



# 1. The Big Picture

## Fuqaha IS attack to grow calls for LNA intervention

Islamic State (IS) militants targeted the Fuqaha police station killing four, including the son of the Municipal Council's head, and kidnapping at least nine others at night on 28 Oct. The latest reports indicate IS claimed responsibility for the attack on 29 Oct. There were reports of a suspected IS convoy consisting of 25 armed vehicles moving into Fuqaha prior to the attack. Initial reports speculate the attack was fueled by the arrest of two prominent IS militants on 16 Oct. The attack, especially the kidnapping of locals, will contribute to already growing local calls for a Libyan National Army (LNA) intervention in the region and would give more legitimacy to the recently-announced "Murzuq Basin" operation.

The presence of 25 vehicles, if confirmed, would stand as a high number relatively compared with standard IS tactics to employ smaller groups in similar attacks. The 25-vehicle figure would clearly underline the importance and priority given to the offensive by the group. While IS militants are known to operate unhindered and with freedom of movement in the Jufra national district, this is usually in the form of convoys of small armed groups of militants in potential reconnaissance missions. The latest attack marks a clear shift from previous hit-and-run tactics both in terms of the duration and scale of attack. IS described the offensive, which lasted a couple of hours, as a full raid on the small town. Such attacks, however, will be difficult to carry more often and against much larger towns. IS will likely continue to prioritize hit-and-run tactics in the medium term.

Although the threat posed by IS in-country is often overblown and the group does not appear to possess the local support required to expand its territorial foothold, multiple factors would facilitate the transition from a near-dormant threat to a more active one in the medium term. Whispering Bell assesses

the threat posed by IS will be determined in part by its ability as an organization to feed off an environment fraught with political uncertainty and ahead of planned elections. Even in a scenario in which elections are a success in Libya, it is highly likely the outcome will be contested. Consequently, IS would exploit rifts between factions losing seat and potential winners of both presidential and/or municipal elections.

On the political front, the absence of a concrete military unification agreement from the Cairo meetings corroborates Whispering Bell's assessment that actors are adopting a "wait and see" approach ahead of the Palermo conference on 12-13 Nov. Despite no official confirmation, Haftar's participation in the conference would appear to be secured, especially following the general's visit to Rome and meeting with Italian PM Giuseppe Conte. According to Italian media reports, Conte discussed a crisis resolution plan drawn up by Ghassan Salame, the head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

Overall, the South will remain a source of instability, setting the stage for increased GNA/LNA competition. France and Chad are likely strong advocates of an LNA presence in the South following the 24 Oct ministerial meeting held in Ndjamena to strengthen cross-border security between Sudan, Chad, Niger, and Libya. Meanwhile, the GNA approved a budget for security provision in the South. A new committee on security and military affairs was formed with the approval of several ministers, including the Minister of Interior, Fathi Bashaqa.

**KEY POINTS**

- 25 vehicles stress priority of attack
- IS claimed responsibility for attack
- Haftar to attend Palermo conference

**عاجل**  
جلود الخليفة يسقطون على بلدة (الغمامة) لساعات ويقتلون ويأسرون عددا من الشرطة ورجال الأمن فيها

وكافة ليبيا - روما - 30 أكتوبر 2018  
بوتفوق الله وملائكته، شن جنود الخلافة مساء أمس هجوما واسعا على بلدة (الغمامة) الواقعة تحت سيطرة ميليشيا حفتر المرتدة حيث اقتحموا مركز شرطة البلدة واخربوه وقتلوا بعض عناصره وأسروا آخرين وسقطوا على المدينة لساعات عدة كما ذهبوا عددا من المنازل بحثا عن مرتزقين من الجيش وشرطة والمحميات والجنود مع عتبا اعتقال عدد من المظالمين وإحراق منازلهم بعد إخراجها من النساء والأطفال، واعتذب المجاهدون بعد انتهاء العملية سائرين.

وفي عملية أخرى نفذ ألح عبد العزيز (لقبلة الله) عملية استشهادية لتهدم هجوم مسلح على جاذر كفضيل بولاية الـ400 على الطريق الرابطة بين الخضرة - سبها، مما أوقع العديد من القتلى والجرحى.

واستكمال للهجوم على بلدة الغمامة فكر جنود الخلافة اليوم عودة واسعة على ألية المرتزقين حاولت تتبع المجاهدين في الطرق الصحراوية ما أدى إلى تدميرها وسلبك وأصابة من كان على متنها، وفرق الباقين والحمد لله رب العالمين

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## 2. National Security Map

LNA forces dismantle 3 VBIEDs ready for detonation South of Harawah; militant hideout located

### Key

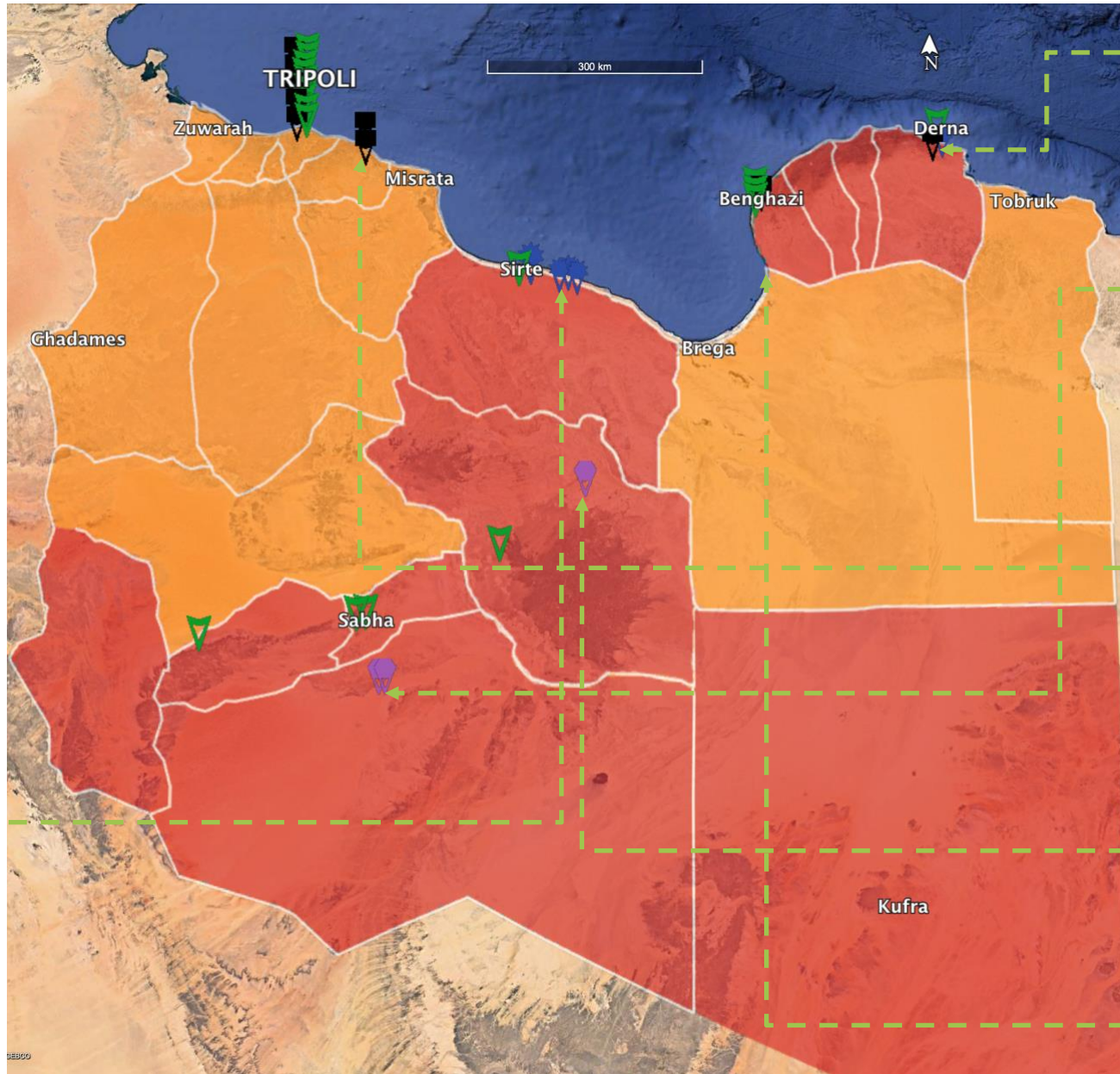
#### THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

#### EVENT INDICATORS

- ♣ IED | VBIED
- ♣ Violent Clash
- ♣ Isolated Gunfire
- ♣ Other

Reports suggest the Libyan National Army's (LNA) 128 Battalion, Tariq Bin-Zayed Battalion, and military engineering factions dismantled three vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs ready for detonation) South of Harawah in the morning on 22 Oct. According to reports, forces dismantled the VBIEDs following intelligence provided by a prominent Islamic State (IS) militant, identified as "Jumaa Massoud Belhssan Al-Qarqai" previously captured by the 128 Battalion on 15 Oct. Additionally, the LNA's 128 and Tariq Bin-Zayed Battalions located a militant hideout in a mountain cave used for carrying out attacks.



The Libyan National Army's (LNA) 210 Infantry Battalion reportedly killed an Al-Qaeda (AQ) leader identified as Abdulghaffar Mansour Al-Tishani, in a sniper operation in Derna's Al-Mughar area.

According to the Mayor of Al-Sharqiyah, Imhimmed Arab, clashes erupted between the Libyan National Army (LNA) affiliated Khalid Bin Al-Walid Brigade and Chadian gangs, resulting in one fatality and the wounding of others in Murzuq's Umm Al-Arabib area on 22 Oct.

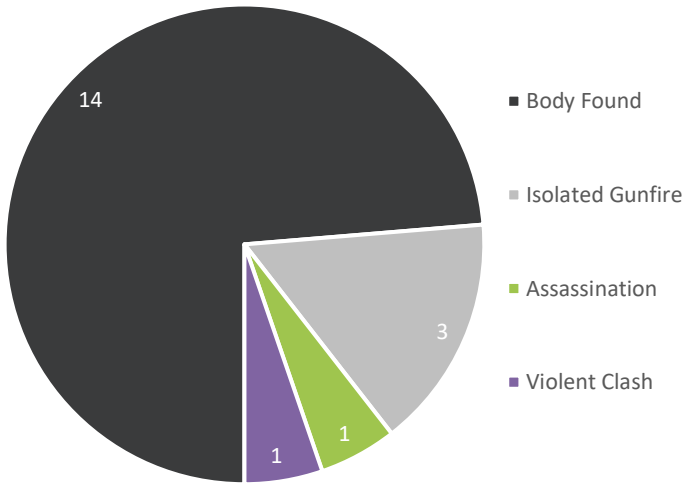
Unidentified assailants reportedly shot dead a man affiliated with the Military Council of Khoms inside his house on 24 Oct. The incident follows the murder of the head of Khoms Military Council's brother on 21 Oct.

Reports suggest the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) deployed heavily armed fighters and fired sporadic shots into the air in response to the killing of one of its members by unidentified assailants in Zella. Clashes reportedly erupted between locals and SLM rebels fighters resulting in 4 injuries.

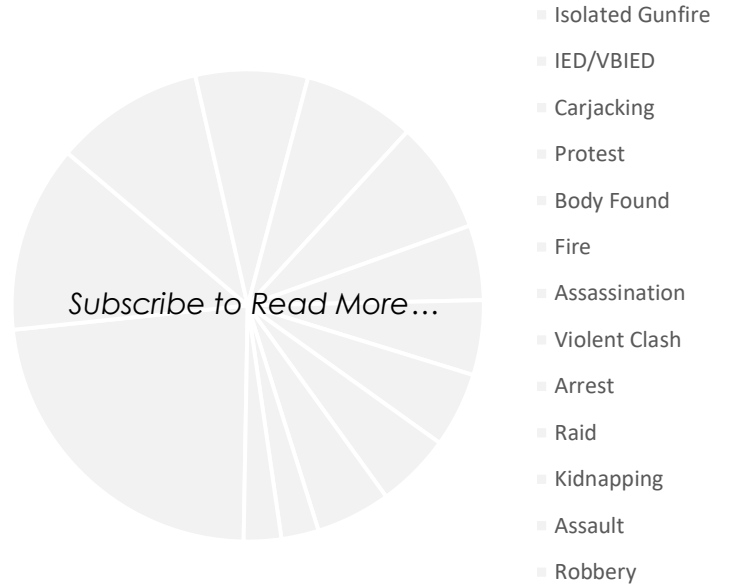
A protest was reportedly held due to poor working conditions and the demand for salary increases at Zuwaytinah's port on 22 Oct.

### 3. Nationwide Security Analysis Decrease in nationwide fatalities numbers & Tripoli incidents

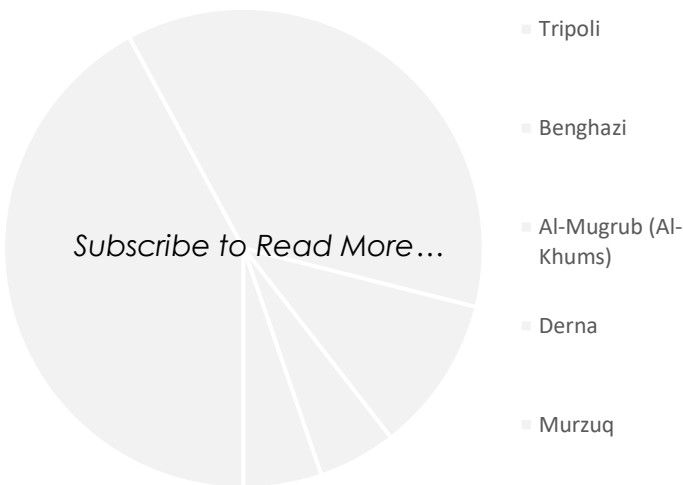
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



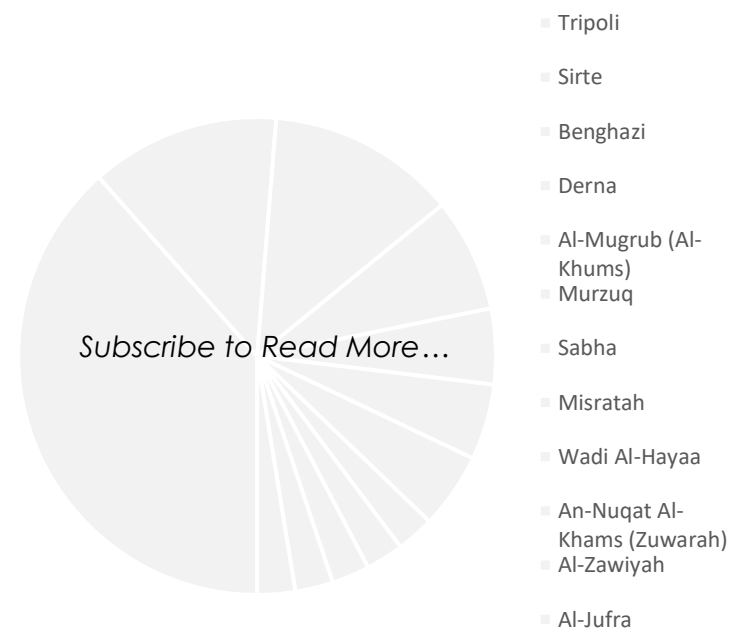
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)

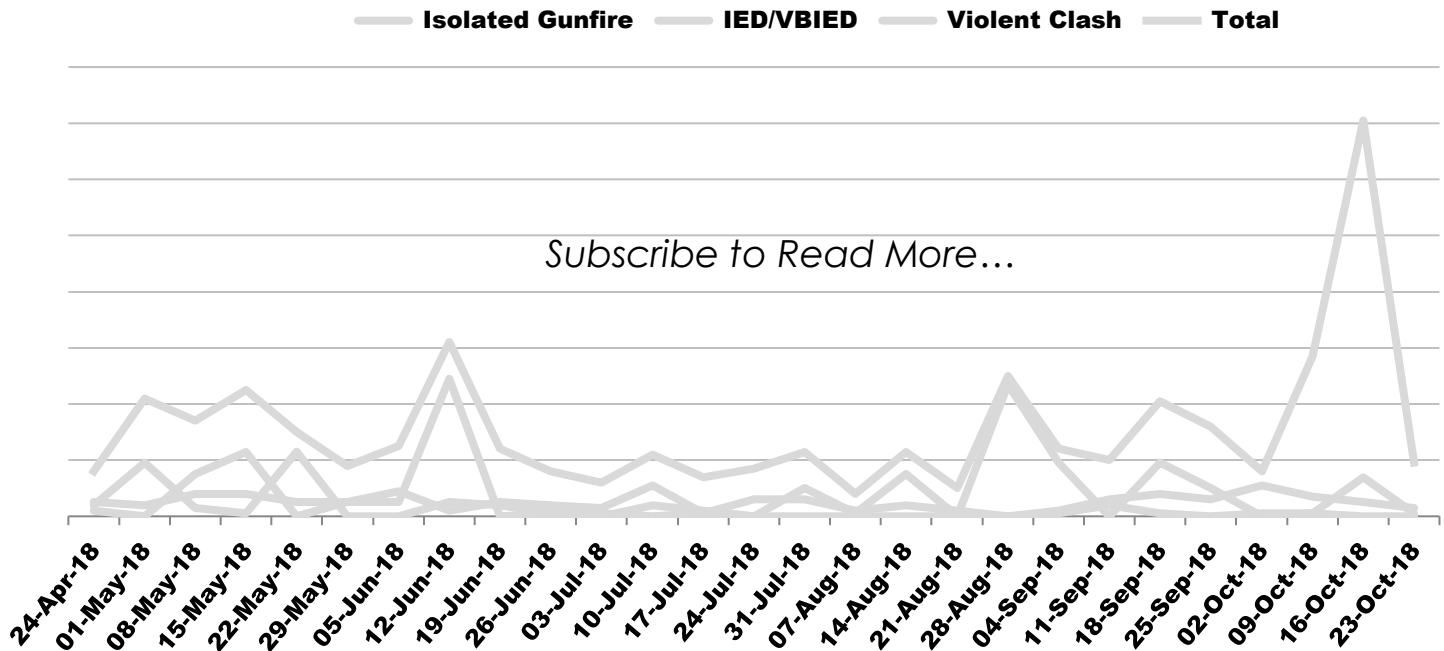


Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)





## Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



### Data Analysis

Whispering Bell recorded this week a total of 19 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 141 deaths reported last week and 57 the week before. This week saw a significant decrease in the nationwide fatality numbers relatively compared with the previously-recorded figures. There appears to be a standard distribution of incidents and fatalities this week. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 9 cases of isolated gunfire, 5 IED/VBIED incidents, 4 carjackings, 2 episodes of violent clash, and a robbery.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 20 incidents, including 15 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. Whispering Bell recorded in Tripoli a total of five bodies found in front of the Tripoli Medical Centre, including three bodies of Ghneiwa militiamen, one African labourer, and a civilian in the evening on 21 Oct. Initial reports suggest the bodies were found dismembered with signs of torture and gunshots. One of the bodies found belonged to an Abu Slim commander, Masoud Al-Maqrahi, who was reportedly captured during the militia clashes in Aug/Sep 2018. Al-Maqrahi's body was reportedly found dismembered and dumped inside a bag outside the hospital. Unconfirmed reports across untested social media suggest Al-Kaniat militiamen were behind the murder of Ghneiwa militiamen. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, reports suggest unidentified assailants riding a silver Hyundai Azera vehicle with tinted windows carjacked a white Hyundai i30 vehicle on Tripoli's Highway of Al-Hadba Al-Khadra area at approximately 2130hrs on 23 Oct.

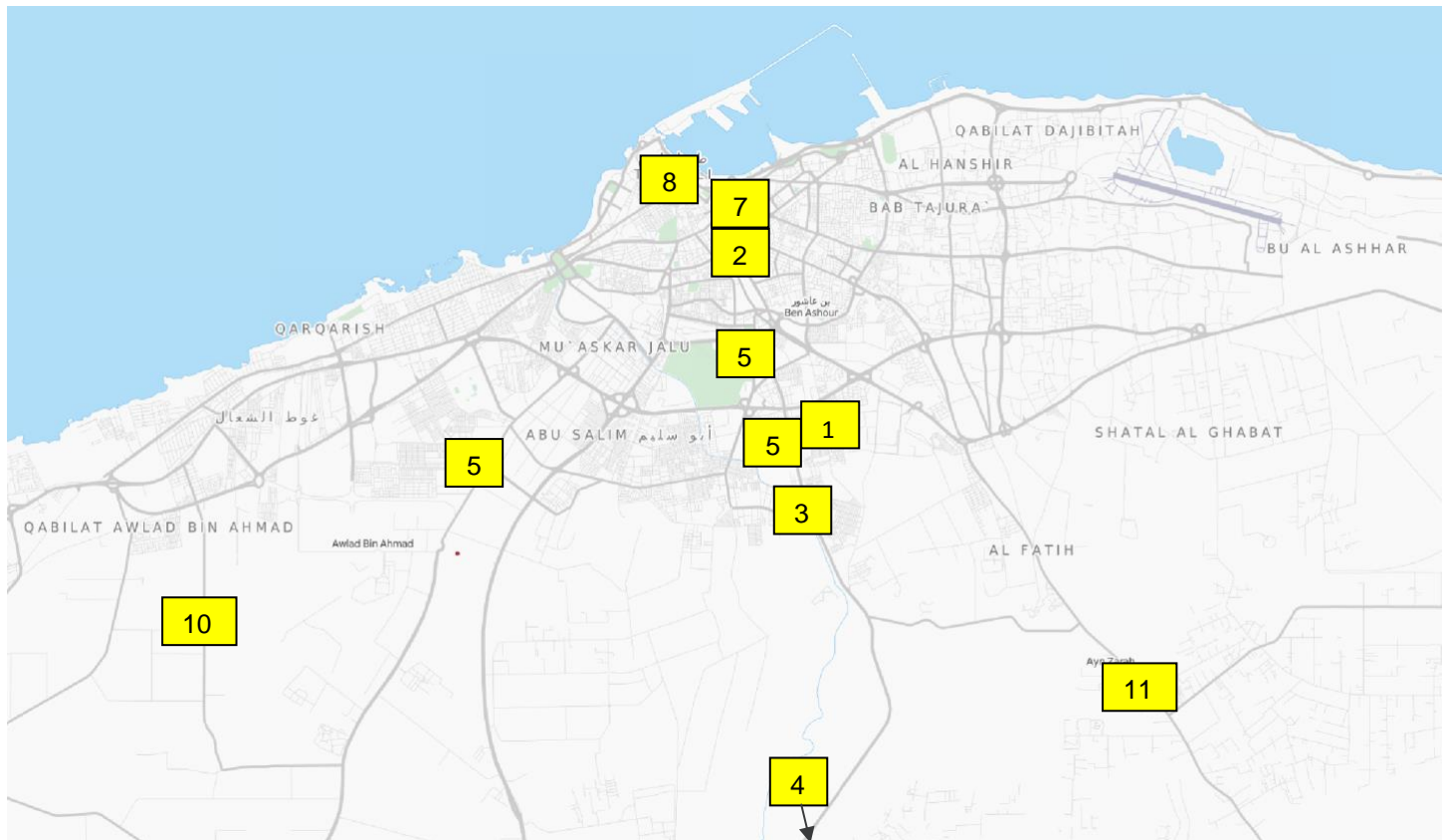
The week in Central Libya was marked by the Libyan National Army's (LNA) 128 Battalion, Tariq Bin-Zayed Battalion, and military engineering factions, dismantling three vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) ready for detonation, South of Harawah in the morning on 22 Oct.

Turning to southern Libya, the week was marked by protests and heavy clashes as the security environment deteriorates in the region. Reports suggest Awbari locals held a protest near Al-Sharara Oil Field city to denounce poor living conditions, among other grievances. Sources suggest the "Fezzan Fury Movement" set a 2-week deadline for authorities to respond to their demands threatening to shut production. Meanwhile, clashes erupted between the LNA-affiliated Khalid Bin Al-Walid Brigade and Chadian foreign elements, resulting in one fatality and the wounding of others in Murzuq's Umm Al-Aranib area on 22 Oct. Unconfirmed reports indicate Khalid Bin Al-Walid received 10 vehicles from the LNA.

In Eastern Libya, Derna, the LNA's 210 Infantry Battalion reportedly killed an Al-Qaeda (AQ) leader identified as Abdulghaffar Mansour Al-Tishani, in a sniper operation in Derna's Al-Mughar area. Al-Tashani reportedly participated in confrontations against the LNA during military operations across the city.

## 4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

### New security arrangements could result in skirmishes; state of alert raised



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (21 Oct) Five bodies found in front of Tripoli Medical Centre
2. (22 Oct) Heavy gunfire resulting in closure of shops & reduced traffic
3. (23 Oct) Ghneiwa militia raids location of narcotics ' dealers
4. (23 Oct) Control of Narcotics & psychotropic substances head killed
5. (23 Oct) Carjackings in Keshlaf, Al-Zawia St. & Al-Hadba Al-Khadra
6. (23 Oct) Sarraj approves greater Tripoli plan
7. (23 Oct) Demolition process of TRB camps across Tripoli commences
8. (23 Oct) Narcotics dealer arrested in ambush in old city
9. (24 Oct) New PG Commander & TRB spokesman appointed
10. (26 Oct) Zintan factions & Fursan Janzour temporarily clash in Al-Serraj
11. (27 Oct) TRB head detains battalion member due to local dispute

#### Heavy gunfire in Zawayat Dahmani

There were reports of heavy gunfire in Tripoli's Zawayat Dahmani area and precisely near the Government of National Accord's (GNA) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), resulting in the closure of shops and reducing traffic between approximately 1800hrs and 1900hrs on 22 Oct. There are conflicting reports over the incident. Initial unconfirmed reports indicate a raid by the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) leader Haithem Tajouri on some of his camps in the area after he returned to Libya and due to an internal dispute following the assassination of prominent TRB militiamen. Other reports suggest the gunfire was likely tied to Haithem Tajouri's attempt to compel factions to surrender their camps as per the new security arrangements in the capital city. Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports suggest a diplomatic mission in the area evacuated staff due to the incident.

#### TRB tensions; potential skirmishes

Sources reported that a meeting between TRB members held in its HQ camp on 24 Oct, resulted in the appointment of Abdulrahman Faraj Al-Mezoughi as the TRB's spokesman, replacing Jalal Al-Wershiffani. The replacement of the TRB spokesman comes amid unconfirmed reports of alleged internal rifts within the TRB, which if confirmed, could

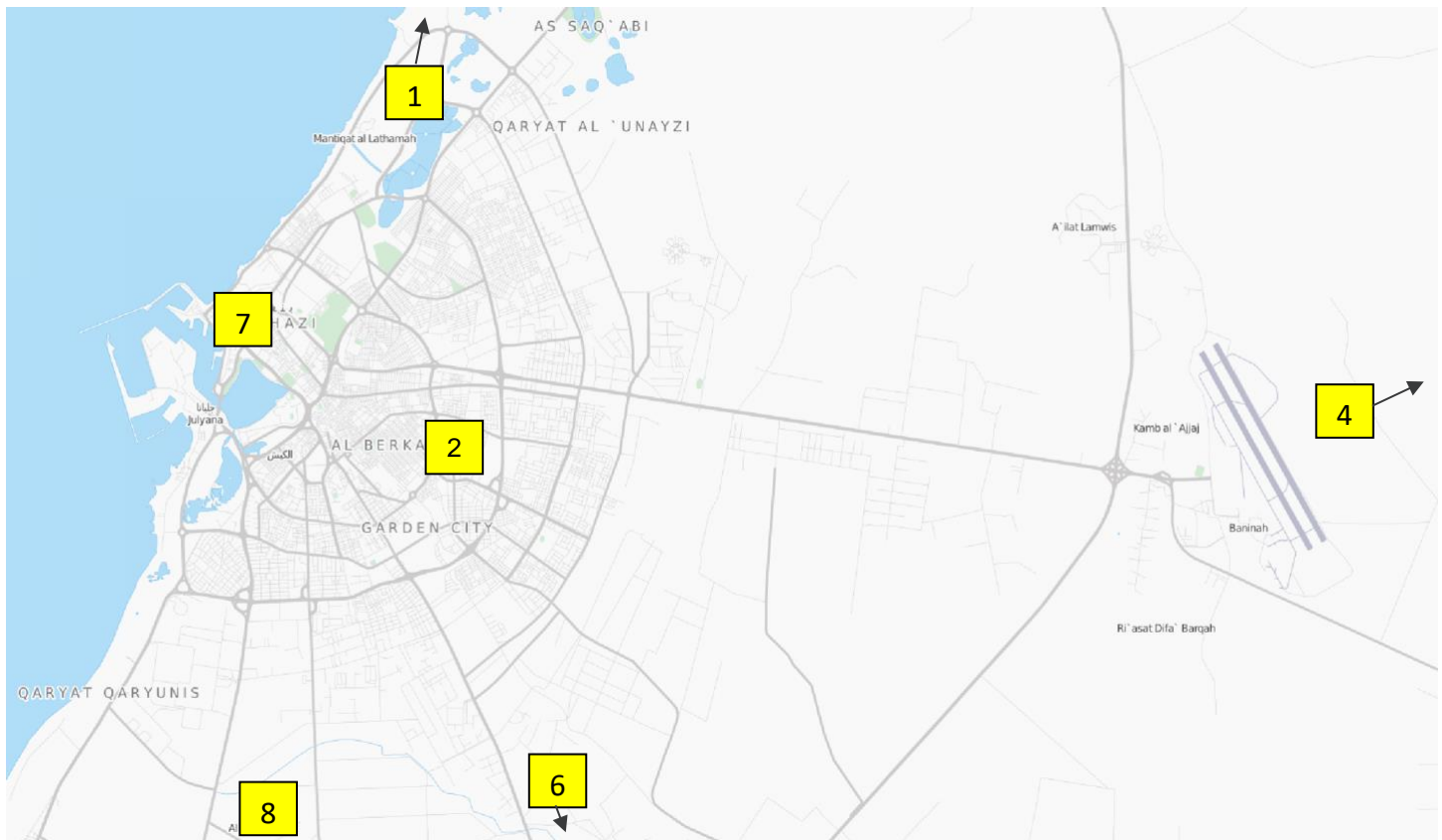
destabilize Tripoli's security situation. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, Tajouri reportedly detained a TRB member identified as "Mohamed Al-Hetra" due to a local dispute in Tripoli's Al-Ruwaimy Prison on 27 Oct. Al-Hetra is reportedly the right-hand of Mohamed Al-Bekbak, a TRB militiaman whose fate remains unknown despite reports suggesting he was killed on 16 Oct. Overall, the newly-implemented security arrangements could result in skirmishes across the capital city with the possibility of escalation in the short to medium term.

#### New PG commander; state of alert

Fayez Sarraj, announced the appointment of Diyaa Al-Din Al-Amrouni as the commander of the Presidential Guard (PG), replacing Najmi Al-Nakoa on 24 Oct. The development follows recent similar ministerial reshuffles within the PC and comes amid efforts to implement new security arrangement across Tripoli. Meanwhile, in a separate development, the head of Tripoli's Security Directorate, Salah Al-Din A-Smouwi, raised the state of alert to critical among the capital's security forces from 25 Oct.

## 5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

### Head of Derna's Security Chamber arrested; IED explosion kills 3



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (19 Oct) 3 prisoners set fire to prison in escape attempt
2. (21 Oct) Authorities raid house used for illicit activity
3. (21 Oct) Meeting to discuss securing oil conference
4. (22 Oct) Haftar meets with military commanders
5. (23 Oct) Gunmen open fire on house of political activist
6. (24 Oct) 7 bodies found in Cement Factory
7. (24 - 26 Oct) Oil & Gas Exhibition & Forum held
8. (27 Oct) IED explosion kills 3 GECOL employees
9. (27 Oct) Head of Derna's Security Chamber arrested

#### House of political activist attacked

Local reports suggest unidentified assailants opened fire on the house of a political activist, Khaled Al-Sukran, in Benghazi at night on 23 Oct. On his official Facebook page, Al-Sukran stated that his house was subject to an attack for the second time, noting that bullets penetrated one of the windows, whilst circulating pictures of the damage caused. Whilst neither the identity of the assailants nor the motive behind the incident are known, the incident stands as politically-motivated and comes amid a series of recent sporadic security incidents across Benghazi.

#### Seven bodies found

Seven bodies were reportedly found in the Cement Factory in Benghazi's Al-Hawari area on 24 Oct. There is no further information available.

#### IED explosion

Local reports suggest an improvised explosive device (IED) explosion resulted in the death of three General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) employees in Benghazi's Al-Qawarisha area on 27

Oct. According to reports, the IED exploded during maintenance works for the electricity lines in the area.

#### Security Chamber head arrested

Local reports from 27 Oct suggest a group affiliated with the military police of the Libyan National Army (LNA) arrested the head of Derna's Security Chamber, General Salem Muftah Al-Rafadi, from his house in Benghazi. According to reports, Al-Rafadi was heading to Egypt via Benina International Airport when a dispute erupted between him, the airport's guards and military police. Al-Rafadi was reportedly later arrested. The incident comes amid ongoing calls for the release of the abducted former Mayor of Benghazi, Ahmed Al-Araibi and his son. Arrest campaigns of prominent political and/or military figures could escalate tensions.



## 6. What's next

### Lack of national cohesion to undermine prospect of Palermo Conference

#### POLITICAL FORECAST

Domestically, fragmentation persists amongst the country's existing rival political institutions. The head of the House of Representatives (HoR), Aguila Saleh, questioned the legitimacy of the heads of the Presidential Council (PC) and the High Council of State (HCS) based on the absence of a legal basis for their respective posts. Saleh's comments follow a series of meetings between the HoR and HCS on the reformation of the PC, which has yet to crystalize on the ground amid reports of ongoing disagreements. Internationally, both Sarraj and Haftar visited the Italian PM Giuseppe Conte in Rome ahead of the upcoming Italy-endorsed conference for Libya on Nov 12-13. Meanwhile, after a lot of conjecture, the Italian Foreign Minister finally confirmed Haftar's presence in the conference, in a potential sign of the importance of Palermo and an understanding by the general of the potential ramifications of a no-show. Whilst it remains too early to ascertain the conference's outcomes, the Italian initiative has thus far gained greater international interest than that of the previous Paris Summit. Ghassan Salame has reportedly drawn up a crisis resolution plan, though whether or not the conference will achieve any breakthroughs remains to be seen. International backing in the absence of national reconciliation will hinder such efforts.

#### WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In an article for "*International Crisis Group*", the author(s), discuss the recent economic reforms adopted by the Tripoli-based government and the need for European Union (EU) member states to address the reforms' core issues and exert pressure on the government to further implement comprehensive economic reforms. "The package's measures fall short of what is needed to improve deteriorating living conditions, prevent the defrauding of the state, discourage attempts to change the status quo through violence and create an environment more conducive to a negotiated solution to the disputes that have divided Libya since 2014. Reforms will not have an impact overnight, but the package introduced in September is a start. If it merely reproduces corruption and fails to address the needs of ordinary Libyans, violent challenges to the arrangement are likely. The EU and its member states should therefore recognise the crucial task of addressing the underlying flaws in the economic policies proposed in September and press Libya's government and its economic institutions to continue work on more thorough reforms. Concretely, they should support efforts to reconcile economic institutions and reach consensus on economic reforms, and back the UN in developing the economic track of peace negotiations.

#### SECURITY FORECAST

The implementation of new security arrangements began with Sarraj's approval of the Greater Tripoli Security Plan under the supervision of the head of the TRB as authorities begin to oversee the demolition of multiple camps. The gradual implementation of new security arrangements will likely challenge the internal cohesion of the TRB, with the potential for skirmishes in the short to medium term. In the West, the murder of an affiliate and relative of the head of Khoms' Military Council, in addition to kidnappings in Al-Jmail and Misrata, highlight ongoing security risks in the region. In the central region, acts of vandalism and robberies will likely persist. Additionally, reports of a suspected IS attack on the municipality of Al-Fuqaha resulting in fatalities & kidnappings highlights militant presence moving into the central region and will likely result in increased security presence and potential LNA involvement. In the South, reports of LNA reinforcements and the continued presence of foreign elements will likely escalate tensions. Meanwhile, tensions could escalate near Sharara oil field and ahead of the 11 Nov deadline set by Awbari locals. In the East, security operations targeting militants persist in Derna, whilst Benghazi's Oil & Gas Exhibition & Forum highlighted confidence in the sector, proving security capabilities despite a recent uneasy security situation across the city.

#### LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an article for "*Bloomberg*", the author, Salma El-Wardany, highlights growing foreign appetite to resume oil and gas operations across Libya despite the volatile security situation. "A number of international companies are looking at returning to Libya, due to the country's "low-cost-to-market" resources and comparatively small amounts of sulfur, a contaminant, in its crude, said Sanalla, who escaped unhurt from the militants' assault. BP had completed some seismic work at the contract areas when Qaddafi was toppled from power. It immediately halted operations, then resumed them, and then ceased activity once again in 2014 when tensions flared. Under their agreement, Italy's Eni will buy half of BP's 85 percent stake in the contract areas that covers about 54,000 square kilometers (20,850 square miles). In another effort to spur production, Sanalla met with Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak and officials of Russian companies including Gazprom PJSC and Tatneft PJSC in Moscow this month. Tatneft confirmed the talks with NOC and is interested in "further work in Libya," a spokeswoman said. The company suspended operations in the country in 2011 but still has assets there, she said. PetroChina Co. agreed to buy Libyan crude, its first term contract with NOC since 2013, a person familiar with the matter said in March. BP and Royal Dutch Shell Plc reached a similar deal in January." said El-Wardany.

# About Whispering Bell



Whispering Bell is a Dubai-based security and risk management consultancy advising clients in challenging and emerging markets throughout the Middle East and North Africa. We establish an in depth understanding of the political and security environments in which our clients operate. We are staffed by people who live and work in the region, understand the local context and speak the languages of the countries in which we report. Whispering Bell works with clients in the region to provide the following services:

- Political and Security Risk Assessments
- Embedded Security Consultants
- Journey Management and In-Country Facilitation
- Due Diligence and Investigations
- Financial and Market Advisory
- Technical and Information Security Services

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