



# 1. The Big Picture

## Questionable outlook in Tripoli after clashes come to halt

Despite an end to the heavy clashes that opposed Tripoli's main militias to a coalition led by the the Tarhuna-based Al-Kaniat militia, the security situation in Tripoli remains fluid. An outcome with no durable solution to contain Tripoli militias' influence would risk exacerbating tensions that initially led to the clashes. Politically, while Al-Kaniat militia and Salah Badi's forces retreated, the GNA's weaknesses are ever-present and could be exploited by multiple factions.

From Al-Kaniat militia's perspective, the clashes have had the unintended outcome of further empowering Tripoli's main militias and other groups with a presence in the capital city. This is especially true for Emad Trabelsi's Zintani forces who made further advances West and South-West of Tripoli. Trabelsi's force is reported to be the faction that has benefited the most from the clashes thus far. Given it did not directly engage in clashes, the Zintani faction would have technically "saved" its ammunition to come out stronger.

As a result, Tripoli's outlook remains sporadic and there appears to be a security vacuum that could be exploited in the short term. Meanwhile, there are unconfirmed reports of an imminent attack by the Islamic State (IS) targeting Tripoli's expatriate community. These reports, however, are difficult to ascertain and corroborate.

More specifically, there is a possibility tensions will escalate into skirmishes and/or clashes between the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) and Zintani factions. Reports suggest the latter's presence in the Gergaesh area represents a direct threat to the prominent TRB commander known as

"Al-Sh'ar", a local who controlled the area prior to the clashes.

Meanwhile, the GNA will likely attempt to prevent any confrontation within the bloc that had formed to oppose Al-Kaniat and Salah Badi. There is a strong possibility the GNA would seek to maintain the presence of allied Misrata militias East and southeast of Tripoli, while keeping Zintani militias West and southwest of the capital city as stabilizing forces.

Beyond this, there could be tensions in Misrata as Badi begins to realize he failed to rally support from other Misrata-based groups. In addition, the possibility of a new counter offensive cannot be ruled out given reports Badi's forces retreated due to a lack of ammunition and support.

Politically, the peace agreement between Tripoli and Tarhuna elders remains fragile and a violation from any side could prompt further hostilities. Converting these militia tensions into structured political demands would be ideal to prepare for elections, though prospects to disarm armed groups diminished after Tripoli's militias proved they can stand their ground, possibly complicating efforts to establish a durable political arrangement in Tripoli. However, in an alternative outcome, Tripoli's main militias would lose their grip over Tripoli should the series of GNA-sanctioned reforms and UN-led efforts begin to have a tangible outcome on the ground.

### KEY POINTS

- Tensions between Zintan & TRB
- No durable political arrangement
- Unconfirmed reports of IS attack



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## 2. National Security Map

### Assassination attempt on Dean of Municipality of Derna; Unidentified airstrike in Awbari

Key

THREAT INDICATORS

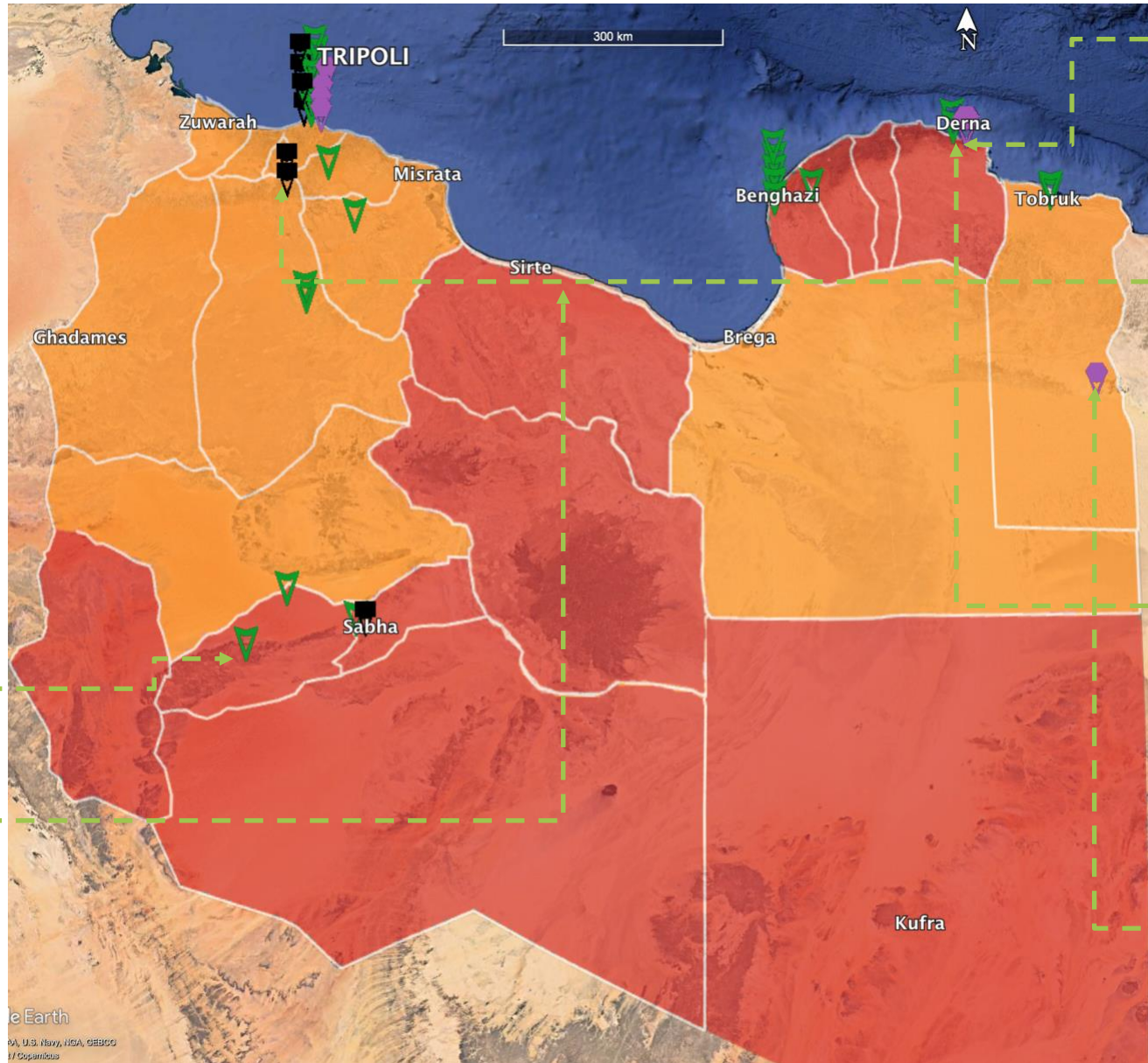
- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

- ▲ IED | VBIED
- ▼ Violent Clash
- Isolated Gunfire
- ▼ Other

Reports emerged over an unidentified foreign aircraft conducting airstrike in Awbari in the night on 27 Sep. The airstrikes reportedly targeted a house and/or vehicle. Thus far, there is no further information available on the confirmed target.

On 29 Sep, a Libyan National Army (LNA) force reportedly arrived to the areas of Qardabiya, Sultan, Harawah, Al-Amra and Wadi Al-Ahmar, approximately 45 kms East of Sirte. The LNA force reportedly established a checkpoint to stop and inspect travellers' vehicles in the area. Additionally, several Toyota 24 armed vehicles were reportedly stationed East of Sirte.



The Dean of the Municipality of Derna, Advisor Abdel Monim Al-Ghaithi, was reportedly subject to a failed assassination attempt in Derna's Pearl Hotel on 25 Sep. According to reports, an improvised explosive device (IED) was deployed in the room adjacent to Al-Ghaithi's.

Local reports suggest a dispute between young men escalated into an exchange of gunfire resulting in the death of two relatives and the injury of at least two others in Gharian's Qawasm on 27 Sep.

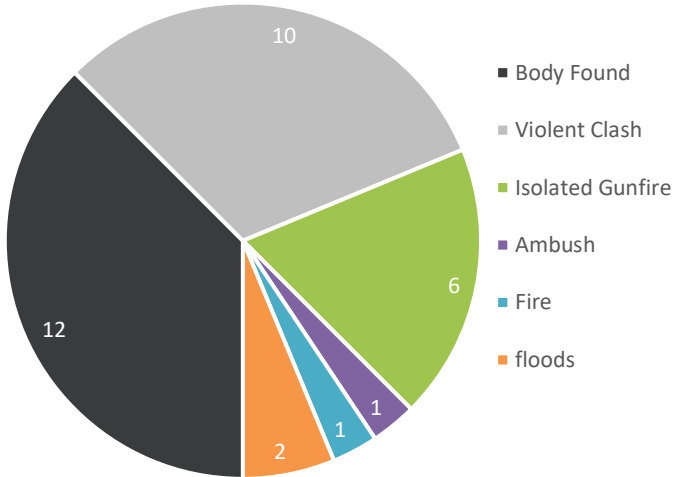
Reports suggest a vehicle driven by females was stopped at a Libyan National Army (LNA) manned checkpoint near Zawiyat Al-Urqub on 27 Sep. The females were found carrying cash, documents and weapons allegedly intended for DPF remnants.

According to the spokesman for the Kufra military district, Miftah Bouzid, violent clashes erupted between the Libyan National Army (LNA)-affiliated Subol Al-Salam Brigade and unidentified Chadian rebel groups, resulting in the death of two of the brigade's members and six Chadian elements near Jaghbug on 28 Sep.

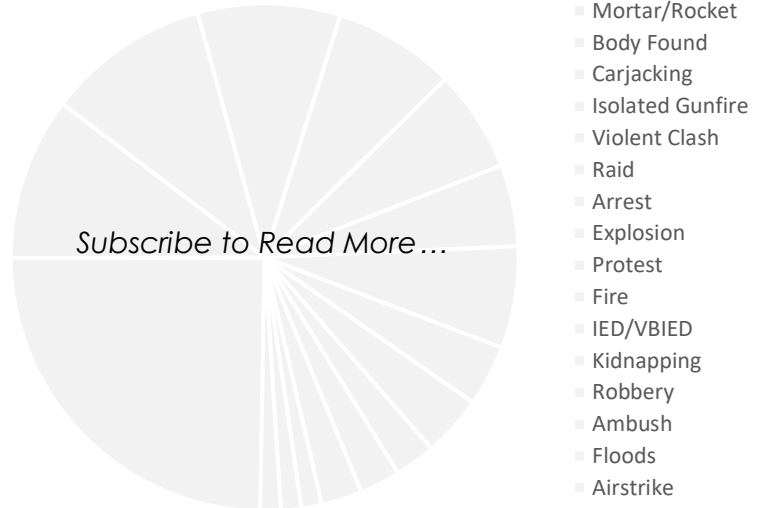
### 3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Majority of security incidents in Tripoli; slight decrease in violent clashes

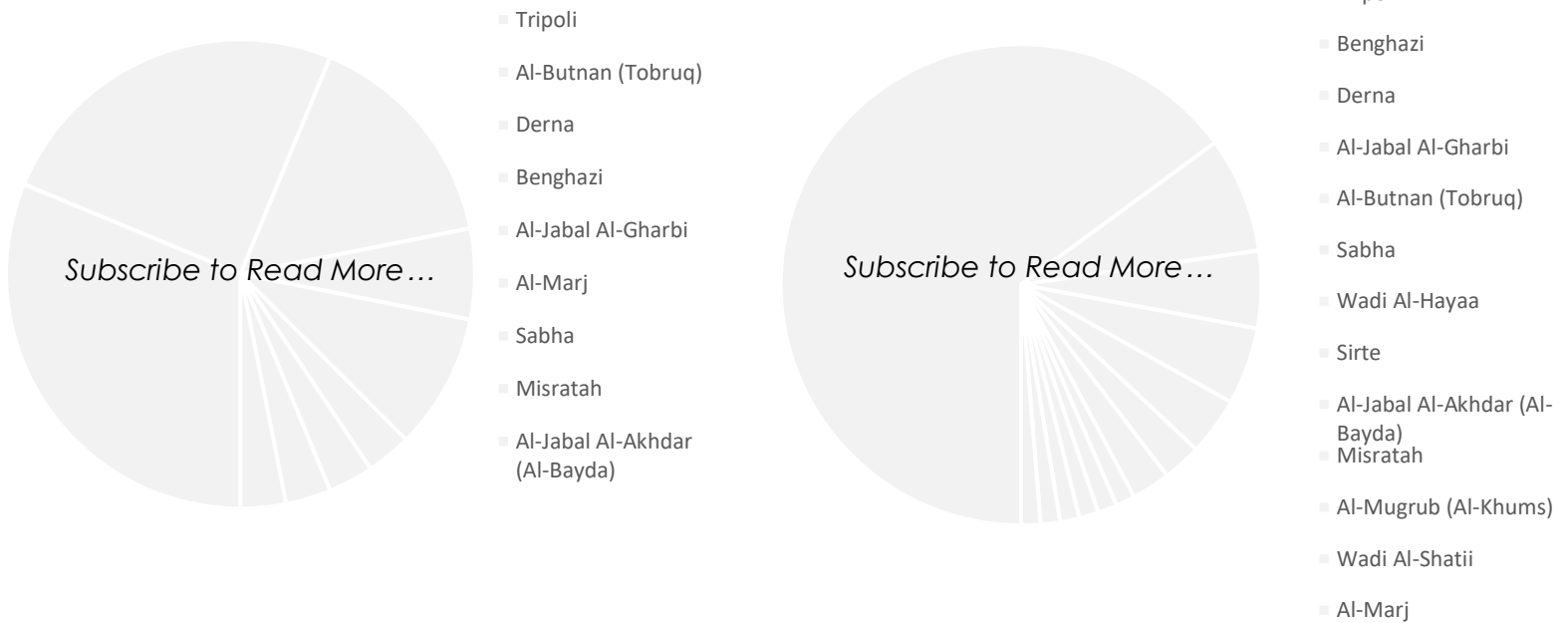
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



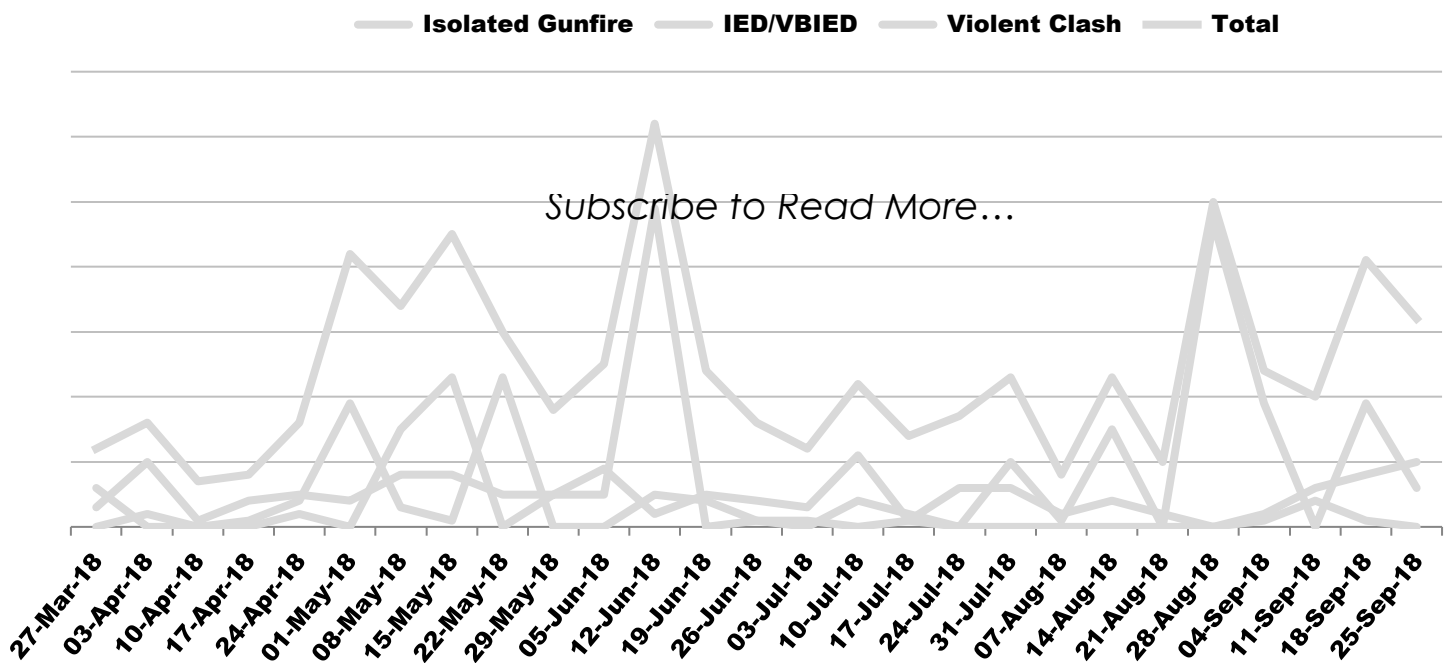
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



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 32 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 41 deaths reported last week and 20 the week before. This week was marked by the halt of heavy militia clashes across Tripoli's Southern areas on 25 Sep and the gradual resumption of air traffic at Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport on 26 Sep. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 7 cases of isolated gunfire, 19 mortar/rockets, 8 carjackings, 8 bodies found and 6 violent clashes.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 58 incidents, including 50 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. This week was marked by the halt of militia clashes on 25 Sep, following the initial outbreak of hostilities on 26 Aug. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, reports suggest three bodies of Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) members were found near Tripoli's Al-Rahma Mosque on Beer Osta Milad Rd in the morning on 28 Sep. Beyond this, the General National Maritime Transport Company stated that unidentified gunmen raided the company's headquarters and assaulted employees in Tripoli's Al-Seyahiya area at approximately 1700hrs on 25 Sep. Meanwhile, Tripoli's Protection Force stated on its official Facebook page that the attackers were affiliated to the Zintan tribe, noting that the company's surveillance cameras monitored the gang during their raid. Reports suggest the motive behind the raid was an attempt to assign a new administration affiliated to a Zintan group.

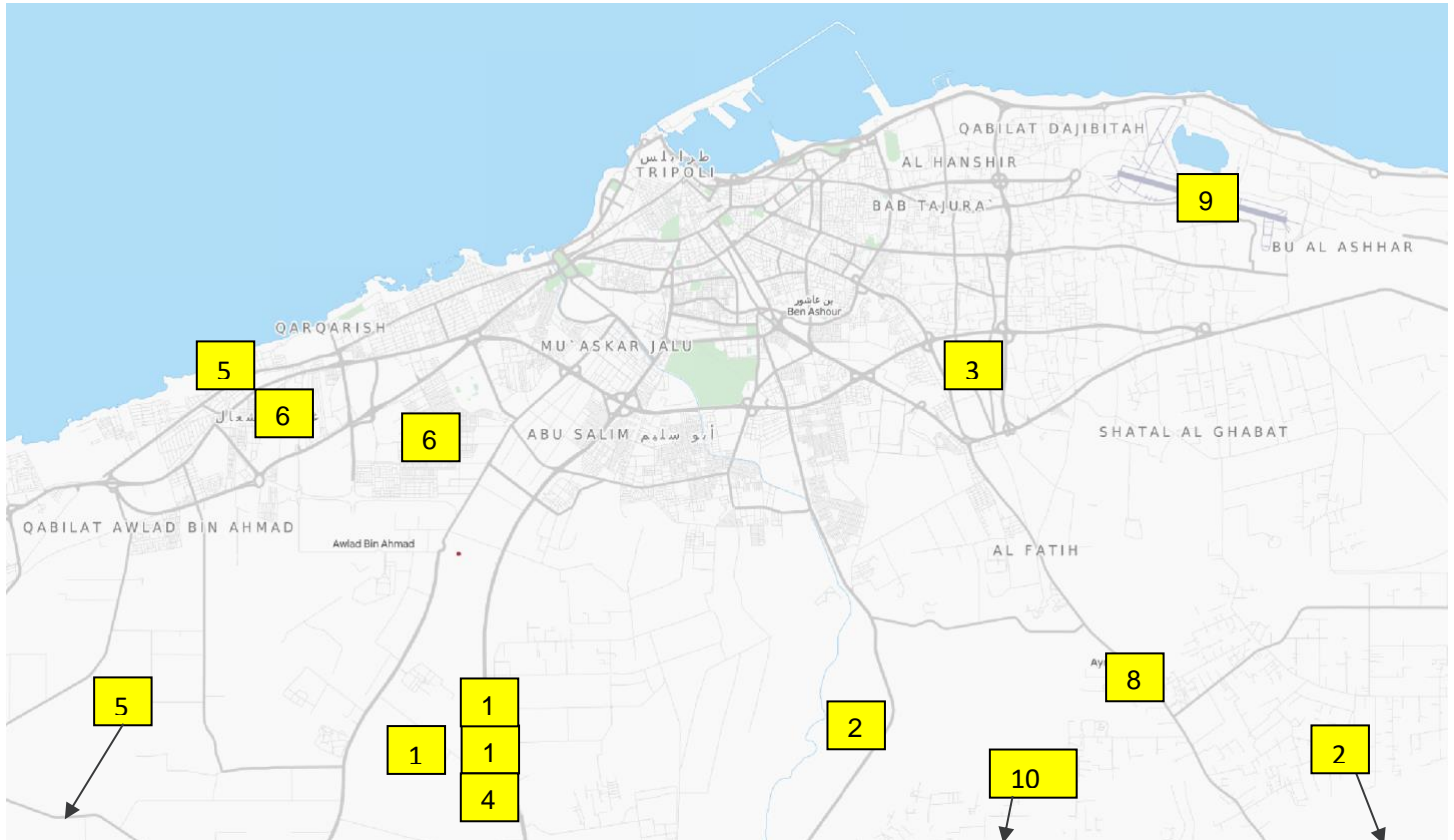
The week in Central Libya was marked by reports suggesting a Demining Team dismantled an improvised explosive device (IED) ready for detonation near the Port of Sirte on 26 Sep.

Turning to Libya's South, local reports suggest an unidentified gang ambushed elements of Sabha's Joint Security Chamber resulting in one fatality and one injury in the region between the Western Sahara desert, South of Sabha, in the afternoon on 29 Sep. Neither the identity of the assailant(s) nor the motive behind the incident are known.

In Libya's East, According to the spokesman for the Kufra military district, Miftah Bouzid, violent clashes erupted between the Libyan National Army (LNA)-affiliated Subol Al-Salam Brigade and unidentified Chadian rebel groups, resulting in the death of two of the brigade's members and six Chadian elements near Jaghub on 28 Sep. Bouzid stated the clashes resulted in the injury of five members of the Subol Al-Salam Brigade. The brigade reportedly seized four armed vehicles belonging to the Chadian armed groups, which were reportedly used for kidnappings, robberies and other acts, particularly on the road linking the towns of Jalu and Kufra. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, the Criminal Investigation Department in Misrata arrested a Turkish national accused of 13 fraud cases on 26 Sep.

## 4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Militia clashes come to halt in South; clashes erupt in An-Najila area



### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (23 Sep) Heavy clashes between Ghneiwa & Badi militias
2. (23 Sep) TRB advance against Al-Kaniat militia, shelling
3. (23 Sep) Dispute between two families results in death of man
4. (23 – 24 Sep) Clashes continue between Badi & Ghneiwa militias
5. (24 Sep) Detainees released; peace agreement
6. (25 Sep) General National Maritime Transport Company raided
7. (25 Sep) Militia clashes come to halt ; blocked roads reopened
8. (26 Sep) Man's body found following kidnapping in Ain Zara
9. (26 Sep) Series of carjackings; Mitiga Intl Airport receives first aircraft
10. (26 Sep) Al-Kaniat affiliate killed by 42 Brigade in Beir Al-Alem
11. (28 – 29 Sep) Militia clashes in An-Najila

### Clashes come to halt; Mitiga reopened

On 25 Sep, Tripoli's Security Directorate announced that militia clashes came to a halt in Tripoli's Southern areas, resulting in 115 fatalities and 560 since hostilities erupted on 27 Aug. The clashes came to a halt as Salah Badi's forces retreated from South of Tripoli, with reports suggesting the retreat was due to lack of ammunition and support. Reports suggest convoys were travelling along the Coastal Road returning to Misrata in the evening on 25 Sep. Additionally, Al-Kaniat militia reportedly retreated from South of Tripoli to its positions between Qasr Bin Ghashir and Tarhuna on 25 Sep, following a peace agreement based on the fulfillment of 6 reconciliation conditions between Tripoli and Tarhuna elders. Subsequently, the majority of blocked roads were reopened across Tripoli on 25 Sep. Meanwhile, Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport received its first Libyan Wings aircraft at approximately 2000hrs on 26 Sep.

### Clashes in Tripoli's Warshaffana

Clashes reportedly continued between the Brigade 3 also known as "Al-Lefaa Militia" and the 55th Battalion led by Moammar Addawi, affiliated to the Military Commander

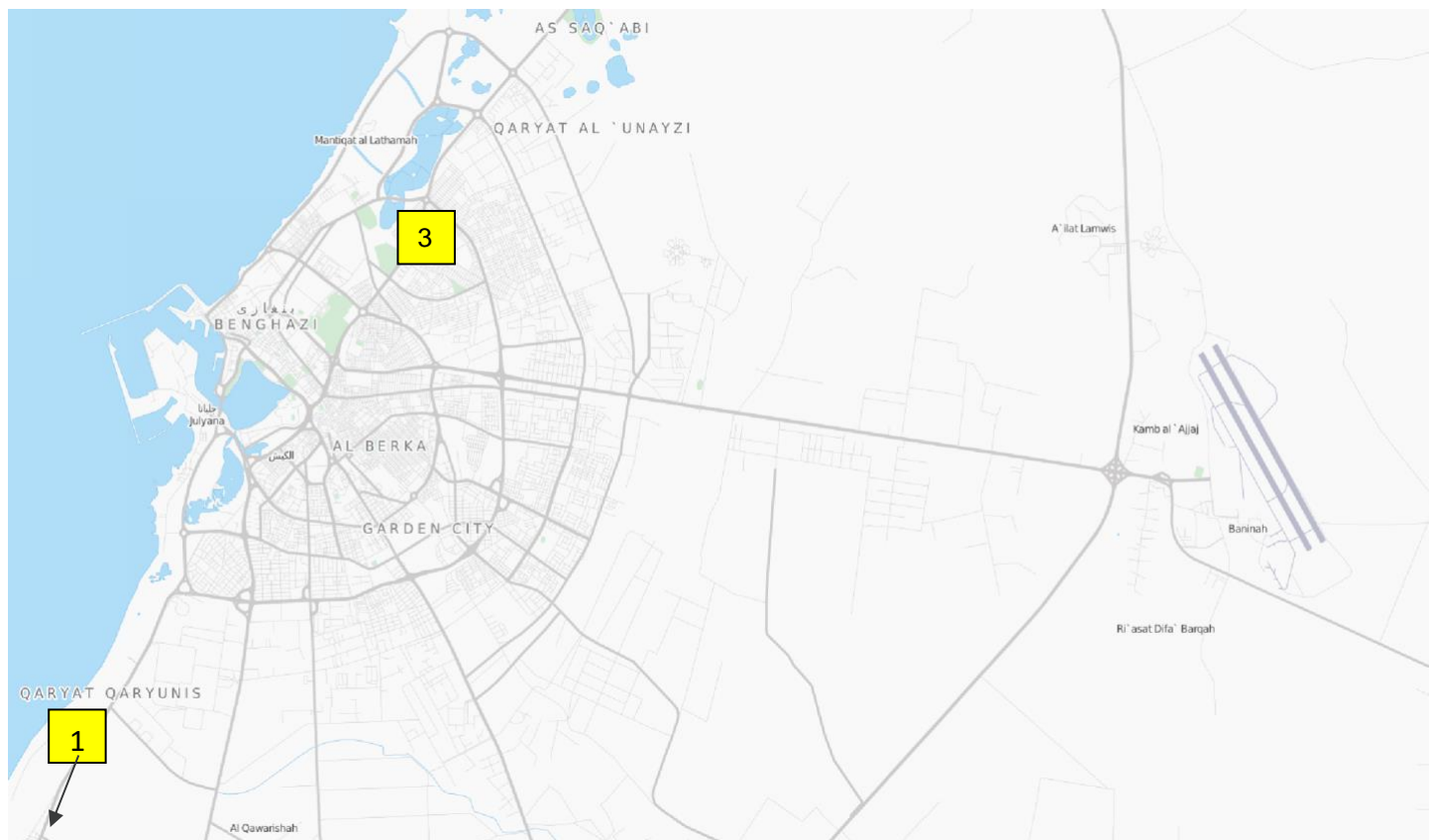
of the Western Region, Osama Juwaili, in the An-Najila area between 28 Sep and 29 Sep. There were no further reports of gunfire as of 0000hrs on 30 Sep. The latest reports suggest the Addawi-led 55 Battalion controlled the area. Whilst the confirmed motive behind the clashes remains unclear, reports suggest the two groups, nominally under the Defense Ministry of the Presidential Council (PC), are vying for control of the region.

### SDF-held detainees released

Detainees from Tripoli's Tajoura and Souk Al-Jumaa areas, held at the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) prison at Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport base, were released on 24 Sep. The release comes after the "Tajoura Revolutionaries Group" announced on their official Facebook page a deadline given to the SDF until 23 Sep to immediately release Tajouran detainees. The group noted the ill-treatment towards the detainees and conditions of the prison prompting their immediate call. Additionally, the group stressed their commitment to the reconciliation agreement between Souk Al-Jumaa and Tajoura to form a committee with the task of overseeing the release of kidnapped and detained individuals.

## 5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

### Female social welfare centre raided; girl arrested & later released



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (23 Sep) Authorities seize alcohol factory
2. (24 Sep) Raid and assault on female social welfare centre
3. (27 Sep) Fire in cooking gas warehouse

#### Female social welfare centre raided

The police force of the General Directorate for Criminal Research in Benghazi reportedly raided a female social welfare centre, arrested a girl, and later released her on 24 Sep. According to reports, an uncited number of girls were assaulted in the raid. Following the incident, the Interior Minister of the Interim Government, Ibrahim Bushnaff, issued a decision to form of a commission to investigate the assault

#### Alcohol factory seized

Reports suggest the Qameenis security department seized an makeshift alcohol factory in the Jaroutha area, 20 km West of Qameenis, in the Benghazi district, on 23 Sep. According to the head of the police department, after raiding the alcohol factory, the suspect was arrested with an estimated 800 liters of homemade alcohol stored in barrels.

#### Fire in cooking gas warehouse

A fire reportedly broke out in a cooking gas warehouse resulting in the death of a boy, whilst injuring four others, in Benghazi's Ard Zwawa area in the evening on 27 Sep. The Civil Defense contained the fire.

## 6. What's next

### Political deadlock persists as security vacuum widens

#### POLITICAL FORECAST

This week, the House of Representatives (HoR) approved a long-awaited constitutional referendum law and amended the constitutional declaration. Meanwhile, the Government of National (GNA) will likely remain under pressure to implement reforms, including new security arrangements to replace Tripoli's militias, particularly amid calls by France and the UN Special Envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salame, to impose sanctions on militia leaders and other figures. On economic reforms, the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) instructed banks to begin implementing measures related to letters of credit (LCs) and foreign currency exchange. While the CBL's announcement would indicate follow-through on reforms, the ramifications and potential impact on militias and other profiteers of the current system remain unclear. Foreign Minister of the Presidential Council (PC) called for the replacement of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) from a political body to a security and stability one. The upcoming period could see a more direct and assertive UNSMIL role in Libya's security matters as the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) crumbles and a potential alternative roadmap emerges. Salame's statement that it might be difficult to respect the 10 Dec elections deadline highlights uncertainty over the Paris election roadmap.

#### WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In an article for "*Ahram Online*", the author, Kamel Abdallah, highlights the comments of the United Nations (UN) Special Envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salame during an interview. "In a television interview Wednesday last week, Salame said that he intended to propose to the Security Council amendments to the Working Plan for Libya, which he had unveiled in New York last year, on 20 September 2017, in light of the recent security developments and the persistent political stalemate in the country. Libya needs to formulate a new political agreement acceptable to all parties, he said, adding that he was not bound to the current agreement that Libyan factions signed in Skhirat, Morocco, on 17 December 2015. After nearly three years, Libyan parties are still at loggerheads over some of the wording and the outputs of this agreement. As the militia violence in south Tripoli enters its second month, no significant progress has been made in carrying out the instructions of the Presidency Council and the new security arrangements. The forces tasked with separating the militias and securing the peace have yet to begin work. Ironically, the new situation appears to have cast Tripoli back to the period before May 2014 when the militias from Misrata and Zintan held sway in the capital.

#### SECURITY FORECAST

Whilst heavy militia clashes came to a halt on 25 Sep following reports of the Al-Kaniat and Salah Badi militias' retreat, tensions remained high across Tripoli. On 28 Sep, militia clashes erupted Southwest of Tripoli, in the An-Najila area, with local and Zintan forces reportedly vying for control of the area. Remnants of Zintani and Misratan factions retreating to the outskirts of Tripoli suggest tensions between the latter remain probable as the situation remains fluid on the ground. Additionally, reports of attacks on checkpoints manned by a Zintan force led by Emad Trabelsi could fuel acts of retaliation. In the wider west, sporadic security incidents related to fuel smuggling remain probable across the region. In Sirte and the wider Oil Crescent region, the Libyan National Army (LNA) will likely consolidate its presence in anticipation of militants, including Islamic State (IS) residual, exploiting the security vacuum to carry out sporadic attacks across the country. In the South, an attack on Sabha's Joint Security Chamber could ignite tensions across the city. Confrontations between LNA-affiliated forces and Chadian outlawed groups will likely persist in the South, particularly along the Jalu-Kufra Road. In the East, the LNA's offensive against militants will likely intensify, whilst sporadic security incidents persist across Benghazi.

#### LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an interview with "*Carnegie Middle East Centre*", Emad Trabelsi, a Libyan activist and development practitioner, discusses how today's Libya faces both civil war and state collapse. "Italy has historical links with Libya and perceives sea crossings by refugees embarking from the country as a threat to its national security. On the other hand, France is not directly affected by negative developments in Libya, which, historically, falls outside the traditional sphere of French influence. This, therefore, justifies France's rash gamble on Libyan elections. Whether successful or not, the bet could ultimately lead to a widening of France's influence in previously uncharted territory. A crucial phenomenon to heed is that the main European players in Libya are threatened by the rise of nationalist movements at home, while the main Arab powers involved in the country have become increasingly authoritarian. This implies that policy toward Libya will become increasingly aggressive and motivated by self-interest, emboldening local actors seeking hegemony. The combination does not bode well for Libya's future as the ripple effects of foreign interference continuously undermine its existence as a polity." said Trabelsi.

# About Whispering Bell



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