

1. The Big Picture

LNA seizes Sharara as Islamist coalition forms in West

This week, the Libyan National Army (LNA) cemented its foothold in the South by peacefully seizing and establishing full control over Sharara oil field. Meanwhile, fears of an LNA intervention in the West continued to grow, despite widespread celebrations of the February 17 Revolution.

The LNA seized Sharara following an agreement with the ethnically-Tuareg 30th Brigade and other units in Awbari. The LNA deployed multiple units to Sharara, including the 128th, 155th and 166th Battalions, the Tariq Bin Zayid Battalion and the Martyrs of Al-Zawiya Brigadem, in addition to Al-Saiqa Special Forces. On 13 Feb, a delegation with senior commanders arrived in the Tamanhint airbase following orders from Khalifa Haftar, a development widely described as a show of force and attempt to reinforce the LNA's image in the South. Meanwhile, the LNA spokesperson, Ahmed Al-Mesmari, confirmed a visit to Sharara Oil Field on 17 Feb. Pictures circulated across local media outlets show Al-Mesmari and other commanders inside the oil field.

While thus far the LNA's southern offensive has exacerbated East-West tensions, a direct military confrontation between LNA and Government of National Accord (GNA) forces has been averted. Multiple statements over the past week have helped de-escalate the situation and provided further clarity on the LNA's intentions at Sharara. In an interview, the LNA CoS, Abdurazzak Nadori, stated Sharara would be handed over to the Tripoli-based National Oil Corporation (NOC). In addition, Nadori confirmed the LNA had no intention to mobilize towards Al-Feel as the field is operating with no security issues.

In another statement, the NOC took a more nuanced approach and clarified its position on the conditions to lift force majeure and reopen the field on 12 Feb. The NOC listed its

conditions for production to resume, including guaranteeing worker safety, confirmation the field is safe based on NOC indicators, and the lifting of the LNA no-fly zone in the South to enable movement of supplies and workers.

The US Department of State expressed concerns over ongoing tensions in Southern Libya and resulting impact on oil production. The statement called on all parties to reach an urgent mutual security arrangement which would guarantee the safety of NOC workers and allow operations to resume. The statement reiterated that "vital Libyan resources must remain under the exclusive control of the NOC and the sole oversight of the GNA".

Overall, there is mounting evidence to suggest the field could resume production in the short term as a stable security environment in Sharara would increase pressure on the NOC to lift force majeure. However, after seizing Sharara, the LNA's offensive could enter a more complex phase. Any attempt to convert territorial gains into political credit would risk escalating tensions in the West. Anti-Haftar sentiment would unite factions in the West, as highlighted by the recent formation of the Islamist and pro-Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) Libyan National Assembly party. These fears were echoed by GNA Minister of Interior, Fathi Bashagha, despite his public recognition the LNA's offensive is "acceptable from the national point of view".

KEY POINTS

- Sharara could reopen in short-term
- LNA offensive to enter political phase
- Anti-Haftar coalition in West



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2. National Security Map

US AFRICOM denies involvement in GNA-stated strike targeting AQ militants in South

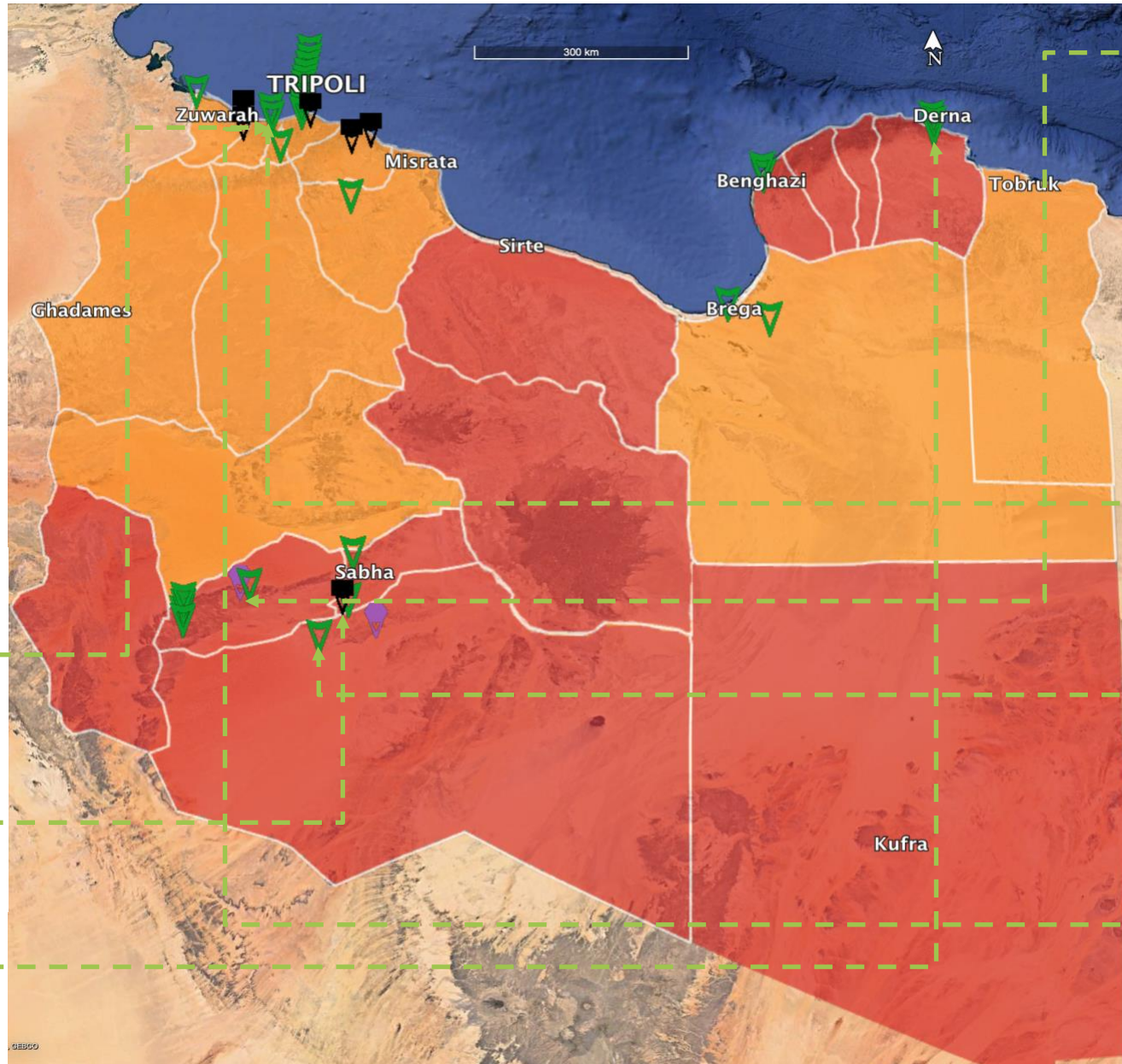
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



US Africa Command (AFRICOM) denied its involvement in a joint airstrike targeting an unidentified Al-Qaeda (AQ) site in Awbari on 13 Feb, contradicting a previous statement by the spokesman of the Government of National Accord (GNA), Mohammed El-Sallak, in which he announced that an airstrike was carried out under joint US-Libyan coordination targeting an unidentified AQ site in Awbari on 13 Feb.

On 17 Feb, the Tunisian Foreign Ministry issued a statement confirming the release of fourteen Tunisian Al-Zawiya oil refinery workers previously kidnapped in Al-Zawiya after they appeared in a video appealing to their government to free a Libyan prisoner identified as Kamal Al-Lafi held in Tunisia in exchange for their release.

The Libyan National Army's (LNA) Air Force (LAF) conducted airstrikes in Murzuq in the morning on 15 Feb. There is no further information, though reports suggest the airstrikes resulted in physical damage with no fatalities recorded.

Dozens of Zawiya locals and militias, affiliated with Abu Obaida, carried out a military parade at Zawiya's Martyrs' Square and issued a statement against the Libyan National Army (LNA) in the afternoon on 13 Feb. Additional reports suggest Zawiya's Coastal Road leading to the Al-Summoud Checkpoint was closed for approximately ten minutes by gunmen at approximately 1715hrs on 13 Feb.

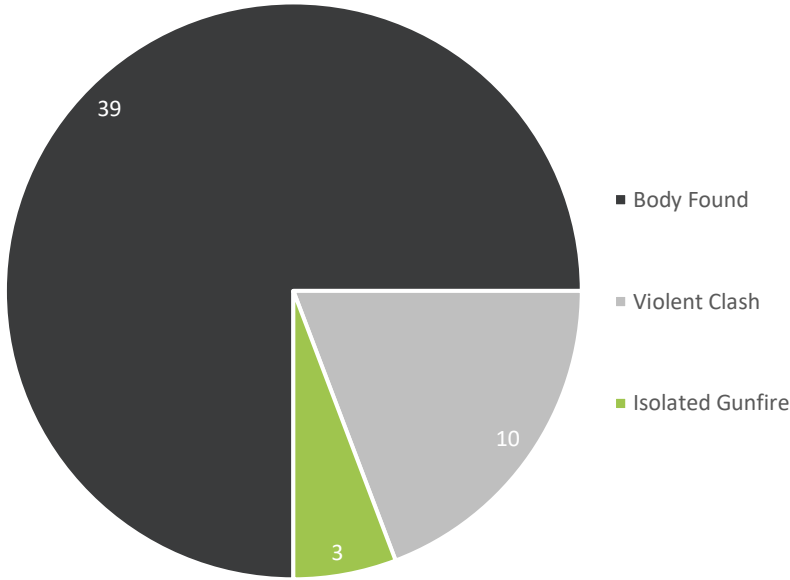
The Zawiya Revolutionaries Brigades Military Council called on all of its members to gather at Zawiya's Martyrs' Square at 1200hrs on 13 Feb. The announcement would closely follow a video circulated across social media showing a local commander, Colonel Ali Al-Koor, pledging allegiance to the Libyan National Army (LNA) from Sala'a Camp, South of Zawiya, on 12 Feb.

Reports suggest two men were kidnapped on their way back from a farm on the Ring Road in Ghadduwah on 12 Feb. The two men were reportedly from Zliten and Sabha. Neither the identity of the assailant(s) nor the motive behind the incident are known.

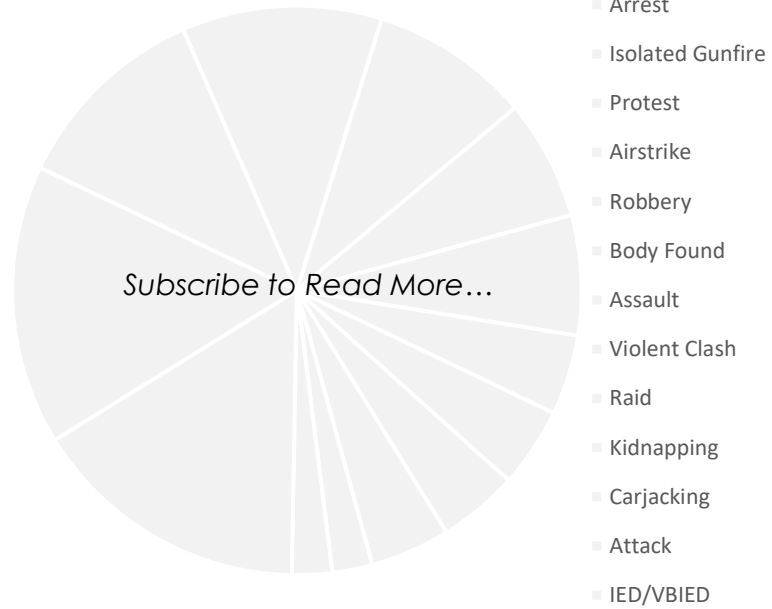
Local reports suggest a military commander under the dissolved Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC) and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) militant, Rasheed Abdullah, also known as "Hafs Al-Mauritani", surrendered to the Libyan National Army (LNA) in Derna on 13 Feb.

3. Nationwide Security Analysis Surge in isolated gunfire incidents in West; 10 fatalities from clashes in South

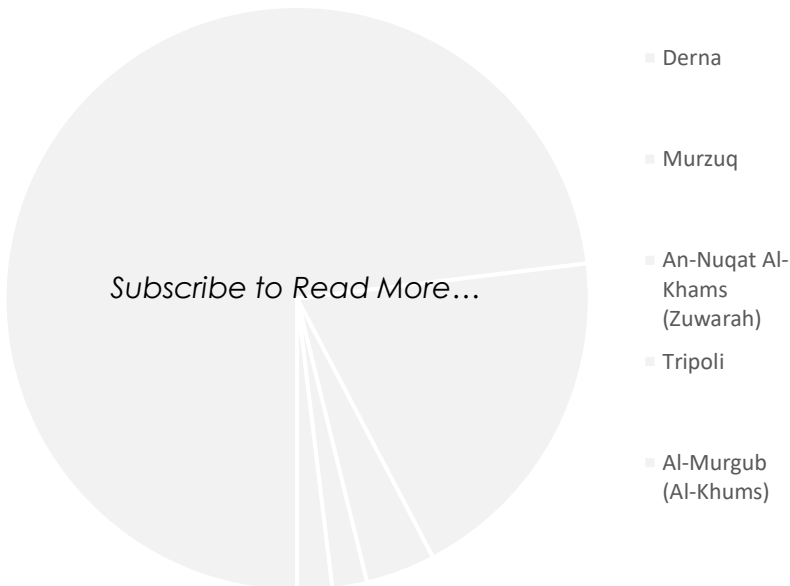
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



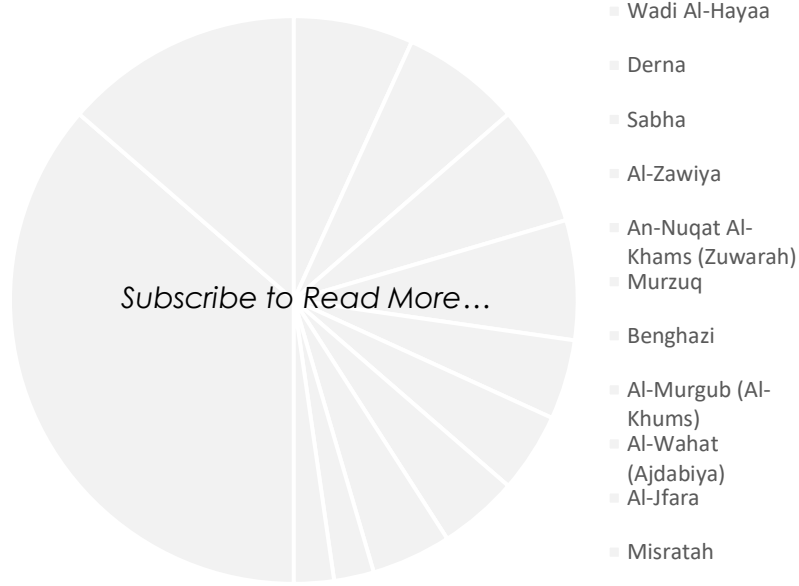
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



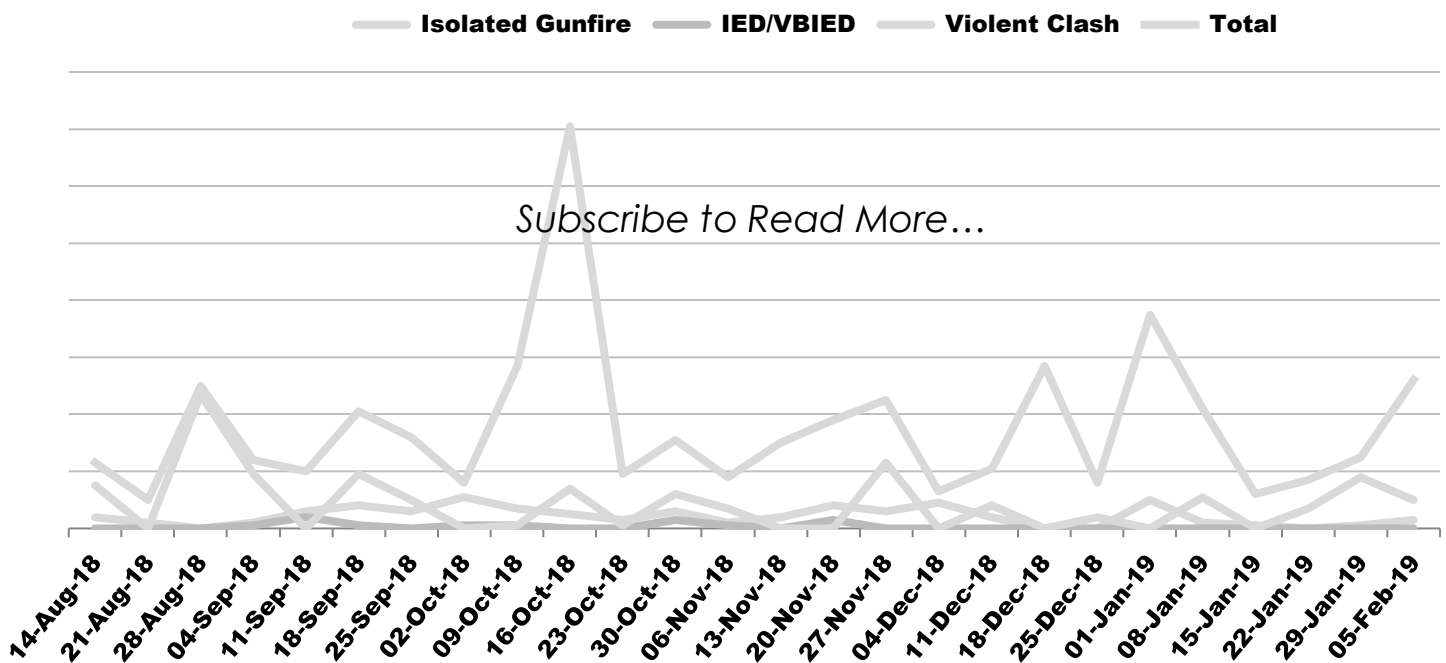
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



Data Analysis

WB recorded this week a total of 52 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 25 deaths reported last week and 17 the week before. This week WB recorded a sharp increase in nationwide fatalities due to 38 bodies found in Derna's old city, as a result of the clashes between the Libyan National Army (LNA) and militants. Additionally, violent clashes between the LNA & Chadian gangs near Umm Al-Aranib resulted in at least 10 fatalities. There was a surge in isolated gunfire incidents in the West. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 7 arrests, 7 cases of isolated gunfire, 5 protests, 5 airstrikes, 4 robberies, 3 separate reports of bodies found, 2 violent clashes and 2 kidnappings.

In Western Libya, WB recorded a total of 25 incidents, including 16 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. In Tripoli, the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) reportedly found an unidentified number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on the Tarasana Bridge in Tripoli's Souq Al Jumaa area at approximately 0000hrs on 12 Feb. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, reports suggest masked gunmen riding a Hyundai Verna vehicle carjacked a Toyota Aurion vehicle in Tripoli's Edraiby area in the morning on 11 Feb. Reports suggest a family affiliated with a Zintan militia carried out a failed robbery on Tripoli's Al-Waha Bank in Tripoli's Ghut Shaal area, with additional reports of the bank manager receiving death threats resulting in the bank's closure on 13 Feb and 14 Feb. Beyond, in the wider Western region, reports suggest a young man killed his uncle in a likely act of retaliation after the uncle killed the man's sister in Al-Fraikh area, in the western suburbs of Ajaylat city, in the evening on 12 Feb. The motive behind the incident remains unclear. Reports suggest skirmishes erupted between two local families in Ajaylat's Al-Jadida area on 12 Feb.

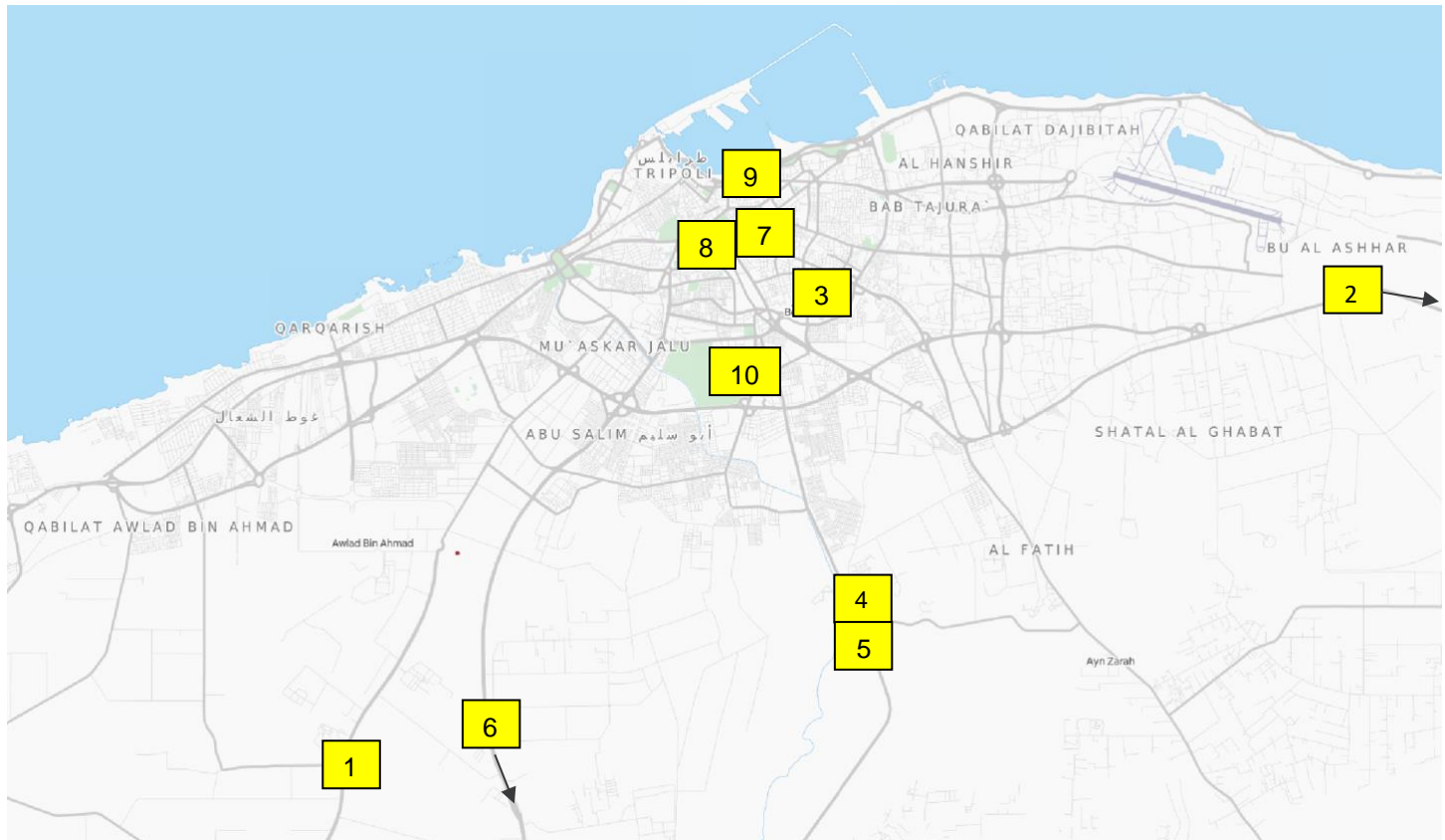
The week in Central Libya was marked by the arrest of 63 Nigerian migrants in Sirte, though not reflected in this week's Nationwide Security Analysis. Meanwhile, Sirte's Security and Protection Force raided the house of an Islamic State (IS) affiliate identified as Massoud Al-Werfalli in Sirte's Wadi Zamzam area on 16 Feb.

Turning to southern Libya, local reports suggest violent clashes erupted between the Libyan National Army's (LNA) Tariq Bin Zayid Battalion and criminal gangs affiliated with Chadian rebels resulting in at least 10 fatalities near Umm Al-Aranib on 14 Feb. Meanwhile, the LNA seized the Awbari power station after the 189th Infantry Battalion, which secures the station and was previously affiliated with the Government of National Accord (GNA), announced its support to the LNA on 13 Feb.

In Eastern Libya, security incidents decreased in Benghazi, whilst authorities continue to locate bodies across Derna.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

SDF & Misrata 301 movements in South; alleged terror threat dismissed



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (09 Feb) Hai Al-Andalus Municipality denies kidnapping of former mayor
2. (10 Feb) Sporadic gunfire & explosions in Tajoura; motive unclear
3. (10 Feb) Parked vehicles stolen in Ben Ashour & Salah Eddien
4. (11 Feb) Tank drives into vehicle with 3 passengers aboard; injuries
5. (12 Feb) SDF locates unidentified number of IEDs in Souq Al-Jumaa
6. (12 Feb) SDF convoy moving along Airport Rd & heading South
7. (12 Feb) Sahara Bank director arrested on embezzlement charges
8. (13 Feb) PG protest delayed salaries in front of PM office
9. (13 Feb) Alleged terror threat targeting Radisson Blu dismissed
10. (14 Feb) TPF issue statement rejecting Haftar & militarisation of state
11. (16 Feb) MMC hold meeting with military leaders in Rixos Hotel

SDF & Misrata 301 movements in South

Local reports of a Special Deterrence Force (SDF) military convoy moving along the Airport Road and heading South at approximately 1630hrs on 12 Feb. Meanwhile, the presence of the Misrata-affiliated 301 "Halbous" Brigade was reported in front of Tripoli's Al-Yarmouk Camp in Khella Al-Furjan area at approximately 1900hrs. Simultaneously, multiple trucks loaded with ammunition reported entering the Faculty of Civil Aviation of Misrata in Misrata city. These movements would closely follow unconfirmed reports of tensions between the SDF and Misrata factions, over the 301 Brigade's deployment to Al-Yarmouk Camp. WB sources confirmed a stable security environment along the road from Sog Al-Khmies Emsihel to Tripoli, passing through Espiaa and Qasr bin Ghashir, in the morning on 13 Feb.

Terror threat dismissed

Unconfirmed reports emerged over an alleged terror threat targeting Tripoli's Radisson Blu Hotel in the Zawiyat Al-Dahmani area in the afternoon 13 Feb. There was no further information available. WB sources reported a stable security environment between 1630hrs and 1700hrs on 13 Feb. Meanwhile, reports across

social media outlets suggest a meeting involving the Government of National Accord's (GNA) Minister of Labor was held in the hotel in the morning on 13 Feb. The meeting may have resulted in increased security presence surrounding the hotel, which could have led to the unconfirmed reports of a potential terror threat.

TPF reject militarisation of state

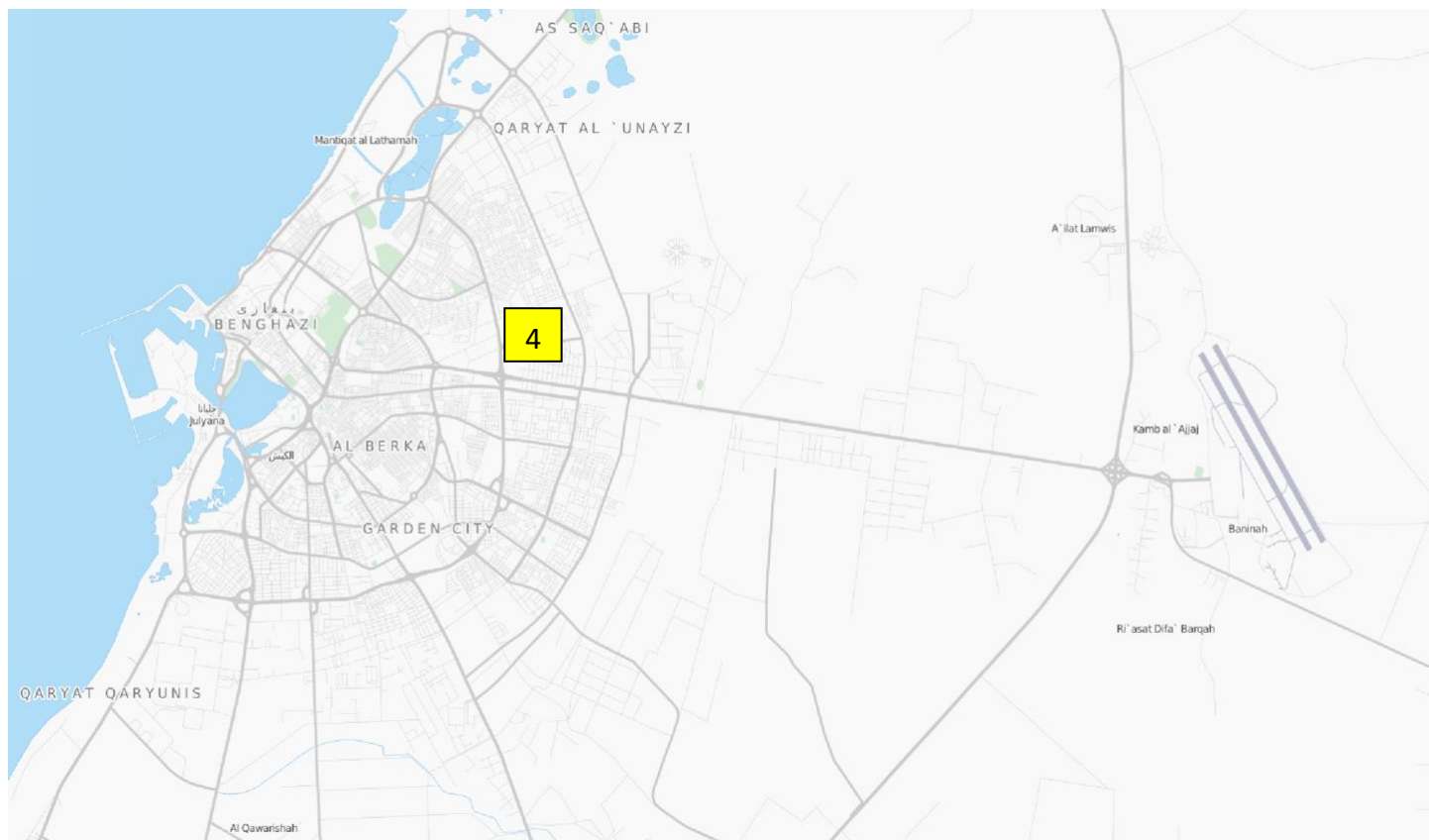
On 14 Feb, the Tripoli Protection Force (TPF) issued a statement in which it reaffirmed its rejection of the Libyan National Army (LNA) head, Khalifa Haftar, whilst it condemned the militarisation of the state, and the LNA's operations in the South. The statement also vowed to confront those who attempt to undermine Libya's stability. Beyond, the TPF expressed its ongoing support for holding elections. The TPF has previously included similar rhetoric in its statements. The statement would come amid ongoing rumors of a potential advance by Haftar's forces on Tripoli.

Arrest warrant against Sahara Bank director

Local reports suggest the General Attorney issued an arrest warrant against the general director of Tripoli's Sahara Bank on charges of embezzlement amounting to 100 million Libyan dinars (LYD). The bank's director was subsequently arrested at night on 12 Feb. Arrest warrants based on the misuse of public funds, remain common across Libya.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Increased security presence & continued crackdown on criminal networks



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (11 Feb) Police officers continue intensive deployment across city
2. (16 Feb) CID arrest largest criminal group involved in vehicle thefts
3. (Unknown) Benghazi's Rescue Dept. arrest human smuggler
4. (Unknown) GNA-Mol affiliates visit various security locations

Arrest campaigns

Reports suggest the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested the largest criminal group involved in vehicle thefts in Benghazi on 16 Feb. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, Benghazi's Rescue Department arrested a human smuggler who reportedly forces captives to wear veils in order to smuggle them in luggage bags. Authorities are reportedly still searching for remaining members of the smuggling network. The arrest comes as a result of the Benghazi's Rescue Department campaign targeting illegal migration across the city.

Intensive security deployment

Local reports from 11 Feb suggest police stations under Benghazi's Security Directorate continued to deploy their forces across Benghazi. The deployment comes as a result of a security plan for the city, and efforts to provide a safe environment for citizens and combat organized crime on the ground.

Western security officials visit

Local reports from 16 Feb suggest the Social Welfare Fund Management Committee head under the Government of National Accord's (GNA) Ministry of Interior, accompanied by several officers, visited Benghazi. The Western delegation reportedly visited the Benghazi Security Directorate, the Traffic and Licensing Department, and the police and metal factories belonging to the Benghazi Security Directorate. Additional reports suggest on the sidelines of the visit, a meeting was held at the police uniform factory in Benghazi in which the fund discussed cooperation with the directorate. There have been previous reports of increased cooperation between Western and Eastern security officials in the security sector despite each body operating under rival governments.

6. What's next

Fears of LNA intervention will continue to grow in West

POLITICAL FORECAST

While on the ground the GNA has had little success in containing the LNA and its military gains, GNA PM Fayeze Sarraj attended the Munich Security Conference, reinforcing his position as PM of the internationally-recognized government. Ghassan Salame stated the National Conference will take place by end of March, while elections are a “true possibility” by year end. Salame would appear to be optimistic only about the feasibility of elections under current conditions, though there are multiple challenges ahead, including reported uncertainty over his UNSMIL tenure in 2019. The African Union (AU) also set another timeline for Libya; a peace conference in the first half of Jul 2019 and presidential and legislative elections in Oct 2019. Meanwhile, Sarraj’s cabinet reshuffles continue to highlight “quick-fix” measures by the GNA to ensure survival. On 14 Feb, Sarraj appointed Mohammed Al-Sharif from Waddan as the Chief of General Staff, subsequently replacing Abdulrahman Al-Taweel. Analysts suggest Al-Taweel was likely dismissed over his recent description of LNA forces in the South as “forces of the Libyan Army” and other alleged pro-LNA comments. Sharara continues to be politicized, and the House of Representatives (HoR) head Aguila Saleh, called on the NOC chairman, Mustafa Sanalla, to lift force majeure at the field. Reports suggest Saleh called on Sanalla to communicate with the LNA head, Khalifa Haftar, to reopen the field.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

A *Stratfor* snapshot report analyses the implications of Haftar’s southern offensive. “Now, however, the balance of power might be shifting, especially as Hifter’s forces have just captured the Sharara oil field in the country’s southwest, which accounts for a full quarter of Libya’s output.” “By capturing Sharara, which accounts for roughly 25 percent of Libya’s oil output, Hifter has increased his control over the country’s upstream oil industry and consolidated his position as a figure central to the North African nation’s future. The biggest question is what Hifter plans to do next. After he went through a rocky period with the Tripoli-based NOC — stemming in part from a demand from his allies that he back a rival National Oil Corp. in the east — Hifter now enjoys a much better relationship with the Tripoli-based NOC, while he’s also made some new allies with Tuareg and other groups in Fezzan during his push toward Sharara. The LNA’s spokesman has said the force has no intentions of pushing toward the region’s other major oil field, El Feel, which is under the control of other militias, but other clouds could be looming on Hifter’s horizon.” The report argues “if Hifter moves northward from Sharara toward Tripoli, the GNA could lean on its appointed bank governor to cease funding for a powerful adversary that increasingly threatens its own position.” Hifter “could block upstream production in an effort to force the GNA to recognize the eastern-backed government’s choice for the Central Bank of Libya as part of any unity negotiations.”

SECURITY FORECAST

In Tripoli, while recent tensions have been overshadowed by Revolution celebrations, opposition to Sarraj and Bashagha is expected to grow, including among Tripoli Protection Force (TPF) militias. It remains unclear how the desire to form a large “western” bloc to combat foreign interventions will materialize in the capital city. Tensions between LNA sympathizers and opponents in Zawiyah and Khoms could result in small-scale disputes. Tensions in Misrata are possible, especially given reported attempts by pro-LIFG and hardline elements affiliated with controversial Mufti Sadiq Gharyani to intimidate perceived opponents in the city. Meanwhile, highlighting the prevailing environment of distrust in the West, the Media Office of the Western Military Region led by Osama Juwaili stated that all military units in the Western region are under its command, and the GNA by extension, with the exception of Sabratah. Separately, an attack by the Islamic State (IS) group against LNA units in the South and/or GNA positions in the West remains possible. In the South, while the LNA’s airpower is expected to provide significant leverage in the offensive towards Umm Aranib and Murzuq, reports indicate a documented presence of militants hostile to the LNA, which would make a ground offensive more challenging and raises the possibility of sporadic attacks against LNA units. Attacks in the East by militants exploiting the security vacuum, including in Benghazi, are also possible.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In a *Brookings* report entitled ‘Empowered decentralization: a city-based strategy for rebuilding Libya’, authors propose a way forward to solve Libya’s security and political crisis; a “city-based” economic and political model. “Because efforts to build a Libyan national security force have failed and remain unpromising in the near term at least, a more viable approach may be to encourage militias to respect certain rules and standards.” On the political front, the authors argue “National elections, while ultimately essential, are not equivalent to the establishment of democracy, in Libya or anywhere else. Just as central are a system of checks and balances, functioning courts, protection of individual rights, guarantees of free speech, and a free and credible media. Without these elements, hasty national elections, rather than improving governance or political legitimacy in Libya, are more likely to bolster the influence of current and often nefarious actors.” “As part of a new initiative, the United States should restore an on-the-ground diplomatic and development presence in Libya. The U.N. mission there is helping establish some hopeful trends and merits strong American support. As the major power that is least mistrusted by Libyans, the United States can also try to deconflict the roles of a half dozen or so external players that have engaged in proxy competition within Libya.”

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