



1. The Big Picture

Tentative GNA/LNA detente to escalate tensions in West

This week was marked by early signs of de-escalation in East-West tensions, highlighted by a United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)-brokered meeting between the head of the Libyan National Army (LNA), Khalifa Haftar, and Government of National Accord (GNA) PM Fayeaz Sarraj in the UAE, where they agreed on the “necessity of ending the state of transition in Libya through general elections and on ways to safeguard stability & unify institutions”.

However, while the meeting would theoretically stand as a step forward in ending Libya’s political crisis, its outcomes remain unclear and there is little evidence on the ground to substantiate claims by some media reports referring to a conclusive “agreement”. In fact, the prospect of a Sarraj/Haftar rapprochement is already prompting factions across the West to unite and rally. Opposition to the GNA’s cooperation with the LNA is growing, championed by hardliners affiliated with the Misrata Military Council (MMC), and supporters of controversial Mufti Sadiq Gharyani and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). Tensions between pro/anti LNA groups could in turn escalate into clashes on the outskirts of Tripoli, including areas such as Tarhunah and/or Garabolli, or in the strategic western towns of Zawiyah and Gharyan, where reports suggest a senior military commander has pledged allegiance to the LNA.

Some analysts suggest the meeting has helped cement Haftar’s position, after recent gains made in the South, and control of Sharara specifically, while falling short of providing concrete guarantees that a military solution will not be pursued by the LNA in the West in the short to medium term. The meeting comes at a critical time as the GNA’s structural weakness continues to grow in its home base of Tripoli, while Haftar is now effectively controlling almost all of Libya’s oil fields and territory.

On the oil & gas front, before meeting Haftar, Sarraj held talks with National Oil Corporation (NOC) Chairman Mustafa Sanallah in the UAE. A partial agreement to lift force majeure at Sharara was reached. The NOC lifted force majeure on 04 March after receiving assurances that site security has been restored. Production is expected to resume on 05 March. Further, in a joint statement, the US, UK, Italy, and France reiterated Libyan resources must remain under the “sole oversight” of the GNA. The statement

would cast doubt on the LNA’s ability to shut production to force the GNA to make political concessions and/or prevent oil & gas revenues from continuing to flow via the Tripoli-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL).

In the West, tensions are high, marked by opposition to Sarraj and distrust among militias. The former GNA Chief of Staff, Abdulrahman Al-Taweel, rejected Sarraj’s recent decision to dismiss him, stating it was not a unanimous decision by the Presidential Council’s (PC) nine members. Al-Taweel refused to hand over his position unless a decision is unanimously adopted by the PC. Al-Taweel stated that he would accept to meet with the LNA head, Khalifa Haftar, to discuss the unification of the military institution. In a separate development, reports suggest a meeting was held between the GNA’s Western Military Region commander, Osama Juwaili, the GNA’s Tripoli Military Region commander, Abdulbasset Marwan, Zintan’s Special Operations Forces (SOF) head, Emad Trabelsi, and leaders of the Special Deterrence Force (SDF), Nawasi, and Ghneiwa militias, in Tripoli’s Mitiga International Airport (MJI) at approximately 1730hrs on 03 Mar. According to reports, the attendees agreed to unify their ranks against the LNA with no further information available.

Looking ahead, it remains unclear how tensions will materialize, and how the Tripoli Protection Force (TPF), which has been gradually opposing Sarraj, will seek to fill the political vacuum. Despite evidence thus far of a strong anti-LNA stance and ambitions to form a “united” front, there is a long-term possibility some Tripoli militias will consider all options, including cooperation with the LNA, given their tendency to be pragmatic and opportunistic. Above all, these tensions will provide a fertile breeding ground for the Islamic State (IS) group to carry out attacks across the West.

KEY POINTS

- Sarraj/Haftar agreement unclear
- Growing anti-Sarraj sentiment
- Sharara force majeure lifted



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2. National Security Map

NOC lifts force majeure at Sharara; LNA handover of Al Feel to eastern-based PFG

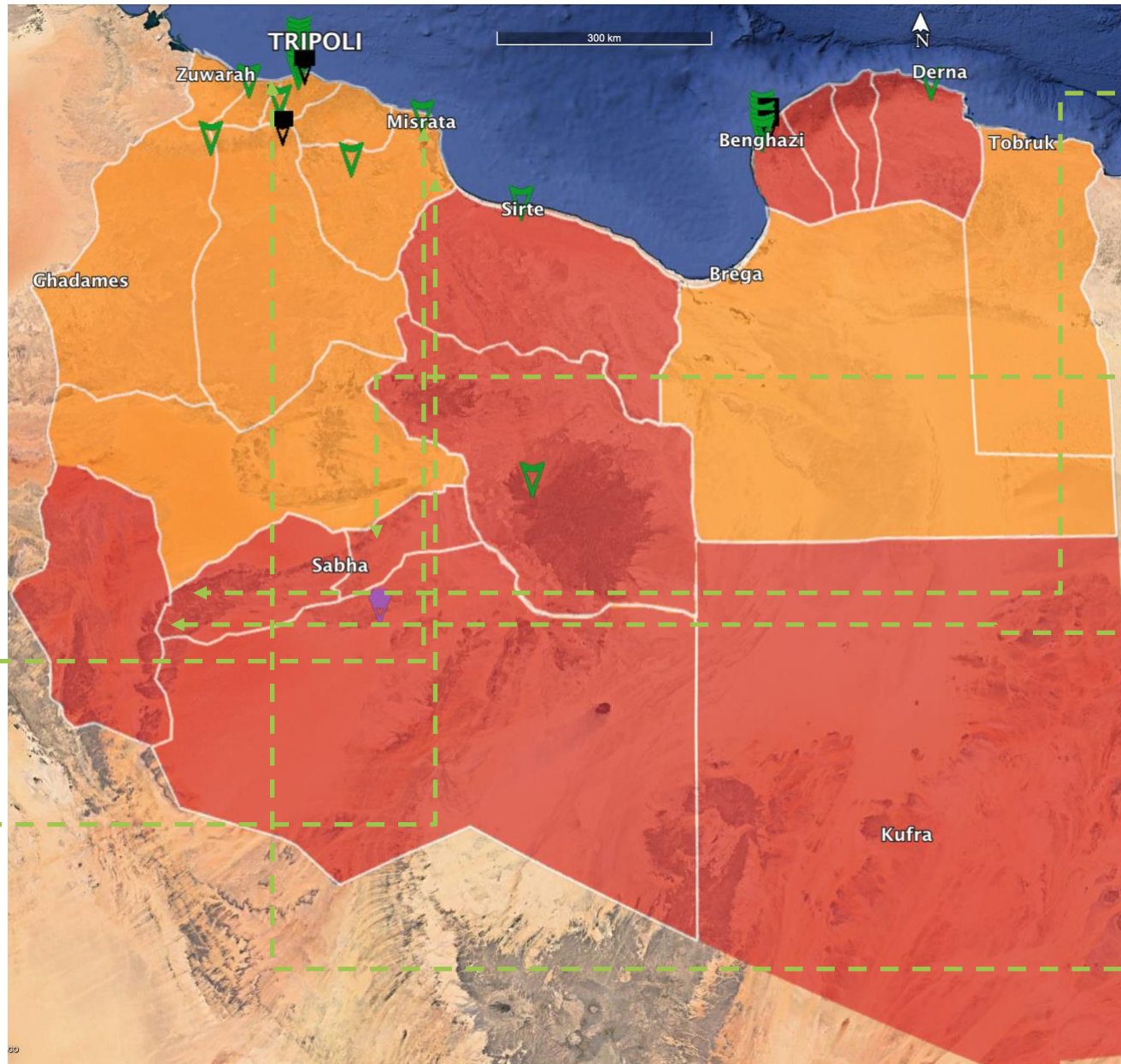
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



Local reports suggest the Public Prosecutor, Nuri Al-Ghali, issued an arrest warrant for 27 members of the “Anger of Fezzan Movement” for their role in the closure of Sharara Oil Field. According to Al-Ghali, the arrest warrant came after investigation findings submitted by the National Oil Corporation (NOC), and a letter by the 30th Infantry Battalion commander, confirming the members’ entry into the field and disrupting production.

LNA Air Force (LAF) commander Major General Mohammed Manfour confirmed orders by the LNA head, Khalifa Haftar, to grant permission to the United Nations (UN)-chartered aircraft to repatriate Nigerian illegal migrants to their home country from the Tamanhint

On 28 Feb, the LNA announced handover of Al-Feel oil field to the Eastern Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) headed by commander Najji Al-Maghrabi.

According to reports, a local militia leader from Al-Zawiya, known as “Al-Qasab”, who controls and secures the Oil Refining Company, declared his support for the LNA and stated he would handover the refinery to LNA forces should the army enter the city. There is no further information available, though the development would highlight the readiness of some militia leaders in key Western cities to cooperate with the LNA amid ongoing rumors of a potential mobilization North , towards the

Misratan security forces arrested a prominent Al-Qaeda (AQ) leader identified as Ayman Abu Amoud, behind the kidnapping of the former Jordanian Ambassador to Libya, Fawaz Al-Aitan, in 2014. Abu Amoud is wanted by the Attorney General for his involvement in multiple criminal cases, including the manufacturing of explosive belts and a number of

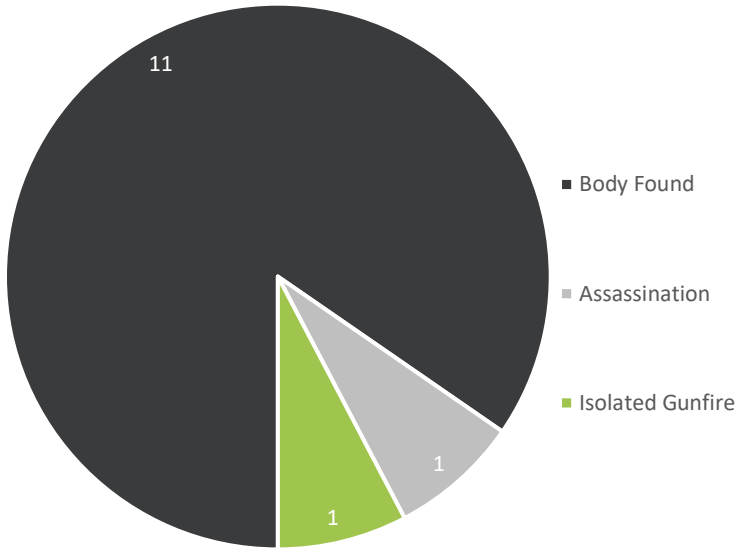
The LNA spokesperson, Ahmed Al-Mesmari, stated Al-Qaeda (AQ)-affiliated groups from Misrata mobilized units 130 kms East of the city on 26 Feb, whilst noting that the LNA’s Air Force (LAF) would target their positions. There is no further information available.

Reports of a military aircraft flying over Western cities, including Aljmail, Al Ajaylat, Sabratah, Surman and Al-Zintan at approximately 1800hrs on 28 Feb. There is no further information available.

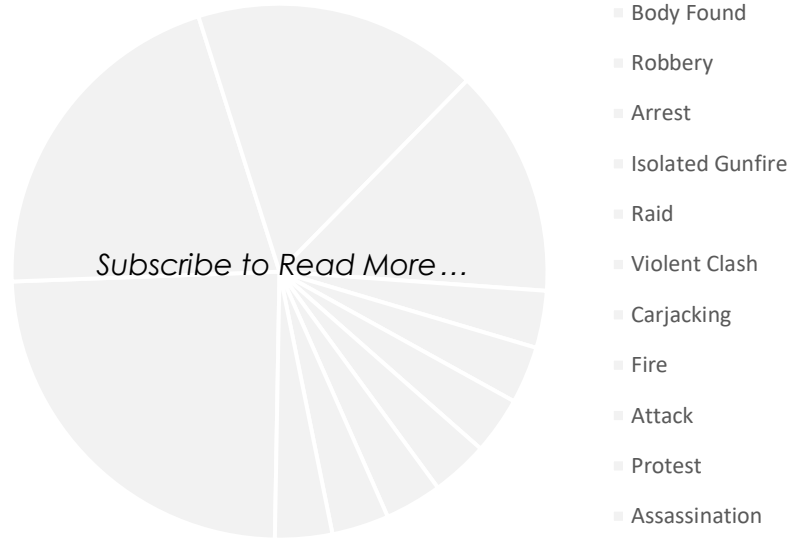
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Overall fatalities down as clashes subside in South; surge in Benghazi fatalities

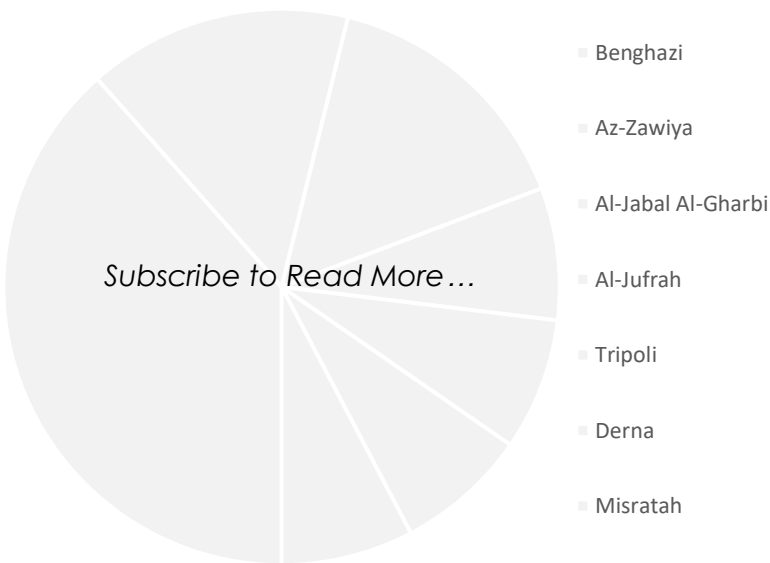
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



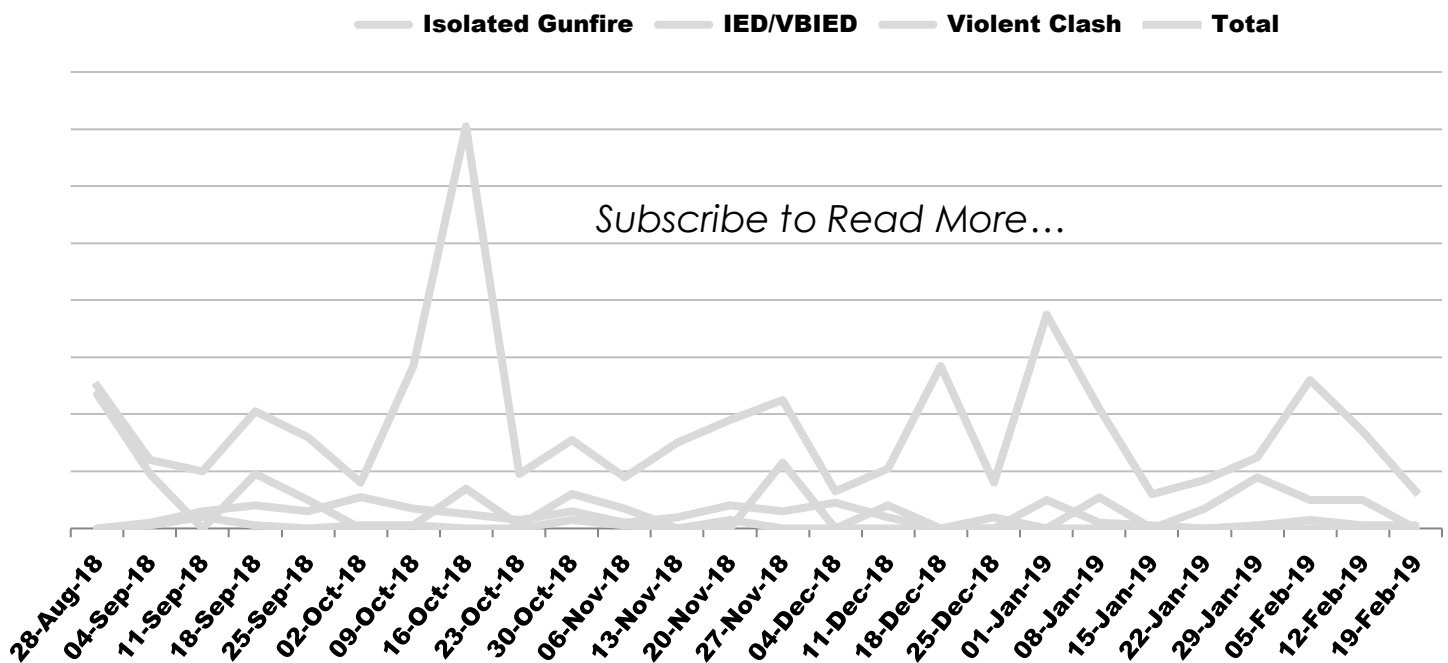
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



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 13 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 34 deaths reported last week and 52 the week before. Unlike past reports, and since the launch of the Libyan National Army's (LNA) Southern military campaign in Jan, this week WB has recorded a sharp decrease in security incidents in the South. This is likely due to the LNA seizing additional Southern cities/towns with little to no resistance. However, there was a slight increase in fatalities recorded in Benghazi. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 7 separate reports of bodies found, 6 robberies, 5 arrests, 4 cases of isolated gunfire, 3 raids, 1 violent clash, 1 protest and 1 assassination.

In Western Libya, WB recorded a total of 16 incidents, including 11 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. In Tripoli, local reports suggest unidentified assailant(s) sabotaged and robbed the station PHB82 belonging to the telecommunications company Al-Madar Al-Jadeed, resulting in halted operations, in Tripoli's Qasr Bin Ghashir area. On its official Facebook page, the company stated that the new site of its station was newly-equipped and was awaiting the transfer of radio equipment from the old site. In a separate incident, reports suggest a parked 2013 grey Hyundai Elantra was stolen in front of a house in Tripoli's Souq Al Jumaa area in the morning on 28 Feb. In the wider Western region, reports suggest the bodies of two brothers were found dumped on the street with signs of torture in Sabratah at night on 27 Feb. The two brothers were reportedly kidnapped on 25 Feb.

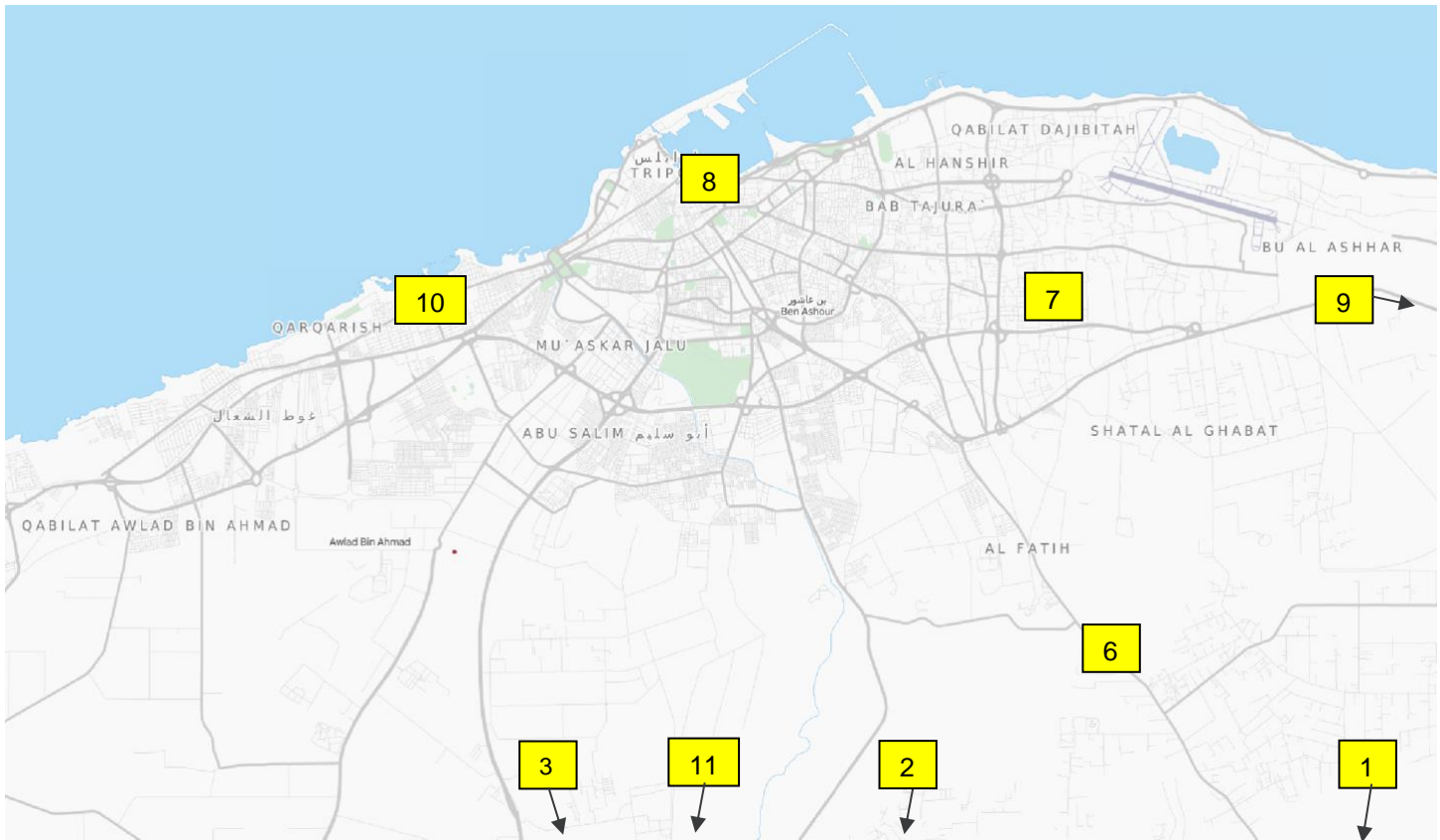
This week in Central Libya was marked local reports suggesting military forces arrested an Islamic State (IS) militant, identified as Ibrahim Al-Qaziri, in his family residence in Sirte's first residential neighborhood between 25 Feb and 27 Feb. According to reports, Al-Qaziri led the IS radio station "Al-Tawhid" during his time in Sirte between 2015 and 2016.

Turning to Southern Libya, local reports from 27 Feb suggest the Libyan National Army (LNA) found three unidentified bodies 10kms West of Awbari. Other reports suggest the bodies belong to the group behind an attack targeting the LNA's 177th Battalion in early Feb. Meanwhile, in contrast to last week, WB did not record LNA airstrikes targeting rival groups in the Southern region. Additionally, WB recorded one violent clash in the South, highlighting a sharp decrease in contrast to previous weeks.

In Eastern Libya, reports suggest Benghazi's Rescue Department arrested a group of Egyptian gunmen involved in the killing of four Libyan men in Benghazi. Reports suggest the gunmen threw the bodies in the sewage.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Bashagha states TIP Security Directorate & its agencies to secure airport



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (24 Feb) Families evacuated due to heavy flooding in Wadi Al-Rabei
2. (24 Feb) Body of Tajoura police officer found with signs of torture
3. (25 Feb) Mol: TIP handover to Security Directorate & agencies
4. (25 Feb) Tripoli & central security directors announce joint security plan
5. (26 Feb) Nine-hour power cuts; high load demands due to cold weather
6. (27 Feb) Sporadic gunfire in Ain Zara; motive unclear
7. (27 Feb) Military aircraft flying over Souq Al-Jumaa
8. (27 Feb) Vehicle stolen from Al-Kabeer Hotel parking lot
9. (27 Feb) Tajoura locals dissatisfied due to Al-Daman seizing hospital land
10. (01 Mar) Pro-LNA demonstration; shots fired to disperse gathering
11. (01 Mar) Al-Madar Al-Jadeed station halts operations due to sabotage acts

Tensions over land; police officer killed

Whispering Bell sources reported local resentment and anger in Tajoura's Beer Osta Milad area after Al-Daman Battalion seized a land belonging to the Hospital of Dermatology in the area. Claims over land ownership rights and subsequent tensions between militias and/or locals remain common across Libyan cities. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, reports suggest a Tajoura police officer was found killed in Tripoli's Bier Al-Toota area in the evening on 24 Feb. Initial reports indicate the man's body was found with signs of torture.

Pro-LNA demonstration

Reports suggest a small pro-Libyan National Army (LNA) demonstration took place in the parking lot of the People's Hall in Tripoli's Hai Al-Andalus at approximately 1700hrs on 01 Mar. Pictures/videos circulated across social media outlets of the demonstrators chanting slogans including "Yes to the police and army" in support of Haftar, while raising pictures of Haftar and key eastern military officials. In response to the demonstration, an armed group dressed in civilian clothing, fired sporadic shots into the air in an effort to disperse the demonstrators. Initial reports indicate the armed group is affiliated with Zintan militias. The incident would confirm the presence of

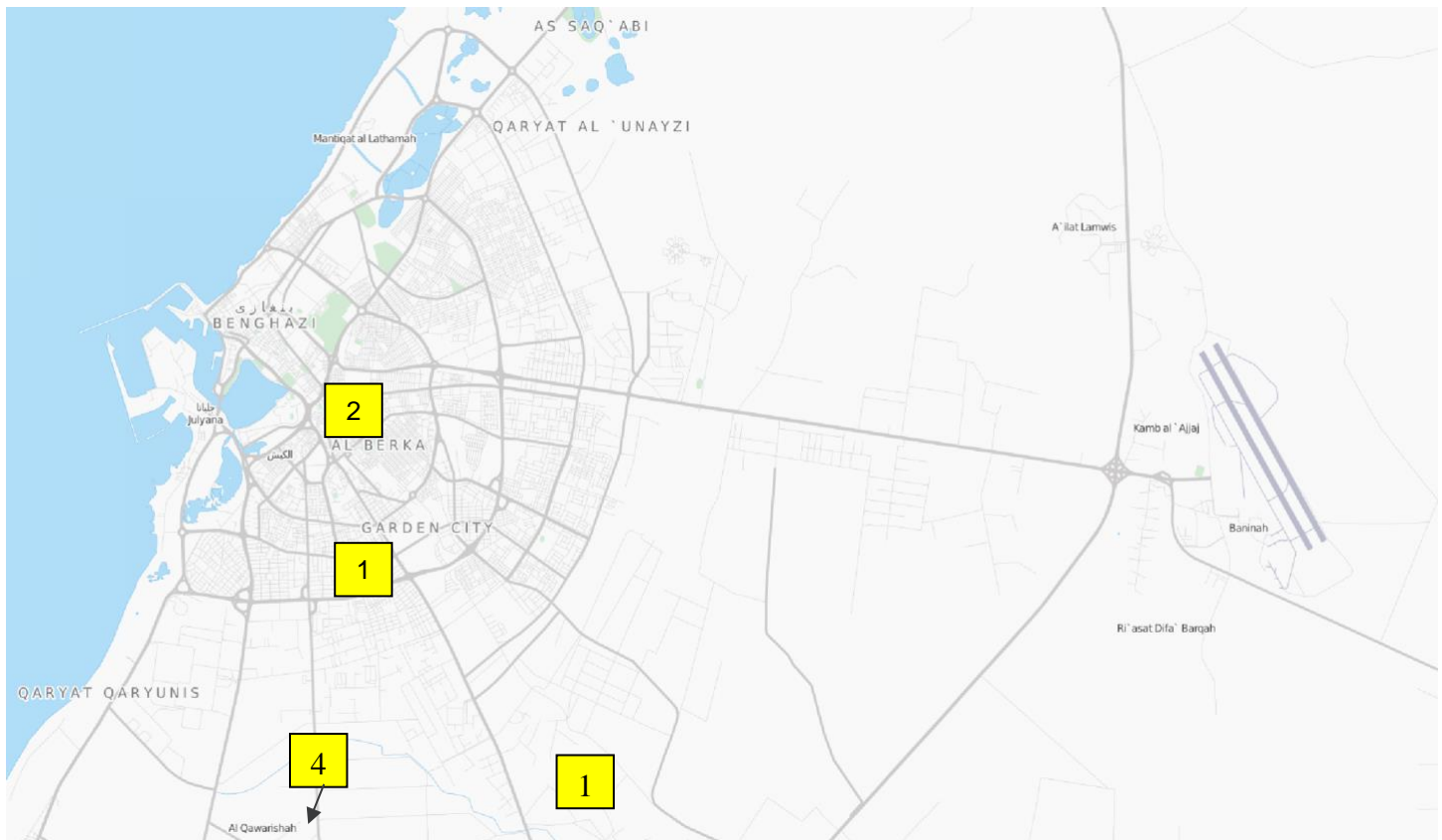
pro-LNA factions in the capital city, with the potential for similar small-scale pro-LNA demonstrations in the short to medium term.

TIP handover; new joint security plan for Tripoli

On 25 Feb, the Government of National Accord's (GNA) Minister of Interior, Fathi Bashagha, held a press conference in Tripoli's International Airport (TIP), where he announced that TIP's Security Directorate and its security agencies have been tasked with securing the airport. Bashagha, accompanied by the GNA's Minister of Transport, Milad Matoug and Italy's Ambassador to Libya, Giuseppe Buccino, carried out an inspection of the latest maintenance works by the Italian consortium in charge. Bashagha stated that TIP's maintenance will be followed by similar works at all airports and entry points across Libya. In Jan, militia clashes in Tripoli's South and surrounding TIP areas halted the maintenance works. The development would suggest the MoI reverted to its initial decision of 2018 to assign the Security Directorate, subsequently reversing the decision to assign Al-Kaniat militia of Tarhuna to secure TIP. The latest unconfirmed reports suggest the Ghneiwa militia controls TIP. Tensions over the control of TIP remain probable. In a separate incident, Tripoli's Security Director, Salem Qraymida, along with the Central Security Director, Mohamed Fathallah, announced a joint security plan in Tripoli, which will bring together multiple security, military and legal departments across Tripoli.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Arrest campaigns targeting criminal networks continue across Benghazi



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (24 Feb) CID capture largest criminal network
2. (24 Feb) Indiscriminate gunfire injures man in Ruwaisat
3. (26-28 Feb) Tunisian FM investigates missing journalists
4. (02 Mar) Cooking gas cylinder explodes; family members injured
5. (02 Mar) Gang involved in armed robberies arrested

Arrest campaigns

On 24 Feb, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) dismantled the largest criminal network involved in armed robberies targeting locals and traders in Benghazi's Hawari area and Al-Nefaq Street. According to the CID's information Office, the operation came after two consecutive months of investigations and information collection. The criminal network would stop locals on the roads and rob their cash, in addition to monitoring and subsequently targeting traders in the Venice Market area. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, Benghazi's Security Department announced the arrest of a gang involved in armed robberies targeting several shops across the city on 02 Mar. Security forces reportedly seized pistols, grenades and self-defense tools from the gang.

Indiscriminate gunfire

Reports suggest indiscriminate gunfire resulted in the injury of a 30-year-old man near the Qortoba School in Benghazi's Ruwaisat area on 24 Feb.

Cooking gas cylinder explosion

Local reports suggest a cooking gas

cylinder exploded resulting in the death of 50-year-old man identified as Mufta Al-Maghrabi, and the injury of his wife and five daughters in Benghazi's Al-Fa'akat area on 02 Mar. The wife stated that the explosion caused the wall of the house to collapse due to the force of the blast.

Tunisian FM investigate missing journalists

Local reports suggest the Tunisian Foreign Ministry sent a local technical team to Benghazi to reveal the fate of the missing Tunisian journalists, Sufian Chourabi and Nadhir Ktari, between 26 Feb and 28 Feb. The Tunisian Foreign Ministry Media Office stated that the technical team visited Benghazi to collect genetic samples that could be analyzed. The ministry noted that the visit comes within the framework of the continuous efforts exerted by the Tunisian authorities in cooperation with their Libyan counterparts to ascertain all information regarding the missing journalists. In May 2015, Libyan officials announced the two journalists - missing since Sep 2014 - had been killed by Islamic State (IS) militants.

6. What's next

Alliances to shift in Tripoli & West; efforts to oust GNA's Sarraj

POLITICAL FORECAST

The absence of a clear election roadmap and uncertainty over the National Conference continue to define the domestic political scene. While the Serraj-Haftar meeting has been described as a positive development in implementing the necessary steps to hold elections, it remains unclear if both sides will indeed set their differences aside. Ghassan Salame will find it increasingly difficult to convince local factions in the West that the National Conference will alleviate concerns over the perceived threat posed by the "militarization of the state" and recent LNA gains in the South. Meanwhile, six Libyan political parties, including the Federal Assembly, the Middle Youth Stream, the National Movement Yes Libya, the Change Party, the National Forces Alliance Party, and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) Justice and Construction Party, signed a "charter of honour for the Libyan national political work" on 26 Feb. The ramifications of the charter of honour remain unclear, though the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood party will certainly undermine credibility given the rising anti-Islamist trend across the West. On 27 Feb, the Tripoli-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL) announced it will resume its disbursement of annual foreign currency family allowances set at 500 US dollars effective from 03 Mar. The CBL stated the delay was due to alleged fraud in national ID numbers in the Civil Registry Authority (CRA) database.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

Writing for *The Independent*, Middle East correspondent Bel Trew discusses implications of the recent Sarraj-Haftar meeting. Trew writes "But Haftar's southern offensive on the strategic area of Murzuq, some 900km south of Tripoli, is an important one that should not be ignored. It has seen forces loyal to the Gaddafi-era general secure control of the country's last remaining oilfields, which are, coincidentally, the biggest ones. Last year, after back and forth battles with controversial militia commander Ibrahim Jadhran, gen Haftar swept the oil crescent in the east, which stretches from the coastal facilities of Ras Lanuf down to Waha. With the recent acquisition of the Sharara and al-Feel oilfields in the south, which have a total production capacity of around 430,000 barrels a day or close to half of Libya's current output, gen Haftar holds all of Libya's onshore oil sector in his hands. Oil exports are still managed by the Tripoli-based National Oil Company, which is loyal to the toothless UN-backed government, but gen Haftar and his men can effectively turn on – or off – the taps. In short, one man now has the power to sever the country's economic artery. It comes at a crucial and tricky time. Last week gen Haftar and the country's recognised prime minister Fayez al-Sarraj met in Abu Dhabi for peace talks, during which they agreed to hold elections." She further argues "But with Haftar holding the power to the purse strings, how much can that be true? How can a peace deal be brokered in Libya and a civilian democratic structure hold power if a powerful and divisive military commander has so much sway? The show of joint leadership was little more than just that: a show."

SECURITY FORECAST

In Tripoli, allegiances have the potential to shift, especially after reports of a meeting to form a united front against the LNA. Sources reported a prominent militia in Tripoli has reverted to extortion and other illicit activity, underlining a potential "budget squeeze" and loss of confidence in the GNA MoI security arrangements led by minister Fathi Bashagha. In the Western region, tensions are at their highest after threats by Misrata Military Council (MMC) members to enter Tripoli should Sarraj cooperate with Haftar. The week was also marked by unconfirmed reports of an imminent escalation between armed groups across North-West Libya, including in Gharyan, where tensions are high between pro/anti LNA groups. The unconfirmed reports suggest at least three brigades in Gharyan have pledged allegiance to the LNA while threatening to take action against anti-LNA "gangs", accusing them of arbitrarily targeting pro-LNA elements in the city. In a separate development, former Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council (BRSC) commander Ziad Belaam rejected Haftar's offensive in the South, while calling on western cities of Gharyan and Zawiyah to use force to prevent Haftar and the LNA from "encircling" Tripoli. In the central areas, there is a threat of tensions and a direct confrontation with LNA units in the Jabal Al-Gharbi national district. The LNA is expected to advance southwards to Chad's borders; a development corroborated by Chadian authorities' closure of borders with Libya.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

Matthew Reisener, a program associate at the *Center for the National Interest*, a Washington think tank, reported comments made by Al-Meshri, head of the High Council of State (HCS) during his recent visit to the US. "Al-Meshri expressed significant optimism about Libya's future despite acknowledging the large structural challenges facing his country. The top priority, according to Al-Meshri, is the creation of a single, unified government which operates with the consent of the Libyan people under the auspices of a democratic constitution. Al-Meshri stated that the greatest trial currently facing Libya is not the division of authority between national and local government or the challenge of equitably dividing Libya's abundant natural resources, but rather the competition between two federal entities for control over the central government. Al-Meshri spoke of the difficulties resulting from the break between the United Nations-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) and Libya's House of Representatives (HOR), a legislative body seated in the city of Tobruk that rejects Tripoli's authority to govern the divided country." "Al-Meshri discussed the persistent presence of terror groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda in the south of Libya, the increase of uncontrolled migration and human trafficking, and the proliferation of weapons throughout the country. Libya, a country of roughly 7 million people, has more than 23 million weapons in circulation. Only by creating a strong, unified Libyan army under the control of a single popularly elected and internationally recognized central government can Libya truly address the nation's ongoing security vacuum."

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