



# 1. The Big Picture

## Escalation appears likely after Berlin fails to establish permanent ceasefire

This week's developments paint a bleak picture of the road ahead in Libya. The Libyan National Army's (LNA) Khalifa Haftar left Moscow without signing a ceasefire agreement brokered by Turkey and Russia, whilst the Berlin Conference proceeded with no major breakthrough. Last but not least, production was shut across key terminals and ports.

The long-anticipated Berlin Conference concluded on 19 Jan but fell short of achieving a major breakthrough in the Libyan crisis. In a final communique, participants pledged to uphold the truce and arms embargo, and return to the political process. Despite media reports Berlin was a success, the Conference passes the buck to Libyan participants, specifically Khalifa Haftar's acceptance of a ceasefire agreement, which is now fundamental to the success of Berlin.

First, the Berlin Conference failed to produce a permanent ceasefire on the ground. In the absence of a permanent ceasefire, none of the monitoring mechanisms or sanctions agreed upon in Berlin can be implemented. This is because the majority of the clauses in the text of the communique fall within the framework of a ceasefire. Without a permanent ceasefire, the Berlin communique will continue to be a mere pledge distanced from the reality on the ground. The UN, by way of example, is currently unable to enforce or monitor the truce because there is no permanent ceasefire on the ground. Similarly, sanctions cannot be imposed on a party for violating the ceasefire if there is no permanent ceasefire.

Berlin's success now hinges on the LNA's acceptance of a ceasefire. Haftar is expected to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, but it remains to be seen whether the LNA commander will sign the Turkey-Russia ceasefire agreement. Haftar reportedly left abruptly and before the final Conference statement by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Analysts are of the view the Berlin Conference's limited outcomes are reflective of the lack of engagement from EU countries. Moscow will now be able to take the credit for solving the Libyan crisis if it convinces Haftar to sign its ceasefire agreement.

Meanwhile, the final Berlin communique still requires unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Realistically, it seems the Berlin Conference has just set the threshold for the Libyan conflict with a commitment from foreign parties not to engage in further escalation. There is no indication that fighting at its current levels will stop in the medium term. In the absence of a permanent ceasefire, the Berlin communique provides ample room for all foreign parties to continue pursuing their interests in Libya. The Egyptian-Greek-Cypriot alliance will continue to lobby against Turkey's maritime and security deals and seek to curtail Ankara's support for the GNA.

But Berlin's main shortfall is the lack of a timeline and absence of a deadline to implement the peace process. A ceasefire could be established, but perhaps only in the aftermath of a major escalation by Haftar's forces. Ultimately, the Berlin Conference has further strengthened Haftar's position and that of his foreign backers.

Separately, tensions moved to the oil and gas sector with the closure of key terminals and pipelines, highlighting the limited prospects for a resolution in the medium term. This time, however, the closure was orchestrated by eastern tribesmen and other civil society figures. The move was justified on the basis of recent reporting that Government of National Accord (GNA) state coffers are being used to finance Syrian mercenaries. It was initially unclear whether the LNA and eastern-based interim government would allow the shutdown, but LNA spokesperson Ahmed Al-Mismary later clarified the general command supports the action. Al-Mismary stated the closure is a result of popular demands and the LNA will not interfere in what the Libyan people want.

The development corroborates WB's assessment in May 2019 that an indirect disruption is likely in the East. WB assessed that a disruption by an eastern-based civilian movement, especially a peaceful protest, could be used as a bargaining chip to achieve the long-coveted goal of controlling the eastern-Central Bank of Libya (CBL) and oil revenues. An indirect disruption enables the LNA to claim plausible deniability. Looking ahead, the closure is gradually gaining the support of other tribal elements in the East and pro-LNA elements in the West.

Whilst past disruptions failed to gain momentum and exacerbated East-West divisions, the latest closure seems to be centered around support for the LNA and rejection of foreign interference, making it more significant given the GNA's weakening posture in the West. Multiple pro-LNA accounts are now placing greater emphasis on terrorist financing with allegations implicating the GNA and Tripoli-based NOC. This highlights LNA and eastern-based interim government intent to follow through on plans to control oil revenues.

The LNA would only allow production to resume under certain conditions, including the cancellation of the Turkey-GNA deals and possibly the recognition of the Benghazi-based NOC. The international community's stance towards Haftar has gradually evolved since the offensive on Tripoli on 04 April 2019, with many UNSC members recognizing the LNA's gains, and by extension, the GNA's weaknesses. It is unclear, however, if the United States would accept a potential LNA attempt to export oil independently of the Tripoli-NOC.

### KEY POINTS

- Berlin Conference hinges on permanent ceasefire
- Haftar comes out stronger from Berlin Conference
- Large losses due to closure of terminals & fields



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## 2. National Security Map

### NOC declares force majeure on exports from key oilfields & terminals

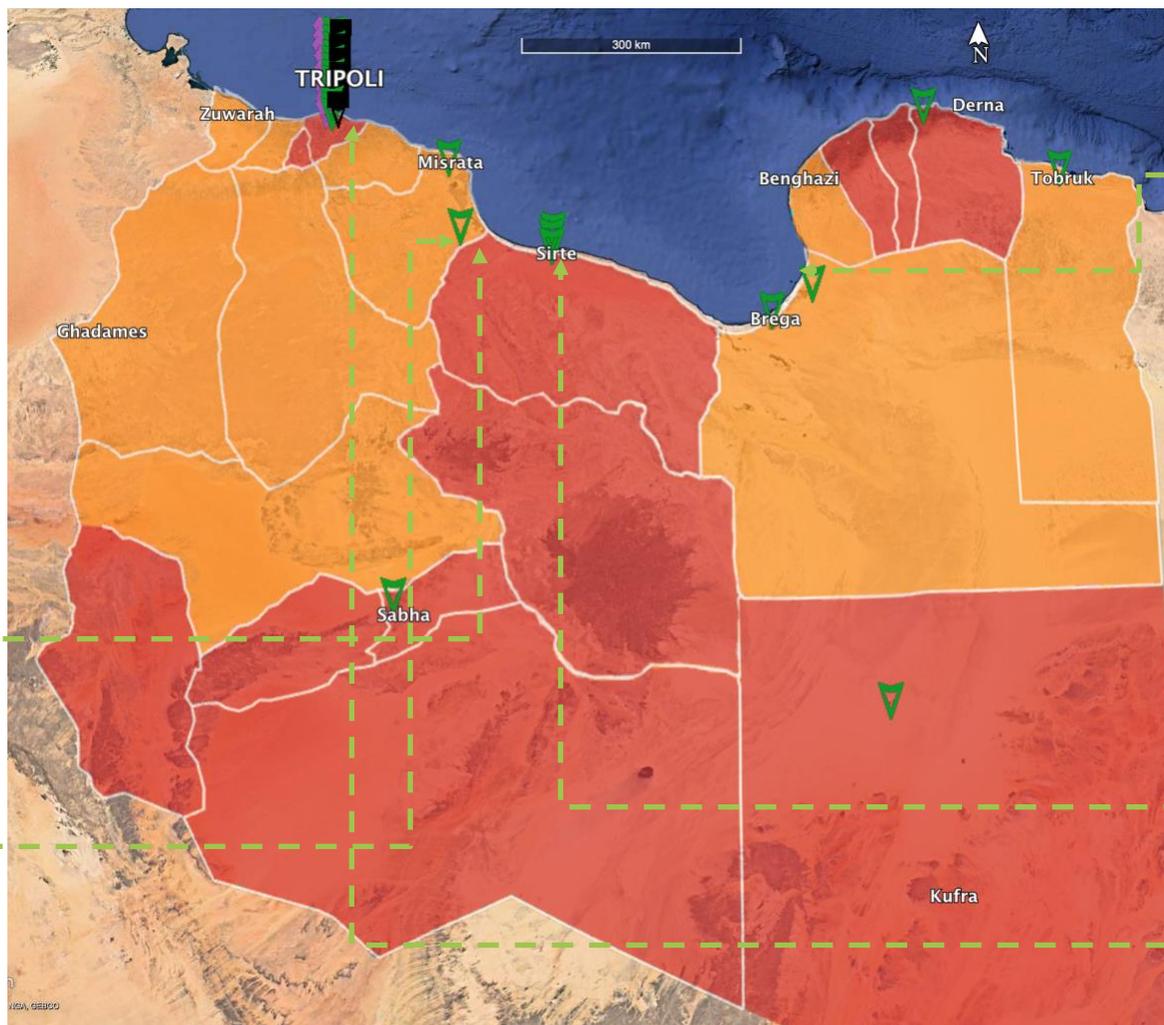
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

- ★ IED | VBIED
- ♦ Violent Clash
- ▲ Isolated Gunfire
- ▽ Other



Reports indicate LNA units retreated from Al-Baghla area, south of Abu Grein, southwards in the evening on 12 Jan. The retreat came after LNA units were stationed in Al-Baghla at approx. 1700hrs. Heavy gunfire was reported in the area as LNA units advanced towards Al Qaddahiyah and Wadi Zam Zam areas. In response, Misrata declared a state of emergency across the city and general mobilisation of all of its forces on 12 Jan.

Reports indicate LAAF airstrikes targeted GNA-aligned positions near Abu Grein and Wadi Zam Zam areas at approx. 1930hrs on 18 Jan, in the latest breach of the 12 Jan ceasefire.

The Guardian quoted informed Syrian sources that some 2000 Turkey-backed Syrian fighters are ready to be deployed to Libya or currently in-country. The report suggests the fighters signed a six-month contract directly with the GNA for a salary of 2000 USD per month and have been promised Turkish nationality.

Tribal council and city elders halted oil and gas exports from Az-Zuwaytinah terminal on 17 Jan and threatened to follow suit across other key terminals, including Es-Sider, Brega, Tobruk, and Ras Lanuf at 1400hrs on 18 Jan. The tribesmen initially established a tent in Az-Zuwaytinah in the morning on 17 Jan, before breaking into the terminal and entering its control room. The tribesmen issued a statement with a list of conditions to resume exports, including the dissolution of the GNA and the expulsion of alleged Turkey-backed Syrian fighters and Turkish military officers from Libya. In addition, the statement mentions other local grievances such as delayed salary payments and lack of local development. In response, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) issued a statement declaring force majeure on exports from Brega, Ras Lanuf, Hariga, Zueitina and Sidra ports. The NOC estimated losses at 55 million USD per day and confirmed the blockade orders were directly given by al-Maghribi and Colonel Ali al-Jilani from the LNA's Greater Sirte Operations Room. As of 20 Jan, activity at the following terminals and fields has been disrupted: Zuweitina, Marsa Al-Brega, Ras Lanuf, Es-Sider and Al-Harigah, Al-Sabah, Al-Fadaa, Al-Ragubah, Al-Feel, Sharara, Al-Waha, Jalu and Hamada. The latest reports indicate Al-Feel and Wafa Oilfields remain operational and continue to feed Mellitah.

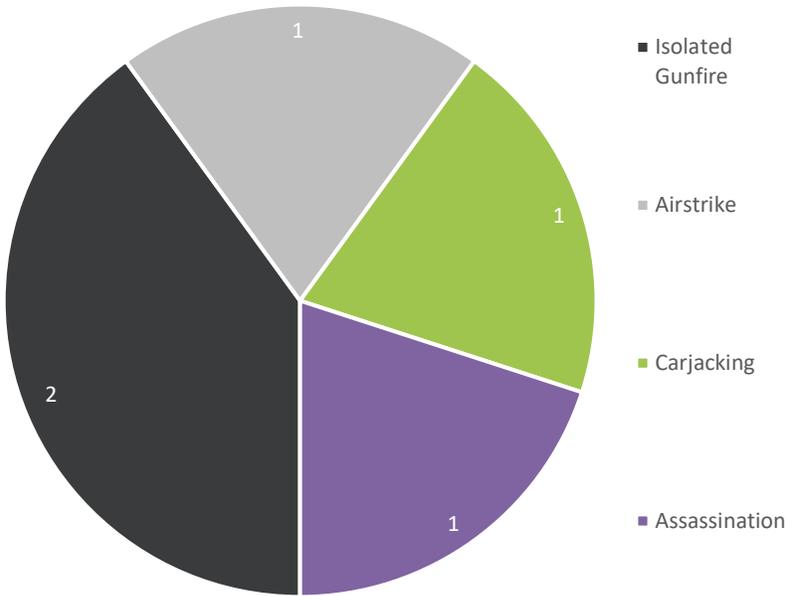
An LNA Air Force (LAAF) helicopter was spotted hovering over Qasr Abu Hadi area, south of Sirte, at approximately 1400hrs on 14 Jan.

Reports indicate LNA-aligned Al-Kaniat brigade members carried out a tactical operation targeting GNA positions in Garaboli in the morning on 14 Jan. The attacking forces reportedly looted a military vehicle belonging to the Garaboli Security Directorate and kidnapped three GNA-aligned Misrata forces. In response, GNA forces reinforced positions on Al-Zatama frontline.

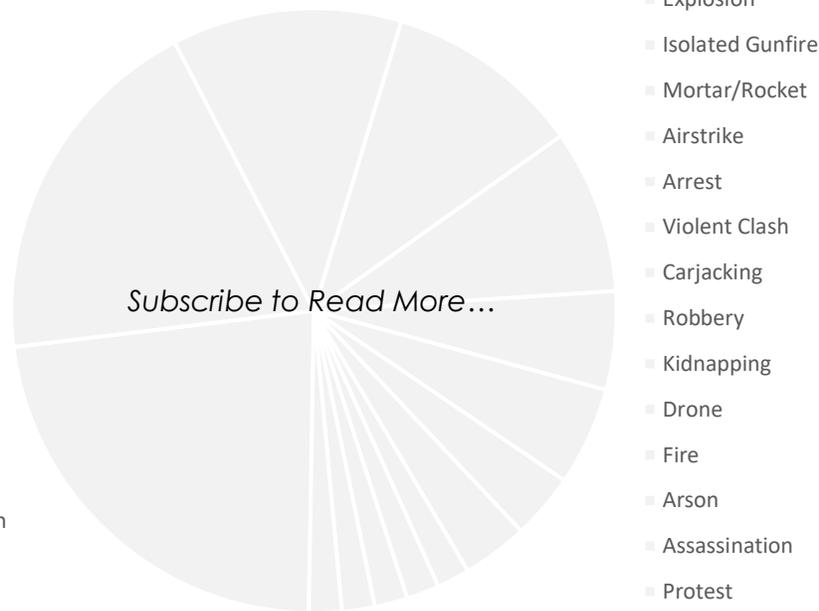
# 3. Nationwide Security Analysis

## Evident decrease in military activity; uptick in Tripoli isolated gunfire cases

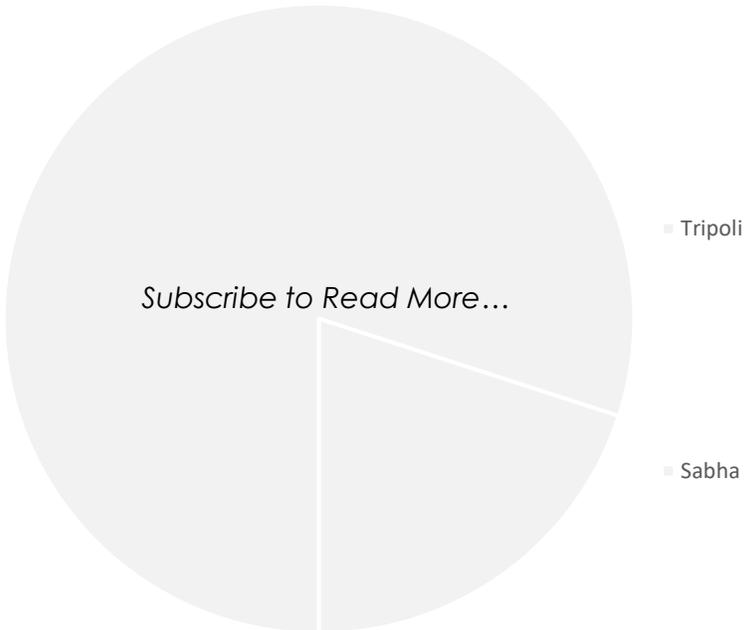
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



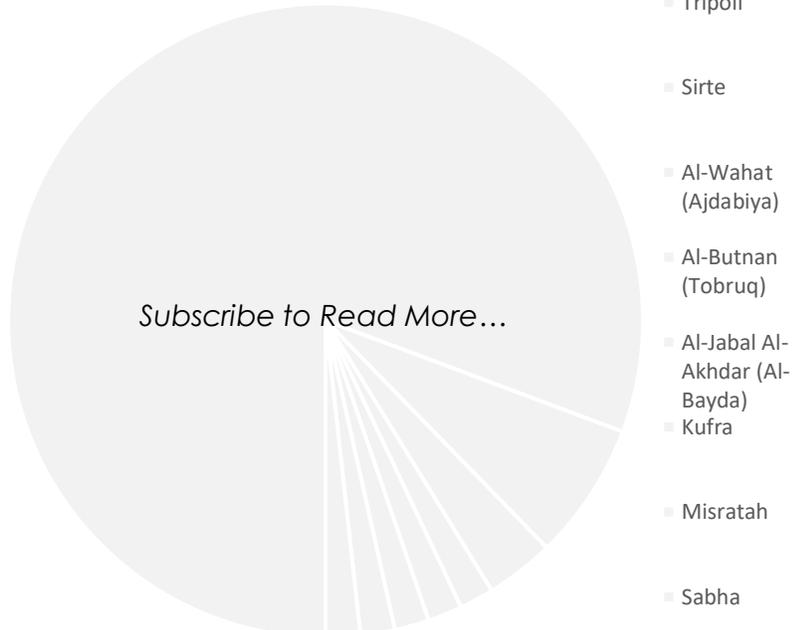
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



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 5 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 98 deaths reported last week and 19 the week before, marking a sharp decrease in fatalities recorded in contrast to last week as a result of limited military following a ceasefire agreement between the warring sides starting from 0000/01hrs on 12 Jan. Whilst there have been intermittent ceasefire violations on the ground, this week's data highlights an evident decrease in common patterns witnessed over the past few months, including airstrikes conducted, mortar/rocket shelling incidents and violent clashes. However, whilst military activity remains limited to date, WB recorded an uptick in general crime in areas beyond the frontlines, including central Tripoli. This week WB recorded eleven isolated gunfire cases in Tripoli, with two fatalities recorded in the Garaboli vicinity as a result of indiscriminate gunfire targeting civilians on the Misrata-Tripoli road. Meanwhile, an LNA Air Force (LAAF) airstrike resulted in the death of a Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli's Ain Zara area according to the GNA's military spokesman, whilst the remaining fatalities came as a result a carjacking incident in Sabha and an assassination in Tripoli's Ain Zara area. Beyond Tripoli and Misrata, this week saw no additional security incidents recorded in the western region unlike the common pattern witnessed over the past months. The remaining incidents were spread across the central, eastern and southern regions. Several incidents were recorded throughout the country including 13 explosions heard, 11 isolated gunfire cases, 7 mortar/rocket shelling incidents, 6 airstrikes, 5 arrests, 3 violent clashes, 3 carjackings, 2 robberies, 2 kidnappings, 1 drone heard, 1 arson and 1 assassination.

In Western Libya, WB recorded a total of 47 incidents, including 46 in Tripoli, marking an evident decrease in security incidents recorded in the region due to the fragile ceasefire agreement which took effect on 12 Jan. In Tripoli, the ceasefire violations were marked by reports of the LNA downing a GNA Turkish unmanned vehicle (UAV) carrying mortar shells in an unidentified area of Tripoli. Meanwhile, in relation to an increase in general crime, WB recorded 11 gunfire-related incidents, 2 carjackings, 2 kidnappings, 1 robbery and 1 assassination across the Tripoli district. In the wider Tripoli district, reports indicate indiscriminate gunfire by unidentified gunmen resulted in the death of two young men and the injury of another on Garaboli's Coastal Road at night on 12 Jan. Initial reports indicate the victims were travelling from Misrata International Airport (MRA) to Tripoli. Beyond Tripoli, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) flew over Misrata's Aviation College at approximately 1530hrs on 13 Jan. Misrata remains on high alert following the LNA's control over Sirte on 06 Jan and subsequent LNA military movements in the area.

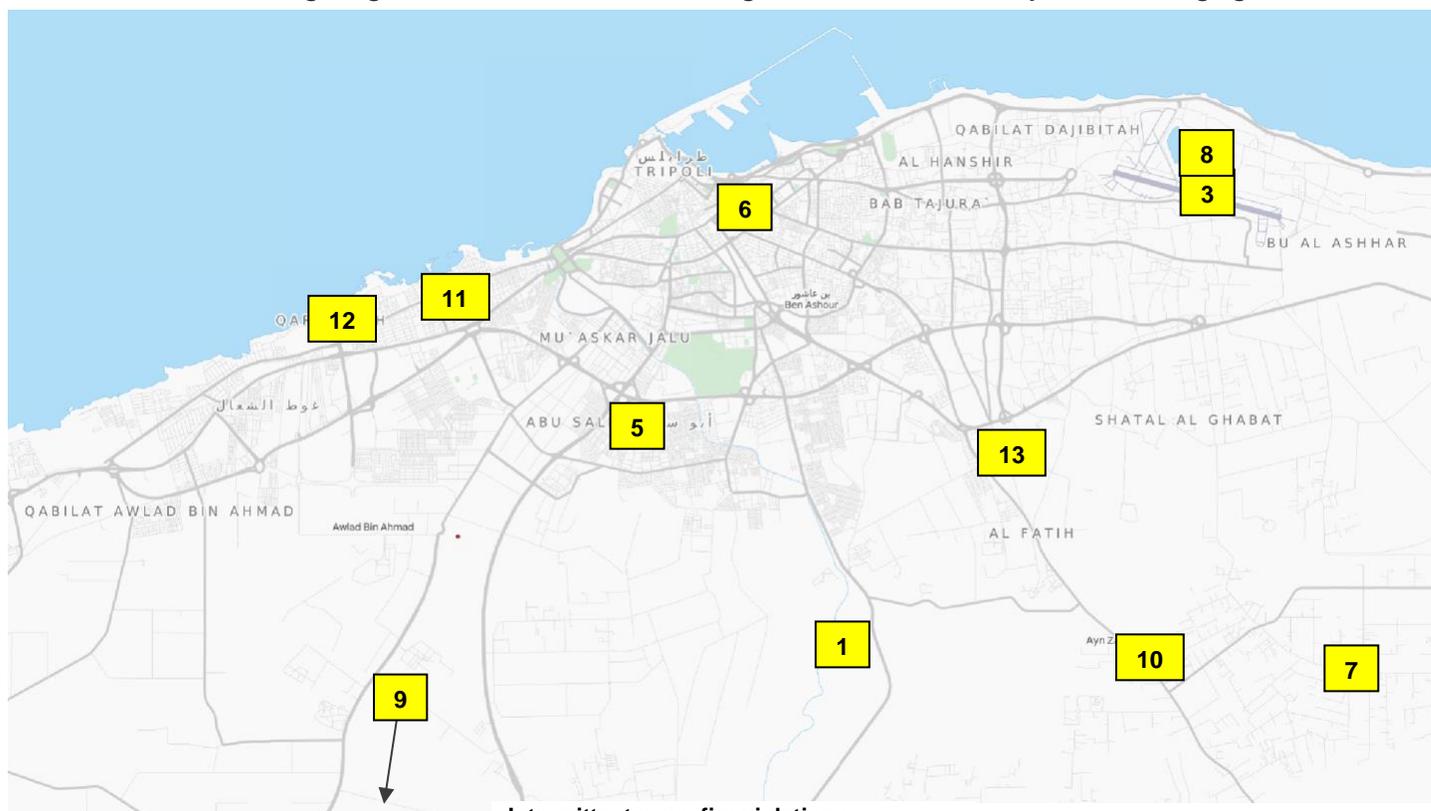
In the central region, reports indicate an LAAF airstrike targeted Abu Grein in the afternoon on 11 Jan. There were no reports of fatalities or injuries. Separately, LNA units dismantled five GNA-affiliated Turkish unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) antennas in Sirte on 11 Jan. Meanwhile, reports emerged suggesting LNA units were readying forces in the Sirte district. Of note, additional LAAF airstrikes were recorded beyond 11 Jan, which will be reflected in next week's data analysis. Meanwhile, reports indicate the GNA's General Authority for Culture building in Sirte was robbed and set on fire during the reporting period.

Turning to the southern region, reports indicate a group of gunmen driving a Hyundai Verna killed a truck driver in a failed carjacking attempt on the Agricultural Road in Sabha's Al-Qurdah area on 12 Jan. Meanwhile, a large fire broke out in Tazirbu which caused mass devastation of over 10,000 palm trees.

Meanwhile in the east, no security incidents were recorded in Benghazi. Meanwhile, members of Al-Jihad Police Station affiliated with Tobruk's Security Directorate arrested four individuals in possession of cannabis resin (hash) and white arms on 15 Jan. The suspects were accused of trading narcotics in an unidentified neighborhood and intimidating locals with white arms. In addition, three individuals were arrested for manufacturing homemade alcohol in Soussa, east of Al-Bayda, on 16 Jan.

## 4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Ongoing ceasefire violations; surge in criminal activity in non-engagement areas



### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (12 Jan) LNA & GNA accept ceasefire starting from 0000/01hrs on 12 Jan
2. (12 Jan) LNA & GNA claim ceasefire violations, clashes resume in Salah Eddien
3. (12 Jan) Air traffic gradually resumes at MJJ
4. (13 Jan) Serraj signs ceasefire agreement in Moscow, Haftar requests extension
5. (13 Jan) Unconfirmed: Ghneiwa militia and SDF commanders meet in Kikli residence
6. (13 Jan) Vehicle theft in Al-Dahra
7. (13 Jan) Rapid Intervention Force arrest four thieves at CP in Ain Zara
8. (14 Jan) Approx. forty pro-GNA Turkish troops on Libyan Wings flight land at MJJ
9. (14 Jan) Clashes in Al-Ramla
10. (14 Jan) Doctor allegedly killed after filming video of Syrian mercenary receiving treatment
11. (14 Jan) Carjacking in Hai Al-Andalus
12. (16 Jan) Gunmen carjack vehicle of GNA Education Ministry Undersecretary
13. (16-18 Jan) Young man kidnapped in front of relative's house in Souq Al-Jumaa
14. (18-19 Jan) Ceasefire violations continue

### Intermittent ceasefire violations

Shortly after the LNA and GNA accepted the Turkish-Russian ceasefire on 12 Jan, violations were reported on both sides on 12 Jan. The GNA reported LNA ceasefire breaches in the Salah Eddien and Wadi Al-Rabei areas minutes after the ceasefire took effect. Similarly, the LNA claimed 30 ceasefire breaches by GNA forces in southern Tripoli. The ceasefire violations were marked by reports of the LNA downing a GNA Turkish unmanned vehicle (UAV) carrying mortar shells in an unidentified area of Tripoli. Additional ceasefire violations have been recorded during the reporting period.

### 40 Turkish military personnel spotted

Sources reported approximately 40 Turkish nationals, believed to be Turkish troops, arrived on a Libyan Wings-operated flight at Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJJ) and were escorted by eight Toyota pick-up vehicles and an anti-aircraft vehicle at approximately 0600hrs on 14 Jan. Of note, Middle East publication Al-Monitor claimed that the most recent Turkish deployment to Libya included approximately 40 servicemen tasked with operating the Milkar-3A3 V/UHF radio jammer system provided by Turkey for electronically jamming Tripoli's airspace.

### Abducted doctor found killed in farm

A man in his thirties was found killed in a farm in Tripoli's Ain Zara area at night on 14 Jan. Initial reports indicate the man was a doctor and was kidnapped upon leaving work in

Tripoli's Hai Alandalus area. The latest reports allege the man was killed because he recorded video footage of a pro-GNA Syrian mercenary receiving medical treatment at the hospital where the victim was employed. Locals remain exposed across Tripoli if they publish or are found in possession of sensitive audiovisual material, especially video footage from the frontlines. This is particularly true as there have been frequent reports of checkpoints where travellers' mobile phones are scrutinised for signs of LNA affiliation/support.

### Man kidnapped in front of relative's house

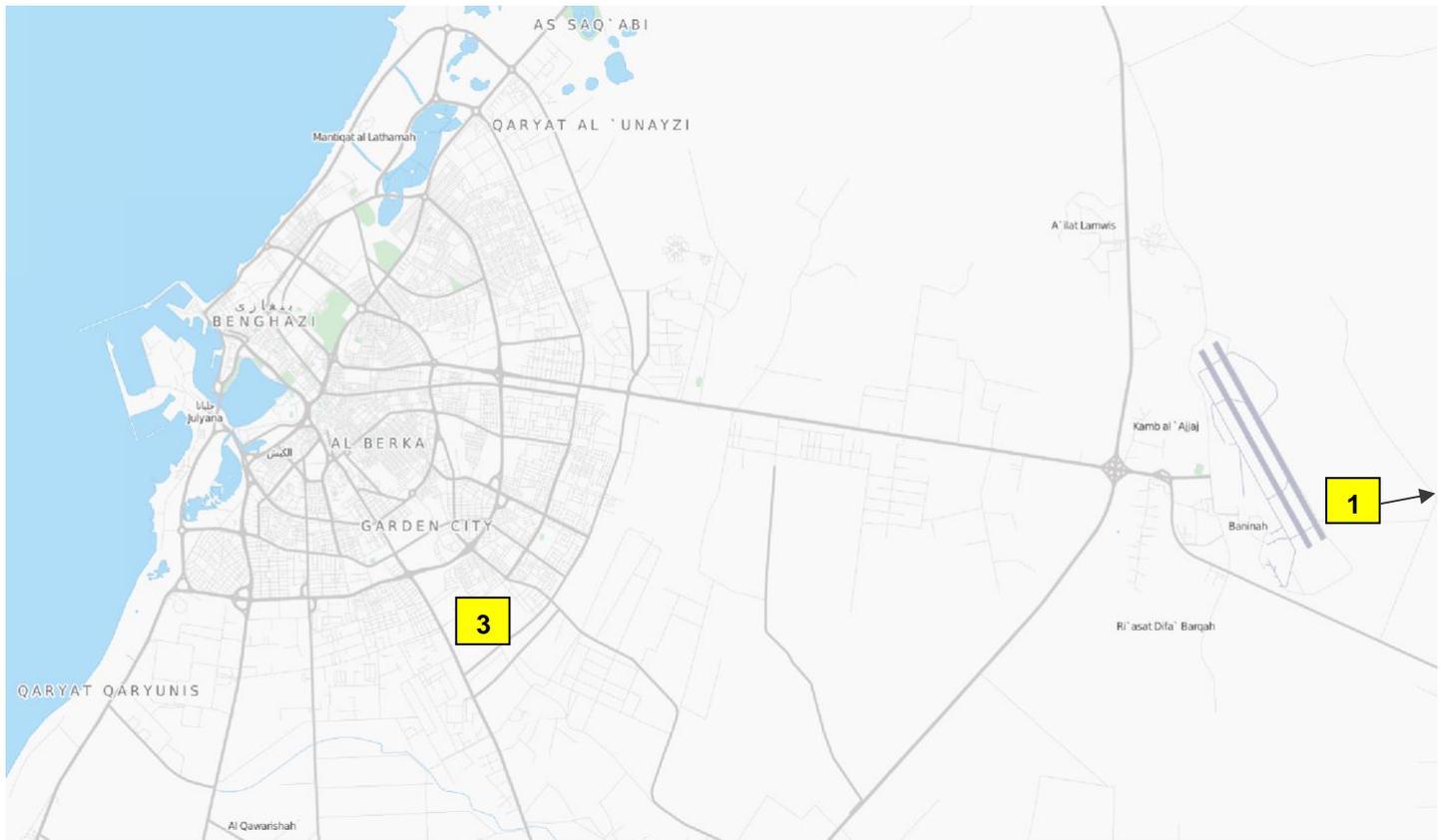
Sources reported the kidnapping of a young man in front of a relative's house on 20 Ramadan Road, near Al-Sahel Sweets, in Tripoli's Souq Al Jum'aa area. Neither the identity of the perpetrators nor the motive behind the incident are known.

### Carjackings & vehicle theft in central Tripoli

Reports indicate unidentified gunmen carjacked a Hyundai Santa Fe in Tripoli's Qerqarish area in the afternoon on 16 Jan. Initial reports indicate the targeted vehicle was driven by the GNA's Ministry of Education undersecretary. Separately, three unidentified armed male suspects carjacked a grey KIA Forte from Hai Alandalus at approximately 2300hrs on 14 Jan. The suspects were spotted driving a light-blue Hyundai Click vehicle. Beyond, reports indicate a parked grey Hyundai Avante was stolen in front of an unidentified bank in Tripoli's Al-Dahra area in the morning on 13 Jan.

## 5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

### German FM meets Haftar in Benghazi ahead of Berlin Conference on Libya



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (12 Jan) Haftar holds meeting with various security, tribal & social factions following Moscow talks
2. (16 Jan) German FM meets Haftar ahead of Berlin Conference on Libya
3. (17 Jan) UNSMIL renews calls for eastern authorities to reveal fate of abducted female MP

#### German FM meets Haftar

German Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas, met the LNA head, Khalifa Haftar, in Benghazi on 16 Jan. According to the German Foreign Ministry, Maas stated that Haftar voiced his readiness to contribute to the “success” of the Berlin Conference on Libya scheduled for 19 Jan and confirmed his will to participate. In addition, Maas stated that Haftar reaffirmed his commitment towards “observing the existing ceasefire.”

#### UNSMIL condemn abduction of female MP

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) issued a statement renewing its call on eastern authorities to reveal the fate of the abducted female House of Representatives (HoR) Member, Siham Sergwa, six months after she was kidnapped from her residence in Benghazi’s Buhdima area. Sergwa’s fate remains unknown to date despite multiple domestic and international calls for eastern authorities to probe into her abduction and reveal her current whereabouts.

## 6. What's next

### Clashes resume across multiple frontlines; widening divisions within GNA groups

#### POLITICAL FORECAST

Whilst Moscow ceasefire talks and the Berlin Conference proceeded, Haftar and the interim government gradually rallied public support by capitalizing on Turkey's involvement and foreign intervention rhetoric. Haftar's recent refusal to sign the ceasefire agreement in Moscow bode well for him, especially among eastern tribes who framed the development as a sign of Haftar's strength and resolve to continue the fight. Although Turkey is expected to back down on its involvement and aggressive rhetoric, Haftar will continue framing actions as a response to public demands, first to preserve his supporter base, but also because this enables a rejection of political negotiations in the short term. Of note, the former Information Minister and official spokesman of the Gaddafi regime, Moussa Ibrahim, warned that if Haftar accepts the outcomes of the Berlin Conference he would lose his support of Gaddafi loyalists and fighters. The House of Representatives (HoR) will likely continue manoeuvres to remove the legitimacy and international recognition from the GNA. HoR speaker Aguila Saleh vowed to push forward with the LNA's "liberation" of Tripoli, declared the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) void and stated that the Presidential Council's (PC) term has expired, whilst claiming that the UN installed a PC that allowed Turkey to interfere in domestic affairs as well as "invade and occupy" Libya. Saleh also reiterated calls for the Arab League to withdraw recognition of the GNA of which the HoR has not yet recognized. Saleh's remarks came in his speech at the Arab Parliament session on 15 Jan. On the GNA side, there are allegations of efforts by Tripoli-based figures, and movement within the Tripoli political landscape, to present a new GNA cabinet and replace Sarraj's government.

#### WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

*International Crisis Group's* Claudia Gazzini explores recent developments on the political front, and specifically the Turkey-Russia alignment and Moscow ceasefire agreement. Gazzini analyses the possible reasons why Haftar refused to sign the agreement. The author argues that the binary view of dynamics on the ground through the "pro-Haftar" vs "pro-Tripoli" lens no longer applies with the Ankara-Moscow convergence of interests in Libya. Gazzini succinctly describes the situation: "Overall, the fact that Moscow and Ankara took this initiative underscores what has been evident for months – that peace in Libya hinges as much on foreign actors' willingness to exert leverage on their Libyan allies as on Libyan factions' actual support for a political alternative to war. That Haftar so far has refused to sign a ceasefire agreement that one of his principal foreign backers put on the table moreover suggests he does not feel dependent on Russia alone, and that his other backers – the UAE most prominently – give him room for manoeuvre." On Haftar's refusal to sign the agreement, the Libya expert argues "Haftar may have refused to sign because the ceasefire terms were too vague, and could have been interpreted as requiring him to withdraw his forces from Tripoli and environs at a moment when he feels the balance of power is in his favour. This vagueness possibly suited Serraj: even though the ceasefire agreement did not make explicit the government's request for a withdrawal of Haftar's forces to their pre-April 2019 positions (i.e. a full retreat from western Libya), it gave him enough flexibility to persuade his home supporters that the withdrawal was still on the cards. Serraj also supported the other two key points – the joint ceasefire monitoring commission and the launch of UN-backed economic, political and military talks. Indeed, his government designated its representatives to the commission weeks ago."

#### SECURITY FORECAST

The Berlin Conference's success in establishing a permanent ceasefire continues to be shrouded in uncertainty as mounting evidence points to an escalation in the short term. LNA forces seem to be readying forces in the Sirte national district and have sent reinforcements to Tarhunah. In response, reports indicate multiple Misrata armed factions returned to the city. Meanwhile, reports continue to emerge documenting the arrival of alleged Turkey-backed Syrian fighters to support the GNA. Open source video footage purported to show Syrian fighting elements onboard an Afriqiyah Airways A320 aircraft en route to Tripoli from Istanbul. The video footage was widely shared across social media, though its authenticity is unconfirmed. Amid reports of a fragile ceasefire and violations on the ground, the arrival of additional Turkish troops via MJJ increases the airport's exposure to potential LNA targeting. Clashes could resume across all frontlines, including Tripoli and Sirte, in the short term. In Sirte, reports indicate the LNA has consolidated its presence across the national district. More importantly, the LNA resumed operations from Sirte's Qardabiya airbase, which could be used for combat sorties targeting Misrata forces. Further LNA military activity targeting Misrata will exacerbate tensions in Tripoli. There is a risk of politically-motivated attacks, assassinations, and other sporadic security incidents targeting pro-GNA officials and/or armed factions. Pressure from the international community to dissolve armed groups, coupled with the squeeze on funding brought by the closure of key terminals and fields, will escalate tensions within the GNA camp. In the vicinity of Garaboli, tensions are high after a weakening of the GNA posture as a result of Al-Kaniat's 9th Brigade tactical offensive in the area.

#### LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In a *Politico* column, Turkey's President Recep Erdogan warns Europe of imminent threats if the GNA falls. The op-ed titled "Road to peace in Libya goes through Turkey", was widely criticized by observers as an attempt by Erdogan to justify recent military manoeuvres in Libya and Ankara's presence in the country. Erdogan argues "Moreover, Europe will encounter a fresh set of problems and threats if Libya's legitimate government were to fall. Terrorist organizations such as ISIS and Al Qaeda, which suffered a military defeat in Syria and Iraq, will find a fertile ground to get back on their feet. Indeed, some groups that largely share those terrorist organizations' ideology, including the Madkhali-Salafis, are fighting alongside Haftar. If the conflict rages on, the violence and instability will also fuel irregular migration toward Europe. The Libyan civil war serves as a litmus test for the EU. Will European leaders uphold the liberal world order in the face of yet another attack? Or will they abdicate their responsibilities, as they did in Syria, to watch the crisis unfold from the sidelines? Our European friends and allies need to understand that they cannot change the world simply by complaining and expressing concern. International law, democracy and human rights cannot be defended without assuming some responsibility. History teaches us that rewarding those who turn their backs on diplomacy and make a mockery of the international community only leads to more serious problems down the road. And yet the most recent developments in Libya suggest that some European leaders haven't learned these lessons. The EU needs to show the world that it is a relevant actor in the international arena. The upcoming peace conference in Berlin is a very significant step toward that goal. European leaders, however, ought to talk a little less and focus on taking concrete steps. Keeping in mind that Europe is less interested in providing military support to Libya, the obvious choice is to work with Turkey, which has already promised military assistance."

# About Whispering Bell



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