



1. The Big Picture

GNA grants SDF more powers; impact on security unclear

This week, the Government of National Accord's (GNA) Presidential Council (PC) issued a decree codifying the disbandment of the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) and ordering the formation of the Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism, which remains under the Ministry of Interior (Mol).

There is a possibility the measure is a simple "name change" to contribute to the SDF's public image. The decision appears to grant the newly-formed organization additional powers, including the ability to operate at a national level, the allocation of an independent budget from the GNA, and power to confiscate land. The decree also contains some unclear clauses, including the Deterrence Apparatus' power to eavesdrop on any resident perceived as a national security threat.

It remains unlikely for the GNA and PC to issue such a decree without prior approval and/or consent from foreign actors, including France, Egypt, and others. While GNA sources claim the measure comes in response to the Islamic State (IS) attack targeting the High National Elections Commission (HNEC) in Tripoli on 02 May, Whispering Bell sources had previously received unconfirmed reports that a reshuffling and disbanding was discussed during negotiations in Cairo to unify military institutions. During Haftar's absence and hospitalization in France, multiple foreign actors reportedly consulted with Abdulraouf Kara, the SDF's head and Haithem Tajouri. If confirmed, this would lend credence to the fact that Tripoli's anti-crime militias are a key player in any future political agreement and are unlikely to be ignored as part of the Cairo talks.

Moreover, GNA PM Fayez Al-Sarraj ordered a review of the decree. Al-Sarraj requested the Ministry of Interior (Mol) to review the implementation process of the reorganization and consult with other security forces in the capital city. Al-Sarraj's move highlights an understanding that the decision could marginalize other militias in the capital city. The move is possibly an attempt to mitigate potential risks resulting from the disbandment.

Regardless of the motive, the measure is symbolic as it projects the SDF as the only "capable" militia from the GNA's standpoint, which could result in some tensions across Tripoli. However, there remains the possibility that the newly-formed Deterrence Apparatus will reduce tensions among Tripoli militias known to directly oppose Abdulraouf Kara, especially pro-General National Congress (GNC) groups such as the Al-Bugra militia.

Such an outcome will be primarily influenced by the potential role that Kara could assume in the future organization. Should Kara agree to step down, Al-Bugra militia would no longer have solid grounds to carry out attacks, including against Tripoli's Mitiga Airport. This outcome, however unlikely, would contribute to the relative stabilization of the security situation in the capital city.



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KEY POINTS

- Motive behind move remains unclear
- Could marginalize Tripoli militias
- Outcome depends on Kara's role

2. National Security Map

Islamic State (IS) claims responsibility for SVBIED attack on Checkpoint 90 near Sirte

Key

THREAT INDICATORS

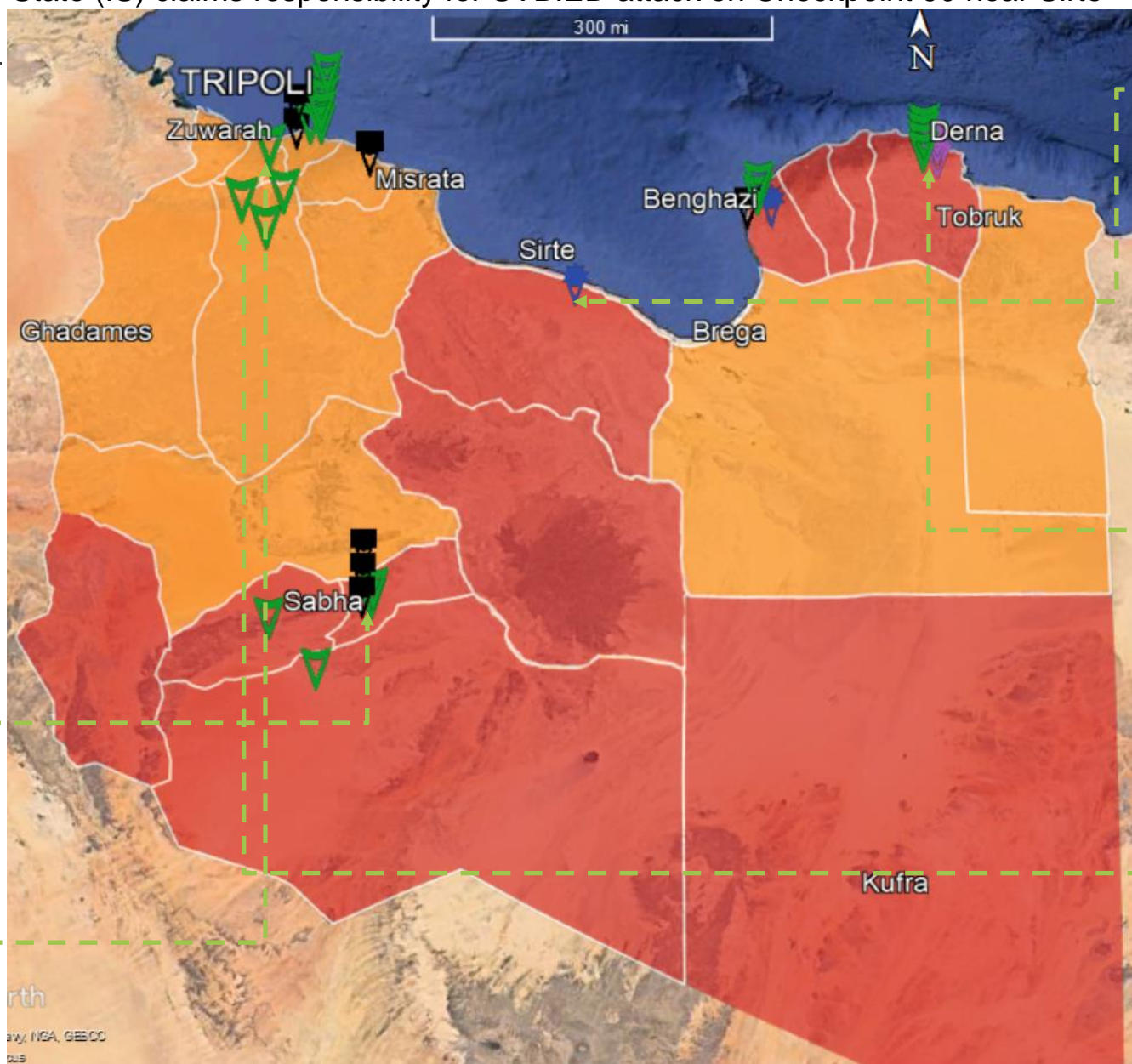
- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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

Local reports suggest a mortar shell landed on a house in Sabha's Hay Hejara area resulting in the death of two men and a young girl, and the injury of a woman, as tribal clashes continued at night on 06 May.

A local militia from Al-Zawiya reportedly stormed the headquarters of the highway services company near the Al-Somoud checkpoint on the Coastal Road and kidnapped the company's manager. Reports suggest the militia demanded a ransom for his release and the company remains closed.



The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the suicide vehicle-borne improvised device (SVBIED) explosion, in Checkpoint 90, East of Sirte, on 08 May. Reports suggest the SVBIED detonated, killing at least 2 Libyan National Army (LNA) soldiers affiliated to the 155 Infantry Battalion.

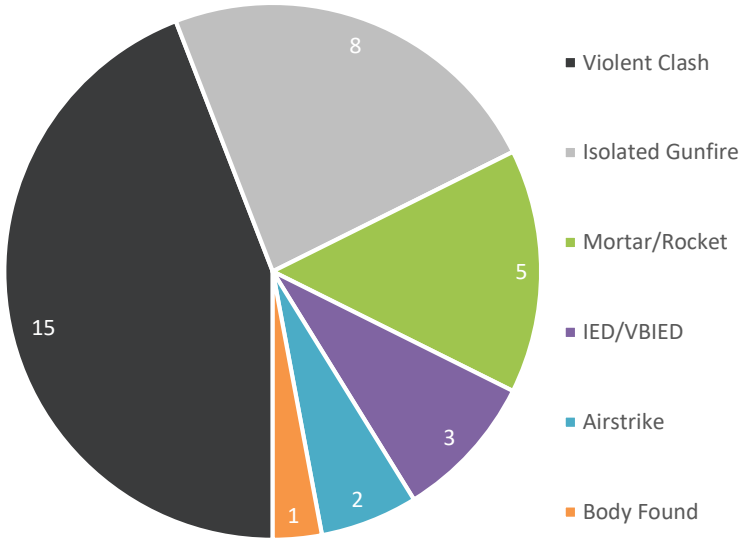
On 07 May, heavy clashes were reported between the Libyan National Army (LNA) and the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC) in Derna's Fatayeh area. Clashes erupted as LNA forces encircling Derna, arrived on the outskirts of the Fatayeh University, later withdrawing due to heavy artillery thwarting their advance. Reports suggest seven LNA soldiers were killed, and 15 others injured, as a result of the fighting surrounding the university. The DMSC reported the death of one of their soldiers and the injury of four others.

The National Oil Corporation's (NOC) Brega Petroleum Marketing Company (BPMC) Fuel and Gas Crisis Committee warned on 11 May that armed militias were robbing fuel trucks in the Alriyayna junction.

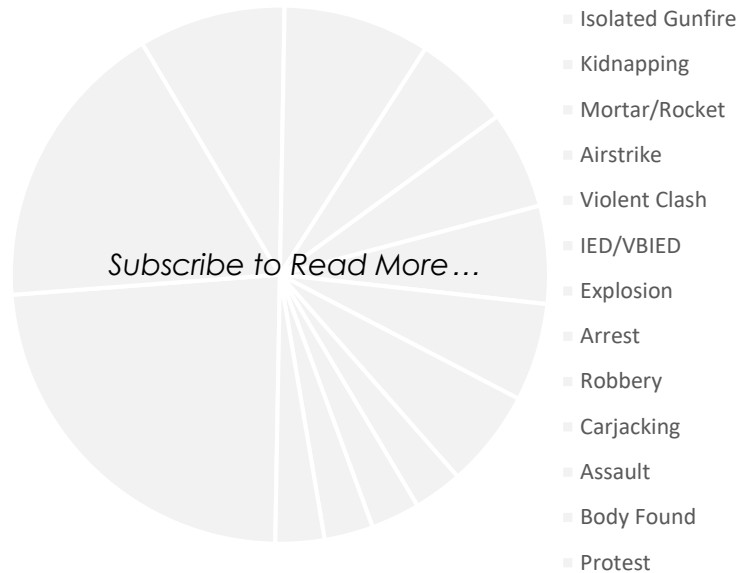
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Surge in Nationwide Fatalities Numbers from Violent Clashes

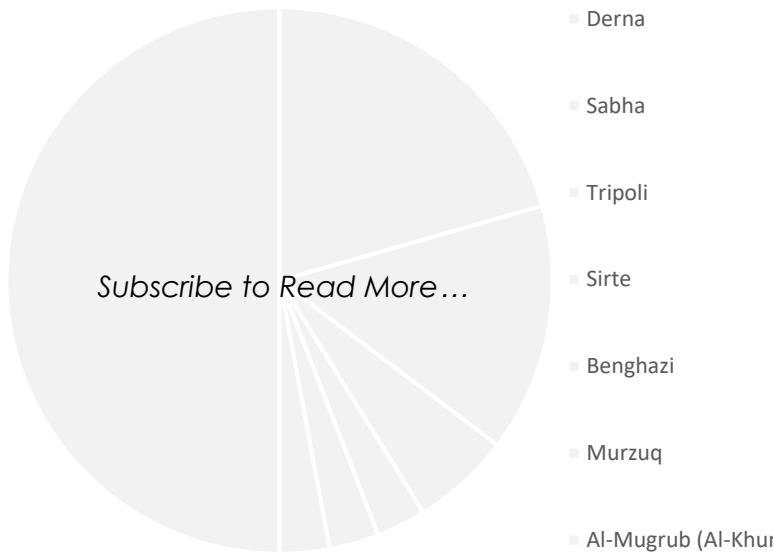
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



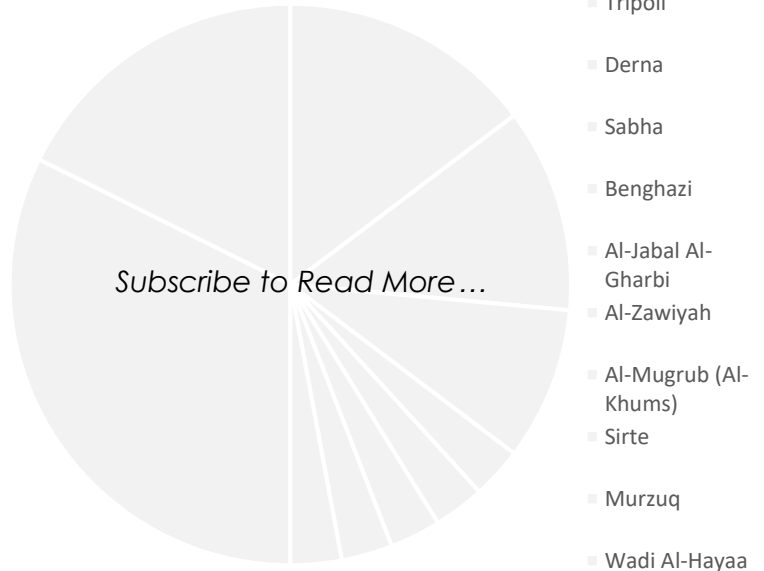
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



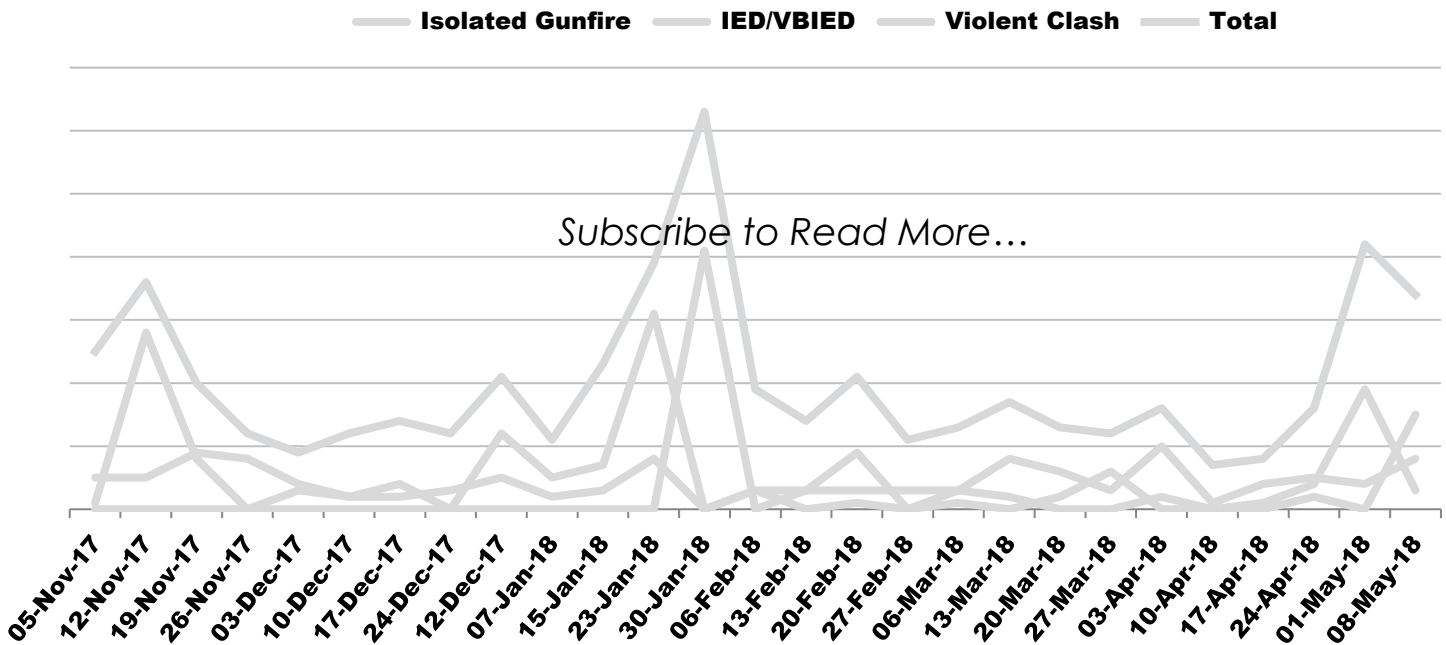
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



Data Analysis

Whispering Bell recorded this week a total of 34 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 42 deaths reported last week and 16 the week before. There was a decrease in nationwide fatalities relatively compared with the IS attack in Tripoli on 02 May. However, this week's ongoing clashes in Derna accounted for approximately half of the nationwide fatalities, while Whispering Bell reported an overall increase in kidnappings. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 8 cases of isolated gunfire, 2 episodes of violent clashes, 2 IED/VBIED reports, 3 airstrikes, 2 robberies, and 3 mortar/rocket incidents.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 16 incidents, including 11 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. Whispering Bell recorded in Tripoli a carjacking incident. Reports suggest two unidentified assailants wearing military uniform and riding a white Chevrolet Optra vehicle with tinted windows and no license plate, carjacked a white KIA Cerato vehicle in Tripoli's Hay Al-Andalus area in the morning on 06 May. Meanwhile, a Sudanese national shot and subsequently killed a local man with an AK-47 rifle in his house in Tripoli's Al-Njeila area on 03 May. The motive behind the killing remains unknown, though it likely stands as a targeted assassination. In a separate incident, an unidentified assailant stabbed a taxi driver several times and carjacked his vehicle on Tripoli's 20 Ramadan Road on 07 May.

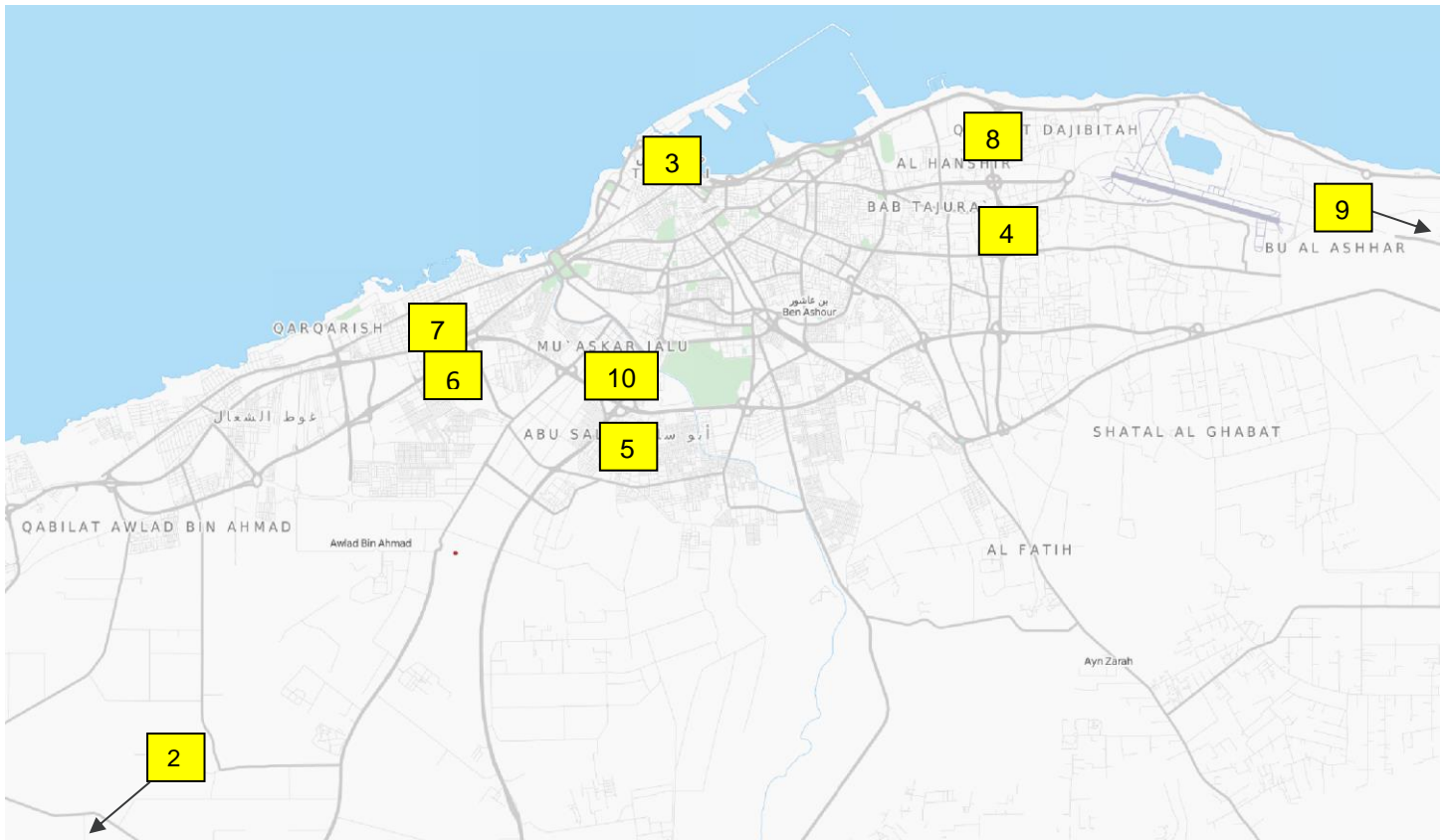
The week in Central Libya was marked by renewed concerns over IS movements near Sirte following the SVBIED attack that killed at least 2 LNA soldiers. Reports suggest the coastal road and the suburbs of Sirte witnessed the deployment of mobile patrols by the Sirte Protection and Security Force on 11 May, following a security alert over suspected Islamic State (IS) activity and movements, southeast of the city. There were no further security incidents reported.

Turning to southern Libya, an exchange of gunfire between Sabha's Awlad Suleiman and Tebu tribes resulted in the death of a man in Sabha's Al-Gorda area on 09 May. Clashes resumed in Sabha despite the Council of Tebu announcing the continuation of the ceasefire in their respective area. Moreover, in a separate development, the spokesman for the Libyan National Army (LNA), Ahmed Al-Mesmari, stated that the commander of the military zone in Sabha announced a ceasefire to be implemented at approximately 0000hrs on 10 May.

In Eastern Libya, Benghazi witnessed a relatively stable security situation. Meanwhile, the head of the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC), Attiya Saad Al-Shaeri, announced on 11 May the formation of a new force called the "Derna Protection Force", likely a rebranding effort in response to the LNA's ongoing offensive. The DMSC will reportedly dissolve and merge its units with the newly-formed Derna Protection Force.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Militia tensions following leader's death and alleged assault



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (03 Mar) Unidentified assailants kidnap political figure
2. (03 Mar) Sudanese kills man inside house in Al-Njeila
3. (05 Mar) Protest in Martyrs' Square
4. (05 Mar) SDF arrest IS suspect in Aarada
5. (06 May) Unidentified assailants kidnap mall owner in Abu Sleim
6. (06 May) Gunfire incidents during football celebrations
7. (06 May) Carjacking in Hay Al-Andalus
8. (07 May) Taxi driver assaulted and vehicle carjacked
9. (07 May) Sub-Saharan narcotics dealer arrested in Al-Gweia
10. (08 May) Boy kidnapped in front of school in Gharghour

Tensions over militia leader's death

While a significant shift in Tripoli's Unconfirmed reports suggest authorities found the body of Mohamed Alwaer, the recently-kidnapped Tajoura Lions Brigade Commander, a militia with strong ties to the Al-Bugra militia, in an unidentified area of Tripoli. While the identity of the assailants who kidnapped Alwaer remains unknown, Al-Bugra militia and Tajoura Lions members will likely hold the Government of National Accord (GNA) and other affiliated militias responsible. On 09 May, the operation room of Tripoli's Tajoura area and local security services reportedly began patrolling areas from the Western side of the city, following the kidnapping and assault of Alwaer in the Al-Gweia area. Reports suggest some militiamen affiliated to the Al-Bugra militia were also searching for the victim, whilst announcing a deadline of 24 hours for his release. Reports over Alwaer's death could escalate tensions between pro-General National Congress (GNC) and pro-GNA militias in the capital city.

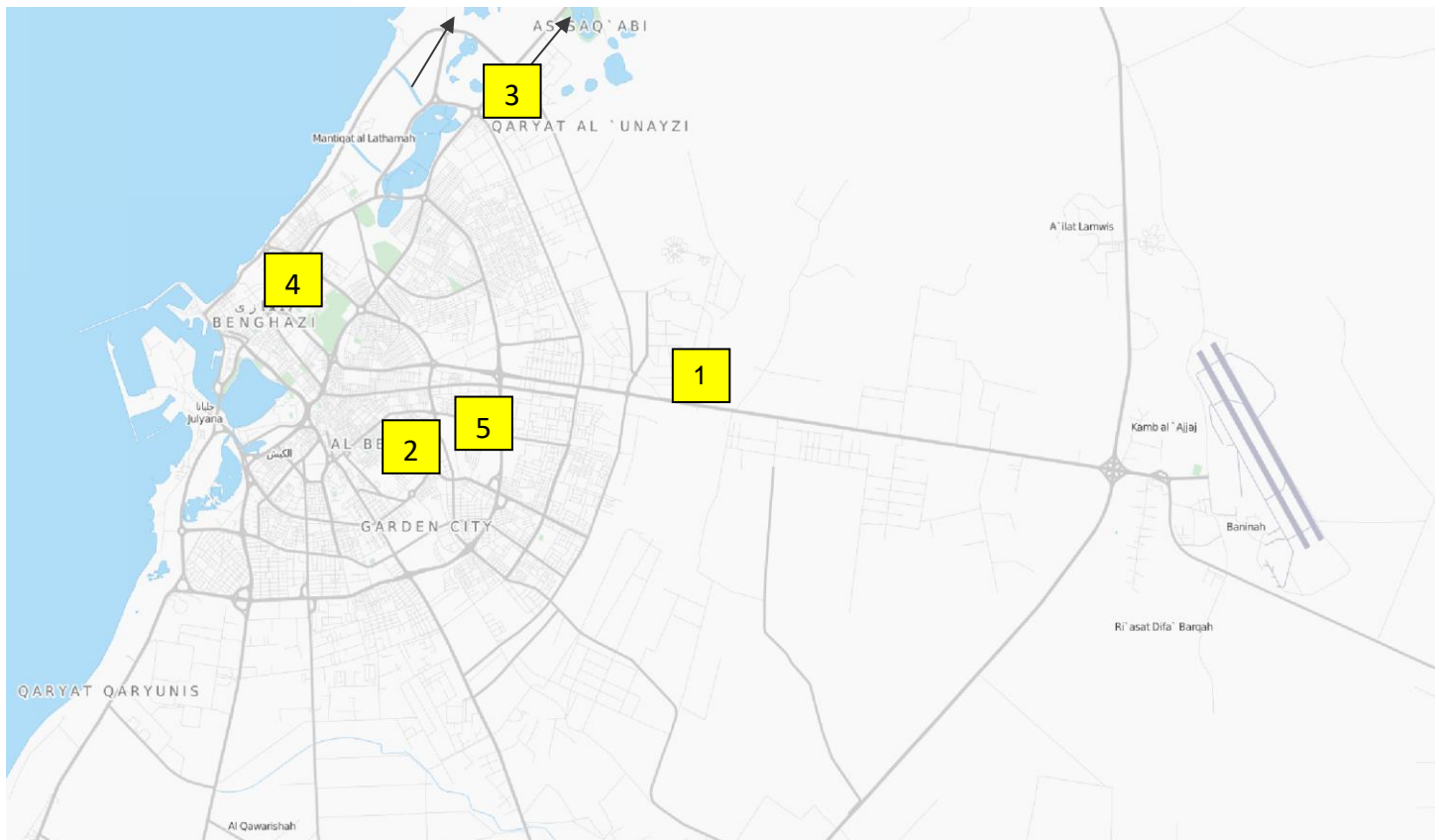
While a significant shift in Tripoli's security situation in the aftermath of Alwaer's death would be unlikely, tensions could potentially expose the capital city's only functioning airport, Mitiga.

Kidnapping incidents

Sources reported two masked unidentified assailants entered Jihad Mall in Tripoli's Abu Sleim area and kidnapped the owner on 06 May. The owner was released at night on 06 May, with reports suggesting a small celebration was held in front of the mall. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, unidentified assailants kidnapped a boy in front of his school and demanded a ransom of 85,000 LYD for his release in Tripoli's Gharghour area. Beyond this, reports suggest unidentified assailants kidnapped the director of Libya's national channel "Libya Al-Wataniya" in an unidentified area of Tripoli on 09 May. The kidnapping was likely politically motivated, given the victim's role and affiliation.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Grenade accidentally detonates inside vehicle killing three civilians



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (05 May) Unidentified object explodes injuring two children
2. (05 May) Indiscriminate gunfire injures man in Al Majori
3. (06 May) Unidentified object explodes injuring man
4. (08 May) IED explosion kills civilian in Downtown
5. (12 May) Grenade detonates inside vehicle killing 3

Unidentified object explosions

An unidentified object exploded as residents burned waste, resulting in the injury of two children in Benghazi's Abu Atni area on 05 May. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, reports suggest an explosion inside a vehicle resulted in the death of three men in Benghazi's Hay Al-Fatah area in the evening on 12 May. Initial reports suggest the explosion was due to one of the three passengers accidentally detonating a grenade inside the vehicle. While the motive behind the passenger carrying a grenade inside the vehicle remains unclear, security incidents related to explosive remnants of war (ERW) remain common across Benghazi. Moreover, in a separate incident, an unidentified object exploded inside a farm resulting in the injury of a man in Benghazi's Sidi Khalifa area on 06 May. In an additional explosion, reports suggest an improvised explosive device (IED) civilian killed a civilian in Benghazi's downtown area on 08 May.

Indiscriminate gunfire

Reports suggest a man was shot and subsequently injured by indiscriminate gunfire in Benghazi's Al-Majori area on 05 May. Neither the identity of the perpetrators nor the motive behind the gunfire are known. In a similar incident, a man was injured by indiscriminate gunfire in Benghazi's Al-Majori area on 07 Apr. Indiscriminate gunfire incidents resulting in civilian casualties and/or fatalities remain widespread and frequent across Benghazi.

6. What's next

Uncertainty over election readiness to prevail amid security incidents

POLITICAL FORECAST

The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, reiterated his support for establishing a suitable environment for elections to be held in 2018, whilst calling on the High Council of State (HCS) and House of Representatives (HoR) to agree on an electoral law. Meanwhile, reports suggest the US rejects France's push to hold elections in the absence of a constitution. The head of the Presidential Council (PC), Fayeze Al-Serraj, received the credentials of the British Ambassador to Libya, Frank Baker, with the UK reaffirming its full support for the country. Baker added that Libyans would soon be able to apply for UK visas via the embassy in Tripoli upon resuming operations. Locally, reconciliation efforts continue in the West, with multiple cities signing peace deals which may positively impact the region's security. Moreover, the CBL announced an increase in the government budget for 2018, amounting to 42.5bn LYD, representing the first budget to be agreed upon between Libyan entities. This was hailed by officials as a significant achievement. The fact that the HoR did not publicly express its opposition to the budget stands as a positive step in ending the political deadlock, though some East-West tensions likely remain.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In an article for *The New Arab*, the author, Francesca Mannocchi, discusses how radical Madkhalists are the latest threat in Libya and highlights their role in undermining the political process. "Today the Madkhalists - who currently control more mosques than any other group in Libya - are increasingly widespread in the country. Their growth makes the balancing act of those committed to national reconciliation all the more difficult. In the west, the most powerful Madkhalist militia is Rada, run by Abdourfauf Kara. It controls the Mitiga airport and most of the city, as well as the personal security of Fayeze al-Sarraj, the prime minister of the UN-backed "Government of National Accord" which sits in Tripoli. Just a few months ago, Rada militiamen broke into a comic book fair in Tripoli and arrested participants and organizers alike, accusing them of "weakening the religion and being fascinated by foreign traditions". In the east, the Madkhalists support General Haftar, whose sons Khaled and Saddam, according to local sources, head two Salafi brigades controlling Benghazi with public punishment and arbitrary executions. When Haftar launched his "Operation Dignity" in eastern Libya, Sheikh Rabi al-Madkhali issued a fatwa on the need for Salafis to support Haftar against the Muslim Brotherhood." said Mannocchi.

SECURITY FORECAST

In Tripoli, the Presidential Council (PC) announced the disbandment of the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) and ordered the formation of the Deterrence Apparatus. Following the announcement, Al-Serraj requested for the decree to be reviewed, ensuring that all security forces are consulted. While thus far the SDF's disbandment is yet to have any ramifications on the security situation in the capital city, Al-Serraj's decision to review the implementation of the decree could highlight threats of potential tensions between militias and other forces. Meanwhile, in Sirte, local authorities will likely remain vigilant and increase patrols in the short term amid reports of suspicious IS movements in the city. In Sabha, tribal clashes will likely intensify, despite attempts at reaching a ceasefire. In the East, the Libyan National Army (LNA) will continue to intensify its offensive in Derna to portray LNA cohesion and capabilities against militants. The LNA's impeding offensive against Derna could potentially disrupt areas beyond the city. In Benghazi, the city has witnessed a recent calm following Haftar's return, though it remains fragile to any potential disruption.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an article for *Energy Voice*, the author, David Mcphee, discusses the recent meeting in Aberdeen between Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) and officials from the trade and energy sector, highlighting its potential implications. "Mr Sanalla said: "Our Libyan delegation including senior NOC and subsidiary staff are in Aberdeen to discuss and focus on great opportunities for reconstruction and investment in the oil and gas sector in Libya. This forum is very important because it re-affirms our commitment to work with the highest qualified consultants, vendors and ancillary service providers of the industry." Afterwards, at a dinner organized by the Libyan British Council, Mr Sanalla signed a statement of intent between the NOC and the city of Aberdeen to undertake future work together. Mr Crockett said: "I think it opens up tremendous possibilities for the area. [Libyan oil officials] met with local weekend like Wood and Petrofac and I think the future looks extremely bright. "I think it will be very, very big business as there are lots to do there. Libya needs to rebuild its oil industry and production from a very low level; I think it's now up to 1.5 million barrels of oil a day. "It'll require a lot of reequipping and refinancing and I think there is interest across the field in terms of what Aberdeen and the UK can do." said Mcphee.

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