

# 1. The Big Picture

## East-West divisions crystallize amid tensions in Tripoli

This week, multiple developments exacerbated East-West divisions and the political situation appears to have stagnated amid no potential signs of an imminent resumption of oil exports in the short term and as production fell to 527k barrels per day (bpd). Meanwhile, tensions are high in Tripoli following heavy militia clashes and a controversial decree that could further undermine the Government of National Accord's (GNA) position.

There is growing support for Haftar and the Libyan National Army's (LNA) recent decision to hand over control of oil ports to the eastern-based National Oil Corporation (NOC). First, there has been a strategic push by the East to link the decision to terrorism financing and subsequently ensuring the fair distribution of wealth, as evidenced by LNA statements to form a Committee to investigate terrorism financing, including the GNA Ministry of Defence. This consequently strengthened the LNA's political position and rationale behind its control of oil ports. It could help expand the number of supporters backing the LNA's decision, while increasing the likelihood of groups, including in the West, holding GNA elements accountable for the deteriorating living conditions.

Second, there are signs of an emerging federalism and its architecture in the East. The President of the House of Representatives (HOR), Agila Saleh, ordered the formation of a temporary committee to reform and restructure subsidiaries of the eastern-based NOC on 02 Jul. Reports suggest the eastern-based NOC will chair the newly-formed committee, which includes delegates from the LNA, the Tobruk interim government, the Bayda-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL), and the eastern Ministry of Interior (MoI). While the committee's objectives

remain unclear, the measure could be an attempt to prepare the eastern-based NOC to market oil independently of the Tripoli-based NOC.

However, these developments are more likely political manoeuvres to pressure the West and GNA to make concessions. The dismissal of the Tripoli-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL) Governor, Saddiq Al-Kabir, and the appointment of Mohammed Al-Shukri, remains the LNA's priority. There is a possibility all of the above is a mechanism to exert pressure in achieving such an outcome. To this end, the GNA's cooperation with Italy and other Western elements has helped reinforce the East's narrative locally.

Meanwhile, in Tripoli, heavy clashes erupted on 07 Jul between the Ghneiwa militia and the Protection Force Apparatus, an armed group led by Abu Azza, which was recently dissolved by the Ghneiwa militia's leader, Kikli. Tensions could also escalate following the GNA decree to appoint Emad Trabelsi, leader of the Zintani Special Operations Force (SOF), as President of the General Security Directorate. As tensions erupt in Tripoli and the West, concerns emerge over the GNA's ability to withstand depleting oil revenues before opposition begins to form among militias nominally under its command.

### KEY POINTS

- East strengthens its position
- Oil ports as a political bargaining chip
- Tripoli tensions undermine GNA



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## 2. National Security Map

Unidentified armed group kidnaps 4 foreign nationals & 3 locals from Al-Hassouna plant site

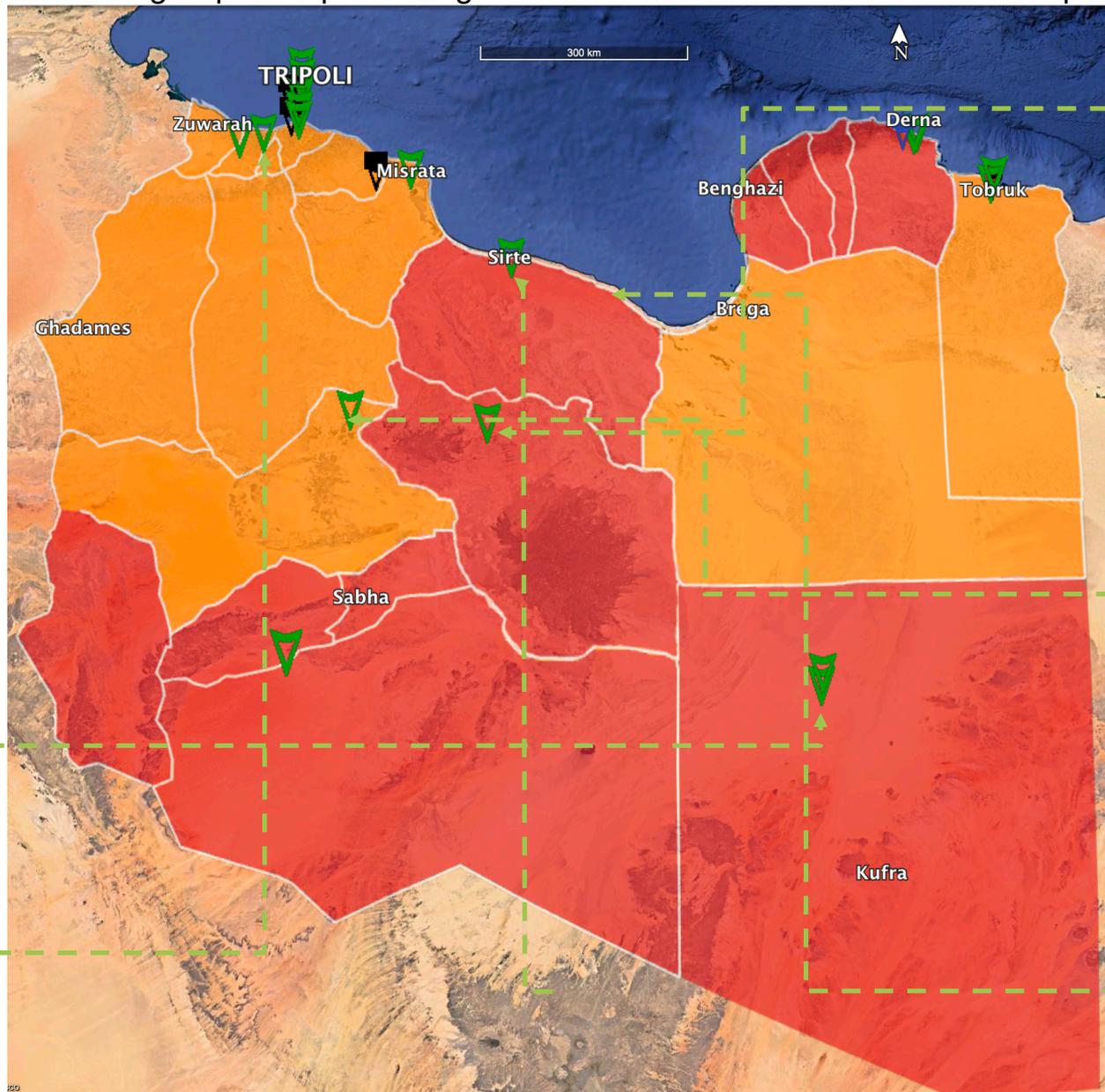
### Key

#### THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

#### EVENT INDICATORS

- ⚡ IED | VBIED
- ⚔ Violent Clash
- ☒ Isolated Gunfire
- ▽ Other



The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of two Libyan Air Force (LAF) officers of the Libyan National Army (LNA) East of Waddan. IS also resurfaced in a new video, dubbed the "Point of Death", documenting its activity in Libya. The video corroborates IS' current strategy in Libya, including the use of small mobile units of approximately 12 militants to conduct hit-and-run attacks.

An armed group kidnapped three Filipino nationals and a Korean technician from the Al-Hassouna plant site near Ash Shwayrif, at approximately 0700hrs on 06 Jul. Three Libyan guards were also kidnapped, though they were later released, whilst the fate of the foreign workers remains unknown. Whispering Bell sources indicate the involvement of former regime supporters, including the brother of a detainee held by the Special Deterrence Force (SDF). According to sources, the brother of the detained, kidnapped 3 Libyan security guards at the site and forced them to lead him to the foreign workers. Reports suggest the motive behind the kidnapping of the foreign workers was to demand the release of his brother.

Reports suggest a military gathering of forces affiliated with the Libyan National Army (LNA) in the Oil Crescent area and Ajdabiya following reports of suspicious movements around the outskirts of Sirte.

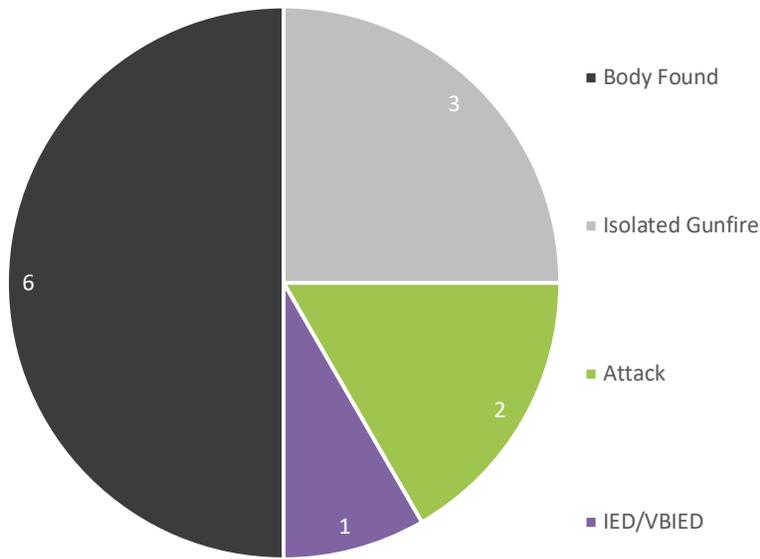
Local reports suggest unidentified gunmen attacked the fields of the Great Man-Made river near Tazerbu in South Eastern Libya, resulting in the death of two technicians, and the kidnapping of two guards, on 07 Jul. Additional reports suggest the attackers have seized vehicles and food supplies from the project site.

Reports suggest locals from Al-Zawiya held a protest demanding the departure of all militias from the city and the reinstatement of a legitimate army and police forces along the Coastal Road at approximately 1500hrs on 04.

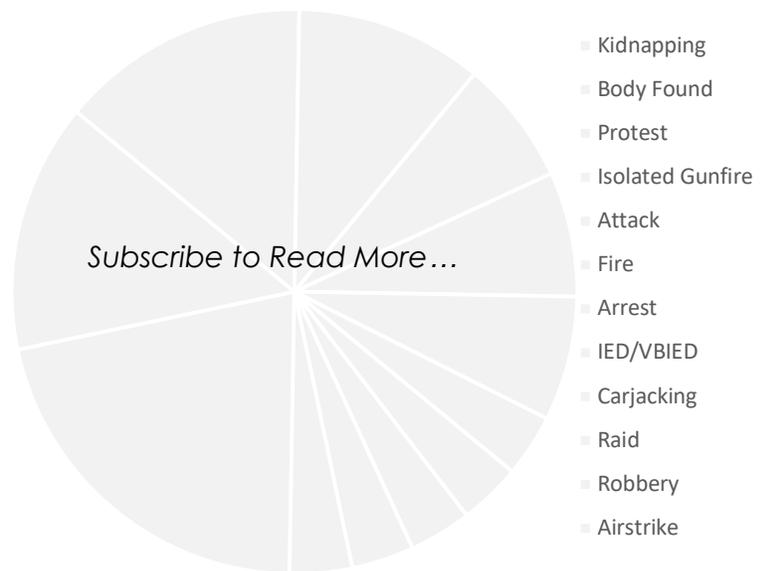
### 3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Surge in bodies found and kidnappings; decrease in number of fatalities

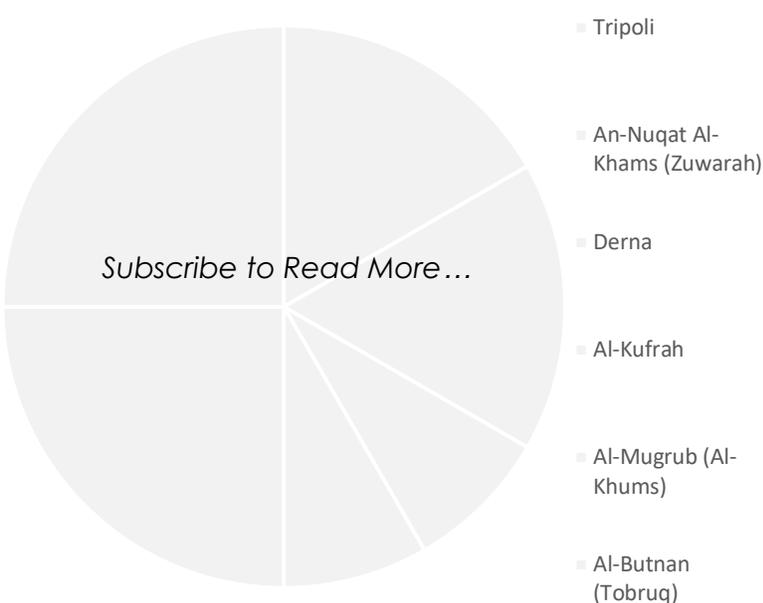
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



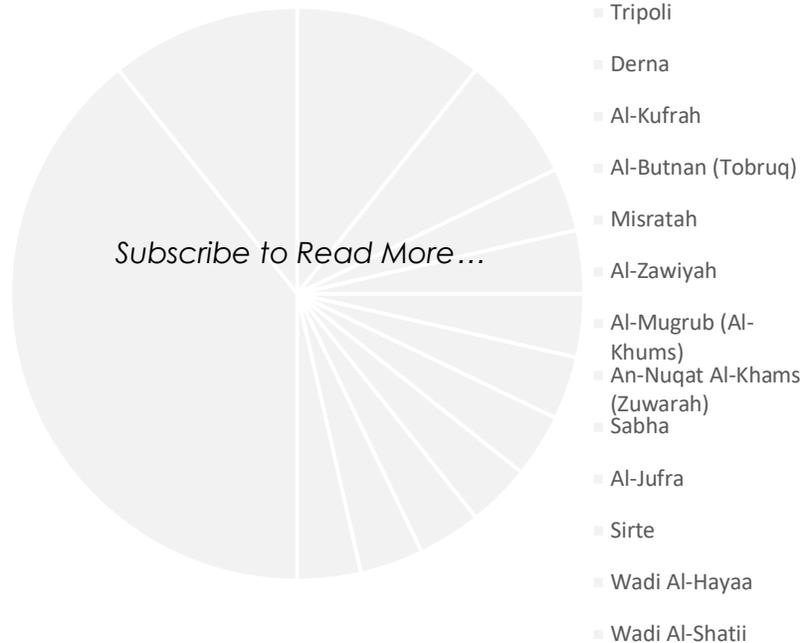
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



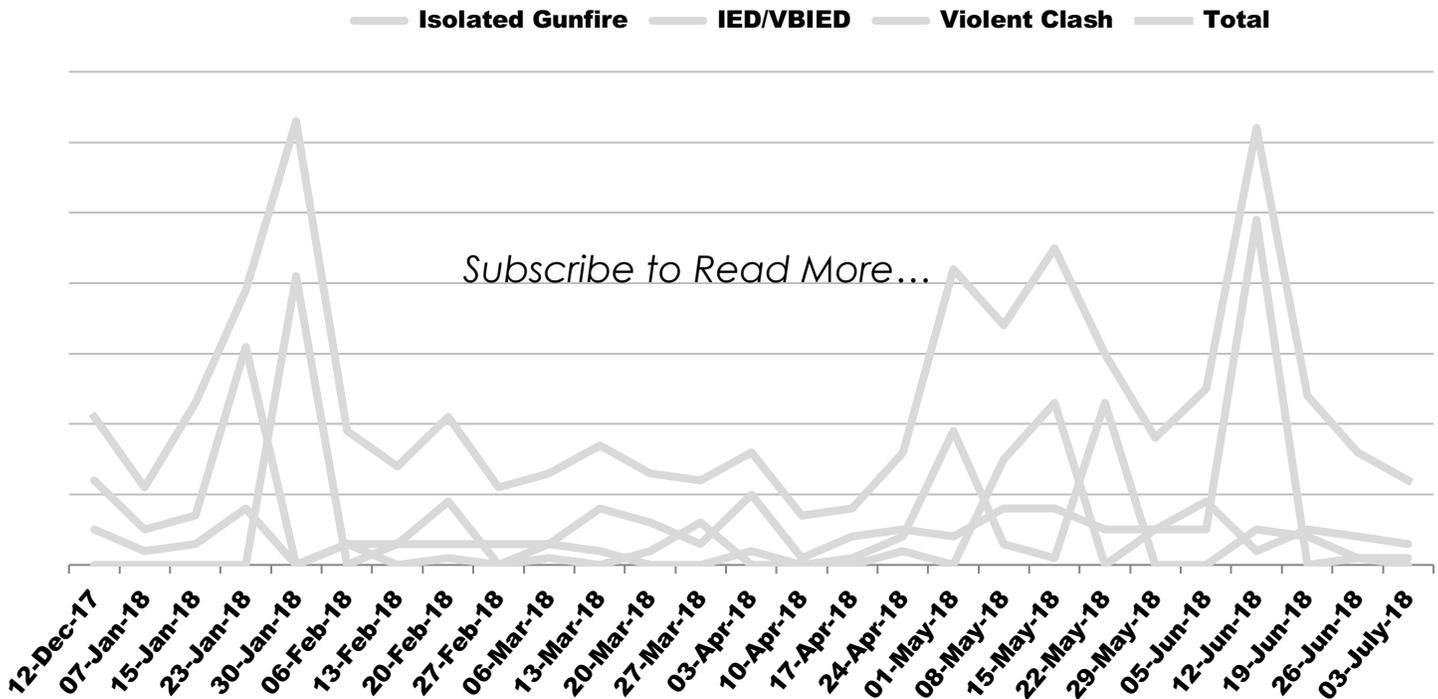
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



## Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



## Data Analysis

Whispering Bell recorded this week a total of 12 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 24 deaths reported last week and 62 the week before. There were no violent clashes over the course of the reporting period, though the number of kidnappings increased. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 3 cases of isolated gunfire, 1 robbery, 4 protests, 2 fires, 1 IED/VBIED incident, 1 airstrike, and 6 kidnappings.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 15 incidents, including 11 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. Whispering Bell recorded in Tripoli a drive-by shooting incident. Unidentified assailants riding in a white Jeep vehicle reportedly killed two individuals in a drive-by shooting in front of Tripoli Mall at approximately 1800hrs on 30 Jun. Initial reports suggest the drive-by shooting was an alleged assassination attempt by the Deterrence Apparatus, former Special Deterrence Force (SDF). Meanwhile, in a separate incident, reports suggest three gunmen riding a 2002 Hyundai Elantra attempted to carjack a 2013 Hyundai vehicle, resulting in the injury of the driver, in Tripoli's Islamic Neighborhood at approximately 2100hrs on 05 Jul. The gunmen reportedly shot the driver in the leg when he refused to hand over his vehicle.

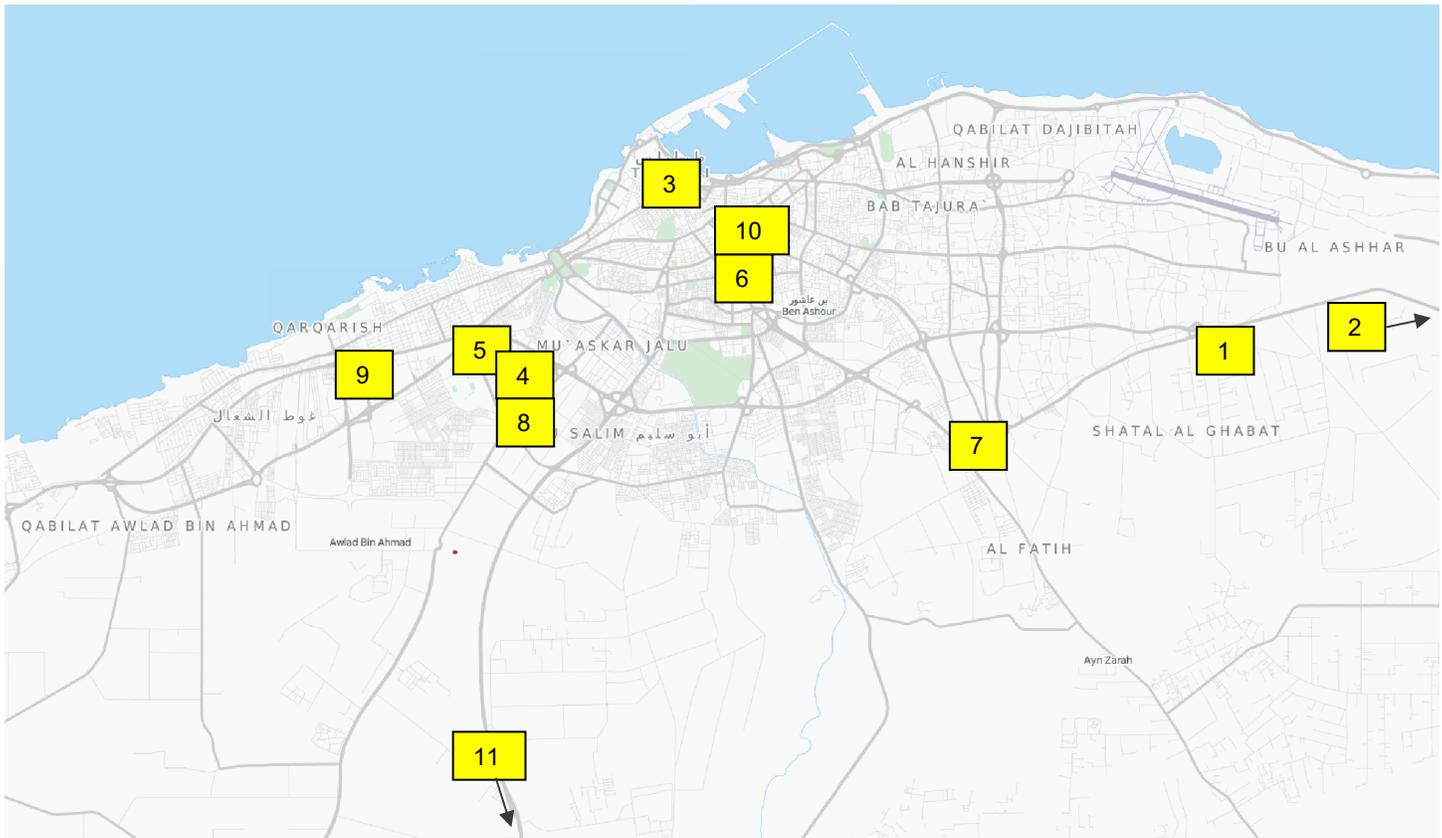
The week in Central Libya was marked by an attack on the Al-Hassouna plant site. An unidentified armed group kidnapped three Filipinos and one Korean technician from the Al-Hassouna plant site near Ash Shwayrif, at approximately 0700hrs on 06 Jul. Three Libyan guards were also kidnapped, though they were later released, whilst the fate of the foreign workers remains unknown. In Sirte, local reports from 03 Jul suggest an unidentified armed group kidnapped two students from the Gdadfa tribe near the city's eastern entrance. According to the reports, the students were kidnapped while walking to sit their final end-of-term examinations at the Sirte University in the Abu Hadi area. Neither the identity of the perpetrators nor the motive behind the kidnapping are known, though the victims' may have been targeted due to their tribal affiliation to the former regime.

Turning to southern Libya, the Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of two Libyan Air Force (LAF) officers of the Libyan National Army (LNA) East of Waddan. Meanwhile, local reports suggest unidentified gunmen attacked the fields of the Great Man-Made river near Tazerbu in South Eastern Libya, resulting in the death of two technicians, and the kidnapping of two guards, on 07 Jul. In Libya's East, bodies were found in Tobruq and Derna.

In the East, Derna, despite the LNA's proclaimed end of combat operations, militants carried out a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) attack targeting the LNA in a central residential area of the city, resulting in the death of an LNA soldier on 04 Jul.

## 4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

### Ghneiwa & offshoot militia violent clash; potential tensions over Trabelsi



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (30 Jun) Two killed in drive-by shooting in front of Tripoli Mall
2. (30 Jun) Al-Kaniat militia raid Central Security Forces CP
3. (01 Jul) High school students protest education grievances
4. (01 Jul) Fire breaks out in workshop near football club
5. (04 Jul) Football fans set fire & sabotage stadium
6. (04 Jul) Body found near Tripoli Central Hospital
7. (04 Jul) Vehicle stolen in front of house in Al-Fornaj
8. (05 Jul) Football fans hold demonstration
9. (05 Jul) Carjacking injures driver in Islamic Neighborhood
10. (05 Jul) Masked gunmen arrest woman beggar and son
11. (07 Jul) Ghneiwa & offshoot militia violent clash

#### Militia clashes and tensions

Reports indicate heavy clashes erupted on 07 Jul between the Ghneiwa militia and the Protection Force Apparatus, an armed group led by Abu Azza, which was recently dissolved by the Ghneiwa militia's leader, Kikli. Clashes erupted at approximately 1800hrs on 07 Jul, near Tripoli's Airport Road and in Al-Hadba area, when Ghneiwa militia reportedly raided the Headquarters for Combating Illegal Immigration, under Abu Azza's control. The clashes resulted in the death of Abu Azza and wounded some Sub-Saharan African illegal migrants, though the precise number of fatalities and casualties remains unclear. The clashes resulted in multiple road closures with reports suggesting clashes continued until Ghneiwa militiamen established control over Abu Azza-affiliated positions. The clashes stem from a recent dispute between Kikli, the Ghneiwa militia leader, and Abu Azza. Kikli recently dismissed Abu Azza and dissolved his battalion.

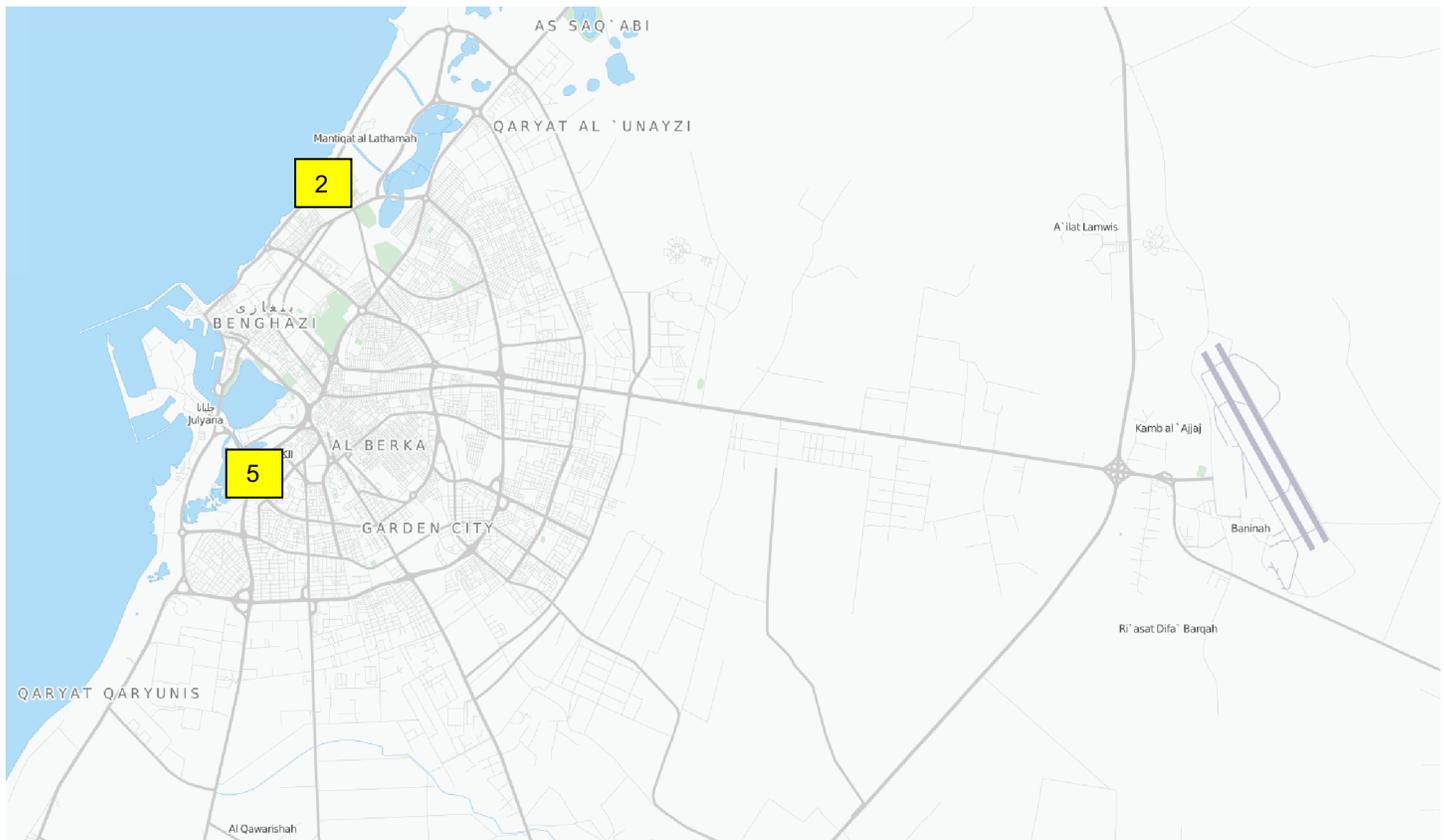
Whispering Bell sources indicate the motive behind Abu Azza's dismissal was due to allegations of facilitating the escape of a prominent inmate from a Ghneiwa-controlled prison. There are likely other motives behind the dismissal and tensions between the two, including potential coup plans by Abu Azza. Regardless, tensions are likely in the short term across the capital city between Ghneiwa militia members and remaining Abu Azza loyalists.

#### Trabelsi's new prominent position

The Government of National Accord (GNA) issued a decree ordering the promotion of Emad Trabelsi, the leader of the Zintan Special Operations Force (SOF), as President of the General Security Directorate on 06 Jul. While the precise motive behind the decree remains unclear, granting Trabelsi additional powers and a wider mandate could be a GNA attempt to secure its position in light of its decreasing popularity among Tripoli militias, especially given the context of uncertainty over oil revenues. The GNA could be aiming to thwart any potential dissent from Tripoli's militias.

## 5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

### Al-Saiqa Special Forces Commander Al-Werfalli escapes



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (02 Jul) Police seize large shipment of narcotics
2. (04 Jul) Red Cross & Libyan Red Crescent deliver aid
3. (06 Jul) Security directorate capture fuel smuggler
4. (04 Jul) Al-Werfalli flees, arrives in Benghazi
5. (03 Jul) Alleged AGOCO HQ raid in support of Haftar

#### Al-Werfalli reportedly in Benghazi

Reports suggest the Libyan National Army's (LNA) Al-Saiqa Commander, Mahmoud Al-Werfalli, fled from prison has prison in Al-Marj and arrived in Benghazi on 04 Jul. Al-Werfalli previously handed himself over to Eastern authorities following international pressure from the International Criminal Court (ICC), demanding his handover for alleged extrajudicial killings and summary executions. There is a strong possibility Al-Werfalli was released by authorities given his popularity in the East. The latest reports from 05 Jul state that the ICC has issued a second arrest warrant for Al-Werfalli's involvement in alleged war crimes.

#### Cannabis shipment seized

Reports suggest Al-Najda's Police Department seized a shipment of narcotics, approximately 45 kgs of cannabis. Local authorities continue arrest campaigns targeting narcotic dealers, though there are no incentives for criminal networks to cease trading. Tramadol pills and cannabis resin remain the most common narcotics found across Libya.

#### Alleged AGOCO HQ raid

Conflicting reports emerged over the raid of the Arabian Gulf Oil Company (AGOCO) headquarters in Benghazi on 03 Jul, by civilians demanding the administration to issue a statement praising Haftar's decision to hand over control of oil ports to the eastern-based National Oil Corporation (NOC). However, the Chairman of AGOCO's management committee, Mohammed Bel Qasim Bin Shitwan, denied the circulated reports. Bin Shitwan stated that the company's headquarters are under the protection of the Libyan National Army (LNA), noting that such false reports will not undermine the company's support of the LNA forces and the General Command.

#### Fuel smuggler captured

Local reports from 06 Jul suggest the General Investigation Unit of the Benghazi Security Directorate foiled an attempted smuggling operation, noting the seizure of a truck loaded with large quantities of fuel.

## 6. What's next

### Further divisions will undermine West's ability to hold its position

#### POLITICAL FORECAST

Amid growing resentment towards the GNA and institutions in the West, along with widespread corruption allegations, Haftar may gain additional support for his decision to hand over control of the oil ports and Crescent area to the Eastern-based NOC under the Interim Government. However, despite consolidating his position and, according to observers, appearing stronger than the GNA ahead of the elections, Haftar's instrumental use of oil as a political bargaining chip could backfire in the medium and long term. Meanwhile, Khalid Al-Mishri, the head of the High Council of State (HCS) will likely continue to attempt to revive military unification talks, both to sideline any efforts from Cairo and to assert his presence and remain relevant as attention shifts to the East-West divide. Meanwhile, Italy's diplomatic efforts with the West will continue to raise tensions locally. Regardless of whether the nationwide security environment facilitates holding elections by Dec 2018, there is a strong possibility potential results will be contested. It is likely that tensions will increase as the Paris Summit deadline to hold elections approaches.

#### WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In an article for "*The National Interest*", the author, Edward P. Joseph, states that Libya's old 1951 constitution stands as a solid framework in which successful elections can be held. "The fact remains that there are no ground rules either for the election or the aftermath when elected officials attempt to take office and govern. Without an agreed and viable constitutional mechanism, holding elections in Libya could reignite conflict and potentially seal the country's division. Instead of trying to cobble together an agreement on a new draft, the way forward is to go back to Libya's original, successful constitution, first drafted in 1951. Without a framework for power-sharing and power-wielding, spoilers will remain outside the process, setting the stage for more chaos and instability in the run-up or aftermath of the poll in December. The current, disputed draft constitution, meant to be adopted by September under the Paris plan, requires a constitutional referendum by two-thirds of voters. Aside from imposing additional security and logistical burdens, the referendum is unlikely to generate much public support given the minimal consultation conducted by the woefully unrepresentative Drafting Assembly. Moreover, even if the draft could survive a poll, parliament would then have to pass a new electoral law." said Joseph.

#### SECURITY FORECAST

Tensions in Tripoli could escalate into sporadic security incidents and/or clashes following the GNA decree to appoint Emad Trabelsi, leader of the Zintani Special Operations Force (SOF), as President of the General Security Directorate. Clashes could erupt, and militia members could oppose being under Trabelsi's command and disobey orders. Meanwhile, in the wider West, Al-Zawiya, tensions could escalate amid growing local signs of opposition to the GNA and corruption allegations. Along the Coastal Road near Garaboulli, Al-Kani militia from Tarhunah will likely continue to expand its influence by establishing checkpoints, though this could lead to tensions with other Tripoli-based militias. In the Oil Crescent area, LNA battalions will continue to mobilize from Derna and remain on alert amid unconfirmed reports of suspicious movements from Sirte. In the South, alleged Chadian armed groups' movements will continue to disrupt the security situation and could potentially result in increased criminal activity, including kidnappings and/or direct attacks, and especially on the road between Braj and the Jufra National District.

#### LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an article for "*Atlantic Council*", the authors, Emadeddin Zahri and Dr. Mohamed Fouad, highlight how the United Nations and the West have failed Libya "The French have come up with yet a new "road map." Except for the Italians, UN and Western diplomats hailed this French "breakthrough." Heads of the four leading factions within Libya came to a last-minute summit at the urging of French President Emmanuel Macron. The four Libyan delegates refused to sign the agreement and the event instead become a race to prove non-compliance to their respective Libyan supporters. Despite the support from the West, the GNA has done little to convince Libyans that it is anything other than a corrupt body whose members receive hefty salaries and perks that surpass those of Western diplomats sitting across the negotiating table. The absence of a security force has allowed Libya to be the main launching pad for migrants going to Europe. Recognizing the total impotence of the GNA, Italy created a mechanism whereby EU funds would be channeled to a militia leader, Ahmad Dabbashi, who was given an official title and was tasked with stopping smugglers. The authors were told by a high-level EU official that the French were not happy with the arrangement and encouraged other smugglers to oppose Dabbashi. This inter-European rivalry and discord is escalating with devastating effects on the Libyan political process." said Zahri and Fouad.

# About Whispering Bell



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