



1. The Big Picture

Oil production recovering, yet political uncertainty remains

This week was marked by reports of a gradual resumption of oil exports and an increase in Libya's output. Oil production is currently estimated at 850k barrels per day (bpd).

However, challenges remain for Libya's oil and gas sector and political uncertainty could translate into security threats. The underlying causes that sparked the June-July 2018 crisis are yet to be addressed, including tensions over control of oil and gas revenues. As the 10 Dec deadline to hold elections approaches, there is a possibility the political and military divides would become further entrenched should the Government of National Accord (GNA) fail to solve core economic issues in Libya. In the East, the Libyan National Army's (LNA) challenge lies in its ability to protect the Oil Crescent against potential attacks.

On the political front, uncertainty is growing as deep institutional divides remain unchanged and amid rising local anti-Italy sentiment in the West. On 09 Aug, the Italian Embassy in Tripoli denied allegations that Ambassador Giuseppe Perrone requested elections to be delayed. The statement came in response to a statement by the House of Representatives (HoR), which strongly condemned Perrone's comments, declaring him a persona non grata and calling for his replacement. Meanwhile, the GNA also stressed on 07 Aug that Libya's planned elections' schedule is to be decided by Libyans alone. This position clearly marked a GNA understanding of the negative impact that Perrone's comments could have on its election prospects.

In Tripoli, conflated grievances, including over power cuts and the higher cost of

living, have prompted locals to back the upcoming elections, which increases pressure on the GNA to implement urgent economic measures.

From a security standpoint, the prevailing anti-Italy sentiment has manifested itself in sporadic incidents involving Italian nationals and interests in the West, while militants continue to pose a threat to the security situation in the Oil Crescent, including Islamic State (IS) and other elements affiliated to former Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) commander Ibrahim Jathran. There were unconfirmed and emerging reports of a mobilization 50 kms from Sirte in anticipation of an attack on the Oil Crescent. According to the unconfirmed reports, the Greater Sirte Operations Room remains on high alert. Thus far, there is no indication or reliable information to suggest an attack is imminent. Whispering Bell has received multiple reports in the past month suggesting militants could mount another attack in the Oil Crescent.

Meanwhile, reports suggest the Libyan National Army (LNA) Air Force conducted two airstrikes targeting Benghazi Defence Brigades (BDB) positions near As Saddadah on 11 Aug. There were no reports of fatalities, casualties, and/or physical damage. The LNA aircraft took off from the Al Jufra airbase. The latest reports indicate the presence of a coalition of militants, including the BDB, Chadian mercenaries and other elements affiliated to Ibrahim Jathran, near As Saddadah.

KEY POINTS

- Oil production at 850k bpd
- Rising anti-Italy sentiment in West
- LNA airstrike in As Saddadah



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2. National Security Map

Unconfirmed reports of an imminent attack targeting the Oil Crescent area

Key

THREAT INDICATORS

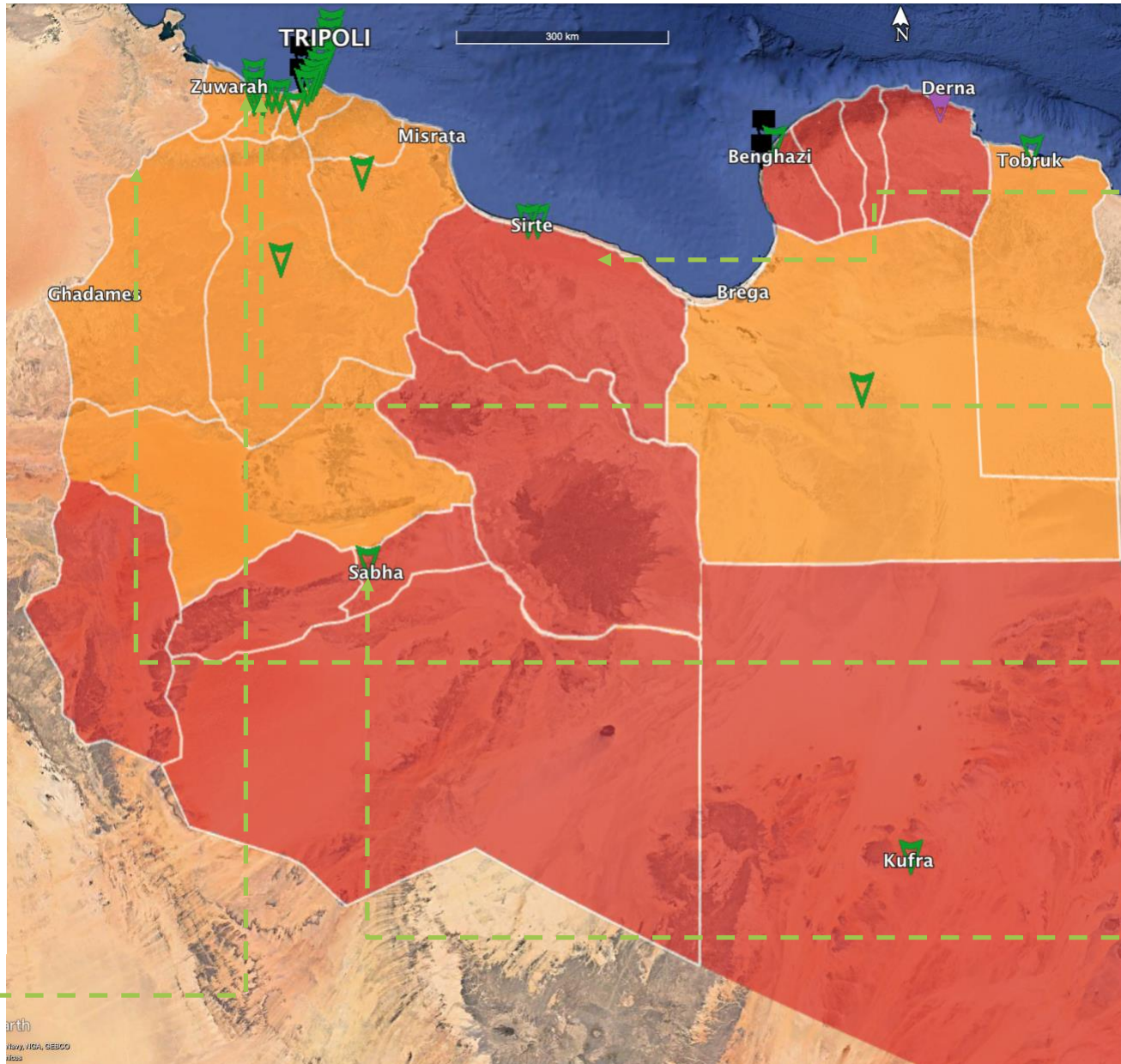
- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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

According to reports, the road between Kufra and Jalu remains insecure due to the recent surge in kidnappings by criminal groups along the road. Eyewitnesses in the area suggest multiple abandoned vehicles were reported along the road, noting that the victims were likely kidnapped and forced to leave their vehicles behind. Additional reports suggest criminal groups, including Tebu and Chadian elements, remain heavily active in Libya's South, particularly in the areas near Sabha, Brak, Samnu, Al-Fuqaha and Umm Al-Aranib. Moreover, reports suggest kidnappings for ransom are widespread in the mentioned areas, noting the high rates of ransom demanded.

Reports suggest an exchange of gunfire at a petrol station resulted in the injury of an individual in Al-Ajaylat on 08 Aug.



Reports indicate Sirte security authorities warned of an imminent Islamic State (IS) attack targeting the Oil Crescent and areas near Sirte. The warning closely followed suspicious movements 90 kms East of Sirte (Checkpoint 90) along the Coastal Road, with reports of approximately 20 IS militants riding in 7 vehicles in the area.

On 08 Aug, Mellitah Oil and Gas trade union expelled an expatriate security advisor, reportedly employed by a foreign oil company operating under a joint venture in the Mellitah complex, accusing him of interference in Libyan political affairs and making defamatory allegations against some Libyan nationals.

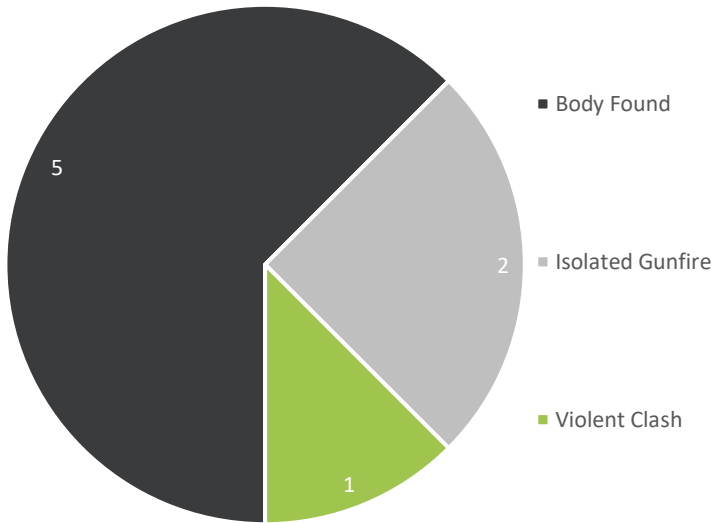
The Government of National Accord (GNA) MoD announced Tunisian authorities closed the Dehiba-Wazen border crossing to all movement except emergency vehicles and other exceptional cases on 09 Aug due to ongoing protests by Tunisian locals. The latest reports suggest the Wazen crossing was reopened, though Ras Ajdair remains closed.

An unidentified group reportedly raided the Scout Commission Office in Sabha and robbed furniture, computers, and training equipment, in the evening on 04 Aug. There were no further security incidents reported.

3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Significant decrease in nationwide fatalities; robberies on the rise

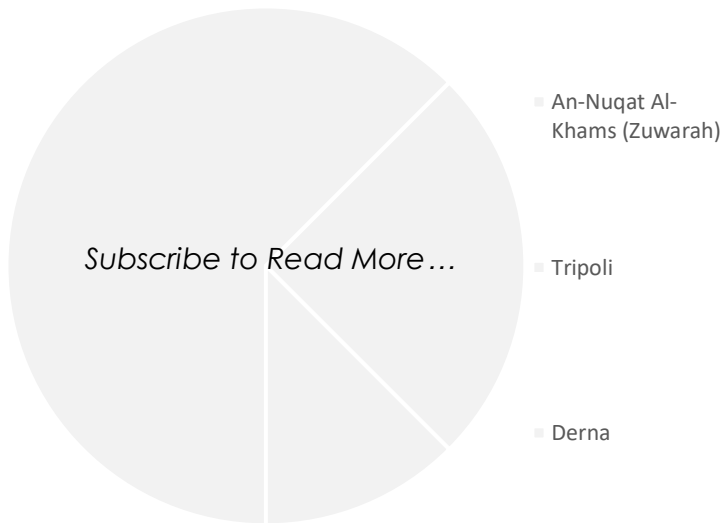
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



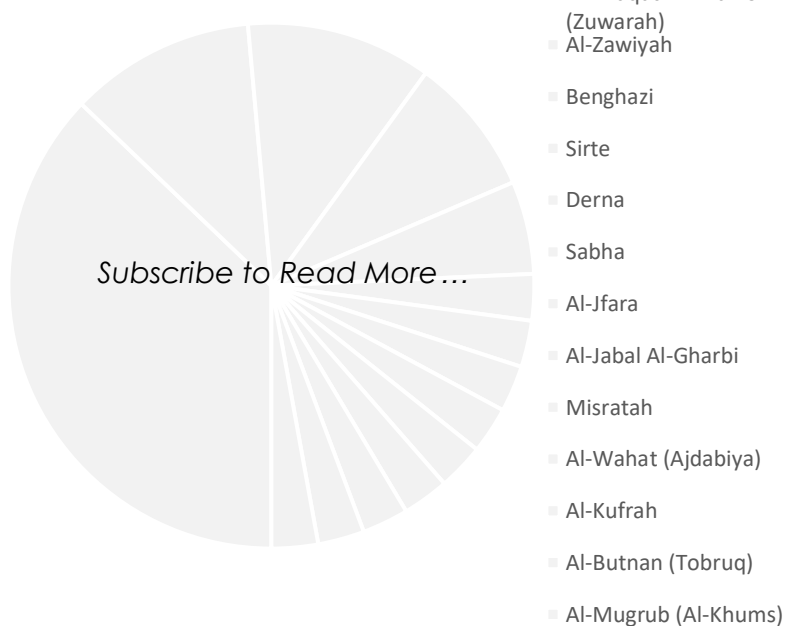
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



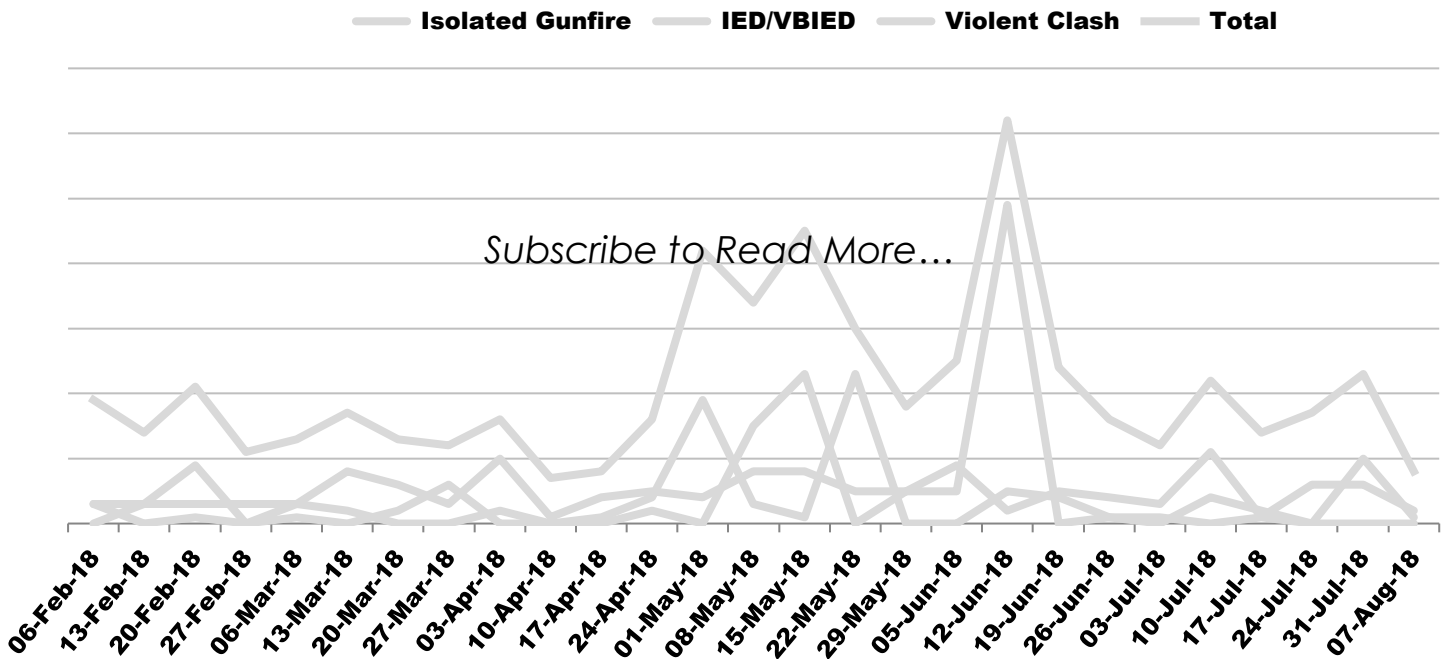
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



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Data Analysis

Whispering Bell recorded this week a total of 8 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 23 deaths reported last week and 17 the week before. This week there was a significant decrease in the overall nationwide fatalities numbers. While West of the capital city continues to present the highest numbers of fatalities across Libya, this week most of the fatalities were recorded in the An-Nuqat Al-Khams district, with no fatalities in Al-Zawiya. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 6 robberies, 5 cases of isolated gunfire, 5 protests, 1 episode of violent clash, and 2 kidnappings.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 24 incidents, including 13 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. Whispering Bell recorded in Tripoli a surge in criminal activity and incidents. On 06 Aug, reports suggest unidentified assailants riding a black Samsung vehicle with tinted windows and no license plate, carjacked a Toyota Hilux vehicle near Tripoli's Bab Al-Aziziya area in the evening on 06 Aug. Assailants commonly ride in vehicles with tinted windows and no license plates during their carjacking attempts. Meanwhile, an unidentified assailant reportedly shot dead a traffic police officer near the Al-Fornaj roundabout in the morning on 07 Aug. The latest reports suggest a dispute between a bus driver and the policeman resulted in the officer's death.

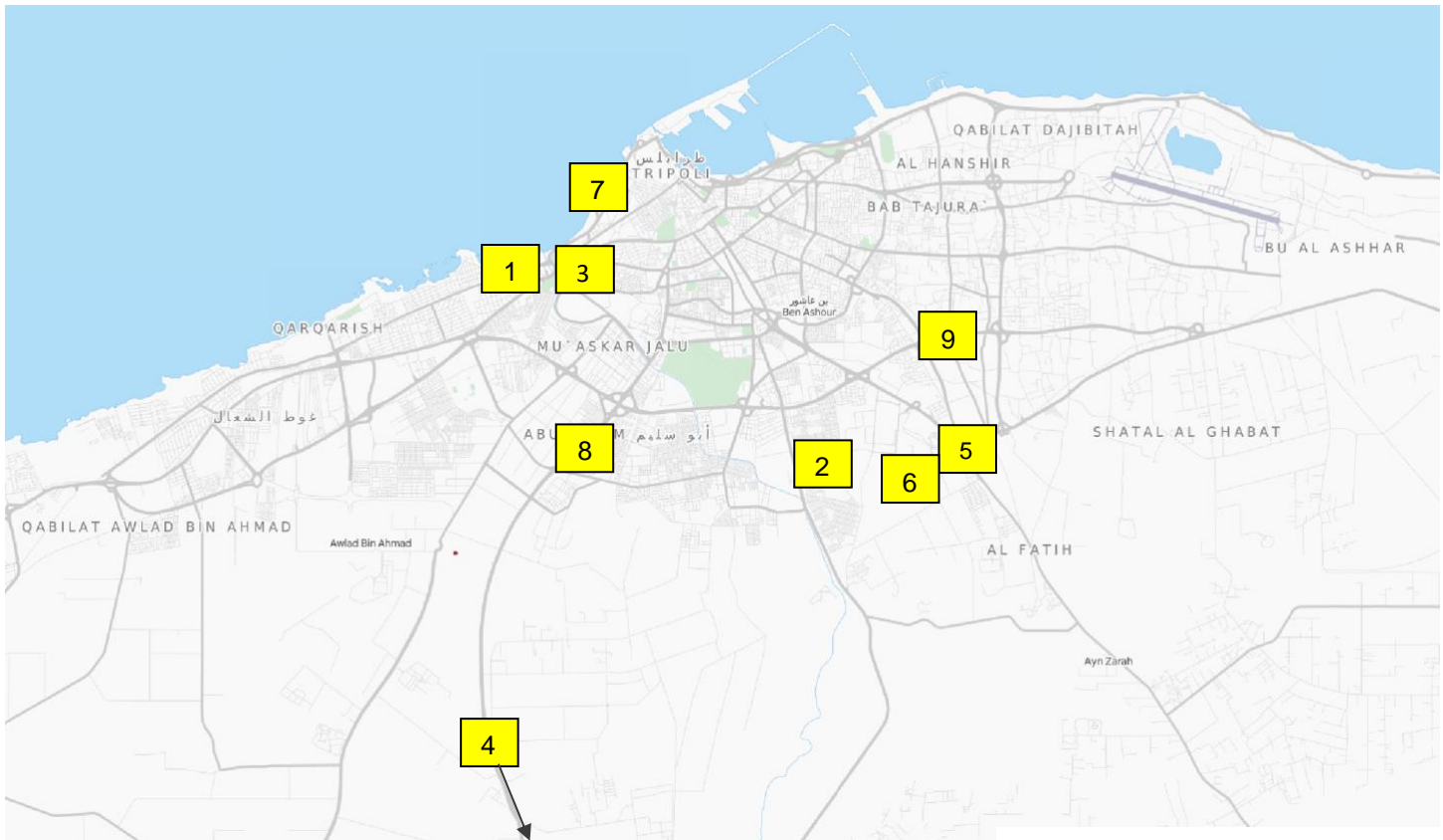
The week in Central Libya was marked by renewed concerns over suspicious IS movements. Reports indicate Sirte security authorities warned of an imminent IS attack targeting the Oil Crescent and areas near Sirte. The warning closely followed suspicious movements 90 kms East of Sirte (Checkpoint 90) along the Coastal Road, with reports of approximately 20 IS militants riding in 7 vehicles in the area.

Turning to southern Libya, an unidentified group reportedly raided the Scout Commission Office in Sabha and robbed furniture, computers, and training equipment, in the evening on 04 Aug. There were no further security incidents reported. Reports suggest the location of the office is in a conflict area where outlawed groups frequently carry out criminal activities. Sabha continues to witness sporadic security incidents on a daily basis due to the security vacuum across the city.

In Eastern Libya, Derna, sporadic clashes continued following the expiration of Haftar's deadline for militants to surrender on 08 Aug. The LNA killed a commander of the Derna Protection Force (DPF), identified as Fathallah Al-Hassi, in Derna's oil city. In Benghazi, indiscriminate gunfire and criminal activity continue to represent the most common security incidents recorded across the eastern city.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Gunmen kidnap & threaten LIA employees to oppose planned HQ move



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (05 Aug) Anti-Italy protest in Hay Al-Andalus area
2. (05 Aug) Unidentified assailants kidnap man in Al-Hadba area
3. (06 Aug) Carjacking of Toyota Hilux vehicle near Bab Al-Aziziya
4. (07 Aug) Italian nationals briefly detained on Tripoli's Airport Road
5. (07 Aug) Unidentified assailant shoots & kills police officer in Fornaj
6. (07 Aug) Vehicle catches fire in front of University of Tripoli
7. (08 Aug) Gunmen securing LIA HQ threaten, abduct employees
8. (10 Aug) Militia attacks, evicts Tawergha IDPs from camp
9. (11 Aug) Celebratory gunfire during militia leader's wedding

Gunmen threaten LIA employees

The Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) issued a statement accusing the brigade in charge of securing their HQ in Tripoli Tower of kidnapping multiple employees and threatening LIA executives. The gunmen reportedly kidnapped LIA employees, taking them to the LIA's previous HQ in Tripoli. The gunmen also reportedly ordered executives not to comply with the LIA Chairman's demands. The gunmen reportedly sought to oppose the LIA's plans to move its HQ to another location. Institutions and businesses operating across the capital city remain exposed to similar disturbances and militia interference. The LIA has long been at the centre of disputes over leadership and corruption allegations. The latest reports suggest the LIA will move from its location in Tripoli.

Al-Daman militia movements

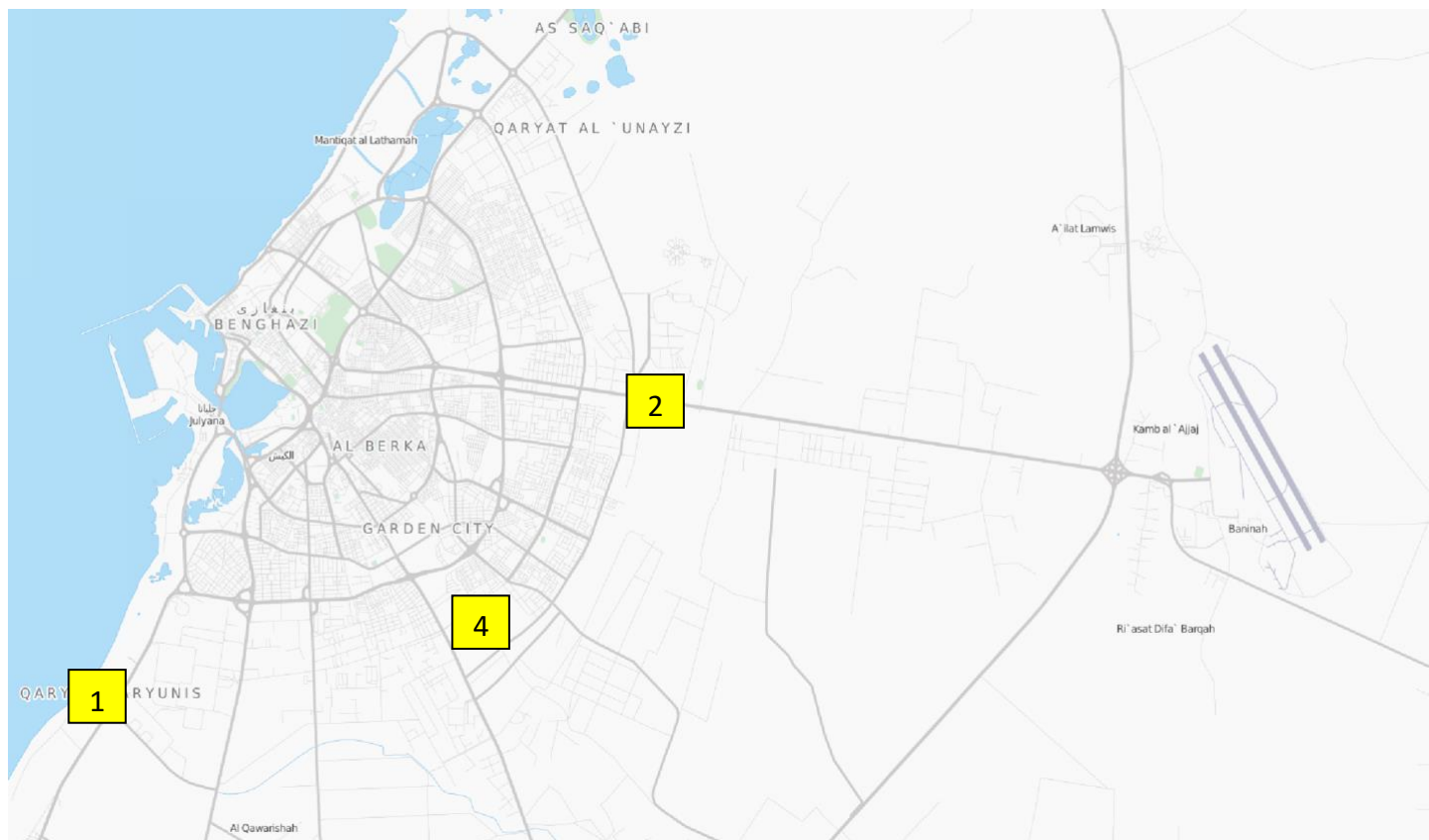
Reports indicate increased Al-Daman militia movements and checkpoints in Tripoli's Beir Al-Osta Milad area following reports of the kidnapping of one of its members in the evening on 06 Aug.

Militia evicts Tawergha IDPs

Reports suggest approximately 60 militiamen riding in 20 vehicles raided the Tawergha internally displaced people (IDP) camp on Tripoli's Airport Road in the early hours of 10 Aug. The reports also indicate the Ghneiwa militia, also known as the Abu Salim Central Security Force, conducted the raid and arrested at least 80 Tawerghans. The Abu Salim Municipal Council justified the raid on the basis of what it described as growing criminal activity within the camp, which houses approximately 2000 Tawergha IDPs. There were no reports of casualties or fatalities, though the raid resulted in physical damage and prompted Tawergha IDPs to flee the camp. Multiple international organizations and governments condemned the displacement of Tawerghans. The incident will likely further undermine the Government of National Accord's (GNA) public image.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Benghazi Rescue Department seizes underground alcohol factory



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (10 Aug) Man injured by indiscriminate gunfire
2. (12 Aug) Soldier killed by indiscriminate gunfire
3. (08 Aug) Authorities raid underground alcohol factory
4. (11 Aug) Armed assailants attack Rescue Department

Underground alcohol factory seized

Local reports suggest members of the Benghazi Rescue Department seized an underground alcohol factory and arrested individuals operating in the factory. According to the Information Office of the Department of Najda, the defendant was previously arrested, though following his release after serving his sentence, he set up an additional alcohol factory. Following the raid, the defendants were referred to the department for legal action. Alcohol consumption and production are prohibited by law across Libya .

Indiscriminate gunfire injures man

Local reports suggest a man was injured by indiscriminate gunfire in Benghazi's Qanfouda area. Information related to the incident remains unclear. The man's condition was reportedly stable after he received treatment at a nearby hospital. Indiscriminate gunfire remains widespread across the country due to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

6. What's next

Institutional divide widens; growing calls for Central Bank of Libya audit

POLITICAL FORECAST

Rome reaffirmed its position and commitment to hold a conference in Nov 2018. Despite rising anti-Italy sentiment and following controversial comments by its Ambassador, Italy is yet to reconsider its commitment to delay elections. Core issues over the Libyan economy will continue to represent an important source of tension between East and West, and among citizens in Tripoli. Meanwhile, there is a possibility the House of Representatives (HoR) constitution referendum bill vote will be delayed yet again, which would reinforce the narrative prioritizing elections before a constitution. In the East, officials will continue to wave allegations targeting GNA officials. The interim PM, Abdullah Al-Thinni, stated that the Libyan government is a sovereign state, but accused the GNA PM Fayez Al-Sarraj and Deputy PM Ahmed Maiteeg of allowing the Italian Ambassador to interfere in domestic affairs. The GNA will find it increasingly difficult to overcome such a narrative, both in Tripoli and in the East. Beyond this, Haftar seems to have clarified his position regarding the elections, potentially discrediting a candidacy and alluding instead to a military commander role.

SECURITY FORECAST

This week saw an increase in criminal militia activity across the capital city. Some militias will likely continue to use coercion to protect their interests while others could engage in further opportunistic crime amid local grievances related to a higher cost of living and lengthy power cuts as temperatures soar. Meanwhile, West of the capital city, as authorities' anti-smuggling operations take effect, tensions could escalate further given the lack of alternative means of income for some locals. Despite a reopening of the Wazzin crossing, Ras Ajdair's ongoing closure will remain a source of tension. Suspicious IS movements and the presence of militants in Central Libya could potentially result in attacks targeting the LNA, though an attack on the Oil Crescent would remain farfetched. In Benghazi, authorities' efforts to combat criminal activity related to narcotics and smuggling will continue to raise tensions. In Libya's South, Chadian groups will continue to pose a challenge. There is a potential for recent clashes between Libya-based Chadian rebel group CCMSR and the military to expand into Libyan territory, including near Qatrun and Umm Al-Aranib.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

International Crisis Group published a report entitled "After the Showdown in Libya's Oil Crescent", providing an overview of the current situation in Libya. The report states "The nearly month-long standoff over crude oil export terminals in eastern Libya is over. But another could soon emerge if the underlying causes of the conflict are not addressed. On 11 July, the Libyan National Army (LNA), the force that controls the east, announced that it would resume collaboration with the National Oil Corporation (NOC) based in the western city of Tripoli, reducing the risk of deepening the country's institutional divides and worsening its already profound economic crisis. But Libyan and international stakeholders must capitalise on the LNA's decision by easing competition for control over the country's resources and financial institutions and tensions over the mismanagement of public funds. Otherwise, popular grievances will persist and renewed armed confrontation is possible... The events in the oil crescent should remind everyone that Libya's conflict has economic as well as political and military dimensions. Any strategy aimed at stabilising the country must address all three components in an integrated manner. Policymakers – including the UN, relevant member states and Libyan authorities – recognise the conflict's many layers."

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an article for *Middle East Eye*, Nadine Dahan discusses the far-ranging consequences of power cuts on Libyans' lives. "Power cuts have become an almost constant feature in Libya. But as temperatures in the oil-rich country reached 46C degrees last month, most of the western area was plunged into darkness for periods lasting as long as 14 hours in some cities, sparking protests.... With temperatures reaching unusual highs, many Libyans have resorted to spending extended periods of time by the sea to escape the heat of their homes during power outages. Fariha, a resident of Zuwara, said: "What kind of a life is this? We don't even have the basics. Some homes lose running water when the power cuts off. Imagine you have a small baby or elderly member of the family and they are left without necessities like water or medical machinery like oxygen pumps." Business owners have also suffered from the cuts, especially shopkeepers and those involved in the food business. Regular and unannounced cuts have also contributed to the inflation of food prices across the country. With fridges, freezers and other coolers constantly losing power, food waste has increased, forcing traders to increase stock prices to compensate for losses. Additionally, when the power goes out, mobile-phone and internet signals vanish, inhibiting communication".

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