

# 1. The Big Picture

## Tripoli state of emergency; clashes growing more complex

Heavy clashes in Tripoli threaten to change the configuration of forces and undermine the relatively stable security environment that has prevailed over the past year. With the latest involvement of Misrata's Al-Bunyan Marsous (BAM), a return to the status quo prior to the clashes would seem increasingly farfetched. Instead, it could be argued that all the conditions leading up to a new security landscape are present in Tripoli.

Today, there is mounting evidence to suggest Tripoli's clashes are now at the initial "tactical" phase where factions take up positions, both physically and politically. A second, and possibly longer, period would unfold once alliances are set and factions begin attempts to gain legitimacy and consolidate power. There is a strong possibility the involvement of foreign forces, including Zintan, Misrata, and pro-Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) will shift alliances within Tripoli in the short to medium terms. A new configuration of forces could be underway, especially as Tripoli militias' hold over territory fades and factions begin to disintegrate. Turf wars are likely within this "second" stage of the clashes.

On the security front, the clashes have created a security vacuum across Tripoli with multiple robberies and other criminal activity reported. The escape of at least 400 prisoners, whose affiliation and identity remains unclear, would pose a long-term nationwide threat. Meanwhile, BAM's involvement and reinforcements from the central regions would present the Islamic State (IS) with an ideal opportunity to expand its operations.

While Al-Kaniat's rapid advances would indicate prior coordination with other groups, the involvement of some Misrata and Zintani elements in the "planning" phase of the operation remains uncorroborated. It is likely

that some anti-Government of National Accord (GNA) elements tacitly supported Al-Kaniat's move, either before or during the clashes. There is mounting evidence, including multiple statements, to suggest Al-Kaniat's move lacks a clear political objective and is concerned with short-term gains. There are unconfirmed reports from sources suggesting Al-Kaniat's 7th Brigade is only intent on controlling the Salah Al-Dein and Khallat Al-Forjan areas, while the 22nd Brigade would seize the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade's (TRB) Na'am Camp. Al-Kaniat's apolitical stance, whether genuine or fabricated, would do little, however, to prevent other factions from advancing political agendas of their own in Tripoli by exploiting the situation.

Regardless of the outcome(s), politically, Al-Kaniat has proven capability and intent to exploit the GNA's decreasing popularity. It is with this perceived success in mind that other factions, both Tripoli-based renegades and "foreign" elements, will gradually begin to resent their marginalization from Tripoli's core militias. This will leave the GNA with little capacity to manoeuvre to ensure its survival, let alone maintain healthy relations with militias nominally under its control. Alternatively, in the long-term, the situation could also provide a stimulus to hold elections, should factions obtain enough assurances that the current government, or its main officials, would not run for office in any future - potentially unified - government. For now, the current situation reduces the likelihood of holding elections by Dec 2018.

### KEY POINTS

- New & emerging security landscape
- Misrata BAM forces involved
- Al-Kaniat intent on short-term gains



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# 2. National Security Map

U.S. AFRICOM airstrike targets prominent IS militant in Bani Walid; SVBIED in Sabha

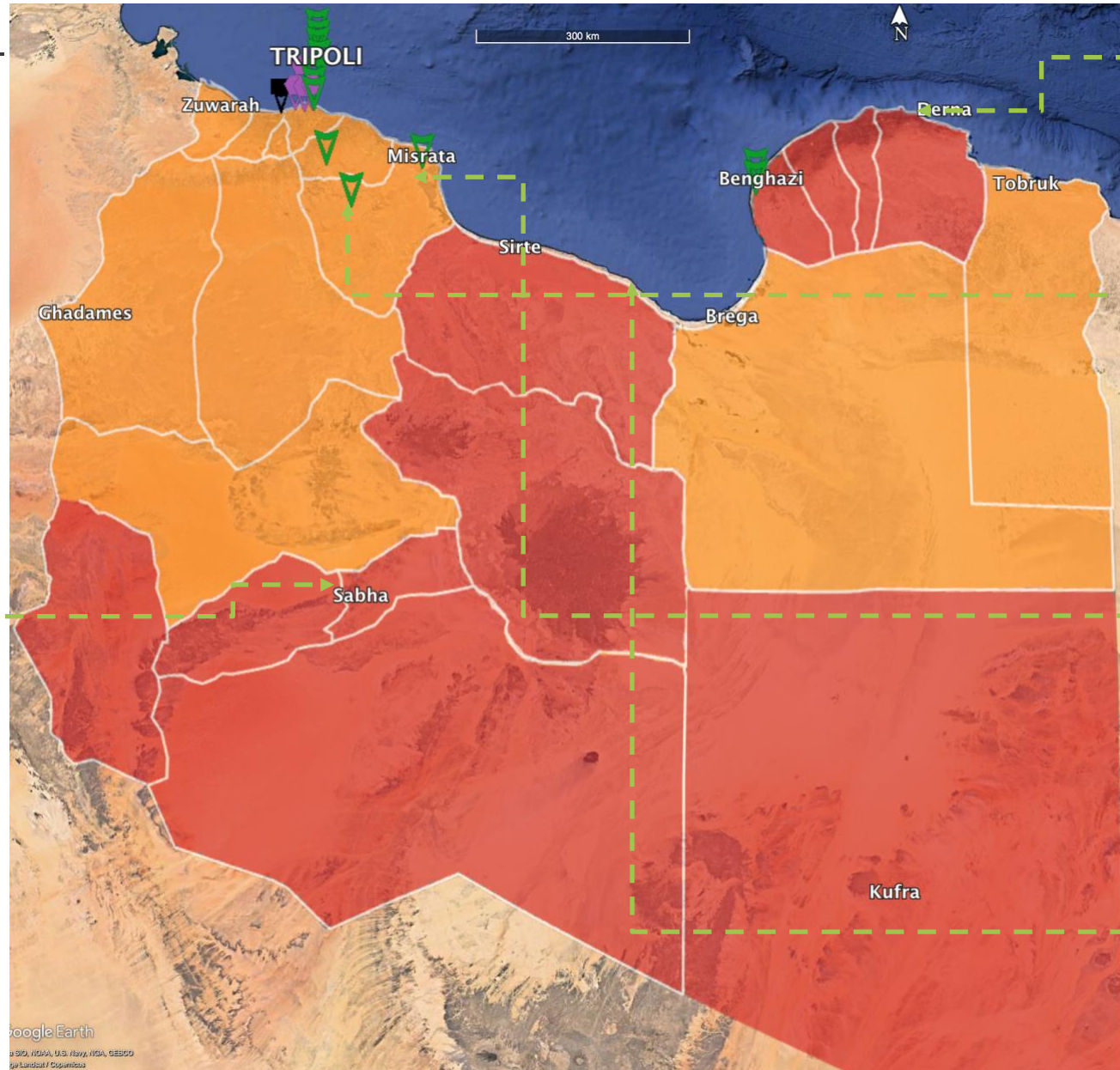
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



A suicide vehicle-borne improvised device (SVBIED) attack targeted the headquarters of the Libyan National Army's (LNA) 116 Battalion on Sabha's Agricultural Road on 02 Sep.

On 26 Aug, a video recording circulated across Facebook of the two employees, one Libyan and one Romanian national, previously kidnapped by an unidentified armed group from the Sharara oil field on 14 Jul, sending an urgent plea to their governments to intervene and facilitate their release. According to unconfirmed reports from Romanian media, the kidnappers are not "terrorists" and are not demanding ransom for the abductees' release, and instead called on Libyan authorities to meet their political demands.

Reports suggest the Libyan National Army (LNA) clashed with remnants of the Derna Protection Force (DPF) resulting in the death of four members of the 106th Infantry Brigade in Derna in the morning on 01 Sep.

In coordination with the Government of National Accord (GNA), the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) conducted a precision airstrike targeting a prominent Islamic State (IS) militant, near Bani Walid on 28 Aug. According to AFRICOM's statement, thus far there are no reports of civilian casualties as a result of the airstrike.

The Commander of the Central Military Region, Mohamed Al-Hedad, was reportedly released hours after unidentified assailants kidnapped him from his farm in Misrata on 01 Sep. According to reports, Haddad is receiving treatment for minor injuries.

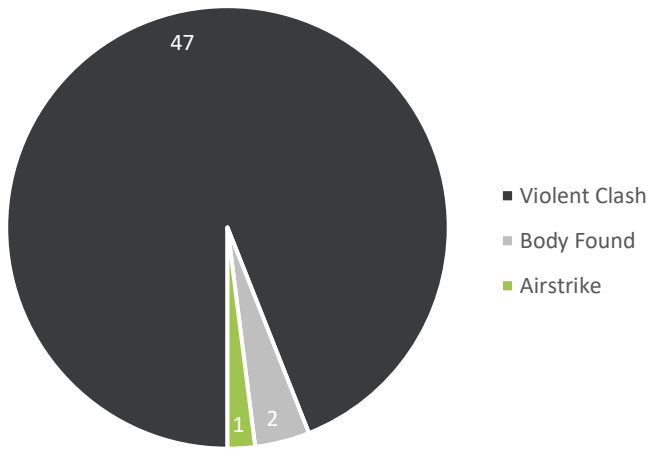
The Government of National Accord (GNA) reportedly struck an agreement to reopen the Ras Jdeir border crossing at 1200hrs local time on 01 Sep.

Reports suggest Libya's oil production rose slightly above the 1 million barrels per day (bpd) mark after the two eastern fields of Amal and Saraa increased production. Despite the gradual increase in output, there remain challenges related to storage capacity following the Jun-Jul Oil Crescent crisis.

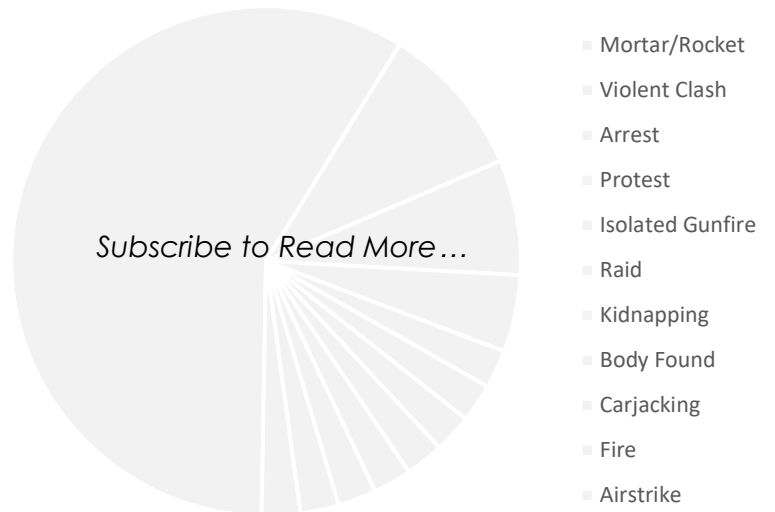
### 3. Nationwide Security Analysis

#### Sharp increase in nationwide fatalities numbers due to Tripoli clashes

Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



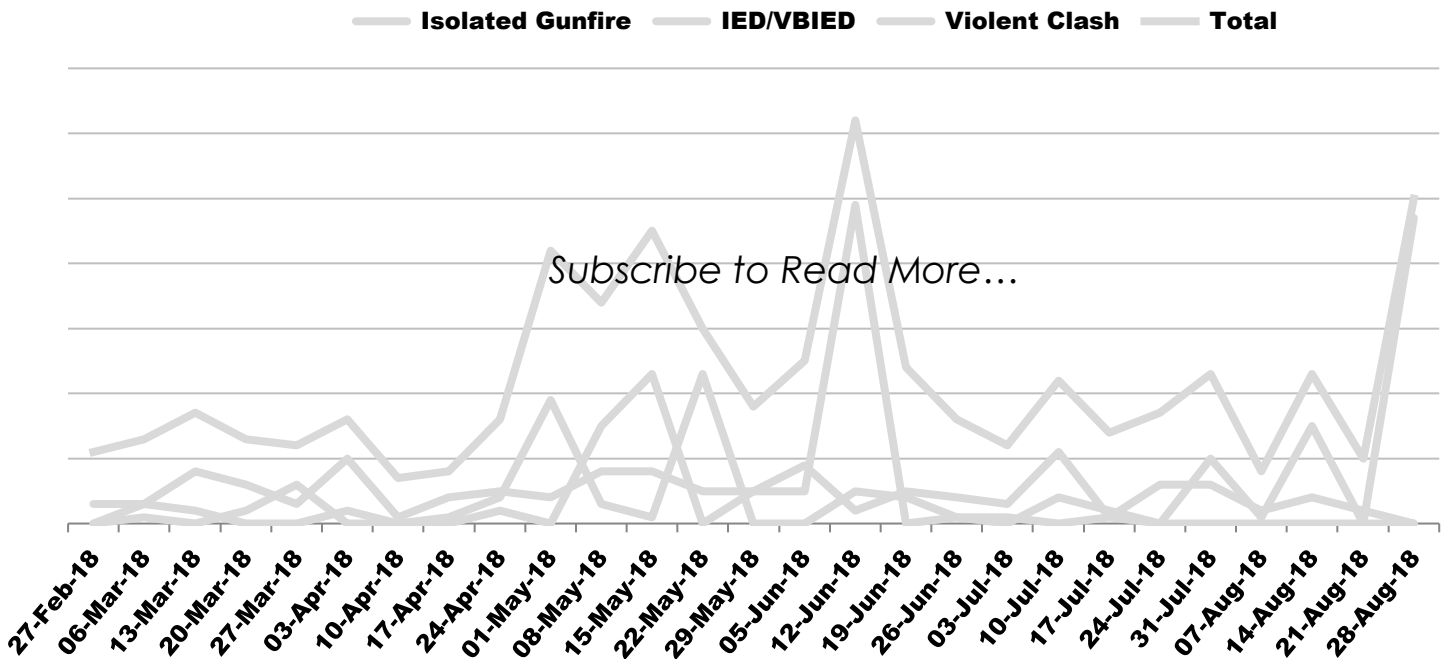
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



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 50 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 10 deaths reported last week and 23 the week before. A large majority of fatalities recorded were directly linked to the heavy clashes in Tripoli. The number of mortar shells falling across the capital city accounted for more than half of the nationwide security incidents recorded. Episodes of violent clashes were recorded across Tripoli only when fighting erupted and/or resumed. As a result, the 4 violent clashes recorded can include multiple security incidents such as cases of isolated gunfire and other militia activity. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 7 cases of isolated gunfire, 6 arrests, 2 kidnappings, 1 airstrike, 1 robbery, and a mortar/rocket incident.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 39 incidents, including 35 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. Whispering Bell recorded in Tripoli heavy clashes with an uptick in shells landing across the capital city. Reports from 01 Sep suggest a BM-21 Grad rocket fell at approximately 0530hrs on Al Waddan Hotel in Tripoli's Al Dahra area, resulting in three casualties. In the evening on 31 Aug, at approximately 2000hrs, air traffic in Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport was temporarily suspended for 48 hours, after a shell reportedly landed inside the airport. All flights were diverted to International Misurata Airport. Tripoli's Municipality Capital Contact Centre reported at least 16 shells falling across parts of the capital city. A shell reportedly fell on the Physical Therapy Center in the Assabaa area, while four shells fell on houses in Arada area, specifically in Shurfat Al Malāha area, behind Mitiga Airport. Meanwhile, other shells fell inside the airport, in Qerqarish, Al-Seyaheyya, Ghut Shaal area, Wadi Alrabei, Ain Zara, and another in Al Bivio area near Alnajma Factory, resulting in physical damage. Some reports suggest the intended targets of the shells were Palm City, the Italian Embassy, and the GNA PM Fayez Sarraj's offices in Tripoli, which if confirmed, would indicate an attempt to escalate tensions and expand clashes.

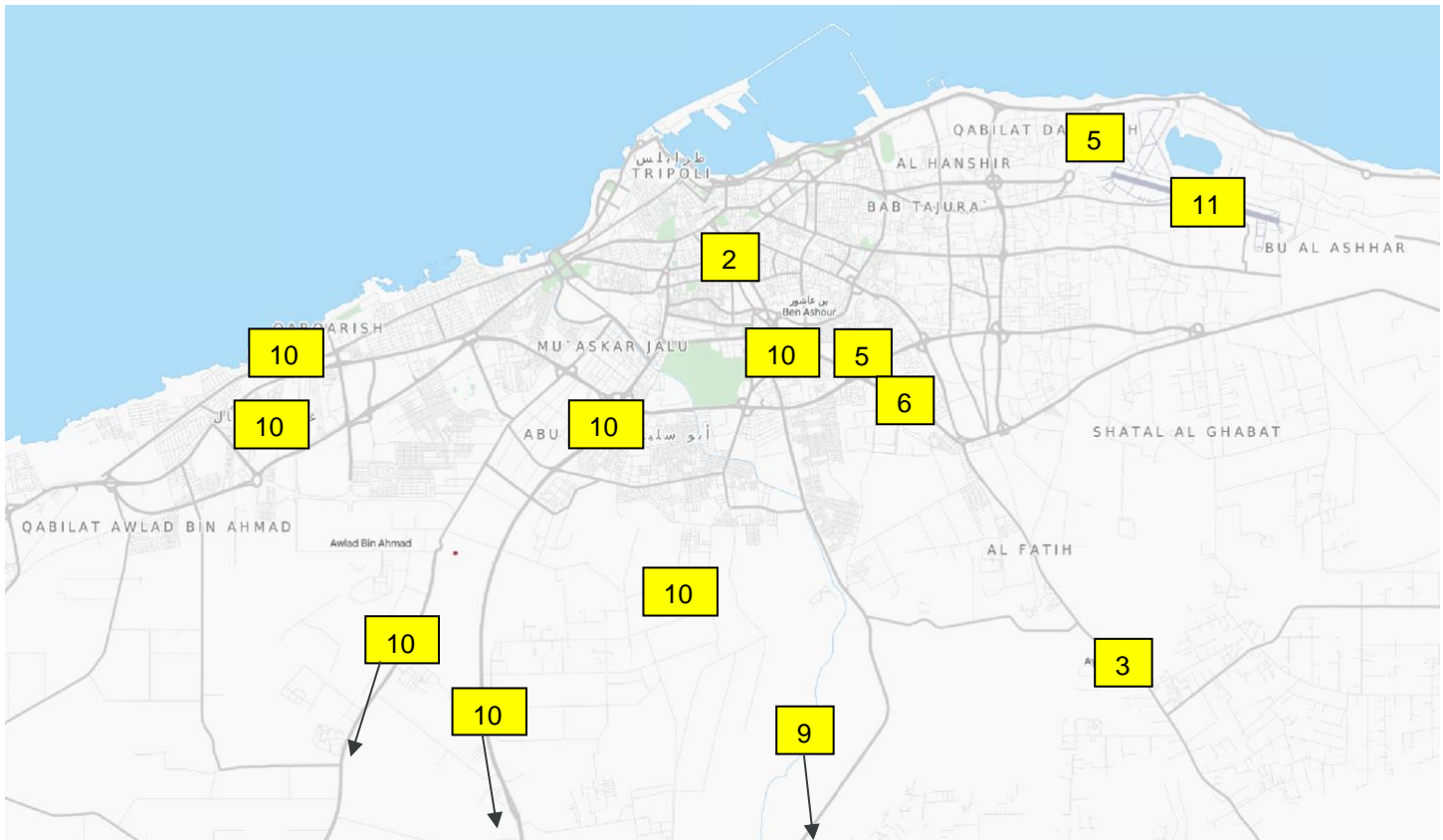
The week in Central Libya was marked by Sirte's Protection Force raising the city's state of alert to critical after monitoring suspicious Islamic State (IS) movements 70 kms South of the city. According to reports, a local was stopped by IS militants 70 kms South of Sirte at night on 27 Aug, with no further information available. Some reports suggest IS militants sought to utilize the recent heavy clashes in Tripoli to move around the city in anticipation of Sirte's security forces mobilizing towards the capital city.

Turning to southern Libya, a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) targeted the Libyan National Army's (LNA) 116 Battalion on Sabha's Agricultural Road on 02 Sep.

In Eastern Libya, clashes resumed between the Libyan National Army (LNA) Derna Protection Force (DPF) remnants, resulting in the death of four members of the 106th Infantry Brigade in Derna in the morning on 01 Sep.

## 4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

### Situation critical as 301 retreat, Zintan & BAM forces deploy



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (24 Aug) TRB member & individual found dead in unidentified area
2. (26 Aug) Armed gang raid Tripoli Central Hospital
3. (26 Aug) 2 Sudanese arrested for currency forgery & fraud in Ain Zara
4. (26 Aug) Al-Kaniat and TRB militias violent clash following tensions
5. (27 Aug) Fire breaks out at traditional clothes shop in Ras Hssan
6. (27 Aug) Vehicle carjacked in Zanatah
7. (27 Aug) Clashes continue & intensify South of Tripoli
8. (27 Aug) Mortal shells fall on multiple areas across Tripoli
9. (29 Aug) Clashes resume between Al-Kaniat & TRB near Al-Yarmouk
10. (30 – 02 Sep) Heavy clashes following tentative ceasefire
11. (31 Aug) Air traffic suspended for 48 hours at Mitiga Airport

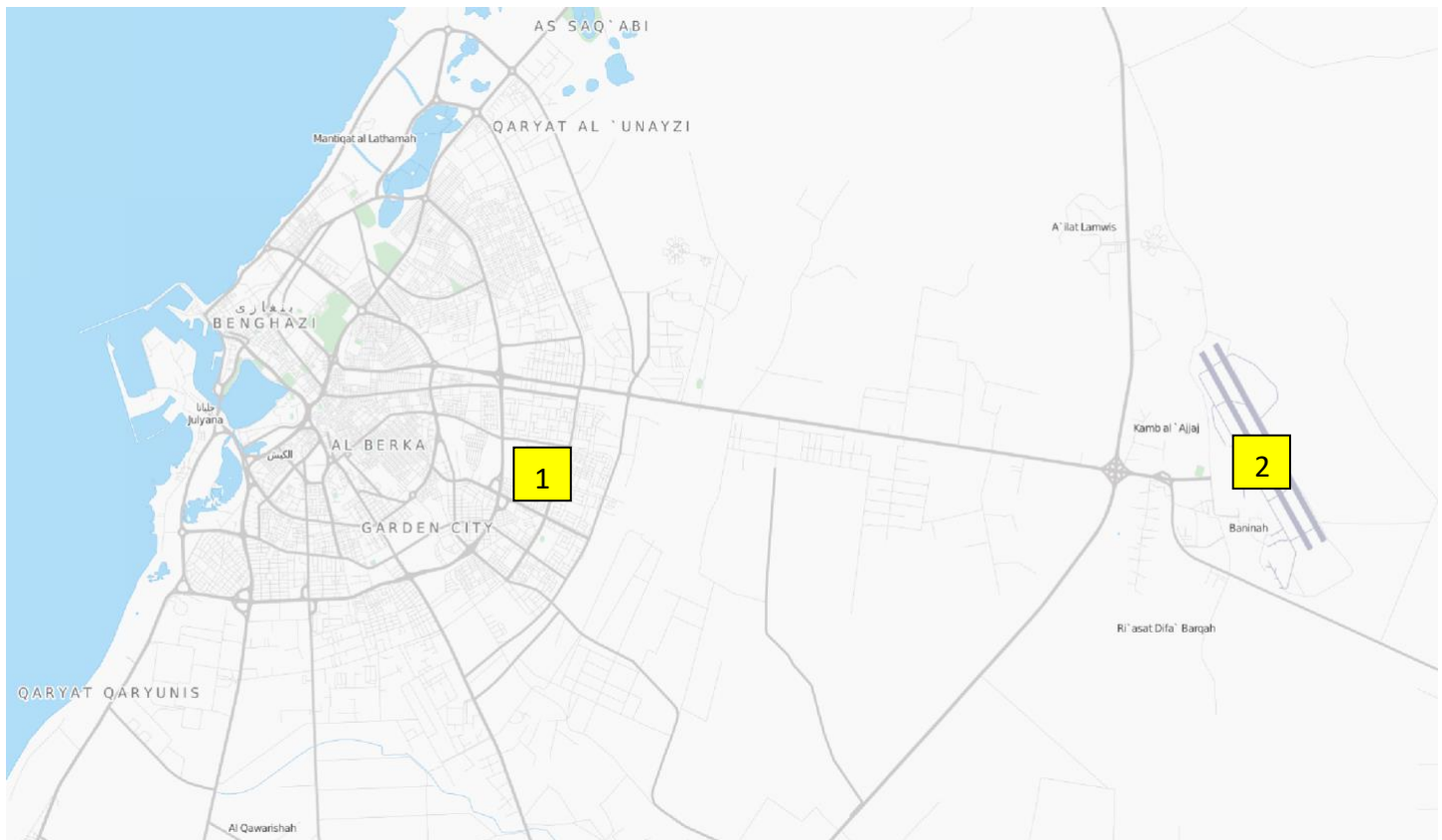
#### Heavy militia clashes

Heavy clashes spread and expanded further North including in the Salah Al-Dein, South of Abu Salim, North of airport road, and Swani road areas. Heavy clashes and indiscriminate shelling continued between 01 Sep and 02 Sep across Tripoli, breaking down the fragile ceasefire agreed upon on 31 Aug. Heavy clashes erupted on 01 Sep between the Al-Kaniat militia and Ghneiwa near Tripoli's Hamza Mosque, and on the airport road between the Misrata 301 Brigade (Halboos) and units affiliated to Salah Badi. Reports suggest the 301 militia retreated from its positions around Tripoli, and a militia called "The Movement Brigade" seized its areas, including Tripoli's Sarraj and parts of Ghot Al-Shaal on 01 Sep. The affiliation of the Movement Brigade remains unclear. Reports suggest the 301 only changed their vehicles stickers, while other reports claim it is affiliated to Salah Badi from Misrata of the Hamza Camp. Badi appeared in a video in front of the camp, calling on Tripoli residents to rise against militia

leaders, including the SD's Abdullaouf Kara, Haithem Tajouri's TRB and Ghneiwa's Kikli. The latest unconfirmed reports suggest Salah Badi was moving near Tripoli's Ghot Al-Shaal area. Clashes reportedly moved to the Islamic Call Society area between Zintani forces affiliated to Emad Trabelsi and Salah Badi's units. Emad Trabelsi's involvement in the clashes is confirmed. At 0800hrs on 02 Sep, Emad Trabelsi's forces reportedly entered Tripoli and seized Regata Resort in Al-Seyaheyya area. At approximately 0720hrs on 02 Sep, 2 anti-aircraft and 4 Toyota Hilux vehicles affiliated with Nawasi were stationed near Tuesday Mall Roundabout. On 02 Sep at approximately 0100hrs, a number of police vehicles "unknown affiliation" came to Salah Al-Dein and informed the locals to evacuate the area and leave their houses. There are reports that Al-Kaniat militia is planning to target the Ghneiwa militia leader in Tripoli's Abu Salim area on 02 Sep. The Al-Kaniat's 22 Brigade threatened to move further North of Tripoli on 02 Sep. The Presidential Council (PC) announced a state of emergency in Tripoli on 02 Sep.

## 5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

### Security officers arrest three passengers on way to Tripoli at Benina Airport



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (26 Aug) Thieves arrested for robbery in Al-Leithi
2. (29 Aug) 3 passengers arrested at Benina Intl. Airport

#### Arrest at Benina Intl. Airport

Local reports from 29 Aug suggest security officers at Benina International Airport arrested three passengers who were reportedly on their way to Tripoli, whilst allegedly preventing others from boarding the aircraft. The motive behind the arrest remains unclear, though it may be linked to the heavy militia clashes in Tripoli. According to reports, the three detainees were transferred to the HQ of the 106 Battalion, led by Khalid Haftar. Meanwhile, additional reports suggest passengers were thoroughly searched and interrogated, whilst some passengers allegedly faced assault. Recent reports suggest increased security and interrogations at Benina International Airport. There is a possibility tensions are related to the ongoing clashes in Tripoli, which would result in increased scrutiny of Tripoli-bound travellers in the East.

#### Institute of Electricity robbed

Reports suggest the Head of the Investigations Division and eyewitnesses reported the existence of thieves stealing from inside the Institute of Electricity located in Benghazi's Al-Leithi area. According to reports, authorities arrived at the scene and witnessed the thieves attempting to steal equipment and remove the buildings' windows. The thieves reportedly confessed to their crime and were subsequently arrested. Meanwhile, an additional individual was arrested for his participation in the robbery, suggesting he was the driver responsible for transporting the stolen goods and the brother of one of the arrested individuals. Robberies remain widespread across Benghazi.

## 6. What's next

### GNA's survival challenged by HoR push to reorganize Sarraj-led PC

#### POLITICAL FORECAST

On 29 Aug, 85 House of Representatives (HoR) members and supporters of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) called for the reestablishment of the Sarraj-led Presidential Council (PC), consisting of two PC members and its President representing the historical regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan, in addition to a Prime Minister. The newly-formed PC would then form a unity government to be approved by the HoR. The members withdrew their confidence in the PC and the Government of National Accord (GNA). The members stated that the PC/GNA failed politically, economically and in the security sector, noting their inability to unite the country. The statement by the 85 members was followed by a statement from Cyrenaica HoR members, supporting the reestablishment of the current PC. The two statements account for an approximate 120 HoR members, the required quorum for successful action to be taken within the parliament. Overall, Libya's existing political institutions' legitimacy remains challenged by the security vacuum across the capital city. Meanwhile, in light of the current security situation in Tripoli, France's push to hold elections by Dec 2018 would fail to materialize, though there is a possibility, however unlikely, clashes will come to a halt, providing incentives to head to the polls.

#### WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In an article for "Oil Price" the author, Tsvetana Paraskova, discusses the increase in Libya's production following the reopening of two eastern fields of Amal and Saraa. "Libya's oil production has been holding at around 1 million bpd for the past couple of weeks, rising slightly this week thanks to increased production at two small oilfields in the east, S&P Global Platts reported on Friday, citing sources and a spokesman for a western company. Harouge Oil Operations, a joint venture of Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) and PetroCanada, has increased production at the Amal oilfield to 25,000 bpd in recent days, up from just 8,000 bpd pumped in July and August due to maintenance, the sources told Platts. Germany's Wintershall, for its part, resumed production at the 50,000-bpd As-Sarah oil field at the end of August, with a gradual ramp-up of output. "Production volumes are still depending on availability of external export pipelines and capacity of loading terminals," a spokesman for Wintershall told Platts. Both the Amal and As-Sarah oilfields ship crude from the Ras Lanuf terminal, whose storage tanks were badly damaged during the attack on Libya's Oil Crescent in June that resulted in crippling the country's oil production and exports in June and July. The crude oil storage capacity at Ras Lanuf has been reduced following the attacks, and the lower storage capacity could constrain oil exports." said Paraskova.

#### SECURITY FORECAST

This week was marked by the heavy militia clashes following the advancement of the Al-Kaniat militia of Tarhuna on Tripoli's Southern areas, under the control of the city's main militias. The clashes are set to intensify amid reports of the involvement of Zintani and Misratan forces and following a general state of emergency declared by the Government of National Accord (GNA). Alliances are likely to shift in the short-term. Reports suggesting hundreds of prisoners have fled will further contribute to the turmoil across the city, and the deployment of forces from the central region could create a nationwide security vacuum. In the wider West, tensions at the Ben Gardane border crossing will likely remain on the Tunisian side. In Sirte, authorities announced a state of alert following suspicious Islamic State (IS) movements. In Libya's South, a suicide vehicle-borne improvised device (SVBIED) targeted the Libyan National Army's (LNA) 116 Battalion in Sabha. There are growing reports of tensions between Tebu tribesmen and Sudanese rebel movements in the South. Additionally, clashes persist between the LNA and militants in Derna, whilst Benghazi's security situation remains relatively calm in contrast to the rest of Libya's regions.

#### LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an interview with the GNA Economy and Industry Minister, Nasser al-Dersi, "Al-Monitor" highlights Al-Dersi's views on the Libya's current economic situation. "**Al-Monitor:** What are the expected obstacles facing the implementation of the economic program? **Dersi:** The economic program ... is facing obstacles, mainly the division of the Central Bank into two branches: one in Tripoli and one in al-Bayda. In addition, the presence of a parallel interim government in eastern Libya is not helping because it spends out of [a separate] budget and is not transparent about its financial policy. Meanwhile, the internationally recognized GNA [is authorized to deal] with the whole Libyan market without discrimination between east and west. Therefore, the difference in opinion between the GNA and the parallel bodies impedes a financial economic policy that applies to all Libyan territories. We need one government and one central bank to implement comprehensive reform. **Al-Monitor:** How will the economic program address the official dinar exchange rate and its price on the black market? **Dersi:** With the lack of security and order, we cannot implement a policy to float the dinar. This measure needs a secure situation, and there should be one policy center so that we don't find two different exchange rates in east Libya and west Libya. "

# About Whispering Bell



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