

1. The Big Picture

Tensions in Tripoli as Palermo ends with unclear outcome

The Palermo Conference for Libya concluded on 13 Nov with a joint press conference by the head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Ghassan Salame, and the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, reiterating the need for Libya's conflict to be solved politically, with no room for military means. A statement was issued at the closing of the Conference, signed by the Presidential Council (PC), the House of Representatives (HoR), the High Council of State (HCS), the Libyan National Army (LNA), the European Union (EU), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations (UN), Arab League, in addition to representatives of over two dozen countries. The signatories reaffirmed support for the December 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LNA) signed in Shkirat, Morocco, as the only existing framework providing comprehensive steps to achieve stability in Libya.

Talks at the Palermo Conference were split into separate working sessions focused on security and the economy. An additional security working session was held on 13 Nov, along with a general international conference, which Haftar reportedly refrained from attending. Meanwhile, Turkey withdrew from the Conference allegedly due to reports suggesting Haftar's political advisors prevented Turkish officials from attending the security meeting held on the sidelines, which brought together regional and neighboring countries.

There is a clear Italian attempt to describe the Conference as a success in bridging the gap between the GNA and Haftar. An official spokesman of the Italian government stated Haftar agreed for Serraj to remain in position until elections are held.

However, beyond verbal commitments, the Conference fell short of providing conclusive outcomes towards elections and/or a binding agreement. In a joint statement by the HoR, HCS, and PC, parties expressed commitment to ensuring technical, legislative and political conditions are met to hold elections, though without providing a clear roadmap. The parties

also agreed on the need to adopt a national constitution and expressed support for the Egypt-endorsed military unification talks to build military/security institutions under civilian control.

It appears that Palermo has simply set another artificial deadline to resolve the Libyan crisis. Salame is planning for a second conference to be held in Italy at the end of Nov 2018 to push for Libyan elections to be held between March and July 2019, preceded by a National Conference in Jan. Overall, Palermo's results are unclear, beyond political rhetoric and statements, observers suggest the conference failed to produce a groundbreaking solution to end the political deadlock. Whilst it remains too early to assess the long-term ramifications of the Palermo Conference, it has certainly contributed to strengthening Haftar's position as a capable security guarantor.

Salame's planned Jan 2019 National Conference, the "Multaqqa", faces multiple challenges. The "bottom-up" approach bringing together local actors may yield positive results, though it could also exacerbate tensions locally. There are emerging signs militia leaders are beginning position themselves to secure a more advantageous bargaining position ahead of Jan 2019. This is illustrated by the uneasy calm prevailing in Tripoli after tensions in the South and a 72-hour deadline (expiring on 21 Nov) set by the Tarhuna-based 7th Brigade, known as Al-Kaniat militia, calling on the Ghneiwa militia to surrender the Tripoli International Airport (TIP) area. The precise motive behind Al-Kaniat's move is unclear, and while the development is likely opportunistic, there is a possibility it is also an attempt to compel the Ghneiwa militia to dissolve and/or join the new security arrangements.

KEY POINTS

- Haftar's security role emphasized
- Tensions in Tripoli South
- Al-Kaniat sets 72hr deadline in Tripoli



CONTENTS

- 1 THE BIG PICTURE
Tensions in Tripoli as Palermo ends with unclear outcome
- 2 NATIONWIDE SECURITY
Events, Analysis and Data
- 3 SECURITY BY NUMBERS
Charts, Statistics and Analysis
- 4 TRIPOLI REPORT
News & Neighborhoods
- 5 BENGHAZI REPORT
News & Neighborhoods
- 6 WHAT'S NEXT
Forward Looking Expert Opinions

2. National Security Map

Unconfirmed reports of suspected IS movements North of Ash Shwayrif

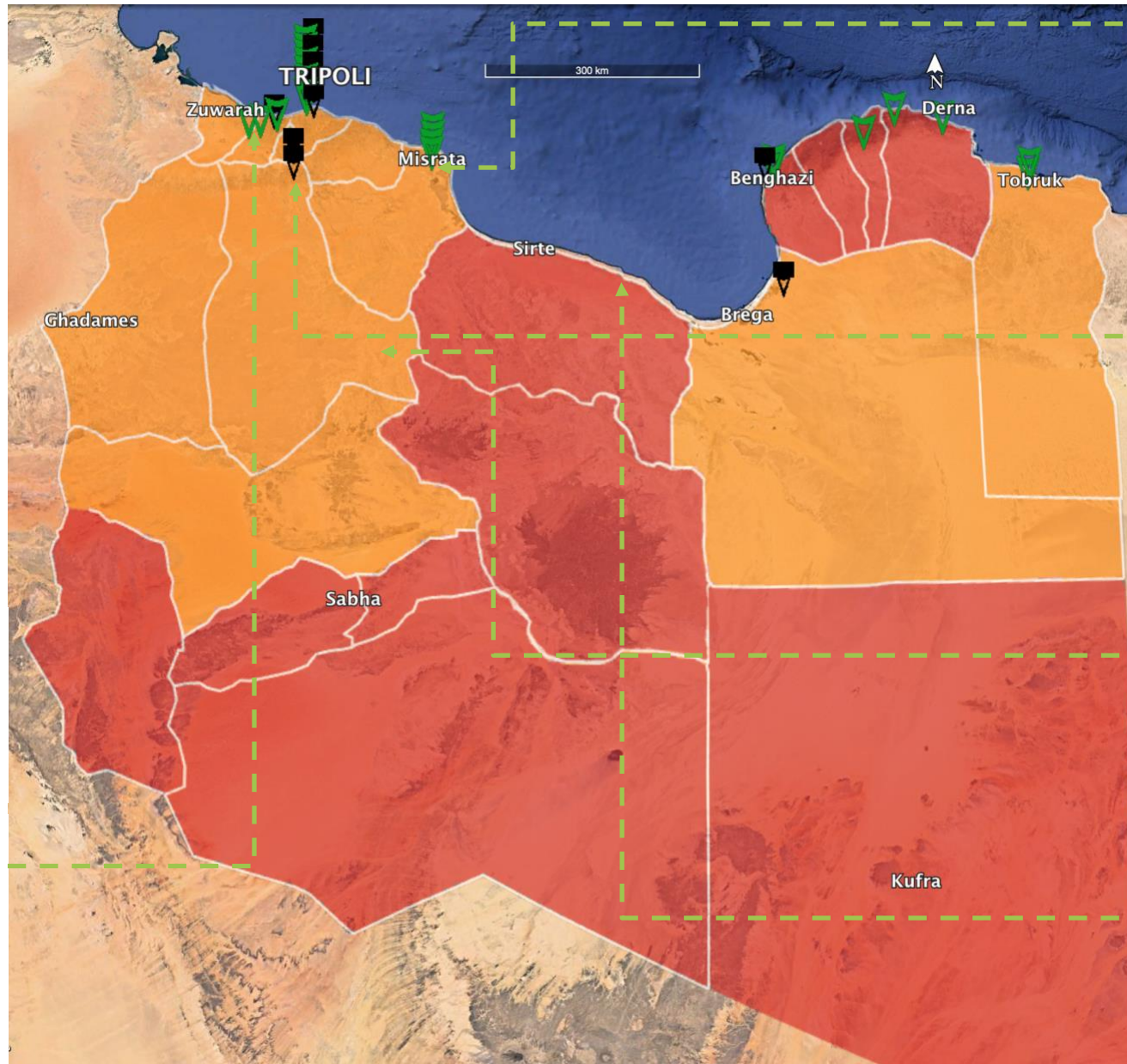
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



Misrata authorities reportedly captured a prominent militant identified as Mohammed Al-Fortas in Misrata on 11 Nov. According to reports, Al-Fortas fled from Derna to Misrata after suffering injuries in Jul/Aug 2018. Al-Fortas was reportedly a resident of Derna's Sheeha area and was likely injured in recent clashes with the LNA.

According to reports, a dispute between two local families erupted for a second consecutive day resulting in the closure of main roads across the city and lasting until the late hours of the evening in Gharyan on 13 Nov. The latest reports suggest a ceasefire was reached between the two families and the main road was reopened in the early hours of 14 Nov.

Unconfirmed reports across untested social media outlets suspicious Islamic State (IS) movements North of Ash Shwayrif at night on 13 Nov. There is no further information available. On 06 Nov, unconfirmed reports emerged over suspicious IS movements in the areas of Abu Nujaym, Wadi Zamzam and Bani Waled.

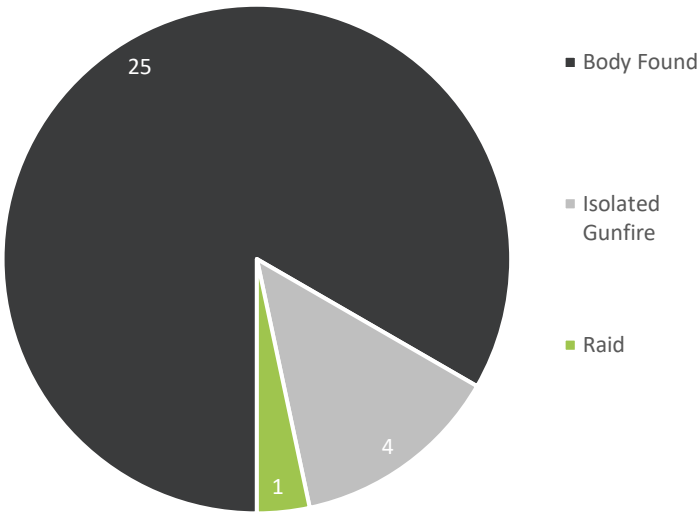
The Libyan National Army's (LNA) 73rd Brigade reportedly conducted patrols in the area between Harawah and Nawfliyah on 12 Nov. There is no further information available and the patrols were likely conducted as a security measure. On 11 Sep, the head of the LNA, Khalifa Haftar, issued a decree to establish the 73rd Brigade, consisting of six battalions, under the command of General Ali Al-Qatani in Benghazi.

The National Oil Corporation (NOC) declared September's revenues generated from crude oil sales and derived products, in addition to taxes and royalties received from concession contracts, amounted to over 1.66 billion US dollars (USD). The NOC noted a rise of approximately 93 million USD (+5.6%) from Aug revenues.

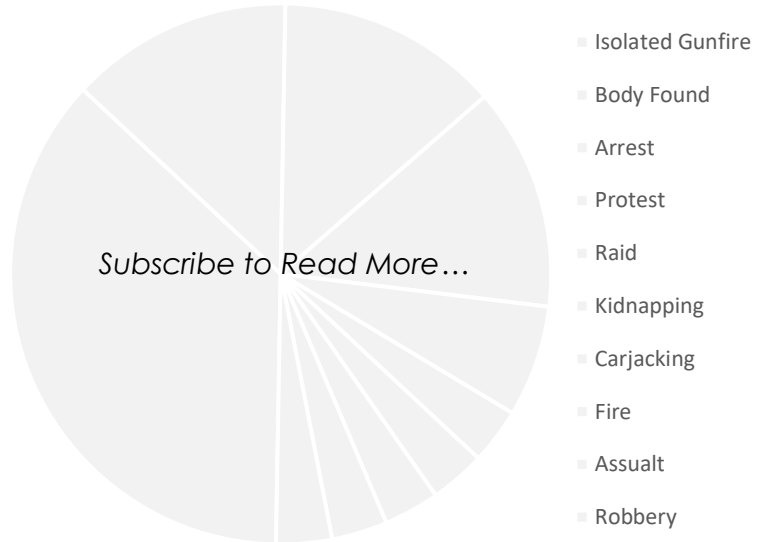
On 15 Nov, Sabratha's Security Room (former Anti-Islamic State Operations Room) confirmed the arrest of the head of the dissolved Sabrataha Military Council, allegedly affiliated with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), Tahir Al-Gharbali. According to a statement issued by Sabratha's Security Room, Gharbali is accused of multiple criminal cases, and was referred to a military prison in Surman.

3. Nationwide Security Analysis Increase in nationwide fatalities due to 22 bodies found in Derna

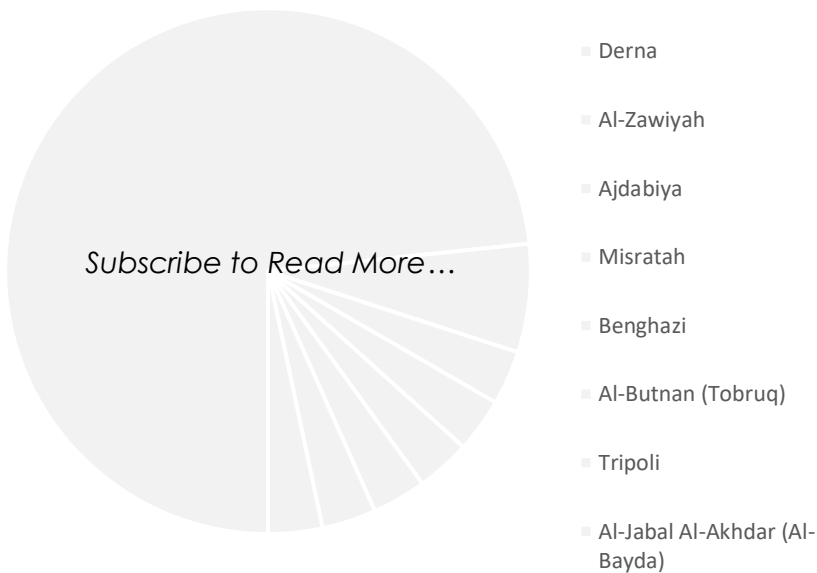
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



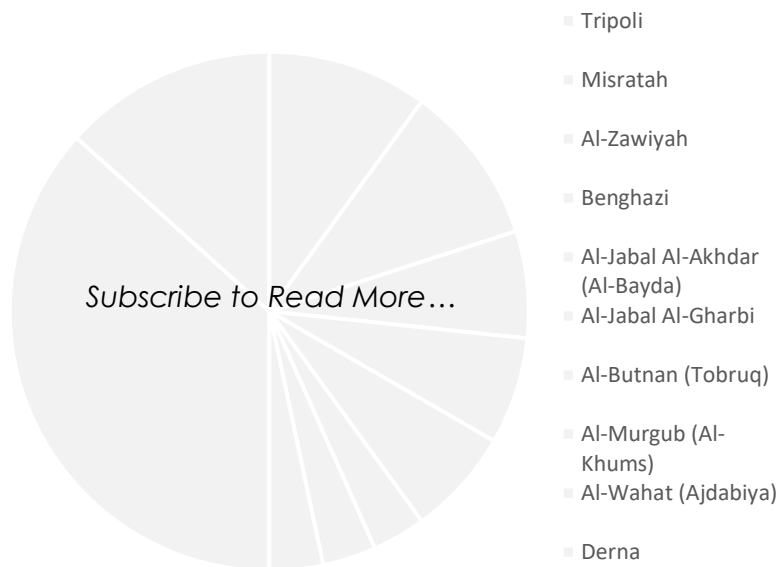
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



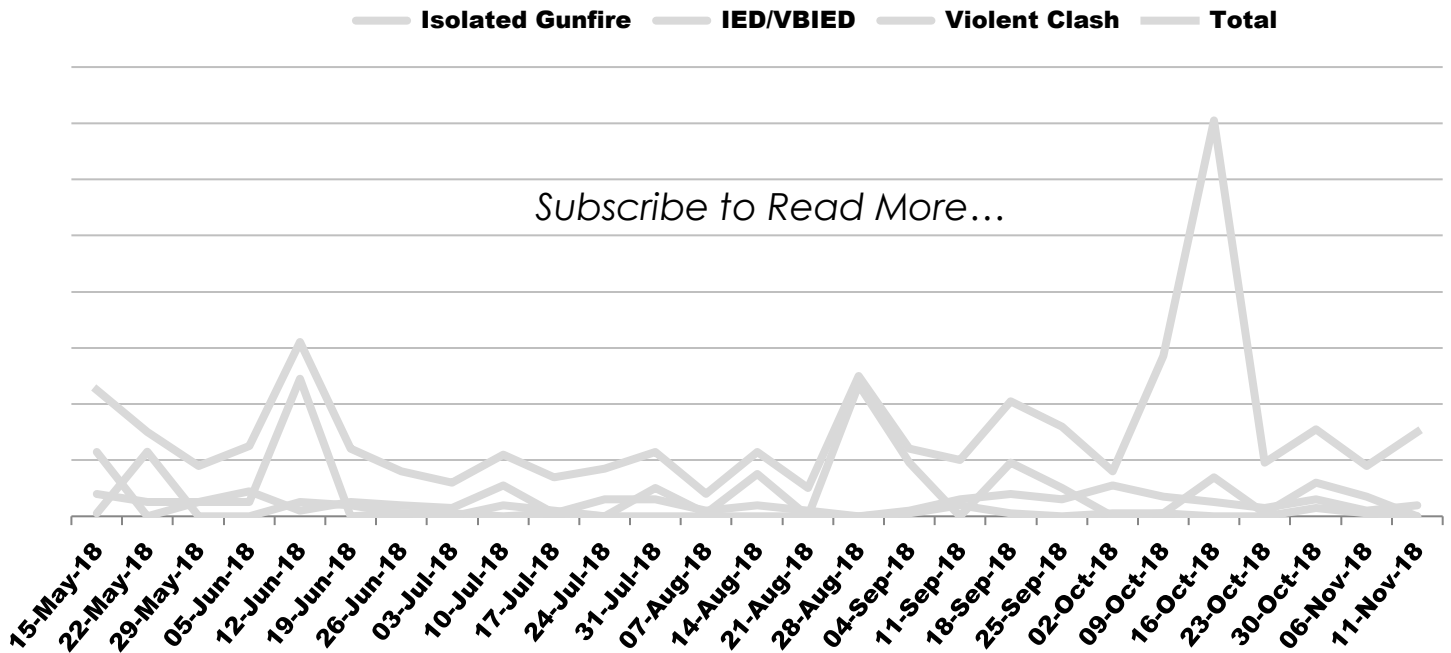
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



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 30 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 18 deaths reported last week and 31 the week before. This week the Libyan Red Crescent located 22 bodies in Derna's Heela area, accounting for approximately three quarters of nationwide fatalities across Libya. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 11 cases of isolated gunfire, 4 protests, 2 raids, 1 kidnapping, 1 carjacking, 1 robbery, and 1 assault.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 19 incidents, including 11 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. This week was marked by the resumption of militia clashes following an advance on Wadi Al-Rabei and Tripoli International Airport areas by Al-Kaniat militia, subsequently prompting tensions with the Ghneiwa militia in the Qasr Bin Ghashir area at approximately 1730hrs on 14 Nov. On 15 Nov, the head of Tripoli's Security Arrangements Committee announced a ceasefire was reached with Tarhuna representatives, with an agreement to assign a military battalion to secure the Tripoli International Airport and Airport Road areas. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, reports suggest three gunmen raided Tripoli's Ghut Shaal Police Station in an attempt to free an arrested affiliate, resulting in skirmishes with members of the police station, affiliated with Zintan forces led by Emad Trabelsi, at night on 15 Nov. Two of the gunmen reportedly fled, whilst the third, identified as Salem Al-Hudairy also known as "Addouda", was killed as a result of the exchange of gunfire during the raid. Beyond this, a dispute reportedly erupted between two local families for a second consecutive day resulting in the closure of main roads and lasted until the late hours of the evening in Gharyan on 13 Nov. The latest reports suggest a ceasefire was reached between the two families and the main road was reopened in the early hours of 14 Nov.

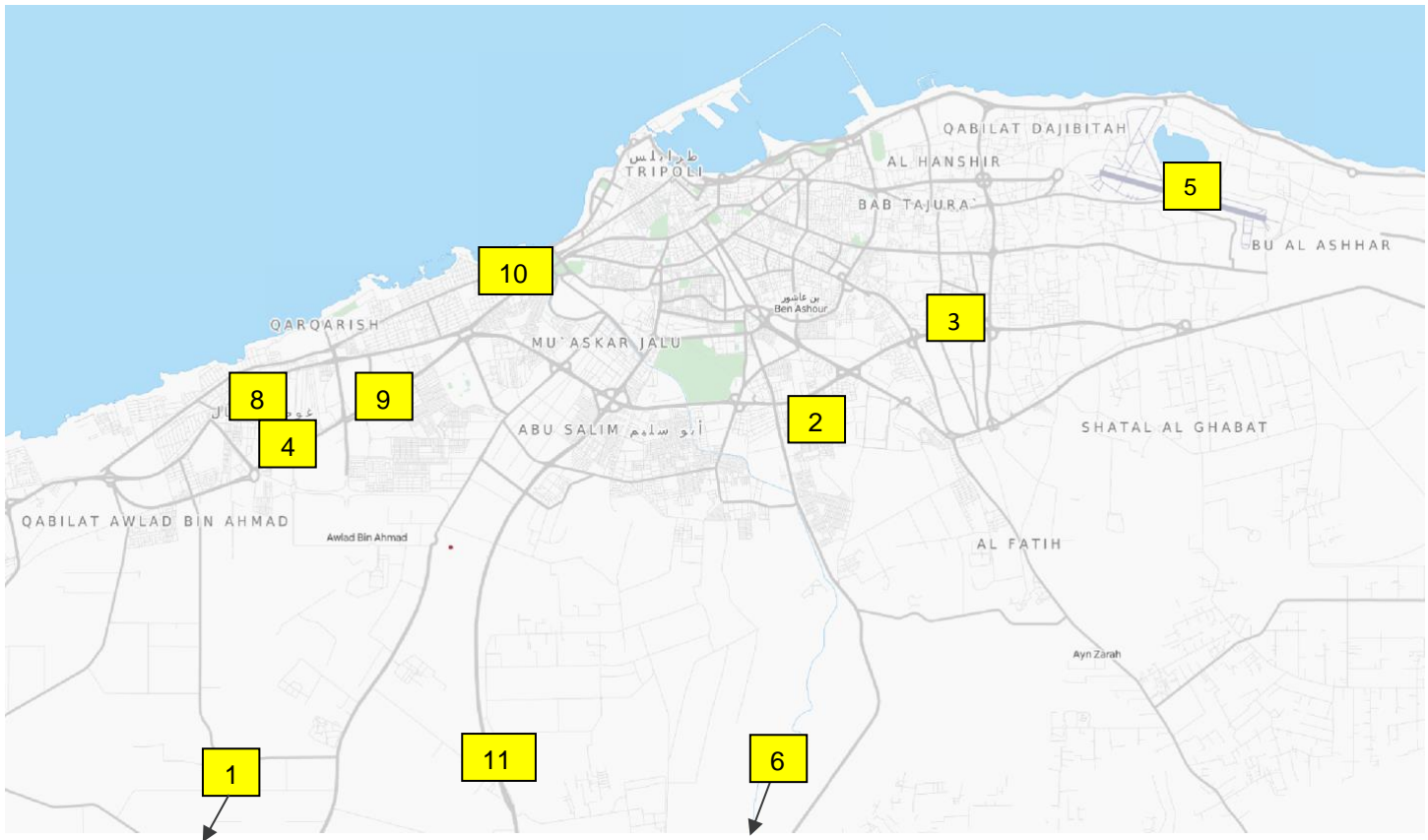
In Central Libya, the General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) issued a statement on their official Facebook page calling on the Ministry of Interior and all security authorities to protect the electrical network against repeated robberies and acts of vandalism. GECOL stated that an unidentified group looted over 83,000 meters of power lines resulting in frequent power outages in the Wershiffanah area.

Turning to Southern Libya, though not reflected in this week's nationwide security analysis, reports suggest eight unidentified assailants riding two vehicles carjacked four vehicles belonging to the Libyan Team for Travel and Adventure near the Tadrart Acacus area, South Libya, on 17 Nov.

In Eastern Libya, local reports suggest indiscriminate gunfire resulted in the death of a 27-year-old man in Tobruk. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, an unidentified body was reportedly found East of Jabal Al-Akhdar, on 13 Nov.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Uneasy calm following Al-Kaniat & Ghneiwa militia clashes in South



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (09 Nov) Multiple shops robbed in al-Kreymiya
2. (11 Nov) Tripoli University employees protest
3. (11 Nov) Previously kidnapped Commercial Bank Manager released
4. (13 Nov) Gunmen open fire & arrest customers at café
5. (13 Nov) 2-hour employee strike at Mitiga Intl. Airport
6. (14 Nov) Clashes between Al-Kaniat & Ghneiwa militias; security alert
7. (14 Nov) 9 Ghneiwa militiamen captured by Al-Kaniat militia released
8. (15 Nov) Gunmen raid Ghut Shaal Police Station; 1 gunman killed
9. (15-16 Nov) Clashes between gunmen & Zintan forces
10. (16 Nov) Carjacking at Al-Sharara Gas Station
11. (17 Nov) Ghneiwa militiamen gather on Airport Rd, uneasy calm prevails

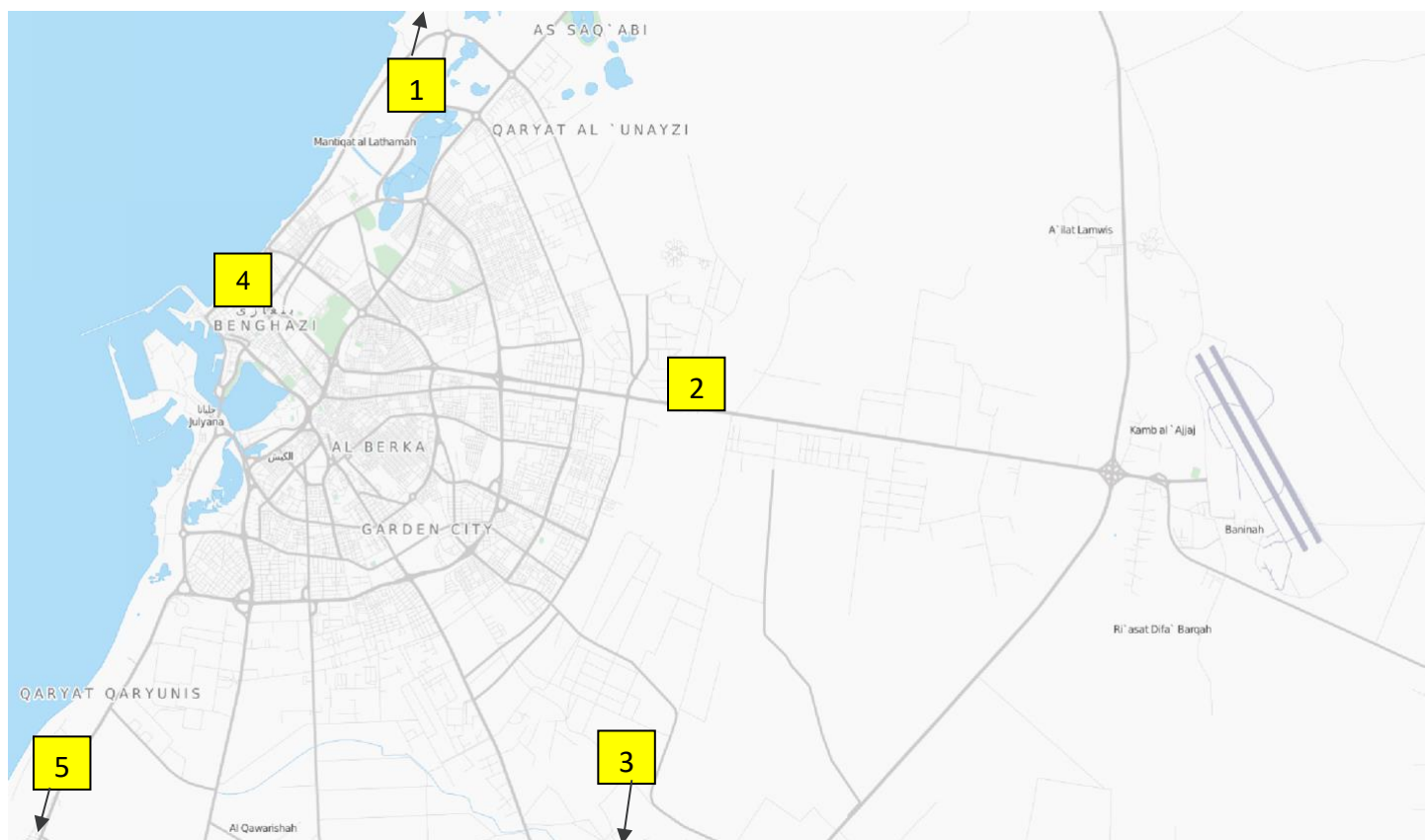
Ghneiwa & Al-Kaniat militias clash

Reports emerged over clashes between the Al-Kaniat militia and the Ghneiwa-led Abuslim Central Security Force in the Qasr Bin Ghashir area following reports of Al-Kaniat militia's advance towards Wadi Al-Rabei and Tripoli International Airport (TIP) prompting a security alert at approximately 1730hrs on 14 Nov. There were reports of gunfire on the Airport Road near Al-Naqliya Camp and in the Attwaisha area, behind TIP, at approximately 1900hrs on 14 Nov. Al-Kaniat militia reportedly stationed on Al-Manara Road and in front of Al-Afia clinic in the Qasr Bin Ghashir area at approximately 2000hrs on 14 Nov. According to reports, Al-Kaniat militia kidnapped/arrested 9 Ghneiwa militia members, whilst there were unconfirmed reports of Salah Badi's involvement and his Sumood Brigade. Meanwhile, sources reported a checkpoint affiliated with Al-Kaniat militia under the Qasr Bin Ghashir bridge with anti-aircraft weapons directed towards TIP at approximately 0730hrs on 15 Nov. Sources reported another checkpoint affiliated with Ghneiwa militia at the Al-Furosiya bridge with a gathering of anti-aircraft weapons directed towards TIP. Meanwhile, two checkpoints affiliated with Zintan Special Operations Force (SOF)

head, Emad Trabelsi, were reportedly stationed on the Qasr Bin Ghashir-Swani Road at approximately 0830hrs on 15 Nov. Al-Kaniat militia reportedly first retreated to the TIP, and later further retreated to South of the TIP at approximately 1000hrs on 15 Nov. On 14 Nov, reports suggest negotiations between Tripoli's Security Arrangements Committee and Tarhuna's Elders and Sheikhs, resulted in the release of 9 Ghneiwa militiamen previously captured by Al-Kaniat militia. On 15 Nov, the Security Arrangements Committee head announced that a ceasefire was reached with Tarhuna representatives, with an agreement to assign a military battalion to secure the TIP and airport road areas. Whilst the motive behind the clashes remains unclear, it stands as the first potential sign of escalation in Tripoli's South since UNSMIL ceasefire reached in Sep 2018 and following the outbreak of militia clashes on Aug 26. There is a strong relation to the Palermo Conference for Libya, with observers suggesting Al-Kaniat militia's offensive was due to Tarhouna's exclusion from the talks. Overall, whilst there remains the possibility for tensions to escalate and retaliation, the Government of National Accord's (GNA) appointment of the Misratan-figure Fathi Bashaga as the Interior Minister suggests Al-Kaniat will fail to receive widespread Misratan support required for another offensive on Tripoli. As of 18 Nov, uneasy calm prevails in Tripoli's South.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

UNSMIL condemns attack on Surgery Centre resulting in staff injuries



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (11 Nov) Indiscriminate gunfire injures man in Deryana
2. (11 Nov) Fire at oil refining plant contained in Bouatni
3. (14 Nov) Gunmen attack medical staff; 5 injured
4. (17 Nov) Indiscriminate gunfire injures man in Al-Sabri
5. (17 Nov) Indiscriminate gunfire injures man in Ganfouda
6. (17 Nov) Haftar receives Southern delegation

Indiscriminate gunfire; casualties

On 11 Nov, reports suggest indiscriminate gunfire reportedly resulted in the injury of a man during a social event in Benghazi's Deryana area. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, indiscriminate gunfire reportedly resulted in the injury of a man in Benghazi's Al-Sabri area on 17 Nov. The man was shot in the arm. Beyond this, indiscriminate gunfire reportedly resulted in the injury of a man in Benghazi's Ganfouda area on 17 Nov. Indiscriminate gunfire continues to pose a threat to civilian lives across Benghazi.

Fire at oil refining plant

The National Safety Department of Benghazi confirmed containing a fire that broke out at an oil refining plant in Benghazi's Bouatni area at dawn on 11 Nov. According to reports, a tank in the factory exploded resulting in the complete damage of a fire-fighting vehicle, though no security incidents were reported. The National Safety Department stated that the fire was contained with the help of firefighters at Benina International Airport and the University of Benghazi.

Attack on Surgery Centre; 5 injured

Local reports suggest unidentified gunmen attacked the Operating Room and the Intensive Care Unit at Benghazi's Surgery Centre resulting in the injury of five medical staff. The gunmen reportedly also attacked the men's section on 14 Nov. Neither the identity of the assailants nor the motive behind the incident are known. Following the attack, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) condemned recurrent attacks on medical facilities and personnel.

6. What's next

Status quo preserved & UN revised Plan unlikely to bridge East-West divide

POLITICAL FORECAST

There remains a lack of clear international, regional, and national consensus on how to move forward with the Libyan file, highlighted in part by Haftar's absence from the main Palermo conference and Turkey's withdrawal. With no change to the political and security situation on the ground, and no clear outcome, it remains unclear how the new proposed date for elections will prove realistic and what future steps will be implemented to ensure the LPA achieves its outcomes. While Ghassan Salame's planned 2019 National Conference would be represent a "bottom-up" solution that could yield positive results given its inclusion of civil society figures, it would still require some form of a decentralized power that the GNA does not seem capable of guaranteeing in the medium to long-term. By supporting actors at a local level, the GNA would risk losing its influence and power in Tripoli. There is mounting evidence to suggest in the aftermath of Palermo, Haftar and Sarraj will continue mobilizing resources to launch a charm offensive with an exclusive focus on security, in an attempt to convince the international community of their worthiness as capable international actors. Meanwhile, a lack of convergence of interests will likely continue to hinder efforts of national reconciliation, and an increased UNSMIL leadership could escalate tensions with the HoR, particularly following Salame's "criticism" of the HoR during his briefing to the UN Security Council on 08 Nov. On the international scene, Russia strengthened its position with a strong presence in Palermo, while Italy's position was weakened in the West given it failed to invite Misrata and Zintan factions.

SECURITY FORECAST

Tensions between the Al-Kaniat and Ghneiwa militias threaten to undermine the security environment in Tripoli. A potential resumption of clashes to a scale witnessed in Aug 2018, though unlikely, would hinder efforts at implementing new security arrangements and highlight the power of armed groups to destabilize the security situation, despite political efforts to contain their influence. Should tensions escalate in Tripoli's South - either before on and/or after the 21 Nov deadline set by Al-Kaniat - alliances could shift in the short to medium term, and potentially expand in areas with pro-LIFG elements, including Misrata, Zawiya, and others parts West of Tripoli. Tensions in Misrata are also expected given the latest reports of sanctions targeting Salah Badi, who still enjoys some level of support in the city. Pro-LIFG members likely perceive all latest political manoeuvres by the GNA as attempts to marginalize them. They could seek to destabilize the security situation in Tripoli and beyond. In Sabratah, the detention of the former head of the Sabratah Military Council could exacerbate tensions. In Central Libya, LNA patrols are set to continue, especially amid unconfirmed movements of suspected Islamic State (IS) militants. In the South, Haftar is expected to mobilize additional resources and potentially launch a full offensive to combat foreign mercenary presence after the Palermo Conference placed greater emphasis on his role as a capable security actor; away from the political rhetoric of his rivals. Haftar is also reportedly set to attend an upcoming G5 Sahel conference on 6 Dec. Should he attend, Haftar will further strengthen his posture as the Libyan representative in cross-border security.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In an article for *AIMonitor*, the author, Kirill Semenov, analyses Haftar's recent visit to Moscow in the run up to the Palermo Conference. According to Semenov, "Hifter had planned the visit as an opportunity to persuade Moscow to voice a more supportive position during the summit in Palermo. Another objective is to demonstrate that the LNA is Russia's main ally in Libya". Semenov adds "On the other hand, it is clear that this visit could not have taken place if Russia itself had not been ready to meet Hifter's demands. Moreover, while the visit by the LNA commander to Italy on Oct. 29 can be seen as Rome's own measure to maintain the balance in the relations with both sides of Libyan conflict (as Fayez al-Sarraj had met Italian leaders four days earlier), Hifter's talks with the Russian side were not compensated by any contacts with the Government of National Accord. This leads to a conclusion that Russia may have decided to make its bet on the LNA at the last moment before the conference." The author concludes by stating "It is quite possible, however, that Hifter's trip to Moscow was organized exclusively as an initiative of the Russian Defense Ministry, which lobbies the LNA or Hifter personally; hence, it would not fully reflect Russia's official position on a Libyan resolution. It should be also taken into consideration that the other group of Russian stakeholders that is led by Ramzan Kadyrov is backing Tripoli and still maintains high status and resources sufficient to influence the Kremlin in order to avoid an excessive shift toward Hifter in Russian policy in Libya."

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an article for Italian publication *La Stampa*, Francesco Semprini, explores local perceptions of the Palermo Conference. "Curiosity tinged with pragmatism, unwavering hope, some laughter, and a little disappointment that begs the question now of "what will happen in Libya?". Italy's efforts to host the summit on stabilizing Libya after its seven-year-old conflict appeared to fall flat Tuesday, as organizers on the second and final day of the meeting in Sicily failed to even confirm whether representatives of the main factions were attending. Of course, Libyans were not waiting at the edge of their seat watching the developments in Palermo in front of the TV, as the head of the Libyan National Army, Khalifa Haftar's made jokes about diplomacy. They had other things on their mind. In Tripoli, for example, bank clerks were dealing with their usual queues and storefronts with their usual dips in supply, all while the administrative machine continued to turn at its characteristic speed.... There are those who expect a step forward from the conference on security in the capital: "We must encourage as much as possible the transition to a regular force and facilitate the exit of the militia," says Saad Hamali, a spokesman of the 7th Brigade (a.k.a Kanyat or Kani brigade, from Tarhuna, a city some 65 km to the southeast of Tripoli), the so-called "insurgents" who clashed against a coalition of brigades in Tripoli earlier this year in August. "The situation had become unbearable, in the suburbs and in the outskirts there was no water, gas or light due to the cuts imposed by certain factions that control Tripoli. There was no bread and there was no cash, the militias have humiliated Libya and it's time to change things."

About Whispering Bell



Contact Whispering Bell at: +971-4-448-6690 or at ras@whisperingbell.com

[Twitter](#)



[Website](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



Copyright © 2016 Whispering Bell, All rights reserved.