



1. The Big Picture

Islamic State (IS) grows more confidence with Tazirbu attack

The week was marked by an Islamic State (IS) attack targeting a police station in the southeastern town of Tazirbu, in the Kufra national district, killing at least nine, including police officers and civilians, and kidnapping 10 others at approximately 1830hrs on 23 Nov. The attack bears resemblance to the 29 Oct attack targeting Al-Fuqaha, a town in the central Jufra national district. At the time of writing, there were emerging reports over a second suspected IS attack West of Tazirbu.

With two similar attacks in less than a month, the group appears intent on carrying out mass kidnappings and raids targeting remote towns where law enforcement capabilities are limited to prevent/defend against such attacks. By kidnapping locals, IS is likely seeking to grow its bargaining leverage, which could set a dangerous precedent. Following the attack, reports suggest four Libyan National Army (LNA) brigades launched a widespread search operation to capture the attackers. Meanwhile, the LNA's Subol Al-Salam Battalion reported ongoing clashes with IS militants near Wadi Al-Hatab and Al-Harouj mountains, an area with a documented militant presence as highlighted in previous WB reports. More importantly, IS could begin to exploit the LNA's counter-offensives in its favour. By continuously carrying out small-scale sporadic attacks against soft targets, such as remote desert towns and/or pipelines, the group could draw forces away from the Oil Crescent, which would increase the exposure of oil facilities.

In Tripoli, a state of minimal security persists as new security arrangements appear to gradually take effect with no major security incidents. However, beneath the surface, there are tensions both between militia leaders and within armed groups, demonstrated by a failed assassination attempt on the former head of Tripoli's Security Directorate. In addition, there were unconfirmed reports of a murder of a bodyguard within the Ghneiwa militia, in a

potential sign of the deep distrust within the militia.

While the United Nations Support Mission in Libya's (UNSMIL) ceasefire is holding, consolidated in part by the imposition of sanctions to deter militias from engaging in hostilities, multiple analysts suggest optimism over the 2019 National Conference should be balanced as the initiative will only provide recommendations, and whether or not those are implemented remains unclear. Should local powerbrokers such as Tarhunah elected officials perceive that promises have been broken, there is little to deter them from taking up arms against some of Tripoli's militias and/or the Government of National Accord (GNA). On 21 Nov, the GNA Minister of Interior, Fathi Bashagha, called on the head of the Public Security Apparatus and Security Centres, Emad Trabelsi, and Director General of the Central Security, Jamal Al-Basha, to prevent their members from interfering in the work of sovereign facilities. The GNA noted serious ramifications for potential violations by Trabelsi and Basha's members.

Meanwhile, the week was also marked by sanctions targeting the hardline Islamist Somoud Brigade commander, Salah Badi. On 19 Nov, the U.S. Department of the Treasury officially listed the Misratan militia leader on its sanctions list. While the sanctions against Badi have the potential to act as a deterrent, they highlight the international community's concern with preserving minimal security, at least until elections are held in 2019. It remains to be seen whether this will prove to be a realistic

KEY POINTS

- IS reverting to mass kidnappings
- Tripoli security holding, but tensions
- Minimal security favored until elections

هلاک وإصابة 29 مرتدا من عناصر الجيش والشرطة التابعين لميليشيا حفتر بهجوم على بلدة تازيربو، في برقة

برقة ليبيا - برقة السبت 8 ربيع أول 1440 هـ

بتوطيق الله ومنه، هاجم جنود الخلافة في ولاية ليبيا أمس مواقع ومنازل مرتدي الجيش والشرطة والصحوات التابعين لميليشيا حفتر ببلدة تازيربو، في برقة، حيث اشتبكوا معهم بالأسلحة الخفيفة والمتوسطة، ما أسفر عن هلاك وجرح 29 مرتدا بينهم مدير مركز شرطة البلدة إضافة لاعتقال عدد منهم بينهم ضباط برتب عميد وعقيد ولاة الحد على توظيفه.

وتقول أهلا المستهدفين والمعتورين وأهالي الأسرى في برقة، أن أبنائكم المجاهدين ماضون في طريقهم للمركب ورفع العلم وأصمب عنكم ولك قيد أبنائكم والاقلائص من المرتد حفتر وأجناده وأنصاره وأعدائه يادن الله تعالى.

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2. National Security Map

Reports of IS-manned CP near Sirte denied; gunmen attack Sharara field station

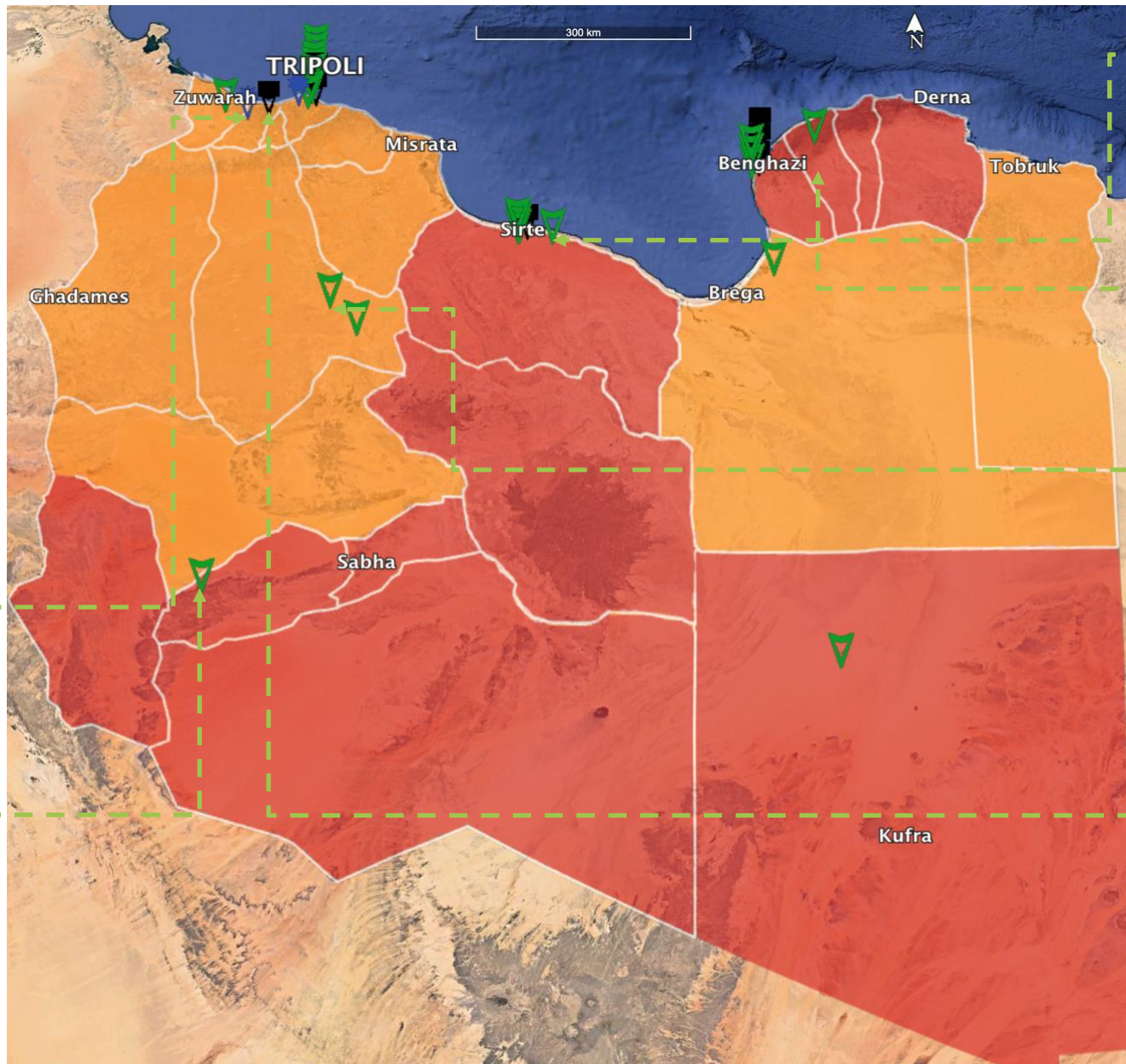
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



The head of Sirte's Security Directorate denied reports of Islamic State (IS) movements in Sirte and an IS-manned checkpoint in Wadi Al-Hunaywah, 50 km East of Sirte, on 19 Nov. Masood stated that Sirte's Security Directorate conducted patrols from Sirte to Ajdabiya, with no reports of IS movements and/or hideouts in the area. On 19 Nov, reports emerged over a likely IS CP near Wadi Al-Hunaywah. Reports suggest the masked militants were travelling in two vehicles and stopped travellers while checking their ID cards near a roundabout.

Reports emerged over renewed tensions between the tribes of Al-Magarha and Al-Mshashia over land ownership in the Bu Geila area, with reports of Al-Magarha tribe gathering forces in the Ash Shwayrif area on 19 Nov. Whispering Bell sources confirmed Al-Magarha tribe gatherings and a convoy of 19 vehicles in the Wadi Bu Gaila area on 19 Nov.

A dispute reportedly erupted between two local militias from Al-Zawiya, identified as Bahron and Hleila militias, which escalated into brief clashes in Al-Gordabiya area in the morning on 24 Nov. Initial reports suggest the Bahron militia is pro-Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and is affiliated with Abu Obaida militia.

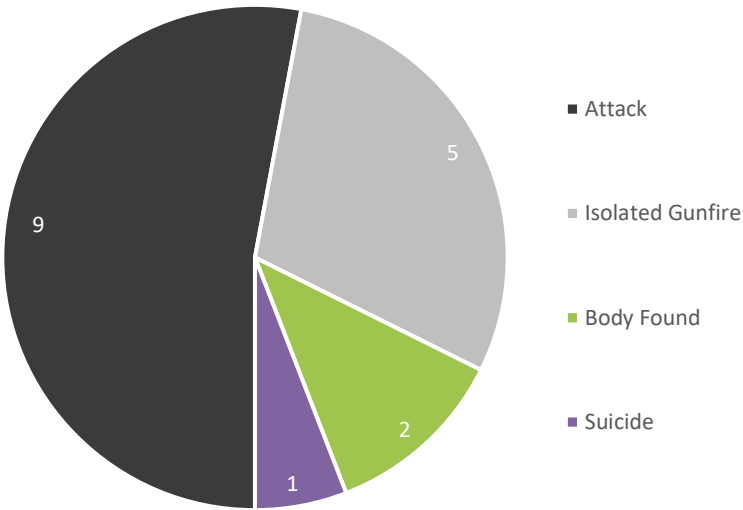
The former head of the dissolved Sabratha Military Council, Tahir Al-Gharbali, confirmed his release from a military prison three days after he was arrested at Sabratha's Dahman checkpoint on 15 Nov.

The National Oil Corporation's (NOC) subsidiary Akakus Oil Operation (AOO) confirmed eight unidentified armed men attacked the Sharara Oil Field substation B-6NC-186 at approximately 1500hrs on 20 Nov. The armed group robbed three company vehicles and mobile phones of Akakus employees on-site, who were later evacuated. According to the NOC statement, there were no security incidents and production was undisrupted, whilst noting that the Akakus management and security forces are cooperating with regional authorities to identify the perpetrators.

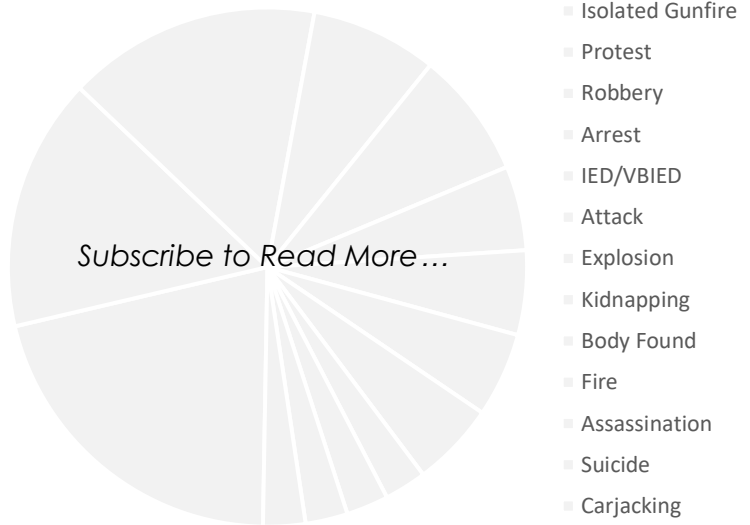
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Half of nationwide fatalities due to IS attack on Southern town of Tazirbu

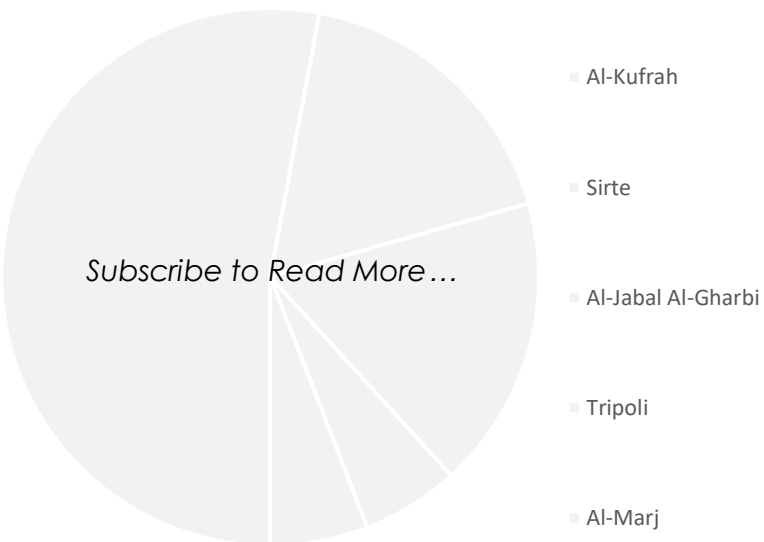
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



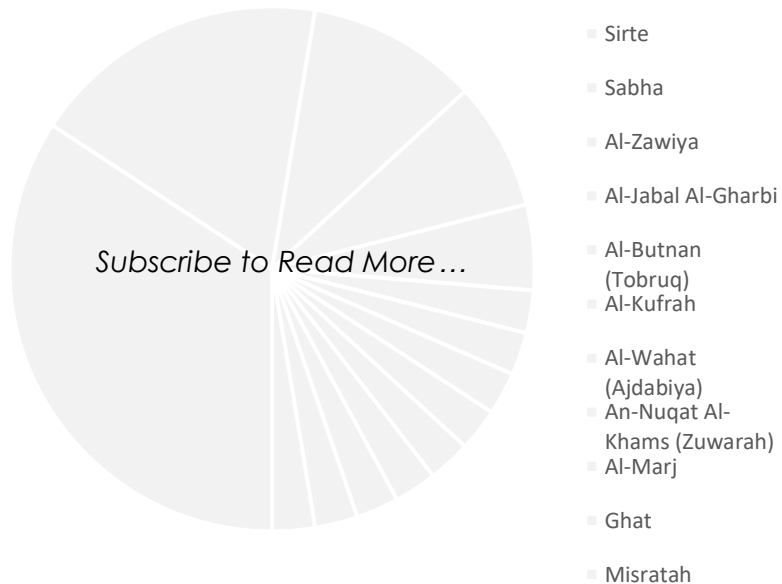
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



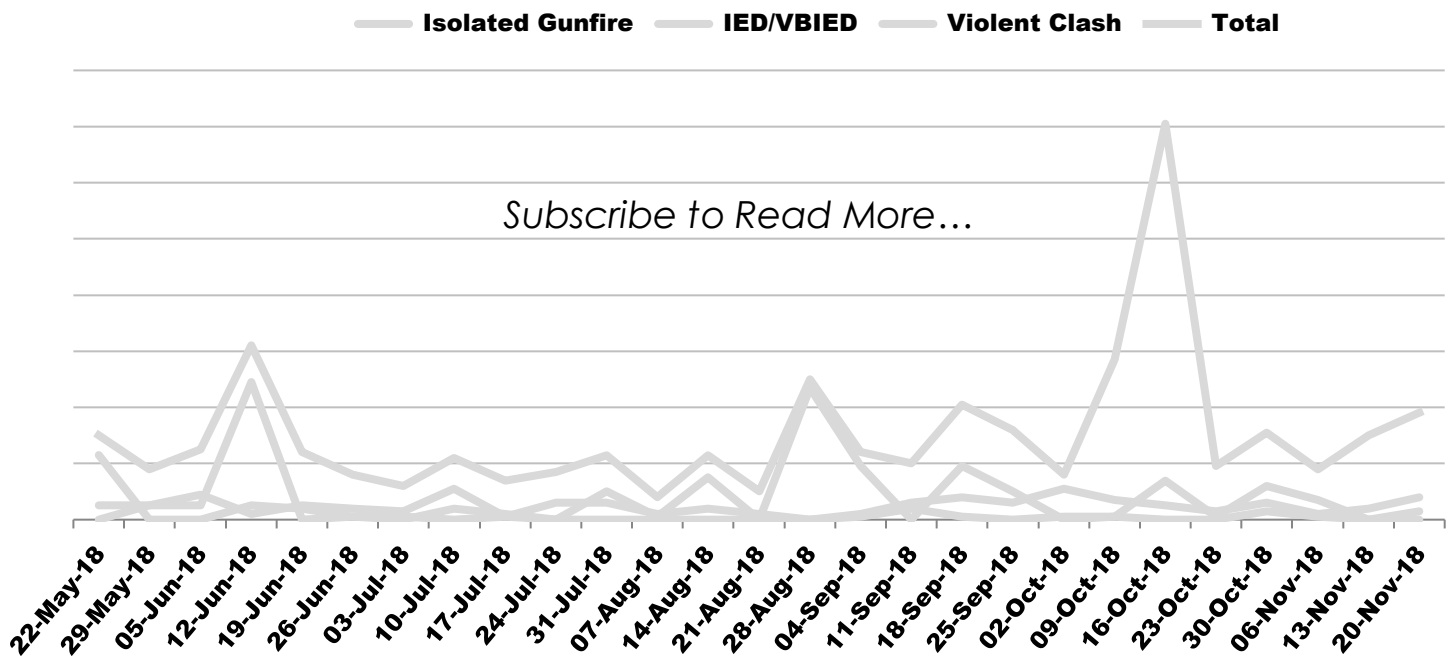
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



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 17 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 30 deaths reported last week and 18 the week before. This week the Islamic State (IS) attack on the town of Tazirbu resulted in nine fatalities accounting for over half of the fatalities across Libya. The number of incidents recorded in Benghazi doubled relatively compared with the past week. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 8 cases of isolated gunfire, 6 protests, 6 robberies, 3 IED/VBIED incidents, 3 arrests, 2 kidnappings and 1 assassination attempt.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 18 incidents, including 13 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. Whispering Bell recorded in Tripoli two incidents of vehicle thefts on 22 Nov. Reports suggest a white KIA Optima vehicle was stolen while parked in front of a house in Tripoli's Abu Sittah area at approximately 1000hrs on 22 Nov. In a similar incident, a silver Hyundai Elantra vehicle was stolen while parked in front of a house in Tripoli's Al-Hadba Al-Mashro' area on 22 Nov. Additionally, Whispering Bell recorded an arrest in the capital city. Reports suggest an alleged Sudanese national at a gas station robbed a parked white Toyota Camry vehicle in Tripoli's Abu Slim area in the afternoon on 20 Nov. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, unidentified gunmen reportedly attempted to assassinate a media official, identified as Mohammed Al-Gaddar, in Misrata at night on 17 Nov. Neither the identity of assailant(s) nor the motive behind the incident are known.

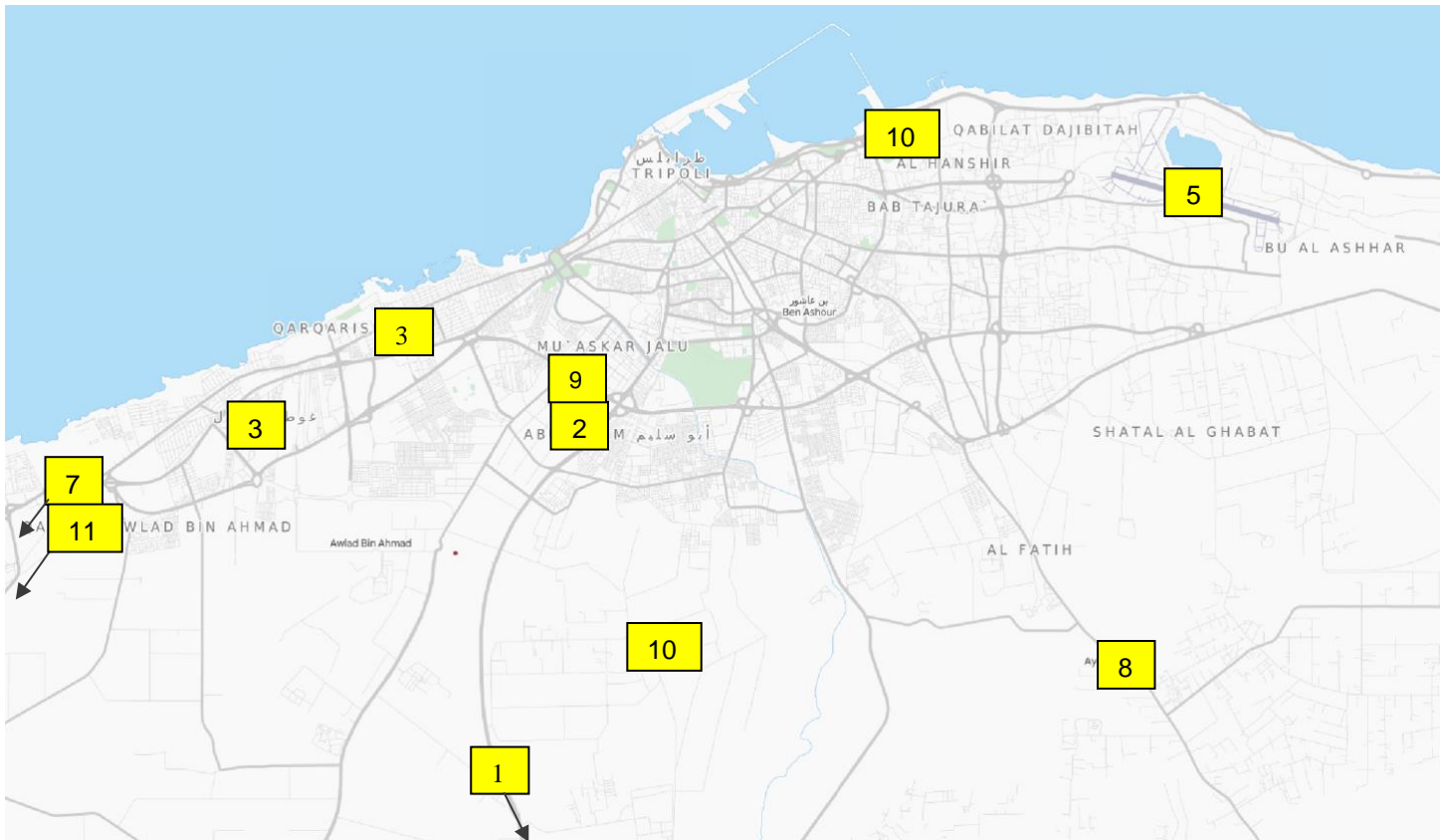
The week in Central Libya Whispering Bell recorded a total of 4 security incidents in Sirte. Local reports suggest a dispute between two families escalated into an exchange of gunfire resulting in the death of one, and the injury of two others, in Sirte's second residential area on 17 Nov. The motive behind the dispute remains unknown.

Turning to southern Libya, this week was marked by the Islamic State (IS) claiming responsibility via its Amaq publication for the raid on the southeastern town of Tazirbu and the attack on a local police station resulting in nine fatalities, 10 injuries, in addition to the kidnapping of at least 10 others, at approximately 1830hrs on 23 Nov. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, the Mayor of Ghat, Taher Al-Kabash, confirmed the rescue of all members aboard the tourist convoy that was subject to an armed robbery and abduction by eight unidentified gunmen near the Tadrart Acacus area on 17 Nov.

In Libya's East, Reuters reported 16 Egyptian workers held hostage due to a financial dispute with Libyan contactors in Tobruk on 17 Nov were released on 21 Nov, according to one of the workers' relatives. In Benghazi, indiscriminate gunfire injured a man in Al-Sabri area on 17 Nov. The man was reportedly shot in the arm.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Al-Kaniat militia 3-day deadline expires with no clashes reported



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (18 Nov) 3-day deadline by Al-Kaniat for Ghneiwa militia to evacuate TIP
2. (18 Nov) Director of Health Services released following 24hr detention
3. (18 Nov) Four gunmen raid multiple shops in Ghut Shaal
4. (18 Nov) Primary School teachers protest to expand school size
5. (18 Nov) Main union of CAA's Technical Affairs strike
6. (19-20 Nov) 36 injured due to firework celebrations across Tripoli
7. (20 Nov) TNT-based IED located & dismantled in Salah Al-Din
8. (20 Nov) Gang of illegal migrants arrested for house robbery
9. (20 Nov) Alleged Sudanese national robs parked vehicle at gas station
10. (22 Nov) Two parked vehicles stolen in front of houses
11. (25 Nov) Assassination attempt on former Security Directorate head

Al-Kaniat militia deadline expires

In a statement published on their official Facebook page, the spokesman of Al-Kaniat militia, Saad Al-Hamali, announced a 72-hour deadline given to the Ghneiwa militia to evacuate from Tripoli International Airport (TIP) and handover the area, whilst threatening to take action should their call go unheard. Al-Hamali stated the deadline comes in response to local calls for Tripoli militias to evacuate, the same narrative used to launch an offensive on Tripoli's militias in the Aug/Sep 2018 clashes. A potential re-escalation of militia tensions would hinder efforts of new security arrangements and highlight the continued power of armed groups to destabilize the security situation, despite political efforts to contain their influence. The deadline elapsed on 21 Nov with no reports of clashes, though tensions remain. On 25 Nov, reports emerged over militia gatherings of seven armed vehicles in front of Al-Naqiya Camp on the Airport Road. The motive behind the gathering remains unclear.

Failed assassination attempt

On 25 Nov, local reports suggest unidentified assailants opened fire on the former head of Tripoli's Security

Directorate, Salah Aldin Al-Sumouee, in front of his house in the areas between Salah Al-Din and Khallat Al-Forjan. Al-Sumouee reportedly suffered serious injuries. Neither the identity of the assailant(s) nor the motive behind the incident are known.

CAA union strike; financial demands

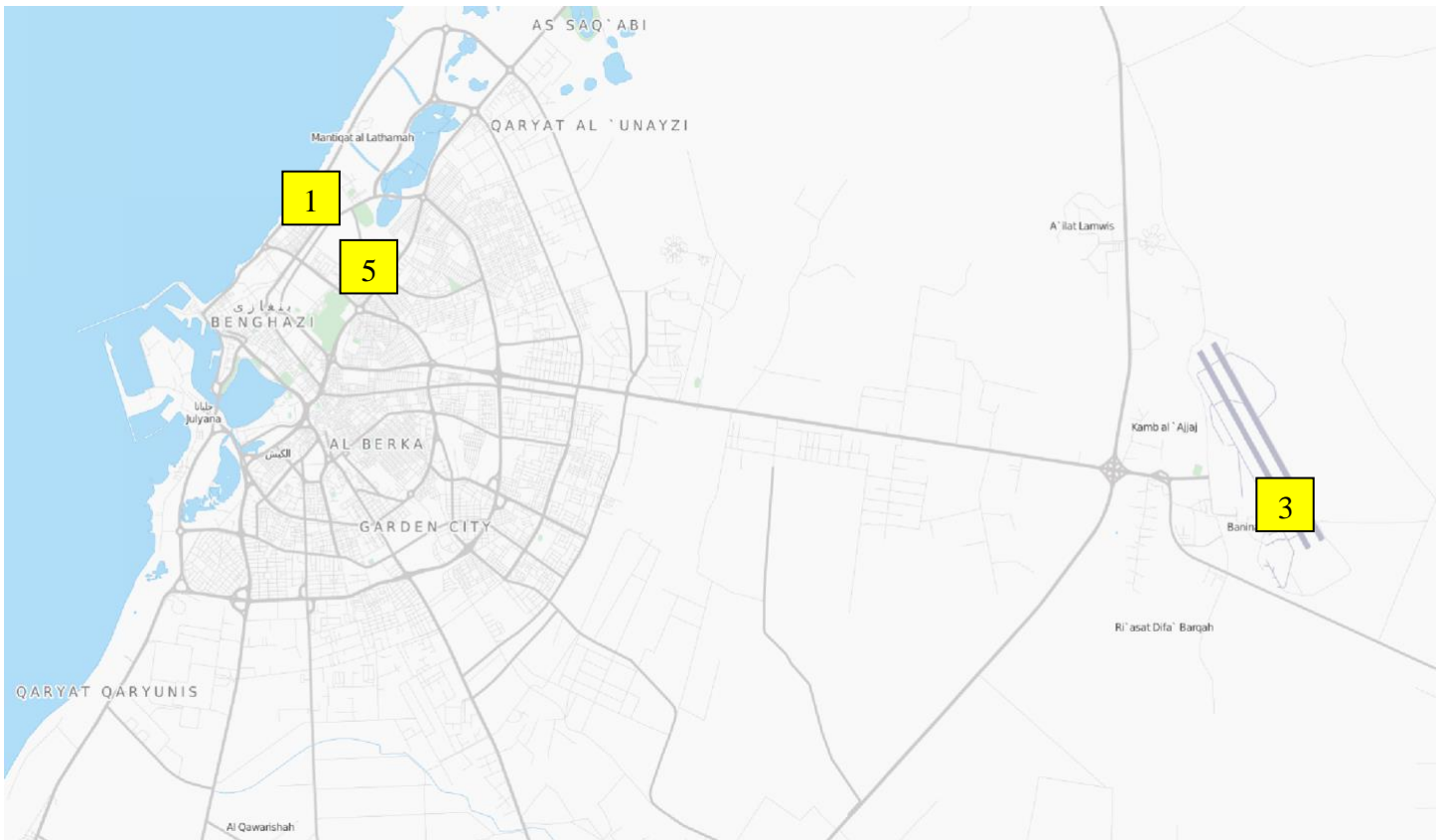
The Main Union of Technical Affairs of the General Administration of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in Tripoli, Sabha, and Benghazi, went on strike over financial demands on 18 Nov. The syndicates threatened to continue the strike should their demands go unheard, whilst noting low salaries and unjust gaps between employee salaries as the motive behind the strike. The syndicates called on the CAA's head to inform national carriers of the planned strike, noting they will not be held accountable for potential ramifications. According to reports, since 2012, successive governments paid higher salaries to specific employees, causing grievances amongst workers. Thus far, air traffic has not been impacted in Tripoli.

IED dismantled

Local reports suggest the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team of Tripoli's General Directorate for the Protection of Diplomatic Missions dismantled a TNT-based improvised explosive device (IED) in the Salah Al-Din area on 20 Nov.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Former Mayor's abducted son released; fate of former Mayor unknown



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (17 Nov) IED detonates during cleaning operation; no injuries
2. (18 Nov) Abducted son of former Mayor released
3. (18 Nov) Main Union of CAA's Technical Affairs strike
4. (18 Nov) Three assailants rob & stab man onboard taxi
5. (21 Nov) Gas cylinder explosion; 14 relatives injured

LNA investigates past assassinations

The spokesman of the Libyan National Army (LNA), Ahmed Al-Mesmari, announced on his official Twitter page, that the perpetrators behind the assassination of an American teacher, identified as Ronnie Smith, in Benghazi in 2013, are currently in custody. Al-Mesmari stated that the assassination was ordered by Ahmed Bokhtala, who is currently imprisoned in the United States, though he provided no details on the identity of the assailants. In Dec 2013, unidentified gunmen assassinated Ronnie, a teacher at Benghazi's International School, during his regular running route on Benghazi's Dubai Street. Al-Mesmari's statements follows the head of the LNA military prosecution, Ali Madi, revealing details of ongoing investigations into a series of previous assassinations carried out in Benghazi, including the assassination of the former US Ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens, in 2012.

Kidnapped former Mayor's son released

According to a relative of the kidnapped former Mayor of Benghazi Ahmed Al-Araibi, his son has been released though Araibi himself remains abducted. The

relative confirmed Araibi's son's release on her official Facebook page, with no mention of the party behind the abduction. On 02 Oct, an unidentified group abducted Al-Araibi and his son in Benghazi, prompting the Tobruk-based parliament and Al-Araibi's relatives to call for his immediate release. Unconfirmed reports emerged over the involvement of the Libyan National Army's (LNA) 106 Brigade led by Khalifa Haftar's son due to Al-Araibi's criticism of financial embezzlement of the Eastern-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL) by Haftar's family members.

Gas cylinder explosion

Local reports suggest a gas cylinder exploded in a house resulting in the injury of 14 family members in Benghazi's Al-Salmani area at night on 21 Nov. According to reports, two individuals suffered serious injuries.

IED detonates; no casualties

Reports suggest an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated during a cleaning operation in front of Sidi Abeid Cemetery in Benghazi's Al-Sabri area on 17 Nov. There were no security incidents reported.

6. What's next

Bottom-up alliances forming ahead of 2019 National Conference pose threat to GNA

POLITICAL FORECAST

Political uncertainty will continue to define the Libyan landscape in the medium term. Post-Palermo conference, there are more questions than answers on the way forward to solve the political stalemate. Salame will continue efforts within local municipalities to rally support for the National Conference. Looking ahead, the main question will be whether minimal security will persist until 2019 and whether powerbrokers will agree to sit together, enabling a transition and perhaps a new beginning for Libya; a narrative strongly advocated by Salame. On the domestic front, tensions are reportedly building up between the High Council of State (HCS) head Khaled Meshri and the GNA PM, Fayez Sarraj, amid allegations of an HCS-HoR alliance against the GNA. Meanwhile, by adopting Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) amendments in the Constitution, the HoR is sending a clear message to Salame that it is the sole legislative authority. More importantly, growing rhetoric between the Beyda-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL), and the UN and Tripoli-based authorities, has clearly underlined the fact that distribution of cash and revenues from natural resources continues to spark heated debates. In a letter addressed to Salame, eastern-based CBL governor, Ali Al-Hibri, justifies the printing of currency in the East as a necessary response to what he described as unfair budget allocation from Tripoli, providing a full breakdown of expenditure in the East.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

Writing for the *Washington Post*, authors Zaid Al-Ali and Sumit Bisarya dissect the prospect of Ghassan Salame's Jan 2019 National Conference and preconditions for a successful democratic transition in Libya. They argue that "While the conference's proposed mandate, decision-making rules and time frame have not been publicly discussed, it seems the idea is to create a narrative of the country coming together at one event. The conference would serve as a founding "we the people" moment, resulting in a sense of legitimacy and authority to set new constitutional rules for a new Libya. Salame has only stated that the national conference will give "a platform for, and give a voice to, the Libyan people." This has led to speculation that participants will be mainly drawn from the country's various social constituencies rather than limited to representatives of the country's main political forces." The authors then explore other models." The authors add that "Libya needs a way to move itself out of transition. A new constitution represents a birth certificate for a new state, a new social and political contract whose legitimacy and authority are grounded in the will of the people. As such, it is a critical milestone in exiting from transition and building foundations for a new society. In the case of Libya, a constitutional settlement would ideally help reconcile competing claims for legitimate authority and provide a common vision around which the state-building process can happen."

SECURITY FORECAST

In Tripoli, while the Al-Kaniat militia's deadline elapsed with no reports of clashes, militia tensions related to the new security arrangements could escalate in the short to medium term. Convincing the Ghneiwa militia to evacuate camps across the capital city will prove particularly challenging for the GNA. In Misrata, a visit by western delegates to show support for hardline Islamist Salah Badi, leader of the Somoud Brigade, and reject sanctions imposed against him, could contribute to perceptions of marginalization and isolation from political negotiations. This would raise serious concerns over the potential for pro-Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) elements to resort to violence in western areas where they have a documented presence such as Zawiya, Sabratha, and Misrata. In central Libya, Bani Walid in particular, the SDF's arrests of prominent militants could increase as they enable the western front to assert its counterterrorism might, especially after an increase in suspicious activity in the area. In the South, a visit by Chadian president Idriss Deby to Israel, has fueled tensions among CCMSR rebels, which could potentially result in an activity uptick, including attacks, on Libya's borders, and subsequent retaliation by Chadian authorities.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an *AlMonitor* article, Fehim Tastekin analyses the potential ramifications of Turkey's withdrawal from the Palermo conference in relation to Cairo's push for a unified Libyan military. The author argues "the veto against Turkey's and Qatar's participation may also be interpreted as maneuvering by Sisi, who persuaded Hifter to come to Palermo." He adds "Ankara interpreted the unofficial meeting on the sideline of the conference as a move to legitimize Hifter's position. The meeting further excluded Turkey from the Libyan process at a time when Ankara had already lost most of its influence over the past couple of years. The roles of Qatar and Turkey first became controversial when Libya was divided between two parliaments, two governments and numerous armed groups. Islamist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood, refused to recognize the House of Representatives. Secular minded deputies under the tutelage of Hifter had moved the assembly to Tobruk to set up a new government. On the other hand, their rivals — supported by Turkey and Qatar — established the National Salvation Government as a continuation of the General National Congress based in Tripoli." Tastekin also contends "The emerging role of the Turkish military signals an effort to balance Cairo's moves to set up a national army."

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