



1. The Big Picture

No de-escalation in sight amid fears of impact on O&G

This week saw an escalation in military operations in Tripoli's Southern areas following Haftar's march on Tripoli on 04 Apr. Clashes intensified between Government of National Accord (GNA)-aligned militias and the Libyan National Army (LNA) with both sides vying for control over frontlines in Tripoli's South. The military operations intensified as rival forces carried out tit-for-tat airstrikes and indiscriminate shelling, including an LNA airstrike targeting Mitiga International Airport (MJI) runway on 06 Apr, and the GNA shooting down of an LNA aircraft over Tripoli's Qasr Bin Ghashir area on 13 Apr. The Tripoli theatre continues to be defined by intermittent heavy clashes, smoke and mirrors over positions and conflicting claims from both sides.

The clashes have entered their eleventh consecutive day with no signs of de-escalation in the short term. The likelihood of military victory seems increasingly unlikely for both sides. The level of hostilities is highlighted by the latest casualty toll indicating 147 injuries and 614 injuries.

The security vacuum in Tripoli expanded beyond engagement areas on 13 April, highlighted by the GNA's arrest of a prominent Islamic State (IS) militant who fought in Benghazi and was in the final stages of planning a terrorist attack against an unidentified target in Tripoli, according to a GNA MoI statement. The militant travelled from Sabha to Tripoli, the statement reads. However, there is a possibility the arrest is linked to GNA attempts to project counter-terrorism capabilities in response to recent allegations, published by international media, that terrorists and Islamist extremists are fighting alongside the GNA.

Meanwhile, the GNA continues to focus on the LNA's supply lines. The GNA's Western Joint Ops Room declared it conducted at least 21 combat missions between 12-13 April. The

missions included airstrikes and intercepting an LNA armed convoy with fuel supplies between Qaryat and Mizdah. Separately, the Sirte Protection Force (SPF), nominally operating under the GNA, seized 8 trucks with fuel and other supplies between Jufra and Gharyan. On the tribal front, Saleh Fendi, the head of Tarhunah's Social Council, publicly declared his support for the LNA and the newly-formed 9th Brigade (active on the Tripoli South fronts). The statement has ended months of speculation over Tarhunah's position, which has now become more overt. However, Zintani factions remain divided over the LNA's offensive. Both anti/pro Haftar statements continue to emerge from Zintan.

Further, concerns continue to rise over the potential spillover effect of military escalation on the country's oil and gas output. Reports indicate LNA units (302 Battalion "Saiqa" led by Major General Wanis Boukhmada) were en route to Es Sider and Ras Lanuf to strengthen their defensive posture on 13 Apr. The threat to the oil crescent and other oil facilities can take the form of direct attacks on pipelines and other assets, and/or political jockeying over oil revenues via the Central Bank of Libya (CBL).

Haftar now controls almost all of Libya's onshore fields with the exception of the Zawiya export terminal and other fields (including offshore) in the West. At any point throughout the conflict, Haftar is capable of disrupting output at some of the fields under his territorial control to compel the Tripoli-based GNA to concede.

KEY POINTS

- Clashes remain confined to South
- Ground & air operations intensify
- Libyan National Conference delayed



CONTENTS

- 1 **THE BIG PICTURE**
No de-escalation in sight amid fears of impact on O&G sector
- 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

IS claims responsibility for two separate attacks on Ghadduwah and Al-Fuqaha

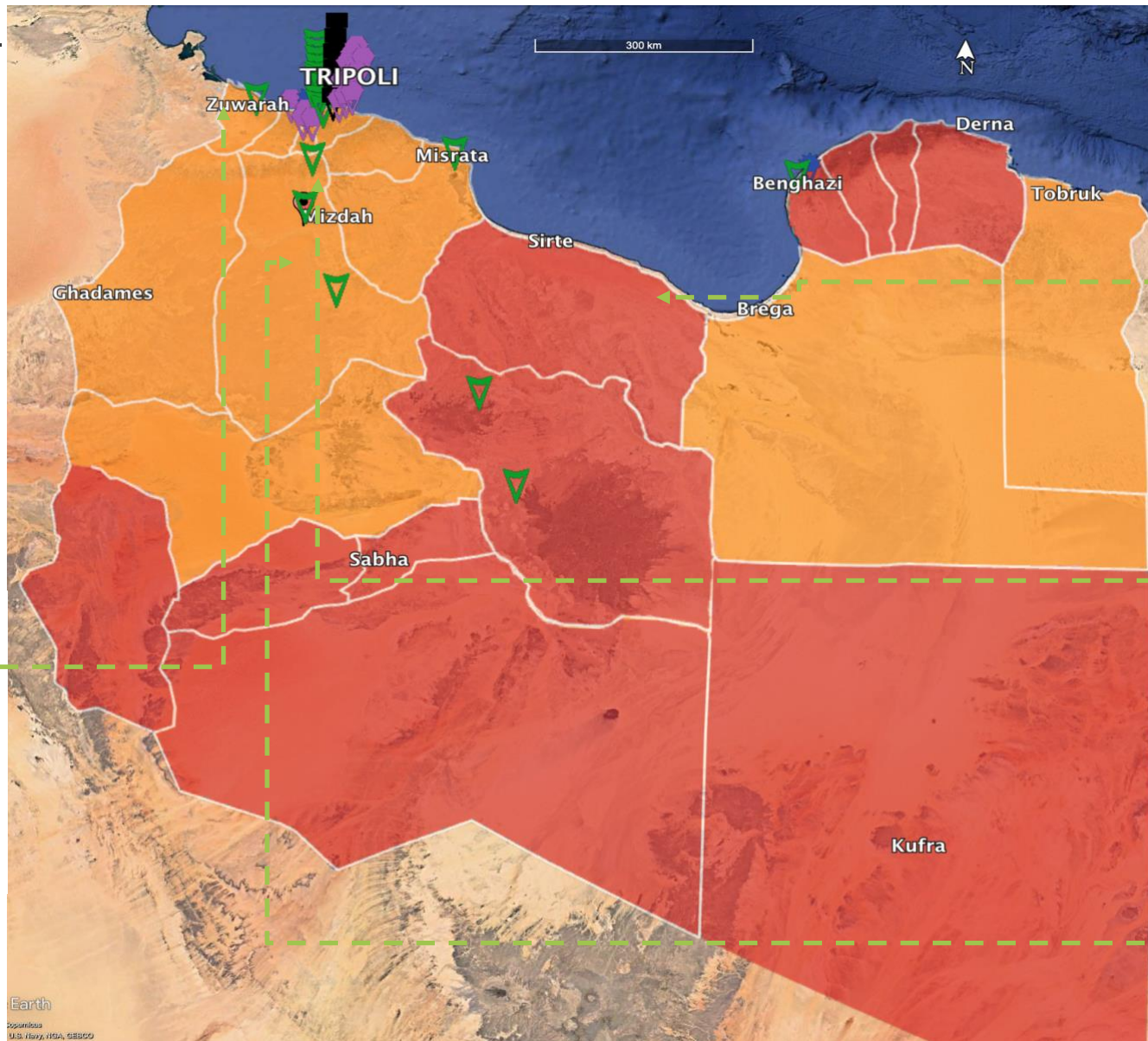
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



On 13 Apr, the Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack on Ghadduwah, 60 kms South of Sabha, resulting in the death of six of Khalifa Haftar-led "militia" forces. The IS claimed to have killed six of Haftar's forces in a raid on their residences.

Concerns continue to rise over the potential spillover effect of military escalation on the country's oil and gas output. At the time of publication, reports indicate LNA units (302 Battalion "Saiqa" led by Major General Wanis Boukhmada) were en route to Es Sider and Ras Lanuf to strengthen their defensive posture.

On its official Facebook page, the Sirte Protection Force (SPF) reported the continuation of patrols to secure the South, West and East of the city on 09 Apr. The SPF stated that the patrols aim to monitor any suspicious movements and subsequently thwart a potential attack on the city. Further, the SPF reaffirmed its support for official state institutions in their efforts to impose security and stability.

Saleh Fendi, the head of Tarhunah's Social Council, publicly declared his support for the LNA and the newly-formed 9th Brigade.

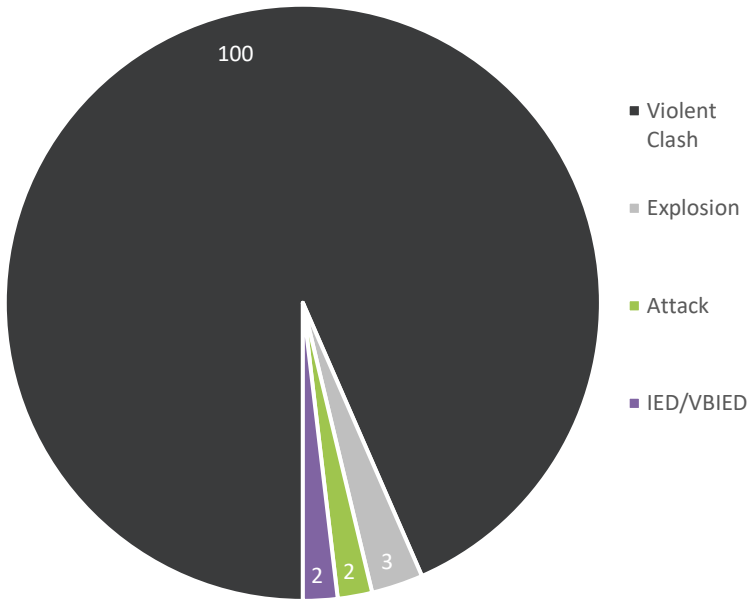
The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the 09 April attack on Al-Fuqaha resulting in the execution of the local council's head and a municipal guard, in addition to the destruction of several houses. A suspected Islamic State (IS) convoy of 13 trucks attacked Al-Fuqaha executing the head of the local council and a municipal guard while burning down the Municipal Police HQ and three houses between 2330hrs and 0045hrs on 08 Apr/09 Apr.

Reports suggest an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near the Freedom School in Al Harsha, West of Al-Zawiya, resulting in two fatalities and one injury at approximately 0330hrs on 13 Apr.

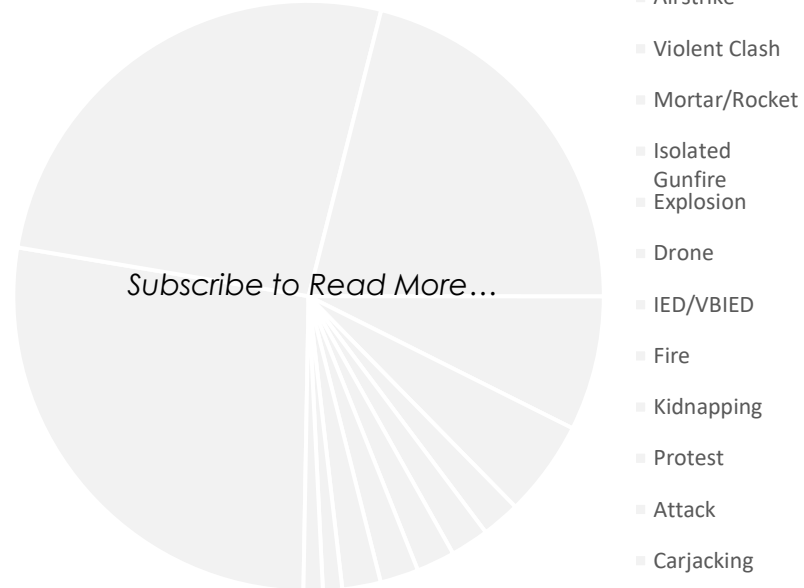
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Surge in nationwide fatalities due to ongoing clashes in Tripoli's South

Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



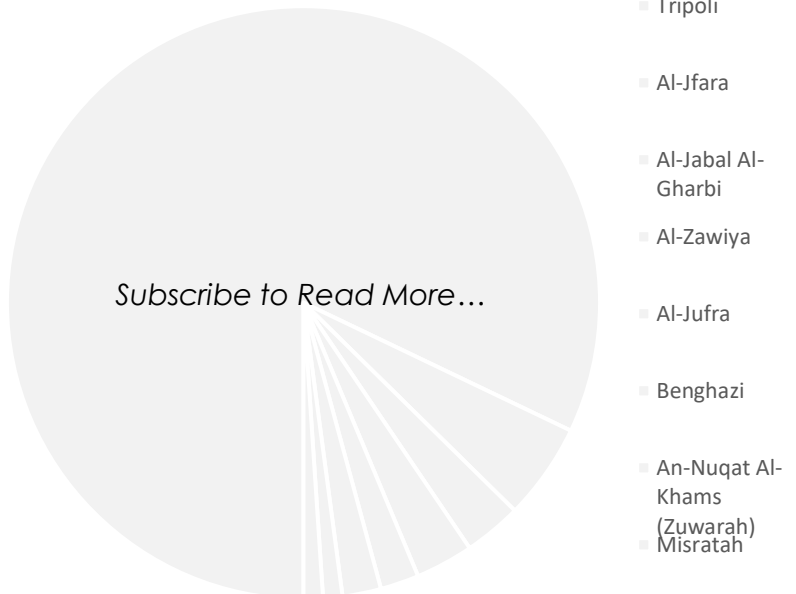
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



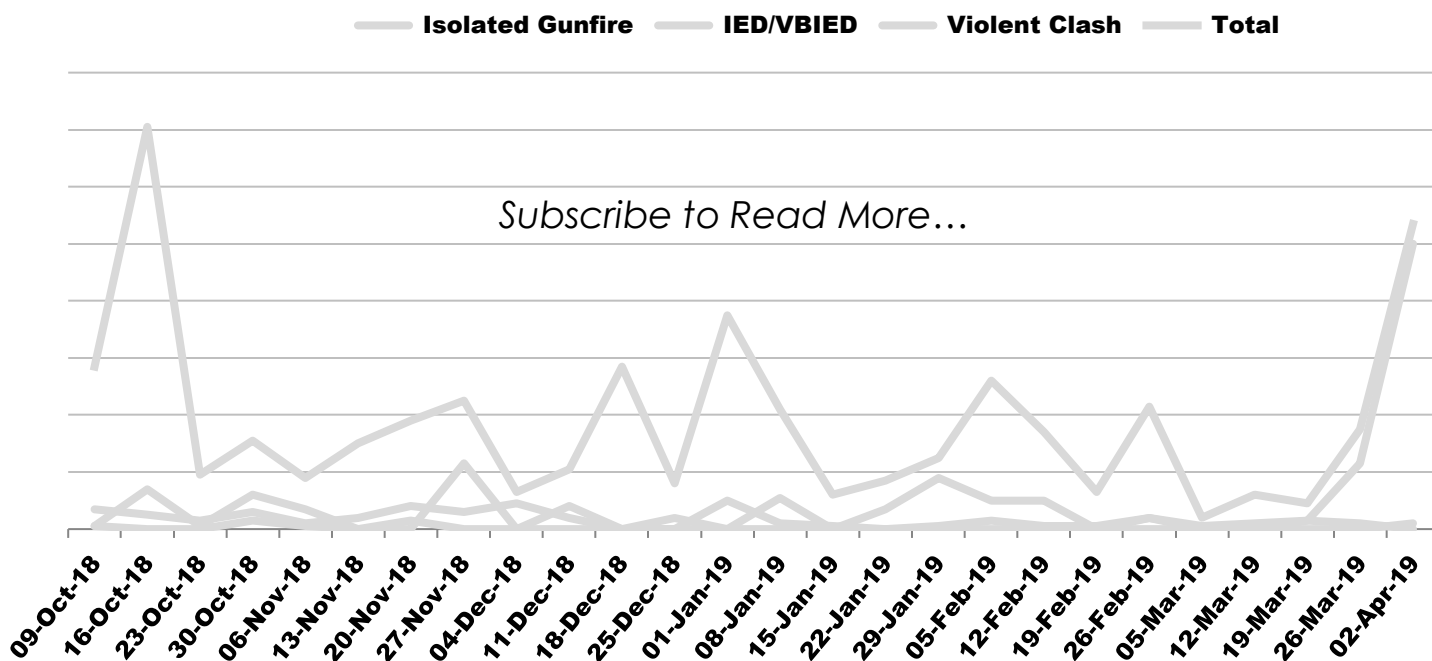
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



Data Analysis

WB recorded this week a total of 107 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 35 deaths reported last week and 09 the week before. This week, the sharp increase in nationwide fatalities comes as a result of ongoing clashes between the rival forces of the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA) in Tripoli's Southern areas, resulting in 121 fatalities and 561 injuries thus far. The majority of incidents occurred in Tripoli due to the launch of the LNA's offensive on the capital on 04 Apr. This week witnessed an increase in airstrikes and violent clashes, whilst the majority of nationwide incidents occurred in the Western region. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country including, 26 airstrikes, 25 violent clashes, 20 mortar/rocket shelling incidents, 7 cases of isolated gunfire, 5 explosions, 2 IED/VBIEDs, 2 protests, and one attack.

In Western Libya, WB recorded a total of 91 incidents, including 78 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli, marking a sharp increase in Tripoli incidents. In Tripoli, beyond the clashes in Tripoli's South, WB recorded a surge in burglary cases in the areas of clashes as thousands of families evacuated their residences. Sources reported increased burglary cases over the past days, where several houses were robbed, particularly in the Wadi Al Rabie, South of Ain Zara and Khallat Forjan areas. Meanwhile, local reports indicate security forces arrested an Islamic State (IS) militant identified as Abu Abdallah Dernawi, who allegedly admitted to coming to Tripoli with the intent to carry out terrorist attacks, on 13 Apr. Beyond, there were also reports of unknown gunmen opening fire at a police checkpoint resulting in the death of one police officer and the injury of three others in Tripoli's Tajoura area on 13 Apr. In the wider Western region, an LNA military aircraft conducted an airstrike targeting a military camp of a force affiliated with the GNA near Zuwara on 12 Apr, marking the closest yet to an oil and gas facility in the Western region. Melittah, co-operated by Italy's Eni and National Oil Corporation (NOC), is located West of Zuwara.

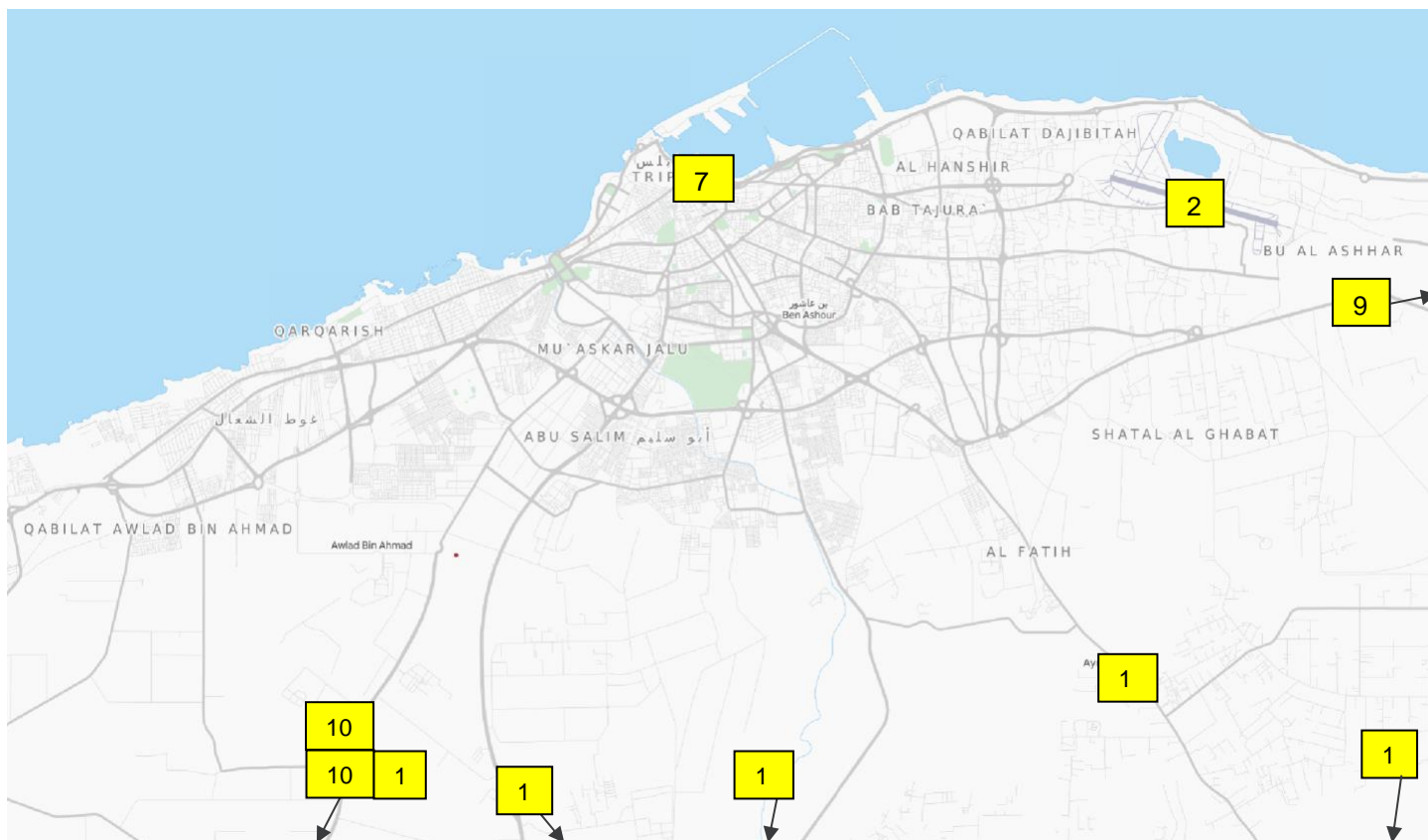
This week in Central Libya, according to Russia's news agency Sputnik, citing the LNA spokesperson, Ahmed Al-Mesmari, stated that a large meeting between terrorist and armed groups was held in Sirte, in which the two groups proposed a plan to attack the Oil Crescent region. On 14 Apr, reports emerged over LNA's 302 Battalion "Saiqa" led by (Maj Gen) Wanis Boukhmada were on route to Es-Sider & Ras Lanuf to strengthen their defensive posture.

Turning to Southern Libya, this was marked by two attacks on Ghadduwah and Al-Fuqaha, with the Islamic State (IS) claiming responsibility for both attacks. The IS claimed responsibility for the 09 April attack on Al-Fuqaha resulting in the execution of the local council's head and a municipal guard, in addition burning down the Municipal Police HQ and three houses between 2330hrs and 0045hrs on 08 Apr/09 Apr. Meanwhile, on 13 Apr, (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack on Ghadduwah, 60 kms South of Sabha, resulting in the death of six of Khalifa Haftar-led "militia" forces. The IS claimed to have killed six of Haftar's forces in a raid on their residences.

In Eastern Libya, incidents remain relatively low in contrast to the Western and Southern regions. This week, local reports suggest a military vehicle loaded with explosive remnants of war (ERW) exploded as it collided with another vehicle, resulting in the death of three soldiers in Benghazi's Qawarsha area in the afternoon on 10 Apr. The Interim Government's Ministry of Interior Spokesman stated that the vehicle was transferring ERW waste when it accidentally collided into another vehicle.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Tit-for-tat airstrikes intensify as LNA targets MJI runway; fluid control



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (05-06 Apr) GNA/LNA forces clash in Tripoli's South
2. (06 Apr) LNA conducts airstrike targeting MJI runway; no casualties
3. (07 Apr) PC Libyan Army spok. announces "Volcano of Rage" Op.
4. (07 Apr) US Department of State calls for immediate halt to military operations
5. (09 Apr) Al-Serraj allocates 2 billion LYD to fund combat operations
6. (11 Apr) EU calls for all parties to immediately cease military operations
7. (12 Apr) Locals hold anti-LNA protest in Martyrs' Square
8. (13 Apr) Mol announce arrest of IS militant plotting attack against Tripoli
9. (13 Apr) Gunmen open fire on police CP; one officer killed & 3 others injured
10. (13 Apr) Indiscriminate gunfire intimidates shop owners & customers
11. (14 Apr) Clashes expected to increase from 14 Apr onward

Casualty toll rises as clashes intensify

As the clashes between rival Government of National Accord (GNA) and Libyan National Army (LNA) forces enter their tenth consecutive day, the situation on the ground remains fluid and control over strategic areas in Southern Tripoli continues to shift. Increased air power by both sides has significantly escalated the military operations, with the LNA spokesperson, Ahmed Al-Mesmari, claiming 8 LNA airstrikes targeted GNA positions and the increase of its air operations by 100%. On the ground, the LNA was unable to advance northward on the Ain Zara and Wadi Al-Rabei fronts on 13 Apr, with reports of hit-and-run clashes in the areas, including Khellat Al-Forjan. Meanwhile, the LNA advanced on the Al-Swani front, where they reached the proximity of Al-Kreymiya, though sources confirmed that Al-Kreymiya remains under the GNA's control. On the Aziziyah front, the GNA attempted to launch an attack on the LNA-secured area from the West (Wershiffanah), in an attempt to relieve pressure from the Al-Swani front. Sources reported engagement areas are Wadi Al-Rabei, Ain Zara and Khallat Al-Forjan, whilst the LNA is in control of Qasr Bin Ghashir, Al-Swani, Tripoli International Airport (TIP), Soug Khmeis Emsihel, and Al-Aziziyah. Meanwhile, the GNA maintains control over Al-Yarmouk and Naqliya camps as of the morning of 14 Apr. The situation is likely to escalate on the ground following the House of Representatives (HoR) head, Aguila Saleh, stating that the LNA will pursue its

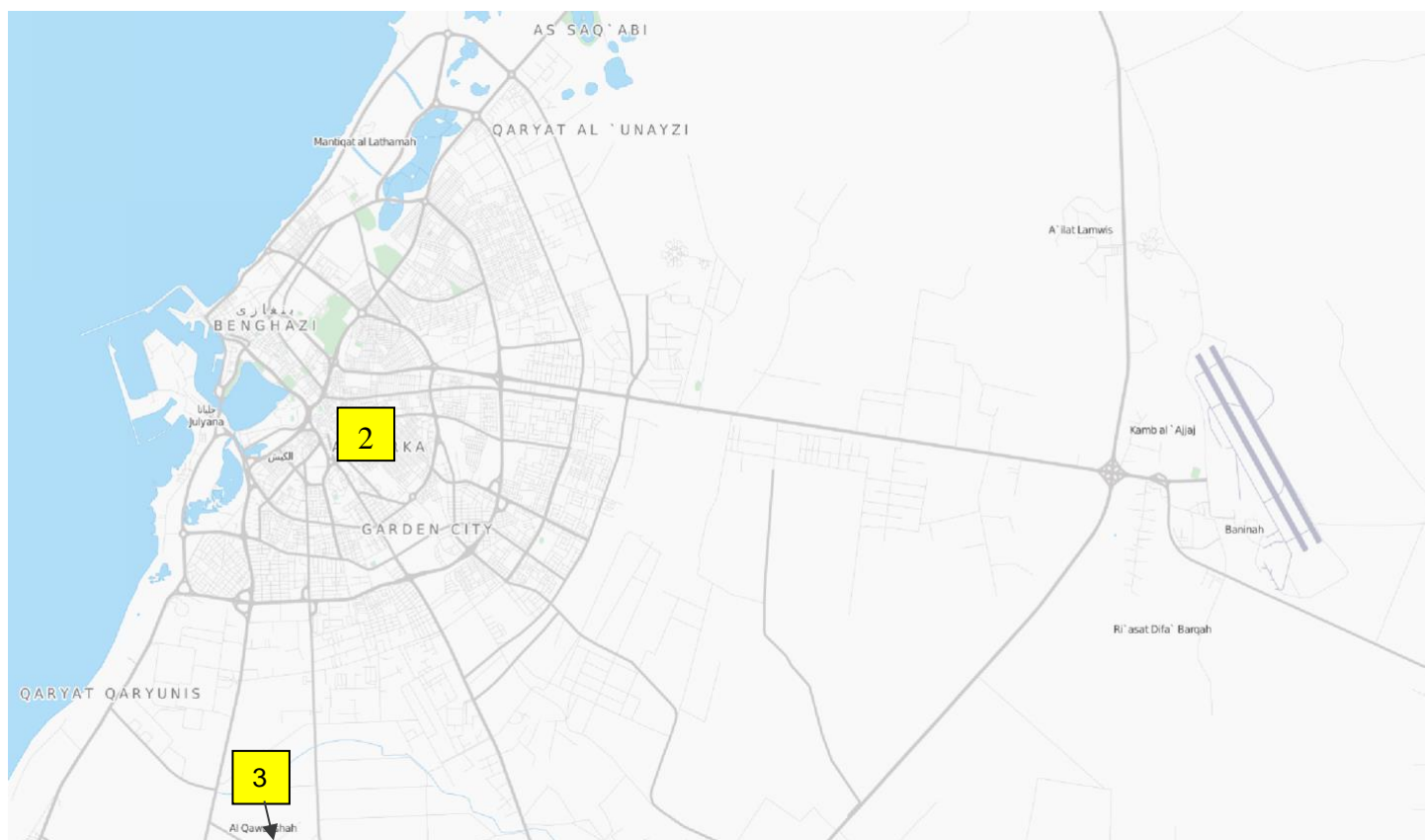
advance on Tripoli on 13 Apr to "get rid of militias and terrorist groups." In response, the GNA's spokesman, Mohamed Younes, stated that the GNA would only agree to a ceasefire if the LNA units retreat back to the East. Moreover, in response to growing allegations of terrorism financing, the Presidential Council (PC) denied the presence of militant groups fighting alongside its forces.

On 09 Apr, Fayez Al-Serraj, ordered the Audit Bureau, Central Bank of Libya (CBL) and the Ministry of Finance to allocate 2 billion Libyan dinars (LYD) to address what he described as "exceptional circumstances in the country", in reference to Haftar's military offensive on Tripoli. Additionally, Al-Serraj issued another resolution no.498 for 2019 on the allocation of 400 million LYD for the GNA Serraj-chaired Ministry of Defense (MoD) to cover the MoD's urgent needs to confront the LNA.

This week saw the LNA targeting Mitiga International Airport (MJI) with an airstrike on 06 Apr. The LNA Air Force (LAF) commander, Saqer Al-Jroushi, stated that the LNA army targeted MJI after armed vehicles affiliated with the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) intended to join forces with Misrata brigades against the LNA. The airport's administration announced extended operational hours from 1700hrs to 0800hrs on 11 Apr, though operations remain limited. Hostilities continue to grow on the ground with the latest casualty toll indicating 121 fatalities and 561 injuries, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The formation of key alliances could significantly deter the situation on the ground either in favour or against either side.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Vehicle loaded with ERW waste explodes after colliding with another vehicle



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (08 Apr) Syrian national wounded by bullet detonating in workshop
2. (08 Apr) Benghazi Municipality expresses support for LNA Ops.
3. (10 Apr) Vehicle loaded with ERW explodes; casualties
4. (13 Apr) HoR holds first official session in constitutional HQ

Vehicle loaded with ERW explodes

Local reports suggest a military vehicle loaded with explosive remnants of war (ERW) exploded as it collided with another vehicle, resulting in the death of three soldiers in Benghazi's Qawarsha area in the afternoon on 10 Apr. The Interim Government's Ministry of Interior Spokesman stated that the vehicle was transferring ERW waste when it accidentally collided into another vehicle.

Syrian national injured in workshop

According to Benghazi's Al-Jalaa Hospital for Surgery and Accidents, a 55-year-old man of Syrian nationality, identified as Salem Mohammed, was injured in the face, chest and hand after a bullet exploded in his workshop on 08 Apr. A citizen reportedly pressurized the victim into cutting into the head of the bullet resulting in it exploding and Mohammed's subsequent injury.

Benghazi Municipality reaffirms support for LNA

In a statement, the Municipality of Benghazi, reaffirmed its support and confidence in the Libyan National Army (LNA) on 08 Apr. The statement expressed its confidence in the LNA to complete "the march of honour and dignity", in a clear reference to the LNA's military operations in Tripoli.

HoR first official session in constitutional HQ

The House of Representatives (HoR) head, Aguila Saleh, stated that the LNA will pursue their advance on Tripoli on 13 Apr, in its first official session held in its constitutional HQ in Benghazi. Saleh stated that "we need to get rid of militias and terrorist groups", whilst assuring Tripoli's residents that the LNA's campaign will be limited and not "violate any freedoms but restore security and fight terrorism". Meanwhile, the GNA's spokesman, Mohamed Younes, stated that the GNA would only agree to a ceasefire if the LNA units retreat back to the East. In response to growing allegations of terrorism financing, the Presidential Council (PC) denied the presence of militant groups fighting alongside its forces.

6. What's next

Intensified Tripoli clashes to result in security vacuum across country

POLITICAL FORECAST

Intensified military operations in Tripoli's South have significantly impacted the previously improved political outlook prior to the outbreak of clashes on 04 Apr. This week, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) head, Ghassan Salame, announced the postponement of the Libyan National Conference, previously due to be held between 14-16 Apr in Ghadames. In a statement, Salame explained that the delay came against the backdrop of the ongoing military offensive on Tripoli and the subsequent security threats associated with holding a conference under the current circumstances. The postponement of the anticipated Libyan National Conference would mark a clear setback in recent efforts to end Libya's transitional phase and push the political process forward to eventually hold elections. Meanwhile, on 06 Apr, the Central Committee for Municipal Council Elections (CCMCE) announced the postponement of the voting across several municipalities, including Alasaaba, Al-Zawiya and in the Southern region, due to military escalation in the West, with clashes reaching Tripoli's South. The CCMCE noted that a new date for resuming the voting would be announced in the coming days. The postponement would come after an initial successful start to the voting as 9 municipalities held peaceful polls 03 Mar. Beyond, the Egyptian President received Khalifa Haftar in Cairo to discuss topics of mutual interest, including counter-terrorism on 14 Apr.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In an article for *Stratfor*, the author(s) write "Realistically, if Hifter were to cut oil exports through the Tripoli-based NOC, he would likely try to continue exporting through a different vehicle: the House of Representatives-supported, Benghazi-based National Oil Company, which has struggled to get off the ground. The Benghazi-based National Oil Company would likely send any oil revenue it earns through the rival Central Bank that Tobruk has also set up, giving Hifter control of not only the oil flowing through Libya but also the key part he is currently missing: the country's oil revenue. But it is not clear that this plan will work. There is an outstanding United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution barring oil sales involving anything but the Tripoli-based institutions; many different groups since 2011 have tried to export eastern Libyan oil independent of Tripoli, but they have always failed. The United States is still staunchly aligned with the UNSC and in 2018 threatened to sanction Hifter if he did not resume oil flows through the official Tripoli-based institutions. Under the Obama administration, the U.S. Navy even physically intervened to prevent independent oil exports from Libya. Nevertheless, continued oil flow out of Libya is the United States' primary interest, particularly as it seeks to sanction Iranian and Venezuelan oil exports. If Hifter cuts off oil through the Tripoli-based NOC — and the only way oil exports from Libya can remain at a relatively high level is if Hifter uses the Benghazi-based National Oil Company — the United States may cave. In any case, the longer the active fighting in Libya's civil war continues, the more likely it is that Hifter will take advantage of the leverage over the oil sector he has built up, putting Libyan oil exports in a fragile position."

SECURITY FORECAST

Clashes in Tripoli's South have entered their eleventh consecutive day with no signs of de-escalation in the short term, particularly as Tripoli's authorities stated that they would only end the conflict when the Libyan National Army (LNA) units retreat back to the East. Meanwhile, the LNA spokesperson, Ahmed Al-Mesmari, stated LNA units are fully functioning on the seven axes, whilst noting preparations for the opening of an eighth axis in the coming days. A stalemate is expected as likelihood of military victory seems increasingly unlikely for both sides. Additionally, rival forces have intensified their ground and air operations, subsequently posing a threat to civilian lives and the likelihood of a rapid increase in casualties. Meanwhile, whilst reinforcements continue to arrive from key Western cities, including Misrata, to join GNA aligned forces against the LNA, there has yet to be a full mobilization in support of the GNA from key Western cities; a scenario that would significantly change the status quo on the ground. Meanwhile, the Oil Crescent remains exposed to a possible attack coordinated by anti-LNA factions exploiting the army's ongoing military operations in Tripoli and subsequent exposure of its controlled areas in the Oil Crescent, East and South. The latter was highlighted by two Islamic State (IS) attacks on Ghadduwah and Al-Fuqaha in the South, in addition to a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) explosion in Benghazi.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an article for *International Crisis Group*, the author(s) write "Despite the LNA's military might and external support, its victory in Tripoli is not a foregone conclusion. The LNA could succeed in taking Tripoli without much of a fight if hostile forces turn sides or flee, as they have done in the centre and south. For now, however, this is an uncertain prospect as the two military coalitions appear equally matched. A more probable outcome is for the current escalation to turn into a protracted battle and possibly a prolonged siege of Tripoli, with a mounting civilian toll. And it could spread to other parts of the country, as Misratan forces have explicitly stated they intend to cut off LNA supply lines in central Libya, and have intimated that they may even go on a more far-reaching counter-attack. What happens in the fight for Tripoli is now largely dependent on how outside actors respond. A number of external powers have condemned the escalation, calling on all parties to exercise restraint and either freeze military operations or withdraw to their prior locations. But none of these statements included the threat of sanctions and none made explicit mention of the need to support the UN-backed Government of National Accord in Tripoli. To many Libyans this suggests that foreign governments are tacitly backing Haftar in his ambition to seize the capital and power. Those who support the LNA's military offensive in Tripoli today in order to defeat parties they label terrorists are betting on a military solution, which they believe will stabilise the country. But such an outcome is far from guaranteed, and all should be aware that protracted deadly fighting would have tumultuous repercussions for Libya, its neighbours and Europe, too. The threat of terrorism could become a self-fulfilling prophecy as new jihadist and other radical groups emerge from the chaos and join the fighting."

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.