

# 1. The Big Picture

## LNA flexes military muscle, consolidates foothold in West & South

The military landscape continues to see an increase in tempo as the Libyan National Army (LNA) consolidates posture across Tripoli's main frontlines, despite relatively limited military activity between 21-24 Nov. However, the LNA's main gains were made West of Tripoli and across the Southern region, where Haftar's forces expanded their reach via local alliances with Tuareg battalions. Within a week, the LNA claimed it downed an Italian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), established a no-fly zone (NFZ) over Tripoli, secured the support of Tuareg tribes in the South, and expanded its presence West of the capital. Haftar's forces are now clearly setting the tempo while the Government of National Accord (GNA) remained relatively quiet this week.

The LNA flexed its military muscle and demonstrated it maintains the upper hand by downing an Italian Air Force General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper UAV over Tarhunah, leading many analysts to suggest the LNA is now in possession of advanced jamming capabilities. The development - confirmed under investigation by Italy - was loaded with symbolism given Italy's colonial past, reinforcing the LNA's image as a guarantor of Libyan sovereignty. Of note, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) also reported the loss of a remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) over Tripoli. Further, the LNA projected air supremacy with the designation of a no-fly zone (NFZ) over Tripoli. In an interview, LNA spokesperson Ahmed Al-Mismari, stated the airspace restrictions were prompted by the Italian UAV incident. Al-Mismari also confirmed the LNA established an air defence system over the Western region.

In a more significant development, the LNA expanded its presence across Tripoli's Western flank; both East and West of its support base of Surman and Sabratha. The LNA fully controlled Ajaylat towards Zuwara and Abu Issa in the western suburbs of Zawiyah, increasing the likelihood of infighting and tensions between pro-LNA and pro-GNA factions. Meanwhile, both the Interim government's Deputy Interior and Defence ministers visited Sabratha, where the East's administrative coverage is expected to grow in the short term. There is a possibility this LNA consolidation West of Tripoli comes ahead of offensive operations in the area and to cordon off pro-GNA forces currently fighting in Tripoli.

In the South, the LNA expanded its presence via alliances with local Tuareg battalions. The effort was led by the LNA's Kufra Military Region commander, Major General Belqasim Al-Abij, who declared on 24 Nov that the entire region is under LNA control. LNA control over the region will likely remain fluid but is symbolic to project LNA capabilities over almost 96% of Libyan territory.

With this context in mind, there is mounting evidence to suggest changes to the political and military landscapes

are likely in the next few weeks. LNA spokesperson Ahmed Al-Mesmari stated combat operations have now reached a "decisive" stage. This phase described by Al-Mesmari is not necessarily a new military escalation or advance northward. In fact, LNA rhetoric is now increasingly pointing towards a de-escalation in the medium term. An example of this rhetoric was seen in the meeting led by Brigadier Mukhtar Furnana, head of LNA Military Police (MP) in the Western Military Region where preparations to secure Tripoli after its "liberation" were discussed. Furnana stated that they have now moved from securing the LNA's rearguard to preparing for Tripoli's liberation. Overall, the LNA's objective is now to mobilise in support of the political effort by the East to build consensus, particularly within pro-Gaddafi supporters, and present a post-war vision reinforcing the idea that Haftar's victory is not a matter of "if" but "when".

Open-source reports support the assessment that a power-sharing agreement is currently underway between Haftar and the pro-Gaddafi supporter base represented by Saif Al-Islam. This rapprochement, if conclusive, will most likely shift the balance in favour of Haftar's LNA. In fact, some analysts suggest this is the only option enabling Haftar to convert military gains into political credit and giving him access to influential former regime officials with a solid understanding of the inner workings of the Libyan political system. There is already mounting evidence that this alliance is now gathering support from towns such as Bani Walid, Zintan, and Zawiyah. Open-source flight tracking platforms confirm that flights have been recently operated between Zintan, where Saif Al-Islam is believed to be, and Benghazi, Haftar's stronghold. Separately, an auxiliary force from Bani Walid declared loyalty to the LNA's 166 Infantry Battalion in a video statement.

On the GNA side, signs of divisions continue to grow and the LNA's manoeuvres have been met with little to no resistance. The alliance highlighted above with pro-Gaddafists is proving to be divisive among pro-GNA elements who revert back to their revolutionary ideals and reject the prospect of Saif Al-Islam's return. In the most striking example, the GNA-affiliated Bunyan Al-Marsous (BAM) military intelligence commander, Mohamad Quneidi, stated that there is a need to create a war government. Quneidi added that the LNA offensive is mostly led by pro-Gaddafi supporters, whilst the GNA is also under the influence of some pro-Gaddafi elements opposed to the 17 Feb Revolution. Quneidi stated that the GNA no longer exists given its weaknesses.

### KEY POINTS

- LNA claims Italian UAV downed over Tarhunah
- LNA imposes no-fly zone; asserts air dominance
- Rapprochement between Haftar & Saif Gaddafi



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## 2. National Security Map

Italian UAV downed over Tarhuna; LNA airstrike targets Turkish AV shipment in Misrata

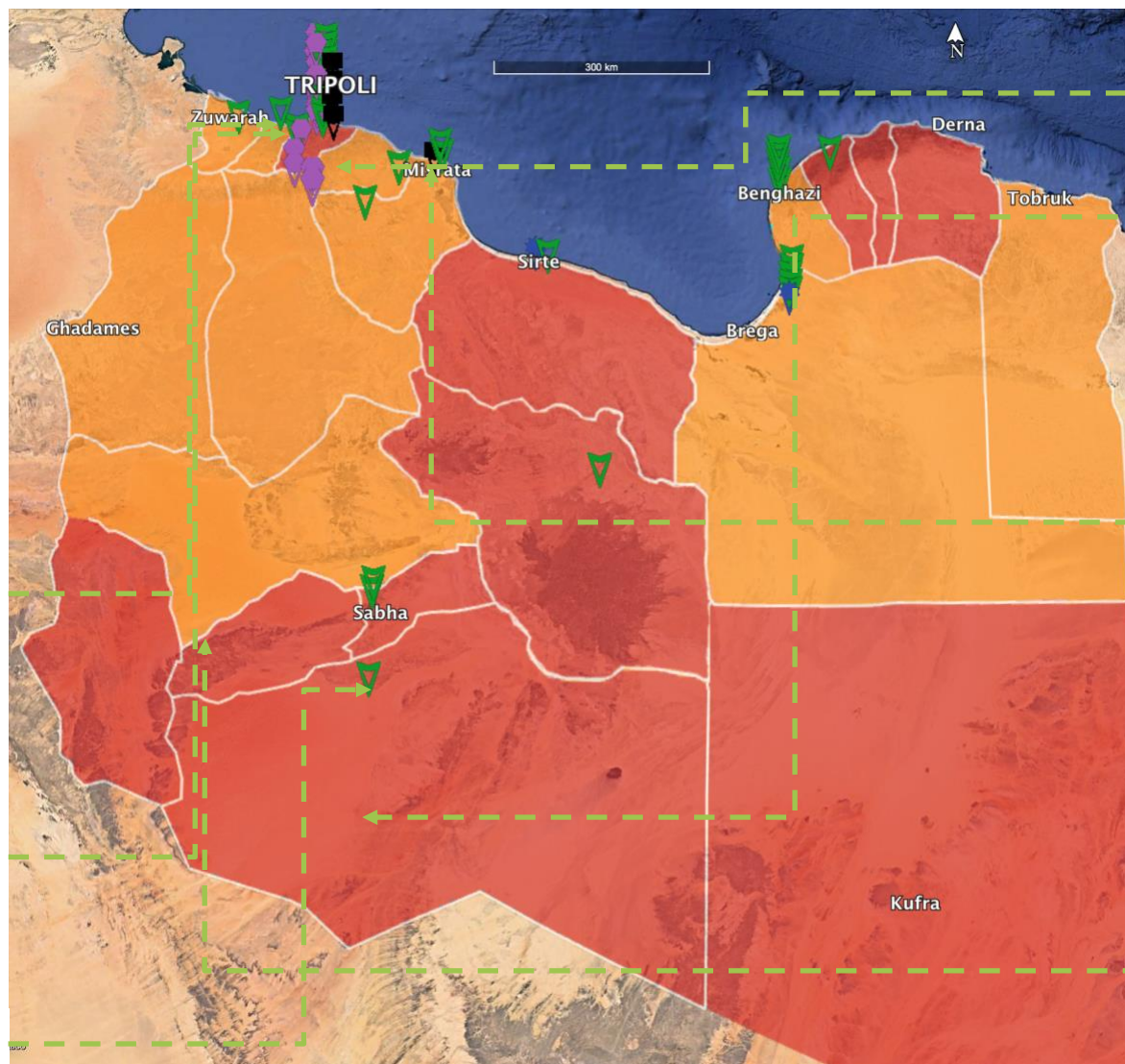
### Key

#### THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

#### EVENT INDICATORS

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



The Italian military confirmed the downing of an unarmed Italian Air Force General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) conducting a reconnaissance mission in support of the Operation Mare Sicur monitoring migration activity near Tarhuna on 20 Nov.

The LNA's Kufra Military Region commander, Major General Belqasim Al-Abij, arrived in Al Wigh Airbase south of Qatrun on 22 Nov. Al-Abij announced the LNA's control over Libya's entire southern region and noted that Murzuq is now stable on 24 Nov.

WB sources reported an LAAF airstrike targeted Misrata's Halbous Brigade Camp in Misrata's Ruwaisat area at approx. 2330hrs on 18 Nov. Initial reports indicate the airstrike targeted an ammunition warehouse resulting in successive heavy explosions. Misrata's Medical Centre reported receiving 13 civilians suffering minor injuries as a result of the airstrike. The incident was corroborated by the LNA spokesman, Ahmed Al-Mesmari, who reported that the 19 armoured vehicles were targeted after arriving from Turkey on a civilian cargo vessel, and transferred from the Iron and Steel Port to an industrial area in central Misrata.

Pro-LNA accounts published video footage purported to be from within Sharara field after rumours that forces led by the GNA's Southern Protection Force (SPF) commander Ali Kanna seized the field. The rumours would follow a statement by Kanna-led GNA-affiliated Sabha Military Region commanders reaffirming their ability to thwart any potential attack aimed at destabilising the South and key sites in the region on 19 Nov.

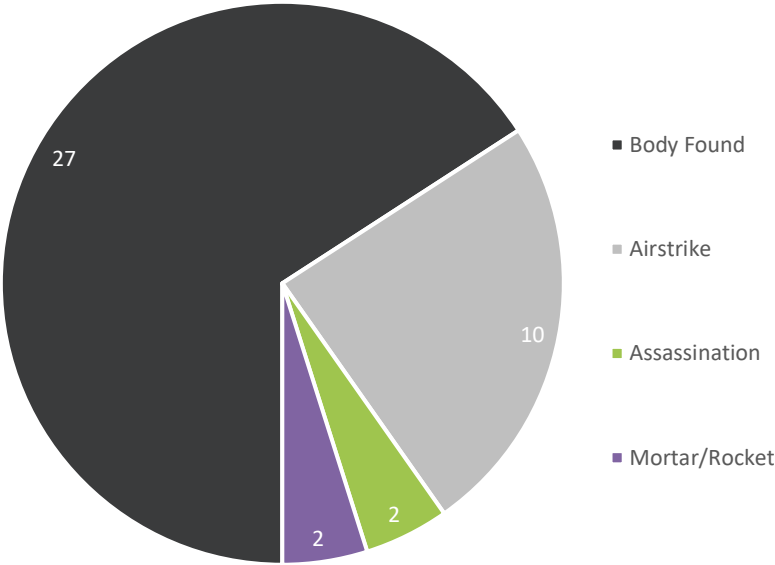
LNA units entered Ajaylat and deployed across several areas of the town at approximately 1730hrs on 18 Nov. Separately, reports indicate additional LNA units entered Alasaba in the early hours of 19 Nov. Of note, Al-Asaba is under LNA control, whilst Gharyan remains under GNA control.

Reports corroborated the entry of pro-LNA forces south of Abu Issa in the afternoon on 22 Nov, in the western suburbs of Zawiya and adjacent to the pro-LNA town of Surman. Separately, unconfirmed reporting suggests a pro-LNA battalion from Surman established a CP on the Coastal Road at night on 21 Nov. Similar CPs were reported in the evening on 21 Nov. In a related development, the LNA's 4th Company, affiliated with the 128th Battalion, announced its readiness to join the battle in Tripoli and was ordered to deploy and secure Abu Issa, the Coastal Road and Surman.

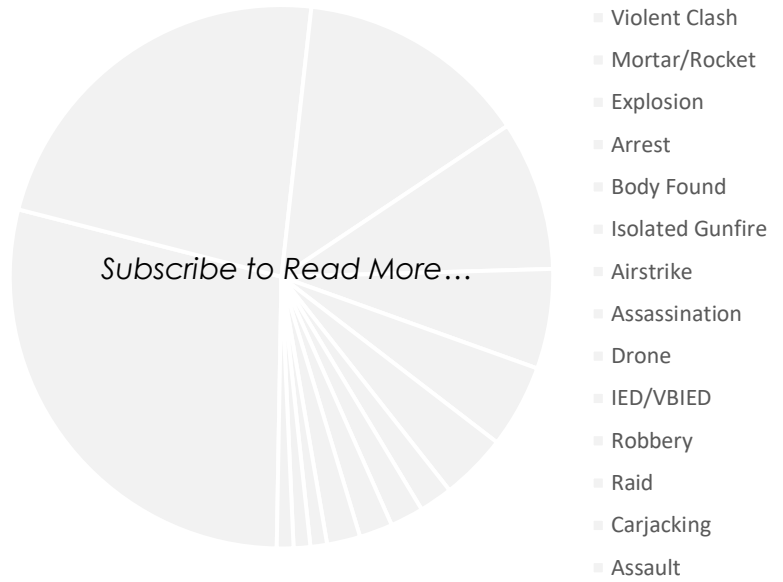
WB sources reported a Chadian Islamic State (IS) militant was arrested in Taraghin in 20 Nov. There is no further information available.

### 3. Nationwide Security Analysis Surge in bodies found across country & Al-Jfara district fatalities

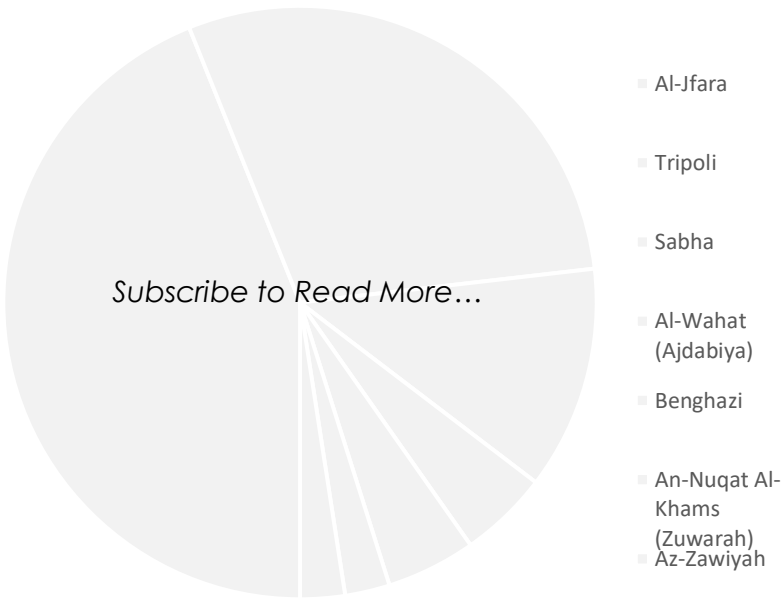
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



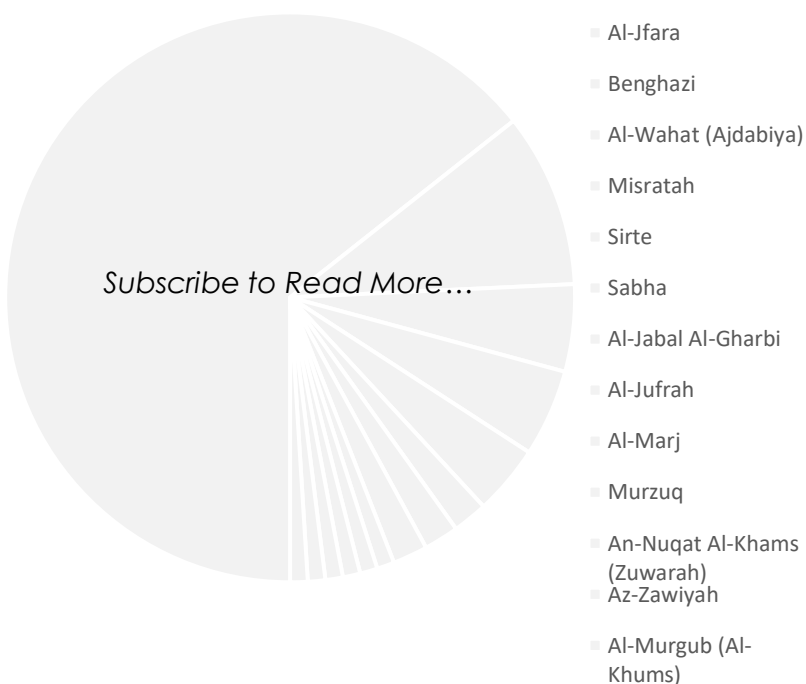
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



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 41 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 20 deaths reported last week and 35 the week before. The total number of nationwide fatalities would likely be significantly higher if a reliable casualty toll of the ongoing clashes in the Western region was available. This week WB recorded 30 fatalities related to ongoing military activity across the Western region, including a Libyan National Army (LNA) Air Force (LAAF) airstrike targeting a biscuit factory in the Wadi Al-Rabei area, which resulted in at least 10 fatalities and 35 injuries. Meanwhile, pro-LNA media outlets reported a mass grave containing 18 bodies belonging to GNA forces was found in the Al-Jfara district, whilst an additional 9 bodies were found across the country, including 5 family members found burnt in a house fire in Sabha. Meanwhile, similar to last week, this week saw a significant drop in airstrikes recorded, with two airstrikes recorded in the Misratah district and two others in the Tripoli district. This week saw an increase in security incidents recorded in the Al-Jfara district as a result of increased military activity in the area, as well as an increase in sporadic security incidents recorded in the Ajdabiya area. Meanwhile, violent clashes dominated the overall security environment, followed by mortar/rocket shelling incidents and explosions heard amid ongoing military operations, whilst 9 arrests were recorded across Libya's western, central, southern and eastern regions. Several security incidents were recorded throughout the country including 29 violent clashes, 23 mortar/rocket shelling incidents, 14 explosions, 9 arrests, 6 cases of bodies found, 5 isolated gunfire cases, 4 airstrikes, 2 assassinations, 2 drones heard flying over western cities, 2 cases of IED/VBIED found, 2 robberies, 1 raid, 1 carjacking and 1 assault.

In Western Libya, WB recorded a total of 81 incidents, including 65 in Tripoli, marking a decrease in security incidents recorded across the region in contrast to last week. In Tripoli, beyond military-related activity across the frontlines, WB sources reported sporadic gunfire in the Edraiby area at approx. 2000hrs on 19 Nov. Initial unconfirmed reports indicate a group of gunmen, driving an unidentified vehicle, fired sporadic shots into the air. No further information available. Separately, sources reported unidentified men fired sporadic shots into the air while driving in the Hai Al-Andalus area at approximately 1400hrs on 19 Nov. Initial reports indicate the gunshots were fired by outraged militiamen. No further information available. Beyond, WB sources reported a parked black Hyundai Elantra was stolen in front of the Endemic & Infectious Diseases & Prevention Centre, near Aldaran Roundabout, at approximately 1800hrs on 17 Nov. Beyond Tripoli, at approximately 2100hrs, reports indicate LAAF airstrikes targeted Misrata's Aviation College resulting in a one-hour air traffic suspension at Misrata International Airport (MRA) at approximately 2100hrs on 18 Nov. Separately, reports indicate heavy sporadic gunfire was heard in Zliten at approximately 1830hrs on 20 Nov. Initial reports indicate the gunfire was heard during a carjacking attempt near Flaifel Mosque. Separately, Reports indicate additional LNA units entered Ajaylat and deployed across several areas of the town at approximately 1730hrs on 18 Nov, whilst additional LNA units entered Alasaba in the early hours of 19 Nov.

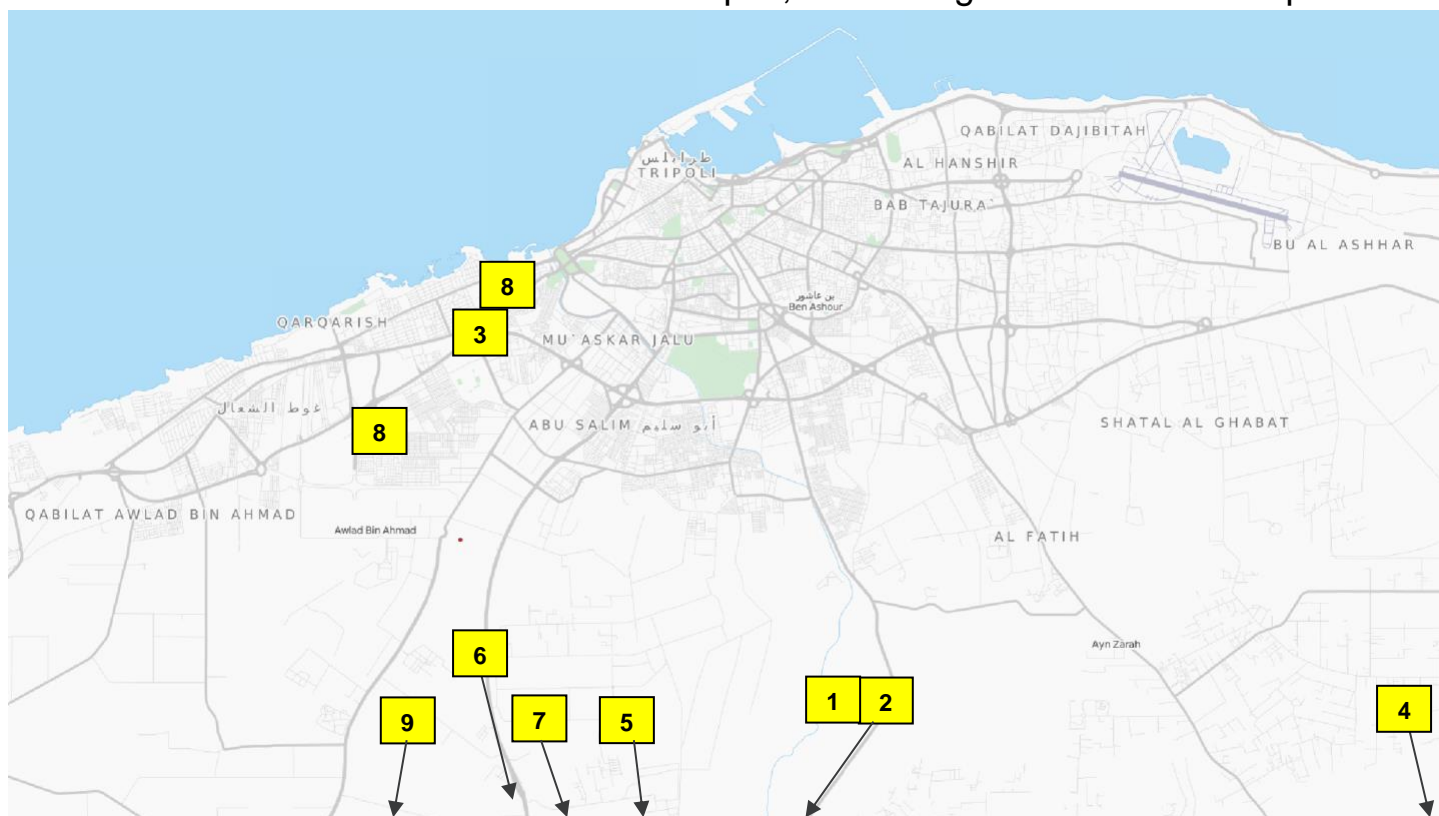
In the central region, local reports from 20 Nov indicate Sirte's residents located two mines ready for detonation and hand grenades concealed inside an abandoned market in the city. According to a Libyan Red Crescent (LRC) volunteer, a team of experts along with the Danish Demining Group (DDG), visited the site and disposed the explosive remnants of war (ERW). Separately, reports indicate security forces seized over 1.5 tonnes of cannabis resin concealed in a livestock truck in Sirte on 17 Nov.

Turning to the South, local reports indicate indiscriminate gunfire wounded a 28-year-old man near his residence in Sabha on 19 Nov. Separately, the LNA expanded its presence across Libya's south and borders with Niger via alliances with local Tuareg battalions. The effort was led by the LNA's Kufra Military Region commander, Major General Belqasim Al-Abij, who arrived in Al Wigh Airbase, south of Qatrun on 22 Nov. Sources suggest at least 10 battalions from the Awbari Military Region "Wadi al Hayaa District" declared their loyalty to the LNA.

In the East, WB recorded 5 incidents in Ajdabiya, including Ajdabiya's Internal Security Agency branch locating a large quantities of ammunition and mines concealed in a farm north of the town on 18 Nov. Unconfirmed reports allege they belonged to criminal groups affiliated with Ibrahim Jathran.

## 4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

### AFRICOM RPA lost over Tripoli; LNA designates NFZ over Tripoli



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (16 Nov) GNA call on Salah Al-Din residents to evacuate after clashes
2. (16 Nov) LNA claim advance in Espia & death of 9 GNA African mercenaries
3. (17 Nov) Parked vehicle stolen near Al-Daran roundabout
4. (18 Nov) LAAF airstrike targets biscuit factory; 10 killed & 35 injured
5. (18-19 Nov) Heavy shelling prompts Hadba Al-Mashro residents to evacuate
6. (19 Nov) Waha Oil Company staff evacuate after clashes expand north
7. (19 Nov) NOC calls for ceasefire after shells land near BPMC storage facility
8. (19 Nov) Gunfire in Edraiby; militiamen fire into the air in Hai Al-Andalus
9. (20 Nov) LNA controls entirety of Al-Ramla; GNA forces retreat
10. (21 Nov) AFRICOM confirms loss of Remotely Piloted Aircraft over Tripoli
11. (21-22 Nov) LNA claim northward advances; LNA reinforcements sent
12. (23 Nov) LNA General Command designates NFZ over Tripoli & surrounding areas

#### AFRICOM: RPA lost over Tripoli

The United States (US) Africa Command (AFRICOM) reported the loss of a Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) over Tripoli on 21 Nov, adding that the incident is currently under investigation. Of note, multiple pro-LNA accounts reported the downing of an unidentified unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in Khallat Al-Furjan in the afternoon on 21 Nov. At the time of publication, it remained unclear if the two incidents are linked. WB is closely monitoring local media for further information. In a similar incident on 20 Nov, an Italian Air Force MQ-9 Reaper UAV was downed near Tarhuna, reportedly using a surface to air missile. The LNA's involvement in the downing of the two drones, if confirmed, would potentially raise questions over newly-acquired capabilities by Haftar's forces, especially given the latest reports of the arrival of Russian Private Military Contractors (PMCs).

#### LNA: NFZ over Tripoli & surrounding areas

the LNA General Command designated a no-fly zone (NFZ) over Tripoli and surrounding areas, calling on the CAA and all other parties operating in Libyan airspace to adhere to the restrictions and obtain approval prior to operating. The NFZ runs from the west in Zawiya (specifically Al-Mayah) to Garabolli in the east, and from Tarhunah South-East to Gharyan South-West. The NFZ excludes Mitiga International Airport (MJI) and Zuwara International Airport (WAX), where MEDEVAC and United Nations (UN) flights are operated respectively. The LNA spokesperson Ahmed Al-Mismary, stated the newly-established military zone comes in

response to the latest military developments in Tripoli, more specifically, the recent incident involving an Italian Air Force MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) downed near Tarhunah.

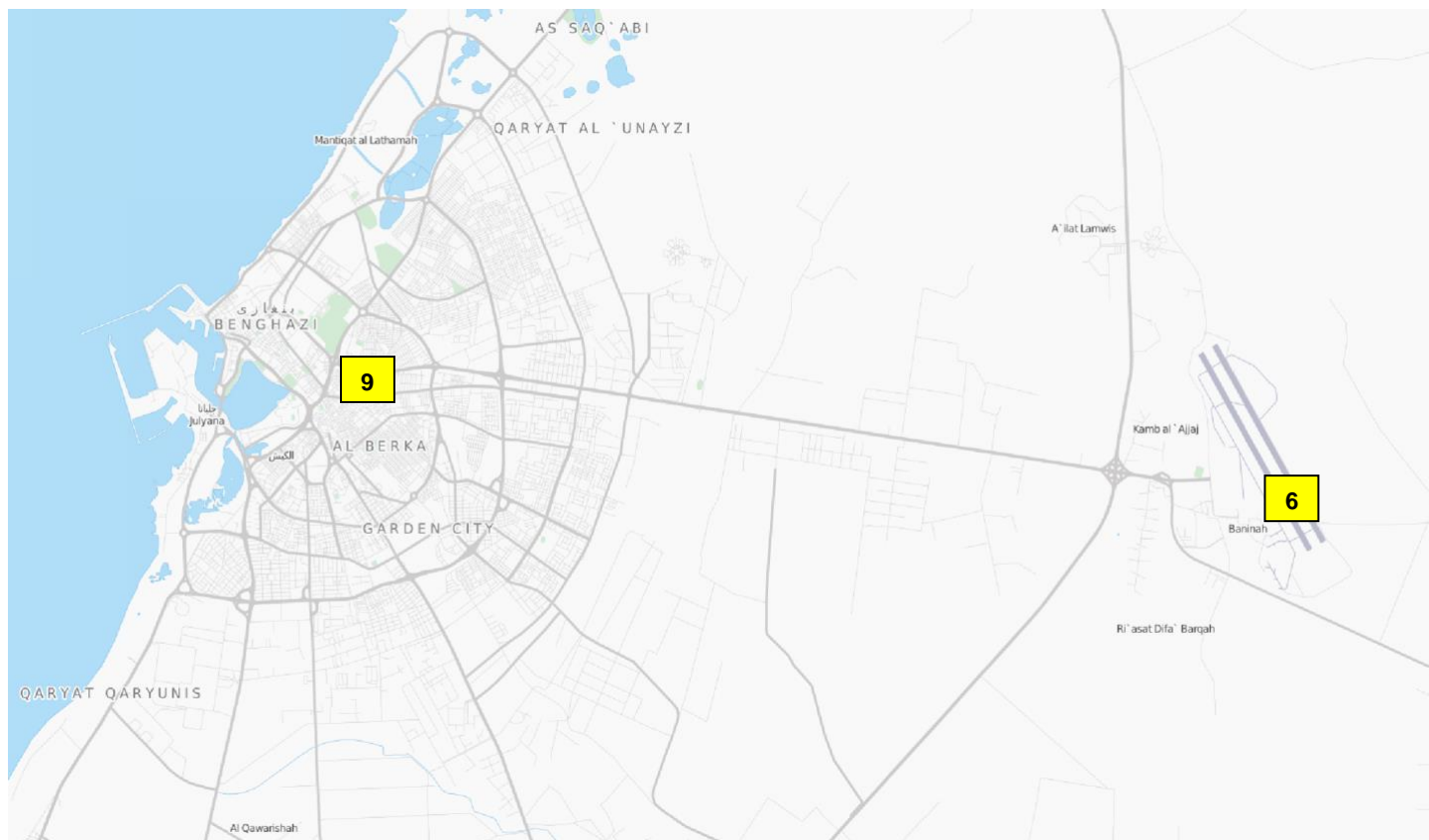
Separately, sources denied reports across social media alleging MJI will resume flight operations in the presence of the GNA's Ministry of Transportation and Libyan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on 24 Nov. The sources added that maintenance works are yet to be completed and the airport is unlikely to resume full operations before Dec 2019. Separately, local reports indicate the Presidential Council (PC) head, Fayezi Al-Serraj, met with the GNA's Transport Minister, Milad matouq and his undersecretary, Hisham Abu Shkiwat, in addition to the Air Force Commander Omar Al-Wefati and the Mitiga Airbase commander, Khairi Al-Sifaw, to discuss the implementation of Al-Serraj's decision to separate MJ's military base and civilian side on 18 Nov. The decision followed reports of an inspection tour by Al-Serraj and Abu Shkiwat to MJ to discuss accelerating the maintenance works currently underway to resume flight operations.

#### Deadly LNA airstrike targets biscuit factory

An LNA Air Force (LAAF) airstrike targeted a Biscuit Factory in the Wadi Al-Rabei area resulting in 10 fatalities and 35 injuries at approx. 1130hrs on 18 Nov. The ten fatalities reportedly include two Libyans and five other Bangladeshi and Sub-Saharan African labourers. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) head, Ghassan Salame, condemned the airstrike, whilst the GNA FM, Mohammed Sayala, referred to the attack as a war crime.

## 5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

### Fugitive IS militant arrested; EU countries call for release of abducted MP



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (17 Nov) Joint EU statement calling for release of abducted female MP
2. (17 Nov) Illegal migrants involved in prostitution cases arrested
3. (17 Nov) Over 60 Sudanese & Chadian migrants deported
4. (17 Nov) Local home-made liquor factory raided
5. (19 Nov) Gang leader involved in vehicle theft arrested
6. (19 Nov) 21 Nigerian illegal migrants deported to home country via BEN
7. (19 Nov) Women's Police Dept. dissolved; head & staff investigated
8. (20 Nov) Fugitive IS militant arrested upon return to Benghazi
9. (20 Nov) Unidentified body dumped in front of Al-Jalaa Hospital

#### Fugitive IS militant arrested

On 20 Nov, Benghazi's General Directorate for Criminal Investigation arrested a fugitive Islamic State (IS) militant from Benghazi who fled to Misrata after fighting the LNA between 2014 and 2017. The suspect reportedly initially returned to Benghazi after fighting on Tripoli's frontlines in support of GNA forces. He later returned to Benghazi after he was told to return to the frontlines in Tripoli or leave Misrata.

#### Body found

Local reports indicate an unidentified individual dumped a body in front of Al-Jalaa Hospital for Surgery and Accidents in Benghazi on 20 Nov. Reports indicate the man quickly fled after being asked to remove his vehicle from in front of the hospital's emergency department. Later, reports suggested the body belonged to a 44-year-old soldier in Benghazi who died of natural causes.

#### Gang leader arrested

Benghazi's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) reported the arrest of a gang leader involved in vehicle thefts in the Eastern and Western regions following investigations that lasted for approximately four months on 19 Nov. The CID reported that the criminal was previously captured in 2008 on charges of vehicle theft. The suspect confessed to trading stolen vehicles between the Eastern and Western regions, whilst the

the Eastern and Western regions, whilst investigations revealed that the criminal purchased advanced machinery to duplicate vehicle keys from overseas via a cargo office in the Salmani area at the cost of 70,000 Libyan dinars (LYD).

#### Joint EU statement calls for release of abducted MP

On 17 Nov, the United Kingdom (UK) Embassy in Libya published a joint statement by the Embassies of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK and the European Union (EU), expressing deep concern over the continued disappearance of Libyan House of Representative (HoR) member, Siham Sergiwa, and calling for her immediate release. The joint statement would come four months after unidentified gunmen abducted Sergiwa from her Benghazi residence on 17 Jul. Sergiwa's spouse and son were reportedly injured during the raid. Her whereabouts remain unknown to date despite multiple international and domestic calls to reveal Sergiwa's fate. The abduction was linked to anti-LNA statements made by Sergiwa during an interview with a pro-Haftar channel, in which she voiced her rejection against the offensive on Tripoli. Meanwhile, Sergiwa's family members reported that masked members of the Khalid Haftar-led 106th brigade were at the scene. Other reports suggested the presence of a militia faction known for brutal treatment of civilians. The words "the army is a red line" were reportedly sprayed on Sergiwa's residence. Whilst the Eastern-based Interior Ministry claimed to have launched a probe into the incident, there have been no further details on Sergiwa's fate.

## 6. What's next

### Alliances could shift; Gaddafi/Haftar alliance to grow more pronounced

#### POLITICAL FORECAST

A recent US State Department statement calling on Haftar's LNA to halt the offensive on Tripoli was met with much optimism by the GNA who viewed it as a form of support. However, US position was carefully balanced this week with the US White House noting its appreciation for Haftar's role in the fight against terrorism while confirming ongoing talks with all belligerent parties, as reported by Middle East news channel Al-Arabiya. The US is now more active on the Libyan dossier, but it remains unclear whether this means support for the GNA. In fact, GNA Deputy PM commented on US position vis-à-vis Libya and stated that the US administration believes some wrong messages have been passed on to US President Donald Trump regarding Haftar's offensive and counter-terrorism role, in an interview with Tim Sebastian on German state-owned channel DW. Washington appears to be carefully weighing its position. Meanwhile, reports suggest former Libyan Ambassador to the UAE Aref Nayef met with National Security Council officials in Washington to pitch a post-war vision and transition. Domestically, the rapprochement between pro-Gaddafiists and Haftar is now proving to be divisive among GNA elements, who now see it as a return to the Gaddafi era and model of glorifying a strong leader. Separately, the LNA continues to focus on its political strategy. The LNA issued a statement on the upcoming Berlin conference emphasizing the need to eradicate militias and terrorist groups prior to any political process and the need for the conference to categorise, list, and identify the various terrorist groups and militias. Politically, this focus on counterterrorism is highlighting GNA weaknesses. Closely following an LNA press briefing, GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha called for the arrest of a prominent Ansar Al-Sharia (ASL) and Islamic State (IS) figure. With this measure, Bashagha is clearly attempting to refute recent allegations by LNA spox. Ahmed Al-Mismary, who provided a detailed description of the various Islamist extremists believed to be operating in support of the GNA. While the GNA is attempting to distance itself from the allegations, such reactions highlight weaknesses and help present the LNA as an arbitrator of who should be considered a terrorist.

#### WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

Writing for the *Atlantic Council's MenaSource*, Libya experts Karim Mezran and Federica Saini Fasanotti, argue that the Berlin Conference is unlikely to produce significant breakthroughs and that the path forward in Libya is instead via municipalities in a bottom-up stabilization approach. The authors argue that recent initiatives and meetings by the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) in Tunisia have proven a success so far. They write "There is however, a different type of meeting that is much more productive. On December 6-8, 2017 the Swiss Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) succeeded in organizing a meeting of Libyan mayors in Tunisia. For the first time since the conflict began, almost all Libyan municipalities and local authorities gathered to discuss how to end the ongoing violence in their country. This important event saw the active presence of the UN representative Ghassan Salamé. The meeting was a success and built an important foundation for a potential National Conference, which should have included the main representatives of Libya's three regions: Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan. Municipalities continued to walk on this path, with a series of gatherings at the beginning of 2018 not only in Tunis, but also in Shahat in January and Tripoli in March. Around 107 local leaders, including those coming from Libya's east attended the meetings. Local leaders asked to be left alone in trying to rebuild their own country." Of note, multiple officials, including from the House of Representatives (HoR) are scheduled to visit Geneva as part of another HD meet-up.

#### SECURITY FORECAST

LNA tactics appear to have shifted over the past two weeks, with a growing reliance on attack helicopters in contrast to the use of UAVs and fighter aircraft in past weeks. In relation to the newly-established NFZ, sources assess it is unlikely to be respected by foreign military aircraft. Only commercial civilian companies are expected to abide by the NFZ restrictions. Of note, the LYCAA has already established its own NFZ over the past few months. Mitiga is excluded from the NFZ but will remain a target, as highlighted by Mismary's comments who emphasized that the LNA continues to monitor flights landing at the airport and that a Libyan Airlines A330 flight landed on 20 Nov. While no further evidence has been provided to ascertain the presence of Russian foreign mercenaries in support of the LNA, Al-Mismary confirmed the presence of "one or two Russian teams providing technical support and maintenance of Russian-manufactured weaponry, including tanks" in an interview. Al-Mismary, however, denied any Russian mercenary presence in support of LNA ground forces. This would be the first statement attributed to the LNA acknowledging the presence of some Russians operating in a support function. Meanwhile, tensions are high West of Tripoli in Zawiya in light of the LNA's recently-expanding presence in Surman and Abu Issa. Tensions are likely to escalate in the area and could result in skirmishes and infighting between pro-LNA and pro-GNA battalions in the short term. The LNA continues to claim there are many sleeper cells in Zawiya and LNA sympathisers. Pro-LNA reports suggest the 84th battalion was established and comprises a large majority of men from Zawiya. A shift in alliances is to be expected in the short term as a result of the LNA's expanding presence West of Tripoli. Any additional LNA advances on the ground or territorial consolidation will prompt pro-GNA factions to hedge their bets and side with Haftar's forces, particularly West of Tripoli in areas such as Zawiya.

#### LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an Op-ed published on *Ahram Online*, the former assistant to the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Hussein Haridy, argues that Cairo's policy towards Libya needs to be reassessed and modified to adapt to the current situation in neighbouring Libya. Haridy argues that changing Egypt's policy will enable the country to be more influential in its contributions to the Berlin Conference. He writes "From an Egyptian point of view, the most important imperative is the defence of our extended borders with Libya, so as to deny terrorist groups from infiltrating our country. Egypt stands to gain diplomatically if it succeeds in persuading the Libyan Field Marshal to implement an immediate and permanent ceasefire. Pulling his troops could come at a later stage, or as a gesture of good will towards the Germans and the Europeans. Such a change of direction on the part of Egypt should be introduced in the framework of a larger reassessment of Egyptian foreign policy in the Arab world during the last eight years. For long, the country has adopted subdued positions vis-à-vis key questions, like how to deal with the Syrian government (until this day, diplomatic relations have not been restored with Damascus; nor has Cairo any open contacts with the Libya's Government of National Accord, the internationally-recognised government)." Haridy further calls on Egypt to officially support the US statement recently calling on Haftar to halt the offensive.

# About Whispering Bell



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