

1. The Big Picture

Turkish military deployment limited in scope but will further undermine GNA posture

Turkey's Parliament approved the deployment of military personnel to Libya for a year at the request of the Government of National Accord (GNA) on 02 Jan. In response, Libyan National Army (LNA) commander Khalifa Haftar called for an all-out mobilization in a televised address on 03 Jan. Haftar framed Ankara's intervention as an invasion and an attempt to revive its Ottoman legacy in the country, urging all Libyans to unite and take up arms. Haftar described Turkey's actions as impinging on Libyans' honour and pride, calling on all Libyans to join jihad (holy war). The LNA's immediate response has been an escalation across all fronts and an increase in the frequency of airstrikes targeting GNA positions.

So far, regional reactions to Ankara's actions have been limited to diplomatic action. All eyes turned to Cairo, a staunch LNA supporter and sizeable military power, and whether a conventional deployment of Egypt's armed forces to counter Turkey was foreseeable. But in reality, Ankara's limited deployment does not warrant a formal military engagement that would bring more firepower to the table than the covert support already provided by the LNA's foreign backers. Moves to counter Turkey's deployment are set to increase but will remain limited to covert forms of support in the short term, including airstrikes and foreign mercenaries.

Beyond alarmist headlines, Ankara's troop deployment is limited by design. First, in terms of scope, Turkey's objective is to shore up the GNA's posture and preserve the status-quo. Ankara does not seek to overturn the balance in favour of the GNA or win the war against the LNA, as highlighted by Erdogan's statement that "the goal of the Turkish armed forces is not to fight, but to ensure a cease-fire in Libya". The deployment will be defensive and limited to Turkish intelligence and military officers operating in a capacity-building function. This is far from a new development; Turkish support to the GNA has been documented on several occasions in the past six months. What does change, however, is that Turkey, a NATO member, is now overtly supporting a side in the Libyan conflict.

Meanwhile, defence experts are of the view Ankara does not possess the capability, including close air support and/or refuelling at sea, to sustain its operations approximately 1900 km away from home – the closest base being in Northern Cyprus. Ankara is well aware of these limitations and is therefore unlikely to commit a large number of troops. Instead, the focus will likely be on unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strikes and Turkey's involvement will add more precision to the GNA's firepower, contributing to a rebalancing of the equation on the ground after the LNA dominated Libya's skies over the past four months.

But local perceptions are perhaps the strongest factor limiting the scope of Turkey's deployment. Multiple tribes

rallied to condemn Ankara's deployment. Even some pro-GNA armed factions will be reluctant to fight alongside Turkish-backed Syrian rebels, whose arrival has been confirmed by the US Embassy in Libya. Based on these local dynamics, Turkish soldiers, if deployed beyond an advisory role, are therefore unlikely to directly engage in combat operations with Libyans.

Haftar capitalized on these gaps by framing Ankara's move as a foreign invasion. The LNA's offensive on Tripoli is now driven by nationalism, which represents a major boost on the narratives front. This has enabled the LNA to reach a wider audience whilst simultaneously consolidating posture within its existing supporter base. Of note, Aisha Gaddafi, late Muammar Gaddafi's daughter, strongly condemned in a statement the deployment of Turkish troops to Libya. Meanwhile, the LNA spox, Ahmed Al-Mismary, called on all armed factions to set aside differences and unite against Turkey.

So far, there is mounting evidence that Ankara's move to send troops does not bode well for the GNA and could backfire. The Turkish deployment, despite being limited, could prompt the LNA's foreign backers to double down on their covert support to maximise gains. In fact, as of 06 Jan 2020, LNA forces seized Sirte and its urban districts after a coordinated offensive targeting pro-GNA forces. Local reports indicate LNA forces were supported by local armed factions, including the Salafi 604 Battalion. The recent Turkish invasion rhetoric likely prompted more factions in Sirte to side with the LNA. Whilst the situation continues to evolve in Libya, the GNA's declining popularity has remained a constant. Diplomatic pressure continues to mount on the GNA, highlighted by a US Embassy statement emphasizing the need to dissolve militias, which it identified as a fundamental issue in the Libyan conflict. Many analysts read the statement as a sign of direct US pressure on the GNA to disarm and dissolve militias in the capital. The statement comes at a time of growing pressure on the financial and monetary front to reform the Central Bank of Libya (CBL).

A temporary ceasefire agreement appears more likely than an all-out escalation or confrontation between major powerbrokers such as Russia, Egypt, Turkey, and others. Turkey's deployment is likely to expedite negotiations; Ankara's intelligence officers will likely operate with the overarching aim of bringing Haftar to the negotiating table. In the long term, however, competition over hydrocarbon resources in the East Med may prompt Turkey to double down on its involvement. Regional tensions continue to brew, especially after Greece, Cyprus, and Israel signed an agreement for the construction of the EastMed pipeline, which further isolates Ankara.

KEY POINTS

- Haftar calls on factions to unite to face Turkey
- Deployment will expedite negotiations but is limited
- No conventional response, Cairo favours diplomacy



CONTENTS

- 1 **THE BIG PICTURE**
Turkish military deployment limited in scope but will further undermine GNA posture
- 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

LAAF airstrikes target SPF in Sirte; GNA Turkish UAV activity resumes after hiatus

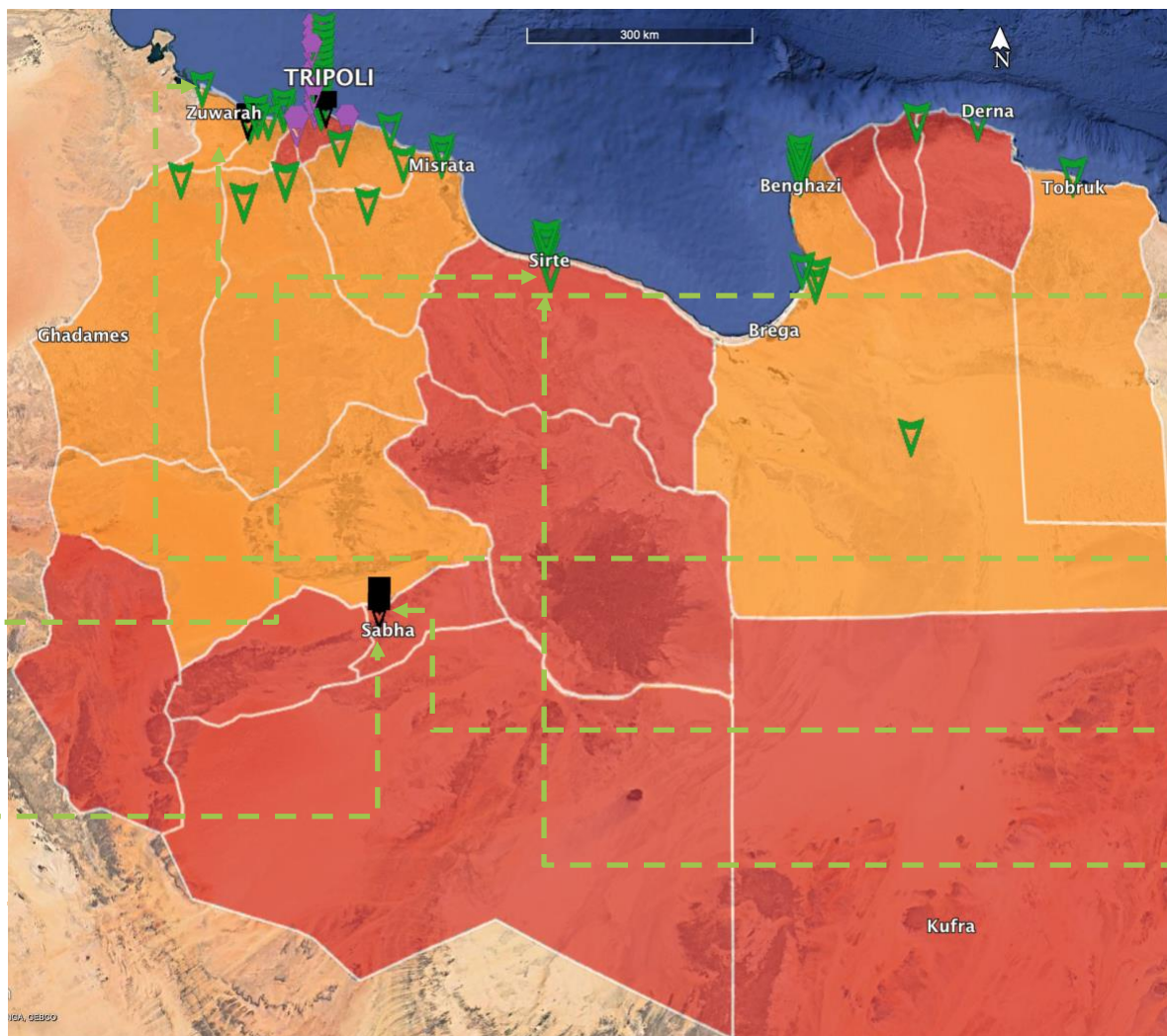
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



The pro-GNA Sirte Protection Force (SPF) reported an LNA airstrike targeting Gate 17 East of Sirte at approximately 1000hrs on 04 Jan. In a separate development, the SPF mourned the death of one of its members who died as a result of an LNA unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strike targeting the Saadi Camp in Sirte's Abu Hadi area at approximately 0300hrs on 03 Jan.

Unidentified assailants opened fire in the vicinity of the triangle checkpoint in Sabha resulting in the death of a police officer in the morning on 01 Jan. The motive behind the incident remains unknown.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported the arrival of 300 alleged Turkish-backed Syrian fighters in Libya, claiming that an additional 1000 Syrian fighters are currently in Turkish camps awaiting transfer to Libya.

Eastern-based subsidiaries of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Ras Lanuf Oil and Gas Company (RASCO), Sirte Oil Company (SOC), and Arabian Gulf Oil Company (AGOCO), have all announced a boycott of Turkish companies. The precise impact of this boycott and its ramifications on local operations is unknown.

A GNA Turkish-manufactured unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) airstrike targeted Al-Wattiyah Airbase, killing three LNA forces and injuring six others at approximately 0400hrs on 05 Jan. Additional reports indicate military vehicles and an ammunition warehouse were destroyed. The incident would mark the official resumption of GNA Turkish drone unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) activity after a long hiatus.

The Libyan Customs Authority thwarted an attempt by a Tunisian national to smuggle 31,500 euros concealed inside his vehicle through the Libyan-Tunisian Ras Ajdir border crossing on 29 Dec. The suspect was referred to competent authorities. Smuggling of goods via the Ras Ajdir border crossing remains common, including fuel supplies, cash, and narcotics.

Reports indicate unidentified assailants shot and subsequently injured a security guard at the Science College in Sabha University in the morning on 28 Dec. The motive behind the incident remains unknown.

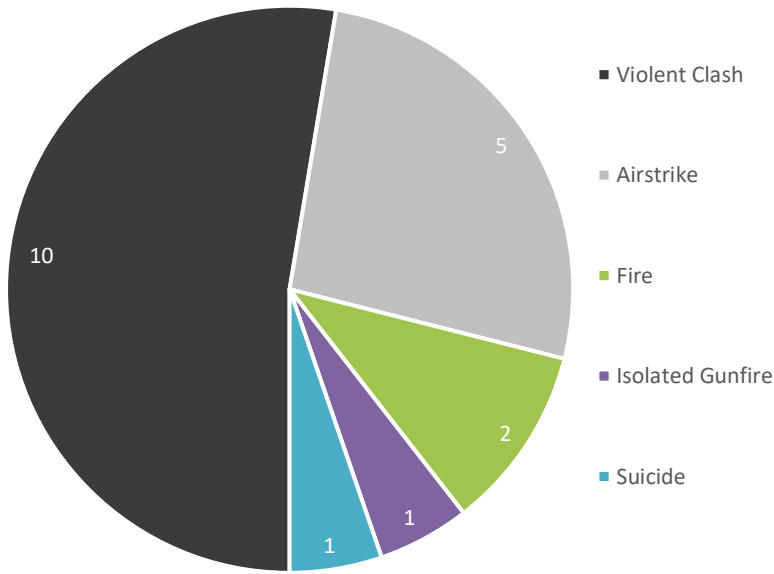
WB sources reported an LAAF unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) airstrike targeted a farm in Sirte's Abu Hadi area at approximately 1030hrs on 04 Jan. No casualties and/or fatalities were reported.

The Anti-Narcotic Agency (Ajdabiya branch) arrested a drug dealer in possession of 47,000 Tramadol pills on 31 Dec. According to the agency, the suspect brought the psychotropic pills from Sabha and sold them in Tobruk.

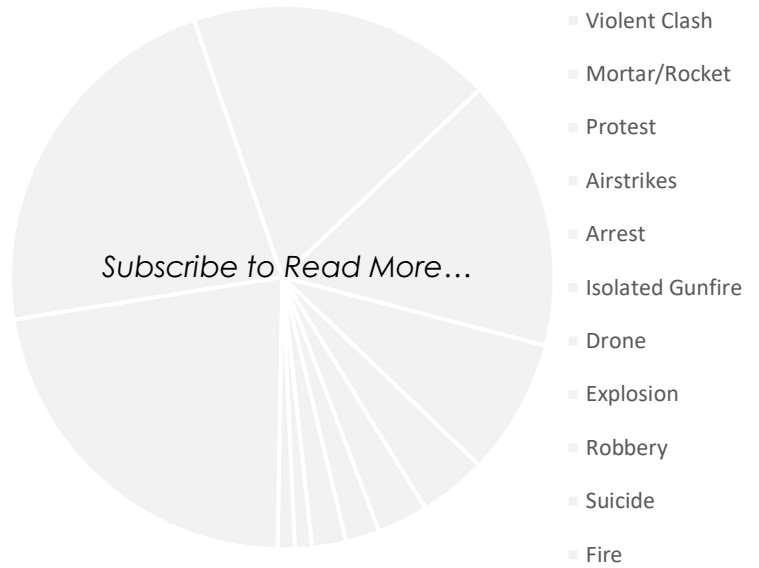
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Four civilians killed in Tripoli airstrikes; 15 anti-Turkey protests across country

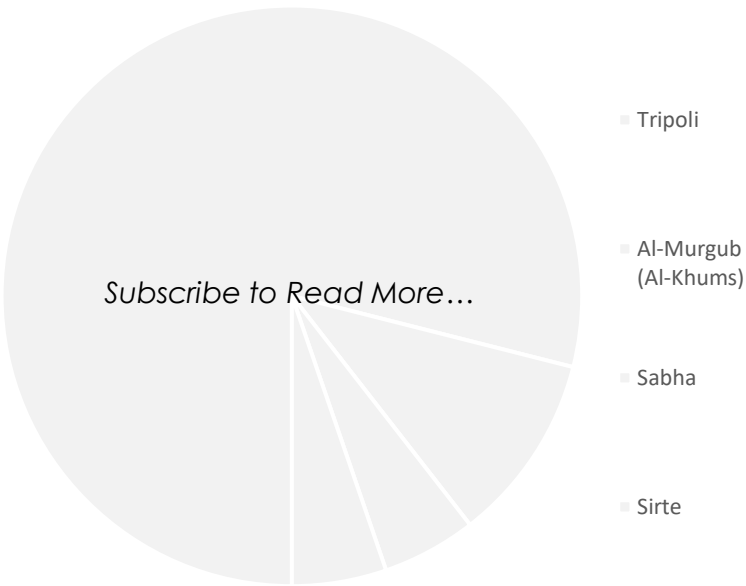
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



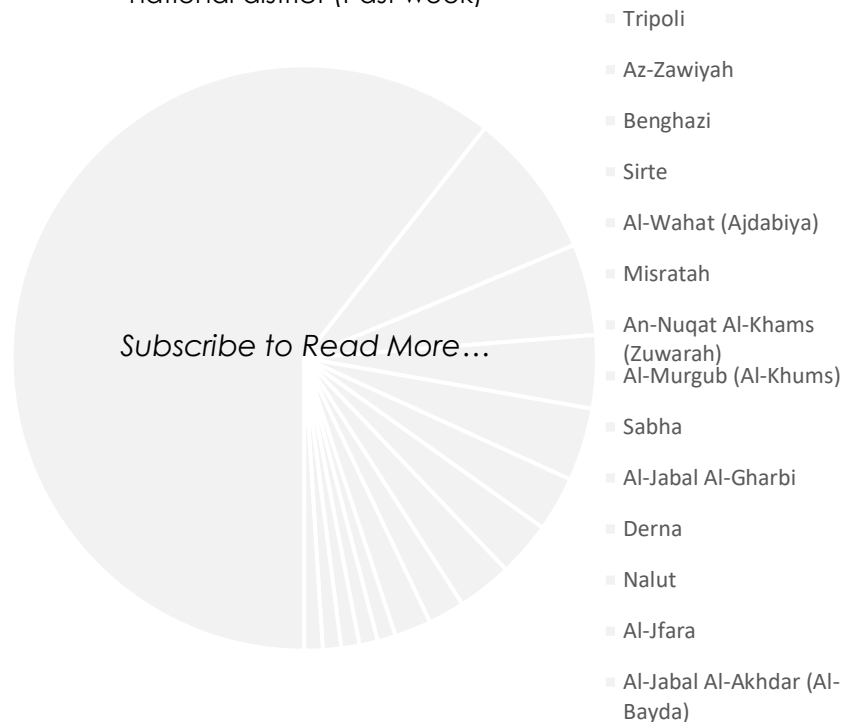
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



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 19 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 44 deaths reported last week and 61 the week before. While official figures remain unknown, this week WB recorded 14 fatalities as a result of military activity related to ongoing clashes between Government of National Accord (GNA) and Libyan National Army (LNA) units. The GNA claimed its forces repelled an LNA offensive on the Airport Road frontline towards Al-Furosiya Bridge resulting in the death of 10 LNA units on 30 Dec. Meanwhile, four fatalities were recorded, including civilians, as a result of LNA Air Force (LAAF) airstrikes. Beyond combat operations, seven were killed in a house fire in Al-Khums, whilst isolated gunfire resulted in the death of a policeman in Sabha. Airstrikes, mortar/rocket shelling incidents, and violent clashes continue to dominate the security environment since the clashes erupted on 04 April 2019. This week saw a surge in protests reported across the country, with a total of 15 anti-Turkey protests reported across Libya and three anti-LNA protests in the cities of Tripoli, Misratah and Zawiyah. Of note, the LAAF intensified its air campaign in the Western region over the past 48hrs resulting in increased civilian fatalities. These figures will be reflected in next week's report. More specifically, the airstrike against a military academy in Tripoli – largely attributed to the LNA - that resulted in 30 fatalities will be accounted for in next week's report. Tripoli continues to account for the highest number of security incidents followed by Zawiyah, where tensions continue to brew. The remainder of security incidents were spread largely across the Western region, in addition to Sirte, Sabha in the South and Benghazi in the East. Several incidents were recorded throughout the country including 22 violent clashes, 22 mortar/rocket shelling incidents, 18 protests, 16 airstrikes, 8 arrests, 4 isolated gunfire cases, 3 drones heard flying over the Western and central regions, 2 robberies and a fire.

In Western Libya, WB recorded a total of 81 incidents, including 60 in Tripoli, a similar figure relatively compared with past weeks. In Tripoli, an LNA unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) airstrike targeted Government of National Accord (GNA) positions in Al-Kreymiya. Local reports indicate the airstrike damaged a blacksmith workshop resulting in the death of at least three civilians on 01 Jan. Separately, reports indicate an LAAF airstrike hit a civilian house in Sharfa Mulaha area near Mitiga International Airport (MJI) resulting in the death of a woman and the injury of two others at approximately 1800hrs on 29 Dec. Beyond military activity, reports indicate unidentified assailants stole a parked grey Hyundai Sonata 2016 model in Tripoli's Souq Al-Jumaa area in the morning on 01 Jan. In the wider Western region, the highest number of security incidents after Tripoli were recorded in Az-Zawiyah district for the second consecutive week. Four protests, 2 mortar/rocket shelling incidents, and one LAAF airstrike were recorded throughout the reporting period. Meanwhile, in Misrata, WB recorded two protests and a drone flying over the city. In Zliten, the General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) reported the theft of a high voltage 1500 metre electric cable from the Majer transmission line no.1 adjacent to station 220 in the central distribution department of Zliten on 28 Dec. As a result, several farms witnessed power outages in Zliten's Majer area. Beyond, local reports from 01 Jan indicate a house fire caused by a short circuit following a power outage resulted in the death of two children in Khoms. Two children out of a total of seven victims reportedly succumbed to their wounds on their way to Tunisia for medical treatment.

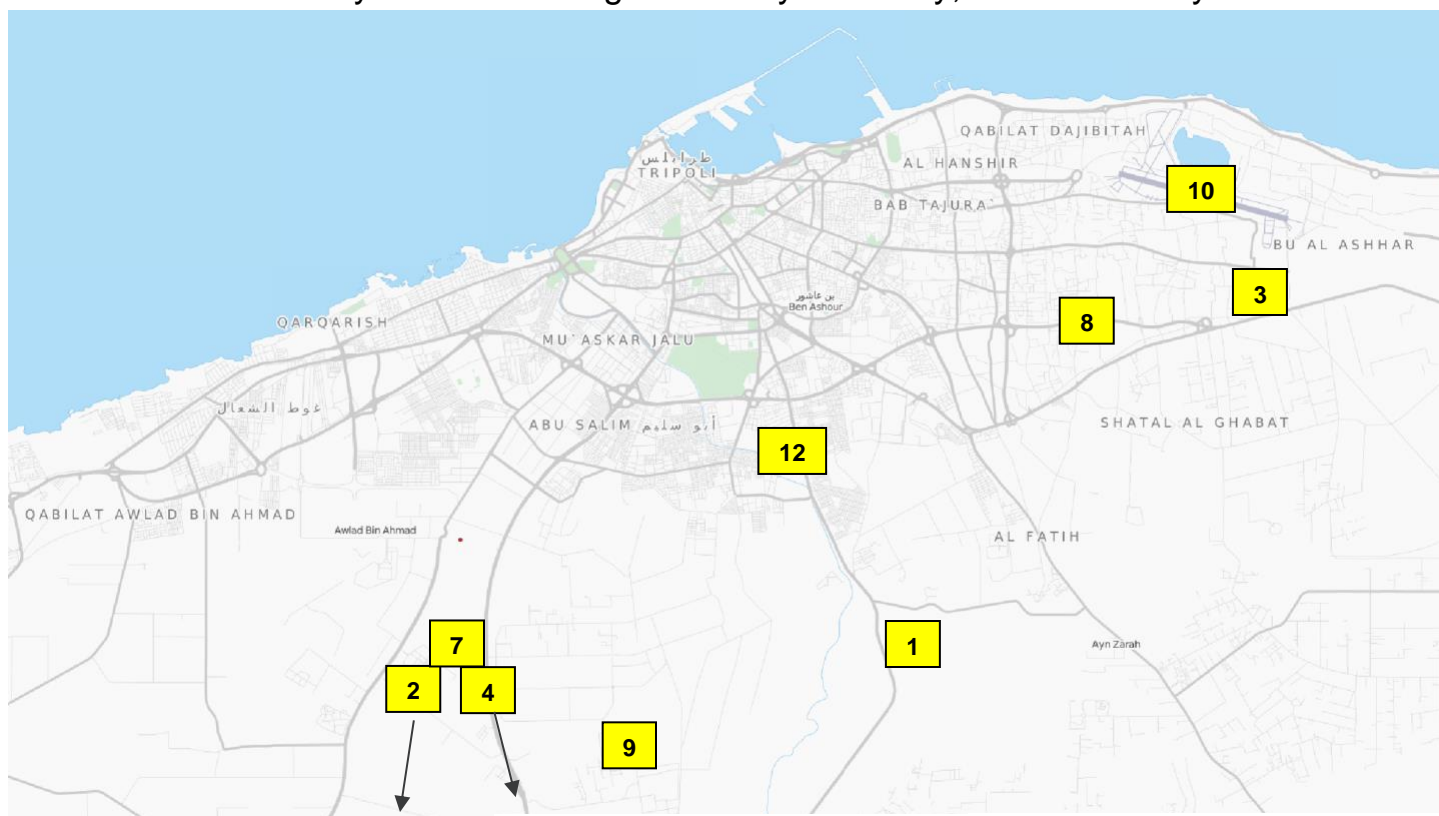
In the central region, two LAAF airstrikes targeted Sirte Protection Force (SPF) positions resulting in the death of an SPF member. In addition, two drones were reported flying over the city. The pro-GNA Sirte Protection Force (SPF) reported an LNA airstrike targeting Gate 17 East of Sirte at approximately 1000hrs on 04 Jan. In a separate development, the SPF mourned the death of one of its members who died as a result of an LNA unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strike targeting the Saadi Camp in Sirte's Abu Hadi area at approximately 0300hrs on 03 Jan.

In the South, similar to last week, two isolated gunfire cases were recorded in Sabha. No other security incidents were recorded across the region.

Turning to the East, four arrests were recorded in Benghazi. Meanwhile, anti-Turkey protests were held in Tobruk, Bayda and Derna.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Deadly UAV strike targets military academy; MJI indefinitely closed



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (28 Dec) Video purportedly shows Turkish-backed Syrian rebels in Tekbali Camp
2. (28-29 Dec) GNA claim offensive in Al-Ramla; buildings seized & tanks destroyed
3. (29 Dec) LAAF airstrike hits civilian house killing woman & injuring 2 others near MJI
4. (30 Dec) GNA claim 10 LNA units killed & 12 technicals destroyed in foiled offensive
5. (30 Dec) LNA spox. claims suicide bombing attack on its forward lines foiled
6. (01 Jan) Tripoli Military Region arrest 25 LNA units attempting to infiltrate South
7. (01 Jan) Shells target Wali Al-Ahd Street; civilian casualties & material damage
8. (01 Jan) Parked vehicle stolen in Souq Al-Jumaa
9. (01-02 Jan) LNA briefly advances in Hadba Al-Mashro'
10. (02 Jan) Two separate mortar attacks target MJI resulting in its indefinite closure
11. (03 Jan) Haftar announces all-out mobilization & jihad (holy war)
12. (03-04 Jan) LNA intensifies air campaign; 28 killed in UAV attack on Hadba Military Academy

LAAF airstrikes result in civilian casualties

Sources reported up to 30 mortar shells targeted Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI) and its vicinity in the evening on 02 Jan, resulting in flight diversions to Misrata International Airport (MRA) and a temporary airspace closure from 0000hrs-0830hrs on 03 Jan. Flights later resumed before a second indefinite airspace closure due to a wave of mortar shells landing in MJI between 1300hrs-1630hrs. Sources reported a hangar used for ground handling services was damaged in the second attack. In addition, reports indicate an LAAF drone airstrike targeted MJI's military side at approximately 1800hrs. While the LNA is yet to officially claim responsibility for the attacks, pro-LNA accounts (9th Brigade Tarhunah and 106 Brigade) vowed to continue targeting the airport in the short term. At the time of publication, MJI remains closed for operations.

UAV strike targets Military Academy

An alleged LNA-operated foreign unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) targeted Al-Hadba's Military Academy, a GNA Interior Ministry training facility, killing at least 28 military cadets and students and injuring 19 others at approximately 2115hrs on 04 Jan. The LNA denied in an official capacity its involvement in the attack, claiming pro-GNA forces launched mortar shells and falsely attributed the incident to Haftar's forces. The GNA contends the attack was an aerial bombing carried out by a foreign ally of the LNA. Unofficial LNA accounts tacitly recognized the LNA's role in the attack, claiming it was preemptive to deter potential GNA fighters from joining combat operations. The LNA's Head of Moral Guidance, Brigadier Khaled Mahjoub, was misquoted by pro-GNA forces claiming

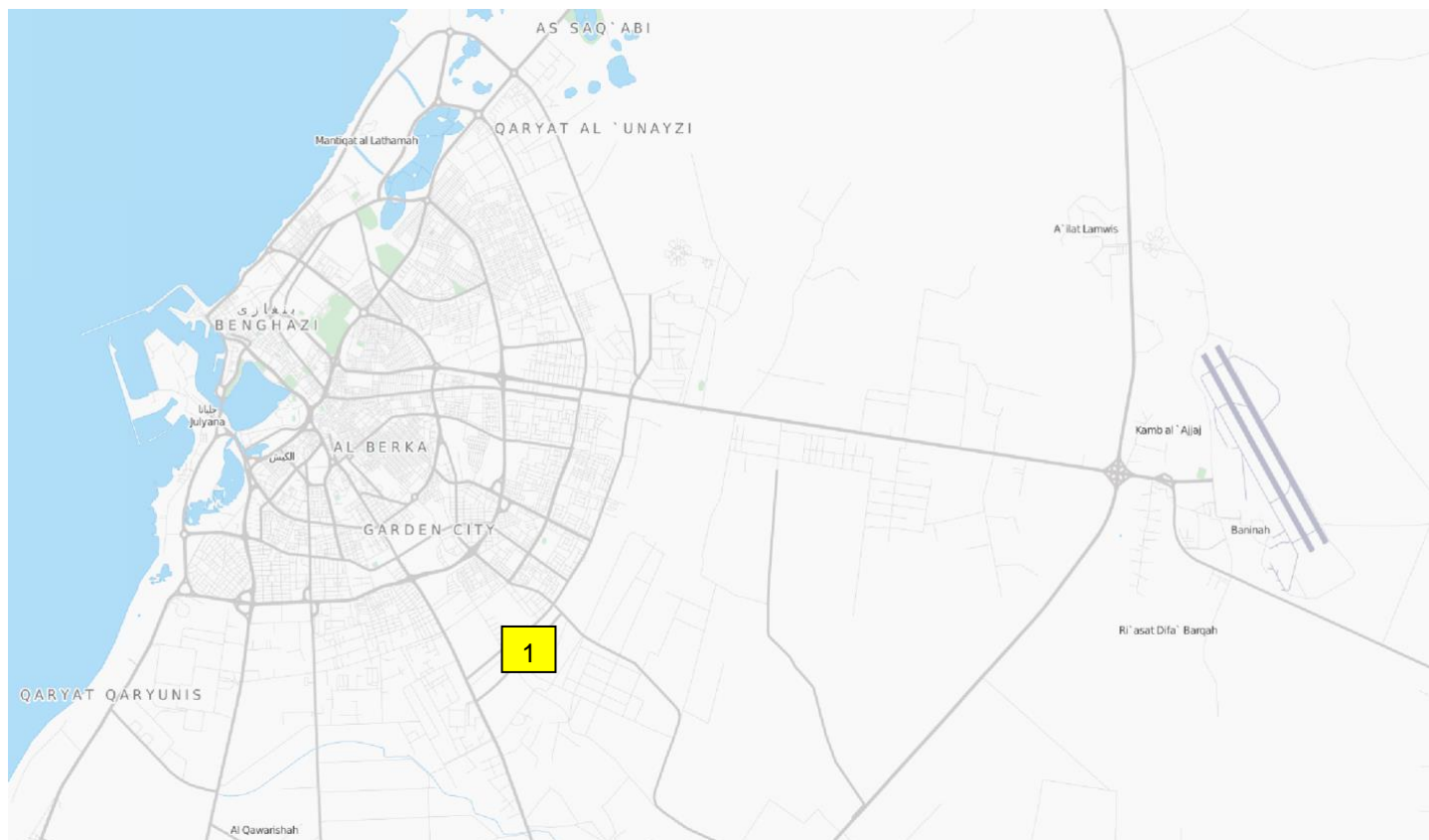
responsibility for the attack in an interview with Arab media. Mahjoub, however, maintained a veneer of plausible deniability during his interview. The incident was condemned by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), though without any attribution. However, the US Embassy in Libya directly attributed the attack to "LNA-affiliated forces" and stated that the deteriorated security situation underscores the dangers of toxic interference in Libya on 05 Jan.

Tripoli Port exposure raised

The LNA's Western Region Operations Room commander, Al-Mabrouk al-Ghazwi, warned that Tripoli Port would stand as a legitimate target for the LAAF if it is used by the GNA to receive Turkish "occupation soldiers and terrorists". In a related development, the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) passed a unanimous vote enabling the LNA to disable all GNA-controlled ports (land and air) that are being prepared to receive "Ottoman invasion in Libya". The statements would come amid local media reports suggesting the first batch of Turkish troops is expected to arrive in Libya on 06 Jan. Meanwhile, Turkish media reported that joint troops (ground, air and marine) will be deployed to Libya along with warships, submarines, drones, warplanes, freighters and infantry. Citing unidentified sources, Turkey's Anadolu agency reported Turkish forces will also train GNA forces and provide humanitarian aid. The developments would significantly raise the exposure of Tripoli port to LAAF targeting in the short-medium term.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Activists disappear after announcing initiative to end LNA Tripoli offensive



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (29 Dec) CID raid illicit alcohol factory and arrest four individuals
2. (30 Dec) CID arrest 7 suspects on charges of substance use & robbery
3. (01 Jan) Activists missing after calling to end war on Tripoli
4. (03 Jan) Locals protest against Turkish intervention in Libya
5. (04 Jan) HoR enact series of laws in extraordinary session in Benghazi

Anti-LNA offensive activists disappear

Reports suggest a group of activists in Benghazi disappeared shortly after announcing an initiative to end the offensive on Tripoli and settle the conflict peacefully on 01 Jan. There is no further information available on the party behind their disappearance and/or current whereabouts. Of note, a female MP and opponent of the LNA's offensive on Tripoli, Siham Sergiwa, was abducted by unidentified gunmen from her Benghazi residence in Jul 2019. Sergiwa's family members were reported stating that masked members of the Khalid Haftar-led 106th brigade were at the scene. Other reports suggested the involvement of a militia faction known for brutal treatment of civilians. The words "the army is a red line" were reportedly sprayed on the outside of Sergiwa's residence. Her whereabouts remain unknown to date multiple despite domestic and international calls on Eastern authorities to reveal her fate.

CID carry out two separate arrests

Benghazi's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) carried out a security operation resulting in the arrest seven individuals charged with substance use and multiple robberies in Benghazi on 30 Dec. The security operation initially began with the arrest of a suspect charged with drug and alcohol use, after which the suspect's father filed a complaint against his son and informed the CID of his son's substance use. This led to the arrest of six additional individuals on similar charges. Separately, CID raided an illicit alcohol factory located inside a farm and arrested four individuals in the Hawari area on 29 Dec. The CID initially arrested a Sudanese national who later

confessed to the presence of three additional suspects based in the farm, including an Egyptian national. One of the suspects stated the farm was owned by an Islamic State (IS) militant that fled Benghazi. The suspects were referred to Public Prosecution.

HoR enact series of laws

In an extraordinary session held on 04 Jan in Benghazi, the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) enacted a series of laws in response to the prospective Turkish troop deployment. First, the HoR nullified Ankara's recent security cooperation and maritime agreements with the GNA and withdrew recognition of the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). The HoR unanimously voted to allocate an emergency budget of 20 billion Libyan dinars (LYD) towards the LNA's Tripoli offensive to be deducted from the 2020 budget; called on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the international community to withdraw recognition of the GNA; called for the formation of a national unity government or amendment of the Interim Government to represent all segments of Libyan society. The Interim Government was also renamed the "Libyan Government". In addition, the HoR MPs referred GNA PM Fayez Al-Serraj and FM Mohammed Sayala to prosecution on treason charges. In response, the parallel Tripoli-based HoR declared the Benghazi session as illegal and lacking a quorum, reiterating support for the recent Turkey-GNA military and maritime deals.

6. What's next

Turkish deployment to expedite ceasefire negotiations; pressure mounts on GNA

POLITICAL FORECAST

Turkey's intervention has raised the stakes in the Libyan conflict, placing greater emphasis on the need to expedite political negotiations. However, a Russia/Turkey agreement and the flurry of diplomatic activity and backchannel negotiations between major powerbrokers, are more likely to achieve breakthroughs than the Berlin Conference/Process. Both Russia and Turkey will seek to rally support among regional players such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria. Analysts are of the view Germany and the European Union's (EU) role in solving the Libyan crisis is gradually fading away. This week will see significant negotiation rounds when Vladimir Putin meets his Turkish counterpart in Turkey to inaugurate the TurkStream pipeline. Moreover, Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry invited his Italian counterpart, Luigi Di Maio, for a meeting in Cairo, Egypt, on 08 Jan. Separately, in a significant development, US President Donald Trump discussed Libya with Erdogan in a telephone conversation on 03 Jan. Trump warned Erdogan that foreign intervention risks complicating the situation in Libya, according to the White House. The development would represent one of the few documented and publicly-known direct interventions by Trump in the Libyan file since the conflict erupted on 04 Apr. Domestically, the eastern-based interim government and House of Representatives (HoR) will continue to work towards a removal of recognition of the GNA. HoR speaker Aguila Saleh was allocated a budget for a foreign tour to rally support and win votes, especially from African states, to sideline the GNA. These efforts from Libyan figures are complemented by Cairo's diplomatic push to build consensus among the international community that Turkey's intervention helps destabilise the region.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

Writing for *Al-Monitor*, Libya analyst Kirill Semenov discusses the inner workings of a potential Russia-Turkey agreement in Libya and whether Moscow may employ a "Syria model" in the current environment. Semenov lays out the rationale behind a more hands-on approach from Moscow in Libya, arguing that Russia needs to project capability to resolve a security crisis beyond its mediator role. The author argues that in order to achieve a meaningful outcome on the ground, Moscow will first have to be a party to the conflict by supporting Haftar before assuming a mediator role. Semenov writes "Unlike in Yemen, however, Russian interests in Libya are more clearly articulated. Russia hopes to reclaim the oil and railroad construction contracts it lost after the fall of Moammar Gadhafi. Libya is also a strategic location, both as a close energy source for Europe and a source of illegal migration to European countries. Should Russia secure a foothold in Libya, Moscow will receive new leverage in its relations with the West, in particular the EU. In dealing with Libya, Russia is yet to overcome some elements of its Syria model when it acts both as a party to the conflict and a mediator. The moment for Russia to become a "pure mediator" is still not there, which means Russia will have to plug away at its mediator role by first engaging with one warring party. This model, which has been tested in Syria, may provide Russia with the results it seeks. However, it imbeds Russia deeper into the conflict and may entail greater risks. This may include a loss of the party Moscow supports if Hifter suffers defeat at Tripoli, and if Moscow and Ankara fail to find a compromise that will either reinforce or at least allow Hifter to save face."

SECURITY FORECAST

No major changes to positions have been reported in Tripoli combat operations between LNA and GNA forces. The LNA continues to intensify airstrikes targeting multiple positions across the Western region. LNA forces vowed retaliation in the aftermath of Turkey's decision to deploy troops. The latest situation risks expanding combat beyond the standard engagement areas; the risk of fighting is now higher across towns in the West between pro-LNA and pro-GNA factions. Factions nominally under the GNA or those that chose to remain neutral are now having to consider supporting the LNA to fend off perceived "Turkish invasion". Meanwhile, with the resumption of GNA Turkish UAV activity highlighted by an airstrike targeting LNA forces in Wattiyah airbase, precision airstrikes are set to dominate the security environment over the next few weeks. However, there are grounds for optimism, and the closed-door meeting of the UN Security Council at the request of Russia on 06 Jan could discuss implementation of a potential ceasefire agreement. In the central region, emerging reports indicate armed clashes erupted between pro-LNA and pro-GNA forces 20 km East of Sirte. The LNA's control of Sirte corroborates WB's assessment of an imminent escalation between pro-GNA and pro-LNA forces in the area after unidentified forces were spotted gathering southwest of Sirte on 05 Jan. Reports indicate the LNA has seized positions in the Abu Hadi district and even within the city's urban districts, which could result in a mobilization from Misrata forces eastward and subsequently weaken GNA posture across Tripoli's frontlines. In this scenario, the LNA's prospect for a northward push on Tripoli increases. In an alternative scenario, LNA forces could engage Misrata forces in the Sirte and Misrata national districts, attacking from multiple fronts, including Bani Walid and Al-Saddadah.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

Nicholas Morgan for *Ahval* explores the foreign policy challenges that may face Erdogan's endeavors in Libya and could complicate Turkey's posture in the region. First, the author discusses the challenges that Erdogan faces at home, arguing that the Libyan case does not present Turkish leadership with a strong rationale for intervention, unlike Syria where the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) justified Ankara's foreign military manoeuvres. This factor alone limits the prospect for a prolonged Turkish intervention in Libya; domestic opposition will grow the longer Erdogan is in Libya and the more he commits resources. But perhaps, the most significant challenge narrated by the author is the logistical dimension of Turkish operations in Libya. Nicholas Morgan points to the fact that "Experts on Libya suggest that any Turkish operation would be complicated by a combination of political, geographic and military difficulties. One critical gap created by all three is whether Turkey will be able to defend its troops from the air or protect them from enemy aircraft. Unlike Syria where Turkey shares a border that makes military operations logistically easier, Libya is nearly 1,900 kilometres away and the nearest airbase is located in Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus. Any sorties conducted from these bases would necessitate mid-air refuelling of Turkish fighters. Turkey does not presently possess a capacity to provide naval aviation to make up for this with its only amphibious carrier still months away from commissioning. Now that Ankara has been expelled from the F-35 programme, it also lacks any fixed-wing jets that can operate from the sea as well."

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