

## 1. The Big Picture

### Turkey flexes military muscle amid uncertainty over next move

This week combat operations continued between Libyan National Army (LNA) and Government of National Accord (GNA) forces in the vicinity of Sirte. No significant changes have been recorded; LNA forces maintain defensive positions in the city. The LNA is relying on airstrikes targeting GNA positions as far as Saddadah in the Misrata district to temporarily deter GNA forces from pursuing advances towards Sirte. On the ground, engagement has been limited to intermittent skirmishes and LNA heavy artillery shelling in Buerat and Wadi Jaraf, west Sirte, which resulted in civilian fatalities. Between 10-13 June, military activity intensified in the area and LNA forces claimed control of the Gulf Steam power plant while repelling GNA forces further west.

Regardless, positions in Sirte will remain fluid in the medium term ahead of a likely escalation highlighted by the reinforcements spotted arriving in both GNA and LNA ranks. GNA forces backed by Turkey are likely assessing their options and whether negotiations will yield more results than a ground offensive. Of note, GNA forces may consider laying siege to Sirte by capturing Wadi Jarf and areas southwest of the city, especially given the GNA's control of Ash Shwayrif, a critical supply node.

But ultimately, the GNA's next moves will depend on Turkey's resolve to continue fighting eastwards. For now, Turkey looks set on reaping the benefits of recent military gains to expand its presence in Libya's north-west and strengthen cooperation with the GNA. It remains unclear where Sirte falls in Turkey's plans and whether an offensive will be pursued before, during, or after Ankara's commercial and military interests are secured in the north-west.

On the diplomatic front, a settlement in Sirte will likely come via negotiations between Moscow and Ankara. Of note, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu were scheduled to visit Ankara on 14 June. However, the meeting was postponed, underlining the fact that a settlement is yet to be reached. Nevertheless, Turkish FM Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu reported technical discussions will continue at deputy level between the two countries.

As combat operations continue in Sirte, Turkey is simultaneously broadening the scope of its military agreement with the GNA. The week was marked by bold military manoeuvres from Ankara. The Turkish Navy and Air Force conducted coordinated exercises off the coast of Libya, according to the Turkish Ministry of Defence (MoD) on 11 June. The drills comprised 17 aircraft and eight frigates and corvettes, the MoD reported.

The development came amid reports Ankara is officially considering the use of Al-Wattiyah as an airbase for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and other intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) functions. Misrata is reportedly being considered by Turkey as a second naval base. Of note, local reports indicate Turkey is already consolidating its presence at Al-Wattiyah Airbase, which was captured by GNA forces on 18 May.

As Turkey consolidates, the EU is facing challenges in enforcing the UN arms embargo. On 10 June, a helicopter operating under the EU's Operation Iridi took off from a Greek

frigate and to intercept a Tanzania-flagged cargo vessel escorted by Turkish Navy frigates. The Turkish Navy warned the Greek helicopter from intervening, which prompted a retreat. Reports indicate Iridi was unable to intercept the cargo vessel because of a legal loophole enabling Turkey to claim the vessel enjoys sovereign immunity.

Meanwhile, the LNA is gradually displaying a bellicose rhetoric given the importance of Sirte to its survival prospects. The LNA under Khalifa Haftar's command is now committing all resources to ensure Sirte is not lost to GNA forces. Based on local terrain, there is effectively no barrier between Sirte and terminals such as Es Sider/Ras Lanuf eastwards. If Sirte is captured, GNA forces could initiate engagement in the Oil Crescent region within hours.

To strengthen its posture after the recent setbacks, the LNA reshuffled the general command's HQ by appointing officers "who can effectively conduct the battle" and respond to recent changes in the combat theatre, as per a general command statement dated 13 June. The LNA acknowledged some of the recent military setbacks and failure to capture Tripoli after six years of fighting terrorism in Libya. In a follow up statement, LNA spox Ahmed Al-Mismary clarified that the "reorganization" is intended to include all personnel with combat experience in Benghazi, Derna, the Oil Crescent or Libya's South. Al-Mismary's statement indicates LNA forces will enlist reservists to join combat east of Misrata.

An LNA shift to an offensive posture is unlikely in the medium term, though the LNA has hinted at changes in combat tactics and declared it will directly engage GNA forces in desert areas (desert warfare) to avoid civilian exposure. Beyond Sirte, the LNA will likely look to contain GNA influence in Libya's south.

Meanwhile, in Tripoli, a sense of normality is gradually settling in though explosive remnants of war (ERW) continue to pose a threat to civilians. In relation to internal divisions, GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha reached out to hardliners in GNA ranks, in an attempt to obtain their buy-in for security-sector reforms. Bashagha directly called on the 17 February "revolutionaries" to respond to the historical challenge via positive participation in state-building that rejects extremism, terrorism, and chaos, and subsequently enhances security of the Libyan state. Bashagha's specific reference to "war criminal" is an attempt at reassuring GNA hardliners that Haftar has no seat in future negotiations.

There is mounting evidence to indicate the presence of Syrian fighters in GNA ranks, seen as a direct result of Bashagha's policies, will continue to be a source of tension. This week, pro-LNA accounts placed greater emphasis on Syrian fighters occupying civilian homes in the Salah Eddien area. The pro-LNA reports, denied by WB sources, alleged disputes broke out between Syrian elements and the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) in Salah Eddien.

#### KEY POINTS

- Russia/Turkey postpone Libya talks
- Turkey mulls use of Al-Wattiyah & Misrata bases
- Escalation remains likely in Sirte



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## 2. National Security Map

### Ongoing military activity on Sirte axis; Sharara & El-Feel Oilfields shutdown

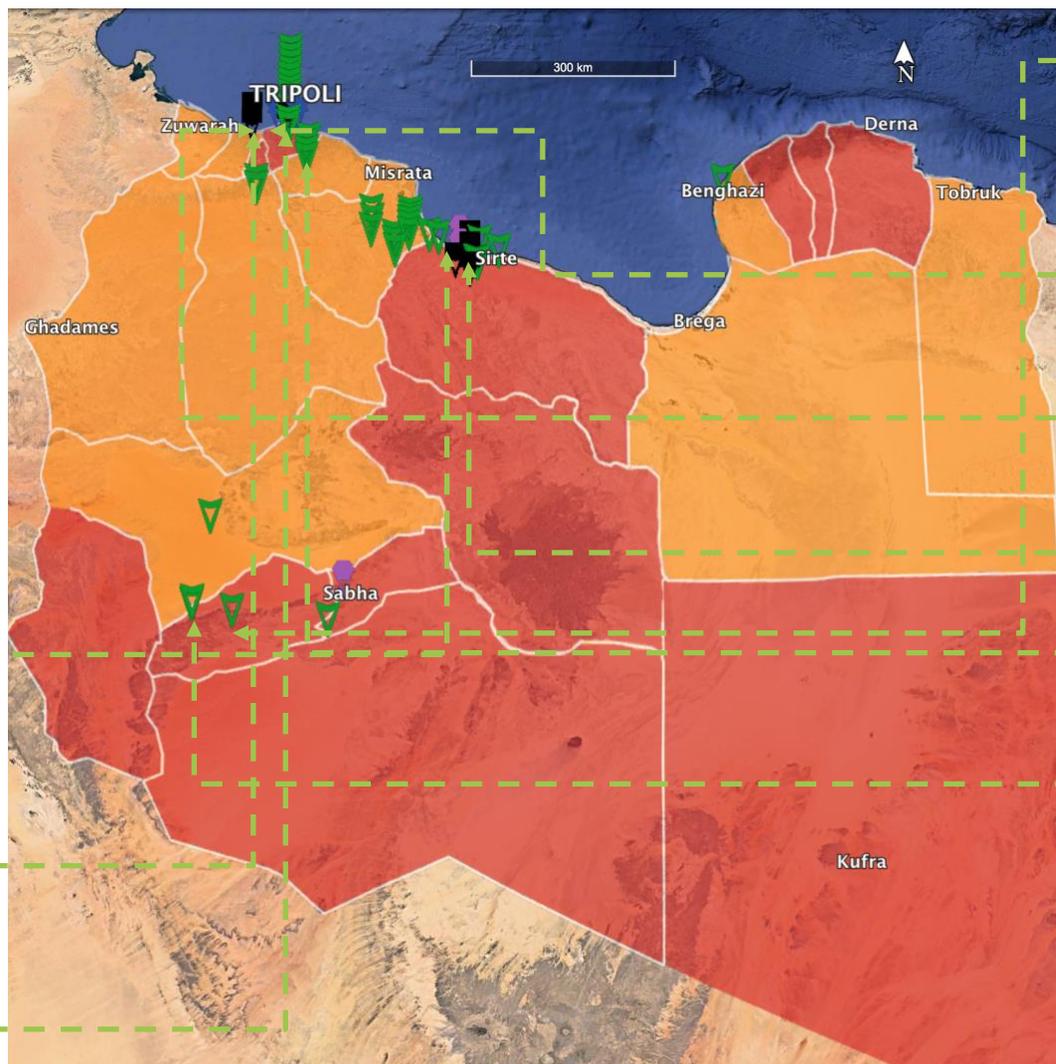
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



Military reinforcements in support of LNA/GNA forces flocked to the Sirte frontline on 12 June. Meanwhile, reports indicate an LNA airstrike targeted GNA positions at the As-Sadadah Bridge east of Misrata at approx. 0400hrs on 13 June. On 11 June, LNA forces shelled the Buerat area and Abugrein village in the afternoon. Earlier that morning, LNA airstrikes targeted GNA positions in the As Saddadah area.

The General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) reported an armed attack targeted the Zainouba Power Plant located south of Al-Zawiya resulting in the destruction of two electrical transformers and subsequent power cuts across the southern suburbs of the city on 13 June.

Reports indicate Osama Juwaili- affiliated Al-Dawi militia kidnapped/arrested a pro-LNA commander and prominent military leader of the former Gaddafi regime, Omar Tantoush, in Al-Aziziya area in the morning on 13 June. Al-Tantoush was released later that night after a Misrata armed faction headed by Mohammed Al-Hassan intervened to facilitate his release.

Reports indicate an LNA airstrike targeted several GNA-affiliated armoured vehicles in Awbari at approximately 0200hrs on 13 June. WB sources reported an LNA airstrike targeted a large convoy carrying anti-LNA Tebu militiamen and mercenaries heading towards Sharara and Al-Feel oil fields at approx. 0200hrs on 13 June. Separately, pro-LNA accounts reported an airstrike targeted a GNA-affiliated military convoy near Wadi Al-Shatii district on 13 June.

Reports indicate unidentified gunmen shot dead a man in a failed carjacking attempt in Wershiffanah's Almamoura area in the evening on 10 June.

Reports indicate a man was found killed inside his vehicle with signs of three gunshots in an unidentified location south of Al-Zawiya at night on 10 June.

Indiscriminate shelling targeted the Wadi Jarif area resulting in the death of an elderly woman and injuring four other civilians on 09 June.

Reports indicate two mass graves were found in Tarhunah on 07 June.

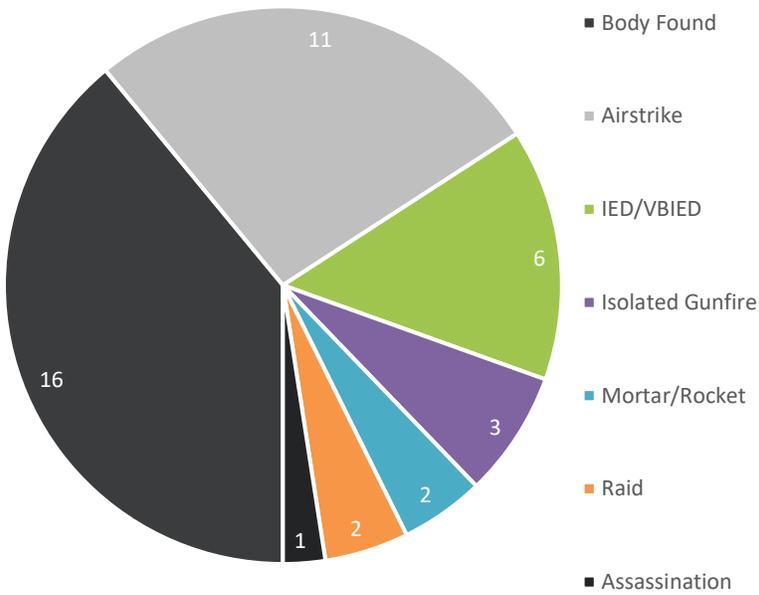
The National Oil Corporation (NOC) confirmed a "drastic deterioration in the security situation at Sharara Oilfield" following the arrival of armed groups from Sabha under Masoud Al Jadi and Ahmad Ibrahim bin Nayel who entered the field in the evening of 08 June, while noting that production remains halted. In addition, the NOC noted the shutdown of production at El-Feel Oilfield after the LNA's Khalid Bin Al-Walid Battalion commander, Hassan Al-Tabawi, coerced workers to stop production a few days after the Hamada valve was reopened.

The National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) reported 36 new cases of coronavirus in Libya and two new deaths, bringing the total number of cases in-country to 454 as of 15 June. The Centre recorded nine cases in Sabha, seven in Sabratah, five in Janzour, four in Tripoli, four in Al-Bayda, three in Benghazi, 2 at Misrata International Airport (MRA) and one in Zliten.

### 3. Nationwide Security Analysis

#### Surge in fatalities due to bodies found & ERW; crime levels on rise

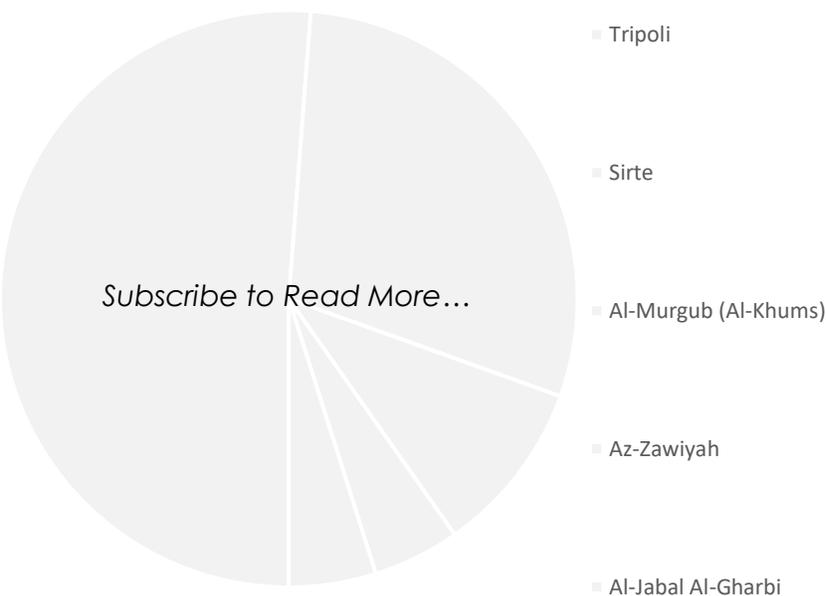
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



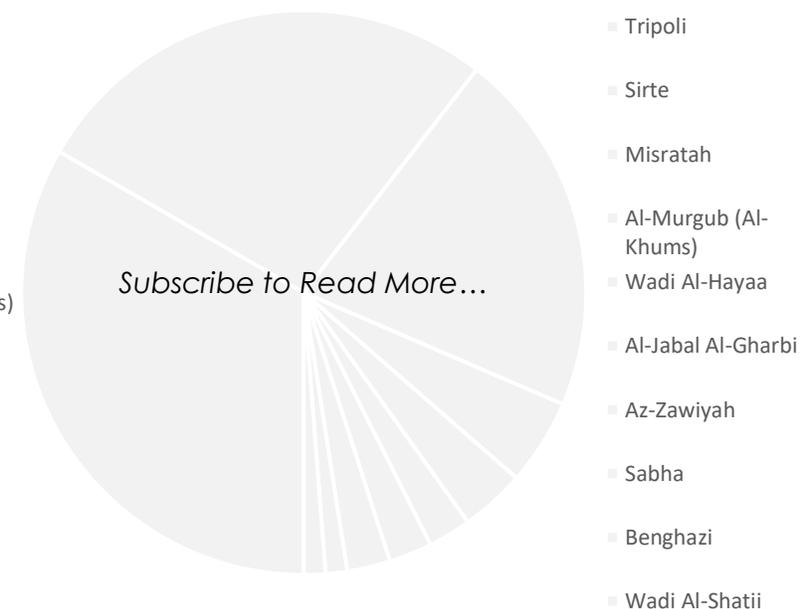
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



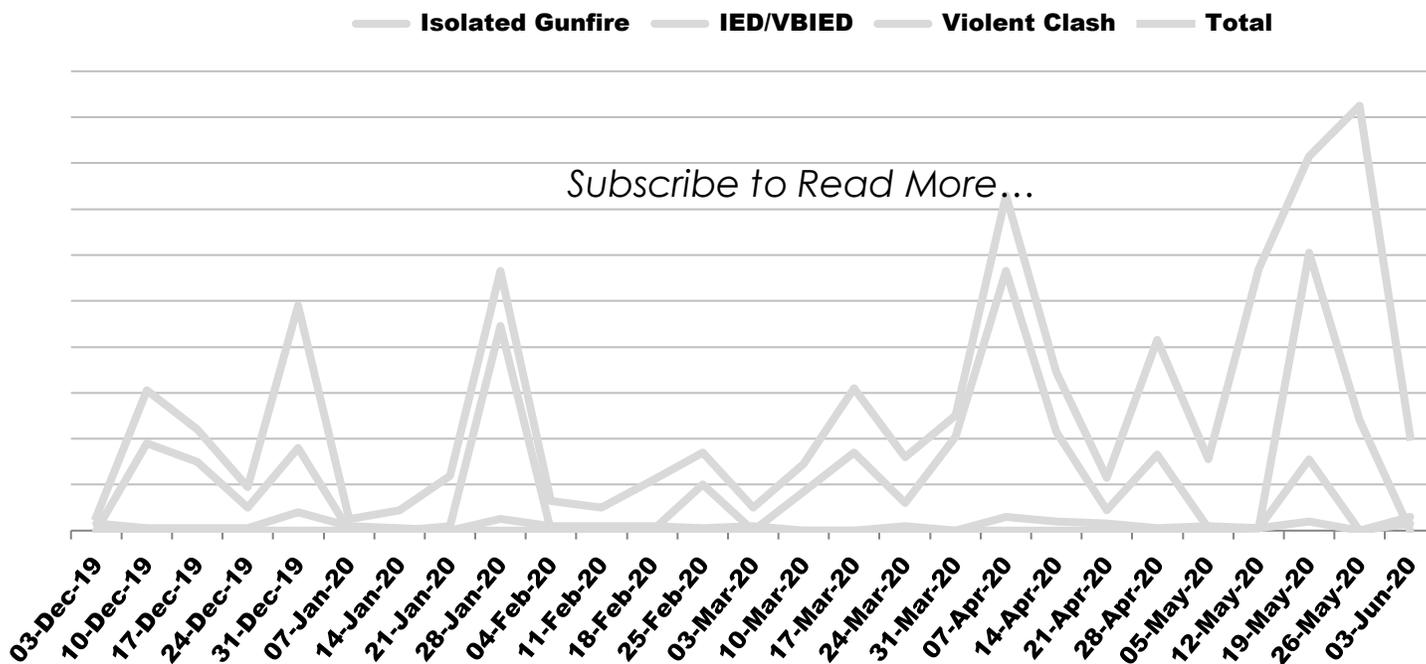
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



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 185 deaths reported last week and 163 the week before. WB recorded 16 bodies found across previous engagement areas in Tripoli and Al-Murgub districts, 11 fatalities as a result of LNA airstrikes conducted in the Sirte vicinity, 6 fatalities as a result of improvised explosive device (IED) explosions, 5 fatalities as a result of indiscriminate shelling, 3 fatalities due to isolated gunfire cases, 2 fatalities recorded in a raid and 1 assassination. In western Libya, WB recorded a total of 47 incidents, including 27 in Tripoli marking a sharp decrease in the number of security incidents reported across the capital due to the end of the LNA's offensive on Tripoli which dominated the environment over the past 14 months. In Tripoli, WB recorded 9 IED explosions, 6 cases of bodies found, 4 robberies, 3 arrests, 2 arson, 1 mortar/rocket incident, 1 protest and 1 isolated gunfire case.

In the wider western region, WB recorded a surge in sporadic opportunistic crime across Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi, Al-Murgub and Az-Zawiyah districts. WB sources reported gunmen affiliated with Zawiya and Gharyan armed factions aboard a convoy of several military and civilian vehicles raided a residential area in Alasaba in an attempt to carry out burglaries. Subsequently, skirmishes erupted between the gunmen and locals in the afternoon on 06 June. The locals killed two gunmen and captured three others, while the remaining perpetrators fled the scene. In an act of retaliation, Gharyan militiamen kidnapped two locals from Alasaba later that night. Separately, pro-LNA accounts reported pro-GNA locals assassinated the Imam of Mosab Ben Omair Mosque in Tarhunah with no further information available. Beyond, A heavy explosion was audible in Tarhuna in the early hours of 11 June. Reports indicate GNA forces detonated a Sufi Shrine of Sheikh Muammar. Further, this week was dominated by ongoing reports of bodies found in the Tarhuna vicinity.

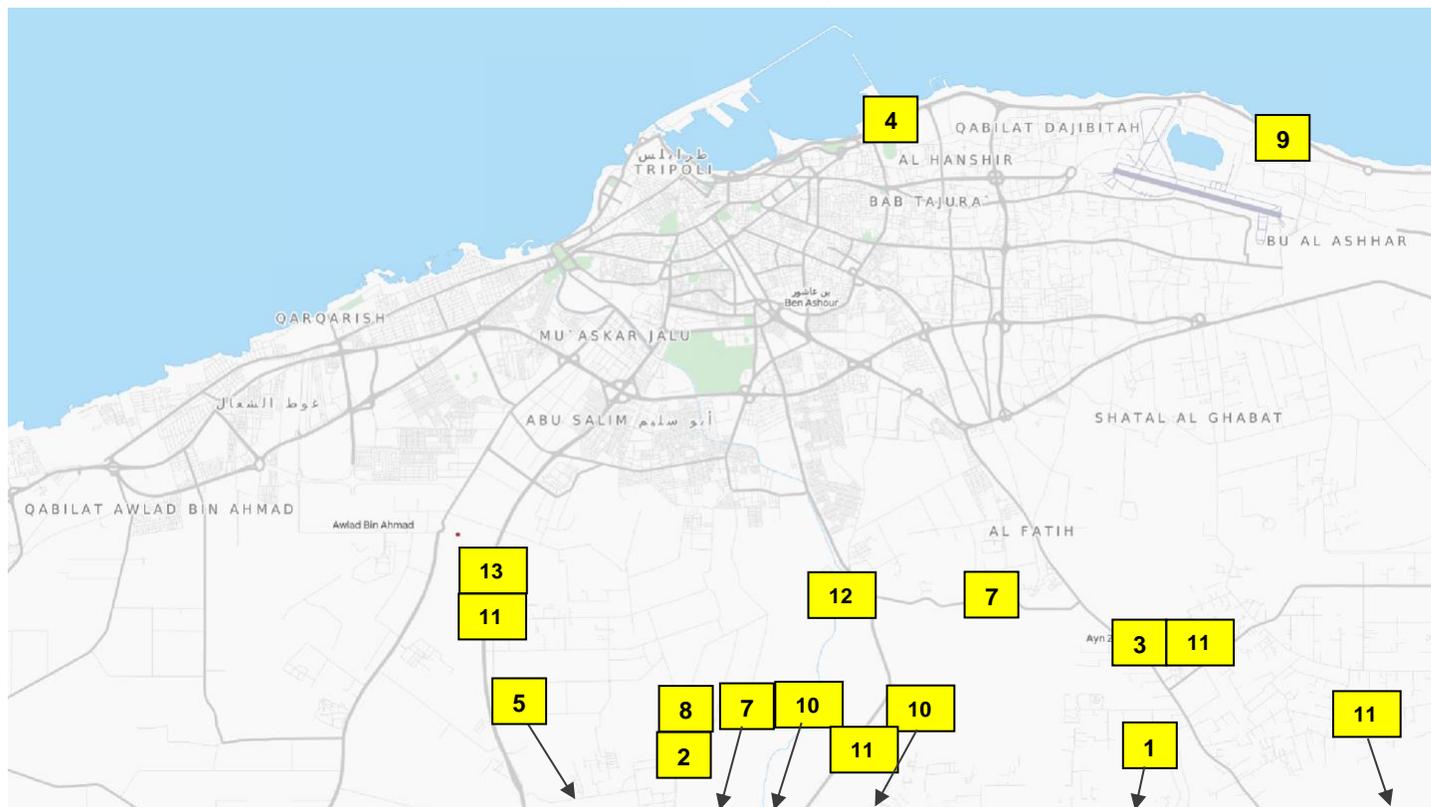
Meanwhile in the central region, the security environment remains fluid in Sirte and nearby vicinities, dominated by airstrikes, an exchange of shelling, and the downing of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). LNA forces remain on high alert to repel any GNA attempt to advance on Sirte which remains under LNA control as of 15 June. Among a series of LNA airstrikes, reports indicate an LNA airstrike killed a pro-GNA Syrian militant identified as Sami Al-Atrash, also known as Abu Ya'rub, west of Sirte on 12 June. Al-Atrash appeared in numerous videos fighting alongside GNA forces during the clashes against the LNA in southern Tripoli. The incident was corroborated by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) director, Rami Abdelrahman, stating that Al-Atrash was killed alongside several GNA forces while attempting to advance east towards Sirte. According to the SOHR, Al-Atrash was expelled from the Al-Nusra Front due to corruption and ethical violations before joining the Syrian National Army's ranks in Afrin in January. The Observatory added that Al-Atrash was not considered a prominent leader. WB recorded a total of 8 airstrikes, including 5 conducted by the LNA. Meanwhile, 8 UAVs were downed across the Sirte district, including five GNA-operated UAVs downed by LNA forces. Beyond, WB recorded civilian casualties as a result of indiscriminate shelling, particularly in the Wadi Jaref area. Further, violent clashes were reported near the Gulf Steam Station.

Turning to the south, the security environment was dominated by a tense security environment in the Awbari region after an armed group stormed the Sharara Oilfield and coerced staff on-site to shutdown production shortly after its restart. A second closure was reported at the field after Awbari notables intervened to restart production following the initial shutdown. Meanwhile, reports indicate an LNA airstrike targeted several GNA-affiliated armoured vehicles in Awbari at approximately 0200hrs on 13 June. WB sources reported an LNA airstrike targeted a large convoy carrying anti-LNA Tebu militiamen and mercenaries heading towards the Sharara and El-Feel Oilfields at approx. 0200hrs on 13 June. Separately, pro-LNA accounts reported an airstrike targeted a GNA-affiliated military convoy near Wadi Al-Shatii district on 13 June.

In the eastern region, WB recorded one arrest in Benghazi with no further security incidents reported across the region. Local reports indicate associates of the civil activist, Khaled Al-Sakran, stated that Al-Sakran was summoned by Benghazi-based security agencies in the morning on 09 June and has not yet been released. Of note, Al-Sakran was arrested by Benghazi's Internal Security Agency and released 24hrs later in January. On 22 January, security forces at Benina International Airport (BEN) prevented Al-Sakran from travelling abroad, which closely followed a statement issued by a group of young activists in the eastern region titled "The National Peace initiative" calling for an end to the war in Tripoli.

## 4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Bodies found & ERW explosions; new political organisation formed



### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (13 June) Vehicle detonates after driving on landmine killing parents & wounding 2 children
2. (13 June) Body of missing man found inside burned vehicle near Hamza Camp
3. (13 June) Central Administration for Central Support arrest two thieves at CP in Ain Zara
4. (13 June) Fireworks heard from Nawasi BDE during banquet with high-ranking commanders
5. (10 June) Taxi driver wounded after driving on landmine & passenger killed near BPMC
6. (10 June) Landmine explosions kills woman on Ain Zara's Al-Sedra Road
7. (10 June) Bodies found inside ship container in warehouse in Qasr Bin Ghashir
8. (09 June) Grenade detonates killing man attempting to clean his house upon returning
9. (09 June) Car-bound protest to denounce power cuts (3-7 hrs)
10. (09 June) Body found in Khallatat; bodies found in water wall in Sog Al-Khmies Emsihel
11. (08-09 June) Burglaries on Airport Rd, Ain Zara & Khallat Al-Furjan; arson in Wadi Rabei
12. (08 June) IED explosion kills deminer & wounds three others
13. (08 June) Dirt barricades removed along Airport Road

### Vehicle drives on landmine killing two

WB sources reported a white Hyundai Avante detonated upon driving on a landmine, killing a woman and wounding her spouse and two children in Ain Zara's Al-Qabailiya area in the afternoon on 13 June.

### Body of missing man found

WB sources reported the remains of a body were found inside a burned vehicle in Al-Hadba Al-Mashro' area near Hamza Camp in the afternoon on 13 June. Reports indicate the body belonged to an elderly man who was reported missing after attempting to visit his house during the clashes in December 2019.

### Banquet held at Nawasi Brigade HQ

WB sources reported fireworks from the Nawasi Brigade headquarters at Abu Sittah with resulting explosions audible from Tripoli's Zawiyat Al-Dahmani and Souq Al- Jumaa areas at approximately 2130hrs on 13 June. Reports indicate a banquet was held at the HQ in celebration of the GNA's liberation of the western region and LNA's subsequent withdrawal from Tripoli. Several commanders attended, including the GNA's Chief of Staff (CoS) Mohammed Ali Al-Sharif, the Western Military Region commander Osama Juwaili, and the Tripoli Military Region commander Abdelbassat Marwan. Reports allege the absence of the GNA Interior minister, Fathi Bashagha, was deliberate and would come amid rumours that the Minister is considering dissolving Tripoli militias following the recent GNA victory in Tripoli, thus positioning Misrata forces in the capital. In addition, unconfirmed reports suggest the meeting aimed at initiating a Tripoli-Zintan alliance against any possible attempts by Bashagha-led Misrata militias to seize the capital. WB is closely monitoring the prospects for divisions to grow within the GNA coalition, particularly after the LNA retreat.

### Formation of "Greater Tripoli Union Council"

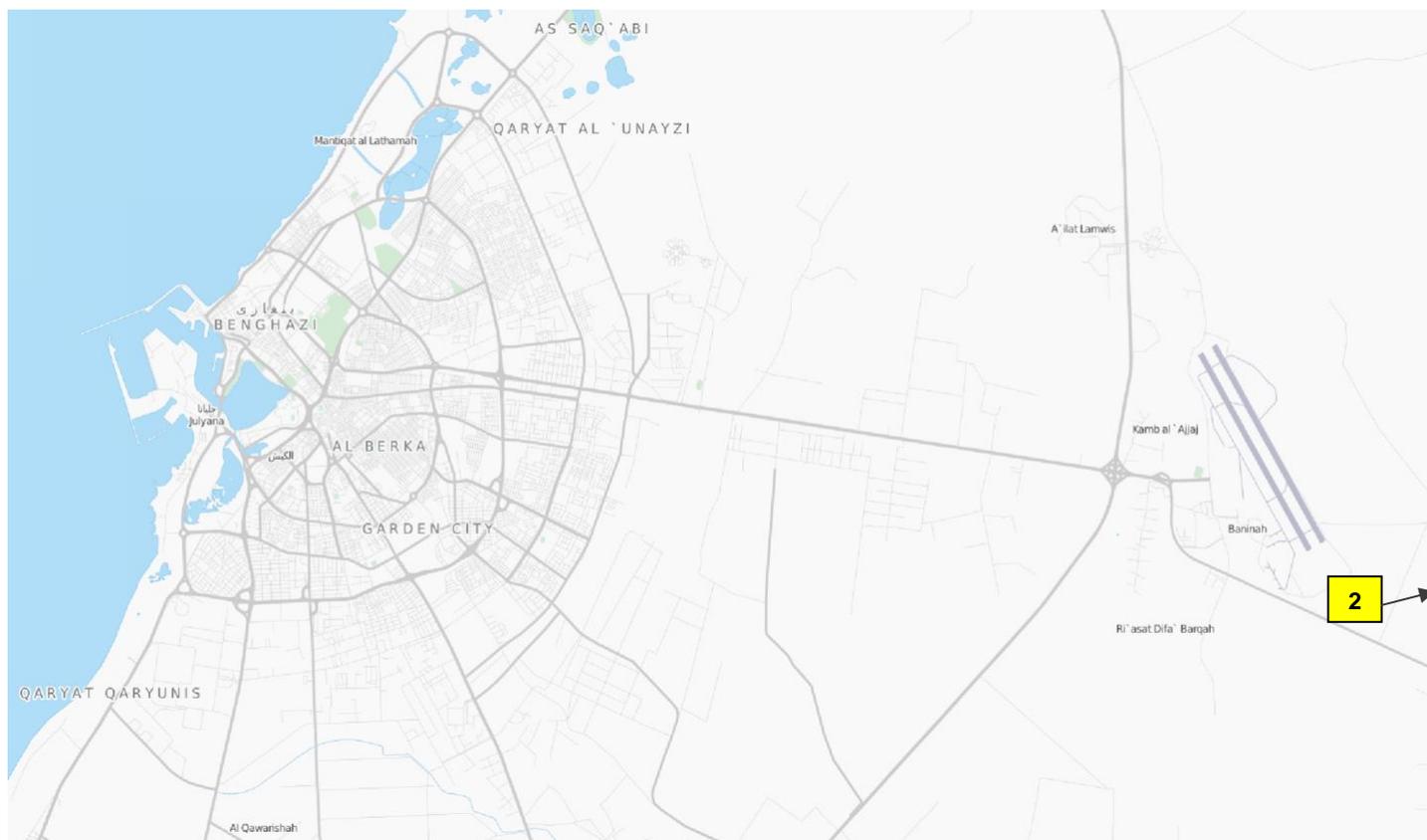
A previously-undocumented political organisation under the name Greater Tripoli Union Council announced their formation from Tripoli on 11 June and called on the House of Representatives (HoR) to set aside differences with its parallel branch and unify ranks due to its significance as the country's legitimate and democratically-elected body. The Tripoli Protection Force (TPF) militia coalition published video footage of the meeting. Of note, the Union consists of several members, including civilians and militiamen such as the high-ranking Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) commander, Ayoub Abu Rass, high-ranking Ghneiwa militia commander, Lutfi Al-Hara, and GNA Tripoli Military region commander, Abdelbassat Marwan. Meanwhile, the Union's undersecretary is the brother of Nawasi Brigade commander, Al-Said Ghadour. Of note, pro-LNA accounts alleged the entity was established to unify Tripoli militias to offset the growing influence of Misrata.

### Zintan militiaman shot dead in dispute

WB sources reported a pro-GNA Zawiyah militiaman shot dead a Zintan militiaman, identified as Fathi Al-Tharman, near Al-Gheiran roundabout at approximately 1900hrs on 06 June. The dispute was over a property in the area. Al-Tharman is affiliated with the Osama Juwaili-led Zintan Military Council. Unverified reports suggest a Ghneiwa militiaman was also killed in the dispute. Skirmishes between pro-GNA armed factions remain probable in the aftermath of the LNA's failed offensive on Tripoli, particularly over issues related to territorial control, military equipment, and funding.

## 5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Civil activist summoned by Internal Security; Haftar receives German Ambassador



### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (10 June) LNA Saiqa commander meets Battalion commanders in HQ
2. (10 June) Haftar receives German Ambassador at LNA HQ
3. (09 June) Security agencies summon civil activist; motive unclear

#### LNA Saiqa commanders meeting

Reports indicate the LNA's Saiqa Special Forces commander, Wanis Boukhmada, met with all battalion commanders affiliated with the Special Forces at the Benghazi headquarters on 10 June. Boukhmada called for the commanders' support in dealing with any potential attack by the "enemies supporting Turkish invasion in Libya." Of note, the Saiqa SF is currently mobilized across Sirte frontlines.

#### Internal Security summons civil activist

Local reports indicate associates of the civil activist, Khaled Al-Sakran, confirmed he was summoned by Benghazi-based security agencies in the morning on 09 June and is yet to be released. Of note, Al-Sakran was arrested by Benghazi's Internal Security and released 24hrs later in January. On 22 January, security forces at Benina International Airport (BEN) prevented Al-Sakran from travelling abroad, closely following a statement issued by a group of young activists in the eastern region titled "The National Peace initiative" calling for an end to the war in Tripoli.

#### Haftar receives German Ambassador in LNA HQ

The German Ambassador to Libya, Oliver Owca visited the east where he was received by the House of Representatives (HoR) Speaker Aguila Saleh and the LNA head Khalifa Haftar in separate meetings. Saleh called on Germany to play a role in combating crimes committed in Tarhuna following the GNA's control of the town. Meanwhile, Saleh stated that Germany should play a fundamental role in implementing the outcomes of the Berlin conference,

while stressing the need for a ceasefire and support for the political process in line with his own roadmap and the Cairo initiative. Meanwhile, the LNA's Media Office reported the meeting held at the LNA's Rajma HQ discussed the latest Egyptian initiative, where the Ambassador praised the "discipline and commitment of the LNA forces." For his part, Haftar thanked Germany for its continuous efforts to support peace in Libya, while stressing the LNA's continued endeavors to preserve the country's "sovereignty and territorial integrity." Of note, 1600 Libyan activists collectively called on the GNA to declare the Ambassador persona non grata following his meeting with Haftar due to the latter's "attack on Tripoli", noting that the meeting coincided with the discovery of mass graves in Tarhuna in an indication of crimes committed by the LNA during its control over the town.

## 6. What's next

### Escalation in Sirte ahead of negotiations; alliances gradually shift in Tripoli

#### POLITICAL FORECAST

While a Turkey/Russia settlement over Libya is in the works, it appears premature at this stage based on the postponement of talks between Ankara and Moscow. For Turkey, a critical agenda point would be convincing Moscow not to include Khalifa Haftar at the negotiating table. Meanwhile, Moscow will likely exert pressure on Ankara to engage in negotiations with the HoR's Aguila Saleh to reach a political settlement. In addition, Russia and Turkey will likely discuss mutual commercial interests in Libya and how to leverage energy and construction contracts, among others. It remains to be seen how Turkey will manage expectations from Washington to curb Russia's influence in Libya. Of note, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo welcomed the resumption of United Nations (UN)-led military ceasefire talks, referring to the development as a "first good step, very positive." Pompeo's statement came after the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) confirmed that the GNA and LNA are "fully engaged" in the third round of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) talks. The Mission convened virtual meetings with the LNA delegation on 03 June and with the GNA delegation on 09 June, in which the attendees discussed the latest developments on the ground and reviewed the draft ceasefire agreement presented by the Mission the parties on 23 February. Of particular note, the Mission voiced its concern over recent escalation and mobilisation in and around Sirte and called for de-escalation. Nineteen civilian deaths, including three women and five children, as well as 12 injuries, were recorded as a result of airstrikes and rockets in the vicinity of Sirte between 05-08 June. Regionally, on 13 June, speaker of the House of Representatives (HoR) Aguila Saleh met with Algerian President Abdelmajid Tebboune in Algiers. The unscheduled visit would signal a renewed diplomatic push by Algeria on the Libyan file, though it remains unclear whether Saleh's visit came to reinforce or compete with the Cairo ceasefire proposal. Of note, Algiers has long attempted to assume a mediator role in the conflict by facilitating a Libyan-Libyan solution, though critics argue the Cairo ceasefire proposal competes with Algiers' policy objective.

#### WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In a key political development, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his US counterpart Donald Trump discussed the Libyan conflict in a telephone call on 08 June, where Erdogan noted that a "new era between Turkey and the US may start" after the two sides agreed on "some issues" regarding Libya. Erdogan's statement was made in an interview with TRT, with no further details disclosed. Meanwhile, the White House issued a statement noting a discussion between Trump and Erdogan surrounding the Libyan conflict, as well as Syria and the wider eastern Mediterranean region. In regard to combat operations on the ground, Erdogan stated that GNA forces will continue to push further south to seize Sirte and the Al-Jufra Airbase, noting that these areas comprise oil wells and thus are of "great importance". Further, Erdogan stated that he will discuss Moscow's role in the Libyan conflict with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, including the supply of Russian warplanes and Pantsir air defences to Haftar's forces. Erdogan stated that following a discussion with Putin, "we can plan ahead". Erdogan's statement coincided with the Russian Foreign Ministry reporting that the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu confirmed their commitment to establish conditions for reconciliation between the Libyan parties in a clear indication of how a Turkish-Russian agreement in Libya will determine future developments on the ground.

#### SECURITY FORECAST

Relative normality is gradually returning to Tripoli, though ERW explosions continue to highlight the threat against civilians across previous engagement areas. Meanwhile, it remains to be seen whether the newly-created Greater Tripoli Union Council will be hostile to Bashagha and Misrata's moves in the capital. More importantly, the discovery of mass graves in Tarhunah and international condemnation could widen the rift between the LNA general command and Tarhunah's 9th Brigade "Al-Kaniat" in the long term, especially given the fact that the majority of Tarhunah fighting units have temporarily relocated to Benghazi and Ajdabiya. The LNA will likely seek to distance itself from any acts that would tarnish its public image, which would impact the LNA's relationship with Tarhunah. Meanwhile, in the central region, escalation is likely amid a build-up of forces. Mahmoud Al-Werfalli, the LNA commander wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), appeared in newly-published video footage delivering a motivational speech to members of the Warfalla tribe and calling for an offensive on Misrata. Pro-LNA accounts reported the video was shot after Al-Werfalli formed a fighting unit to join LNA ranks east of Misrata. In response, Bani Walid's Mayor Salem Nouyr stated Al-Werfalli does not represent Bani Walid and the commander will be arrested upon entering the town's administrative borders. Meanwhile, the Fezzan region is proving to be a difficult target for GNA forces amid fluid alliances. LNA forces continue to maintain air superiority in the southern region, as highlighted by the airstrikes targeting pro-GNA factions reportedly en route to Sharara and Al-Feel. The LNA will likely continue attempts to curb the GNA's influence in the south. Pro-LNA battalions from the south conducted joint mobile patrols in the vicinity of Sharara and El-Feel oil fields, and Awbari on 14 June. Meanwhile, the GNA hinted at potential combat operations in the south. In a statement, GNA PM Fayez Al-Serraj stated that the Tripoli government continues to explore peaceful options to resume production but will not remain patient for long and allow the wealth of Libyans to be held "hostage by mercenaries and criminals."

#### LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

The *US Embassy in Libya* published a briefing with *Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker* on the U.S.-Iraq Dialogue and Developments in Libya on 11 June. In relation to Libya, Schenker welcomed the Cairo ceasefire initiative but cautioned against growing foreign involvement. Schenker stated "And this week we have also been focused on Libya. Despite the end of the LNA's siege on Tripoli and last weekend's event in Cairo, which brought eastern Libyan leaders together and opened the way for greater political dialogue, fighting has intensified with the involvement of foreign actors. We're particularly concerned about the continued influx of Russian military equipment, weapons, and Russian Wagner mercenaries, whose presence led to the significant Turkish intervention now underway. We see the continued interference from external actors as a challenge to U.S. interests and regional stability in the Eastern Med, but also as a tragedy for the Libyan people. Libyans want peace and an end to foreign intervention. They are alarmed by this level of foreign involvement in their affairs. We continue to call for de-escalation, a ceasefire, and a return to political negotiations. Now is the time for Libyans on all sides to act so neither Russia nor any other country can interfere in Libya. GNA and LNA agreement to re-enter UN security talks was, as the Secretary noted, a positive first step which requires quick follow-through with good faith negotiations, implement a ceasefire, and the relaunch of UN-led intra-Libyan political talks to achieve a long-term solution. We're encouraged that both the GNA and the LNA are now engaged in UNSMIL-hosted 5+5 talks, but showing up is not enough. We want to see all Libyans coming together to take charge of their country. It is vital that all sides exercise restraint and ensure civilians are protected as the Libyan public faces multiple challenges from conflict, COVID, and economic hardship. Those challenges have been intensified by the five-month oil sector shutdown by forces aligned with the GNA – sorry, by forces aligned with the LNA. Putting Libya on the path to economic recovery, as the Secretary said, means preserving Libyan oil facilities and restoring access by the National Oil Corporation. Using critical infrastructure that belongs to the Libyan people as a tool of war, whether for oil that feeds the economy or water upon which Libyans depend on for survival, is reprehensible and it must end".

# About Whispering Bell



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