

1. The Big Picture

Large LNA operation in south as negotiations proceed

The week starting 12 Oct continues to be marked by cautious optimism as UN-sponsored negotiations proceed amid heightened tension between Government of National Accord (GNA) and Libyan National Army (LNA) forces over Sirte. The security environment is relatively static, although a large contingent of LNA 128 Reinforced Brigade units deployed across Sabha from the Jufra district, in a show of force ahead of broader law enforcement operations.

The nationwide combat theatre remains unchanged amid renewed LNA allegations that GNA forces are plotting attacks on Sirte, Jufra and/or targets in the southern region. LNA spokesperson Ahmed Al-Mesmari reported GNA intent to carry out an “aggressive and provocative act” before attacking the Sirte-Jufra axis and LNA sites. Al-Mesmari reiterated the LNA’s commitment to a ceasefire, calling on the GNA to prevent “militias” from spreading rumours in response to LNA deployments across the central Jufra district.

The politically-charged statements came amid large-scale LNA deployments in Jufra and the south. On 17 Oct, the LNA 128 Reinforced Brigade, supported by other battalions, paraded in the Jufra district. Pro-LNA accounts reported at least 6000 units were mobilised, although more conservative assessments report the number of forces hovered around 2000, including auxiliary battalions.

Furthermore, the 128 Reinforced Brigade announced on 18 Oct the beginning of a law enforcement operation in Sabha targeting armed groups, smugglers, and other criminals. The operation comes against the backdrop of worsening living conditions in the region and could exacerbate long-standing ethnic divisions between Tebus and other local Arab tribes. Overall, the LNA expanding its foothold in the south could reignite tensions in GNA ranks, especially if LNA forces move northwards. The context would be reminiscent of the pre-April 2019 offensive, although another LNA-sanctioned Tripoli operation is unlikely.

In the broader operating environment, the week was marked by positive signs. On 12 Oct, an eastern tribal delegation visited Misrata elders to negotiate the exchange of prisoners and bodies. Reports indicate there was agreement over a number of issues, including the reopening of gates, roads, and airports. Of note, the Sirte-Misrata coastal road was temporarily reopened to enable the eastern delegation’s visit. The local tribal discussions are expected to continue in the medium term and are a result of the Egypt-led Hurghada military talks.

In an equally positive development, Afriqiyah Airways operated the first flight between Tripoli’s Mitiga International Airport (MJT) and Benghazi’s Benina International Airport (BEN) since the LNA’s Tripoli offensive on 16 October. The flight was followed by the LNA-sanctioned reopening of airspace to domestic and international flights.

Turning to Tripoli, the week was marked by the GNA Interior Ministry’s (MoI) high-profile arrest of Abdalrahman al-Milad, also known as “Al-Beidja”, a notorious Zawiya-based smuggler under UN Security Council sanctions, on Ghut Shaal’s main road near Bin Gharsa Gas Station at approximately 1500hrs on 14 October. The arrest resulted in a show of force by

Zawiya-based armed groups west Tripoli, although tensions were later defused on 15 Oct. The arrest sent a strong message the MoI under Fathi Bashagha’s command will continue to engage in security-sector reforms, supported by the Special Deterrence Force (SDF).

Politically, the outlook remains shrouded in uncertainty. LNA and GNA military delegations convened in Geneva as part of the fourth round of 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) talks on 19 October. The talks are expected to continue until 24 October to reach a permanent ceasefire deal. Meanwhile, as official UN-sponsored negotiations proceed, sideline initiatives are being carved out. In Sirte, a conference was organised on 17 October under the supervision of the Interim Government and in the presence of eastern FM, Abdulhadi Al-Hweij, and other civil society members from Libya’s three regions. Separately, France is reportedly seeking greater involvement from Libya’s neighbours and is pushing for a meeting involving Algeria, Tunisia, Chad, and Niger. It remains to be seen how all settlement efforts will converge in the medium term.

While there are grounds for optimism, observers argue the gradual isolation of Turkey from sideline negotiations leading up to official UN-sponsored talks, including the Egypt-led military talks, could backfire in the medium term given Ankara’s on-the-ground presence. Of note, EU Ambassadors recently reiterated their rejection of Turkey’s maritime agreement with the GNA in a press communiqué.

Observers argue Ankara has become less assertive at the negotiating table and its diplomatic ability to steer outcomes in Libya is gradually diminishing. Regardless, Turkey continues to manoeuvre in the western region. The GNA MoD announced this week Ankara will train 120 GNA forces in Tripoli’s Tajoura. Further, Turkey’s Defence Ministry reported a second batch of Libyan War College graduates received counterterrorism training in Isparta, Turkey. Meanwhile, two Turkish Air Force C-130s landed in Al-Wattiyah airbase on 15 October. The cargo aircraft reportedly remained in-country for at least 72hrs, the longest recorded ground time for a Turkish military aircraft since the LNA offensive, which according to analysts is a clear indicator of Al-Wattiyah airbase’s

In the oil & gas sector, production has remained uninterrupted, despite uncertainty the LNA will reinstate the closure given the expiry on 18 October of the deadline to hold a Libyan-Libyan dialogue, as part of the deal with GNA Deputy PM Ahmed Maiteeg. Oil continues to flow with output hovering around 500k barrels per day (bpd) as more oil fields resume production. Observers argue LNA commander Khalifa Haftar is unlikely to risk another closure that could spark protests in the eastern region. Haftar, however, could close some terminals if UN talks are successful in forming a new government, as this outcome would threaten the LNA commander’s posture. Meanwhile, observers are of the view Moscow would be in favour of another closure if the outcome of UN-sponsored military talks undermines its interests.

KEY POINTS

- GNA MoI arrests notorious Zawiya smuggler
- First MJT-BEN flight since LNA offensive
- LNA law enforcement op. in Sabha could backfire



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2. National Security Map

AI-Mesmari claims GNA intent to attack LNA; LNA patrols & reinforcements in Jufra & south

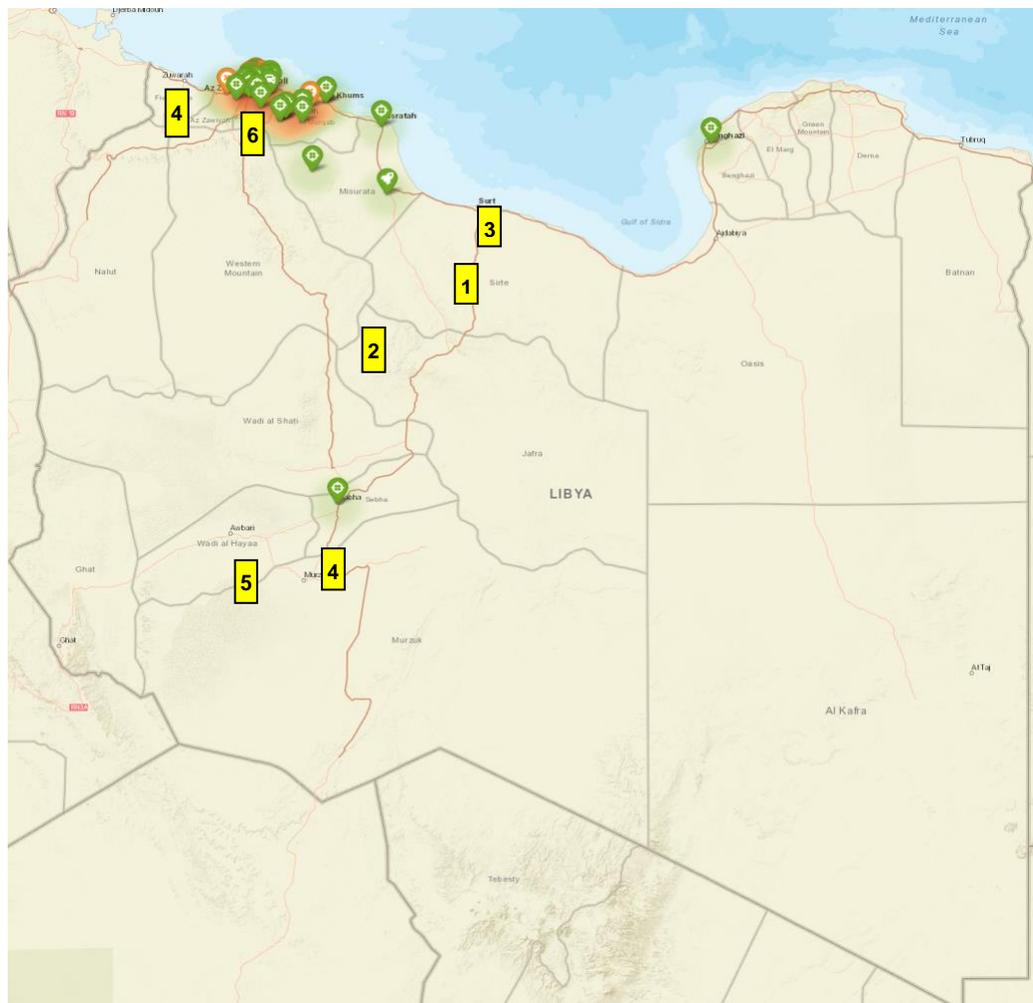
Legend

Impact Indicator

- Low Impact
- Medium Impact
- High Impact

Incident Type

- ⊕ IED/VBIED/ERW
- ✕ Isolated Gunfire
- 💧 Violent Clash
- 🚗 Carjacking
- ✈️ Airstrike / UAV
- 🚀 Mortar/Rocket
- 👤 Kidnapping
- ⊕ Other



(Map Source: Whispering Bell Platform)

The LNA's Chief of Staff (CoS) and head of the eastern Coronavirus Committee, Abdelrazak Al-Nathouri, issued a decision to reopen Libyan airspace to domestic and international flights according to the precautionary measures agreed upon with the medical advisory committee and the readiness of national carriers to resume operations.

1

In an intensified war of words between the two rival sides this week, the LNA spokesman Ahmed Al-Mesmari confirmed intelligence on GNA intent to carry out an "aggressive and provocative act" before attacking the Sirte-Jufra axis and LNA sites. The statements came in response to pro-GNA reports that LNA-affiliated foreign mercenaries seized public buildings and schools in Houn.

2

The LNA's 128th Reinforced Brigade paraded in the Jufra district on 16 October. Additional reports from pro-LNA accounts indicate approximately 6000 LNA forces are mobilised in the Jufra district.

Libya's oil production increased to 500,000 barrels per day (bpd), according to Bloomberg citing informed sources. Sharara Oilfield is pumping approx..110,000 bpd.

3

A prisoner exchange took place in Sirte between Misrata and the eastern region in the evening on 16 October. The development came as a result of a recent visit by an eastern delegation to Misrata to reach consensus on a prisoner exchange deal between the two sides.

4

Open-source flight tracking software indicates two Turkish Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft flew from Turkey to Al-Wattiyah airbase on 15 October, and later took off on 18 October.

5

Pro-LNA accounts reported a large convoy affiliated with the LNA 128 Reinforced Brigade mobilised towards an unidentified area in the southern region on 14 October. Reports suggest the LNA General Command ordered multiple units to mobilise across desert areas in Libya's southwest.

6

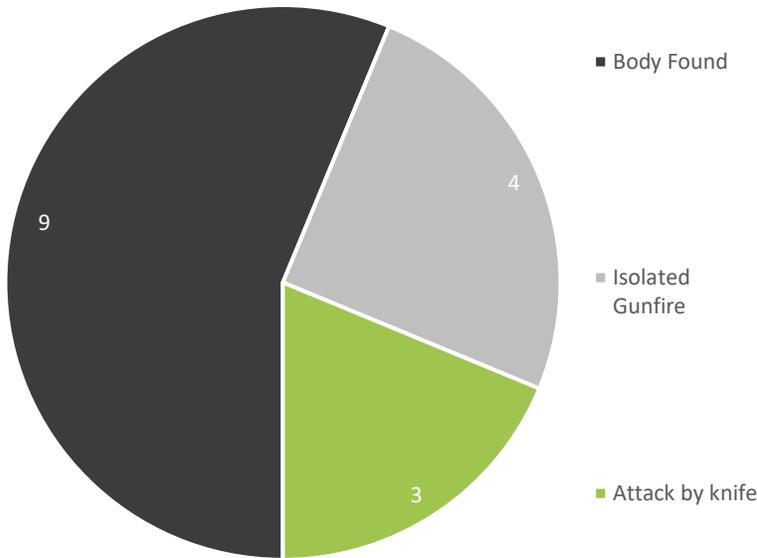
The General Authority for Search and Identification of Missing Persons reported the remains of five bodies across three mass graves were found in Tarhuna's Mashro' Rabat area on 13 October.

GNA Volcano of Rage Operations commanders rejected the inclusion of LNA commander Khalifa Haftar in any political talks, in a meeting with GNA Prime Minister Fayez Al-Serraj. According to pro-GNA accounts citing their own sources, Al-Serraj held a six-hour meeting with the GNA commanders. According to reports, the attendees expressed their reservations towards the performance of the Al-Serraj-led Presidential Council (PC), while they believe the current talks, including the Bouznika dialogue, set the stage for a power split between the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS), thus resulting in Haftar remaining in the political scene and waging a new war, similar to the scenario witnessed prior to the Ghadames National Conference slated for April 2019.

3. Nationwide Security Analysis

All fatalities recorded in west; arrests dominate security environment

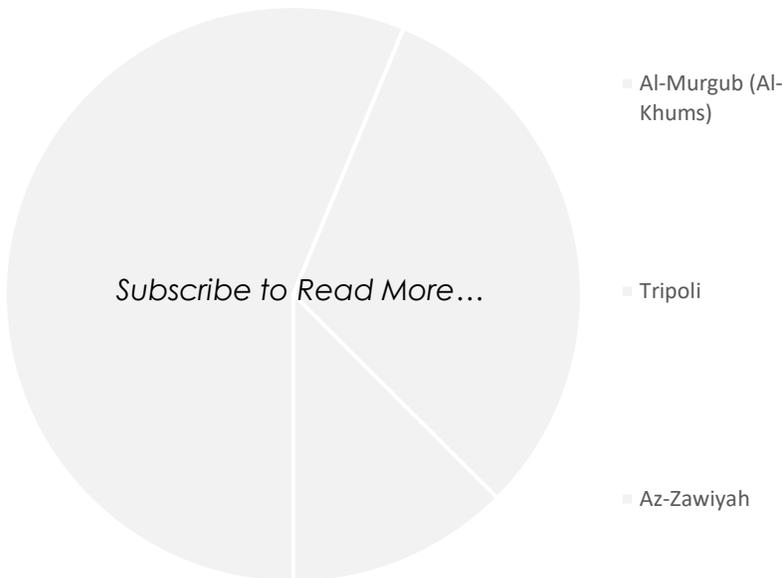
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



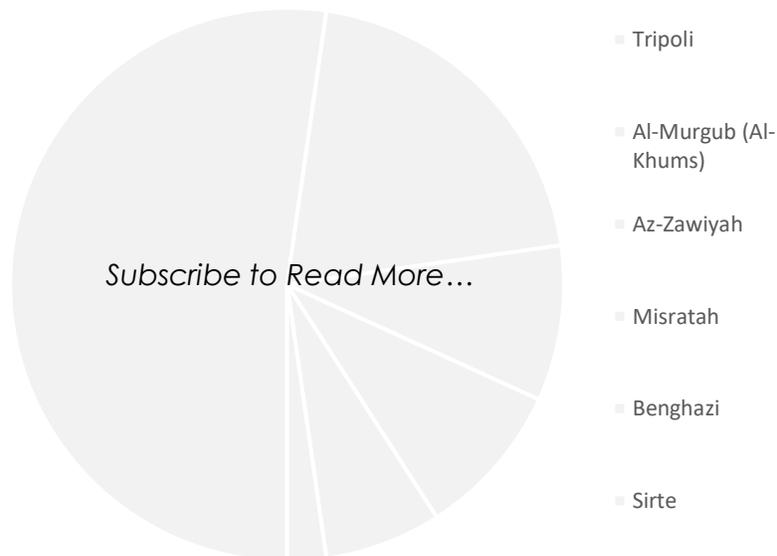
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



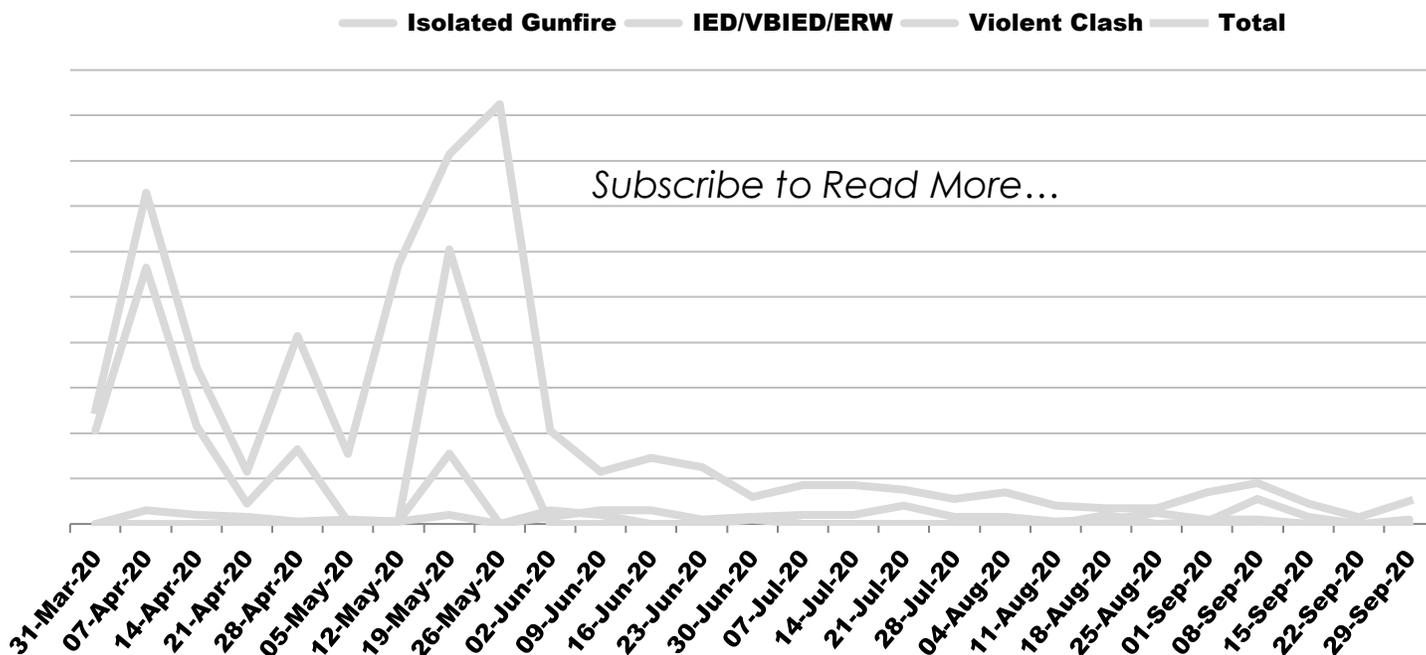
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



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Data Analysis

WB recorded this week a total of 16 confirmed deaths in Libya compared with 10 deaths reported last week and 4 the week before. The fatalities recorded this week came as a result of nine bodies found in the western region, including eight bodies found in newly discovered mass graves in Tarhuna, and one body found in the Al-Zawiya district. Separately, three fatalities came as a result of gunfire-related incidents, including two in Tripoli and one in Msallata in the Al-Murgub district. Beyond this, WB recorded three fatalities as a result of stabbings carried out in the capital city. All the fatalities were recorded in the western region throughout the reporting period.

In the western region, the highest number of security incidents continues to be recorded in the Tripoli district with a total of 23 incidents, marking a decrease from the 32 incidents recorded last week. This week represented an array of opportunistic crime carried out across the capital city. In Tripoli, WB recorded four robberies, three carjackings, three isolated gunfire cases, three carjackings, three arrests, two attacks by knife, one kidnapping, one protest, one raid, one fire, one IED/VBIED/ERW incident, and one incident of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) activity over Tripoli's skies. Beyond Tripoli, WB recorded nine security incidents in the Al-Murgub district, including two robberies, two cases of bodies found, one fire, one isolated gunfire case, one explosion, one act of assault and one arrest. Meanwhile, in the Al-Zawiya district, WB recorded two arrests, one case of a body found, and one isolated gunfire case. In Misrata, WB recorded one arrest, one isolated gunfire case, one fire, and one robbery.

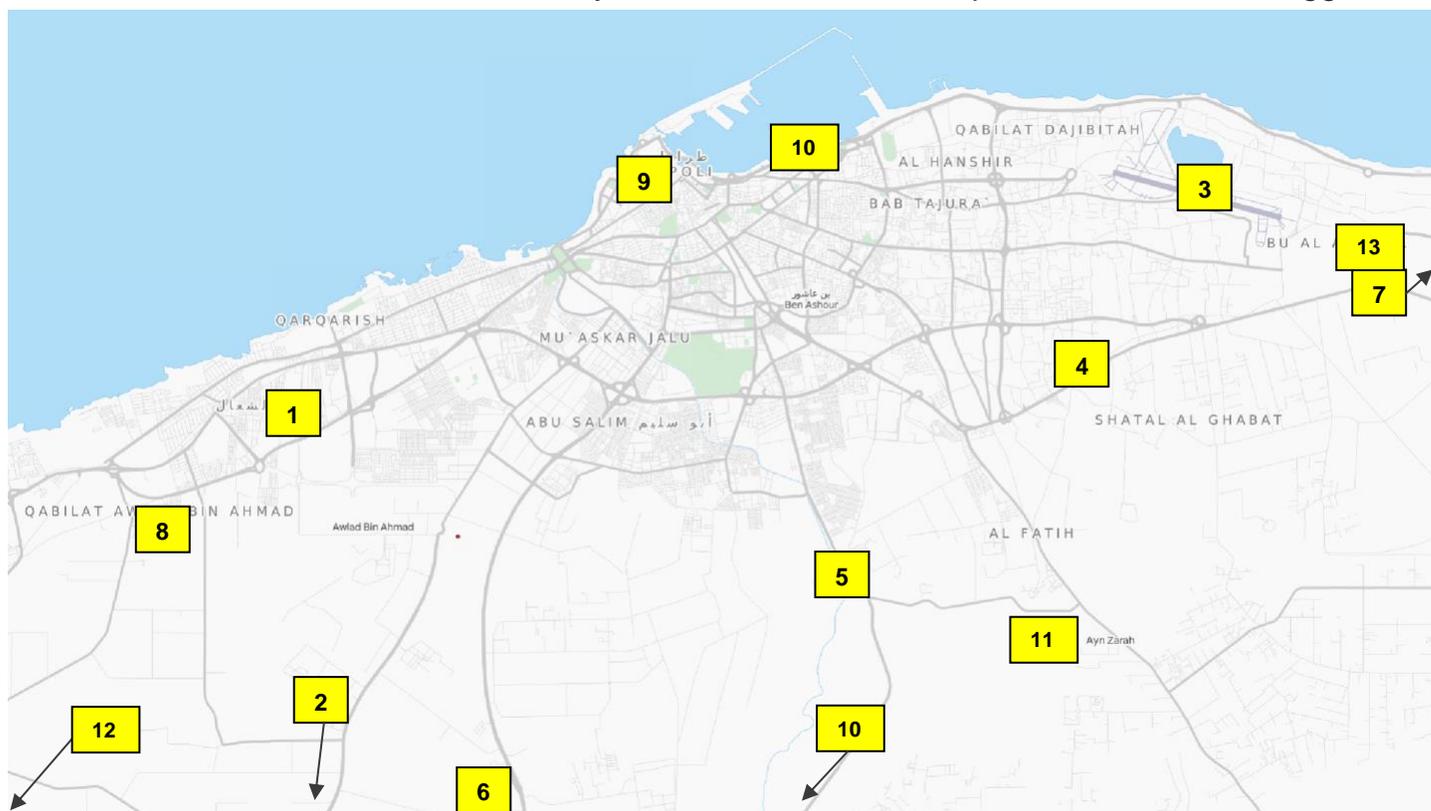
The war of words between the GNA and LNA came amid increased LNA patrols & reinforcements in the Jufra district. The LNA spokesman Ahmed Al-Mesmari confirmed intelligence on GNA intent to carry out an "aggressive and provocative act" before attacking the Sirte-Jufra axis and LNA sites. Al-Mesmari reiterated that the LNA remains committed to a ceasefire, though it stands fully prepared to respond to any security breach by GNA forces. In this regard, Al-Mesmari called on the GNA to prevent its "militias" from spreading rumours about the LNA's actions. The statements come in response to pro-GNA reports that LNA-affiliated foreign mercenaries seized public buildings and schools in Houn. Al-Mesmari noted that the LNA's 128 Reinforced Brigade was stationed in Al-Jufra and conducted patrols to secure public and private property and ensure the safety of residents. Images circulated across social media outlets of the LNA's 128th Reinforced Brigade carrying out a military parade in the Jufra district on 16 October. Additional reports from pro-LNA accounts indicate an approximate 6000 LNA forces are positioned in the Jufra district.

Turning to the south, WB recorded no security incidents across the region throughout the reporting period. However, pro-LNA accounts reported a large convoy affiliated with the LNA 128 Reinforced Brigade mobilised towards an unspecified location in the southern region on 14 October. Reports suggest the LNA General Command ordered multiple units to mobilise across desert areas in Libya's southwest. While LNA units have reinforced their foothold in the southern region over the past two weeks, the latest deployment would come ahead of 18 October, which marks the expiry of the 1-month deadline given by the LNA to resume oil production in order to enable a Libyan-Libyan dialogue. There is a possibility, albeit remote, the LNA battalions will deploy across Sharara and Al-Feel oil fields.

In the eastern region, WB recorded three arrests conducted in the city of Benghazi. No further security incidents were recorded in the east throughout the reporting period. In relation to the arrests, Benghazi's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested three drug dealers in Benghazi's Buhdima area on 16 October. The first suspect escaped upon the CID forces ambushing his house after his brother opened fire on the security forces. Subsequently, an arrest warrant was issued against the suspect's brother who has a previous criminal record and was also involved in the trade of alcohol and drugs. A third suspect involved in drug-related crime was also identified. The suspects confessed to the charges against them. Separately, pro-LNA accounts reported the LNA's Military Police (MP) arrested the Director of the Office of Martyrs and Wounded on charges of harassment in an unidentified location in Benghazi on 11 October. Reports allege the accused was involved in the harassment colleagues' spouses. Of note, the Office of Martyrs and Wounded is located in Benghazi's Al-Berka area. Beyond this, Benghazi's CID arrested a man on charges of manufacturing and trading intoxicants inside an illicit alcohol factory on 10 October. The Department seized the factory and arrested its owner, where large quantities of alcohol were found. The suspect confessed to the charges against him.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

International community welcomes Mol arrest of prominent human smuggler



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (17 Oct) Gunfire audible during local dispute in Ghut Shaal
2. (17 Oct) GECOL reports 1.1 km long power cables stolen on Al-Fandli line
3. (16 Oct) Afriqiyah Airways operates flights from Mitiga to Benina Intl. Airport
4. (16 Oct) Syrian national shot dead inside vehicle ivo Al-Sabaa
5. (16 Oct) Motorbike driver shot dead at the Salah Eddien traffic lights
6. (16 Oct) New department dubbed "Anti-Theft Auto Department" established ivo Airport Rd.
7. (16 Oct) Alcohol factory raided & two Sub-Saharan African operators arrested
8. (15 Oct) Business kidnapped from house in Al-Serraj
9. (15 Oct) Man stabs to death his spouse & daughter inside their house in the Old City
10. (15 Oct) SDF & Ghneiwa militia movements on Shat Rd. & Khallat Al-Furjan main rd.
11. (14 Oct) Three GECOL technicians wounded after driving over ERW in Ain Zara's Al-Sedra
12. (12 Oct) Skirmishes b/w 55th BN & 3rd BN
13. (12 Oct) GNA forces undergo Turkish military training in Tajoura

Syrian national shot dead ivo Al-Sabaa

Unidentified assailants shot dead a Syrian national residing in the Al-Sabaa area at approximately 1400hrs on 16 October. The victim was shot dead inside his vehicle. While there is no further information available, the exposure of Syrian nationals to sporadic security incidents increased in the aftermath of the LNA's failed offensive on Tripoli. The latter is tied to the presence of Turkish-backed Syrian fighters present in the capital city and reports of their involvement in opportunistic crime, including the targeting of Libyan-owned private property in previous engagement areas.

Motorbike driver shot dead ivo Salah Eddien

Reports indicate a motorbike driver was shot dead by an unidentified assailant onboard an unmarked vehicle at the Salah Eddien traffic lights at approximately 0030hrs on 16 October. The incident was preceded by a verbal altercation.

Businessman kidnapped from house in Al-Serraj

A Libyan businessman was kidnapped by an unidentified armed group in Tripoli's Al-Serraj area in the morning on 15 October. While the motive behind the incident remains unknown, a kidnap for ransom remains probable. Of note, sources reported the victim was kidnapped from his house in front of his family members who remain unaware of his current whereabouts.

Mol arrests prominent human smuggler

On 14 October, the GNA's Interior Ministry reported the arrest of former Libyan Coast Guard commander from Al-Zawiya, Abdalrahman al-Milad, also known as "Al-Beidja", who was sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on charges of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. The Ministry stated

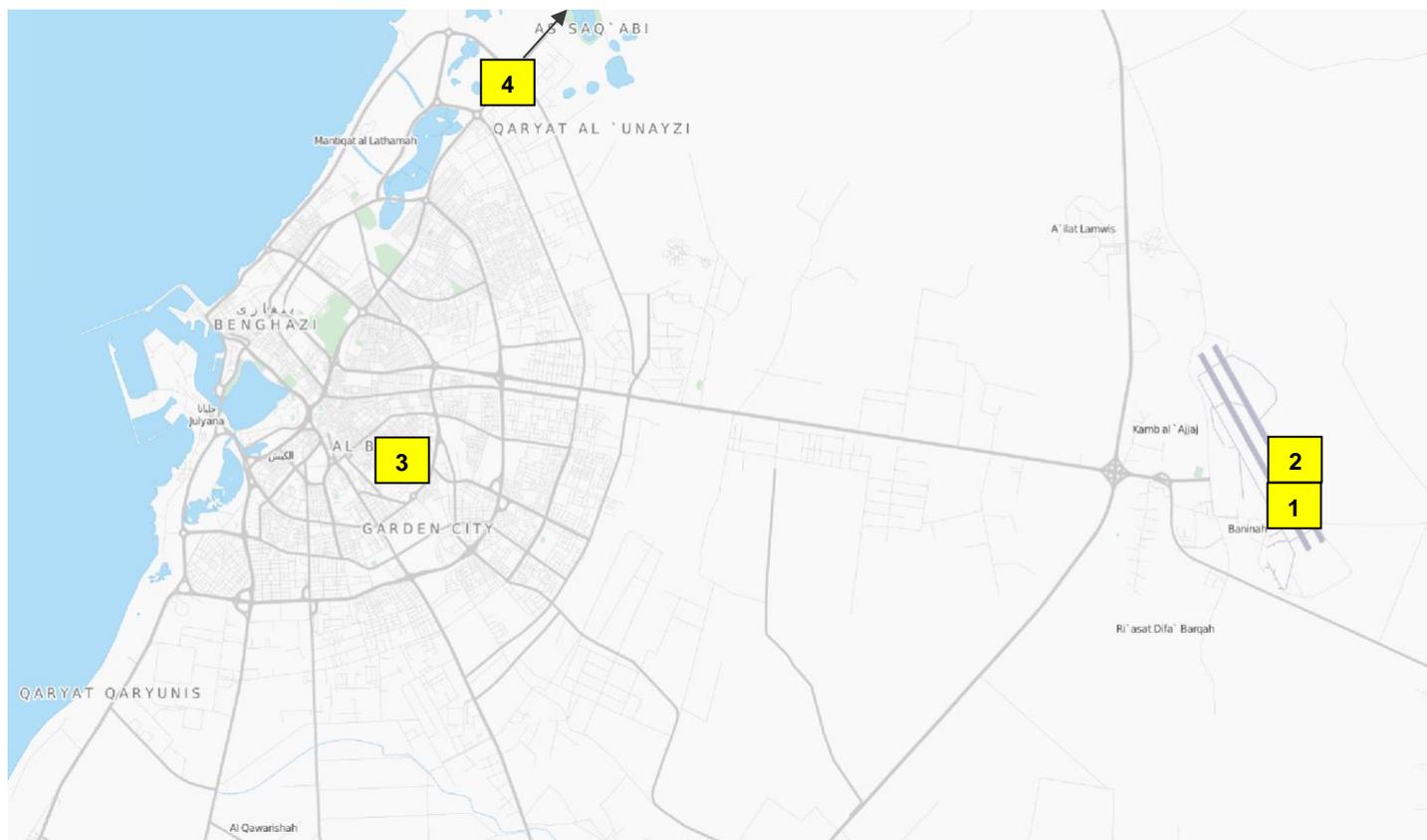
that the arrest came at the request of the UNSC and the case was referred to the public prosecutor. Reports indicate al-Milad was arrested while driving on Tripoli's Ghut Shaal main road near Bin Gharsa Gas Station at approximately 1500hrs on 14 October. At approximately 1700hrs, reports indicate a military convoy consisting of approximately 50 pick-ups mounted with anti-aircraft weaponry, affiliated with Al-Zawiya militias, closed the 27 Checkpoint along Janzour's Coastal Road. At approximately 1800hrs, the same convoy closed the Ghut Shaal Roundabout and fired indiscriminate shots into the air, thus causing a state of panic among travellers passing through the highway. Subsequently, travellers diverted their travel routes to avoid the scene. At approximately 2000hrs, the roundabout was reopened after the convoy headed eastwards towards the Tuesday Mall Roundabout, and similarly shot indiscriminately into the air upon their arrival at approximately 2030hrs. The convoy then travelled back westwards. Unconfirmed reports suggest the "Al-Qasab" militia led by Mohamed Al-Hadi Al-Arby Keshlaf gave the GNA Interior Minister, Fathi Bashagha, a 24hr deadline to release al-Milad. The militia allegedly threatened to close Az Zawiya Oil Refining Company if their demands go unheard. The alleged deadline expired with no significant security incidents or the closure of the Refinery. In addition, the aforementioned roads were reopened.

Skirmishes between pro-GNA battalions in An-Najila

Sporadic gunfire was audible in Janzour's An-Najila area at approximately 1900hrs on 12 October. A military convoy affiliated with the 55th Battalion "Al-Dawi militia" led by Muammar Al-Dawi raided a camp affiliated with the 3rd Battalion "Al-Lefaa militia" led by Ramzi Al-Lefaa in Wershiffanah's Bin Issa area. Subsequently, skirmishes erupted between the two battalions, who are notorious for having a long-standing dispute in Wershiffanah.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Aviation officials inspect BEN as Al-Nathouri announces reopening of airspace



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (17 Oct) LNA CoS: reopening of airspace to domestic & intl. flights
2. (16 Oct) First flight operated between Tripoli & Benghazi after hiatus
3. (16 Oct) CID arrests three drug dealers in Buhdima
4. (12 Oct) Bushnaaf orders CID to withdraw from securing BPMC warehouse
5. (11 Oct) UNSMIL welcomes appointment of 5 females in new specialised courts
6. (11 Oct) LNA Military Police arrests director of Martyrs' & Wounded Office

First flight from MJI to BEN

Following a year and a half hiatus as a direct result of the LNA's offensive on Tripoli in April 2019, an Afriqiyah Airways-operated flight landed in Benghazi's Benina International Airport (BEN) from Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI) on 16 October. The development was received positively across social media outlets. Local reports indicate delegations of the Libyan Civil Aviation Authority, the Libyan Airports Authority, and Afriqiyah Airways were onboard the flight. The delegations conducted a field inspection of the airport in preparation for the resumption of commercial flights.

Three drug dealers arrested

Benghazi's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested three drug dealers in Benghazi's Buhdima area on 16 October. The first suspect escaped upon the CID forces ambushing his house after his brother opened fire on the security forces. Subsequently, an arrest warrant was issued against the suspect's brother who has a previous criminal record and was also involved in the trade of alcohol and drugs. A third suspect involved in drug-related crime was also identified. The suspects confessed to the charges against them.

Specialised courts established

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) welcomed the appointment of five female judges who will work in two new specialised courts in Benghazi and Tripoli on 11 October. The new court will be concerned with cases of violence

against women and children. The Mission referred to the development as a "significant step towards advancing the rights of women and children in Libya. With dedicated courts, the criminal justice response to cases of violence against women and children will vastly improve."

CID ordered to withdraw from BPMC warehouse

The Interim Government's Interior Minister, Ibrahim Bushnaaf, instructed the head of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) to withdraw from Brega Petroleum Marketing Company (BPMC) Warehouse in Benghazi's Ras Al-Mingar area, as per the orders of the LNA's Dignity Operations Room commander, Saqr Al-Jaroushi. The Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) and the Internal Security will continue to be tasked with securing the warehouse. Of note, Bushnaaf established an office to combat fuel smuggling in early September, which included distributing fuel from authorised sectors and delivering the supplies across legitimate stations in order to crackdown on the black market selling fuel at inflated prices and prevent overseas smuggling.

Wounded Military Programme official arrested

Pro-LNA accounts reported the LNA's Military Police (MP) arrested the Director of the Martyrs and Wounded Office on charges of harassment in an unidentified location in Benghazi on 11 October. Reports allege the accused was involved in the harassment colleagues' spouses. Of note, the Office of Martyrs and Wounded is located in Benghazi's Al-Berka area.

6. What's next

Residual tensions in capital; Skirmishes in Sabha/south between LNA & locals

POLITICAL FORECAST

Observers argue the vacuum created by the absence of a UN Envoy undermines negotiation prospects. On 14 October, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov, speaking at a joint presser with his Italian counterpart Luigi Di Maio, described the US position as an "obstacle" to appointing a new UN envoy. Locally, it remains to be seen whether the Second Sirte Conference organised by the eastern government will be exploited by stakeholders to support or derail official UN-sponsored negotiations. Eastern FM Abdulhadi Al-Hweij stated that the Conference aims to send a message to the international community on Libya's ability to solve its own issues. Meanwhile, divisions are stark within the HoR, which could undermine HoR Speaker Aguila Saleh's ability to implement outcomes of UN-led talks. The HoR Deputy Speaker Fawzi Al-Nuwairi, issued a statement condemning the "sudden call" by Saleh to hold a session in Benghazi on 19 Oct. Al-Nuwairi noted that the parliament has not convened in almost a year and called on those who issued the invitation to clarify their reasons and agenda to the parliament's representatives. In the same context, the Fezzan Parliamentary Bloc boycotted the HoR session over deteriorating living conditions in the south. Regionally, French FM Jean-Yves Le Drian held consultations with Algerian President Abdelmajid Tebboune on 15 October. The two discussed the Libyan crisis among other bilateral issues. Reports suggest France is considering a meeting of Libya's neighbours. In a French National Assembly address on 07 October, Le Drian spoke about a potential meeting to support the Berlin Process bringing together Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Chad, and Niger. Meanwhile, the Algerian President, reiterated his country's position that the only political solution for the Libyan crisis is to hold elections as soon as possible, in a televised address. Separately, GNA Defence Minister Salaheddin Al-Namroush, met with Nigerian President Mahamadou Issoufou on 14 October. The meeting is significant given Al-Namroush has been described as having close ties to Ankara, which has recently cultivated stronger ties with Niger by signing a military cooperation agreement in July. The meeting would reflect Turkey's intent to establish a strong foothold in Niger via its GNA partner to undermine France's existing influence in the country.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

Fehim Tastekin for *Al-Monitor* argues that Turkey's on-the-ground involvement in Libya has failed to grant it enough clout at the negotiating table, unlike Syria where Turkey played a proactive role in the Astana Process. The author contends that Turkey's policy is driven by the idea that being present in the field will grant Ankara a seat at the negotiating table. Tastekin, however, states this policy process has not borne fruit in Libya. The author writes "In short, Ankara has proven its ability to 'spoil games' in conflict zones, as government proponents would brag, yet it is struggling to be a playmaker, falling short of the strategic approaches that playmaking requires. Several reasons can be cited for that failure. Above all, Ankara's field-table equation goes wrong because of the disparity between its goals and means. Despite being NATO's second-largest standing force, Turkey tends to exaggerate its military deterrence in distant regions. The efficiency of Turkish armed drones in the conflicts in Syria, Libya and the Caucasus has led to an overblown sense of "strategic power," though such power projection takes more than drones. The Libyan experience in particular has shown that Turkey's military capabilities fall short in ventures far beyond its borders. Moreover, the government's bragging about "fully indigenous" drones took a blow earlier this month as Canada suspended the export of crucial drone parts to Turkey. How others perceive Turkey's might is equally important. Ankara would frequently hurl threats that it cannot follow through. As a result, its warnings and threats have come to be often seen as blackmail or bluffing, designed for bargaining purposes, or as domestic grandstanding by a government that has grown reliant on the support of nationalist quarters."

SECURITY FORECAST

Tripoli's security environment will continue to be dominated by high-profile arrests and ensuing residual tensions, including militia movements and possible skirmishes over territory. In the aftermath of Al-Beija's arrest, WB recorded SDF and Ghneiwia movements. The militia movements are likely in response to the show of force by Al-Zawiya militias in the vicinity of Tuesday Mall roundabout. Tripoli militias are expected to reinforce positions in their bordering territories, and more importantly to the west and south of the capital in areas controlled by multiple militias, including the Tuesday Mall roundabout and Airport Road, as a precautionary measure against any possible escalation by Al-Zawiya militias. Turning to crime, the kidnapping of a prominent Libyan business from Tripoli highlights yet again the threat against affluent nationals. Meanwhile, a tense security environment has been reported in Sabha and across the southern region. The LNA's law enforcement operation threatens to exacerbate local tribal tensions and ethnic divisions, including the long-standing divide between Tebu and Arab tribes. Past LNA law enforcement operations in the area resulted in allegations of favouritism, although the LNA effectively struck an alliance with some Tebu members. Of note, dozens of protesters affiliated with the southern region's "Revolution of the Poor" civilian movement, denounced deteriorating living conditions in Sabha and the southern region as a whole, and held banners against the LNA commander Khalifa Haftar on 16 October. The protesters stated that since the LNA seized the south in January 2019, the black market for fuel has soared, and Sabha Airports remains closed due to the LNA's recent obstruction of a flight from Tripoli to Sabha. Video footage purported to document long lines at petrol stations in Sabha.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In comments to Russian media, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov gave his country's position on a number of regional issues, including Moscow's policy in Libya and strength of the relationship to Ankara. When asked if Turkey is considered a strategic ally when Moscow regularly "runs into" Ankara as an opponent in Libya and Syria, Lavrov responded that "Turkey has never qualified as our strategic ally. It is a partner, a very close partner. In many sectors, this partnership is of a strategic nature." Further, Lavrov described the relationship between Ankara and Moscow: "In Libya, we are also collaborating with Turkey. Diplomats, the military, and secret service officers have met on numerous occasions to use the capabilities of each of the sides. We are in contact with everyone. I am referring to both eastern Libya, where the parliament has its seat, and western Libya, where the Government of National Accord (GNA) is based. The Turks, as you may know, are supporting the GNA, but they are well aware that it is necessary to look for compromises between the approaches of all regions and all Libyan political forces. For now, the political processes are rather chaotic, but they are developing and starting to align. This concerns the Berlin Conference on Libya and the initiatives proposed by Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt as neighbouring countries. This is absolutely understandable and we support it. What is important now is to channel all this into a single pattern under the aegis of the UN, a pattern that will be based on all Libyan sides being encouraged to sit down and negotiate, rather than put forward ultimatums to one another, as we have seen lately between Tobruk and Tripoli. Currently, our UN colleagues are trying to reduce all these efforts to a common denominator. We are helping this proactively. I hear that Turkey is also interested in these processes gaining strength. In any case, diplomacy is about taking into account the positions of all sides to a conflict in this or that crisis-hit country. But it also has regard for the interests of regional states, which interests are legitimate and accepted by the sides to the conflict themselves."

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