

November 10, 2020

1. The Big Picture

Oil output above 1 million bpd as UN kick-starts talks in Tunis

The week in Libya was marked by positive developments with progress at the UN-facilitated 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) talks to implement the ceasefire signed on 23 October. In the oil and gas sector, oil production rose above 1 million barrels per day (bpd) ahead of schedule. Meanwhile, the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) was officially kick-started in Tunis on 09 Nov, despite local opposition over the selection of Libyan attendees. The expectations are high but it remains to be seen whether the political-track talks will be conducive to elections and a new executive authority.

In the military-track, the 5+5 JMC concluded its fifth-round of UN-facilitated consultations in the presence of UN SRSG Stephanie Williams in Ghadames on 03 Nov. In its first meeting in Libya after signing the ceasefire agreement on 23 Oct, the JMC representatives agreed to form a committee to supervise the withdrawal of foreign forces and return of local forces to their positions. The JMC agreed to meet in Sirte as soon as possible and will be headquartered at the [Ouagadougou Conference Centre](#), a large exhibition hall that was once captured by the Islamic State (IS) in 2016.

The current context of uncertainty and efforts to hold elections have prompted local rumours Government of National Accord (GNA) Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha will assume leadership of the new government. The Interior Minister's manoeuvres have led to speculation he is working to consolidate his posture to replace GNA PM Fayez Al-Sarraj.

In a pioneering move this week, Bashagha visited Cairo on an official working visit within the framework of GNA-Egypt cooperation to discuss bilateral issues and strengthen security cooperation. Bashagha's visit came at the invitation of the Egyptian government. Reports that Bashagha signed a security agreement with Egypt prompted the eastern-based Interim Government's foreign minister, Abdulhadi Al-Hweij, to stress that his government will not be bound by deals made between the GNA and Egypt. In addition, Al-Hweij stressed that the Egypt-Libya border crossing is under his government's jurisdiction.

The peace overture lends credence to Bashagha's premiership bid. The development is significant and would corroborate Bashagha's posture as a reformist open to negotiations with the GNA's rivals. Bashagha's visit has been described as a bold move with broader ramifications on his posture in Libya, likely widening the rift with Tripoli-based elements such as the Tripoli Protection Force (TPF).

In fact, while Bashagha was in Cairo, the Mol issued a politically-charged statement on 06 Nov condemning the arbitrary detention of six eastern Libyan passengers on a Buraq Air flight from Benghazi Benina International Airport (BEN), detained upon arrival in Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI). The Mol attributed the "irresponsible" incident to individuals serving their own narrow interests and not representing the GNA.

In response, the TPF accused the Interior Minister of advancing narrow political agendas to increase his chances as Prime Minister of the new government. The development stood as a clear sign long-standing tensions between Bashagha and the TPF had resurfaced this week. While the

identity of the perpetrators is unknown, there are allegations the Nawasi Brigade was involved. If its involvement is confirmed, the Nawasi Brigade could have acted to raise its bargaining leverage in negotiations. Observers argue similar security incidents are likely in the medium term as stakeholders from the Tripoli-bloc and others who feel sidelined from negotiations manoeuvre to raise their bargaining leverage.

On the security front, heavy clashes erupted between the 444 Fighting Unit (MoD) under Mahmoud Hamza and local [Tarhunah](#) armed groups, including Al-Naaji Martyrs Battalion, throughout the night on 03 Nov. The clashes involved mortar/rocket shelling, small arms and heavy artillery gunfire. From the GNA's perspective, the development is significant given Tarhunah's clan-based demographics and its sensitivity as the launch pad of the Libyan National Army's (LNA) April 2019 Tripoli offensive. While Al-Kaniat family no longer maintains a presence there after retreating towards the east, the GNA is required to tread carefully to avoid a vacuum that could enable a return of pro-LNA elements in the town. Locals took to the streets of Tarhunah on 06 Nov demanding the GNA to reinstate Wasim Al-Naaji, commander of Al-Naaji Martyrs Battalion.

Meanwhile, LNA commander Khalifa Haftar continued to meet local tribes in an effort to secure their support, particularly in the southern region. Haftar met with a delegation of Magarha tribesmen, one of the most influential tribes in Libya's southern region, in [Ar-Rajmah](#) on 05 Nov. Haftar praised the tribe's effort in supporting the LNA's counterterrorism operations. The development would corroborate the LNA's current strategy to engage Libya's tribes in the southern region.

In other positive news, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) reported total crude production surpassed 1 million barrels per day (bpd), reaching 1.036 million bpd as of 07 Nov. The NOC, however, warned production levels will be difficult to sustain due to financial difficulties and shrinking budgets. The NOC reported September revenues from the sale of crude and condensates amounted to 116.9 million USD, representing a significant year-on-year decline from 1.7 billion USD. This decline can be explained by August figures, during which the blockade on exports was in place. The NOC reported October revenues reached 230.2 million USD, adding this increase is due to the export of crude from storage when force majeure was lifted.

In a significant development, the NOC emphasized that it has deposited oil revenues in its account at the Libyan Foreign Bank (LFB) as directed by Libyan authorities. The statement would confirm the NOC adopted the proposal to hold revenues in one of its accounts under international supervision and not in a separate escrow account as initially requested by the LNA. The NOC distanced itself from issues outside its mandate related to the "budget process and ultimate management of Libya's finances". Both France and the United States hailed the NOC's transparency.

KEY POINTS

- 6 eastern Libyans detained on arrival at MJI
- Tunis LPDF talks kick-started on 09 Nov
- GNA Mol Bashagha in pioneering visit to Cairo



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2. National Security Map

GNA-affiliated CAA approves flights to south; LNA commander released from custody

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

1

Reports allege Wagner PMCs deployed an unidentified radar system in the Batuma area, west Sirte, on 07 Nov.

2

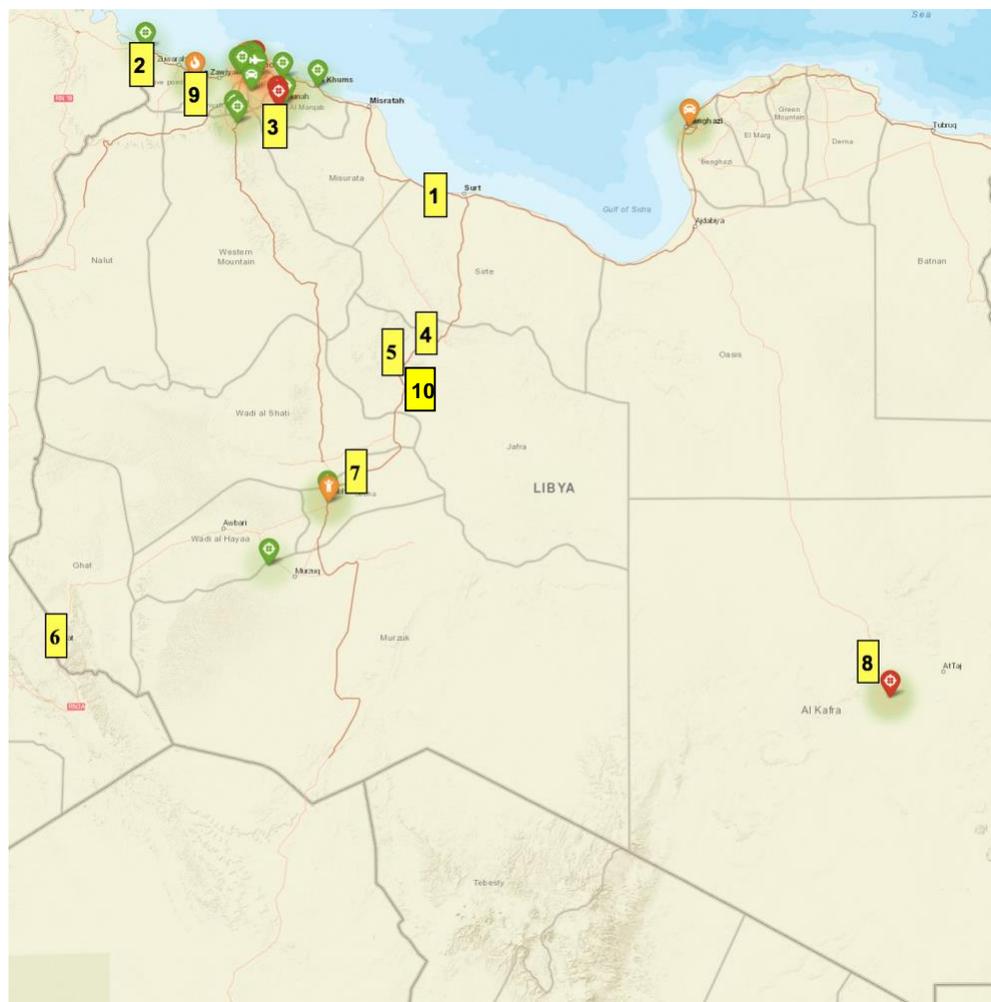
Local reports suggest the Ras Ajdir border crossing point (BCP) was temporarily reopened for Libyan nationals stranded in the Tunisian side on 07 Nov. The reports have not been independently verified by WB sources. Commercial transit via the BCP remains indefinitely restricted.

3

The committee tasked by the GNA's Justice Ministry to locate mass graves in Tarhunah's Mashro' Rabt recovered at least 10 bodies from a mass grave on 05 Nov. One of the bodies belonged to Mabrouk Khalaf, a Ministry of Interior (MoI) official killed by Al-Kaniat militia.

4

Two relatively new structures have been spotted north of the LNA-controlled Jufra airbase, based on open-source satellite imagery dated 28 October. The reports, if confirmed, would corroborate activity at the airbase. Of note, reports indicate LNA forces supported by Wagner Group private military contractors (PMCs) recently shifted their presence from Sirte to Jufra and the southern region.



5

Reports suggest an LNA-marked combat aircraft flew over Al-Jufra at approximately 1400hrs on 06 Nov.

6

The LNA General Command mourned the death of Hussein Al-Koni, an influential stakeholder and head of the Tuareg Social Council who passed away on 06 Nov. Al-Koni's body was transferred to Ghat, where a burying ceremony will be held.

7

On 04 Nov, the Tripoli-based Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) notified operators that all flights to the southern region are permitted as of 07 Nov.

8

The LNA's Southern Military Region commander Maj. Gen. Belqasim Al-Abaj was released from LNA custody on 04 Nov. Al-Abaj was received in Kufra by local tribesmen. Al-Abaj's arrest by the LNA was justified on the basis he cooperated with a foreign party, though reports suggest the arrest was fuelled by competition over funds with the Zway-dominated Subul Al-Salam Battalion.

9

Skirmishes erupted between two local families in Al Ajaylat's Shbeika area in the earliest hours of 05 Nov. The skirmishes reportedly subsided after a few hours. The motive is unknown.

10

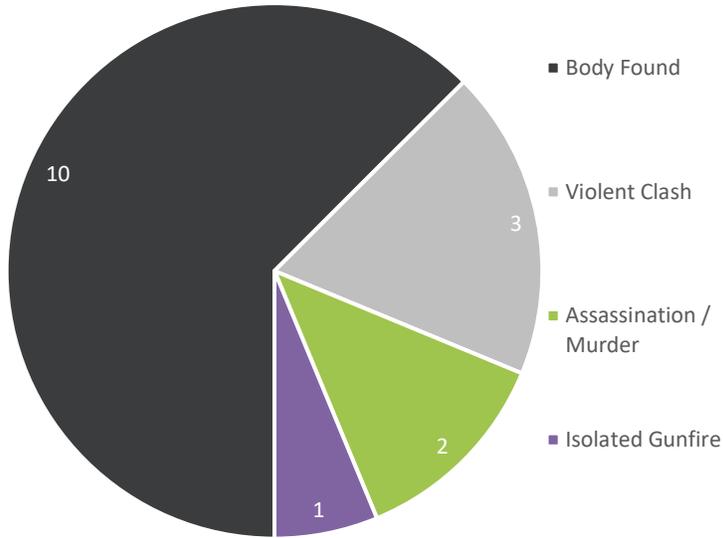
The LNA 128 Reinforced Brigade commander, Colonel Hassan Al-Zadma, approved an exchange of 6 LNA prisoners in an unidentified location in the Jufra district on 02 Nov facilitated by Awlad Suleyman tribesman Zeidan Maatog Al-Zadma and Zintani tribesman Hadi Al-Imani Al-Zintani.

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3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Mass graves in Tarhunah dominate tally; slight surge in carjacking incidents

Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



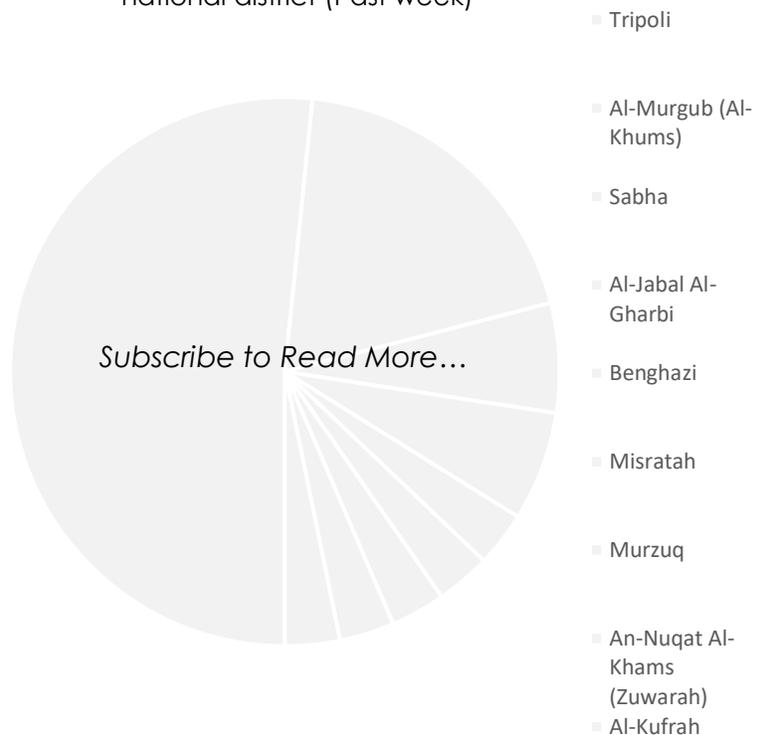
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



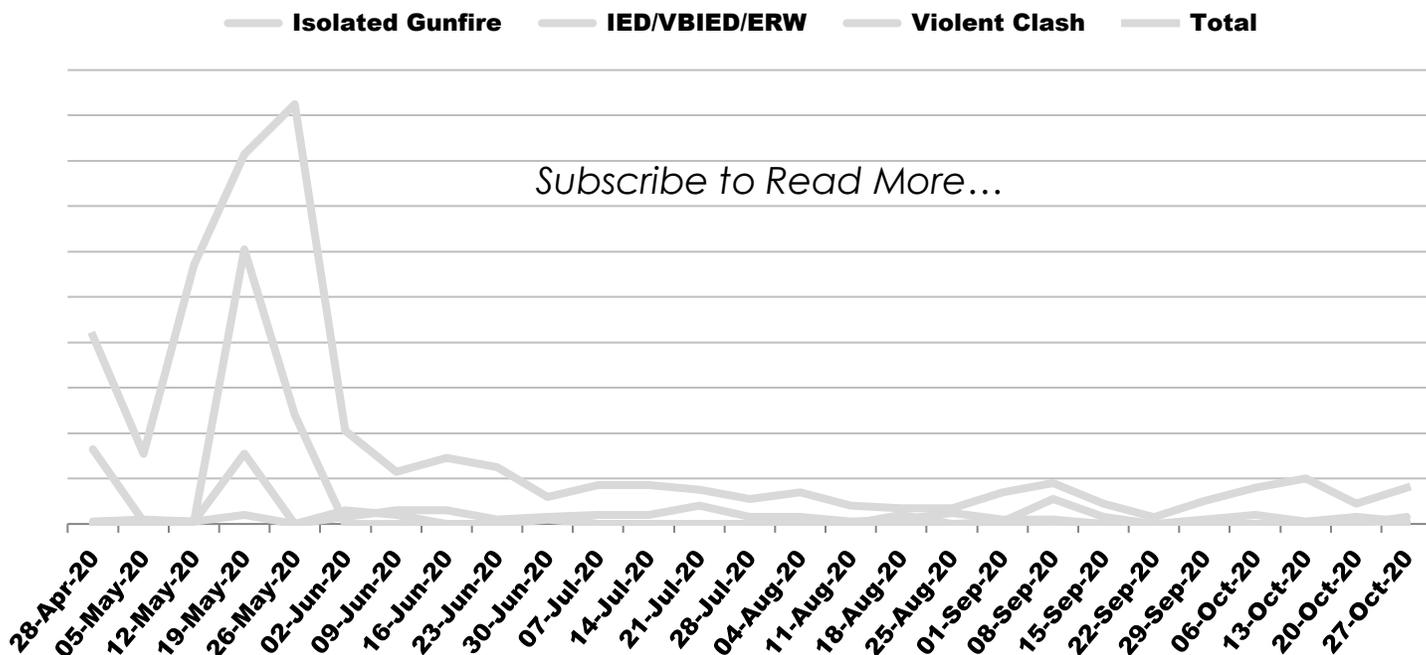
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



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 16 confirmed deaths in Libya compared with 9 deaths reported last week and 20 the week before. The fatalities recorded this week came as a result of 10 bodies found in mass graves across Tarhunah, the violent clashes in the city that resulted in 3 fatalities, and two other incidents. Arrests continue to dominate the nationwide security environment.

In the western region, the highest number of security incidents continues to be recorded in the Tripoli district with a total of 16 incidents. In Tripoli, WB recorded 4 robberies, 2 carjacking incidents, 5 arrests, an isolated gunfire incident, a kidnapping of six nationals at MJJ, and 2 reports of UAVs. In relation to carjackings, WB recorded one violent incident in Hai Al-Andalus. The other incident was recorded by WB sources when four gunmen in a grey Renault Samsung SM3 with no license plates carjacked a grey Hyundai Avante near Rahahalh Mosque in Tripoli's Sidi Al-Sayeh area in the morning on 02 November.

In the broader western region, WB recorded localized skirmishes in Al-Ajaylat. Skirmishes erupted between two local families in Al Ajaylat's Shbeika area in the earliest hours of 05 Nov. The skirmishes reportedly subsided after a few hours. The motive is unknown. Meanwhile, there were reports of local tensions and civil unrest across Tarhunah against the backdrop of the GNA-sanctioned 444 Fighting Unit's law enforcement operation targeting local armed commanders and resulting in heavy clashes between 03-04 Nov. A demonstration was held by locals in the afternoon on 06 Nov. Dozens gathered to condemn the 444 Fighting Unit and call for Wassim Al-Naaji's release, the commander of Al-Naaji Martyrs Battalion and member of the Tarhunah Protection Force.

In the central region, WB recorded no significant security incidents in the area throughout the reporting period, though the LNA flew a combat jet over the Jufra district. Meanwhile, pro-GNA accounts claimed LNA-affiliated Sudanese Janjaweed increased their presence in Sirte over the past 24 hours. The reports allege the mercenaries bolstered their positions in Al-Khazzan and Al-Battuma areas of Sirte's Wadi Jarif area. The reports also allege the mercenaries installed a new radar system in the area.

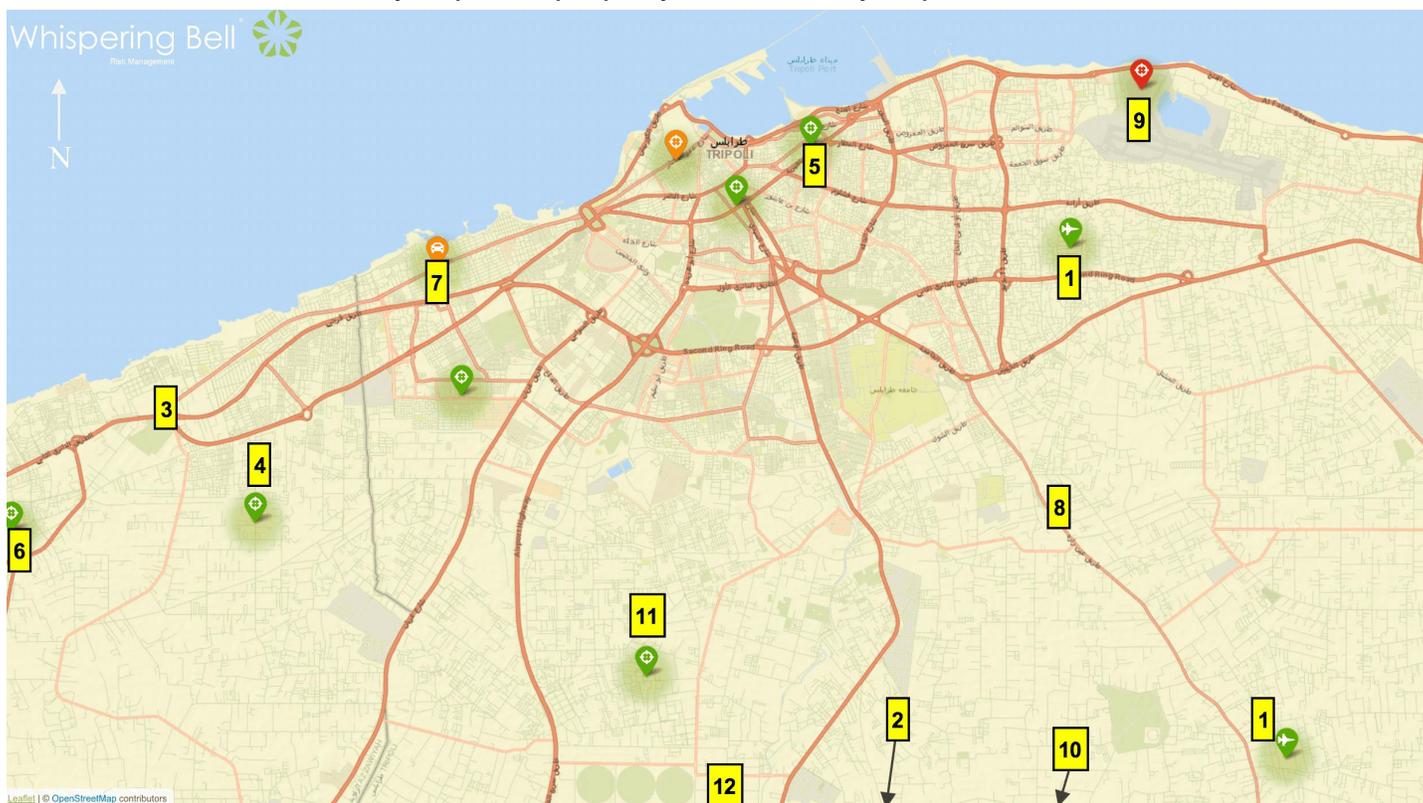
Turning to the south, WB recorded two security incidents in the city of Sabha. Assailants kidnapped a local male near Sabha's Agricultural Faculty in the evening on 05 Nov. Reports allege the assailants were from Al-Hassawna tribe. No further details on motive. In a separate incident, an elderly male was reportedly kidnapped from Sabha's Al-Jadid area in the morning on 07 Nov. Sources reported an surge in criminal activity across the southern region over the past two weeks. This incident will be reflected in next week's figures.

The eastern region was marked by a slight uptick in security incidents, reinforcing the assessment that the security environment has relatively deteriorated in Benghazi over the past few weeks. On 03 Nov. in the morning, a number of Al-Awaqir tribesmen protested in front of LNA's Tarik Ibn Ziyad Brigade camp in Benghazi's Sidi Fraj area, denouncing the arrest of some of their fellow Al-Awaqir tribesmen by the LNA's Tarik Ibn Ziyad Brigade. The tribesmen allege their relatives were detained to extort them to give up their land. The claims are difficult to ascertain, although the tribe in question has accused the Tarik Ibn Ziyad Brigade of land expropriation in the past.

Separately, unidentified gunmen shot Brigadier Nasser Al-Areibi, the head of the eastern Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) branch, and carjacked his vehicle in Benghazi's Ard Shabna area on 06 Nov. Al-Areibi sustained wounds in his legs and was transferred to Al-Jalaa Hospital.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

US Embassy explores property; eastern Libyan pax detained at MJI



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (02 Nov) UAV activity over Souq Al-Jumaa & Ain Zara
2. (02 Nov) Gunmen carjack Hyundai Avante vehicle in Sidi Al-Sayeh
3. (02 Nov) Militia movements & convoys ivo Al-Gheiran Roundabout
4. (03 Nov) Joint Mol/Fursan Janzur checkpoints in Al-Serraj
5. (04 Nov) Criminals steal parked grey Hyundai Sonata vehicle
6. (04 Nov) Mayor of Janzur released after charges against him dropped
7. (04 Nov) Two gunmen carjack vehicle, assault owner near Mozart Sweets
8. (05 Nov) Heavy artillery gunfire reported in Ain Zara at approx. 2000hrs
9. (05 Nov) Six eastern Libyans detained upon arrival at MJI
10. (06 Nov) Red Summer House residents threaten protests over power cuts
11. (07 Nov) Theft of parked Hyundai Sonata vehicle
12. (07 Nov) EOD teams dismantle ERW

US Ambassador discusses property options

US Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland discussed with GNA Foreign Minister Mohamed Syala the US Embassy's "intention to begin formal consultations with Libyan authorities on the lengthy process to secure property in Tripoli to facilitate long-term U.S. diplomatic engagements in Libya". In a meeting on 06 Nov, Ambassador Norland reported that a full reopening is a "long way" from now, but the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) talks in Tunis have increased stability prospects, enabling his country's diplomatic mission to engage in procedural steps towards establishing a full-time presence in-country.

Pax detained upon arrival at MJI

Six eastern Libyan passengers on a Buraq Air flight from Benghazi Benina International Airport (BEN) to Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI) were arbitrarily detained/kidnapped upon their arrival in the capital on 05 Nov. The incident's timing could undermine ongoing negotiations between the LNA and GNA. Of note, there are at least four Turkish nationals currently detained in the eastern region by the LNA.

SDF arrests hospital official

Reports suggest the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) arrested the director of Tripoli University Hospital from the hospital in the afternoon on 03 Nov. Initial reports indicate the arrest was prompted by complaints from the Food and Drug Control Centre (FDCC), accusing the director of neglect.

Bashagha receives Tuareg delegation

GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha received a Tuareg tribal delegation at the Mol HQ in Tripoli in the evening on 03 Nov. The Tuareg delegation included Ubari Mayor Ahmed Manko.

Joint Mol/Fursan Janzur checkpoints in Al-Serraj

Sources reported three checkpoints manned by the GNA Interior Ministry's Law Enforcement Department, supported by the Fursan Janzur Battalion, in Al-Serraj at approximately 1830hrs on 03 Nov. The Law Enforcement Department has become more active in Tripoli's western flank, including Al-Serraj and Janzur, over the past few months.

Long queues at petrol stations

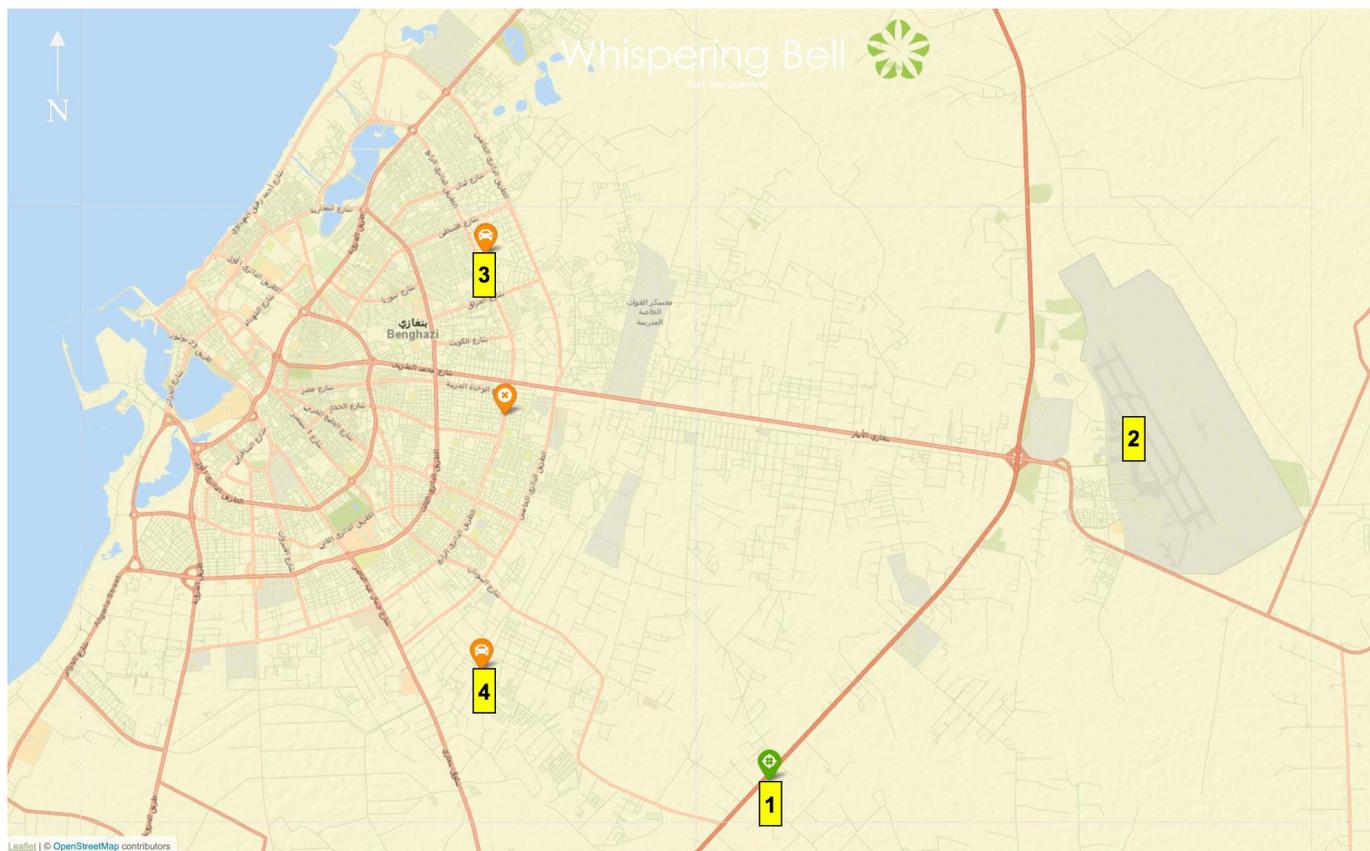
Sources reported long queues and heavy congestion across the capital's petrol stations on 07 Nov. The incident was caused by rumours of a lack of fuel supply, which were refuted by the GNA Ministry of Interior (Mol) on 07 Nov. The Mol confirmed routine supply procedures, urging residents not to queue up in front of petrol stations. The queueing was due to some delays at Tripoli Port caused by adverse weather conditions, which delayed vessels' offloading of products. Of note, Libya continues to import the majority of its local demand for fuel products. Petrol stations remain hotspots for disputes and other low-impact security incidents.

Violent carjacking incident in Hai Al-Andalus

Sources indicate two gunmen in a white Chevrolet Optra carjacked a similar vehicle in Tripoli's Hai Al-Andalus, near Mozart Sweets, at approximately 0400hrs on 04 Nov. Reports suggest the gunmen attacked the victim and attempted to lock him in the boot. The victim reportedly resisted and fled the scene without his vehicle.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Haftar orders formation of new security room



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (03 Nov) Awaqir tribesmen protest detention of relatives in front of LNA Tarik Ibn Ziyad camp
2. (03 Nov) Global Air flight operated from BEN to MJI
3. (06 Nov) Gunmen shoot & injure PFG official in carjacking
4. (07 Nov) Man injured in carjacking

Activist's daughter reportedly attacked

Benghazi-based activist Hanan Al-Barassi claimed gunmen in balaclavas and military uniforms attacked her daughter in a failed kidnapping/assassination attempt on [Venezia Street](#) on 07 Nov. Al-Barassi appeared in a video expressing her frustration at the LNA and filming her daughter's car with bullet holes. Al-Barassi has been vocal about the current state of affairs. She appeared in videos in the past directly criticizing the LNA and Haftar.

Man injured in carjacking

Reports a local male was injured in a carjacking attempt in Benghazi's [Al Hawary](#) in the morning on 07 Nov.

Global Air operates BEN-MJI flight

A Global Air flight with 50 passengers onboard was operated between Benghazi's Benina International Airport (BEN) and Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI) on 03 Nov. The flight was operated by an Embraer ERJ145 aircraft. The flight will be operated twice a day, according to reports.

Haftar orders formation of new security room

The LNA General Command under Khalifa Haftar instructed Chief of Staff (CoS) Abdulrazzak Al-Nathori to form a security operations room covering the greater Benghazi area, as per decree 9159 dated 02 Nov. The orders came during a meeting between Haftar and senior officials, including Al-Nathori and Interim Government PM Abdullah Thinni. The decree tasks Al-Nathori to coordinate with a number of security officials, including eastern

Interior Minister Ibrahim Bushnaf. The new security operations room has been mandated to secure the entire Benghazi area, respect for human rights, coordination with law enforcement and military units, establishment of an information centre and database, arrest of wanted individuals in cooperation with the LNA Military Prosecutor, clearance of expropriated lands and private property, and protection of critical infrastructure.

The decree is in direct response to recent tensions in Benghazi and the east as locals accused security directorates and other officials of lax security. The eastern Interior Minister recently reshuffled heads of security directorates across the eastern region.

Leaflets with LNA headers were reported across Benghazi instructing local weapon owners and carriers to remain home on 06 Nov. The leaflets would come amid preparations by the newly-formed Greater Benghazi Security Ops Room to launch a large law enforcement operation against the backdrop of a surge in security incidents. Multiple armed groups and LNA veterans continue to operate in a law enforcement capacity across the city, which has led to incidents in the past.

Gunmen shoot PFG official

Unidentified gunmen shot Brigadier Nasser Al-Areibi, the head of the eastern Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) branch, and carjacked his vehicle in Benghazi's [Ard Shabna](#) area on 06 Nov. Al-Areibi sustained wounds in his legs and was transferred to [Al-Jalaa Hospital](#).

6. What's next

LPDF outcomes exacerbate tensions in western region & Sirte

POLITICAL FORECAST

Regardless of the progress so far, observers argue the UN political and military talks are by design bound for failure given they are out of touch with the reality on the ground, especially the expanding military presence of Turkey and Russia in the form of Wagner Group private military contractors (PMCs). Meanwhile, in relation to the Bashagha-Egypt meeting, regional publications alleged the meetings focused on the demobilisation of armed groups in the western region. Cairo allegedly presented a list of designated terrorists that are to be excluded from any disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) effort. Locally, other observers argue Bashagha's visit is a sign he feels emboldened and will likely issue a series of arrest warrants in the medium term. On the diplomatic front, US Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland welcomed the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) consultations in Ghadames to consolidate the recent ceasefire agreement. In a statement on 03 Nov, Ambassador Norland expressed regret that a "small group of Libyans, in concert with certain external actors" is attempting to undermine the dialogue process. Ambassador Norland cautioned that those who seek to obstruct the "way of progress" are at risk of sanctions. Meanwhile, Ambassador Norland, arrived in Moscow on 02 Nov to hold discussions with Russian counterparts on "ways to support Libyan-led, United Nations (UN)-facilitated resolution of the conflict in Libya." According to Sputnik, the two sides held a detailed conversation centred around the Libyan parties' need to adhere to the ceasefire agreement and cease hostilities, as well as commit to the political settlement in accordance with the Berlin Conference and UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution no. 2510. The Ambassador's visit to Russia comes shortly after UN SRSG Stephanie Williams, met with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, during which the Minister stated that his country will continue to support the UN-led political process that is "working to ensure lasting peace and stability in Libya." International actors recognise the importance of Russia and Turkey's buy-in in any political settlement as the two countries continue to represent the main powerbrokers in the Libyan conflict, albeit with diverging political stances.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In a joint piece for the *Atlantic Council* by Emadeddin Badi, a nonresident senior fellow, and Karim Mezran, a resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, the authors discuss how foreign intervention obstructs the Libyan ceasefire agreement. The authors argue that the international optimism that came in response to the recent launch of political and military talks in Libya "obfuscates the very real possibility of a relapse into violent conflict". "The first hurdle appears to be that there are virtually no coercion or accountability mechanisms that international stakeholders are committed to leveraging against domestic parties that are working to undermine the agreement with the support of foreign actors. Indeed, many have a vested interest and a track record of jettisoning political, economic, or security tracks. Meanwhile, on the Tripoli offensive, the authors argue "The protraction of Haftar's offensive from a blitzkrieg into a sixteen-month long war was neither an exclusively domestic endeavor nor was his forces' defeat and withdrawal a Libyan-negotiated process. The forcibly-induced route of the LAAF from Tripoli's suburbs was a geopolitical exercise that excluded Libyans; it was preceded by Turkish-Russian covert talks that ultimately led to the Russian mercenary Wagner Group's withdrawal toward Sirte and Central Libya, thereby inducing LAAF's frantic abandonment of their position and the loss of their main forward base. The contemporary format of the security talks not only assumes that Haftar is too beleaguered to spoil the ceasefire again, but it also presumes a degree of Libyan leverage on foreign troops and mercenaries that simply does not exist."

SECURITY FORECAST

Queueing across the capital's petrol stations has resulted in low-impact security incidents after locals gathered to fill tanks due to vessel-offloading delays at Tripoli Port caused by adverse weather conditions. Similar incidents potentially involving the use of small arms are possible in the medium term across petrol stations should current conditions remain unchanged across Tripoli. Meanwhile, on the political front, an announcement of a new government as a result of the Tunis LPDF talks threatens to exacerbate tensions in the capital. Travellers are advised to maintain situational awareness at all times. Opposition to the outcome of LPDF talks may come in the form of attacks targeting sensitive government buildings or demonstrations that turn violent. Separately, the Law Enforcement Department has become more active in Tripoli's western flank, including Al-Serraj and Janzur, over the past few months. In the central region, if confirmed, the deployment of a radar system operated by Wagner PMCs west Sirte would cast doubt on the withdrawal of foreign forces within the 90-day period as stipulated by the 5+5 ceasefire agreement. Meanwhile, flights from Tripoli to Sabha (SEB) are expected to resume after Afriqiyah Airways reported receiving the approval from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on 06 Nov to begin operating flights to/from SEB. The CAA permitted operators to resume flights to all airports in the southern region. Of note, LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar ordered the reopening of SEB with security measures. It remains unclear if the LNA will implement its order requiring all inbound/outbound flights to the southern region to transit via Benghazi. In Benghazi, the newly-formed Greater Benghazi Security Ops Room agreed to dismantle armed formations and evacuate their headquarters in one of its first meetings held in Benghazi in the presence of LNA CoS Abdulrazak Nathori on 07 Nov. The development would come amid a noticeable surge in security incidents in Haftar's stronghold. In the southern region, given Al-Koni's role as a mediator between Tuaregs, his death will likely impact the LNA's posture in the south at a time when Haftar is seeking to secure the support of key tribes in the region.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

The Co-founder and editor of *Libya Herald*, Sami Zaptia, refers to the GNA Interior Ministry's "embarrassment" following the arrest of citizens arriving from Benghazi's Benina International Airport (BEN) to Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI) on 05 November. While the Ministry was quick to issue a statement condemning the incident and distancing GNA forces from any involvement, as well as announcing a probe into the act, Zaptia argues that the timing of the incident "could not have been worse". The author writes "The incident must be a cause of much embarrassment to the Tripoli Libyan government and Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha. Its timing could not have been worse. Tripoli has been keen to create a positive atmosphere and narrative in parallel with the ongoing UN-brokered virtual and in-person military and political talks. For example, Tripoli has resumed flights to eastern Libya as well as Sebha, it has attempted to stop media under its control from referring to Haftar as the "war criminal" and has encouraged prisoner exchange. These have been part of what UNSMIL has called "trust-building measures." Zaptia goes on to analyse the development from two angles. "Firstly, as no more than the ongoing existence and behaviour of militias outside the direct control of the Tripoli government. This is a status quo that has existed since the 2011 revolution that ended the Qaddafi era. Secondly, it could have been a premeditated act by spoilers who have not been included in the dialogue process, or who prefer the status quo, or object to the likely results of the ongoing political talks. It will be seen if the Interior Ministry will indeed officially name and punish the responsible militia."

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