

November 24, 2020

## 1. The Big Picture

### Bashagha in Paris amid CBL / NOC feud over oil revenues

The week ending 22 Nov saw no major security developments. Whispering Bell has received reports of localised Islamic State (IS) activity, though it remains too early to ascertain threat levels. Elsewhere, implementation of the UN-sponsored 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) is facing some roadblocks amid local opposition from Government of National Accord (GNA) field commanders to reopen the Sirte-Misrata coastal road, and a reported Libyan National Army (LNA) state of alert.

Politically, however, the week was relatively eventful with a high-profile visit by GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha to France. Meanwhile, long-standing tensions resurfaced between the Tripoli-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL) and GNA over budgets and control of the Libyan Foreign Bank (LFB), which processes Libya's oil revenues. In Tripoli, it was business as usual this week as the first cohort of Turkey-trained infantry forces graduated from a new training centre in Tajoura.

On the diplomatic front, GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha pursued his official visit to France, meeting Foreign Minister Jean Yves Le-Drian and Defence Minister Florence Parly on 19 Nov to discuss security-sector reforms (SSR) and bilateral ties. Bashagha reported an agreement with Airbus Helicopters to receive 10 helicopters to combat organized crime, trafficking, and terrorism. A day earlier, Bashagha reported the acquisition of a biometric security solution from French IDEMIA Group. From Bashagha's standpoint, the visit is likely to strengthen his posture and obtain France's buy-in for his premiership candidacy ahead of a second round of LPDF talks. From France's perspective, the visit underlines an attempt to engage key powerbrokers in Libya's western region after Macron's diplomacy was accused of placing all of its bets on Haftar's failed Tripoli offensive. Bashagha's visit presents an opportunity for France to rebuild ties in the west, using local powerbrokers' aspirations and interests to undermine Ankara's influence. The visit to France is guaranteed to exacerbate existing divisions between Bashagha and pro-Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) elements and other hardliners.

Looking ahead, it is clear the achievements so far in the form of rising oil production, the ceasefire in the central region, and political talks are all becoming increasingly fragile.

In the oil and gas sector, the dispute over oil revenues, described as one of the most critical issues in the Libyan conflict, is reaching levels of complexity that could disrupt production in the medium term. On 19 Nov, the Tripoli-based CBL published revenue and expenditure figures for the Jan-Oct period, accusing the National Oil Corporation (NOC) of manipulating oil revenue data. The NOC, however, responded with a strong statement accusing the CBL of "malicious claims", reiterating that all O&G revenues O&G will continue to be deposited in the NOC's account at LFB and will not be transferred to the central bank until the latter is transparent about its books.

Observers argue the statement will drag NOC Chairman Mustafa Sanallah into domestic politics. Regardless of its attempts to remain neutral over the past few years, the NOC statement legitimizes the temporary deal to resume production between GNA Deputy PM Ahmed Maiteeg and LNA

commander Khalifa Haftar. In fact, the NOC accused the CBL and its "ambiguous policies" of fuelling the latest oil blockades. This comment was described by critics as a tacit approval of the latest LNA-sanctioned blockade.

It remains to be seen how the issue will pan out. The sector is facing a multi-layered crisis. The CBL under Sadiq Al-Kabeer is being increasingly marginalized and pressured into restructuring its board, though Al-Kabeer retains the support of Muslim Brotherhood (MBD) aligned elements. For his part, Sanallah is equally under pressure and facing internal criticism over a series of appointments and restructuring across key local oil companies, including Waha Oil (WOC), Arabian Gulf Oil (AGOCO), and Mellitah (MOG). As oil flowed and revenues were deposited in the LFB account, WOC employees protested the appointments and threatened strike action. In addition to the long-standing 67% salary raise, oil workers are now calling for Sanallah to be ousted.

There is mounting evidence the current transitional period may crystallise into a status quo in the next few months with no major change ahead of planned, yet difficult to achieve, elections in December 2021. The UN-sponsored political track is mired in corruption allegations, albeit under review, threaten to undermine the legitimacy of the entire process. At least 56 participants sent a letter to the UN Secretary General calling for a full investigation and temporary membership suspension of those involved until further investigation findings. It remains to be seen if the UN will press ahead with sanctions against "spoilers". The difficulty of holding those obstructing the process to account was clearly highlighted by Russia's veto at the UN Security Council of a German/US motion to sanction Tarhunah-based Al-Kaniat militia and its leader.

Turning to the security front, reports continue to caution against the potential threat of a rising Islamic State (IS) presence across Sabratrah, Al-Ajaylat, and Msallatah. IS presence in Al-Ajaylat and Msallatah has not been independently confirmed by WB sources, though in Sabratrah WB documented IS activity over the past few weeks. WB assesses it is too early to draw conclusions on the group's posture based on these reports alone. It is unlikely that IS will find enough local support across Libya to regroup and reach a level of operations/sophistication that could pose a significant threat to government assets similar to its peak capacity in 2016. However, the low-level insurgency threat has increased in light of these reports.

IS continues to maintain its strongest presence in the Fezzan district, especially in farms south of Taraghin. IS presence in the western region continues to consist of sleeper cells across urban and semi-urban environments. However, if the group is able to consolidate in Sabratrah, Al-Ajaylat, and/or Msallatah, it will find it easier to carry out small-scale targeted attacks against soft targets in the western region. The current context of political divisions, especially the warm overtures by GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha, will enable the group to justify future attacks.

#### KEY POINTS

- Bashagha meets senior French officials in Paris
- NOC: oil revenues will remain at LFB account
- Graduation of 1<sup>st</sup>Turkey-trained GNA forces



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# 2. National Security Map

Partial reopening of roads ivo Wadi Zamzam; abandoned VBIED found in Ras Lanuf desert

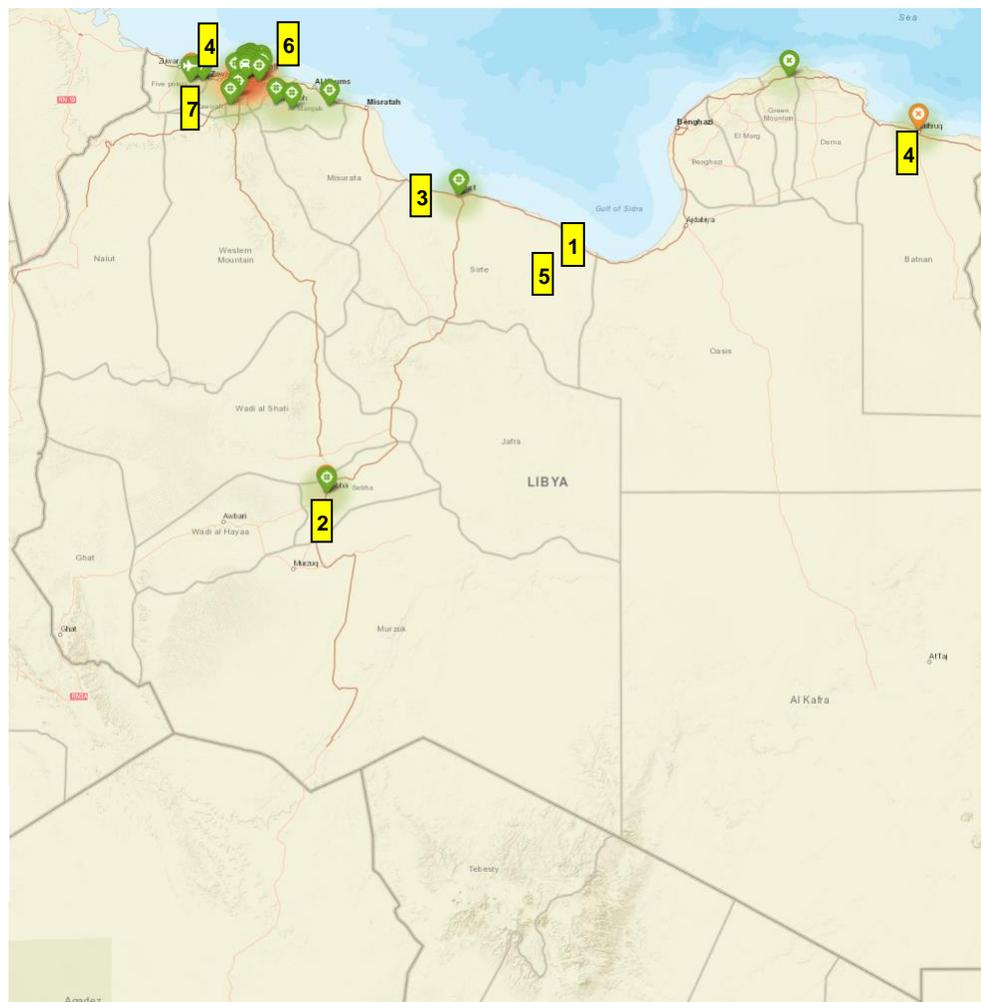
## Legend

### Impact Indicator

- Low Impact
- Medium Impact
- High Impact

### Incident Type

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



National Oil Corporation (NOC) Chairman Mustafa Sanallah issued a number of decrees dated 19 Nov reshuffling NOC-affiliated companies. The appointments have proved controversial, resulting in a number of anti-NOC statements from oil companies' unions, threatening strike action.

4

Unidentified assailants shot and injured a male in military uniform in front of Tobruk's central post office in the evening on 20 Nov. The incident is believed to be a failed murder attempt. The perpetrators were later intercepted by local security forces and referred to prosecution.

5

A patrol of the LNA's 128 Reinforced Brigade reported the discovery of an explosive-laden abandoned Toyota Tundra truck allegedly designed for vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attacks in a desert area south of Ras Lanuf in the morning on 18 November. While the intended target is unknown, there are a number of soft targets along the coastal road in the area, including LNA outposts and oil terminals, and other oil infrastructure in the Oil Crescent.

6

On 20 Nov, the Tripoli-based Audit Bureau under Khaled Al-Shakshak denied recent reports it had referred GNA PM Fayez Al-Sarraj and other officials to prosecution on charges of violations of the Public Health Insurance Fund.

7

Reports indicate an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) airstrike targeted a fuel smuggling truck in the Aqar area, south of Sabratah, at approximately 1800hrs on 17 November. In a similar incident, reports indicate a UAV airstrike targeted a fuel smuggling truck south of Al-Ajaylat at approximately 2000hrs on 17 November.

1

Waha Oil Company (WOC) employees in Es-Sider organised a sit-in and issued an anti-National Oil Corporation (NOC) video statement on 21 November. The employees are against the NOC after accusations by the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) that the NOC manipulated oil revenue data. The employees threatened strike action if the NOC board of directors was not reshuffled and condemned the NOC's recent appointments.

2

Alleged Janjaweed mercenaries have been spotted across Sabha on 21 November. Local reports indicate the mercenaries transferred injured fighters to Sabha's Al-Majd Clinic and later left the city towards Tamanhint Airbase.

3

The LNA 106 Brigade is preparing to conduct a major military exercise in the coming days, according to the LNA Military information Division (MID). The MID reported the Brigade is due to carry out the LNA's largest military maneuver.

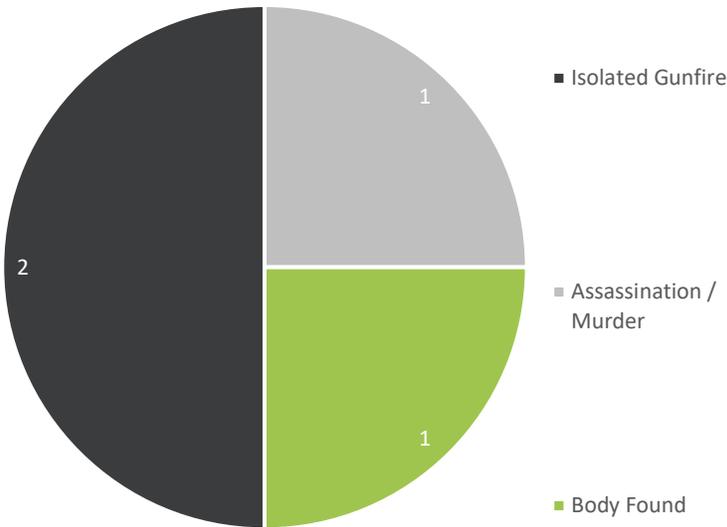
Local reports of a partial reopening of roads west Sirte, in the vicinity of Wadi Zam Zam, as part of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) ceasefire agreement. A bulldozer was spotted clearing sand barriers and other physical obstacles, though the coastal road remained closed at the time of publication.

Access LibyAware © Platform

### 3. Nationwide Security Analysis

#### Drop in nationwide fatalities; surge in robberies

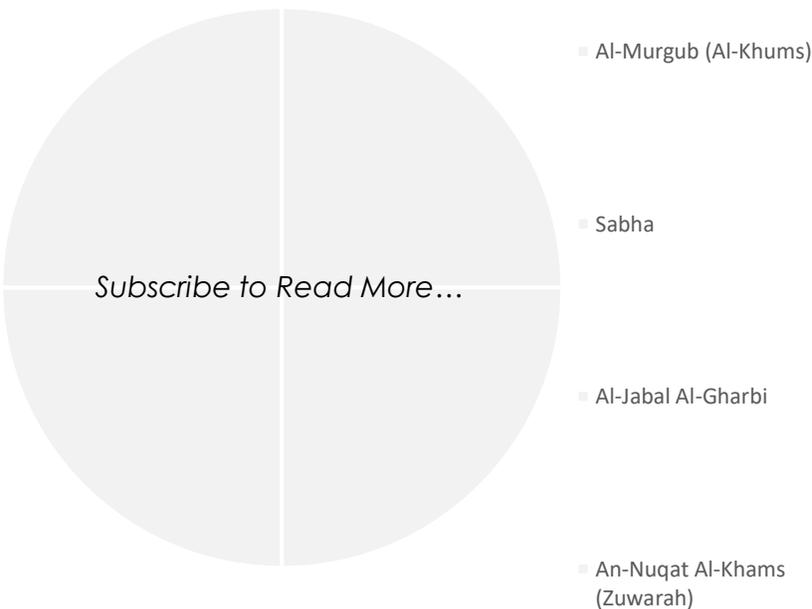
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



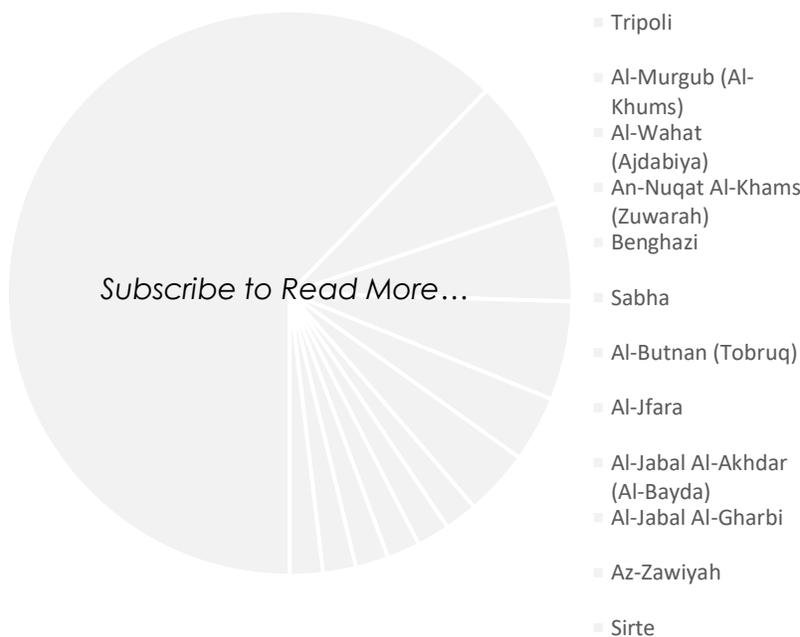
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



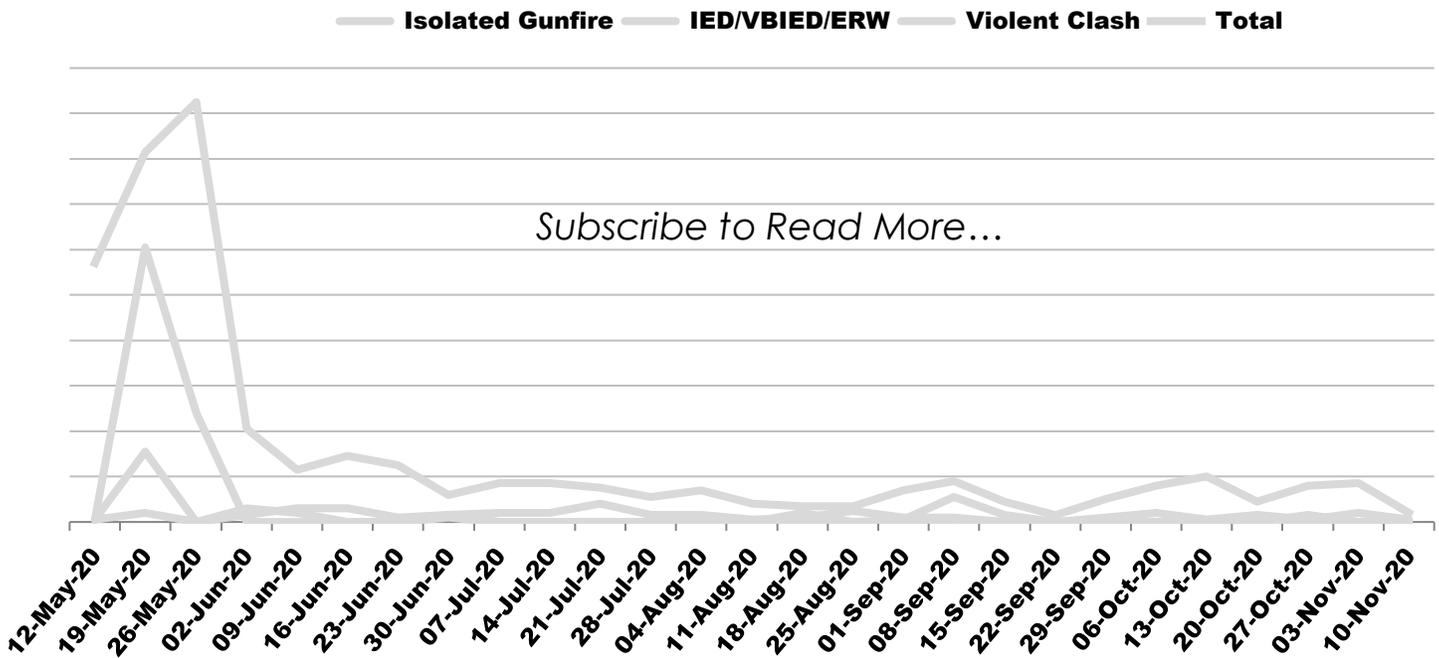
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



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 confirmed deaths in Libya compared with 17 deaths reported last week and 16 the week before. The fatalities recorded this week came as a result of two isolated gunfire cases in Al-Ajaylat & Mizdah, as well as a murder recorded in Sabha and a body found in Tarhuna. In Tripoli, WB recorded 10 arrests, 9 robberies, 4 fires, 2 protests, 2 IED/VBIED/ERW incidents, 1 raid, 1 kidnapping, 1 isolated gunfire case, 1 report of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) activity, 1 carjacking, and 1 explosion.

In the wider western region, WB recorded an isolated gunfire case in Mizdah located in the Jabal Al-Gharbi district, a robbery incident involving power cables in Al-Aziziyah located in the Al-Jfara district, two robberies, one case of a body found and an isolated gunfire case in Tarhuna, Zliten, and an unidentified location in the Al-Murgub district. In addition, two unammned aerial vehicle (UAV) airstrikes targeting fuel smuggling trucks were conducted in Sabaratah and Al-Ajaylat this week. The airstrikes' affiliation remains unknown. Beyond, an isolated gunfire case involving local militias in Ajaylat's Al-Jadida area resulted in one fatality on 16 Nov. Further, a fuel truck exploded in Sabaratah on 16 November, with unconfirmed reports alleging a UAV strike targeted a fuel smuggling truck south of the city.

In the central region, there were reports of consecutive heavy explosions south of Sirte at approximately 1700hrs on 17 November. Unconfirmed reports suggest LNA forces testing weapons. No further security incidents were recorded in the central region throughout the reporting period. However, Over the past 48hrs, reports indicate the majority of bakeries in Sirte were closed due to a shortage of diesel across the city. Of note, local bakeries commonly rely on diesel-operated generators due to frequent power cuts. The development is expected to exacerbate local grievances and may result in sporadic security incidents, including protests and road closures.

Notably, local reports of a partial reopening of roads west Sirte, in the vicinity of Wadi Zam Zam, as part of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) ceasefire agreement. Separately, the spokesman of the GNA Sirte-Jufra Operations Room, Abdelhadi Drah, claimed LNA-affiliated Russian Wagner Group private military contractors (PMCs) and Janjaweed mercenaries continue to dig trenches in the Sirte vicinity and remain positioned in Jufra and Houn as of 18 November.

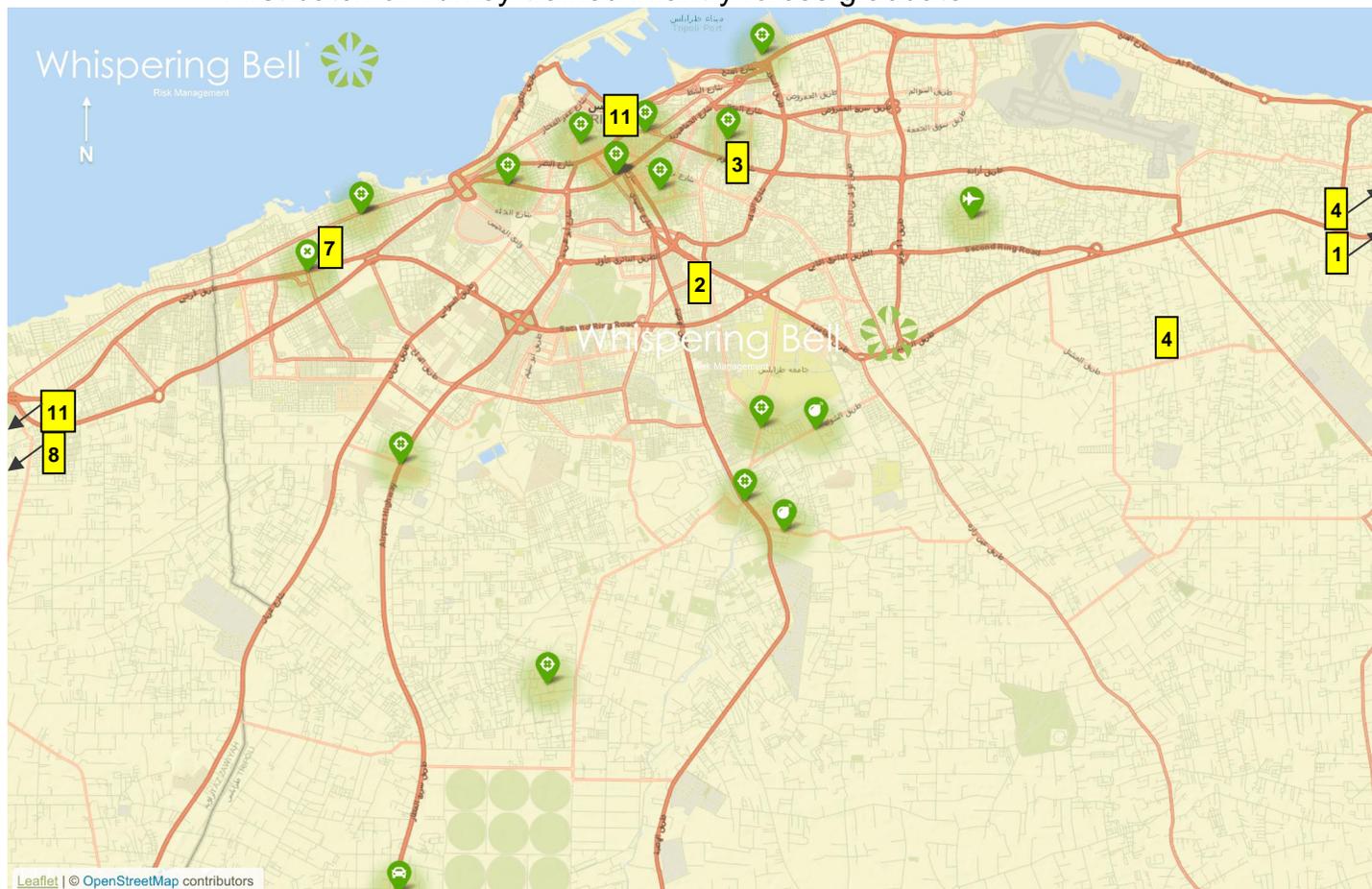
Turning to the south, WB recorded an explosion and a murder in the city of Sabha. Reports indicate an elderly sheikh, identified as Taher Al-Mahmoudi, was found killed in Sabha's Bardi area on 17 November. Reports allege unidentified assailants onboard a Hyundai Avante were behind the killing. Meanwhile, the cause of the explosions audible in the city on 19 November were unclear. No further security incidents were recorded in the region.

The eastern region witnessed a drop in security incidents in Benghazi in contrast to the recent surge in sporadic crime recorded in the city over the past two weeks. WB recorded one arrest and one fire in Benghazi. Meanwhile, the newly-formed Greater Benghazi Security Operations Room commenced its duties with a crackdown on traffic violations and new measures surrounding the registration of foreigners residing in Benghazi. Beyond Benghazi, WB recorded an isolated gunfire case in Tobruk. Unidentified assailants shot and injured a male in military uniform in front of Tobruk's central post office in the evening on 20 November. The incident is believed to be a failed murder attempt. The perpetrators were later intercepted by local security forces and referred to prosecution. Separately, on 18 November, the Libyan Association of Judicial Bodies condemned the targeting of Shahhat Public Prosecutor Ahmed Issa Hussain, calling on security services to identify the perpetrators. The Association reported the Prosecutor's vehicle was targeted with gunfire as he reached his house at dawn on 17 November. The vehicle was damaged as a result. The Association referred to the incident as a targeted attack on Hussain. Meanwhile, WB recorded three security incidents in the Al-Wahat district, including an isolated gunfire case, a kidnapping, and arrest. In relation to the kidnapping, the Arabian Gulf Oil Company (AGOCO) corroborated that it had lost contact with its employee, Hamza Miloud Al-Hadari, after he left the Nafoura Oilfield and arrived in Jalu at 1000hrs on 14 November. Al-Hadari was en route to the company's Bayda 47 Field. The company stated that a search is underway, comprising the Murada Brigade, Murada Police Station, the Waha Oil Company (WOH), the Nafoura Field Guards, volunteers from the Azoua tribe and volunteers from the Murada and Al-Bayda field. The search team combed all the roads leading to Al-Bayda Field, including field 103, on 14 November. The search resumed on 15 November.

Separately, the LNA 106 Brigade is preparing to conduct a major military exercise in the coming days, according to the LNA Military information Division (MID). The MID reported the Brigade is due to carry out the LNA's largest military maneuver.

## 4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

### First batch of Turkey-trained infantry forces graduate



#### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (21 Nov) First cohort of Turkish-trained GNA forces graduate from Omar Al-Mukhtar Training Centre
2. (21 Nov) Vehicle theft ivo Ras Hssan
3. (21 Nov) Law Enforcement Dept. arrest man on murder charges ivo Fashloun
4. (21 Nov) Man arrested in possession of psycoportric pills ivo Tajoura
5. (19 Nov) CBL issues state revenue & expenditure, accuses NOC of manipulating data
6. (20-22 Nov) Heavy rainfalls floods Tripoli streets; power cuts in Tripoli & western region
7. (20 Nov) Shots fired during dispute ivo Gorje
8. (20 Nov) Locals protest eviction from residential units in An-Najila after ultimatum to evacuate
9. (18 Nov) Public Prosecution refers several Finance Ministry employees to East Tripoli Court
10. (18 Nov) Director of the Central Bank of Libya Governor Office reportedly released
11. (18 Nov) Two Libyan drug dealers trading ivo Al-Dahra arrested; Nigerian drug dealer arrested ivo Janzour

#### First cohort of Turkish trained GNA forces graduate

The first cohort of GNA forces undergoing training by Turkish forces held a graduation ceremony at Tajoura's Omar Al-Mukhtar Training Centre on 21 November. The cohort reportedly included at least 100 officers. The ceremony was attended by the GNA Defence Minister, the former Chief of Staff (CoS), GNA Military Spokesman, as well as the commanders of the Tripoli and Western Military Regions and representatives of the Turkish side. The Deputy Prime Minister, Ahmed Maiteeg, and Presidential Council (PC) deputies Ahmed Hamza and Abdulsalam Kajman, also attended. The graduating batch performed martial arts and concluded the ceremony with military parades.

#### Zintan General Security Apparatus steal vehicle

An armed group affiliated to the Zintan-dominant General Security Apparatus reportedly stopped a civilian and stole his vehicle in Tripoli's Hai Al-Andalus at approximately 0030hrs on 21 Nov. The armed group reportedly fired sporadic warning shots ahead of a house raid in the area.

#### Locals protest eviction from An-Najila houses

Dozens of locals protested their eviction from residential units in Tripoli's An-Najila area at approximately 1830hrs on 20 Nov. The Joint Force, Janzour Security Directorate and Fursan Janzour, reportedly gave the locals an ultimatum to evacuate the premises, accusing the locals of squatting.

#### Carjacking ivo Airport Road

WB sources reported unidentified assailants onboard a black Hyundai Accent carjacked a white Hyundai

Elantra 2012 model on Tripoli's Airport Road on 17 November.

#### Imported goods without LCs to no longer be released

The GNA-affiliated Customs Authority stated that it will no longer release goods imported without letters of credit (LCs) after 31 December 2020, noting that importers will no longer be granted permission to clear their goods across all ports of entry. The Customs Authority warned violators will have their goods confiscated. The Authority's decision is in line with the GNA Prime Minister Fayez Al-Serraj's decision which allowed traders to import goods without letters of credit (LCs) providing their access to foreign currency from the Tripoli-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL) until 31 December 2020. In August 2020, the GNA allowed the traders to import goods without having to open an official LC and pay in hard currency at the CBL until 31 December 2020. The GNA-sanctioned measure was aimed at alleviating economic conditions after the Tripoli offensive. The LC system has been a source of tension between the GNA and CBL, and the root catalyst of the parallel currency exchange in Libya. It remains to be seen if the measure will be implemented across eastern ports of entry.

#### Bani Walid Municipality Mayor referred to court

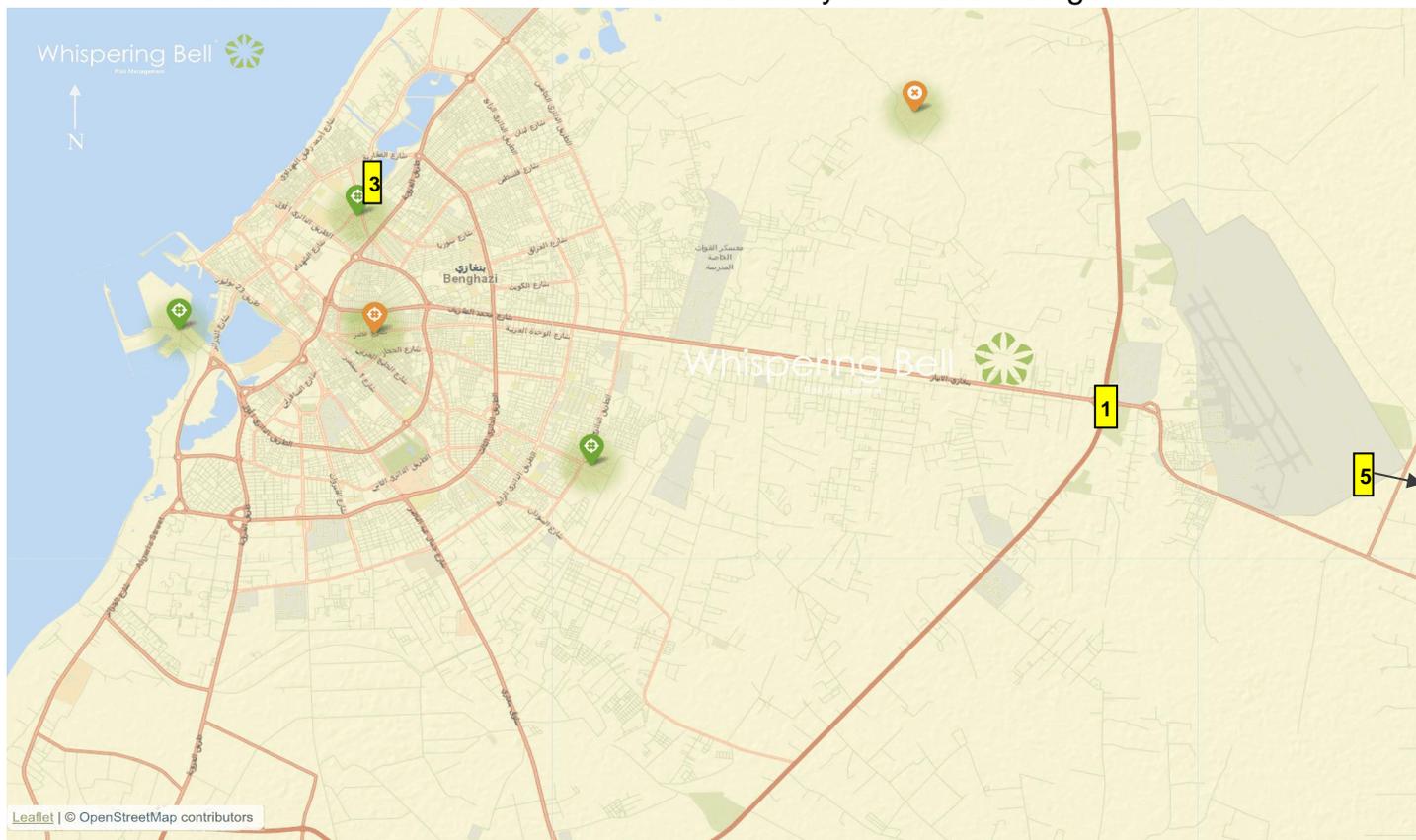
The Mayor of Bani Walid Municipality, Salem Nuwairi, was referred to the Indictment Chamber of the Southern Tripoli Court on charges of embezzlement and the misuse of public funds by the Public Prosecution.

#### Libya Weekly Political and Security Update

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## 5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Series of measures taken to restore security after recent surge in crime



### KEY INCIDENTS

1. (21 Nov) Tunisian delegation land at BEN ahead of expected flight resumption
2. (20 Nov) Greater Benghazi Security Ops. Room prepares security plan to seize small/medium/heavy artillery weapons
3. (20 Nov) Moi's sub-committee to form inventory & census of foreign nationals
4. (18 Nov) Haftar's son visits 73rd Infantry Brigade camp ivo Boatni
5. (18 Nov) Haftar receives Al-Hasawna tribesmen at LNA HQ

#### Tunisair flights lands at Benina

Reports indicate a Tunisair-operated flight carrying a delegation of Tunisian officials landed at Benghazi's Benina International Airport (BEN) on 21 November. The visit comes in preparation to resume flights between Tunis-Carthage International Airport (TUN) and BEN.

#### Security arrangements across Benghazi

In its latest meeting on 20 November, the newly-formed Greater Benghazi Security Operations Room agreed to prepare a security plan to seize small, medium, and heavy artillery weapons from residents, combat sporadic shooting during celebrations, and pursue and prosecute wanted criminals.

In a related development, the eastern-based Ministry of Interior's (MoI) sub-committee recently formed as part of the new Greater Benghazi Security Ops. Room, reported it will create an inventory and census of foreign nationals residing in Benghazi. The aim of the census, scheduled to begin within a week from 20 November, will be to regulate the presence of all foreign nationals in Benghazi, including those holding valid residence permits, by assessing their numbers, legal status and port of entry, place of residence, health status, among other information. All foreign nationals are given six months to report to regulate their status and report to the security office in Sabri neighbourhood. As per the new measures, internet service providers (ISPs) Libyana and Al-Madar, all transportation ticketing offices, currency exchange houses, private clinics, have been instructed not to offer services to

foreigners who do not present newly-issued foreigners cards to prove their legal status.

#### Haftar's son visits 73<sup>rd</sup> Infantry BDE camp

Khalifa Haftar's son, Saddam Haftar, visited the 73rd Infantry Brigade camp in Benghazi's Boatni area on 18 November. Videos of the visit were published by pro-LNA accounts. Saddam was accompanied by Colonel Omar Al-Magarhi, commander of the Tarik Ibn Ziyad Brigade.

#### Traffic regulations & 166 BDE deployment

The LNA Chief of Staff (CoS), Abdelrazak Al-Nathouri, ordered all units to remove the tint on vehicles and ensure that metal license plates are installed on 17 November.

Meanwhile, the LNA 166 Brigade, accompanied by a number of military units, deployed across Benghazi on orders of LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar to evacuate camps across the city.

#### Haftar receives Al-Hasawna tribal delegation

The LNA commander, Khalifa Haftar, received a delegation of sheikhs and elders of the Al-Hasawna tribe at his LNA headquarters in Ar-Rajmah in the morning on 18 November. According to the LNA's Media Office, the tribal delegation emphasized the importance of the LNA's role in securing the country and eliminating extremist and criminal groups in the southern region in particular. In turn, Haftar praised the efforts of the Hasawna tribe in standing by the LNA's "war against terrorism." Of note, Haftar received a delegation of the Tuareg tribe at the end of October. While Libya is currently dominated by ongoing political and military talks, Haftar remains focused on garnering support from Libya's influential tribes.

## 6. What's next

### Skirmishes in Sirte and build-up; Saleh in Moscow ahead of new deal

#### POLITICAL FORECAST

The Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) virtual sessions are scheduled to resume on 23 Nov. UNSMIL will reportedly present four selection mechanisms for government positions. On 20 Nov, UNSG Antonio Guterres notified in a written letter Security Council members of his intent to appoint current UN Middle East Envoy Nikolay Mladenov as Special Envoy to Libya. The appointment, if confirmed, would fill the vacuum left behind after Ghassan Salame's resignation in March 2020. Since then, there have been multiple divisions at the UN Security Council over the position. Meanwhile, HoR Speaker Saleh is due to visit Moscow at the invitation of the Russian government in the next few days to discuss the Libyan file. Domestically, the spokesman of the GNA Prime Minister, Ghaleb Al-Zgalay, reiterated that Fayez Al-Serraj will hand over his duties to the new executive authority that will be agreed upon following the end of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF). In addition, Al-Zgalay noted that the Prime Minister is due to meet with the High National Elections Commission (HNEC), Emad Al-Sayeh, to discuss necessary preparations to ensure credible elections. Of note, Al-Serraj recently announced the allocation of funds to the HNEC in order to carry out its duties. There are clear signs the implementation of the ceasefire outcomes is facing challenges. In her latest briefing to the UN Security Council on 19 Nov, UN ASRSG Stephanie Williams expressed optimism at the progress achieved so far but stated she is "clear-eyed" about the challenges ahead. Williams noted that the GNA and LNA have not yet withdrawn forces from agreed-upon lines in Sirte and Jufra, adding that GNA forces remain stationed in Abugrein and Weshka, while LNA units continue to build outposts and man air defence systems on the Sirte-Jufra axis. Williams added military cargo activity was monitored at Al-Wattiyah airbase and Misrata in support of GNA forces, and between Benghazi's Benina International Airport (BEN), Jufra airbase, and Sirte's Ghardabiya airbase for the LNA.

#### WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In a comprehensive piece published by DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, Libya expert Emadeddin Badi, explores the various transformations post-2011 that led to the hybrid security structure in Libya. The study was conducted with the aim of providing tangible recommendations and inform current security-sector reforms (SSR) and initiatives targeting Libya's security ecosystem. Badi writes "The hybrid nature of the security sector makes the typical dichotomies of SSR practices – such as state versus non-state and formal versus informal – impractical in reality as the delimitations between these dimensions have collapsed overtime. As a result, focusing solely on strengthening formal institutional structures and practices of security and justice provision may lead to cosmetic changes in security sector governance as actors selectively adopt measures and narratives that strengthen their legitimacy and disguise this manoeuvre as SSR. In addition, the overreaching of armed actors into the economic sphere implies that a security-centric or purely institutional conceptualization of SSR processes, which distances the process from wider socio-economic and political factors, will be inadequate by design. Consequently, a security-centric process of integration that does not factor in armed actors' alternative revenue-generation mechanisms may result in the further institutionalization of corruption at the state level as armed actors integrate while retaining their revenue streams. At a more granular level, the functionality of security sector governance, as well as the quality of human security, is largely predicated on the type of relationship that exists between formal forces and institutions (such as security sector directorates) and quasi-official or informal groups (such as local armed actors). This relationship is not only a key consideration for macro-level SSR programming, but also of paramount importance to interim security arrangements and targeted SSR efforts."

#### SECURITY FORECAST

The attempt to enter the NOC office by force in Tripoli on 23 Nov highlights the current context of heightened tensions in the oil sector. While the motive is unclear at the time of writing, there are currently multiple stakeholders with varying interests involved after the dispute between CBL governor Sadik Al-Kabeer and Sanallah was made public. In relation to the IS threat, local reports allege IS militants have established a presence in Sabratah on 13 November, a local farm in Al-Ajaylat, and more recently in Msallatah's Al-Amamra area. In Al-Ajaylat, the reports allege militants set up base in a farm, from where they coordinate logistics and operate narcotics and human-smuggling operations to earn revenue. In addition, unconfirmed reports from pro-Gaddafi outlets claim IS militants raised black flags in the Msallatah vicinity and faced no resistance on 16 November. In Sirte, Over the past 48hrs, reports indicate the majority of bakeries in Sirte were closed due to a shortage of diesel across the city. Of note, local bakeries commonly rely on diesel-operated generators due to frequent power cuts. The development is expected to exacerbate local grievances and may result in sporadic security incidents, including protests and road closures. In the central region, pro-LNA accounts are growing increasingly bellicose, alleging GNA forces are rallying in Abugrein ahead of offensive operations. The pro-LNA accounts warned that GNA forces are "beating the drums of war". For its part, the GNA Sirte-Jufra Ops Room declared LNA forces mobilised south and east Sirte, including in Wadi Harawah, ahead of an anticipated violation of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) ceasefire. The GNA and LNA mobilisations have not been independently confirmed. Any manoeuvre could be misinterpreted and result in skirmishes. Separately, the discovery of the VBIED south Ras Lanuf would closely follow a high-profile meeting attended by UN ASRSG Stephanie Williams in Brega to discuss the unification of the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG).

#### LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

On 18 November, the US House of Representatives passed the "Libya Stabilization Act" which imposes sanctions on those who undermine the country's peace and stability. The House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee introduced amendments to the bill and submitted it to Congress last June. The amendments focused on a peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis, support for the United Nations (UN) embargo on Libya, as well as support for Libya's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity. The Bill, which still requires the approval of the US President, includes sanctions and aid related to the conflict in Libya. The bill provides statutory authority for an executive order dated 19 April 2016 imposing property and visa blocking sanctions on contributors to Libya's violence, notably those supporting/engaging with a foreign person operating in Libya on behalf of Russia in a military capacity. In addition, the bill threatens sanctions against those missing Libyan state assets or natural resources and those complicit in human rights abuses in Libya. The sanctions expire on 31 December 2024. The Act includes the publication of unclassified reports on foreign presence in Libya and the extent of Russia's involvement within 90 days. These reports will have broader diplomatic ramifications when released. Meanwhile, the US Agency for International Development may provide humanitarian assistance to Libyan communities/individuals in urgent need of health supplies, food, and shelter. In addition, the Department of State will work to strengthen Libya's democratic governance, including assistance on unifying Libya's financial and governing institutions and ensuring transparent and credible elections in Libya. The Department of the Treasury will vote for international financial institutions to support an economic recovery in Libya that complements the establishment of democratic institutions and rule of law.

# About Whispering Bell



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