



**Weekly Libya .Xplored preview**

February 01, 2019

Prepared by Risk Analysis Team, Libya

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

LIBYA ACTIVITY MAP ..... 3

TRIPOLI ACTIVITY MAP ..... 4

OUTLOOK ..... 5

**Short term outlook** ..... 5

**Medium to long term outlook** ..... 5

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS..... 5

**Governance**..... 5

**Security** ..... 6

**Migrant Crisis** ..... 6

**Oil & Gas** ..... 6

**Transport**..... 7

KEY DATES ..... 7

THREAT MATRIX..... 7

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ..... 8

**Security** ..... 8

        LNA: Expansion continues in Fezzan, and creeps into Tripolitania ..... 8

WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT ..... 8

**Tripolitania** ..... 8

**Cyrenaica** ..... 8

**Fezzan**..... 9

ACRONYM LIST..... 10

GARDAWORLD INFORMATION SERVICES ..... 11

GARDAWORLD ..... 11

**This is an abridged version of the GardaWorld Weekly Libya .Xplored report. To subscribe to our full report or to request a quote for security services in Libya please contact Nicholas Bennett, Regional Director, Libya.**

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**LIBYA ACTIVITY MAP**



IED	SAF	Armed Clash	Suicide Attack	VBIED	IDF	SA Fire	HG/Mine/RPG	CP Incident	Kidnap	Civil Unrest	Crime	Threat Warning	Accident	Military Op	Health	Airstrike

February 01, 2019

**TRIPOLI ACTIVITY MAP**



IED	SAF	Armed Clash	Suicide Attack	VBIED	IDF	SA Fire	HG/Mine/RPG	CP Incident	Kidnap	Civil Unrest	Crime	Threat Warning	Accident	Military Op	Health	Airstrike

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## OUTLOOK

### Short term outlook

- The Libyan National Army (LNA) is continuing its expansion in the south and north-west of the country. It has moved forces to the south of the Nafousa Mountains however it is expanding its influence further with local and established tribal, social and armed groups in the north-west pledging allegiance, changing the balance of power in Libya. There is the potential for increasing tensions in Tripolitania.
- Tensions in the south of Tripoli are beginning to increase again with forces maneuvering in the area. The area remains unstable and further fighting remains possible.
- The north-west coastline remains unstable with local, national and international actors vying for influence and control. Further maneuvering and potential confrontations are possible in the short to medium term.
- Terrorist groups remain active across Libya and will continue to mount attacks against security forces, governmental and state institutions. They also pose a threat to more symbolic targets as well as the international community. The threat posed by these groups is assessed to have increased in the north-west following an increase in operational tempo.

### Medium to long term outlook

- Work continues to reach a consensus on the holding of the National Gathering (now expected in February) and the constitution referendum in preparation for elections mooted to take place in the first half of 2019. There remain a number of spoilers as well as those supporting the parallel Libyan roadmap which is focused initially on restructuring the Presidential Council. Domestic and international competition and opposing agendas will continue to fuel division and hamper positive progress.
- Tripoli militias are consolidating against the Minister of Interior (GNA), risking new fault lines and tensions being created in the capital while Prime Minister Sarraj (GNA) tries to consolidate power and maintain his position in the face of deepening divisions in the Presidential Council. Tripoli will not gain long-term stability until there is political, and military, unification and it will continue to see various stakeholders looking to gain, retain or expand influence in the city.
- Moves to combat the security vacuum in the south, and to halt and reverse deteriorating living conditions have the potential to create areas of national unity, as well as competition. The southern security vacuum has ensured that transnational and domestic terrorist groupings, as well as foreign mercenaries and rebel groups, have space to regroup, train and create rear support areas. LNA moves to confront these forces will see an extension of Field Marshal Haftar's influence in the region however this will depend as much on diplomacy as it will military success. The presence of rebel groups from Chad and Sudan could draw both countries further into the Libyan crisis.

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

### Governance

- Tensions persist between SRSG Ghassan Salamé and the east after Salamé was critical of the Operation Southern Liberation in Fezzan. The Speaker of the HoR, Aguila Saleh, has claimed that Salamé has not communicated with them over the National Conference and claimed he was biased towards the GNA. Brigadier General Ahmed Mismari of the LNA claimed Salamé had become part of the problem in Libya, prompting Salamé to state that UNSMIL's role was to mediate between all parties.
- The HoR voted to amend the contested referendum law at the request of the High National Election Commission and began discussing the presidential election law this week. Saleh has stated that the HoR is in the process of issuing a law to elect a president.
- Prime Minister (HoR) Thinni has claimed he will take "strict measures" against the Awqaf Authority whom he claims are "making decisions without any consultation with the offices of authority." The authority is run by Madkhali Salafists who have been using the authority's influence to spread the ideology. Their influence in Libya continues to grow, largely through their influence within the security forces.
- The head of the High Council of State, Khalid Mishri, announced this week that he is resigning from the Muslim Brotherhood. The move comes as some members of the HoR look to introduce a bill to designate the Muslim Brotherhood in Libya as a prohibited terrorist organization. Reports indicate that there are also internal

February 01, 2019

divisions with the Muslim Brotherhood which has resulted in a number of resignations following a recent meeting.

- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated that a final political solution needed to be reached before any dates for elections were set. The comments came during a meeting with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi. There has been some suggestion that UNSMIL is now looking to delay the elections until later in the year “until there is more support from rival leader`s.”
- The HoR filed corruption charges against the Deputy Health Minister (HoR) Saad Aaqoub. The HoR has accused Aaqoub of ignoring three previous court orders filed against him and stealing money from a charitable fund that was allocated to help special needs children in Jordan.
- Italy has appointed Giuseppe Buccino as the new ambassador to Libya. Buccino previously held the post between September 2011 and February 2015. He replaces Giuseppe Perrone who had been declared “persona non grata” in August 2018 by the HoR after they claimed he had broken diplomatic protocol by “repeatedly calling for a delay to the Libyan elections” which they stated was interference in Libyan affairs.

### Security

- The LNA has continued to expand its influence in Fezzan this week and has also begun to push northwards into Tripolitania. They have deployed forces to the south of the Nafousa Mountains while various social and armed groups begin to pledge allegiance around the north-west.
- Prime Minister (GNA) Fayeze Sarraj, in conjunction with the High Council of State, is allegedly looking to appoint a military chief for southern Libya. The move apparently has conditional support from Misrata, who lost much of their influence in the area during 2017 when the LNA dislodged Third Force. Sarraj also stated that the GNA was working on economic reforms in the area. The move to appoint a military chief could increase tensions with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar who launched a large military operation in Fezzan on January 15 however it is also possible that the appointment is being done in cooperation with the LNA as part of efforts to reunite the military.
- The ceasefire to the south of Tripoli has continued to hold this week however tensions have once again increased as troops mobilize in Suq al-Khamis. The troops are allegedly under the command of Osama Jwelli and are intent on moving on Tarhunah. The Aldawon tribe has stated it is remaining neutral in the current conflict and will support the police and military in Tarhunah.
- Security forces have killed Al-Qaeda and IS terrorists in Sabha, Derna and Sirte this week. The LNA has also begun transporting IS prisoners from Sabha to Qarnada prison in Shahat.
- The Ministry of Interior (GNA) has stated that any military presence or mobilization inside or outside Tripoli which does not conform to the new security arrangements, will be subject to legal proceedings. The statement comes after reports that forces under the command of GNA Western Commander, Osama Jwelli, were mobilizing in Suq al-Khamis with the intent of moving on Tarhunah.

### Migrant Crisis

- The IOM has stated that 18,000 people have gone missing on migratory routes across the Mediterranean region from October 2013 to December 2018. 84,345 migrants and refugees entered Europe by sea in 2018, mainly through Spain which was the leading destination for 2018. The number of people leaving Libya reduced significantly during 2018.
- Thirteen people of different African nationalities have been arrested on the Tunisian side of the border by a joint patrol of the National Guard of Ben Guerdane and Remada for crossing the border illegally.
- UNHCR has confirmed there was an increase in the number of illegal migrants arriving in Misrata, Khoms and Tripoli last week. Around 470 people have been rescued by the Libyan Coastguard since the start of 2019.
- The Netherlands refused an Italian request to take in 47 migrants stranded on the Seawatch, saying there was a “need to distinguish between genuine refugees and economic migrants.” The migrants were eventually allowed to disembark in Sicily after ten days however the vessel is reported to have been blocked in Catania.

### Oil & Gas

- Mustapha Sanalla, Chairman of the NOC, has stated that Sharara will remain closed “until the armed group occupying the site leaves.” Sanalla stated that “the armed group attempting to hold NOC and Libya’s economic recovery to ransom must leave the field before NOC will consider restarting production.”
- There are reports suggesting the NOC is in talks with a British security company to provide security in the southern oil fields while other reports suggest the Russian Wagner Group is set to move to the area in support

## Weekly Libya .Xplored Preview

February 01, 2019

of the LNA. The reports come as Sanalla appeared to suggest he wanted an independent security force under the control of the NOC to protect the fields however he later dismissed the comments as been misrepresented.

### Transport

- The US investment firm, The Guidry Group, has announced that both east and west Libya have come together to formally agree support for the port of Susah project. The port will be the most highly-automated and largest deep-sea port in North Africa. Susah is near the eastern city of Bayda and the port is scheduled to be completed by 2022.
- Libyan Airlines have begun a new service between Istanbul and Benina Airport in Benghazi. The service is to run three times a week.
- Reports indicate that Sirte Airport may reopen mid-2019. The news comes after a plane landed at the airport last week. The facility has been closed since IS took control of the town in 2015. It was damaged and has since been looted on multiple occasions prior to maintenance work being carried out over recent months.
- A ceremony was held on January 26 to inaugurate Derna's Port Customs Centre and its operations in conjunction with World Customs Day. The port had been shut for around four years.
- Mishri has denounced the increase in ticket fares by Libyan Airlines. Mishri stated that having surplus workers within the business was not a justification for raising prices and that customers should not be made to pay "for the irresponsible fiscal policy of the company." He also stated that the Ministry of Economy should step in.

## KEY DATES

Date	Occasion	Comment
February	National Gathering	
February 17	Libyan Revolution Day	Public Holiday
March	Planned local council elections	
March – June	UNSMIL proposed timelines for elections	
May 01	Labour Day	
June 05 – 06	Eid ul-Fitr	End of Ramadan
August 11	Arafat Day	
August 12-14	Eid al-Adha	
September 01	Islamic New Year	

## THREAT MATRIX

Region	Political	Terrorism	Militancy	Crime	K&R
Tripolitania	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	High	High
Cyrenaica	High	High	Moderate	High	High
Fezzan	High	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	High	Extreme

### Threat Scale

Minimal

Low

Moderate

High

Extreme

## LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

### Security

#### LNA: Expansion continues in Fezzan, and creeps into Tripolitania

The LNA has gained significant traction this week in both Fezzan and increasingly, in Tripolitania. In Fezzan, the force has taken full control of Sabha city after Checkpoint 17, on the road to Ghat, fell to them on January 31. The LNA expansion was expected to be challenged however, mainly by Chadian rebels who have exploited the south's security vacuum over the last few years to establish a presence outside of Chad. The group's risk being squeezed, unable to return to Chad and with LNA pressure bearing down on them in Fezzan, they were expected to push back at some stage. This manifested on the morning of February 01 when Chadian rebels advanced north from Taraghin to attack 128 Battalion (LNA) in Ghadduwah at dawn. Fierce fighting ensued until the LNA mounted an airstrike at 1000hrs, silencing the Chadian guns.

This week, the LNA launched Operation Hamada Belt which has pushed the northern line to Qayrat and across to Ghadames. With LNA troops now to the south of the Nafousa Mountains, various tribal, social and armed groups have begun pledging their allegiance in the north-west.

## WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### Tripolitania

#### Significant activity

- Shooting - Jan 25, Tripoli Province, Karzaz: An Egyptian national was shot and killed during an armed robbery in the Karzaz area of Misrata.
- Shooting - Jan 25, Nalut Province, Nalut: A member of the Mashashiya tribe was shot and wounded following the attempted armed robbery of a vehicle.
- Arrest - Jan 25, Misrata Province, Misrata: Security forces have arrested a man who was displaced from Derna.
- Airstrike - Jan 26, Nuqat Al-Khams Province, Libya - Tunisia Border: An airstrike targeted three vehicles smuggling fuel near the Libya/ Tunisian border.
- Arrest - Jan 27, Misrata Province, Tamina: A suspect was arrested after a raid on a building allegedly being used to sell weapons and alcohol in Tamina, Misrata.
- Crime - Jan 28, Az Zawiyah Province, Zawiyah Power Plant: A vehicle carrying air filters was targeted by armed robbers near the Zawiyah power station. The driver was briefly held and his mobile stolen.
- Arrest - Jan 28, Nuqat Al-Khams Province, Libya - Tunisia Border: 86 Battalion arrested a group of Algerian smugglers near the border between Libya, Tunisia and Algeria. Authorities discovered cosmetics, gold and a number of other unidentified objects.
- Arrest - Jan 30, Tripoli Province, Swani: A criminal armed gang operating in Swani and Crimea were arrested by the Jafara Security Directorate. The gang had been involved in robberies, killings and kidnappings. A prominent Chadian rebel, Lieutenant Colonel Bukhari Mohammed al-Bukhari was part of the gang and one of those arrested. He is alleged to have taken part in various clashes.
- Arrest - Jan 30, Sirte Province, Sirte: 166 Battalion arrested Khalifa al-Barq, a suspected former leader of IS, at his home in Sirte.

### Cyrenaica

#### Incidents

- Armed Clash - Jan 27, Derna Province, Derna: An LNA soldier was killed by sniper fire during ongoing clashes in the Old City.
- Shooting - Jan 27, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: A civilian was wounded by a stray bullet in Majouri.
- Accident - Jan 28, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: A man was killed when his dynamite which he was using for fishing, detonated prematurely off the coast of Benghazi.

## Weekly Libya .Xplored Preview

February 01, 2019

- Crime - Jan 29, Kufra Province, Tazirbu: Security forces seized a vehicle used for smuggling by Sudanese nationals. The seizure came as part of a two-day anti-smuggling operation.
- Arrest - Jan 29, Benghazi Province, Salmani: A suspect was arrested for using counterfeit bills.
- Arrest - Jan 29, Benghazi Province, Benina: 106 Brigade (LNA) arrested Yusif al-Wakwak after he smashed a police car window at Benina Airport on December 26 to steal a million Euros in cash. The money had been confiscated earlier from a passenger who had tried to smuggle it abroad. It is unclear if Wakwak was connected to the money originally. He was caught on CCTV using a rifle to break the car window in a video which was released publicly. Wakwak is the brother of Ezzidine al-Wakwak al-Barghathi, an influential tribal leader and head of Benina Security who sided with Haftar in 2014 and allowed him the use of Benina Airport. Relations have however reportedly become strained.
- Arrest - Jan 29, Derna Province, Derna: The LNA arrested Alamin Ali Kalfa, a member of al-Qaeda. Kalfa is allegedly responsible for a number of assassinations of security officials.
- Shooting - Jan 29, Al-Butnan Province, Tobruk: A civilian was wounded by a stray bullet and taken to hospital in Benghazi.
- Demonstration - Jan 30, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: A small protest was held against UN Envoy Ghassan Salamé outside the Municipality of Benghazi. Protestors claimed Salamé was biased towards the GNA and Muslim Brotherhood.

## Fezzan

### Significant activity

- Demonstration - Jan 25 Morning, Sabha Province, Sabha: A demonstration was held against the LNA military operation in Jadeed. This may have been in connection to the arrest of Abdelmajid Othman on January 24. His home was raided and another two people were also arrested. Footage of the search which left his home "ransacked" caused outrage online.
- Armed Clash - Jan 27 12:00, Sabha Province, Sabha: Clashes took place southeast of Sabha between the LNA and Chadian armed gangs.
- Military Operation - Jan 27, Sabha Province, Hajara: The SDF (LNA) mounted a raid against the home of Adel Ahmad al-Abdali al-Makeni (aka Abu al-Zubayr al-Libi), a commander within al-Qaeda. Abdali detonated an explosive device during the raid, killing himself, his mother and his daughter. His wife was seriously hurt and taken to intensive care.
- Shooting - Jan 28, Sabha Province, Sabha: Two members of 128 Battalion were shot dead in a possible revenge killing. The attack has been linked to the killing of two brothers as they passed a roadblock in September 2018. 128 Battalion is currently securing Sabha Airport
- Crime - Jan 28, Wadi Al-Hayaa Province, Obari: Armed robbers attacked the National Commercial Bank in an effort to steal 4 million LYD which had recently arrived at the bank. The robbers were engaged initially by bank security before 137 Infantry Battalion (LNA) responded and fought the gang off. They managed to get away with three mobile phones belonging to bank staff.
- Accident - Jan 31, Murzuq Province, Murzuq: A Nigerian national was killed in an accidental explosion.
- Arrest - Jan 31, Sabha Province, Sabha: The Joint Security Room arrested a gang of African nationals suspected of stealing copper cables and water pumps from farms.

## ACRONYM LIST

AQ - Al-Qaeda  
AIOR – Anti-IS Operations Room (Sabratah)  
BAM – Al Bunyan Al Marsous (Misrata aligned)  
BDB – Benghazi Defense Brigade / Saraya Defend Benghazi (SDB) (Al Qaeda-aligned – AAS and RSCB associated/umbrella group)  
CBL – Central Bank of Libya  
CNI – Critical National Infrastructure  
DACOCT - Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism  
DPF – Derna Protection Force (an amalgamation of all militias in Derna, including the MSCD)  
GATMJB -  
GECOL – General Electricity Company of Libya  
GMMR – Great Man-made River  
GNA – Government of National Accord (UN-backed)  
GNC – General National Congress  
HNEC – High National Elections Commission  
HoR – House of Representatives (Tobruk-based)  
IDP - Internally Displaced Persons  
IED - Improvised Explosive Device  
IOC - International Oil Company  
IS - Islamic State  
LIFG – Libyan Islamic Fighting Group  
LNA – Libyan National Army  
LNG – Libyan National Guard  
LPA – Libyan Political Agreement  
LROR - Libyan Revolutionary Operations Room  
MoD - Ministry of Defense  
MoF - Ministry of Finance  
MoFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
MoHE - Ministry of Higher Education  
MoI - Ministry of Interior  
MoJ - Ministry of Justice  
MoO - Ministry of Oil  
MoT - Ministry of Transportation  
MSCD – Mujahideen Shura Council of Derna (AQ aligned)  
NFDK - No Further Details Known  
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization (aid/charity)  
NOC – National Oil Company  
NSG – National Salvation Government (GNC)  
NSTR - Nothing Significant To Report  
PC – Presidency Council (GNA)  
PG – Presidential Guard  
PFG- Petroleum Facilities Guard  
PSC - Private Security Company  
PSD - Private Security Detail  
RPG - Rocket Propelled Grenade  
RSCB - Revolutionary Shura Council of Benghazi  
RTA - Road Traffic Accident  
SDB – Saraya Defend Benghazi / Benghazi Defense Brigade (BDB) (Al Qaeda-aligned – AAS and RSCB associated/umbrella group)  
SDF – Rada Deterrence Force/ Special Deterrence Force/ Rada  
Technical - An improvised weapon-mounted pick-up truck  
TPF – Tripoli Protection Force (TRB, Nawasi, Bab Tajoura Brigade and Ghneiwa umbrella group)  
UXO - Unexploded Ordnance

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For more information on how our services can support your business in Libya contact:

Nicholas Bennett  
Regional Director, Libya:  
[Nicholas.Bennett@garda.com](mailto:Nicholas.Bennett@garda.com)

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## **Weekly Libya .Xplored Preview**

February 01, 2019

### **Middle East**

International Protective Services Headquarters  
Office 2502, Tower 2, Currency House  
DIFC, PO Box 482069  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

### **United States**

1101 Wilson Boulevard  
Suite 1725  
Arlington, VA, 22209  
United States

### **UK**

Two London Bridge  
London  
SE1 9RA

### **Europe**

37-39 rue des Deux Eglises  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

[garda.com](http://garda.com)