



## Weekly Libya .Xplored preview

March 08, 2019

Prepared by Risk Analysis Team, Libya

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**LIBYA ACTIVITY MAP**



# OUTLOOK

## Short term outlook

- The Libyan National Army (LNA) is continuing its expansion in the south and north-west of the country. It has forces in the Nafousa Mountains, and it is expanding its influence further with local 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 as “revolutionary” groups begin to organize against the growing threat posed by the LNA.
- 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. These groups may experience short term disruption due to LNA operations in the south of the country, but the threat remains extent.

## Medium to long term outlook

- The growing traction of the LNA is changing the threat landscape in Libya, creating new fault lines, changing loyalties and mobilizing opposition. The situation remains dynamic and will heavily influence political progress in the nation. Attempts to “defend” the capital will likely create deepening divisions. Prime Minister Sarraj is having to play an ever more delicate balancing act between competing interests in and around the capital which risk undermining his government further. 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.
- Work continues to reach a consensus on the holding of the National Gathering and the constitution referendum in preparation for elections now mooted to take place in October 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.
- 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 power vacuum that had helped incubate terrorist organizations, criminal gangs, and foreign rebels is now being challenged by the LNA which has exerted its influence over key areas of Fezzan. This could have ripple effects across the Sahel.

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## Governance

- The US, France, Italy, and the UK have welcomed the “agreement” made in the UAE between Prime Minister (GNA) Sarraj and Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also issued a statement in support of the meeting “commending both parties” on the “preliminary non-binding agreement made during the meeting.” Nizar Kawan, Vice President and head of the political department of the Justice and Construction Party (Muslim Brotherhood), also expressed his support for the meeting.
- Reports indicate that indirect talks between Haftar and Sarraj may take place in the middle of next week in Abu Dhabi.
- Sarraj has stated that Libya will hold parliamentary and presidential elections by the end of the year. Sarraj made the statement to the heads of the Western Region’s municipalities.
- The HCS has reiterated that the LPA remains the only framework for political process. The HCS supports the holding of elections to end the transitional phase and called on the HoR to work towards the unification of state institutions.
- The president of the HCS, Khalid Mishri, had a two-day visit to Qatar and met with senior Qatari officials.
- Some groups have released statements this week opposing the LNA and criticizing UNSMIL. The Grand Mufti has followed this up by calling for protests against UNSMIL as they seek to influence the organization.
- Chad has closed its border with Libya. The move comes after armed clashes in Kouri Bougouri across the border and convoys of opposition groups dislodged by the LNA trying to move back over the border.

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- The HoR has rescinded the death sentence against the late King, Idris Senussi, and reinstated Libyan nationality to him and his family. Senussi was in exile when he was sentenced to death in November 1971 after the Gadhafi coup of September 1969.

### Security

- The LNA has continued to take control of towns and villages in Fezzan. They are encountering continued issues around Murzuq town however.
- The Deputy Chief of Staff (GNA) Salem Juha has signaled his support for the LNA and unification of the military. The comments came as Sarraj demoted the Chief of Staff, Major General Abdul Rahman al-Tawil, and “effectively ended his military career” after he refused to step down following similar comments to Juha.
- The LNA has indicated an intent to take control of the Tunisian border after taking control of the Algerian border further south.
- The Sirte Protection Force has highlighted a lack of financial and logistical support from the GNA.
- Another soldier from 111 Infantry Battalion, which defected to the LNA in February, was assassinated in Gharyan.
- Airspace at Mitiga in Tripoli was shut for a couple of hours over two days during the week with reporting suggesting a further incident on the afternoon of March 08. There were various reasons given including that drone activity had been sighted.
- The commander of the Sabha Military Zone (LNA), Major General Muhammad al-Ghazawi, has threatened to use air assets to target human traffickers and fuel smugglers in the south.
- The Desert Patrols Force in the Hamada al-Hamra area has confirmed its support to the LNA in a public statement.
- The Council of Zintan, the Office of the Social Coordinator, the Armed Forces Support Force, the Sons of Zintan, and the families of the martyrs of Zintan issued a joint statement expressing their support for the LNA.
- Sheikhs and tribes in Rujban publicly announced their support for the LNA.
- Tuareg dignitaries met with Haftar in Benghazi and stated their support for the LNA and their operation in the south.
- The first batch of Special Forces soldiers graduated from Azizyah Training Camp (Warshefana) on March 06 in front of GNA Western Commander Osama Jweli.

### Health

- A four-month-old child has been diagnosed with malaria in Abu Saleem, Tripoli. An emergency meeting has been convened to discuss the issue, and Abu Saleem has declared a high alert. Malaria had been eradicated from Libya however has crept back in the chaos of the post-revolutionary years; however this is the first case reported in Tripoli.

### Migrant Crisis

- Leaked EU documents allegedly indicate a Libyan coastguard commander was disciplined after a bungled rescue operation of 130 people on November 06, 2017 in which 20 people were feared to have drowned.
- Sudanese authorities stopped an attempt by 39 Sudanese migrants from crossing illegally into Libya on March 03. The people were being smuggled by a gang of five people who were later arrested in Fasher.
- Operation Sophia has announced the launch of two new training programs for the Libyan Coastguard in Croatia and Crete.
- Forty migrants were rescued off the coast of Lampedusa after leaving Sabratalah three days before.
- UK Embassy officers and UNHCR representatives visited Tariq Seka migrant shelter in Tripoli to discuss delays in the transfer of vulnerable migrants to Niger.

### Economy

- The Central Bank of Libya resumed the \$500 grant for each family from March 03. The grants had been delayed due to an investigation of fake national identity numbers, not due to a lack of funds according to the bank.

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### Oil & Gas

- The NOC lifted the force majeure at Sharara Oilfield after the LNA gave written assurances over security concerns on March 04.
- The High Social Council of the Libyan Tuareg issued a statement in support of the LNA and the Anger of Fezzan Movement prior to the force majeure at Sharara being lifted. It has also criticized NOC Chairman Mustafa Sanalla.
- Repsol, OMV, Total, and Equinor (known as the 'Repsol Consortium'), have partnered with the NOC and signed a \$20 million agreement to support a series of sustainable development projects adjacent to sites operated by NOC subsidiary Akakus. The fund will support projects in Obari, Sabha, Zintan, Jadu, Alriyayna, Yefren, Alrujban and Zawiya al-Gharbia over the next two years.

### Infrastructure

- The Man-Made River Authority has stated that the interrupted water supply to parts of Tripoli this week was due to leaking distribution pipes in the city.
- The Department of Health Services is assessing Derna Old City in order to work out what needs to happen to allow people to return to the area. The Old City was taken by LNA forces in February and has suffered serious damage.

## KEY DATES

Date	Occasion	Comment
March	National Gathering	Initially planned for January 2019
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
July	AU/ UN International Conference on Libya?	Addis Ababa
August 11	Arafat Day	
August 12-14	Eid al-Adha	
September 01	Islamic New Year	
October	AU proposed elections	

## 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

### Governance

#### LNA opposition begins to organize in Tripolitania

A number of meetings have taken place around the north-western region this week as various groups begin to coordinate and organize against the LNA. The meetings may well have been triggered by the meeting in Abu Dhabi between Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar and Prime Minister Sarraj on February 27. The meeting has stoked fears in some factions of a possible deal between the GNA and LNA which would significantly increase the risk that some groups could end up marginalized.

### Security

#### LNA: The expansion continues in Fezzan

The LNA has continued its expansion in Fezzan, moving into various towns and villages without any confrontations. Reporting from the south suggests a genuine increase in security around Sabha, at least for now. As expected however there are continued problems around Murzuq town. The LNA redeployed combat troops from the town last week as they pushed south, leaving local police to provide security.

#### LNA: Further pledges in Tripolitania

The LNA has also had further pledges of support in Tripolitania this week. Most notably from groups in Rujban and Zintan. Both areas are known to have existing support bases for the LNA. Zawiyah has stated its objection to the militarization of the state however reporting has consistently indicated growing traction in the city for the LNA.

#### GNA: Sarraj moves against his chief of staff

Major General Abdul Rahman al-Tawil, the Chief of Staff for the GNA, refused to step down this week after being sacked in February. Tawil then reached out to Haftar, stating he would meet with the LNA and supported the unification of the military. Sarraj responded by demoting Tawil and effectively "ending his military career."

## WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### Tripolitania

#### Significant activity

- Demonstration - Mar 01, Tripoli Province, Hay Andalous: A small demonstration with around 10-20 people was held in front of the Peoples Hall in support of Haftar. Demonstrators were reportedly dispersed by Nawasi Brigade who fired some shots into the air. The area is known to have a small pro-Haftar group.
- Armed Clash - Mar 03 17:00, Nuqat Al-Khams Province, Tallil: The Coastal Road has closed in Tallil due to heavy clashes on the Ras Yusuf Road between CID (Western Region) Sabratah and the CID from Ajaylat. The fighting was triggered by the arrest of a man named Assafra from Ajaylat on March 02 by the CID (Western Region).
- Arrest - Mar 03, Tripoli Province, Tajura: Faisal Karkab, Chairman of the Libyan Post Telecommunication and Information Technology, was arrested by the Bab Tajoura Battalion on charges of embezzlement and falsification of paperwork.
- Murder/ Execution - Mar 03, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Province, Gharyan: Adel Ali al-Dhawi, a soldier with 111 Infantry Battalion (LNA) was assassinated. Dhawi was one of those who supported the battalion's recent defection to the LNA and is the second soldier to be assassinated.
- Armed Clash - Mar 03, Misrata Province, Sadada: Forces from the Sudanese Liberation Movement - Minni Minnawi (SLM - MM) mounted an attack on fighters from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), another Sudanese rebel group in Sadada town.
- Demonstration - Mar 06 12:00, Tripoli Province, Oea: Supporters of the Grand Mufti held a demonstration outside Oea to demand UNSMIL leave Libya. The protest remained peaceful with it eventually moving to the rear gate of the complex.

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- Shooting - Mar 07, Az Zawiyah Province, Zawiyah: Four gunmen opened fire on the First Support Force of the Directorate of Security HQ twice.
- RPG - Mar 07 18:00, Az Zawiyah Province, Zawiyah: Ahmed Kardmin, Osama Bashut and Ali Rahoooma were killed whilst in a vehicle after men opened fire with an RPG. The men were likely responsible for the drive-by shootings on the First Support Force.
- Arrest - Mar 07, Tripoli Province, Tripoli: A gang of five men allegedly linked to IS was arrested trying to infiltrate Tripoli. Three were dressed as women.

## Cyrenaica

### Significant activity

- Crime - Mar 01, Al-Wahat Province, Jalu: Three people were arrested for possession of firearms and suspected narcotics.
- Crime - Mar 01, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: A criminal gang was arrested for a series of robberies. Weapons were also recovered.
- Assault - Mar 01, Derna Province, Derna: A young man suffering from a mental illness was allegedly assaulted by the LNA.
- Arrest - Mar 02, Al-Wahat Province, Ajdabiya: Security forces arrested a man for manufacturing alcohol and also seized a number of narcotics from him.
- Arrest - Mar 03, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: Security forces arrested a suspect in possession of 40 narcotic pills following a tip-off.
- Arrest - Mar 03, Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar Province, Shahat: Security forces arrested a gang member for theft after a commercial shop was targeted.
- Crime - Mar 06, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: The investigation unit of the Benghazi Security Department have arrested a person in possession of 15,000 Tramadol tablets and seized a vehicle which they were been transported in from the south to Benghazi.
- Arrest - Mar 07, Al-Butnan Province, Tobruk: Security forces arrested a gang in possession of 78 bottles of Rivotril.
- Murder/ Execution - Mar 07, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: A fight over drugs resulted in one person being killed in the 602 buildings area of Benghazi.

## Fezzan

### Significant activity

- Weapons Find - Mar 02, Wadi Al-Hayaa Province, Obari: The LNA found 2 x BM21 MLRS which had been hidden in a tree line to protect them from air reconnaissance.
- Kidnap - Mar 02, Sabha Province, Sabha: Ibrahim Abek, a Mali national, was able to escape from his kidnappers.
- Arson - Mar 02, Sabha Province, Sabha: Unknown perpetrators vandalized and set on fire a staff members car and a tractor at the Sabha Medical Centre.
- Weapons Find - Mar 03, Murzuq Province, Hummayrah: The LNA found a cache of explosives near Umm al-Aranib in what is being described as an IED storage facility.
- Armed Attack - Mar 06, Murzuq Province, Murzuq: An armed group launched an attack against security forces in Murzuq. Three members of the armed group, described as Tebus, were killed in the attack.
- Armed Attack - Mar 06, Murzuq Province, Murzuq: In revenge for an early armed attack, locals went through a number of homes belonging to the Tebu and reportedly killed a disabled young man in front of his sister and mother. The LNA is to send reinforcements to the town and a commander may engage in peace negotiations. The LNA combat units withdrew from the town the week before as they pushed down south with police and other security forces backfilling them in Murzuq. The town is one of the few places where the LNA encountered armed resistance.
- Armed Attack - Mar 07, Murzuq Province, Murzuq: Armed men attacked the home of Ali Adbullah Saleh Rajab in the east of the city. When the men did not find him, they shot dead his four-year-old son Abdullah and his 14-year-old nephew Wael in front of their mothers. The attack comes after a similar attack the day before. The town remains tense. Rajab was reported to be supporting the LNA.

## 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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## **Weekly Libya .Xplored Preview**

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