



Weekly Libya .Xplored preview

September 08, 2019

Prepared by Risk Analysis Team, Libya

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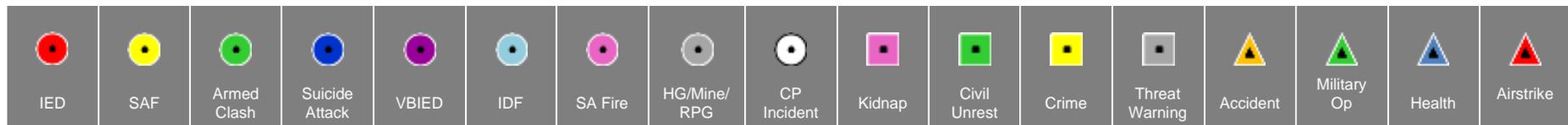
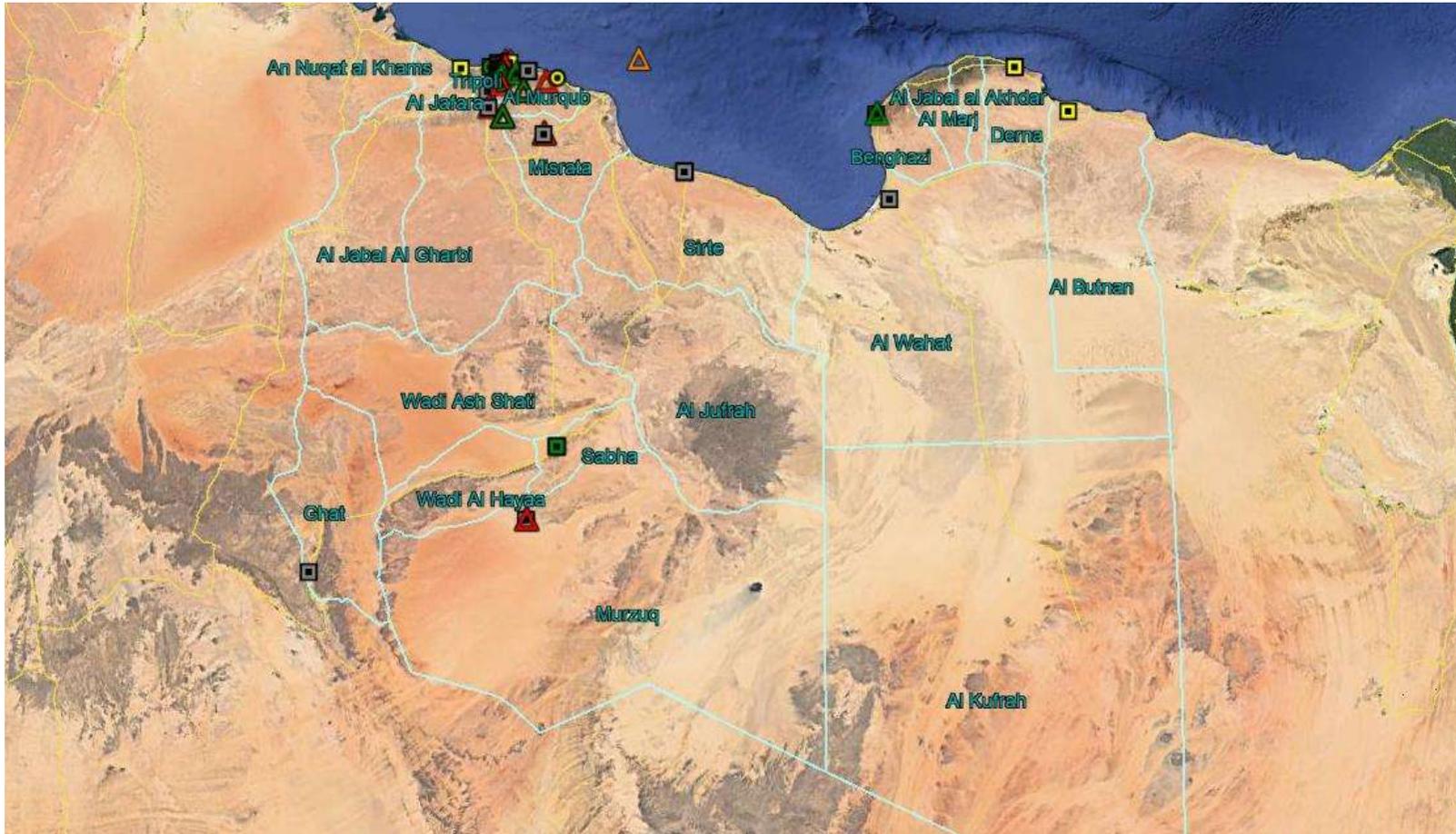
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LIBYA ACTIVITY MAP



TRIPOLITANIA 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

OUTLOOK

Short term outlook

- With a stalemate persisting in Tripoli, the conflict between the Libyan National Army (LNA) and those fighting under the banner of the Government of National Accord (GNA), has begun to spread to the east. The area to the east of the capital is becoming unstable, and there is a growing threat of escalation around the oil crescent/Sirte/ Jufra areas. There are continuing signals that both LNA and GNA forces are planning major offensives, possibly against strategic hubs south of Tripoli itself.
- There remains the potential for a sudden shift on the ground in Tripoli should one side gain an advantage, or if additional fronts expose vulnerabilities in the Tripoli frontlines.
- There is a heightened risk from increased terrorist and criminal activity across Libya as groups and individuals exploit security vulnerabilities caused by the conflict in the north-west.
- There is an increased risk to critical national infrastructure (CNI) with the summer months adding additional pressure to systems. Load shedding and outages could trigger a response from armed groups against CNI while increasing discontent over deteriorating living conditions will result in civil unrest, mainly in the north-west and south of the country. This may manifest in armed violence around fuel stations in particular.

Medium to long term outlook

- The LNA push for control of Libya is altering the balance of power and has resulted in a significant setback for the political process. The outcome of the conflict will be a main factor in determining how and when the political process resumes. The conflict will likely see a shifting of allegiances and various deals as groups and individuals look to protect their spheres of influence and status. It will also impact on factional influences with some empowered by the conflict, and others degraded.
- Terrorist groups remain active across Libya and will continue to mount attacks against security forces, government, and state institutions. Sirte and Fezzan have seen recent reassertions of presence. They also pose a threat to more symbolic targets as well as the international community. The conflict in Tripoli may provide opportunities for IS or others to plan and execute terrorist attacks in Tripolitania.
- Various groups opposed to the LNA, including IS, local groups disenfranchised by the LNA and the Southern Protection Force (GNA) are exploiting the current conflict in Tripolitania to try and destabilize Fezzan and undermine LNA control. Further armed attacks against LNA targets and local towns are likely.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Operation Flood of Dignity/Volcano of Rage

- Intense clashes occurred around the southern suburbs throughout September 07. Clashes in Ain Zara, Khamlet Al-Furjan, Wadie Alrabea and Ramla reportedly caused around 40 GNA fatalities and an unknown number and nature of LNA casualties. The clashes were preceded by several days of build-up as both sides moved military equipment towards Ain Zara (GNA) and Qaser Bin Ghassir (LNA).
- GNA airpower has appeared resurgent in this reporting period, with multiple daily strikes on the LNA supply chain south in Tripoli, in Tarhunah and further afield in Bani Walid. This likely precipitated a further LNA airstrike on control equipment related to the drone capability at Mitiga Airport.
- Reporting indicates that the GNA and LNA may both be preparing for further action around Gharyan. LNA forces were reported to have assembled in the vicinity of Al-Araban, 25km southeast of Gharyan. GNA airstrikes have targeted LNA in position here. The GNA-aligned Gharyan Protection Force has also asserted intent to drive the LNA further back from Asabea, 20km southwest of Gharyan.

Governance

- UNSMIL SRSG Ghassan Salamé in a September 04 address to the UN Security Council (UNSC) stated that a short-lived truce over Eid showed that a full ceasefire was possible and called for foreign powers to exercise positive influence with their GNA and LNA allies. His call was dismissed by the LNA and GNA. LNA spokesman Ahmed Mismari also noted the perceived irrelevance of PM Sarraj in Tripoli and Misrata's realpolitik. However, Libyan media reporting from September 04 stated that elders from the eastern town of Ajdabiya (LNA) had met with those of Zintan (split between LNA/GNA) to discuss ways to end the fighting in Tripoli. Any such activity unlikely to bear fruit for weeks or months.

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- National mediation efforts continue for the conflict in the Fezzan's Murzuq. The Assembly of Elders of the Western and Central Regions on September 07 issued a statement from Yefren in the Nafusa mountains. They reiterated their commitment to continue efforts to stop the conflict between Tebus and Arabs and to restore stability to Murzuq. Their statement further called for assistance for IDPs to return, and for the GNA to 'safeguard' the implementation of the agreement.

Security

- Three to four IDF (mortar) rounds reportedly struck open ground within Mitiga Airport at approximately 0400hrs on September 06. The facility is still closed following the September 01 IDF volley. No casualties or damages have been reported. Official and emergency flights have continued, and it is likely this activity triggered the attack.
- Reporting in this period and in recent weeks hints that local militias may be growing more comfortable with the impasse in the southern suburbs and the operational focus shifting to towns south of Tripoli. If this is the case, overnight, localized, inter-militia small arms clashes may again become part of normal activity in areas of Tripoli not otherwise affected by combat operations.
- Banyan Al-Marsous (BAM) spokesman Mohammed Al-Ghasri said IS were present or passing through Garabuli on August 31, further stating that they had arrived by sea. This echoes similar concerns of IS presence in Garabuli raised by BAM in June 2019 and appears consistent with edicts from IS Global that jihadists should travel to Libya. In related reporting, Sirte's security forces reportedly detained four suspected IS members in Sirte's Al-Thani neighbourhood on the evening of September 04.

Humanitarian and Migrant Crisis

- The UNHCR reported on September 01 that 199,925 people had been displaced by the Tripolitania conflict since it started in early April 2019. It also stated that the death toll was estimated at 1048 with 5,558 wounded. This included more than 100 civilian fatalities and around 300 other civilian casualties.
- The formation of a new governing coalition in Italy could see a shift in Italy's hardline stance on deterring migrant flows to the country. Part of the new coalition agreement is a 'loosening' of Salvini's decision to close Italian ports to NGO rescue ships.
- International and Libyan institutions have highlighted issues with resourcing and inter-agency cooperation on handling migrants since the closure of several Migrant Detention Centers in August. The UNHCR has warned of potential overcrowding in the EU and UN-backed Gathering and Departure Facility (GDF) in Tripoli. The GDF facilitates the repatriation of migrants to their countries of origin or onward journey as refugees and asylum seekers to host countries. The Libyan Coast Guard also reported that it had been forced to release hundreds of migrants in late August after being unable to place them in appropriate accommodation via official channels.

Oil and Gas

- *Reuters* reported on September 06 reported that the NOC had restricted (but not shut off) kerosene supplies to areas controlled by Khalifa Haftar's LNA. The NOC was quoted as saying 'Jet fuel demand has increased in [the east] despite ... civilian [use] remaining unchanged.'

Travel

- As of September 08, no further official information has been released regarding the Mitiga Airport's return to normal operations. An unconfirmed report suggests that a meeting to decide on re-opening will be held on September 15. Anecdotal reporting indicates that Misrata's hotel bookings have surged and that taxi fares between Tripoli and Misrata have increased from LYD 40 to 50 to LYD 300 to 400.

KEY DATES

Date	Occasion	Comment
September 16	Martyr's Day	
October	AU proposed elections	Considered unlikely at present
October 23	Liberation Day	
November 10	Birthday of the Prophet Mohammed	
December 24	Independence Day	

THREAT MATRIX

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

Threat Scale

Minimal

Low

Moderate

High

Extreme

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Operation Flood of Dignity/Volcano of Rage

Weekly Overview

Activity levels in this period have remained broadly consistent with that reported throughout August. Combat operations themselves continue to have a relatively small direct impact on the city centre and the northern suburbs. The Mitiga IDF campaign has continued, despite the facility's closure to commercial operations. The GNA has also targeted LNA reinforcements moving via Bani Walid and Tarhunah.

Ground Operations

An apparent coordinated GNA attempt to push back LNA lines in southern Tripoli took place over September 07. Clashes were reported in Khamlet Al-Furjan, Ain Zara, Wadi Alrabea and in Ramla (east of the disused Tripoli International Airport, TIP). The clashes were preceded by several days of troop movements towards battlefronts in southern Tripoli, as well as artillery and airstrikes around supply lines and opposition dispositions around southern Tripoli, Tarhunah and Bani Waled. However, the main effort of any further activity in the next seven days will likely be a resumption of airstrikes around Tripoli and the Tarhunah supply route

Air Campaign

Airpower has been displayed by both sides before and throughout the week, with more strikes attributed to the GNA than the LNA. Unconfirmed reporting has stated that the GNA had replaced its drone capability following the degradation suffered during the LNA's strikes on Misrata Air College in August. Reporting over the week appears to confirm this.

Airstrikes to disrupt opposition logistics, by both sides, characterised reporting from September 02 to 07. Five GNA airstrikes on September 05 targeted an LNA convoy and other force elements travelling between Tarhunah, to its south.

WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Tripolitania

Significant activity

- Surveillance - Sep 01, Tripoli Province, Garabuli: Aerial surveillance was reported over Garabuli and Zayayna
- UXO - Sep 02, Tripoli Province, Tripoli: EOD teams removed UXO from a home in Tripoli.
- Crime - Sep 01, Sirte Province, Sirte: Armed men reportedly looted a station and section of the pipeline of the GMMR near Sirte on September 01.
- Arrest - Sep 05, Sirte Province, Sirte: Security forces reportedly detained four suspected IS members in Sirte's Al-Thani neighborhood on the evening of September 04.
- Crime - Sep 06, Tripoli Province, Janzour: International media reports have highlighted an armed robbery at a NOC office. The National Company for Drilling and Maintenance of Wells reported that its Tripoli HQ on the Swani road south of Janzour was subject to an armed robbery around dawn on September 06. Two masked men fired shots, assaulted the guards and held them inside the company's headquarters overnight.

Cyrenaica

Significant activity

- Security Operation - Sep 01, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: Benghazi security forces mounted additional patrols and checkpoints in Benghazi early on the morning of September 01. Reporting indicates they were trying to identify vehicles in breach of new counter-terror edits banning tinted windows and mandating correct vehicle licensing.
- Security Announcement - Sep 01, Al-Wahat Province, Ajdabiya: Elements of the LNA 166 Battalion reportedly deployed in Benghazi to deter unspecified criminal activity.
- Arrest - Sep 04, Derna Province, Derna: Security forces in Derna reportedly conducted arrest operations around Derna on the morning of September 05.
- Armed Clash - Sep 04, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: Armed clashes were reported in Al-Wihaishi in Benghazi on the evening of September 04. 'Morality' police attempting to enter an area controlled by a tribal militia were said to have triggered the clashes.

Fezzan

Significant activity

- Airstrike - Sep 01, Afternoon, Murzuq Province, Murzuq: The LNA conducted two airstrikes in Murzuq on the afternoon of August 31. A local official, Mohammed Omar, of the Municipal Council, said that six to eight people were killed.
- Other - Sep 03, Murzuq Province, Murzuq: A shipment of several PKMs and ammunition reportedly for LNA forces in Murzuq on September 03.
- Demonstration - Sep 02, Sabha Province, Sabha: Employees from the Educational Inspection Department protested in Sabha on September 02 to condemn a recent statement from the GNA Ministry of Education accusing them of delaying exam results.
- Threat Warning - Sep 04, Ghat Province, Ghat: In southwest Libya, Ghat's municipal council has warned of likely floods owing to anticipated heavy rainfall in the next week.
- Crime - Sep 07, Sabha Province, Sabha: Sabha Medical Center has suspended its services after an armed attacker assaulted a nurse and shot another staff member in the leg during an attack on September 06. One source suggested that the attacker blamed staff for perceived poor treatment of a family member. The facility's management explained in a public video on social media that services would be limited to emergency provision until poor security has been addressed.

ACRONYM LIST

AQ - Al-Qaeda
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
DF – Direct Fire
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

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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