



Weekly Libya .Xplored preview

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Prepared by Risk Analysis Team, 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

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

- During heavy clashes in southern Tripoli's Ain Zara and Khallet Al-Furjan on September 13, several senior LNA 9 Brigade members, including its commander, were reportedly killed when their vehicle was subject to an airstrike. The Tarhunah elders have asserted their enduring commitment to the LNA. Anti-LNA local sources have expressed views that the deaths were linked to internal disagreement within Tarhunah over the town's commitment to the war, though this appears speculative. Circulated images of the bodies do not appear consistent with a direct hit from an airstrike, but they do not exclude combat related deaths.
- The LNA has continued to target the GNA's (resurgent) drone capability, with several attacks on assets at Mitiga International Airport (MJI) and Misrata Air College (MAC, 4km from Misrata International Airport). Additionally, strikes were reported against GNA drone capabilities at Sirte's Ghardabiyah airbase.
- LNA action has appeared responsive to increasing GNA pressure on LNA supply routes. GNA airstrikes on reinforcements, supplies and capabilities over the last few weeks have steadily crept with greater consistency south and east of the Tripoli operational area. One to two strikes have been reported against Jufra airbase, with GNA-aligned sources claiming destruction of an LNA operations room and the deaths of six UAE officers. LNA airstrikes on vehicle columns in three locations west or south of Sirte also hint at intent to harry supply routes further from the capital and other frontlines south of Tripoli.
- In southern Tripoli, the latter half of the reporting period has seen consistent reports of 'intense clashes' in daylight hours and protracted, harassing IDF throughout hours of darkness.
- The most dynamic combat zone remains the southern Gharyan approaches, 60km south of Tripoli. Intense, protracted combat has been reported throughout the week, with latest reporting indicating that the GNA now control Ghot Al-Reeh, 20km south of Gharyan, and possibly Al-Araban, 25km south-east of Gharyan.

Governance

- UNSMIL SRSG Ghassan Salamé in a September 09 interview with France's *Libération* said he considered an agreement between Haftar and the GNA to be 'conceivable.' His comments highlighted areas where he felt Haftar and various elements in the opposing GNA-alliance could potentially find agreement. UNSMIL later had to rebuke local media outlets for reporting that an LNA withdrawal could be imminent. Salamé's actual comments were themselves dismissed by GNA and LNA aligned stakeholders.
- Germany has highlighted clear intent to assume a greater role in steering an international response to Libya's crisis. On September 11, Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Libya's conflict was 'taking on the dimensions' of that in Syria and risked 'destabilizing the whole Africa region.' The same day, Germany's Ambassador to Libya announced that Germany intended to collaborate with the UN on hosting an international conference on Libya in Berlin in October or November 2019.
- Libya's crisis remains a key policy area for African Governments. A joint statement from Malian President Keïta and Nigerien President Issoufou in Mali alluded to mooted plans for UN and AU backed conferences, calling for coordination between regional and international efforts. Algerian Foreign Minister Sabri Bugadom during a meeting with UNSMIL chief Ghassan Salamé on September 14 called for an immediate ceasefire, a 'Libyan-driven' political solution and international adherence to UN arms embargo on the country. Libya was also discussed during Tunisia's televised presidential debates.
- UNSMIL's mandate was renewed for a further 12 months. UNSC Resolution 2486 (2019) passed on September 12 extended the mission until September 15, 2020.

Security

- IDF against Mitiga has continued, despite the airports continued closure following the IDF volley on September 01. An IDF attack on September 14 reportedly damaged the runway and the tower, with unofficial sources reporting further damage to the runway and tower.

Humanitarian and Migrant Crisis

- The EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC) reportedly voted on September 12 to extend the counter-trafficking Operation Sophia from the end of September 2019 until March 2020. The extension will not see any changes to the existing mandate; the last renewal in March 2019 had seen the withdrawal of surface naval assets at the insistence of Italy's (since departed) Matteo Salvini.
- GNA military officials have called to declare Murzuq a 'disaster area' in order to make use of emergency funding to assist the town's return to relative normalcy. The town was engulfed by conflict throughout July and August. The situation has since calmed, and residents are reported to have started returning.

Travel

- As of September 15, no further official information has been released regarding the Mitiga Airport's re-opening and return to normal operations. A mooted CAA decision meeting was reportedly pushed back to the end of the September 2019, though reported runway damage on September 14 may delay the decision further. Other low-level indications from Mitiga stakeholders increasingly point to a prolonged closure.

KEY DATES

Date	Occasion	Comment
September 16	Martyr's Day	Libyan public holiday
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
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LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Operation Flood of Dignity/Volcano of Rage

Weekly Overview

Activity levels in this period increased across the Tripoli operational area. The Mitiga IDF campaign has continued, despite the facility's closure to commercial operations. GNA harrying of the LNA in its rear areas has seen airstrikes reported in Jufra, south of Sirte province. southern Tripoli and Gharyan's southern approaches have seen warlike operations through the week. Combat operations themselves continue to have a relatively small direct impact on the city center and the northern suburbs.

South of Gharyan

The most dynamic combat zone remains the southern Gharyan approaches, 60km south of Tripoli. The LNA has maintained its apparent intent to recapture its former command and supply hub, lost following a surprise GNA assault on June 26. The GNA-aligned Gharyan Protection Force, bolstered by reinforcements from other areas of the GNA Western Military Region, has appeared this week to have successfully held or captured ground south of the town, though control of territory may remain fluid over the coming week. If the GNA forces can hold Ghot Al-Reeh and Al-Arban then it affords them firm control of two key routes through the Nafusa mountains, via Gharyan itself and the Ghot Al-Reeh to Espiaa route.

Southern Tripoli

In southern Tripoli, the latter half of the reporting period has seen consistent reports of 'intense clashes' in daylight hours and protracted, harassing IDF throughout hours of darkness. Where detail is available, reports indicate that the LNA has initiated most clashes. This has again seen little apparent strategic intent, other than to assert presence and attrit Tripoli's defending forces. The most significant single event of the week came on September 13 when several senior LNA 9 Brigade members, including its commander, were reportedly killed in Khamlet Al-Furjan. Those killed were Abdul Wahab al-Magri, 9 Brigade's commander; Mohsen al-Kani, the LNA commander in Ain Zara and Salahuddin; and his younger brother Abdul Azeem Al-Kani.

Governance

Salamé hints at ongoing backchannel engagement, Germany takes on Libya's crisis

UNSMIL SRSG Ghassan Salamé in a September 09 interview with France's *Libération* said he considered an agreement between Haftar and the GNA to be 'conceivable.' Germany's Ambassador to Libya said on September 11 that plans were in early stages for a Libya conference in Berlin in October or November 2019. The SRSG laid out what he perceived to be the broad shape of any eventual settlement, which he anticipated to be similar to that laid out in the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement, and the February 27 UAE meeting between Sarraj and Haftar. He said this includes national elections, within an agreed constitutional framework, that would itself be subject to full ratification via a national election. Haftar reportedly seeks guarantees on 'what forces control Tripoli' and had 'requirements' for key appointments to positions of State. Salamé also indicated that views from the GNA's bloc differed around the extent to which LNA forces would be required to withdraw; some would accept a withdrawal from Tripoli, others wanted Haftar's forces to return fully to Benghazi.

WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Tripolitania

Significant activity

- IDF - Sep 09, Tripoli Province, Mitiga Airport: Four mortar rounds reportedly impacted within Mitiga Airport's perimeter at approx 2030hrs on September 10. Fires were reported and depicted in images circulated locally, indicating possibly that the mortars had struck equipment or stores, or had impacted on grass. The Emergency and Ambulance Service stated on September 10 that several ambulances were damaged by shrapnel.
- Weapons Find - Sep 08, Al-Jafara Province, Hira: Pro-GNA sources claimed to have secured a sizeable LNA weapons cache near Hira on September 09.
- Kidnap - Sep 09, Tripoli Province, Tripoli: Hungarian journalist Szabo Gergely Hoang Viet was reportedly injured by shrapnel while reporting on clashes on September 09. A circulated image purports to show a cheerful Viet in a hospital ward after evident treatment for injuries. (Other reports have claimed he was kidnapped from his hotel in central Tripoli.)
- Security Operation - Sep 10, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Province, Zintan: Zintan security forces launched a campaign to remove illegal migrants from the town on September 10.
- SAF - Sep 10, Tripoli Province, Dahra: Two bursts of automatic SAF were heard from the vicinity of the Al-Waddan Hotel at around 2300hrs on September 10. The Nawasi militia reported that it was related to a local feud between four males. Local roads were closed off for a short period of time.
- SAF - Sep 10, Tripoli Province, Tripoli: SAF was reported in central Tripoli at approximately 1930hrs on September 10, reportedly over a dispute between the Ghneiwa and an unknown Misrata militia.
- Arrest - Sep 10, Tripoli Province, Ghararat: Rada reportedly arrested 10 people in the Ghararat area of Suq Al-Juma. Mixed reporting has linked this to suspected LNA sympathies, or to the ongoing IDF campaign against Mitiga International Airport. It was more likely linked to narcotics raids.
- Arrest - Sep 10, Tripoli Province, Abu Saleem: Ghneiwa forces reportedly conducted raids around their Abu Saleem powerbase on September 10, targeting properties owned by people from Tarhunah.
- Military Operation - Sep 12, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Province, Araban: LNA forces in Al-Araban reported repelling a GNA assault from Ghot Al-Reeh on the morning of September 12.
- SAF - Sep 12, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Province, Gharyan: A shooting attack at the Sabhan Gas Station in Gharyan reportedly killed a young man named Jamal Al-Jali.
- SAF - Sep 12, Tripoli Province, Dahra: A SAF exchange was reported on central Tripoli's Al-Jamahiriya Street.
- Airstrike - Sep 12, Evening, Sirte Province, Ghardabiyah Airbase: GNA drones strikes reportedly targeted LNA positions in Sirte's Ghardabiyah Airbase over the night of September 12/13.
- Airstrike - Sep 13 08:00, Misrata Province, Misrata Air College: The LNA conducted airstrikes on military assets near Misrata International Airport. Independent sources in Misrata International Airport have stated that two missiles impacted near Misrata Air College 4km south of the passenger facility. No damages were reported. Civilian operations were unaffected.
- Airstrike - Sep 13, Misrata Province, Abu Grain: An LNA airstrike reportedly targeted GNA vehicles in Abu Ghrein.
- Airstrike - Sep 13, Sirte Province, Abu Nujaym: An LNA airstrike reportedly targeted GNA vehicles in Abu Nujaym.
- IDF - Sep 14 04:00, Tripoli Province, Mitiga Airport: An unspecified number of Grad rockets reportedly impacted Mitiga Airport.
- IDF - Sep 14, Tripoli Province, Mitiga Airport: Reported Grad rocket IDF of unknown origin/affiliation reportedly targeted Mitiga Airport on the evening of September 14.

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

September 15, 2019

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