



# Weekly Libya .Xplored preview

October 20, 2019

Prepared by Risk Analysis Team, Libya

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**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

**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

- Although the stalemate in Tripoli persists, the LNA now seems to have regained the initiative. They have also regained air superiority and continue to target GNA-aligned forces across Tripolitania. There remains the potential for military activity around the oil crescent, Sirte and Misrata to escalate however at present, this has largely remained confined to airstrikes. International, national and local negotiations continue but have as yet failed to find a breakthrough.
- There is 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. Recent AFRICOM airstrikes targeting IS in the Fezzan highlight the enduring presence of transnational terror groups in Libya.

### 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 conflict will be a main factor in determining how and when the political process fully 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.
- There are indications emerging that the GNA and Prime Minister Fayeze Serraj are losing support on the international stage. As a result, Serraj is becoming more hardline domestically. The GNA is also failing to unite and exert control over forces under its command. Increasing competition and self-interest amongst these forces are further undermining the GNA and threatening the stability of the capital outside of the current conflict.
- Terrorist groups remain active across Libya and will continue to mount intermittent attacks against security forces, government, and state institutions. 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 destabilize Fezzan and undermine LNA control. Further armed attacks against LNA targets and local towns are likely in Fezzan.

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

### Operation Flood of Dignity/Volcano of Rage

- Activity associated with the conflict in Tripolitania has reduced compared to last week, largely as a result of a reduction in fighting around the Aziziyah axis which saw intense activity last week.
- The LNA has maintained its air superiority, however reports indicate they lost a jet and a drone this week. The GNA claim to have shot them down, claims predictably the LNA has denied. The LNA has escalated their air campaign against Misrata this week, targeting militia locations outside of Misrata Air College. They have also focused on Zintani forces, targeting them in Gharyan, Surman, Serraj and along the Aziziyah axis.
- An airstrike on October 14, in which three young girls and their mother were killed, has caused a backlash against the LNA from some factions and saw the GNA launch Operation Martyrs of Fornaj in which they pushed LNA forces back along several axes in the city in the days after. The strike saw the usual condemnation from external stakeholders, but it remains unclear if the family's home was directly targeted by mistake, or whether it was an unintended consequence of the targeting of a militia location nearby. Khalid Mishri, head of the High Council of State (HSC), later asked Prime Minister Fayeze Sarraj (GNA) to request a military no-fly zone in Libya from the UN Security Council.
- Major General Ahmed Mismari (LNA) has stated that they have taken out 75% of the GNA's "Turkish" air capability. He also stated that the LNA would "not enter Tripoli as an occupying force but as a national army that has fought against terrorism and wants to end militia corruption and crime."
- Seventeen cities and areas reaffirmed their support for the LNA and Operation Flood of Dignity at a meeting in Zintan on October 13. Elders of the Cyrenaica tribes also reaffirmed their support for the House of Representatives (HoR) and the LNA later in the week, suggesting the LNA's main support bases in the east and west remains intact at present.

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### Governance

- Unconfirmed reports now suggest that the Berlin Conference, originally scheduled for October/ November, is now more likely to take place in the new year after running into a number of hurdles. Reports have continued to indicate that Qatar, and now Turkey, will not be invited, however this was disputed by SRSG Ghassan Salamé. Berlin is keen to avoid the mistakes of previous international conferences and is looking to lay groundwork prior to the conference to pave the way for progress.
- The LNA has welcomed plans for the Berlin Conference but stated that any political process which does not have the security conditions to guarantee its success and respect electoral results would be “futile to discuss.” It also stated that militias and terrorist groups needed to be removed as obstacles to the political process.
- South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea allegedly attempted to progress talks about appointing a joint African Union and United Nations envoy to Libya during a closed-door meeting on October 16. The proposal, which would likely have seen SRSG Ghassan Salamé replaced, failed to gain traction with the 15-member council, which stated it wasn't time to “change horses midstream.”
- Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj (GNA) stated that the GNA has submitted a complaint to Moscow over reports Russian mercenaries are fighting for the LNA. The GNA has also complained to Beijing over the use of Wing Loong drones by the LNA which are believed to have been supplied by the UAE. Beijing stated they would investigate the matter.
- Members of the HoR met in Cairo this week. The meeting is believed to be part of a strategy to see the HoR reunited and presented as a unity government along with the LNA which “controls two-thirds of Libya” prior to the Berlin Conference.
- The Minister of Health (GNA) Ehmid Bin Omar is due to visit Paris between October 28 and November 01 to discuss bilateral cooperation within the Health Sector. The visit suggests relations between Paris and the GNA are beginning to improve after the Ministry of Interior (GNA) suspended cooperation with France in April over Paris's alleged support of the LNA.
- The Libyan Ambassador to Turkey, Abdul Razzaq Mukhtar, has reportedly been ordered to return home by October 31 after a long tenure in post by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (GNA) Mohammed Sayyala, Mukhtar was accused last year of committing “serious violations” and is reportedly a senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood.
- Teachers continue to protest across Libya over pay and conditions. Some are also demanding the removal of the Minister of Education. A protest in Bayda, where someone opened fire in order to disperse the teachers, was widely criticized. The new school year started this week, causing increased traffic on the roads in many areas as the pattern of life alters.

### Security

- The coastal road both east and west of Tripoli has seen some disruption this week. Over in Harsha, to the west of the capital, a local dispute resulted in a roadblock, lasting a number of days which forced traffic to divert around it. It is now reported to have reopened however the issue remains unresolved. An incident at the Dafiniyah checkpoint, near Misrata to the east of the capital, resulted in a closure lasting a couple of hours.
- The LNA re-entered Murzuq this week however there has been no immediate clashes with opposition forces under the command of Hassan Mousa which are also present. There remain a number of internal politics affecting the LNA force which may yet further complicate the situation moving forward.
- Salim al-Amil, spokesman of the Sirte Protection Force, has stated that “IS members are present in big numbers in mountainous areas in southern Libya, after they reorganized by taking advantage of lax security.”
- The Ministry of Labour and Chief of Staff (GNA) has discussed how to organise and enlist “supporting forces” (militias) into the GNA aligned military.
- Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar has issued a decree to establish the “General Authority of Mobilisation” under the command of Major General Aoun Ibrahim al-Furjani. The General Authority of Mobilisation is being seen as a possible replacement for the Military Investments & Public Works Office which has been threatened with international sanctions for involvement in suspicious activity. It aims to ensure the LNA has access to the resources it requires to support its military operations.

### Oil & Gas

- Brega Petroleum Marketing Company (BPMC) has condemned what it calls “attempts to intimidate its employees by an illegitimate parallel board.” The move came after BPMC claimed that its staff in Benghazi were forced to sign agreements relinquishing their posts.



## KEY DATES

Date	Occasion	Comment
October 23	Liberation Day	
November 10	Birthday of the Prophet Mohammed	
November 11-12	First Libyan Investment Economic Forum	To be held in Rabat, Morocco
December 24	Independence Day	
TBC	Berlin Conference on Libya	

## 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 reduced this week as fighting around Aziziyah calmed. Last week, there were 156 security incidents reported associated with Operation Flood of Dignity/ Volcano of Rage compared to 100 this week, making it the 11<sup>th</sup> busiest week throughout the operation so far. Airstrikes continue to dominate the battlespace with 36 reported this week compared to 26 armed clashes.

#### Air Campaign

The LNA has maintained its air superiority, conducting 29 attacks this week. This was, however, a notable reduction from 57 reported the previous week. While the tempo of activity overall reduced this week, the LNA also reportedly lost a jet near Surman and a drone over Misrata during combat operations. The GNA claimed to have downed both, however the LNA claimed the jet had a technical issue while the drone was one of the GNA's.

#### Ground Campaign

Fighting this week has focused around Hadba al-Mashro, Khallat Furjan, Ain Zara and the Giew Triangle, south of Wadi Alrabea. On October 15, the GNA launched an offensive on several axes in the city, pushing LNA forces back along Khallatat Street in Hadba al-Mashro and at the Giew Triangle. The push boosted GNA morale but came at a cost. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the GNA did not gain as much ground as they hoped and suffered a high casualty rate. The LNA also took casualties with funerals being held in Tarhunah for fallen soldiers on October 17. Fighting around the Aziziyah axis reduced after intense activity last week.

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### Governance

#### AU: Plans to appoint joint envoy fail to progress

South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea allegedly attempted to progress talks about appointing a joint African Union (AU) and United Nations (UN) envoy to Libya during a closed-door meeting on October 16. The proposal, which would apparently have seen SRSG Ghassan Salamé replaced, failed to gain traction with the 15-member council, which stated it wasn't time to "change horses midstream." The AU is concerned that the situation in Libya has "dangerous repercussions" for regional and African security and want an "enhance collaboration" with the UN.

#### HoR: Meeting begins in Cairo

This week a meeting was held in Cairo, attended by 90 members of the HoR. A number of action points were agreed at the meeting:

- Formation of a committee to liaise with UNSMIL in order to prepare for a HoR session in Ghat or any other city to discuss the formation of a national unity government;
- Rejection of attempts to overrule the HoR's authority and solutions put forward by parties that are unfit to represent the Libyan people and are therefore illegitimate;
- Rejection of any dangerous attempts to politically involve the judiciary system leading to a serious imbalance in the principle of the separation of powers;
- Increase efforts to reach an agreement to resolve the crisis by calling on the HoR head to cooperate with various local and international parties to clarify the HoR's vision and discuss initiatives resulting in a national consensus paving the way for elections;
- Expressing the solidarity of all HoR MPS with their fellow MP, Siham Sergewa, whose fate remains unknown, whilst demanding increased efforts to release abducted and forcibly disappeared individuals;
- Bearing full responsibility of the executive authorities' failure in providing necessary services to displaced cities and areas;
- Calls for an expanded national forum of national reconciliation and transitional justice aimed at restoring cohesion, peace and harmony among all components of Libyan society.

### Security

#### IS: Contradicting reports over groups current strength in Libya

Salim al-Amil, spokesman for the Sirte Protection Force (SPF), stated this week that "IS members are present in big numbers in mountainous areas in southern Libya after they reorganized by taking advantage of lax security." He went on to claim that they are currently in "dozens of small groups" but that the impact would be "disastrous if they were able to form a large grouping."

The comments are in contrast to those from American officials. Reports indicate Washington believes that their recent airstrikes against IS in Libya, which took place over a number of days at the end of September, killed an estimated 43 IS fighters which were operating out of desert camps. This included some key commanders in the group. As a result, a "senior US defense official" assesses that there are approximately 100 fighters remaining and that the group has suffered "pretty significant degradation of their capabilities." The official also believes that they will struggle to reconstitute because of the nature of the operatives who were killed in the strike, on top of the fact they were already struggling for manpower.

### Migrant Crisis

#### UNHCR: Zuwara, Garabuli and Khoms current hotspots for migrant departures

The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) stated this week that human trafficking gangs were currently sending boats of migrants from areas near Zuwara, Garabuli and Khoms. The Libyan coastguard had intercepted and returned 260 refugees and migrants back to Libya over the last week, with 179 disembarking at Tajura and 81 at Khoms. The UN agency also stated that the Gathering and Departure Facility in Tripoli remains at full capacity, blocking any transfers from detention centres. The UNHCR currently has over 45,700 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with them. The majority come from Syria (37%), Sudan (26%) and Eritrea (14%).

## WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### Tripolitania

#### Significant activity

- Security Announcement - Oct 13, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Province, Zintan: Seventeen cities and areas reaffirmed their support for the LNA and Operation Flood of Dignity. The meeting took place at the invitation of the Social Coordinator of the General Command and the Council of Zintan Tribes and the Steering Council of the Municipality of Zintan. It included notables and sheikhs from Gadamis, Sinawon, Harrabah, Rehaybat, Rajban, Zahir Al-Jabal, Mizdah, Qurayyat, Batan Al-Jabal, Al-Asabah, Mashashia, Shakshouk, Al-Qawalish, and from the West Coast areas of Surman, Sabratha and Al-Ajail.
- Airstrike - Oct 13 13:00, Az Zawiyah Province, Surman: The LNA carried out multiple airstrikes against the Western Region (GNA) Operations Room at the Nature Reserve in the south of Surman. At least six soldiers were killed in the attack including Brigadier General Ali Ghanay and Colonel Mohammed Soussi Zintani with up to 20 wounded. Zintani was a senior officer and third in command of Osama Jweli's forces. The LNA claimed that the base was being used as a staging area for an offensive on Surman. The LNA is also engaged with Jweli's troops on the Aziziyah axis.
- CP/ Road Block - Oct 13 18:00, Az Zawiyah Province, Harsha: Members of the Aburas family blocked the coastal road in Harsha after hearing that a member of the Ben Rajab family, accused of the murder of Bashir Aburas on August 11, had been released from custody.
- CP/ Road Block - Oct 14 22:00, Misrata Province, Dafiniyah: The Dafiniyah checkpoint was temporarily closed with reports of gunshots in the area. It had reopened by the following day. This may have been in response to a kidnapping in the area.
- Airstrike - Oct 14 12:00, Tripoli Province, Fornaj: An airstrike damaged a home killing three young sisters. Their mother and brother were also wounded with the mother dying the following day. The Qusheera family had been displaced from Ain Zara due to the fighting and were renting the house in Fornaj.
- Armed Clash - Oct 15, Tripoli Province, Ain Zara: SDF (GNA) mounted another offensive against 9 Brigade (LNA) in the Swahili area. SDF reportedly made advances however 26 Battalion (LNA) also reported making advances in Ain Zara. Colonel Salim Al-Ghaziwi, commander of 144 Battalion (LNA), fighting with 9 Brigade, was reportedly killed in the clashes. The GNA took control of Yarmouk towards the evening.
- SAF - Oct 16, Al-Jafara Province, Saedia: A civilian vehicle, belonging to Abdul Rahman Miloud Tamimi, was attacked with SAF, resulting in the deaths of his sister, pregnant wife and two young daughters. Timimi was severely wounded. Both the GNA and LNA are blaming each other for the attack. Tamimi and his family were on the way to a local medical clinic.
- SAF - Oct 16 01:00, Al-Murqub Province, Alaluas: An unknown group in a Toyota Pick-up opened fire on an ambulance taking wounded Misratans back to their city from Tripoli. One man was killed and one wounded inside the ambulance. This is the second reported incident of SAF against Misratans returning to their city along the coastal road.
- Airstrike - Oct 17, Misrata Province, Taminah: The LNA carried out airstrikes against weapons and ammunition stores at Hamiya Camp.
- Airstrike - Oct 17 Evening, Misrata Province, Misrata Air College: The LNA has carried out a series of airstrikes against suspected ammunition and artillery storage areas, UAVs, maintenance workshops and a cargo plane at Misrata Air College.
- Airstrike - Oct 17, Tripoli Province, Karzaz: The LNA attacked the headquarters of the Tajina Battalion in Karzaz.
- Airstrike - Oct 17 15:30, Tripoli Province, Ben Ashour: The LNA carried out an airstrike against a Bab Tajura militia HQ which may have housed a UAV control capability. The location used to belong to one of Gadhafi's sons. Ammunition cooked off after the airstrike after iso containers of ammunition were hit.
- SAFire - Oct 18 02:00, Misrata Province, Taminah: The GNA shot down an LNA drone in Taminah around 6km south of Misrata Air College (MAC). The incident came after an airstrike on MAC. Further strikes occurred after the drone was downed.

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### Cyrenaica

#### Significant activity

- Demonstration - Oct 13, Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar Province, Bayda: Teachers in Bayda staged a protest demanding an increase in pay and the dismissal of the education minister, Fawzi Boumrez. Reports indicate a warning shot was fired to disperse the protestors.
- Arrest - Oct 14, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: The CID arrested two men for the possession of narcotics.
- Arrest - Oct 14, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: CID arrested a suspect in possession of hashish and 90 bottles of wine.
- Arrest - Oct 17, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: Security forces arrested a smuggler and confiscated 570 packets of narcotics.
- Arrest - Oct 18, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: Security forces raided a house they believed to be occupied by drug traffickers in the Washishi area. The suspects opened fire and engage the security forces in a firefight. Firearms and ammunition were subsequently seized.
- Arrest - Oct 19, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: Security forces arrested a kidnap gang.

### Fezzan

#### Significant activity

- Demonstration - Oct 13, Sabha Province, Sabha: Teachers in Sabha held a protest to demand an increase in salary. This is the latest protest by teachers over pay across Libya.
- Demonstration - Oct 14, Al-Jufra Province, Waddan: Teachers staged a demonstration demanding a pay rise.
- Military Operation - Oct 15 20:00, Murzuq Province, Murzuq: The LNA re-entered Murzuq from the east. Local reports indicate it is the Tariq Bin Ziyad Brigade which does not enjoy a positive relationship with the city's inhabitants following previous fighting in the city. Hasan Mousa has tried to distance himself from the opposition forces in the city claiming he is GNA however those opposing the LNA remain under his command. The LNA move came after threat reports last week indicating that they were preparing an offensive against opposition forces in the city.
- Kidnap - Oct 15, Sabha Province, Sabha: A man was shot dead as he tried to intervene in the attempted kidnapping of a Lebanese man who worked locally. This is the latest kidnapping targeting foreign nationals in the area.
- Security Announcement - Oct 15, Wadi Al-Hayaa Province, Obari: 128 Battalion (LNA) are carrying out night patrols in Obari.
- Security Announcement - Oct 16, Sabha Province, Sabha: 160 Battalion (LNA) announced that they had secured the eastern entrance to Sabha, known locally as the Sabha Oil Depot Gate, which links the city to Tamanhint.
- Security Announcement - Oct 16, Sabha Province, Sabha: The Head of the Investigations Department in the Directorate of Security (Sabha) Ibrahim Shweil stated that a new security plan has been implemented to secure Sabha during the night. The new security plan included the deployment of night-time patrols and checkpoints at key checkpoints and had reportedly improved security by "70%" according to Shweil. 116 Battalion (LNA), 12 Brigade (LNA), Central Support Agency and units from the Directorate of Security were taking part in the new security plan.
- Arrest - Oct 17, Sabha Province, Sabha: Security forces carried out a series of arrests targeting criminals involved in kidnapping, murder, drug smuggling and violent assaults. 40 people were arrested. The move comes after additional forces were sent to the city from Benghazi after a notable deterioration in security.

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

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### **Middle East**

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