



Weekly Libya .Xplored preview

March 22, 2020

Prepared by Risk Analysis Team, Libya

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIBYA ACTIVITY MAP 3

TRIPOLITANIA ACTIVITY MAP 4

OUTLOOK 5

 Short term outlook 5

 Medium to long term outlook 5

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS..... 5

 Operation Flood of Dignity/Volcano of Rage..... 5

 Coronavirus 6

 Governance..... 6

 Oil & Gas 6

KEY DATES 7

THREAT MATRIX..... 7

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS 7

 Operation Flood of Dignity/Volcano of Rage..... 7

 Weekly Overview 7

 Air Campaign 7

 Ground Campaign 7

WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT 8

 Tripolitania 8

 Significant activity 8

 Cyrenaica 9

 Fezzan..... 9

ACRONYM LIST 10

GARDAWORLD INFORMATION SERVICES 11

GARDAWORLD 11

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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

- The GNA and LNA both agreed to a humanitarian ceasefire on March 21 in light of the threat posed to the country from COVID-19 although it is unclear when this is to come into effect. The agreement comes after a week of increased intensity and activity. It is unlikely to be adhered to completely, at least initially, but it may help to reduce activity in the short term as Libya prepares for a possible outbreak of the virus.
- The Libyan National Anti-Disease Center has warned that a coronavirus outbreak is “imminent.” Preparations are underway; however, the Libya healthcare system is unlikely to be able to deal with a significant outbreak. Measures to try and prevent the spread of an outbreak are resulting in restrictions of movement into and around the country. Curfews and the closure of schools, shisha cafes, mosques and non-essential shops are all impacting the normal pattern of life across Libya. This could mask or impact existing and emerging threats.
- There is a heightened threat from increased criminal or terrorist activity across Libya as groups and individuals exploit security vulnerabilities caused by the conflict in the north-west. Kidnap for ransom and car-jackings will continue to present a significant hazard.

Medium to long term outlook

- The LNA push for control of Libya is altering the national balance of power and has resulted in a significant setback for the political process. The conflict will be the 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.
- The GNA is being drawn further into Ankara’s sphere of influence as it faces sustained pressure from the LNA and a loss of international support. A deal for additional military support in exchange for allowing Turkey to extend its maritime reach in the Mediterranean threatens to force a realignment of international stakeholders while drawing in new ones. The GNA risks losing further domestic support as it takes ever more controversial decisions to try and ensure its survival.
- Although Islamic State suffered significant attrition towards the end of 2019, the group remains a threat in Libya and may exploit the ongoing civil war to re-group and regenerate over 2020. Other terrorist factions also remain active with some representing a kidnap threat, especially in more remote areas. Others are currently more focused on the civil war, fighting against the LNA which ousted various extremist groups from cities in the east over the previous few years.
- Various groups opposed to the LNA, including Islamic State, 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 pushes for control by the Southern Protection Force, supported by other anti-LNA groups are possible.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Operation Flood of Dignity/Volcano of Rage

- On March 21, reports indicated that both the GNA and LNA agreed to a humanitarian ceasefire as the country prepares to deal with COVID-19. The conditions of the ceasefire have yet to be made public including the start date, and clashes have continued in the capital and at Abu Grain.
- Activity has increased significantly through the week with clashes ongoing on a number of axes after weeks of reinforcements and resupplies. The ceasefire could help reduce activity through this next week, even if it doesn’t result in a total cessation with both sides remaining highly distrustful of the other.
- IDF continued to dominate activity and resulted in a number of civilian casualties through the week. While the LNA condemned attacks on civilians, many commentators blamed them for at least some of the attacks.
- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has stated that 139 Syrians have now been killed fighting in Libya. They have also claimed that Turkey has lowered their wages after reaching a quota of 6000.

March 22, 2020

Coronavirus

- There remain no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Libya, despite a number of tests been carried out throughout the week. Despite this, the country has locked down its borders and introduced curfews and closures of schools, non-essential shops and shisha cafes.
- The Global Health Security Index (GHS) has stated that Libya is amongst the countries least prepared to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. It is ranked at 168 out of 195 countries.
- A WHO team visited the National Center for Disease Control's (NCDC) laboratory in Tripoli and observed that "testing procedures were well understood and implemented and laboratory technicians were well trained."
- Major General Ahmed Mismari, the spokesman of the LNA, has self-isolated himself and his team for 14 days after returning from Egypt. Mismari states he is not showing any symptoms, but that "public health is very important, and everyone must make sure they are doing their part."
- The Ministry of Health spokesperson, Fawzi Wanis, stated that the Minister of the Interior (GNA) Fathi Bashagha underwent "medical examination" at Mitiga Airport along with other passengers upon his return from France this week.
- The LNA has ordered the building of a second emergency hospital. The hospital will be based in Zintan and will have fifty beds during its first phase, with more to be added later. This follows additional beds which were added to hospitals in Benghazi by the LNA to prepare for the virus.
- Thirteen Libyan nationals who have recently returned to the country have been placed into quarantine this week.

Governance

- A meeting for the Board of Trustees of the Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) was postponed from March 15 till further notice by Prime Minister (GNA) Fayez Sarraj. Sarraj had been expected to use the meeting to push for the appointment of Faisal Gergab as the new LIA chairperson.
- A second tribal council conference was held in Sabha on March 14, led by the head of Libyan tribes.
- Stephanie Al-Qaq, Director Middle East & North Africa Department at the UK FCO, stated after her recent meeting with Bashagha, that the UK was reaffirming its support for the GNA. The UK also continues to support the UN-led process, de-escalation and enforcement of the arms embargo.
- There is a growing potential that Operation Irene may be delayed after concerns were raised by Austria and Hungary over the potential that EU naval assets could end up encouraging migrants to attempt the crossing from Libya. Operation Irene is the replacement to Operation Sophia and is aimed at enforcing the UN arms embargo on Libya which has repeatedly been violated by both factions.
- The High Council of State (HCS) stated that an Emergency Committee meeting had been held in Tripoli on March 19, the third in as many days. The meeting included representatives from the HCS, the Tripoli-based HoR, the Central Bank of Libya, and Major General Osama Jweli, commander of the GNA Western forces. The meeting discussed the current military situation and plans to enhance security in the capital.

Oil & Gas

- The National Oil Corporation (NOC) has stated that production now stands at 91,108 bpd with a total financial loss of \$3,376,183,429. This is down from 1.2 million bpd before the oil blockade.
- The NOC has criticized a shipment of aviation fuel by the UAE to the LNA. The fuel was allegedly delivered into Benghazi Port. The NOC claimed it had reported the incident to the UN, GNA and others as a breach of the UN arms embargo.
- The NOC confirmed on March 18 that it had spent millions of dollars since the start of the blockade on purchasing and transporting fuel into eastern Libya and that despite the hardships, it was still able to "source and distribute enough fuel for all Libyans."
- Work was suspended on March 21 at the Mellitah Oil & gas office in Dahra, El Emad Towers, and their locations at Abu Sitta Naval base and Tajura stores for a week.

March 22, 2020

KEY DATES

Date	Occasion	Comment
Spring 2020	African Union of the Reconciliation Forum	
April 04	Year anniversary of the beginning of the current LNA assault in Tripolitania	
April 06	GNA three-week travel ban due for review	
May 01	May Day	Public Holiday
May 24 - 26	Eid al-Fitr	Public Holiday
July	AU to hold a conference in a bid to create a comprehensive reconciliation in Libya	Addis Ababa
July 30	Day of Arafah	Public Holiday
July 31 – August 02	Eid al-Adha	Public Holiday

THREAT MATRIX

Region	Political	Terrorism	Militancy	Crime	K&R
Tripolitania	Extreme	High	Extreme	High	High
Cyrenaica	High	High	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate
Fezzan	High	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	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 increased significantly this week, making it the most active week since the start of Operation Flood of Dignity/ Volcano of Rage. Incidents spiked from 120 last week to 167. This was largely driven by IDF which continued to dominate the battlespace, resulting in civilian casualties on a number of occasions. The intensification of activity came after weeks of reorganisation, resupplies and reinforcements from both sides which had built the expectation that the conflict would deteriorate again.

Air Campaign

Air activity remains low with eight strikes reported. At least seven were carried out by the LNA against GNA mobile and static positions on the Abu Grain axis. The axis has been the focus of airstrikes over the past few weeks, carried out by the LNA. A strike was also reported in Wadi Alrabea. Although some reports claimed it was the LNA, a GNA reconnaissance UAV had been reported a few kilometres further south hours earlier.

Ground Campaign

At the start of the week, the LNA was able to sever the Gharyan to Tripoli route by taking Hira and Kasarat. The positions were later lost, but the incident will have put pressure on the Aziziyah axis. After taking the locations, the LNA moved its attention to Ramla on the Tripoli Airport Axis. The clashes gave way to intensive clashes on the Airport Road Axis with engagements in a number of areas including Saleem Street, Crown Prince Street and near the Brega Oil Tanks on Airport Road. Intense clashes have also been ongoing in Ain Zara this week. As



March 22, 2020

with Ramla, ground exchanged hands on a number of occasions, however, neither side appeared to have gained overall.

WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Tripolitania

Significant activity

- Armed Clash - Mar 15 14:00, Tripoli Province, Ramla: The LNA advanced westwards during clashes in Ramla and took control of Tariq Ibn Ziyad School, approximately 3km southeast of Swani. They claimed to have destroyed vehicles and killed a number of opposition fighters.
- Security Operation - Mar 15 14:00, Tripoli Province, Tripoli: SDF raided the Suq al-Musheer - the parallel currency trading market - and closed down several shops after they hiked the US dollar to Libyan dinar conversion rates.
- Armed Attack - Mar 15 Morning, Tripoli Province, Salahuddin: The GNA attacked LNA positions killing a number of LNA soldiers.
- Armed Clash - Mar 16, Al-Jafara Province, Hira: The LNA claimed to have cut off the route at Hira and Kasarat, severing the Gharyan route to Tripoli.
- Airstrike - Mar 16 01:30, Misrata Province, Hayshah: The LNA carried out another airstrike against GNA positions.
- Airstrike - Mar 16 01:30, Misrata Province, Qadahiyah: The LNA targeted GNA positions in an airstrike near Abu Grain.
- Airstrike - Mar 18 23:30, Misrata Province, Abu Grain: Unconfirmed LNA airstrikes reported.
- Armed Clash - Mar 18 17:10, Tripoli Province, Ain Zara: Clashes resumed. Omar Mukhtar Brigade commander Ziyad Belaam was seriously injured fighting for GNA forces in the area. Belaam has been evacuated to Turkey for treatment with some unconfirmed reports claiming he had died.
- IDF - Mar 18 17:15, Tripoli Province, Ain Zara: The Al Hassoum Brigade (LNA) targeted GNA positions near the Alewi junction with IDF.
- IDF - Mar 18 18:30, Tripoli Province, Abu Saleem: IDF impacted into a bedroom of a residential building. There were no casualties as the family were out at the time.
- Armed Clash - Mar 18 20:00, Tripoli Province, Airport Road: Sustained clashes were ongoing on the Airport Road axis with heavy artillery and HMG in use. Clashes went on for a number of hours.
- IDF - Mar 18 20:30, Tripoli Province, Sidi al-Marsi: IDF impacted into the Ras Hassan area north of the second ring road.
- IDF - Mar 18 22:30, Tripoli Province, Ain Zara: Three people were killed in an IDF impact on the home of the Al-Raqi'l family near the Zouita area.
- IDF - Mar 18 23:00, Tripoli Province, Bab Ben Ghashir: A woman and her daughter were killed when a shell hit their vehicle. Her niece was wounded.
- Armed Clash - Mar 19, Tripoli Province, Ain Zara: Intensive clashes resumed on the Ain Zara axis.
- Airstrike - Mar 20 04:00, Misrata Province, Wadi Zamzam: The LNA targeted a GNA position which was mobilising.
- Airstrike - Mar 20 06:00, Misrata Province, Abu Grain: The LNA carried out further airstrikes against static and mobile GNA positions.
- IDF - Mar 20 21:30, Tripoli Province, Serraj: Large calibre IDF, fired from the south, impacted into the Hay Saleem area near the Islamic Call Centre.
- SAFire - Mar 20 23:55, Tripoli Province, Mitiga Airport: SAFire was reported around Mitiga Airport.
- IDF - Mar 21 00:30, Tripoli Province, Mitiga Airport: IDF impacted near Mitiga Airport.

March 22, 2020

Cyrenaica

Significant activity

- Crime - Mar 16 Morning, Al-Wahat Province, Zueitina: The PFG found 25kg of hashish while patrolling the coastline near Zueitina Port. The PFG also stated that they had not received salaries for six months but would continue to carry out their duties.
- Arrest - Mar 16, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: Morality Police from the CID arrested the local distributor of Dettol cleaning products for increasing prices by 25%.
- Border Closure - Mar 19, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: The HoR closed its borders. This included the land borders with Algeria, Niger, Sudan, Chad and Egypt.
- Curfew - Mar 19, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: The HoR has implemented a curfew between 1800 and 0600hrs in all areas under their control.
- Crime - Mar 20, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: A pick-up carrying RPGs and 86 packs of hashish was seized by security forces.

Fezzan

Significant activity

- Murder/ Execution - Mar 16, Sabha Province, Sabha: A person was killed as a result of an internal feud within the Maghara tribe.
- Murder/ Execution - Mar 16 20:00, Sabha Province, Sabha: Salih Abdullah Hamad Al-Qatroni was shot and killed as he travelled between Sabha and Wadi al-Shati.
- Armed Attack - Mar 16, Wadi Al-Hayaa Province, Obari: Unconfirmed reports claim that an ambush targeted the convoy of Major General Abu al-Qasim Al-Abaj, the commander of the Southern Military Region (LNA). Abaj, from Kufra, is an ex-regime officer who has been conducting tribal reconciliation efforts in the south since February. The ambush involved SAF.
- Armed Clash - Mar 17 01:00, Sabha Province, Sabha: Clashes erupted in Mahdia between unknown groups resulting in the injury of one male.
- Murder/ Execution - Mar 20 16:00, Sabha Province, Sabha: Jihad Saad Battat al-Womali, a suspected criminal, was murdered in the Qurdah area.
- Kidnap - Mar 21 00:00, Sabha Province, Sabha: A member of the Tebu tribe was kidnapped in Hijarah.
- Murder/ Execution - Mar 21 19:30, Wadi Al-Shatii Province, Brak al-Shati: The Director of the Primary Health Care Unit in Sabha was murdered during a land dispute in Wadi al-Shati.
- Armed Clash - Mar 21 23:59, Wadi Al-Shatii Province, Quttah: Residents from Quttah clashed with the Mashashiya tribe over a land dispute which was likely linked to the death of the Director of the Primary Health Care Unit earlier.

March 22, 2020

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)
 GECOL – General Electricity Company of Libya
 GMMR – Great Man-made River
 GNA – Government of National Accord (UN-backed)
 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
 Mol - 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
 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

March 22, 2020

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March 22, 2020

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