

# Spot Report 08/22 – GNS Prime Minister Bashagha Entry into Tripoli (Update)

## ACTIVITY

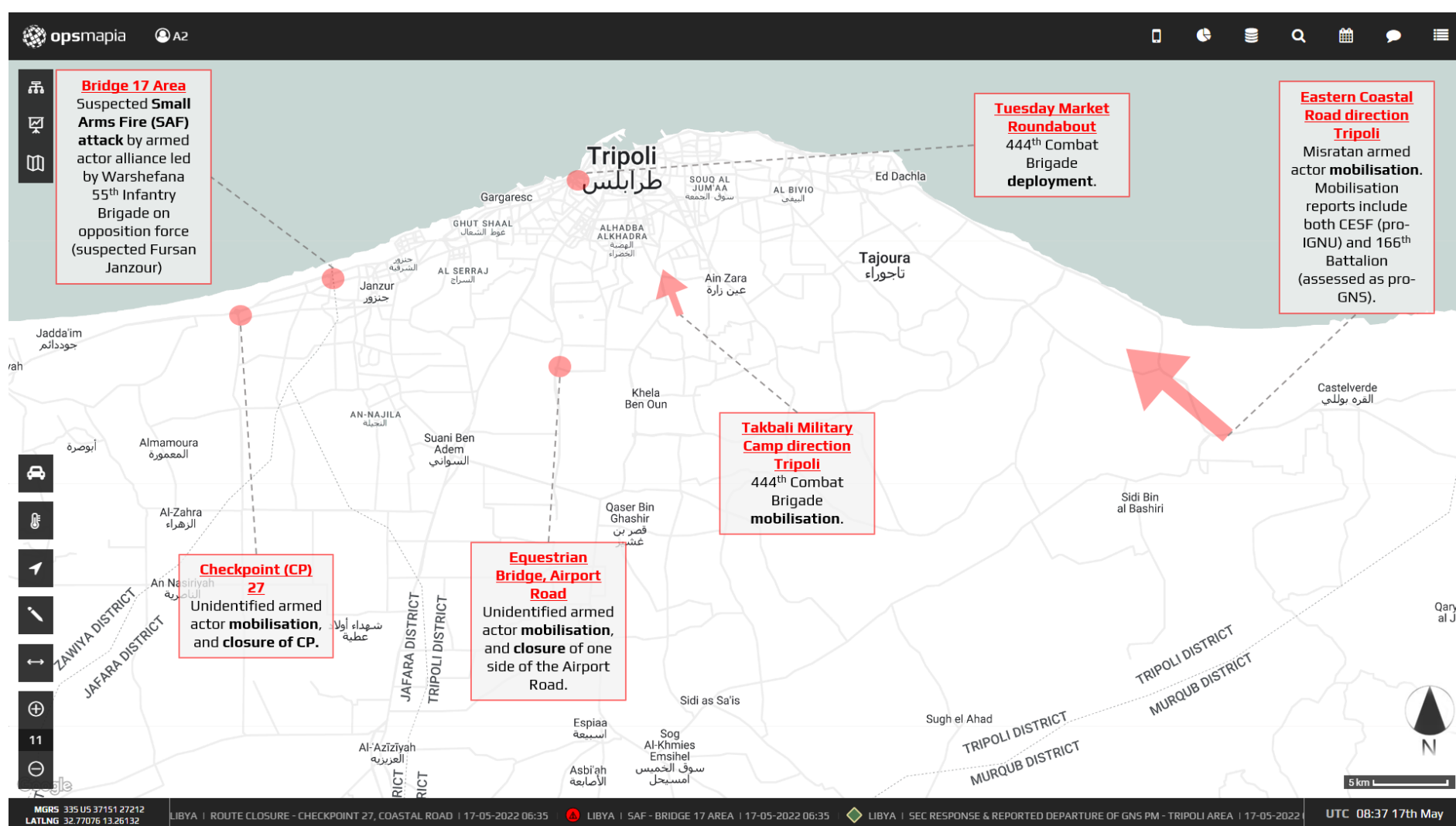
- **May 17 at approx. 1000hrs:** Following his arrival, and subsequent military/ security and armed group actor (armed actor) mobilisation and armed clashes in various areas of Tripoli, GNS Prime Minister Bashagha has departed Tripoli under protection of the 444<sup>th</sup> Combat Brigade. The GNS reportedly claims that the departure has been conducted in the interest of the safety and security of citizens. The departure also coincides with a US Embassy Libya warning statement, in which it urges armed groups to “refrain from violence and for political leaders to recognise that seizing or retaining power through violence will only hurt the people of Libya”.
- As of 1000hrs, there are no further recorded armed clashes. However, there are ongoing mobilisation reports of both pro-IGNU and pro-GNS armed actors in the wider Tripoli area.

## POTENTIAL IMPACT

- The assessed unsuccessful governance takeover attempt by the GNS likely reflects unfavorably on the ability of the GNS to generate sufficient support in the Western Region to ensure its political objectives.
- Aside from the IGNU-GNS political power struggle, the overt siding of the Nawasi Brigade with the GNS, including the presence of GNS Prime Minister Bashagha at its HQ, is likely to impact its position vis-à-vis other armed actors in Tripoli. Tensions are expected to remain, with potential efforts, including use of violence, to reduce the influence of the Brigade and others who are found to actively support the GNS.
- Unsuccessful governance takeover may increase scepticism within the GNS alliance, including by the LNA over the ability of current efforts to address the status quo. Scepticism may give rise to alternatives, including political, and military options.

## Activity Overview

Map 1: Incidents



## Assessment

- Causes for the assessed unsuccessful governance takeover attempt by the GNS may relate to its failure to mobilise and activate sufficient armed actor support in the Western Region. This may explain the sudden withdrawal of GNS Prime Minister Bashagha from Tripoli, which although the GNS claims was conducted in the interest of safety and security of citizens, is likely to have been made in interest of the security of GNS Prime Minister Bashagha amidst opposition force offensive operations. Overall, certain aspects of Prime Minister Bashagha’s plan may not have added up, including to activate support from other Western Region armed actors. This assessment would go to show the volatility and complexity of armed actor allegiances in facilitating political power. Moreover, today’s developments further underline armed actor power in Libya, including the political gatekeeper role in Tripoli.
- GNS Prime Minister Bashagha is expected to give a response to today’s developments via press conference this evening. However, the manner of the unsuccessful governance takeover, including the protection of the GNS by an armed actor in Tripoli, and the outbreak of violence, are likely to damage the GNS’s image, and the perceived ability of the GNS to enforce power on the ground. This contradicts the viability of the GNS policy to peacefully take over governance in Tripoli, and likely reinforces positions in the GNS alliance, including within the LNA, which may support alternative political as well as military options to change the status quo, of which the armed actor political gatekeeper role is a part of.