



Whispering Bell

Libya Daily Report



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KEY DEVELOPMENTS



17 May 2023

Tripoli

- Tripoli: Increased SDF/DCIM presence
- World Islamic Call Society: Weapon testing
- PC Office: Menfi chairs security meeting
- Sea Rd: Roadworks

Nationwide / General

- HoR suspends GNS PM Bashagha
- ACA suspends GNU Cabinet Affairs Minister
- Unconfirmed: Haftar-Dbeibah deal to oust Saleh & Bashagha
- Al-Zawiya: Planned attack on CTF HQ
- Wershiffanah: SDF arrest Al-Lefaa members
- Al-Jufra: ISA commander visit
- South Misrata: SSA patrols/CPs

Oil & Gas Update

- Mellitah Industrial Complex resumes ops.
- April: \$1.69 billion net O&G revenue
- Tripoli: Protest Outside NOC

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SUMMARY

Key Points

- 6+6 committee pursue election law discussion
- US renews pressure to hold elections in 2023
- Oil output stable but LNA blockade possible

Political

The absence of a solution to the political deadlock and continuing legitimacy crisis over the GNU's mandate continue to define the context of heightened political uncertainty. In the current context, there are two political initiatives at odds with one another. The pro Al-Meshri bloc within the High Council of State (HCS) recently voted in favour of the House of Representatives' (HoR) 13TH constitutional amendment, while key international actors have announced support for the political initiative proposed by UN SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily.

Intense political manoeuvring will likely define the next few weeks against the backdrop of Bathily's proposed formation of a High-level Steering Panel for Libya. Key contentious issues such as the eligibility of dual nationals and military officials to run for president will continue to divide Libyan stakeholders and undermine progress towards a solution to the stalemate.

The UN SRSG's proposal is already facing resistance from key domestic actors such as the HoR. Consequently, Whispering Bell assesses actors opposed to the UN-led initiative will double down on their campaigns to form a new unified government as a hedge against the UN push to establish a new dialogue forum. In turn, renewed efforts to form a new government will mount the pressure on the GNU and PM Abdul Hamid Dbeibah. Amid US pressure to hold elections, Dbeibah may be compelled to reshuffle his cabinet and/or organise limited legislative elections. Of note, Dbeibah announced the formation of a government committee to implement and coordinate elections on 09 March, while Bathily provided further details on his proposal to form a High-Level Steering Panel for Libya in a press briefing on 11 March.

Security

Tripoli is operational and continues to present a relatively permissive operational environment. Sporadic incidents will continue to define security atmospherics in the western region. From a security standpoint, the status quo and stable atmospherics are set to remain as is in Tripoli. Low-impact and localised flashpoints outside government offices are possible but are unlikely to escalate or impact business operations. Targeted attacks against HoR MPs, HCS members, and other political figures are likely as political tensions peak over the next few weeks. Beyond Tripoli, protesters in Al-Zawiya reopened roads and government buildings following civil disobedience sparked by a deteriorating security environment. The temporary stop to the protests came in response to a security plan drafted by GNU Chief of Staff (CoS) Mohammed Al-Haddad.

Oil & Gas

Disruptions to production are likely despite evidence the LNA is yet to support a coordinated oil blockade. In his latest visit to Libya, US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director William Burns allegedly reiterated to Haftar the importance of safeguarding oil and gas facilities and production.

TRIPOLI

- **Report n°6352:** Tripoli: Increased SDF/DCIM presence

WB sources reported an increased security presence of the Directorate for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) and the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) across several areas of Tripoli including Ras Hassan, Al-Noofleen, and Downtown in the evening/night on 16 May.

Analysis/Comment: No further information.

Location: Tripoli
Incident Date: 16 May
Timestamp: Evening; Night
Source: WB
Veracity: A
Actors: DCIM; SDF
Impact: Low

Recommendations:
Identify the motives behind new checkpoints and deployments across the capital.

- **Report n°6353:** World Islamic Call Society: Weapon testing

WB sources reported gunfire heard in Tripoli's Al-Serraj as a result of the Zintan General Security Apparatus testing weapons near the World Islamic Call Society HQ at approximately 1930hrs on 16 May.

Analysis/Comment: No further information.

Location: Al-Jebs
Incident Date: 16 May
Timestamp: 1930hrs
Source: WB
Veracity: A
Actors: Zintan General Security Apparatus
Impact: Low

Recommendations:
Identify the motives behind gunfire reported across the capital.

- **Report n°6354:** PC Office: Menfi chairs security meeting

Presidential Council (PC) Head Mohamed Menfi chaired a security meeting attended by GNU Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, GNU Chief of Staff (CoS) Mohamed Al-Haddad, GNU Interior Minister Emad Trabelsi, and Libyan Intelligence Services (LIS) Head Hussain Al-Aeib, and Internal Security Agency (ISA) Head Lutfi Al-Harari, to follow up on the security environment in the western region, western coast, and the city of Al-Zawiya on 16 May.

Location: PC Office
Incident Date: 16 May
Timestamp: Unknown
Source: Social Media
Veracity: B
Actors: PC; GNU
Impact: Low

Recommendations:
Continue to monitor details surrounding high-profile meetings held across the capital.

Analysis/Comment: No further information.

▪ **Report n°6355:** Sea Rd: Roadworks

WB sources reported the General Services Company closed Sea Road of Tripoli's Hai Alandalus area, linking Caffè di Roma Roundabout with Aspetar Clinic, due to roadworks in the morning on 17 May.

Analysis/Comment: No further information.

Location: Hai Alandalus
Incident Date: 17 May
Timestamp: Morning
Source: WB
Veracity: A
Actors: General Services Company
Impact: Low

Recommendations:
Identify the motives behind roads closure across the capital.

NATIONWIDE / GENERAL

▪ **HoR suspends GNS PM Bashagha**

GNS Prime Minister Fathi Bashagha stepped down and assigned Deputy Ali Al-Qatrani to fulfill the role in the interim, in a letter addressed to the House of Representatives (HoR) on 15 May. The GNS official Facebook page published the decision. Reports allege Bashagha departed Sirte and arrived in his hometown of Misrata following his resignation in the afternoon on 16 May.

Bashagha's move was pre-emptive given recent rumours of an HoR move to dismiss him. In fact, hours after Bashagha stepped down, the HoR voted to suspend him in a majority vote during a closed-door session chaired by First Deputy Speaker Fawzi Al-Nuwairi at the HoR HQ in Benghazi on 16 May. HoR Speaker Abdallah Belhaiq confirmed the decision and announced GNS Finance Minister Osama Hammad will assume the GNS premiership.

Following the vote, Al-Nuwairi and Second Deputy Speaker Al-Hadi Al-Saghir met with the newly-appointed GNS Prime Minister, Osama Hammad, on 16 May.

It is worth noting that HoR Speaker Aguila Saleh did not chair the session in which a majority vote was cast to oust Bashagha. Saleh's absence in the session comes amid reports of divisions within the parliament surrounding the decision to replace Bashagha. On the same day of the vote, Saleh received High National Election Commission (HNEC) Head Emad Al-Sayeh and discussed preparations to hold elections at his office in Al-Qubbah on 16 May.

In the first official response from the western power bloc over Bashagha's suspension, High Council of State (HCS) Head Khaled Al-Meshri described the HoR's decision to suspend Bashagha as "political absurdity" and "suspicious". Al-Meshri recalled how the HoR withdrew confidence from the GNU without consulting with the HCS, failed to approve a general state budget allowing the GNU to spend without accountability or supervision, and appointing Bashagha to head a new government in a "non-transparent manner" and now suspending him in a "suspicious" manner.

Comment: There is mounting evidence to indicate Bashagha's dismissal paves the way for a GNU cabinet reshuffle facilitated by the entente between Dbeibah and LNA commander Khalifa Haftar and his son Saddam.

Of note, the newly-appointed GNS PM has documented ties to the LNA. The development will enable the LNA to allocate key ministerial positions within the GNS to Dbeibah, and vice versa. The move strengthens the LNA's leverage over the GNS, which will likely facilitate a cabinet reshuffle and potential unification of the GNU/GNS governments, which is a key objective sought by Dbeibah and Haftar to ease off pressure to hold elections. The development confirms Whispering Bell's assessment that a new negotiated government is a more likely scenario than presidential elections in 2023.

Meanwhile, Aguila Saleh and Khaled Al-Meshri's opposition to Bashagha's dismissal confirms the HoR/HCS alliance is currently opposed to the Dbeibah/Haftar bloc. Saleh is supported by Egypt, though Cairo and Haftar are currently at odds over the conflict in Sudan given the latter's support for the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Bashagha's dismissal and Saleh's absence from the session confirm the conflict of interest between the HoR Speaker and LNA.

- **ACA suspends GNU Cabinet Affairs Minister**

The Administrative Control Authority (ACA) dismissed GNU Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Adel Jumaa and referred him for investigation on 16 May. Jumaa has been placed under provisional detention.

Comment: The development is significant given Jumaa is considered relatively close to Dbeibah. There is evidence to suggest the move aims to exert pressure on the GNU cabinet to support the HoR-sanctioned move to transfer all administrative powers from the Audit Bureau to the ACA. Of note, in March 2023 HoR Speaker Aguila Saleh ordered the transfer all administrative powers of the Audit Bureau to the ACA, in a move seen by observers as a direct attempt by the HoR Speaker to strengthen his posture and leverage. The ACA was given greater powers to review all contracts between Libyan entities such as the National Oil Corporation (NOC) and international parties.

The timing of Jumaa's dismissal is significant given it coincided with a majority vote cast by the House of Representatives (HoR) to dismiss GNS Prime Minister Fathi Bashagha and refer him for investigation.

The situation confirms Whispering Bell's assessment that the HoR/HCS alliance is proactively manoeuvring to undermine the GNU, whilst Dbeibah seeks to reshuffle his cabinet and negotiate a new power-sharing arrangement with the LNA. Against this background, similar incidents are expected to impact the GNU cabinet's posture in the next few weeks. The HoR/HCS may begin to manoeuvre and target additional GNU ministers via state institutions such as the ACA over the next few weeks.

- **Unconfirmed: Haftar-Dbeibah deal to oust Saleh & Bashagha**

Unconfirmed reports allege LNA's Tariq Ibn Ziyad commander Saddam Haftar and relative of GNU Prime Minister, Ibrahim Dbeibah, struck a deal to overthrow House of Representatives (HoR) Speaker Aguila Saleh and replace him with MP Fathallah Al-Sait. The deal has been allegedly endorsed by over 40 MPs who received payments. In addition, the agreement includes a cabinet reshuffle that guarantees the survival of the GNU, the failure of the 6+6 Joint Committee meetings concerning electoral laws, and thwarting efforts to form a new unified government by Saleh and High Council of State (HCS) Head Khaled Al-Meshri. According to the reports, the main purpose of this deal is to ensure elections are delayed indefinitely and the status quo is maintained, allowing both LNA commander Khalifa Haftar and Dbeibah to retain their positions and not risk competing in an election runoff. Haftar and Dbeibah are allegedly against Saleh remaining in office due to his close relationship with Egypt.

- **Al-Zawiya: Planned attack on CTF HQ**

Reports indicate a military gathering of local tribesmen and armed forces was monitored in Al-Zawiya's Dai Halal and Al-Shurafa areas at night on 16 May, ahead of a planned attack on the Counter-Terrorism Force (CTF) HQ - Al-Zawiya branch in the city centre. In response, reports indicate a military convoy affiliated with the 103 Battalion "Al-Selaa militia" (Al-Zawiya) was monitored in Al-Shurafa area to prevent any military confrontation at night on 16 May.

Comment: It will be recalled that the Day Al-Hilal area witnessed deadly clashes between Al-Zawiya CTF supporting locals from Ghammuda against locals from Al-Shurafa on 11 May. A fragile truce ended the hostilities in the area.

- **Wershiffanah: SDF arrest Al-Lefaa members**

Reports indicate the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) arrested three affiliates of the 3rd Infantry Company led by Ramzi Al-Lefaa (Wershiffanah) from a house in Wershiffanah's Awlad Issa area in the morning on 16 May. The Public Prosecutor issued an arrest warrant against the suspects on several criminal offense charges. Of note, one of the suspects is considered the right hand of Al-Lefaa, thus increasing the prospects of retaliation and tensions in Wershiffanah.

- **Al-Jufra: ISA commander visit**

The head of the internal security agency's (ISA) eastern branch, Osama Al-Darsi, landed in Al-Jufra and conducted a visit of the ISA's local branch to review cooperation with the LNA on 15 May. Al-Darsi was received by LNA 128 Brigade commander Maatoug Al-Zadma. In addition, Al-Darsi supervised a handover ceremony between the new local ISA commander, Major Hussein Al-Shara, and outgoing commander Brigadier Mahmoud Al-Huni.

- **South Misrata: SSA patrols/CPs**

The Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) - Central Region branch, in cooperation with the Misrata Security Directorate, conducted security patrols and established checkpoints at Al-Dofan Gate approximately 70km south of Misrata on 16 May. The development comes as part routine security procedures.

OIL & GAS UPDATE

Terminal Status

Es-Sider	Operational
Ras Lanuf	Operational
Mellitah	Operational
Zawiya	Operational
Zueitina	Operational
Marsa	Operational
Brega	
Marsa	Operational
Hariga	
Bouri	Operational
Jurf	Operational

Es-Sider: Stable terminal operations and security atmospheric reported as of 1700hrs LT.

- **Report n°6356:** Mellitah Industrial Complex resumes ops.

Mellitah Industrial Complex resumed operations following 16 days of maintenance on 16 May, according to reports. It will be recalled that the NOC announced the closure of the Complex for renovation purposes on 01 May.

Analysis/Comment: No further information.

Location:	Mellitah Industrial Complex
Incident Date:	16 May
Timestamp:	Unknown
Source:	NOC
Veracity:	A
Actors:	Mellitah
Impact:	Low
Recommendations:	Continue to monitor nationwide O&G-related developments.

- **Report n°6357:** April: \$1.69 billion net O&G revenue

Libya's net revenues from oil and gas sales during April amounted to \$1.69 billion, according to National Oil Corporation (NOC) statistics published on 16 May.

Analysis/Comment: No further information.

Location:	N/A
Incident Date:	16 May
Timestamp:	N/A
Source:	NOC
Veracity:	A
Actors:	N/A
Impact:	Low
Recommendations:	Continue to monitor nationwide O&G-related developments.

- **Report n°6358:** Tripoli: Protest Outside NOC

Reports indicate dozens of chemical engineering graduates demanded job opportunities within the oil and gas sector in a protest held outside National Oil Corporation (NOC) 's HQ at approximately 1200hrs on 17 May. Sources reported two technicals and approximately 10 armed forces affiliated with the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) closed Casa Lenges Crossroads near the NOC 's HQ.

Analysis/Comment: N/A

Location: NOC
Incident Date: 17 May
Timestamp: 1200hrs
Source: WB
Veracity: A
Actors: Chemical engineering graduates

Impact: Low

Recommendations:
Continue to monitor the motives behind protests held across the capital.

VERACITY SCALE

A – Reliable:

This information is almost certainly true. A is Reliable, "No doubt of authenticity, trustworthiness, or competency; has a history of complete reliability". It is reported by one or more credible publications, and if an author is listed we have no reason to suspect them to be biased. The reporting is sourced based on widely available or verifiable information. The information is consistent with everything our team knows about this subject.

B – Fairly Reliable:

This information is probably true. This information is possibly true. B is "Fairly Reliable" for "minor doubt". It is reported one or more mostly credible publications, and if an author is listed we have no reason to suspect them to be biased on this subject. The reporting is primarily based on verifiable information. The information is mostly consistent with everything our team knows about this subject, but may contain new or surprising information given credibility on the strength of the publication or author.

C – Unreliable:

This information is probably false. This information is almost certainly false. "not usually reliable" for "significant doubt," and "unreliable" for "Lacking in authenticity, trustworthiness, and competency; history of invalid information". It appears in social media or an unreliable publication, and may be written by an author that is not known to us or is known to be less reliable. The reporting is thin, largely dependent on anonymous sources or unverifiable accounts from social media or limited access areas. The information is consistent enough with our knowledge of the subject to be possible, but contains sufficient discrepancies to make it seem unlikely. The information is mostly or entirely inconsistent with our knowledge of the subject.

ACRONYM LIST

AQ	Al-Qaeda
BAM	Al-Bunyan Al-Marsous
BCP	Border Crossing Point
BEN	Benghazi International Airport
BDB	Benghazi Defence Brigade
BPMC	Brega Petroleum Marketing Company
BRSC	Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council
CBL	Central Bank of Libya
CESF	Constitution and Elections Support Force
CNI	Critical National Infrastructure
CDA	Constitutional Drafting Assembly
DACOCT	Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism
DDR	Disarmament, demobilising and reintegration
DF	Direct Fire
DMSC	Derna Mujahideen Shura Security Council
GACS	General Administration of Central Support
GASO	General Administration of Security Operations
GECOL	General Electricity Company of Libya
GMMR	Great Man-Made River
GNA	Government of National Accord
GNC	General National Congress
GNS	Government of National Stability
GNU	Government of National Unity
GTUC	Greater Trpoli Union Council
HCS	High Council of State
HNEC	High National Election Commission (HNEC)
HoR	House of Representatives
IDF	Indirect Fire
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOC	International Oil Company
IS	Islamic State
JMC	Joint Military Commission
LAB	Libyan Audit Bureau
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
LNA	Libyan National Army
LPA	Libyan Political Agreement
LPDF	Libyan Political Dialogue Forum
LROR	Libyan Revolutionary Operations Room
MJI	Mitiga International Airport
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOGC	Mellitah Oil and Gas Complex
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoO	Ministry of Oil

MoT	Ministry of Transportation
MRA	Misrata International Airport
NEE	No Expected Exposure
NIEE	No Immediate Expected Exposure
NFDK	No Further Details Known
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOC	National Oil Company
NSTR	Nothing Significant To Report
P3+2	France, Germany, Italy, UK, US
PC	Presidential Council
PFG	Petroleum Facilities Guard
RASCO	Ras Lanuf Oil and Gas Processing Company
RPG	Rocket-Propelled Grenade
RTA	Road Traffic Accident
SAF	Small Arms Fire
SSA	Stabilisation Support Agency
SDF	Special Deterrence Force
TPF	Tripoli Protection Force
UNSRSG	United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WOC	Waha Oil Company