



Whispering Bell

# Libya Daily Report



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# KEY DEVELOPMENTS



**18 May 2023**

## Tripoli

- PM Office: Dbeibah receives Egyptian intelligence delegation
- Ain Zara: SDF drills/movements
- Airport Rd: Al-Zawiya-affiliated movements
- Tajoura: Worshippers expel Al-Abani affiliated Imam
- Sport City: Riot; killing a local fan

## Nationwide / General

- Benghazi: New GNS PM takes office
- Unconfirmed: Bashagha dismissal over LNA disputes
- Dbeibah initiative to organise religious institutions
- Al-Haddad: Al-Zawiya stable
- Bathily stresses inclusive elections
- EgyptAir Cargo resumes regular flights to MJJ
- Al-Zawiya: Closure of coastal road

## Oil & Gas Update

- Nothing Significant To Report (NSTR)

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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) 13<sup>TH</sup> 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°6359:** PM Office: Dbeibah receives Egyptian intelligence delegation

On 17 May, GNU Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah received a high-level delegation from the Egyptian General Intelligence Service (GIS) to follow up on the work of the Egyptian-Libyan Joint Committee established in 2021. In a separate meeting, the visiting delegation discussed with GNU representatives projects implemented by the consortium of Egyptian companies after taking over their business sites, completing employment procedures, and equipping their headquarters. The projects are primarily in the electricity and infrastructure sectors. The two sides also discussed steps taken by Egyptian authorities to grant visas to Libyan citizens.

**Analysis/Comment:** No further information.

**Location:** PM Office  
**Incident Date:** 17 May  
**Timestamp:** Unknown  
**Source:** Social Media  
**Veracity:** B  
**Actors:** GNU; Egyptian delegation  
**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:**  
 Monitor relations between the GNU and the international community.

- **Report n°6360:** Ain Zara: SDF drills/movements

WB sources reported heavy sporadic gunfire heard in Tripoli's Ain Zara area as a result of the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) conducting military drills at the Diplomatic Club near the Diplomatic Intersection at approximately 1800hrs on 17 May.

Simultaneously, sources monitored an SDF military convoy of approximately 20 technicals passing through Al-Khallatat Intersection, heading southwards.

**Analysis/Comment:** No further information.

**Location:** Ain Zara; Al-Khallatat  
**Incident Date:** 17 May  
**Timestamp:** 1800hrs  
**Source:** WB  
**Veracity:** A  
**Actors:** SDF  
**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:**  
 Identify the motives behind gunfire and military movements reported across the capital.

▪ **Report n°6361:** Airport Rd: Al-Zawiya-affiliated movements

Reports indicate a military convoy of approximately 25 technicals affiliated with Al-Zawiya armed forces travelled on Tripoli's Airport Road and headed southwards at approximately 1800hrs on 17 May. There are no further details available.

**Analysis/Comment:** No further information.

**Location:** Airport Road  
**Incident Date:** 17 May  
**Timestamp:** 1800hrs  
**Source:** Social Media  
**Veracity:** B  
**Actors:** Al-Zawiya armed factions  
**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:**  
 Continue to monitor the military movements across the capital.

▪ **Report n°6362:** Tajoura: Worshippers expel Al-Abani affiliated Imam

Reports indicate pro Sadiq Al-Ghiryani worshippers expelled the Imam of Al-Houma Mosque who was recently appointed by General Authority for Awqaf and Islamic Affairs head Mohammed Al-Abani in the afternoon on 17 May. The incident marks the second time an Imam has been expelled from a mosque this week as the first incident occurred at An-Naqah Mosque. Of note, Al-Ghiryani's son, Suhail, is accused of inciting his father's followers to target Al-Abani-affiliated clerics.

**Analysis/Comment:** No further information.

**Location:** Tajoura  
**Incident Date:** 17 May  
**Timestamp:** Afternoon  
**Source:** WB  
**Veracity:** A  
**Actors:** Libyan Fatwa House; General Authority for Awqaf and Islamic Affairs  
**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:**  
 Monitor the latest developments and repercussions between Libyan Fatwa House and General Authority for Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

▪ **Report n°6363:** Sport City: Riot; killing a local fan

A young local fan of Al-Ittihad Club passed away, at night on 17 May, after being hit by a stray bullet in the head, after a basketball match between Tripoli's Al-Ittihad Club and Benghazi's Al-Ahly Club took place at Tripoli Grand Hall for Sports, one of the Sport City's facilities, in the evening on 15 May. Riots broke out among the fans, where an armed man affiliated with Mol General Administration of Central Support shoot into the air, one of the stray bullets hit the victim.

**Analysis/Comment:** No further information.

**Location:** Sport City  
**Incident Date:** 15 May; 17 May  
**Timestamp:** Evening; Morning  
**Source:** WB  
**Veracity:** A  
**Actors:** Mol General Administration of Central Support  
**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:**  
 Continue to monitor the most prevalent forms of crime across the capital.

# NATIONWIDE / GENERAL

- **Benghazi: New GNS PM takes office**

On 17 May, the GNS announced that Osama Hammad officially commenced his duties as acting Prime Minister from the PM Office in Benghazi after Fathi Bashagha's dismissal on 16 May. Hammad was pictured alongside House of Representatives (HoR) Speaker Aguila Saleh and Belqasem Haftar, the LNA commander's son in charge of political affairs.

**Comment:** Belqasem's presence confirms Bashagha's dismissal was sanctioned by the LNA. Reports allege Belqasem threatened to dismiss Saleh over the latter's initial refusal to oust Bashagha. Meanwhile, Saleh's meeting with Hammad confirms his endorsement of the decision and withdrawal of support from Bashagha, despite the fact the HoR Speaker did not attend the session to change the GNS PM.

- **Unconfirmed: Bashagha dismissal over LNA disputes**

The Conflicting reports allege the dismissal of Fathi Bashagha from his role as GNS PM was the result of a conflict of interest with the LNA. Bashagha allegedly refused to award construction contracts to entities affiliated with Saddam Haftar, the LNA commander's son. The reports claim Bashagha fled Sirte to Misrata in an unmarked vehicle to avoid arrest as he was allegedly wanted across LNA-manned checkpoints.

**Comment:** There are two plausible theories behind Bashagha's dismissal. First, Bashagha agreed to step down under pressure from the LNA to facilitate a potential new power-sharing arrangement between Dbeibah and Haftar. In this scenario, Bashagha's exit was negotiated with the LNA to secure future political objectives. By contrast, the second theory suggests Bashagha was simply compelled to step down by the LNA without any ulterior motive. Still, in both theories Bashagha's alignment with the GNU and a potential deal with Dbeibah is likely, irrespective of the LNA's stance. Meanwhile, there is tangible evidence to indicate Bashagha's dismissal comes as the LNA manoeuvres to consolidate its posture and raise its bargaining leverage before potentially entering negotiations with Dbeibah over a new government.

- **Dbeibah initiative to organise religious institutions**

GNU Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah formed a government body to organise the work of religious institutions and foster unity between them on 17 May. Dbeibah attributed the decision to the divisions that occurred over the Eid Al-Fitr period, which led to various Libyan cities celebrating the religious holiday on different dates.

**Comment:** Reports suggest Dbeibah's decision was influenced by the recommendations of GNU Minister of State for Communication and Political Affairs Walid Al-Lafi and supporters of Tripoli's Dar Al-Ifta led by Sadiq Al-Ghiryani. Of note, multiple low-impact incidents such as scuffles have been recorded across mosques due to ideological differences and affiliations to rival religious entities.

Dbeibah's proposal has already sparked controversy given its perceived association with Al-Lafi. This sensitive file could negatively impact Dbeibah's posture as his entrepreneurial

background and to a certain extent, secular attitude, have largely contributed to his public image so far.

**Update:** The ACA summoned GNU Minister of State for Communication and Political Affairs Walid Al-Lafi to interrogate him on corruption charges with regard to National Libya Channel contracts under Al-Lafi's control in a decision dated 17 May. The interrogation session is scheduled for 21 May. The decision stipulates that Al-Lafi will be summoned a second time if he fails comply with this order, after which legal measures will be taken against him.

- **Al-Haddad: Al-Zawiya stable**

GNU Chief of Staff (CoS) Mohamed Al-Haddad stated that the security environment in Al-Zawiya is "normal" and "reassuring" and that the government is addressing the demands of Al-Zawiya's residents in coordination with a committee representing them. Al-Haddad attributed the recent uptick in unrest in Al-Zawiya to competition over influence, as well as the occurrence of a murder and its aftermath. In addition, Al-Haddad referred to an unnamed party that seeks to drag Libya into wars, fighting, and chaos for its own interests and thus impact the current state of stability achieved by the GNU.

- **Bathily stresses inclusive elections**

UN SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily stressed that the electoral race must not exclude anyone to represent the will of the Libyan people, while confirming that the conditions for running for the head of state position remain controversial in an interview with Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath TV channel on 17 May. Bathily reiterated his hope that elections will be held before the end of 2023, citing "favourable conditions" to hold polls.

- **EgyptAir Cargo resumes regular flights to MJI**

EgyptAir Cargo Chairman Jasser Hussain announced the resumption of regular flights to Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI) following an eight-year hiatus on 17 May. Hussain stated that the airline will conduct one flight per week to Libya and the frequency of flights will increase according to supply and demand.

Separately, the Libyan Civil Aviation Authority (LCAA) reported that a delegation from the Italian Civil Aviation Authority conducted a two-day inspection visit of Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI) to assess its compliance with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards between 16-17 May.

- **Al-Zawiya: Closure of coastal road**

Locals erected dirt barricades and closed off Al-Mutrud traffic light on Al-Zawiya coastal road at approximately 1400hrs on 18 May. Incident linked to the following incident where an undefined assailants raided a house of an armed man affiliated to Al-Zawiya armed forces and killed him, in Al-Zawiya's Al-Mutrud area in the early morning on 18 May. Initial unconfirmed reports alleged that the assailants are affiliated to Hatem Al-Ghaeb, a pro-LNA commander from Al-Zawiya city.

Unconfirmed reports alleged that Hatem Al-Ghaeb, a pro-LNA commander from Al-Zawiya city arrived to Al-Zawiya 's Abu Soura area, coming from Benghazi city, recently. Initial unconfirmed reports alleged that the commander is preparing to enter Al-Zawiya 's Al-Mutrud area, his

homeland, during the coming days. Of note, Al-Ghaeb was the deputy of CID – Western branch, before 2019, before the LNA offensive attack on Tripoli.



# 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°6364:** Nothing Significant To Report (NSTR)

**Analysis/Comment:** N/A.

**Location:** N/A  
**Incident Date:** N/A  
**Timestamp:** N/A  
**Source:** N/A  
**Veracity:** N/A  
**Actors:** N/A

**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:** N/A

# 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