



Whispering Bell

# Libya Daily Report



Strictly Confidential & Exclusive for ConocoPhillips Libya

# KEY DEVELOPMENTS



**28 May 2023**

## Tripoli

- Tripoli: 444 BDE vs SDF tensions
- CTF vs Judicial Police tensions

## Nationwide / General

- Al-Zawiya: GNU additional UAV strikes
- MRA resumes flights
- Unconfirmed: Al-Dawi deal with 444 & SDF
- Ar-Rajmah: Haftar meets UN SRSG

## Oil & Gas Update

- Nothing Significant To Report (NSTR)

## CONTENTS

<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TRIPOLI</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NATIONWIDE / GENERAL</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>OIL &amp; GAS UPDATE</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>VERACITY SCALE</b>	<b>7</b>

# SUMMARY

## Key Points

- Saleh: New gov't to supervise elections
- Security environment stable
- Political tensions continue to escalate

## Political

*Whispering Bell continues to assess presidential elections are unlikely in 2023, despite momentum towards the polls. In the current context, Libya stands at the political crossroads of new government announcements.*

*Political divisions over the way forward in Libya remain centred around the need to form a new government, and whether this must be a brand new executive to supervise the elections, or a government formed via a Government of National Unity (GNU) cabinet reshuffle and/or merger with the parallel Government of National Stability (GNS).*

*The 6+6 committee tasked with formulating electoral laws kicked off its meetings in Bouznika, Morocco, on 22 May. Regardless of the potential consensus reached during the interparliamentary discussions, it is assessed the electoral laws will require the final approval of the eastern-based parliament, which will likely delay the path towards elections in favour of a new government.*

*Meanwhile, it is anticipated all stakeholders will continue to pay lip-service to elections whilst pursuing specific political agendas and securing their interests. A key escalation trigger in the next few weeks will be the 6+6 committee's potential publication of electoral laws that compel presidential candidates to resign from their positions and/or exclude specific candidates.*

## Security

*Stable atmospherics prevail across the country. Political tensions are expected to increase the frequency of sporadic low-impact security incidents across the western region, though the overall operating environment will remain permissive for foreign businesses.*

*There is mounting evidence to indicate the wave of security incidents in Al-Zawiya is part of a sophisticated anti-GNU campaign to weaken Dbeibah's foothold in the city, expel pro-GNU forces, and make the case for a new interim government. The political nature of the demands by the local protesters lend credence to this assessment.*

## 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°6388:** Tripoli: 444 BDE vs SDF tensions

Sources reported a military convoy of approximately 15 technicals affiliated with 444 Fighting Brigade was spotted transiting via the Seaport Roundabout heading eastwards at approximately 1030hrs on 28 May. Sources reported the convoy was stationed near the Central Bank Of Libya at approximately 1115hrs. Reports allege the mobilisation closely follows the arrest/kidnap of a commander affiliated with the 444 Fighting Brigade identified as Musaab Zureik who was driving his vehicle alongside his wife and child in the area in the morning. Sources reported stable atmospherics in the area at approximately 1230hrs and the absence of 444 Fighting Brigade vehicles. Meanwhile, local sources reported a 444 Fighting Brigade mobilisation in Tripoli's Salah Eddien area near the brigade's camp in the afternoon on 28 May.

The SDF allegedly arrested Zureik in retaliation for his recent arrest of another SDF commander who was active in Tarhunah and was tasked with consolidating the SDF's posture in the city. The reports indicate the 444 Fighting Brigade gave the SDF and its affiliated Judicial Police 24 hours as an ultimatum to release Zureik.

**Analysis/Comment:** Given both brigades are relatively well-organised and with a strong command hierarchy, the prospect for a major escalation is limited as the stakes are high. However, low-impact sporadic tensions are possible.

**Location:** Seaport Roundabout; Salah Eddien  
**Incident Date:** 28 May  
**Timestamp:** 1030hrs; 1230hrs  
**Source:** WB; Social Media  
**Veracity:** A;B  
**Actors:** 444; SDF  
**Impact:** Moderate

**Recommendations:**  
 Closely monitor the evolution of the development and resulting tensions between the two armed groups.

- **Report n°6389:** CTF vs Judicial Police tensions

Sources reported a military gathering affiliated with Misrata's Counter-Terrorism Force (CTF) near Wadi Al-Rabei Traffic Lights and another gathering affiliated with the Judicial Police stationed near Al-Yarmouk Camp in Tripoli's Khallat Al-Furjan area at approximately 2330hrs on 27 May. Initial reports indicate the mobilisation is due to a dispute between members of the two forces in Wadi Rabea area earlier in the evening. Stable atmospherics were reported in the area in the early hours of 28 May with the absence of both forces.

**Location:** Wadi Al-Rabei Traffic Lights; Khallat Al-Furjan  
**Incident Date:** 27 May  
**Timestamp:** 2330hrs  
**Source:** WB  
**Veracity:** A  
**Actors:** CTF; Judicial Police  
**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:**  
 Routine monitoring of military activity across the Tripoli area.

**Analysis/Comment:** Of note, the Judicial Police is seen as a proxy of the SDF. No further tensions are expected as a result of this incident.

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## NATIONWIDE / GENERAL

- **Al-Zawiya: GNU additional UAV strikes**

The GNU conducted additional unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strikes against several targets in Al-Zawiya, Surman, and Al-Ajaylat throughout 27 May. The GNU-affiliated Air Force conducted multiple strikes in Al-Harsha, Surman, and Al Ajaylat. The strikes included legitimate targets such as illegal smuggling hideouts, though GNU critics allege the GNU's use of force is excessive and resulted in collateral damage and impacted civilian buildings. An additional GNU UAV strike was reported in Al-Harsha in the afternoon on 28 May. Reports allege the GNU will double down on UAV strikes ahead of a potential ground manoeuvre and mobilisation across Al-Zawiya.

Meanwhile, GNU PM Abdul Hamid Dbeibah in his capacity as Defence Minister issued shoot-to-kill orders across the greater Tripoli area (west of 17 Bridge, south of Espiaa bridge, east of Al-Qweaa) and ordered the Air Force to raise alert levels and monitor any suspicious movement. Dbeibah ordered the Air Force to conduct reconnaissance sorties and document any suspicious movement with aerial imagery.

In a significant development underlining his anti-GNU stance, High Council of State (HCS) Head Khaled Al-Meshri called on Presidential Council (PC) Head Mohamed Menfi in his capacity as supreme commander of the armed forces to revoke Dbeibah's military powers and command of the UAV control room, in a politically-charged statement dated 26 May. Al-Meshri rejected what he described as Dbeibah's use of military powers as Defence Minister to settle political scores with opponents under the pretext of combatting crime.

Moreover, Al-Meshri sought to dispel rumours of Turkey's involvement in the latest UAV strikes in Al-Zawiya. The HCS official reiterated that Turkey is a neutral party on the ground and that the UAVs are under Dbeibah's direct command. Al-Meshri accused Dbeibah of embroiling Turkish "brothers" in an internal conflict.

Moreover, at least 68 members of parliament (HoR) condemned the GNU's UAV strikes targeting the residence of MP Ali Abu Zreiba in Al-Zawiya, in a statement dated 25 May. The HoR members described the GNU's action as a "war crime" prolonging the conflict in Libya and urged the UN to condemn the GNU, which was described as an illegitimate government.

For its part, the GNS under PM Osama Hammad issued a second statement on 25 May denouncing what it described as the GNU's excessive use of force in Al-Zawiya and environs and calling on the Attorney General to investigate the UAV strikes.

The latest reports allege Ali Abu Zreiba was plotting to form a new government during a meeting HCS and HoR members at his residence in Al-Zawiya. Abu Zreiba was spotted in video footage on 26 May condemning the GNU during a meeting with tribal elders and notables. Abu Zreiba declared the GNU is attempting to sow discord between local tribes across the entire western region including Al-Zawiya, Surman, Al-Ajaylat, and Sabratah. Abu Zreiba described the GNU's strikes as a plan by Misrata to target Al-Zawiya.

Meanwhile, the local youth movement "Correcting the Path" that recently formed to denounce the wave of security incidents in Al-Zawiya, published a video statement from Al-Zawiya's Martyrs' Square on 26 May confirming its support for anti-crime operations in the city but denouncing the GNU's use of force for political ends. The movement called on the GNU to coordinate all military action with the recently-formed military council.

- **MRA resumes flights**

Misrata International Airport (MRA) resumed flight operations on 27 May after a 2-week closure due to runway maintenance. MRA received Malta MedAir flight MT320.

- **Unconfirmed: Al-Dawi deal with 444 & SDF**

Unconfirmed reports allege the 55th Battalion commander Muammar Al-Dawi (Wershiffanah) entered an agreement with Special Deterrence Force (SDF) commander Abdoukarou Kara and 444 Fighting Brigade commander Mahmoud Hamza to handover control of Wershiffanah Region to the SDF and 444 Fighting Brigade on 26 May. The reports allege Al-Dawi was promised an ambassador position in exchange and that the deal is part of the GNU Defence Ministry's plan to consolidate its foothold in the western region and curb the rising anti-GNU momentum spearheaded by Zintan commander Osama Juwaili.

- **Ar-Rajmah: Haftar meets UN SRSG**

UN SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily met with LNA commander Khalifa Haftar in Ar-Rajmah on 27 May. Bathily reported he reviewed the latest political and security developments in Libya, and discussed the need to support a secure environment to facilitate elections this year.

# 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 atmospherics reported as of 1700hrs LT.**

- **Report n°6387:** 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