



Whispering Bell

Libya Daily Report



Strictly Confidential & Exclusive for ConocoPhillips Libya

KEY DEVELOPMENTS



30 May 2023

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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°6394:** Tripoli: 444 Fighting BDE member released

Video footage circulated on 29 May corroborated the release of 444 Fighting Brigade commander Musab Zureik whose brief detention by the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) sparked skirmishes between the latter and the Brigade in central Tripoli on 28 May.

Analysis/Comment: Zureik's release significantly decreases the likelihood of tensions resuming between the two sides in the short-term.

Location: Unknown
Incident Date: 29 May
Timestamp: Unknown
Source: Social Media
Veracity: B
Actors: SDF
Impact: Low

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

- **Report n°6395:** MJI: Benghazi basketball club assaulted

Al-Nasr Club condemned an assault on its basketball team by Mitiga International Airport (MJI) based security upon landing, holding the GNU's Ministry of Interior (MoI) responsible for providing its team with security in a statement issued on 30 May. The incident took place at night on 29 May.

Analysis/Comment: The PC's backing of the GNU's military operation in the west coast region is set to increase criticism against the Council both at the levels of the general public and politically.

Location: MJI
Incident Date: 29 May
Timestamp: Night
Source: Local Media
Veracity: B
Actors: MJI-based security
Impact: Low

Recommendations:
Continue to monitor the nature of security incidents at Tripoli's only functioning airport.

▪ **Report n°6396:** Al-Furnaj: 444 allegedly raids military HQs

Unconfirmed reports allege the 444 Fighting Brigade raided the headquarters of the Military Prosecutor General in Tripoli, Military Prosecution, and Counter-Terrorism Prosecution. Reports allege the Brigade took possession of documents from the HQs and burned a large number of files in Tripoli's Al-Furnaj area on 29 May.

Analysis/Comment: The incident closely follows the 444 Fighting Brigade's involvement in skirmishes with the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) over the latter's detention of a Brigade member in central Tripoli on 28 May.

Location: Al-Furnaj
Incident Date: 29 May
Timestamp: Unknown
Source: Untested Social Media
Veracity: C
Actors: 444 Fighting Brigade
Impact: Low

Recommendations:
 Continue to monitor the nature of security incidents across the capital.

▪ **Report n°6397:** Tripoli: Dbeibah & Menfi receive eastern tribesmen

GNU Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah received a delegation from the eastern Al-Awaqir tribe at the Prime Minister's Office on 29 May. The meeting discussed several service and social files according to the GNU's Media Office. Dbeibah assured the visiting delegation of his government's keenness to consolidate social cohesion and improve services in the eastern region. For their part, the tribesmen affirmed their support for the GNU to achieve stability and development and praised their efforts to hold successful elections.

Separately, Presidential Council (PC) Head Mohamed Menfi received a delegation of the eastern Al-Obeidat tribe and discussed the latter's role in the Council's national reconciliation project, reunification efforts, and the holding of elections in Tripoli on 29 May.

Analysis/Comment: Tripoli's power bloc understands the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship with Libya's influential tribes given the significant role they play across all fields.

Location: PM Office; PC Office
Incident Date: 29 May
Timestamp: Unknown
Source: Local Media
Veracity: B
Actors: GNU; PC
Impact: Low

Recommendations:
 Continue to monitor relations between western authorities and Libyan tribes.

- **Report n°6398:** Supreme Court: UN SRSG visit

UN SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily visited Tripoli's Supreme Court on 29 May. Bathily was briefed on the work of the Court and the role of judicial bodies in ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, particularly with regard to the electoral process. Bathily stated that he discussed with the President and members of the Court the judiciary's important role in the electoral process, as well in the field of human rights.

Analysis/Comment: No further information.

Location: Supreme Court
Incident Date: 29 May
Timestamp: Unknown
Source: Local Media
Veracity: B
Actors: UN SRSG;
 Supreme Court
Impact: Low

Recommendations:
 Assess the impact of the judiciary's role in the electoral process.

NATIONWIDE / GENERAL

- **Al-Zawiya Coastal Rd: Additional closure**

WB sources reported locals from Al-Zawiya closed off the Coastal Road west of Al-Zawiya between Mutrud and Surman in protest of the GNU unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strikes targeting the west coast at approximately 1400hrs on 29 May. Sources reported the Coastal Road remains closed as of 0730hrs on 30 May. Of note, the development comes a day after locals from Al-Zawiya closed the Coastal road east of Al-Zawiya.

- **GNU MoD west coast operation 1st phase completed**

The GNU Ministry of Defense (MoD) commended its Air Force for successfully completing the first phase of its security operation and achieving mission objectives, which included precision airstrikes targeting hideouts across the west coast region on 29 May. The Ministry reported the destruction of 7 boats used by criminal gangs and 9 tanks used for smuggling fuel overseas. The ministry confirmed all precautionary measures are in place to protect civilians and their properties. The ministry announced the commencement of the second phase of its operation, renewing its call on citizens to fully cooperate and remain distant from suspicious sites used by criminal gangs. The ministry noted that it will publish a video statement on the details of the operation's first phase in due course.

- **HoR accuses GNU of settling political scores in Al-Zawiya**

House of Representatives (HoR) Speaker Aguila Saleh and his First Deputy Fawzi Al-Nuwairi chaired an open session in Benghazi on 29 May. Saleh called for a statement to be issued by

the HoR notifying UN SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily, Attorney General Al-Siddik Al-Sour, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the Turkish parliament of the events in Al-Zawiya and Al-Mayah. The HoR argued that the GNU unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strikes in Al-Zawiya are being carried out to settle political scores and not to combat smuggling as the GNU claims. The HoR argued the bombing of the residence of Al-Zawiya MP Ali Abu Zreiba confirms the GNU is serving its own political interests.

- **US & UK embassies concerned with Al-Zawiya situation**

The US Embassy in Libya stated that it is monitoring with concern the situation in Al-Zawiya amid reports of weapons being used in civilian areas and the potential for further violence, calling on Libyan leaders to de-escalate and take precautionary measures to protect civilians on 29 May. Of note, similar calls were echoed by the UK Embassy in Libya on 29 May.

- **Mali: New footage of kidnapped SA paramedic**

A newly-surfaced video of kidnapped South African paramedic Gerco Van Deventer was circulated across media platforms, confirming his detention in Mali by Jamaat Nasr wal Muslimin (JNIM), an affiliate of Al-Qaeda (AQ). Gerco confirms the video is dated 26 May 2023. Gerco can be seen in the video appealing for help to secure his release. Of note, Gerco was kidnapped in Libya whilst working for a private security provider in 2017, and later smuggled to Mali. His presence in Mali was only confirmed in Jan 2023.

- **Wershiffanah commander condemns GNU UAV strikes**

55th Brigade commander Moammar Al-Dawi (Wershiffanah) condemned GNU unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strikes in the west coast region that killed one of his members on 28 May. It will be recalled that Al-Dawi shifted loyalties and sided with GNU Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah following the GNS' third failed attempted entry into Tripoli in Aug 2022, after initially supporting Bashagha-led GNS forces.

- **Benghazi: Haftar receives UK Ambassador**

LNA commander Khalifa Haftar received UK Ambassador to Libya Caroline Hurndall at the LNA HQ in Benghazi on 29 May. The meeting discussed recent political and security developments, including creating a suitable environment for elections to be held in 2023 according to the LNA's Media Office. Of note, the meeting comes a day after Haftar received UN SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily.

- **Sabha: LNA/GNS visit**

A delegation led by LNA Tariq Ibn Ziyad Brigade commander Saddam Haftar and GNS Prime Minister Osama Hammad alongside deputy Salem Al-Zadma, visited Sabha on 29 May. The visiting delegation was received by Sabha Military Region commander, Sabha Security Directorate members, and sheikhs of the city. The delegation inspected several service and

development projects implemented by the GNS and the Brigade, as well as several administrative headquarters and government buildings.

- **Al-Ajaylat: Municipal elections**

The Central Committee for Local Elections (CCLE) commenced municipal elections in Al-Ajaylat and opened the voter registration on 29 May. Of note, CCLE announced the preliminary results of the elections for Zuwara and Dirj municipal councils held on 27 May.

- **6+6 reportedly agree on eligibility of military officials candidacy**

Unconfirmed reports on 30 May allege the 6+6 committee tasked with formulating electoral laws has come to an agreement on the candidacy of dual nationals and military officials, as well as a timeline for elections. According to these reports, the committee agreed to hold parliamentary elections by Dec 2023 and presidential elections the following month in Jan 2024. The committee allegedly agreed to form a new government with a 6-month limited mandate to hold the elections. More importantly, the committee will allegedly allow military officials to run for office and regain their positions if they do not win, and dual nationals to run provided they renounce their second citizenship if they reach the second round or win the elections.

A final announcement by the 6+6 committee is identified as a trigger for escalation. Localised flashpoints are likely across government buildings in Tripoli and other high-profile landmarks known to host political figures. Still, the overall operating environment in Tripoli will remain permissive throughout these heightened political tensions.

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°6393:** Al-Zawiya Refinery closed, GECOL warns of blackout

Armed individuals loyal to MP (Al-Zawiya) Ali Abu Zreiba halted gas and fuel supplies feeding Tripoli power stations by closing valves at Al-Zawiya Refinery, in demand of the GNU Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah's dismissal over the recent UAV strikes in the city at approximately 1700hrs on 29 May. The General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) warned of a major power outage across the majority of the country in the coming hours.

Meanwhile, Abu Zreiba stressed that he will not allow oil and gas operations to resume at the refinery until Dbebah is dismissed, noting that the closure was orchestrated by sheikhs of the western region. Abu Zreiba echoed GECOL's warning of nationwide blackouts.

In the same context, Al-Zawiya's First Support Force commander Mohamed Bahroun aka "Al-Far" condemned the pipeline closures and voiced his support for the GNU's operations in the west coast region on 29 May. Al-Far stated that the development stands as a "desperate attempt" by criminal gangs to disrupt the GNU's security operation.

Analysis/Comment: The development is significant given it marks what could prove to be the beginning of a series of nationwide oil and gas disruptions in protest of the GNU's security operation in the west coast region and in a bid to unseat Dbeibah.

Location: Al-Zawiya Refinery
Incident Date: 29 May
Timestamp: 1700hrs
Source: Local Media
Veracity: B
Actors: Abu Zreiba Loyalists

Impact: Moderate

Recommendations:
 Assess the probability of such measures gaining nationwide momentum.

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