



Whispering Bell

# Libya Daily Report



Strictly Confidential & Exclusive for ConocoPhillips Libya

# KEY DEVELOPMENTS



**02 July 2023**

## Tripoli

- SDF arrests military prosecutor
- Raiding the National Planning Council

## Nationwide / General

- Unattributed UAV strikes target Wagner Group
- HCS/HoR divisions deepen
- Al Abraq Airport: LNA orders to resume flights

## Oil & Gas Update

- US cautions against oil blockade

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# SUMMARY

## Key Points

- LNA ready to use oil card in negotiations
- GNS wants to scrutinize NOC finances
- Elections highly unlikely in 2023

## 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 HoR appointed new heads of the Constitutional Court and Administrative Control Authority (ACA) in a session on 26 June. The move was widely condemned by 6+6 committee members who view the HoR's manoeuvre as an attempt to derail and undermine the progress made on the electoral laws. Observers argue the move was sanctioned by Belqasem, Haftar's son in charge of political affairs. The move to appoint a new head of the Constitutional Court is controversial given the HoR and High Council of State (HCS) previously agreed to freeze all talks pertaining to the court. The HoR move will likely exacerbate tensions with the HCS.*

*Meanwhile, Russian Ambassador to Libya Aydar Aganin presented his credentials to Presidential Council (PC) Head Mohamed Menfi in Tripoli on 26 June. It is unclear if Ambassador Aganin will now operate from Tripoli, though Russian government officials previously stated he will be temporarily based at Radisson Blu Al-Mahary Hotel. The Russian diplomatic presence will likely seek to counter US influence in Tripoli and across the country.*

## 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.*

## Oil & Gas

*The threat of an LNA-induced oil blockade has significantly increased across all scenarios and is now assessed a likely in the next three months. Against the backdrop of mounting political tension, backchannel negotiations to form a new government, and diplomatic pressure, the LNA may be compelled to utilize the "oil card" to raise its bargaining leverage in the medium term (3-6 months). The LNA is unlikely to directly sanction a blockade but may instead do so by exploiting local grievances to restrict oil exports and exert pressure on the GNU.*

# TRIPOLI

- **Report n°6475:** SDF arrests military prosecutor

Libyan Crimes Watch (LWC) reported on 01 July the forced disappearance of a prosecutor within the military prosecution office, Farouk Bin Saeed, from Tripoli on 26 June. According to LWC, three Special Deterrence Force (SDF) servicemen in unmarked vehicles arrested Bin Saeed in Al-Bevi and later transferred him to Mitiga prison. LWC called for his immediate release.

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

**Location:** Al-Bevi  
**Incident Date:** 26 June  
**Timestamp:** Unknown  
**Source:** Local Media  
**Veracity:** B  
**Actors:** SDF  
**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:**  
 Routine monitoring of high-profile arrests.

- **Report n°6476:** Raiding the National Planning Council

Reports of an undefined gunmen raided the National Planning Council's HQ in Tripoli's Edraiby area, in the afternoon on 02 July. Initial reports indicate that the undefined gunmen kidnapped/arrested an official of the council. Additional unconfirmed reports alleged that some offices were sabotaged.

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

**Location:** Edraiby  
**Incident Date:** 02 July  
**Timestamp:** Afternoon  
**Source:** Social Media  
**Veracity:** B  
**Actors:** Undefined  
 assailants  
**Impact:** Low

**Recommendations:**  
 Routine monitoring of high-profile arrests.

# NATIONWIDE / GENERAL

- **Unattributed UAV strikes target Wagner**

Unconfirmed reports allege the GNU carried out an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strike targeting Wagner Group at Al Khadim airbase on 29 June. The reports were initially published

by Arabi 21, a news outlet citing anonymous GNU MOD sources. The reports speculate a Turkish Akinci UAV was used in the strike. The Akinci UAV has a bigger payload and range than the TB2 but has not yet been seen in Libya, although there have been reports documenting the GNU's acquisition.

However, GNU Chief of Staff (CoS) Mohamed Al-Haddad refuted the claims and described the allegations as attempts to reignite war and regional conflict.

Meanwhile, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) public relations branch officer Kelly Cahalan denied any attribution to any military strike on Libyan soil, affirming AFRICOM's last UAV strike was in Sep 2019.

Moreover, Qatar-based publication Al-Araby Al-Jadeed (The New Arab) confirmed there were two UAV strikes, citing two anonymous military sources affiliated with the LNA.

The report claims the first airstrike targeted the Wadi Sammalus area 150 km southeast Benghazi, Marj district, whilst the second airstrike targeted the entrance within the inner perimeter of Al-Khadim Airbase (also known as Kharruba), where Wagner Group has a documented presence.

According to the LNA sources cited by the report, the UAV strikes are unattributed and likely came as a warning to Wagner Group. Meanwhile, local sources from the nearby town of Kharruba confirmed to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed hearing the airstrikes.

**Comment:** *Of note, the US targeted an Ilyushin IL-76 aircraft affiliated with Wagner at Al-Khadim in late Jan 2023, as confirmed by leaked US cables. The incident would have a broader impact on Russia's military posture in Libya. In terms of attribution, several observers highlight the involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).*

#### ▪ **HCS/HoR divisions deepen**

In a letter dated 01 July, High Council of State (HCS) Khaled Al-Meshri addressed his House of Representatives (HoR) counterpart and urged him to resume cooperation on the political track by publishing the electoral laws agreed-upon by the 6+6 committee. Moreover, Al-Meshri expressed his categorical rejection of the HoR's decision to appoint new members of the Constitutional Court, which the HCS views as a violation of the joint HCS/HoR agreement to freeze talks related to the Constitutional Court.

**Comment:** *Al-Meshri's letter attests to the growing divide between the HCS and HoR, which altogether will reduce the likelihood of elections this year.*

#### ▪ **Al Abraq Airport: LNA orders to resume flights**

Emerging reports indicate LNA commander Khalifa Haftar gave orders to resume domestic and international flights from Al-Bayda's Al Abraq Airport on 02 July. The development was relayed via official LNA social media pages.

# 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°6477:** US cautions against oil blockade

US Special Envoy Richard Norland urged on 30 June Libyan political actors to abandon threats of an oil shutdown, describing a blockade as “destructive” to Libya. Norland reiterated calls for an inclusive revenue management system to address issues related to the distribution of oil revenues. Norland emphasized the need to protect the NOC’s apolitical nature.

In response, GNS PM Osama Hammad issued a series of statements via Twitter on 01 July. Hammad instructed Norland to respect the sovereignty of the Libyan judiciary and refrain from picking sides, accusing the US Ambassador of external interference in domestic affairs. The GNS PM further accused Norland of picking the side that continues to profit from oil revenues, namely the GNU.

In a related development, at least 70 Benghazi-based HoR members rejected US Special Envoy Richard Norland’s statement cautioning against threats to blockade oil exports as foreign interference. In a statement on 01 July, the HoR MPs categorically rejected Norland’s statement and supported GNS PM Osama Hammad’s plans to administratively seize oil and gas revenues by judicial means. The statement described the administrative seizure of oil and gas revenues as necessary to prevent the embezzlement and misuse of public funds.

Against the backdrop of mounting tensions embroiling the NOC in broader political disputes, the legal office of the NOC said that the process of distributing oil revenues is not within its core competencies

**Location:** Nationwide  
**Incident Date:** 30 June – 01 July  
**Timestamp:** N/A  
**Source:** Local Media  
**Veracity:** B  
**Actors:** US; GNS; HoR

**Impact:** Moderate-High

**Recommendations:**  
 Closely monitor the evolution of developments related to the oil blockade and assess threat likelihood and impact.

as per its legal structure, in a media statement on 01 July. The statement added that including the NOC in oil revenue distribution embroils it in issues that fall beyond its remit.

**Analysis/Comment:** The likelihood of a blockade is difficult to ascertain given it is closely tied to the ongoing backchannel negotiations. The threat is assumed as high over the next few weeks.

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# 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