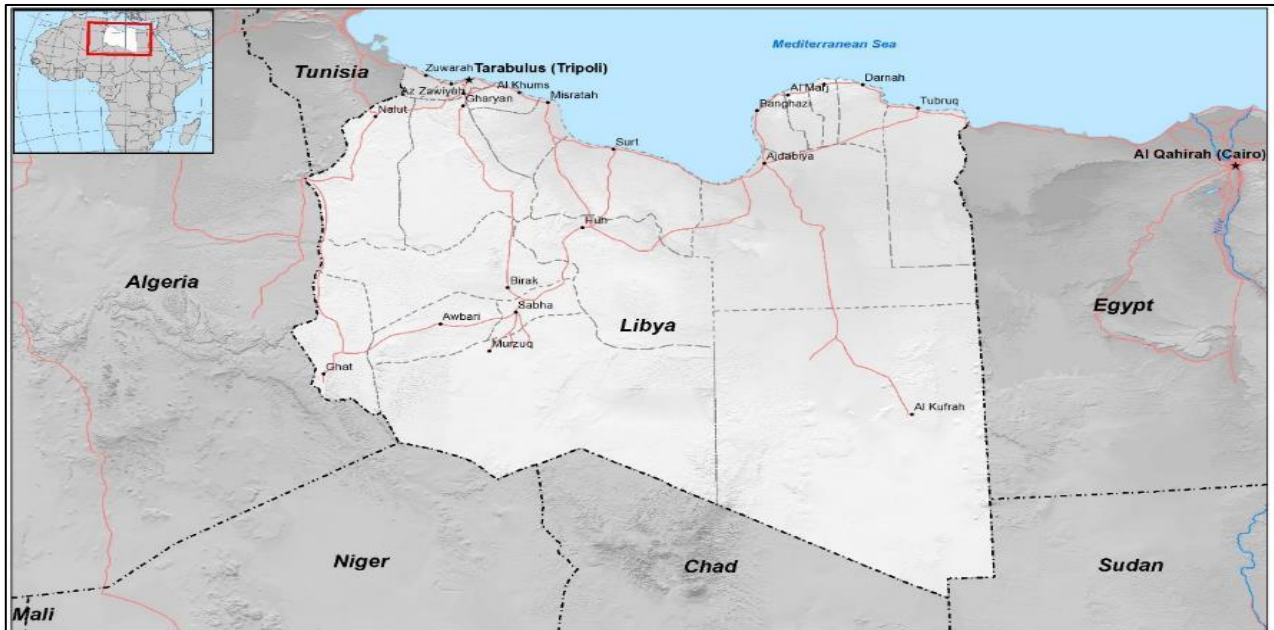


**EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA**  
**Monthly Security Roll up - JANUARY 2023**

Authors: LTC OLABARRIETA (*Analyst*) - LTC LOTTI (*Planner*) – MAJ WEERSINK (*EGF Advisor*)  
Coordinated by LTC REITSMA



**SUMMARY**

The mid-January 2023 clashes in Warshefana and nearby the Tripoli International Airport signal fractures within pro-GNU armed groups, and the capability of armed actors to coordinate responses out from any centralised security plan as well. Those may complicate the GNU’s current strategic efforts towards sustainable stability and military-security cooperation through SSR.

Concurrently, LNA keeps on with its operational activities, training and restructuring efforts in the Eastern cities and the rest of the country, while pro-GNU units are trying to expand and consolidate their defensive line and area of responsibility outward the Cordon of Tripoli.

While the UN is posturing to reinforce JMC security initiatives, although not completed fit to lead that task up to the end, national authorities are struggling to reconcile, even claiming a possible state of emergency or any alternative mechanism, pending a solution to the political impasse.

In such evolution, international security actors continue relating to the GNU and LNA as the de facto authorities, even relying on bilateral cooperation seeking to convene on security and economic initiatives, some to safeguard the vital interests aimed to limiting the flow of irregular migration and preserving the continuity flow of energy resources.

## 1. MAIN EVENTS IN THE GREAT TRIPOLI AREA (GTA)

Security conditions into the GTA appear stabilized with efforts to expand control and implement the Tripoli Security Plan (TSP). However, tensions between the armed actors persist with the Tripoli International Airport (TIA) as the new hotspot in the fight to control critical infrastructures and lines of communication. Of interest:

- on 28 Dec 2022, GNU MoI, Emad Trabelsi, held a meeting with the security Directors of the Western Coastal Region while PC member, Abdullah Lafi, kept a parallel one with the leaders of the security and military agencies, both aimed to address the situation in Zawiyah;
- on 05 Jan, after an increased military deployment by the MoD 51 Bde (Al-Bugra) in the area of Tajoura, minor skirmishes took place between the SDF-RADA elements and Al-Bugra elements;
- on 06 Jan, armed clashes were reported in the area of Ajaylat, close to Sabratah, between the Sidra armed group and the al-Mashreqi family group;
- on 09 Jan, GNU Chod inspected the 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Bn, recently integrated into the MoD and involved in securing the TIA;
- on 09 Jan, Trabelsi announced the launching of a security plan to secure Greater Tripoli with a view to extending the operations to the Capital's cordon, and then to the rest of Libya, while transferring 3,500 MoI employees from the internal Departments to police functions;
- on 12 Jan, Deputy PM Ramadan Boujenah and West Coast military Cdr Salaheddin Al-Namroush visited the 444 Bde's Al-Tekbali Camp inspecting the Operations Room and reviewing the Brigade's combat capabilities;
- on 13 Jan, the Head of 55 Bde, Muammar al-Dawi allegedly met with 777 Bde Cdr, Haitham Al-Tajouri in Warshefana, with a possible tentative of GNU PM Dbeiba to incorporate 777 Bde into his siding;
- on 14 Jan, unconfirmed sources reported the movement of 200 vehicles of the Anti-Immigration Department from Tripoli to Bani Walid. That indicates a wider plan to set an anti-immigration line across the West of the country;
- on 15 Jan, Trabelsi met with the Head of the National Safety Authority, MG Othman Al-Malikta, discussing coordination and cooperation under the TSP framework;
- on 16 Jan, GNU MoI Undersecretary for Directorate Affairs, MG Bashir Abu Al-Amin inspected in Tripoli the HQ of the newly created Security Directorate Support Force of the Regions (SDSFR);
- on 19 Jan, early morning, a clash broke out between units of the SDF-Rada and 111 Bde in the area of Qaser Bin Gashir, in the vicinity of the TIA. The 444 Bde intervened and deployed to block and prevent further escalations. The GNU leaned SDF is out of the control of the MoD, formally depending from the Presidential Council;
- on 20 Jan, the 3<sup>d</sup> Div informs of an assassination attempt on Commander Ramzi Al-Lafa at his house in Awlad Issa (Warshefana). The incident, apparently related to the implementation of the GNU MoI TSP, reported a subsequent revenge armed attack against 55 Bn personnel;
- on 22 Jan, Western Coastal Military Region Cdr. MG Al-Namroush, alongside a 52 Bde delegation, inspected the 62 Bde HQ at the Al-Assa Military Camp, in Riqdalin. On the other side, the Western Region General Staff addressed measures to establish a Navy Special Forces Division in the Misrata Free Zone;
- on 25 Jan, unconfirmed sources reported a security meeting (on 23 Jan) in Abu Salim between Abdelghani al-Kikli (Ghneiwa) Head of the SSA, Lotfi Al-Hariri, Head of the Internal Security

Agency, Osama Abdel Majeed, Head of IGNU Mol Facilities Security Authority, Abdul Hamid Al-Magdouha, SSA-affiliate. The meeting reportedly highlighted a growing rift between Ghneiwa and the Mol, Emad Trabelsi related to his alleged lack of support for the SSA. Reportedly, Ghneiwa is now attempting to gather support for the removal of Trabelsi from his position;

- on the same day, GACS held a meeting, instructed by GNU Mol, Trabelsi, in the presence of Commanders of nationwide GACS branches, with the aim to unify efforts and cooperate;
- on 26 Jan, reports alleged 52 Bde efforts to secure the coastal road between Janzour and the Ras Ajdir border crossing point;
- on the same day, Awlad Saqr armed group enforced route closure of the Western Coastal Road due to local discontent over security conditions in wider Zawiyah;
- on 30 Jan, new clashes erupted in the area of Ramla, in the vicinity of the TIA between SDF and the 111 Bde.

## **2. EXTERNAL MILITARY SUPPORT TO THE GNU**

Turkey is continuing playing a dominant role, with direct military support to the GNU. Specifically

- on 24 Dec 2022, open sources echoed that a batch of about 50 Syrian mercenaries, affiliated with Turkish-backed armed Syrian opposition factions left Libya headed to Turkey. This, along with the arrival in Turkey of more mercenaries from Syria prepared to be sent to Libya;
- on 04 Jan, a military cargo aircraft affiliated with the Turkish Air Force coming from Misrata landed at the al-Wattiya Airbase;
- on 18 Jan, the 51 Bde graduated a new batch of forces who were trained for five months by the Turkish Training Mission in Libya. Among them a 100 special forces unit;
- on 24 Jan, the Cdr of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) Libya Task Group, MG Osman Aytac visited the Turkish Frigates, TCG Gemlike (F-492), and TCG Gokova (F-496) in Khoms Seaport;
- on the same day, the Turkish Training Mission in Libya and 111 Bde met at the Omar Al-Mukhtar Camp, in Tajoura, to develop the competencies and combat capabilities of the Brigade.

## **3. SECURITY EVENTS OUTSIDE OF THE GTA**

The LNA keeps on with its activities and restructuring efforts among buzzes about LNA Cdr, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, and possible imminent 'abdication'.

- On 23 Dec 2022, Haftar made a speech during a rally in Benghazi recalling the 'last chance' for the political elite to formulate a roadmap toward elections. Additionally, Haftar declared his support for Libya's unity, distancing himself from any Eastern Region's secession attempt;
- on 26 Dec 2022, a prisoners exchange took place between the LNA and Western Region forces including several high-profile individuals;
- on 04 Jan, the Media Centre of the 20/20 Company affiliated with the LNA's TBZ Bde announced the disbandment of the Company at the orders of the LNA General Command;
- on 06 Jan, LNA 110 Bn deployed in Sabha as part of efforts to secure and stabilize the city;
- on 06 Jan, alleged renewed tensions between Abdel Fattah al-Nadori and Haftar's sons appear to threaten LNA cohesion. On 15 Jan, Nadori arrived to Benina Airport, Benghazi, from Jordan, allegedly after leaving Libya due to security reasons;

- on 09 Jan, reports alleged a meeting in Amman (Jordan) among several GNU militia Cdrs and the TBZ Bde Cdr, Saddam Haftar, facilitated by the UAE, as a continuation of the one held in early Dec 2022. The counterparts were expected to agree to a cabinet reshuffle within the GNU and on the dissolution of the HCS and the HoR;
- on 15 Jan, units of the LNA 106 Bde and TBZ Bde mobilized in Qatrun. Sources alleged the mobilization due to border security operations and the presence of non-Libyan forces;
- on 16 Jan, localised source reported about the confirmed planned entry into Sirte by the pro-GNU CTF Reserve Force and the 166<sup>th</sup> Bn Guard and Protection Unit, as part of a reconstituted Joint Operating Force, between the GNU and the LNA;
- on 19 Jan, LNA General Command has allegedly ordered the 128 Bn to limit its interactions with the Wagner Group in Sirte;
- on 23 Jan, LNA TBZ informed about the implementation of patrols along the border with Chad likely linked with the announcement of the ongoing withdrawal of Chadian mercenaries;
- on 24 Jan, against the backdrop of multiple assassinations and security incidents involving LNA servicemen in Benghazi, Saddam Haftar met with GNS Interior Minister Issam Abu Zreiba, GNS Deputy Interior Minister Faraj Egaim, and other security officials in Ar-Rajmah;
- on 28 Jan, Wagner forces were reported gathering outside the LNA HQ in Al Rajma, Benghazi, allegedly demanding the payment of debts from the LNA;
- on 29 Jan, the pro-GNU CTF-Reserve Force confirmed a significant area of operation expansion Southwards, by conducting patrols in desert areas of Awbari.

#### **4. CRITICAL NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURES (CNI)**

Threats to disrupt CNI continue, while linking them to a possible extradition of former Regime members. Oil production and oil revenue distribution remain the most sensitive elements that could be exploited at different level pending any political settlement.

- On 01 Jan, GNS PM Bashagha's government threatened escalation to stop oil revenues from going into NOC's bank accounts;
- on 24 Jan, SSA Cdr, Al-Kikli, held a meeting with several Commanders of armed groups from Al-Zawiya to discuss any possible influence around the Tripoli International Airport;
- on 29 Jan, GNU Oil and Gas Minister Mohamed Aoun, as well as GNS PM, rejected the gas production agreement signed between the NOC and Italian energy company Eni, during the Italian PM visit on the 28 Jan;
- on 30 Jan, local media reported statements by Vice President of the Supreme Council of Elders and Dignitaries in Libya, in which he warned of escalation in the coming days and closures of oil fields, ports, and pipelines in the Oil Crescent, and Southern-Eastern Region.

#### **5. OTHER INTERNATIONAL AND SECURITY RELATED EVENTS**

- On 10 Jan, the PC-President met with the Cdr of the LNA, in Cairo. They reportedly discussed reuniting Libya's armed groups into a **national security entity**. Menfi allegedly stated that the PC might move to declare a "**state of emergency**" if the HSC and the HoR should fail to promptly agree upon a constitutional basis for elections;
- on 11 Jan, Tripoli Appeals Court ruled against the implementation of the maritime MoU between Libya and Turkey. On the same day, the Turkish MoFA, Melvut Cavusoglu, claimed that the GNU had informed his Government of its continued adherence to the hydrocarbon MoU;

- on 12 Jan, CIA Director William Burns arrived in Tripoli and met with GNU-PM Abdul Hamid Dbeiba and with Gen. Haftar in Al Rajma, Benghazi;
- on 15 Jan, IPC President, HoR Speaker and LNA Cdr-in-Chief reportedly met in Cairo, the second time in one week for LNA Cdr and the IPC President;
- on 15-16 Jan, JMC 5+5 convened in Sirte. UN SRSG Bathily attended the conference, along with a US delegation. SRSG called on the IC to support towards the full implementation of the CFA and called on the GNU to prioritize its work. He also announced the launching of joint work between the international Ceasefire Monitoring Team and Libyan monitors in the city;
- on 17/18 Jan, Chief of Turkish Intelligence Agency (MIT), Hakan Fidan arrived in Tripoli (just five days after the CIA Director) and met with the GNU PM and IPC President, allegedly making political reconciliation efforts between GNU PM and HCS;
- on 18 Jan, on the side-lines of signing of a MoU, the Italian and Turkish border police were seeking cooperation in confronting illegal immigration and also combatting terrorism in Libya;
- on the same day, Haftar held a meeting with the Leslie Ordeman, Chargé d’Affaires of the US Embassy to Libya and the attendance of the Deputy Cdr of the USAF in Europe-Air Forces Africa discussing over security coordination, including aviation;
- on 20 Jan, the US Treasury Department designated the Russian private military company "Wagner Group" as a "transnational criminal organization" and imposed additional sanctions against the group and its network;
- on 22 Jan, EU's foreign service's Military Committee recommended Operation Irini until at least 31 March 2025 in light of the worsening instability in Libya;
- on 24 Jan, after fighting alongside the LNA for years, the Chadian rebels, known as the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD), announced its readiness to depart from Libya and return to Chad in response to the provisions of the Doha peace agreement;
- on 28 Jan, GNU Mol Trabelsi met with his Italian counterpart to discuss Mol’s plan to combat illegal immigration, smuggling, organised crime, and counterterrorism and prepare a Joint Technical Committee meeting to take place in February;
- on 27 Jan, Leslie Ordeman, the US Chargé D’affaires met with the Head of 55 Bde, Muammar al-Dawi, and praised Dawi’s efforts towards social and security stability within the Jafara District. On 30 January Muhammad Al-Haddad, GNU Chief of Staff, and Salah Al-Namroush, Cdr of the Western Coast Military Region, inspected that same unit.

Sign-off for release: Brig. Gen. STELLA, V.

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*Disclaimer: This report is based on security events and reports from multiple open sources, whose accuracy may not always be verified. Therefore, the information and conclusions expressed are subject to change without notice.*