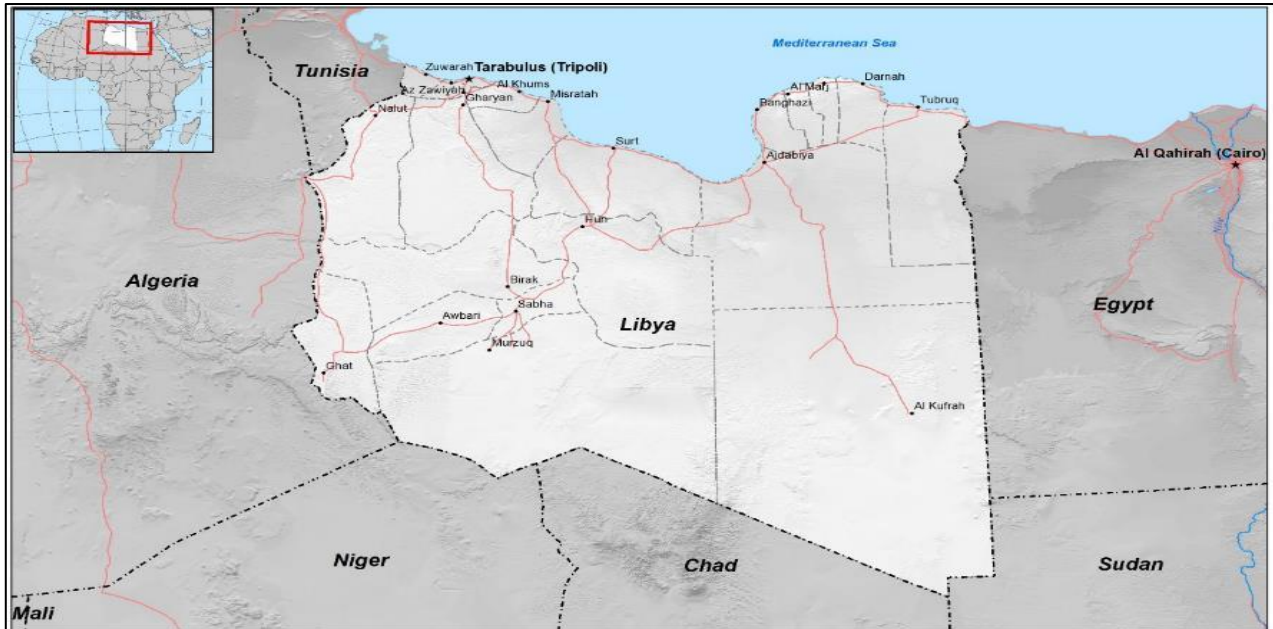


## EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA

## Monthly Security Roll up - APRIL 2023

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## SUMMARY

The holy month of Ramadan has resulted in limited ‘disagreements’ and skirmishes, even between affiliated armed groups. The power struggle in the Great Tripoli Area has continued with the GNU Minister of the Interior’s restructuring the security directorates in the context of combating smuggling across borders and ports. Current military groups in the greater Zuwara area have opposed the initiative, which has led to tensions.

The UN led meeting that took place in Benghazi has confirmed a “*new dynamic*” in the relationship between the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) and the political Western and Eastern elites. Several military and security leaders from all regions met with the aim of boosting confidence and progressing in a reconciliation dialogue of “*great symbolic value*” as an expression of national unification and patriotism. The call to establish a Joint Military Force (JMF) in the Southern part of Libya could point to a swift move forward. However, developments in neighbouring country Sudan might put such an initiative on hold because of competing regional interests and new allegiances between external and internal actors.

Therefore, the ongoing Sudanese crisis will likely affect the overall political and security situation in the North African Region, with its predicted consequences in terms of large number of refugees, the boosting of cross-border smuggling, and the stalling of the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters, and forces. This would also likely impact the expected UN SRSG political and security objectives in Libya in a recently conceived Libyan–Libyan dialogue, inside Libya.

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

Security conditions in the GTA appeared relatively calm, with efforts to consolidate control, implement the Tripoli Security Plan (TSP), and secure the borders. However, limited clashes between armed groups and social unrest have persisted around the Capital and along the Western coastal road.

In spite of different initiatives taken with the aim of improving collaboration between the 5+5 JMC and additional security stakeholders, not everyone was on board with such a plan.

Of interest:

- on 02 APR, a **LNA delegation**, including the Cdr of the Tariq Bin Ziyad Bde, Haftar's son-in-law, and the GNS Deputy Mol, visited the Zintan Cdr, General **Jweili**;
- on 05 APR, the Cdr of the 77<sup>th</sup> Bn, which is based in Misrata was killed in a suspected attack following his departure from Watiyah airbase;
- on 07 APR, the **GNU-PM** had to cancel his **visit to Misrata**, due to conflicting reports about gunfire and the sounds of RPG launchers;
- on 09 APR, the so-called "**Union of Libyan Revolutionaries**" from the Western region stated their **rejection** of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the **militarization of the state**, and dismissed dual nationals for any sovereign position appointment;
- on 10 APR, **51<sup>st</sup> Bde** Al Bugra handed over Al Daman Camp (Tajoura) to the Tripoli Revolutionary Brigade, ousted from Tripoli last September;

on the same day:

- the Special Deterrence Force (SDF/Rada) arrested expats and locals working for **GardaWorld**, one of the largest private security companies in the world, providing protection for **EUBAM**. GardaWorld is partnered in Libya with the French company Amarante International;
- the Joint Zawiyah Security Room launched an operation to **crack down** on the sellers of **black market fuel**, focusing on the area between **Judaim** and **Sabriyah**, East of **Zawiyah**;
- on 16 APR, the GNU-Mol announced the restructuring of **security directorates** according to geographical areas, including **control of ports**;
- on 18 APR, **tensions** were initiated in **Zuwara** amid reports stating that GNU-Mol would extend its control over all the ports in Libya, starting from Ras Ajdir;
- on 20 APR, one thousand fifty-seven **prisoners** were **released** by the Attorney General's Office and IGNU MoJ. This is a pardon, which is related to the Aïd-Al-Fitr festivities;

on the same day, in the Municipality of Zuwara, the city elders and armed groups issued a statement against the remarks of the GNU-Mol, calling upon the GNUPM to restrain the GNU-Mol in its initiatives;

- on 22 APR, **riots broke out during the Eid prayer** in Martyrs Square, Tripoli. Supporters of the Libyan Dar Al Ifta led the protest, during which demonstrators were praising the Maliki school and renouncing the Madkhali one;
- on 23 APR, **security patrols** were conducted on the **Libyan-Tunisian border** from Ras Ajdir in the North to the Al Assah area;

on the same day, unconfirmed sources reported that the **Samoud Bde** was preparing to **deploy** an unspecified number of **forces from Misrata to Tripoli**, reportedly **against the process of East-West reconciliation**;

on the same day, **clashes** broke out at the Eastern entrance of **Zawiya** against the backdrop of a previous killing;

- on 24 APR, GNU-PM stressed that the **GNU-MoI** was ready to **secure elections**;

on the same day, gunmen affiliated with the GNU-MoD 103<sup>rd</sup> Bn - **Al Selaa militia**, **targeted** two camps affiliated with the GNU-MoI First Support Force - **Al Far militia**, in Surman, **Zawiya**;

- on 25 APR, unconfirmed reports alleged a military gathering affiliated with the **Al Selaa militia** in the Beer Terfas area **in** the Southern suburbs of **Zawiya**;

on the same day:

- unconfirmed reports indicated a military gathering affiliated with the **444<sup>th</sup> Bde** in Tarhunah's Fam Molga area, in preparation to **mobilise towards Zawiya** to secure the city at the orders of GNU-PM;
- **unidentified assailants** opened fire on Sabratah Municipal Council HQ. Unconfirmed reports allege the attackers were **supporters of cleric Al-Ghiryani**;
- a force of 100 vehicles from the **Western Military Region** deployed to the "**Southern Line of Tripoli**" in order to conduct **counter smuggling operations**;
- the **Facilities Security Authority (FSA)** issued a statement **urging foreign security** and safety companies operating across Libya to register and **obtain special permits to carry out their in-country activities**;

- on 26 APR, a joint force belonging to the Al Qurayyat Security Directorate and the **Border Guards** deployed **desert patrols** between Ash Shwayrif and Bani Walid;

- on 27 APR, Zawiya residents **demonstrated** in the streets of **Zawiya**, demanding the departure of security officials, whom they blamed for the deteriorating security conditions in the city;

- on 29 APR, **GNU-PM** speech at the aviation and space technology exhibition in Turkey: "**We thank Türkiye & Baykar company for supporting Libya with modern aviation technologies.**";

on the same day, **GNU-CoS** held a **meeting with** a number of **Zawiya leaders** and city elders after the unrest that had swept through the city of Zawiya;

- on 30 APR, the **Misrata Revolutionaries Union** issued a statement in which they **rejected** the idea of engaging in **dialogue with LNA Cdr** and individuals considered to be his allies.

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

The LNA is continuing its efforts to reform its operational organisation, enforce the rule of law, and secure the Southern border.

Different bilateral activities were conducted with the aim of improving collaboration and making headway in the effort to unite military institutions.

Of interest:

- on 02-03 APR, Internal Security Agency (**ISA**) activated the Brak Shati and Kufra **branches**;
- on 04 APR, **UN SRSG** met with the **LNA Cdr** and the HoR Speaker in Benghazi;
- on 06-07 APR, **JMC** military / security leaders and representatives from the Western region met with counterparts **in Benghazi** in the presence of the UN SRSG. They expressed full commitment to the previous dialogue between the JMC and the security leaders held in Tunis and Tripoli, and claimed a **pact of honour** with that same UN SRSG;

- on 08-09 APR, LNA 73<sup>rd</sup> and 128<sup>th</sup> Bdes reported conducting **border security operations** from **Awbari** to the **Salvador Triangle** with Chad and Algeria;  
on the same day, the **UN SRSG** met in **Sabha** with military and security leaders, notables, and civil society;
- on 11 APR, LNA continued their **Southern border operations** with units from the 128<sup>th</sup>, TBZ, and 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigades and the 155<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 676<sup>th</sup> Battalions;
- on 12-13 APR, the **GNU** and **LNA Chiefs of Staff** met in **Benghazi**. They stated, “*We’ll defend the civil state...when it comes to holding **fair elections**,*” and the army “*will not be a **tool for political conflict**.*”;  
on the same day, **cleric** Al-Ghiryani stressed that a **state of division** is better than having the LNA Cdr rule Libya;
- on 13 APR, LNA **604<sup>th</sup> Bn** deployed in **Sirte**, allegedly as part of efforts to secure it from criminals;
- on 14 APR, LNA increased its presence along the **Chad border region** and the Salvador Triangle;
- on 16 APR, LNA announced the arrest of an **Islamic State** sleeper cell consisting of six individuals that intended to target LNA interests;
- on 17 APR, Kufra Military Region announced the closure of the **Libyan-Sudanese border**;
- on 18 APR, LNA **units mobilised** to secure the Libyan–Sudanese border;
- on 19 APR, LNA **Subal Al-Salam**, a Salafi armed group dominating Kufra, **handed over** the crossing with Sudan, and security personnel at Kufra Air Base were demobilized;
- on 20 APR, Libya suspended its **trade with Sudan** at the border crossing near Al Kufra, amid fear of a possible influx of migrants and refugees;
- on 24 APR, LNA Cdr attended a meeting between military leaders and officers at the LNA HQ in Benghazi, stating, “*The Libyan people are starving and can no longer bear irresponsible behaviour & deliberate tampering with their **wealth and capabilities**, which must be **reconsidered on how to be distributed fairly before it is too late**.*”;  
on the same day, an armed convoy of **Tebu forces** was reportedly **leaving for Sudan** to participate in the ongoing clashes alongside the RSF;
- on 25 APR, LNA issued a decision to **close the Libyan-Sudanese border**;
- on 26 APR, unconfirmed sources reported the arrival of large ammunition resupplies and **Wing Loong Chinese-made UAVs** to Al Jawf;  
on the same day, **LNA-110<sup>th</sup> Bn** was **redeployed** from Wahat to the **Southern region**.

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

The Sudanese conflict threatens the fragile balance of the Southeastern tribal dynamics, while external spoilers could have an interest in spreading instability into Libya through its porous borders. An intensive narrative was observed to show unverified LNA support for the Sudanese RSF, which left the LNA Cdr in an awkward situation, especially with Egypt.

Different bilateral activities occurred with the intent to strengthen cooperation and safeguard specific interests. Furthermore, the UN SRSG moved forward with his roadmap for presidential and legislative elections as well as engaging within the framework of the JMC's activities for unifying the military institutions and highlighting a joint military force.

Of interest:

- on 03 APR, following the 24 MAR release of the **Fact Finding Mission (FFM)** report on Libya, it questioned the **EU-support for the Libyan Coastal Guard**. The **US Embassy** stated, “*We also renew our calls for the expedited removal of all foreign forces, including Russia’s Wagner Group.*”;
- on 12 APR, **Russia’s** Representative to the UN **blamed the destabilization of the Sahel region on the West**, calling on them to “*abandon the neo-colonial narrative.*”;  
on the same day, US citizens were arrested on **charges of promoting Christianity**. That, following the arrest of a group of Libyans on **charges of converting from Islam**;
- on 13 APR, the MoFAs of **Egypt** and **Türkiye** agreed to **cooperate more closely on Libya** and to reappoint of ambassadors to each other’s countries;
- on 15 APR, **conflict** erupted between the **Sudanese Army** and the **RSF**. **Chad** immediately announced the **closure of its border**;
- on 17 APR, **Tunisian government** arrested former Speaker of Parliament Ghannouchi, ordering the closure of both Ennahdha Party and opposition Coalition National Salvation Front HQs;
- on 18 APR, UN SRSB briefed the UNSC, stating that “*there has been a new dynamic in Libya because of the security actors*”, acknowledging a request to receive international support to create a **joint military brigade**;
- on 19 APR, it was reported that the **LNA** sent at least one military plane to the **RSF** in Sudan, while **Egypt** dispatched more warplanes and pilots to support the **Sudanese military**;
- on 20 APR, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the **Fezzan region** **rejected** a project aiming “*to contribute to the social integration of the local population and illegal immigrant communities in the region*”. The Head of the Libyan National Security Council opposed such a project as **impacting on national security**, demanding that foreign **NGOs and CSOs complete their registration** with the Libyan authority **in accordance with Libyan laws**;
- on 26 APR, the **US Secretary of State** for Near Eastern Affairs spoke by phone to **LNA Cdr** allegedly on the “*urgent need to prevent outside actors, including the Wagner Group, from further destabilizing Libya or its neighbours, including Sudan*”;
- on 29-30 APR, a **Turkish Army Airbus A400M cargo aircraft** landed at **Al Watiya** **airbase**, West of Tripoli, supposedly departing from Algeria and transporting unidentified armoured vehicles.

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.*