

# Libya daily security analysis report

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# Latest Developments

## Political Developments

- SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily gave his address to the UN Security Council on February 27. The address was wide-ranging however perhaps the most important statement was of the SRSG's intent to establish a High-Level Steering Panel for Libya.
- During Speaker Aguila Saleh's visit to Damascus, he called for sanctions to be lifted from Syria in the wake of the February 06 devastating earthquakes. During his meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Saleh stated that the HoR "supports the return of Syria to the Arab family." This comes as the trend towards a rehabilitation of Assad gathers some steam regionally in the wake of the earthquakes.
- The head of the HCS, Khalid Mishri, criticised Saleh's visit to Syria stating: "No man who has honour or dignity can deal with Al-Assad, who surpassed all previous dictatorships," describing him as a "criminal and butcher who killed the Syrian people with barrel bombs."
- An unconfirmed report claimed that Prime Minister (GNU) Abdulhamid Dbeibah has disclosed to "a number of Arab leaders of his desire to normalise relations with Tel Aviv." This is reportedly an attempt to secure Israeli pressure on Washington to keep Dbeibah in power.

## Security Developments

- Zawiyah remains unstable with clashes erupting around the Mutrud area during the late afternoon of February 27. The clashes involved the Qasab militia which has been involved in recent tensions with the Kaboat. The feud appears to now be pulling in other militias allied with those involved. The clashes ceased when an agreement was reached to hand over an individual accused of murder. The area remains unstable however with further incidents likely.
- The French Special Envoy, Paul Soler, stated that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission was due to hold a meeting in Paris "soon." He added that the meeting "will be an opportunity to set clear goals for the military track, in order to achieve sovereignty and border security. As well as the withdrawal of foreign forces from Libyan territory."
- Minister of Interior (GNU) Emad Trabelsi appointed Major General Khalil Wahiba as chief of the Tripoli Security Director. Wahiba had been the chief of the Internal Audit Department at the directorate before his new appointment. He will succeed Major General Mahmoud al-Abed.

# Assessment

## Political Developments

### UN: Bathily gives address to the UN Security Council

SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily gave his address to the UN Security Council on February 27. The address was wide-ranging however perhaps the most important statement was of the SRSG's intent to establish a High-Level Steering Panel for Libya. The SRSG stated that: "Based on article 64 of the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), and building on previously reached agreements among Libyan stakeholders, I have therefore decided to launch an initiative aimed at enabling the organization and holding of presidential and legislative elections in 2023. In this regard, I plan to establish a High-level Steering Panel for Libya."

He went on to explain: "The proposed mechanism will bring together all relevant Libyan stakeholders, including representatives of political institutions, major political figures, tribal leaders, civil society organisations, security actors, women, and youth representatives. In addition to the facilitation of the adoption of the legal framework and time-bound roadmap to the holding of elections in 2023, the proposed

Panel will also provide a platform to advance consensus around related matters, such as election security and the adoption of a Code of Conduct for all candidates.”

SRSG Bathily stated that: “To date, the House of Representatives and the High State Council have not been able to agree on a consensual constitutional basis for elections.” SRSG Bathily acknowledged the HoR’s adoption of the 13<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment to the 2011 Constitutional Declaration however pointed out that the HCS had yet to endorse it. He described the amendment as “controversial within the Libyan political class and general citizenry.” He added that: “Moreover, it does not address key contentious issues such as the eligibility criteria for presidential candidates, does not stipulate a clear road map and timelines to realize inclusive elections in 2023, and adds additional contentious issues such as the regional representation in the Senate.”

The SRSG stated that after extensive discussions domestically regionally and internationally, he was “pleased to report that by and large, all regional and international partners agreed on the necessity to hold inclusive and transparent elections in 2023.”

**COMMENT:** ‘Over the past few weeks, Bathily had indicated he was tiring of the delay tactics being employed by the HoR and HCS and that alternative options to their track were being looked at. After giving them until the end of February to make firm progress on the constitution, Bathily appears to have largely dismissed the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, at least in that it has not achieved the desired result in the specified timeframe. He now appears to be looking to revitalise the political process with a view to holding elections in 2023 and in the process, side-line the HoR and HCS from their current levels of control over the political process.

Bathily’s move comes after Speaker Saleh outlined his own vision for moving towards elections. Saleh’s pathway would see a committee of 45 people, 15 from the HoR, 15 from the HCS and 15 “independents” agree on a new unified government while elections would take place no more than 240 days from an agreement on election laws, according to his 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Cairo has recently made clear it supports Saleh’s position.

To have any hope of succeeding, a new UN-led high-level steering committee would still need buy-in from key domestic factions, like the HoR. While Bathily and Saleh appear to be on opposing tracks right now, it’s likely that both approaches will blend to some extent as neither can successfully achieve their agendas in a vacuum and that any future progress will continue to build on that already made.

The rhetoric regarding the holding of elections this year has gained momentum in recent weeks however, this remains an ambitious target. With ten months left of the year, there remain no clear signs of any fundamental shift in attitude from the country’s current political elite which continues to prioritise their own positions above the creation of a democratic society. Even with an agreed pathway, there remains plenty of opportunity for spoilers to knock the process off track if they feel threatened with the SRSG risking a repeat of 2021.’ **COMMENT ENDS.**

#### **UK: Woodward highlights the need for long-term stability**

Speaking in response to the SRSG’s address to the UN Security Council, UK Ambassador Barbara Woodward welcomed his commitment to reinvigorating the political process to deliver elections for Libya and its people. Ambassador Woodward stated that: ‘To deliver parliamentary and presidential elections, Libyan power-holders must compromise and agree the conditions for elections. Potential spoilers must also be brought into an agreement, to ensure election results are respected. The United Kingdom thanks Egypt for their efforts to support discussions between the House of Representatives and High State Council.’

She further stated: “Elections will not mean the end of the political process. The groundwork must also be laid for long-term stability, including the finalisation of a constitution, facilitated by the elected government, and a continued cycle of future elections that respect term-lengths. President, political developments must also be supported by effective security and economic tracks. Transparent and accountable economic processes and public institutions, that serve all Libyan people through the fair distribution of resources, and

the provision of and investment in public services are required. I call on all Libyan parties to enact these elements of good governance.”

Ambassador Woodward finished with: “President, this is a seminal moment in Libya. We have a clear opportunity to progress long-term stability and meet the expectations of the country. I urge all Libyans, UNSMIL and the Council to grasp it. Through inclusive dialogue and compromise Libyan actors have an opportunity to finally deliver the security and prosperity the Libyan people deserve.”

**COMMENT:** ‘With elections being the focus of much of the political narrative over the past few years, it is more than refreshing for a key international stakeholder to place elections within the much longer, complex strategy which incorporates effective security and economic tracks. In addition, the risk of a new political elite, created by any successful elections, behaving in the same way as the current political elite was highlighted with Woodward warning that the groundwork needed to be laid for long-term stability. Her nod to Egypt was also potentially notable given Cairo’s current support of Saleh.’ **COMMENT ENDS.**

# Significant Incidents

## Tripolitania Region



**1 Arrest - Feb 27, Al-Murqub Province, Tarhunah:** SDF reportedly arrested Hasan Jabballah, an MP in the HoR, for allegedly trying to establish an armed group in Tarhunah.

**2 Armed Clash - Feb 27 17:00, Az Zawiyah Province, Mutrud:** An armed clash erupted between Nasir Company (aka Qasab militia) and the Security Directorate Support Force (Western Region). Two people were killed as a result of the clashes and a woman from the Toumi family was wounded. Other reports have suggested involvement from Sila Brigade, commanded by Othman Lahab. Nasir Company secures Zawiyah refinery and is heavily influenced by the Abu Hmeria tribe. This comes after a feud between Nasir Company and Kaboat militia after a member of Kaboat militia was kidnapped by Nasir Company whilst involved in human trafficking activities in Mutrud on February 19. Lahab has a long-standing relationship with the Kaboat militia and both militias are associated with the Awlad Saqr Tribe. The feud between Qasab and Kaboat has resulted in a number of incidents since February 19 including kidnappings, and disruption to routes. The northwest coastline is currently seeing clear signs of destabilisation with Zawiyah a current focus.

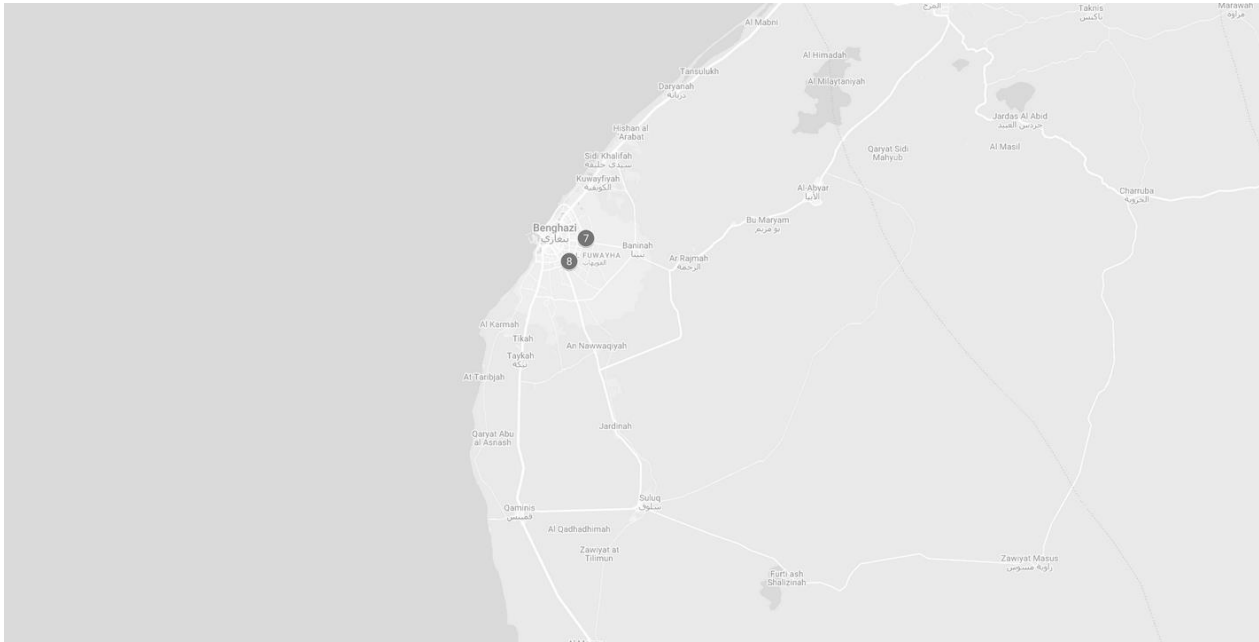
**3 SAF - Feb 27 19:08, Az Zawiyah Province, Zawiyah Oil Refinery:** Small arms fire was heard from the area of the refinery.

**4 Troop Movements - Feb 27 19:15, Az Zawiyah Province, Zawiyah:** 24 armoured vehicles mobilised from Zawiyah towards the area of clashes in a bid to intervene.

**5 Ceasefire - Feb 27 20:03, Az Zawiyah Province, Harsha:** A ceasefire was agreed upon after one group agreed to hand over an individual accused of murder. As a result, clashes ceased and armed groups began to withdraw from the area.

**6 Troop Movements - Feb 27 20:08, Az Zawiyah Province, Mutrud:** Armed vehicles withdrew from the area of the clashes near Mutrud towards Zawiyah.

## Cyrenaica Region



**7 Arrest - Feb 27, Benghazi Province, Boatni:** A man and woman were arrested by the police after it was claimed they were found in an "immoral situation." This came after a house raid by police following accusations of theft and fraud against the man involved. He was also found in possession of a hand grenade.

**8 Arrest - Feb 28, Benghazi Province, Bohdema:** The Benghazi Security Directorate arrested a number of individuals for possession of hashish.

## Fezzan Region

NSTR

## Offshore

NSTR

# Outlook

## Short Term Outlook

- Libyan remains locked in a political impasse with two governments, both of which are slowly weakening. The House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) continue to dominate the current political scene, with their efforts to resolve key issues like the constitution taking centre stage. After years of backtracking however, SRSB Bathily has made clear that without real progress, the two risk entities risk being sidelined. Various factions are beginning to position themselves for expected change in 2023 as the UN continues to push towards elections, while regional and global issues, not least the Ukraine offensive, continue to shape the international communities' agendas in Libya.
- Although more settled at present, the security situation in and around Tripoli remains fundamentally unstable. After significant changes to the capital's security makeup in August and September 2022, new faultlines are emerging as militia commanders continue to consolidate their positions. This includes expanding their influence through ministries and other state apparatus. In addition, plans to reconstruct Tripoli International Airport threaten to destabilise the delicate balance of power in the city with Misratan entities looking to claim significant influence over the location. The resurgence of Jihadist Salafism in Tripolitania is also a potential source of destabilisation, one which is currently being felt in Tajura and along the north-west coastline including Zawiyah. Armed groups in Tripoli continue to be empowered via financial, military, and political means, ensuring they will continue to exert significant influence over the political situation.

## Medium to Long Term Outlook

- The solution to Libya's political impasse remains elections for many stakeholders with UNSMIL attempting to develop a new pathway. Realistically, elections are unlikely to occur in 2023 however, there is a real chance that much-needed groundwork could be achieved. While UNSMIL heads efforts towards elections, other international stakeholders are prioritising more short-term objectives as they look to shape not just Libya, but regional and global issues.
- Terrorist groups remain active but contained in Libya. Islamic State (IS) will continue to present a threat to security forces, primarily in the south, and may re-establish the capability to mount sporadic attacks along the coastline in the future. The group continues to suffer from years of attrition and is more likely focused on providing support for more active IS theatres in sub-Saharan Africa. Al-Qaeda-aligned groups remain active in the country with their integration into societies in the south and some armed groups in the Tripoli area potentially posing a longer-term issue for Libya.

# Key Dates

Date	Occasion	Comment
April 22 - 24, 2023	Eid Al-Fitr (+/-)	Public Holiday
May 01, 2023	May Day	Public Holiday
June 27, 2023	Arafat Day	
June 28 – 30, 2023	Eid Al-Adha	Public Holiday
July 19, 2023	Islamic New Year	Public Holiday
September 16, 2023	Martyrs' Day	Public Holiday

September 27, 2023	The Prophet's Birthday	Public Holiday
October 23, 2023	Liberation Day	Public Holiday
December 24, 2023	Independence Day	Public Holiday



# Acronym List

AQ - Al-Qaeda  
BDB – Benghazi Defense Brigade (Al Qaeda-aligned – AAS and RSCB associated/umbrella group)  
CBL – Central Bank of Libya  
CESF - Constitution and Election Support Force  
CNI – Critical National Infrastructure  
DACOCT - Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism (SDF)  
DDR - Disarmament, demobilising and reintegration  
GASO – General Administration of Security Operations  
GACS – General Administration of Central Support  
GECOL – General Electricity Company of Libya  
GMMR – Great Man-made River  
GNA – Government of National Accord (2016)  
GNC – General National Congress (2012)  
GNS – Government of National Stability (2021)  
GNU – Government of National Unity (2021)  
GTUC - Greater Tripoli Union Council (Tripoli militias and others, established in June 2020)  
HCS – High Council of State (Tripoli-based)  
HNEC – High National Elections Commission  
HoR – House of Representatives (Tobruk-based)  
IDF – Indirect Fire (mortars/rockets)  
IDP - Internally Displaced Persons  
IED - Improvised Explosive Device  
IOC - International Oil Company  
IS - Islamic State  
JMC – Joint Military Commission  
LIFG – Libyan Islamic Fighting Group  
LNA – Libyan National Army  
LPA – Libyan Political Agreement (2015)  
LPDF - Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (2020)  
LROR - Libyan Revolutionary Operations Room  
MoD - Ministry of Defense  
MoF - Ministry of Finance  
MoFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
MoI - Ministry of Interior  
MoJ - Ministry of Justice  
MoO - Ministry of Oil  
MoT - Ministry of Transportation  
NFDK - No Further Details Known  
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation (aid/charity)  
NOC – National Oil Company  
NSG – National Salvation Government (GNC)  
NSTR - Nothing Significant To Report  
P3+2 – France, Germany, Italy – UK, US  
PC – Presidency Council  
PG – Presidential Guard  
PFG - Petroleum Facilities Guard  
RPG - Rocket Propelled Grenade  
RTA - Road Traffic Accident  
TIP – Tripoli International Airport  
SSA – Stability Support Authority  
SAF - Small Arms Fire  
SDF – Rada Deterrence Force/ Special Deterrence Force/ Rada  
UXO - Unexploded Ordnance

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