



Intelyse



LIBYA

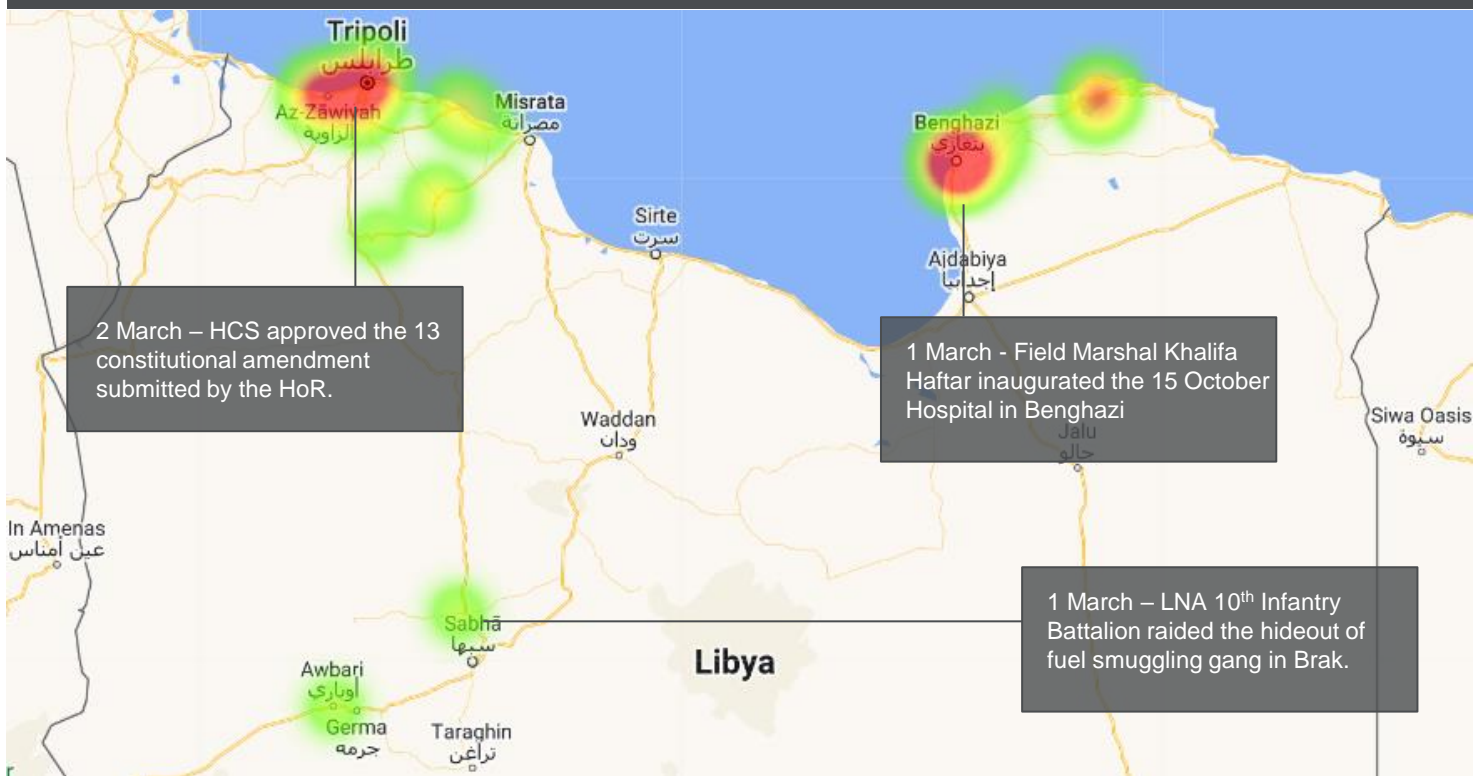
Weekly Political Stability,
Economic And Security
Threat Assessment

25 FEBRUARY – 3 MARCH 2023



COUNTRYWIDE OVERVIEW

FIGURE 1: HIGHLIGHTED INCIDENTS IN LIBYA, 25 FEBRUARY – 3 MARCH 2023



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- UNSMIL Head Abdoulaye Bathily briefed the UNSC on the Libyan situation and proposed for the creation of a High-Level Steering Panel for Libya.
- Several low-level militia clashes were reported on the western coastal road, resulting in the death of at least two individuals and injury to two others.
- Gaddafi supporters accused the 5+5 Joint Military Committee (JMC) of conspiring with foreign parties to exclude Saif from running in the elections.
- Reports of plans to expand the LNA-Mol joint security campaign in Benghazi to target groups outside the LNA command structure.

OUTLOOK

- The HoR and HCS sees the steering panel as a threat to their power and influence in the Libyan political scene. This will likely force both parliaments to work together to show progress on the electoral law to try to undermine the UNSMIL proposal.
- Low-level militia clashes can occur without prior notice do not extend beyond 48-72 hours. These episodes can often be triggered by petty disputes.
- This suggests that Saif being sidelined in the political process will be rejected by his support base and may be used to challenge the legitimacy of the elections. Gaddafi supporters may also resort to protests, especially in Sabha, if Saif is prevented from participating in the elections.
- If the plan materializes, these will likely result in increased tension in Benghazi and lead to armed clashes in different areas of the city

COUNTRYWIDE OVERVIEW

UNSMIL PROPOSAL TO ADDRESS LIBYAN CRISIS

UNSMIL Head Abdoulaye Bathily briefed the UNSC on the Libyan situation following months of engagements and consultations with Libyan stakeholders and international partners. In his brief, Bathily touched on several points including:

- The non-agreement of the HoR and the HCS on the constitutional basis for elections as one of the reasons for the persistence of the Libyan crisis. The HoR adopted its 13th Constitutional Amendment and published it in the Official Gazette, which was subsequently endorsed by the HCS. Bathily reiterated that the amendment does not address contentious issues including eligibility criteria for presidential candidates. The collaboration between the HoR and HCS, and the ultimate endorsement by both parties, is likely an attempt to project cooperation in order to undermine the UNSMIL proposal. The UNSMIL proposal runs in parallel to the HoR/HCS roadmap for elections.
- A proposal for the creation of a High-level Steering Panel for Libya, involving relevant Libyan stakeholders to facilitate the adoption of a legal framework and a time-bound road map, for the holding of elections this year. The proposed committee will include major political figures, tribal leaders, civil society organizations and security actors.
- 5+5 JMC and UNSMIL joint plan to facilitate dialogue with representatives with armed groups in the coming weeks to discuss ways to achieve a conducive environment to hold the elections.

The US and France expressed their support for Bathily's proposal to hold the elections in Libya. The National Force Alliance, a Libyan political party, also supported the proposal and hailed it for abiding with public demands to form a unified government. Meanwhile, GNU-PM Abdul Hamid Dbeiba called on the UN Secretary General for technical assistance in implementing and deploying international observers for the electoral process.

The HoR rejected Bathily's statement and called his proposal an interference on Libyan affairs. The HoR also rejected Bathily's statement regarding the non-agreement between the HoR and HCS as inaccurate. This reaction is not unexpected as similar statements have been made in the past against international parties commenting on the two parliament's disagreements. Ultimately, the dispute will prolong Libyan political crisis.

The HoR and HCS view the steering panel as a threat to their power and influence in the Libyan political scene. This will likely force both parliaments to work together to show progress on the electoral law in order to undermine the UNSMIL proposal.

FIGURE 2: HIGHLIGHTED INCIDENTS IN TRIPOLI FROM 25 FEBRUARY – 3 MARCH 2023



MILITIA CLASHES IN TRIPOLITANIA

Low-level militia clashes were reported on the western coastal road during the reporting period:

- 27 February – Clash between the Al Kabwat and Al Qasab militias in the Al Mutrad area, west of Zawiya. At least two were killed, and two others were injured. Reports indicated that the clash was triggered when members of the Al Qasab militia opened fire on houses in the area.
- 27 February – Unconfirmed reports circulated about a clash between units affiliated with the SSA and the 55th Battalion units in the Abu Sura area, Al Zawiya.
- 1 March – Unconfirmed reports of a clash between local armed groups near the Al Masira clinic in Surman,

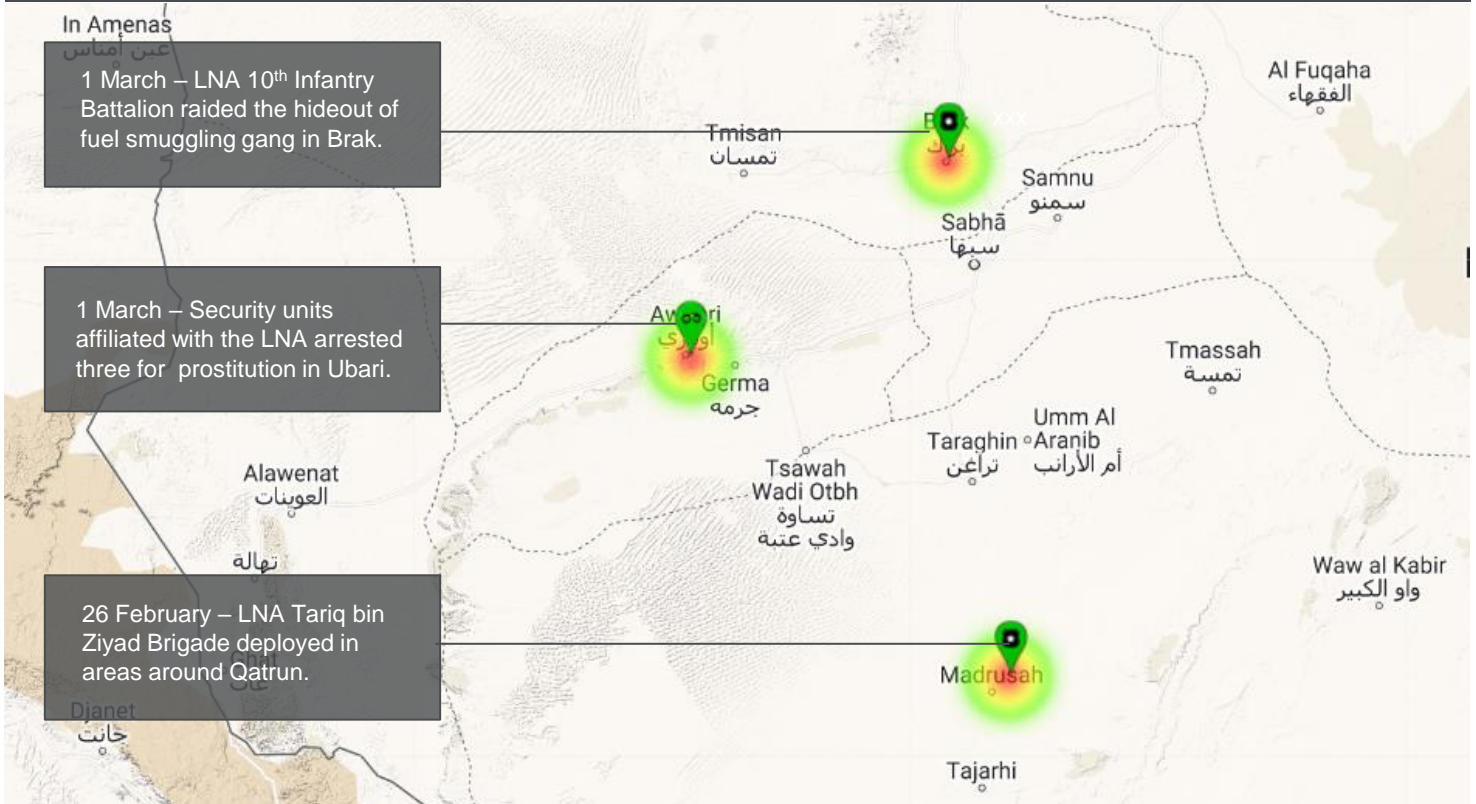
The incidents above appear to not have escalated further, falling inline with the usual low-level militia dynamics in Tripolitania. As previously assessed, these episodes do not extend beyond 48-72 hours and can occur without prior notice. Similar incidents can be expected to occur in the short to medium term, often triggered by petty disputes.

DEMONSTRATIONS OVER UNIFIED SALARY SCALE

Different groups of public sector employees staged demonstrations across several areas of Tripolitania during the reporting period. The protesters are demanding their inclusion in the unified salary scale signed by GNU-PM Abdul Hamid Dbeiba in June of 2022.

- 26 February – Employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock staged a protest in Bani Walid.
- 27 February – Public sector employees staged a demonstration in front of the office of the PM in Tripoli. Employees of the Asbiah Municipal Council closed their headquarters until their demands are met. Real Estate Registration Authority also staged a protest in front of their headquarters in Janzour.
- 1 March – A group of public sector employees staged a protest in front of the office of the PM to demand for the distribution of their salaries.
- 2 March – Employees of the Ministry of Environment staged a protest in front of the Courts Complex in Tripoli and called on the Attorney General to intervene.

FIGURE 3: HIGHLIGHTED INCIDENTS IN FEZZAN FROM 25 FEBRUARY – 3 MARCH 2023



GADDAFI SUPPORTERS ACCUSED 5+5 JMC OF CONSPIRACY

On 26 February, supporters of Saif Gaddafi said that members of the 5+5 Joint Military Committee (JMC) are conspiring with foreign parties to exclude Saif from running for the planned elections. The statement is also likely in response to the US and UK-led efforts to bridge the gap between the east-west divide which led to Tripolitania groups releasing a statement against Saif (see 24 February Weekly Threat Assessment).

A similar plot was also claimed by Pro-Gaddafi activist on 10 January, when a delegation from the HoR and the HCS allegedly met with Saif in Sabha to ask him not to run for the elections. The veracity of these claims are difficult to ascertain, however, they indicate that Saif Gaddafi remains a relevant character. This also suggests that Saif being sidelined in the political process will be rejected by his support base which could be used to challenge the legitimacy of the elections. In this scenario, it remains likely that pro-Gaddafi supporters may resort to protests, especially in Sabha.

GENERAL TREND IN FEZZAN REMAINS THE SAME

The security situation in Fezzan has remained the same. The incidents recorded during the reporting period are mainly arrests and government operations against criminal groups. Low-impact crimes including robbery and narcotics trade, which are often unreported, remain common largely due to the security gap in the city.

The LNA's Tariq Bin Ziyad (TBZ) Brigade will start a recruitment campaign in Sabha on 8 March. The recruitment is part of the LNA's efforts to maintain its control and expand its influence in the region. It remains unlikely that the recruitment or deployment of additional LNA forces will address the security issues in the region.

FIGURE 4: HAFTAR DURING 15 OCTOBER HOSPITAL INAUGURATION IN BENGHAZI, 2 MARCH 2023



HAFTAR INAUGURATES 15 OCTOBER HOSPITAL

On 1 March, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar inaugurated the 15 October Hospital in Benghazi. Other LNA officials, including TBZ Commander Brigadier General Saddam Haftar, 166th Battalion Commander Ayoub Al-Ferjani, and GNS Deputy Interior Minister Faraj Aqim.

The opening of the military hospital is expected to address previous demands by wounded members of the LNA for treatment abroad and is expected to boost the morale of members of the LNA. Similarly, the LNA also announced the opening of the 106 Brigade strength hall which allows soldiers to train with gym equipment.

PLANNED EXPANSION OF LNA-MOI SECURITY CAMPAIGN IN BENGHAZI

Reports on 28 February claim that plans to expand the joint security campaign in Benghazi are underway to target groups outside the LNA command structure. The LNA has yet to confirm the reports, however, Saiqa Special Forces (SF) Brigade 21, which was under the command of the infamous Mahmoud Al Werfalli, condemned the plans. The LNA and Saiqa Special Forces had a fall out following the assassination of Al Werfalli in Benghazi on March 2021.

If the plan materializes, it will likely result in increased tension in Benghazi and lead to armed clashes in different areas of the city. Intelyse will continue to monitor and report should the situation develop further.

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