



Intelyse



# LIBYA

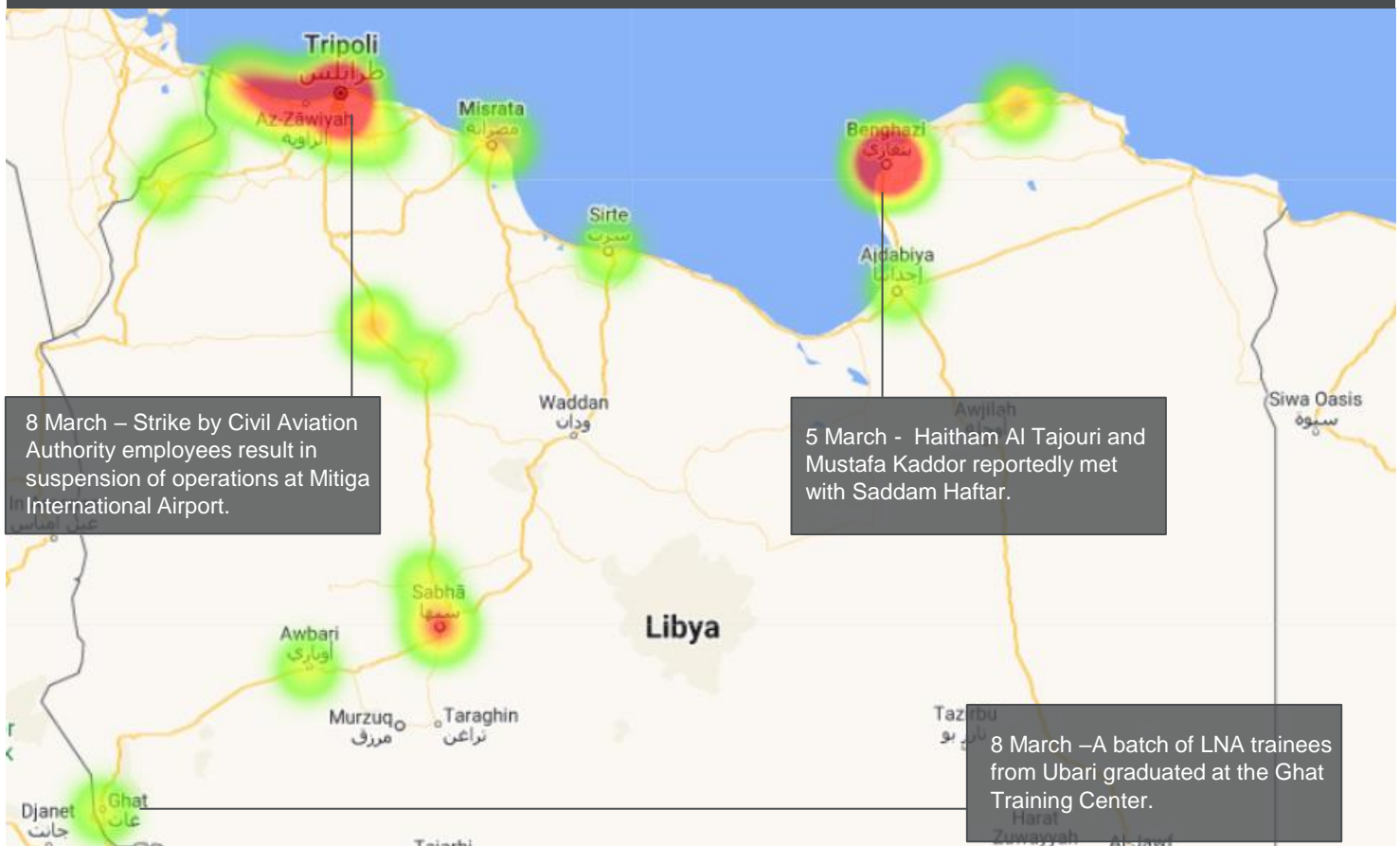
Weekly Political Stability,  
Economic And Security  
Threat Assessment

4-10 MARCH 2023



# COUNTRYWIDE OVERVIEW

FIGURE 1: HIGHLIGHTED INCIDENTS IN LIBYA 4-10 MARCH 2023



## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Local and international stakeholders met to discuss UNSMIL’s proposal for the creation of a high-level Steering Panel for Libya, to eventually organize elections. However, the initiative is at odds with the Libyan-Libyan solution which is being advocated by HoR head Aqila Saleh.
- In the past 24 hours, unconfirmed social media reports have been spreading and causing uncertainty in Tripoli. Such reports are summarized on page 3 and include allegations of a possible offensive against Tripoli.
- Pro-LNA sources claimed that former TRB commander Haithem Al Tajouri and Nawasi Battalion commander Mustafa Kaddour arrived in Benghazi. The two reportedly met Saddam Haftar.

## OUTLOOK

- It is still too early to say whether the UNSMIL proposal will succeed. The existence of different inconsistent initiatives to achieve reconciliation and elections will keep posing a challenge to political progress. However, UNSMIL’s plan is gathering substantial international support and is being complemented with local engagement in Libya (see 10 February Weekly Threat Assessment).
- Based on the available information and in the current context, an offensive against Tripoli is currently not a realistic scenario. Intelyse will keep monitoring the situation.
- If confirmed, the development would fall or might be part of the previously reported efforts to bridge the gap between the eastern and western blocs. Other observers argued that the meetings could be indicative of an LNA plan to take Tripoli. However, this does not look likely.

# COUNTRYWIDE OVERVIEW

## REACTIONS TO UNSMIL PROPOSAL

Local and international stakeholders met to discuss UNSMIL's proposal for the creation of a High-Level Steering Panel for Libya, to eventually organize elections. However, the initiative is at odds with the Libyan-Libyan solution which is being advocated by HoR head Aqila Saleh.

- **8 March:** US ambassador to Libya, Richard Norland and US Chargé d'Affairs Leslie Ordeman met with GNU-PM Abdul Hamid Dbeiba in Tripoli. They agreed on the importance of holding the elections in Libya in 2023. Dbeiba also met with the Ambassadors and Envoys of the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Italy to Libya (P3+2 group) to discuss international efforts in support for the UNSMIL proposal in holding the Libyan elections.

Dbeiba prioritizes remaining in power, but also has to show support for reconciliation efforts given the strong international involvement, to avoid losing legitimacy among foreign stakeholders.

- **8 March:** UK Ambassador to Libya, Caroline Hurdall, expressed her country's full support to UNSMIL's proposal for an inclusive political progress, after a meeting with HCS Chairman Khaled Al Mishri
- **7 March:** President Mohammed Menfi received UNSMIL head Abdoulaye Bathily in Tripoli to discuss the High-Level Steering Panel for Libya. During the meeting Menfi reiterated the PC's support to all efforts to hold elections. Separately, Bathily also met with GNU-PM Abdul Hamid Dbeiba. Dbeiba reaffirmed his government's support to the UNSMIL proposal.
- **7 March:** PM Dbeiba met with Canadian Ambassador to Libya Isabelle Savard to discuss shared support to the UNSMIL proposal.
- **7 March:** US Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland met with HoR Speaker Aquila Saleh in Benghazi. Norland reaffirmed US support to the UNSMIL proposal, while Saleh reiterated that the HoR has fulfilled the legislative requirements for the elections.
- **4 March:** HoR Aquila Saleh met with the representatives of the Libyan Sheikhs Authority in Al Qubah. During the meeting, Saleh reiterated the need for a Libyan-Libyan solution to the political crisis instead of relying to the UN-sponsored initiative.

It is still too early to say whether the UNSMIL proposal will succeed. For now, HoR head Saleh keeps supporting a Libyan-led solution which is at odds with UNSMIL's. The existence of different inconsistent initiatives to achieve reconciliation and elections will keep posing a challenge to political progress. The main chances of success rely on a possible deal between the political leadership of the western bloc and the Haftar family.

## PROTEST OVER SALARY ISSUES CONTINUED IN TRIPOLITANIA

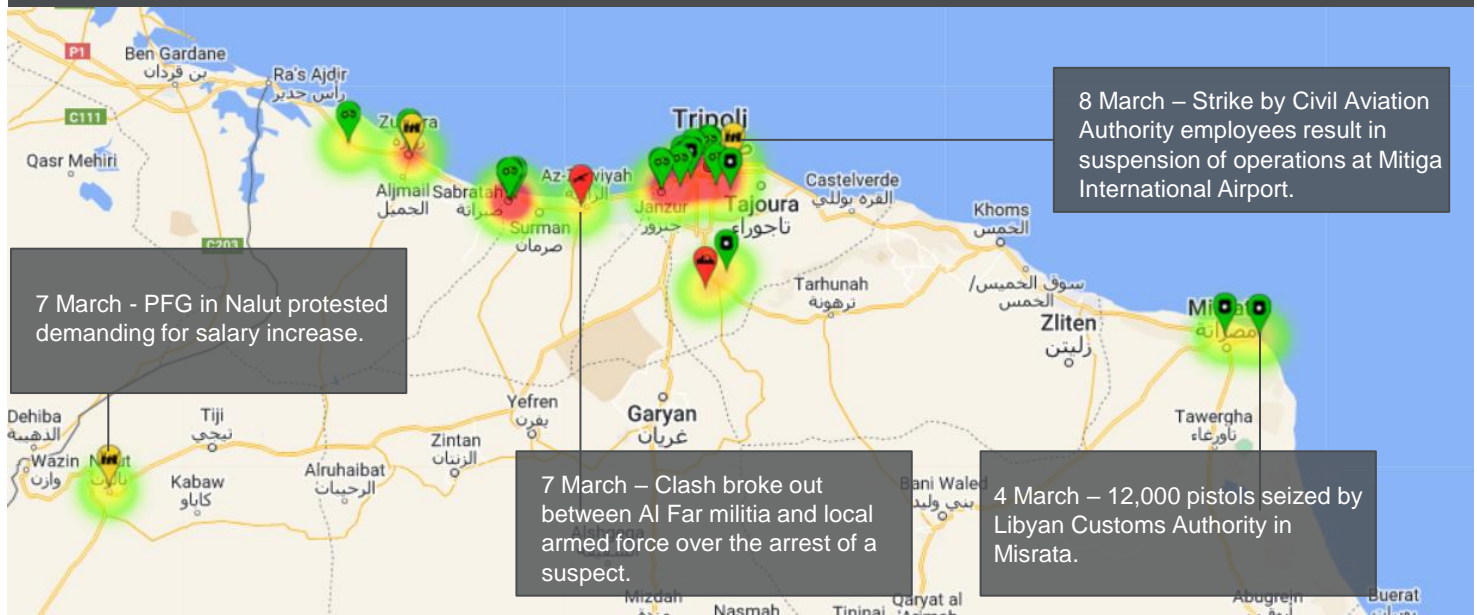
After last week's protests over the exclusion of some workers from the unified salary scale, new protests were reported. These protests remained peaceful but carry the potential to disrupt travel in and out of Libya and local road traffic.

- **8 March:** Flights to and from Mitiga International Airport (MJI) were temporarily stopped after Civil Aviation Authority employees protested to demand a pay raise. Operations resumed shortly after. Similar strikes were also reported in Benghazi and Misrata, but did not result in disruptions there.
- **7 March:** the Petroleum Facilities Guards (PFG) in Nalut staged a demonstration demanding the payment of their salaries. This follows a demonstration by other PFG members threatening to shut down oil facilities in western Libya on 2 March. In response to that, the PFG in Tripoli has called on its affiliated branches to refrain from disrupting oil operations.

To note, it is common in Libya when workers protest in one location for their colleagues in other parts of the country to follow suit, in order to obtain the same concessions. More protests may occur in the next days and weeks.

# TRIPOLITANIA

FIGURE 2: INCIDENT ACTIVITY IN TRIPOLITANIA, 4-10 MARCH 2023



## LIKELY DISINFORMATION BEING SPREAD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In the past 24 hours, unconfirmed social media reports have been circulating:

- Zintani commander Osama Al Juwaili will be receiving or has recently received weapons from France.
- Former TRB commander Haitham Tajouri reportedly called Mohammad Bahroni of the Janzur knights and said that he would attack Tripoli before Ramadan.
- Reports of a meeting to unify militias from Zintan will take place in Zintan on Friday or Saturday. If confirmed, the above would be consistent with the goals set out by the Extraordinary Forum of Libyan Revolutionaries held in Zintan on 11 February. However, there is no certainty that the two episodes are linked.

Currently, it is likely that this information has been fabricated and/or distorted with the goal of causing confusion and disrupting the de-escalation in tension between the eastern and western blocs achieved via international engagement. Intelyse will keep monitoring the situation, but based on the available information, the prospect of an offensive against Tripoli is not realistic.

## MOBILIZATIONS AND COUNTER MOBILIZATIONS IN MIZDAH – ASH SHWAYRIF AREA

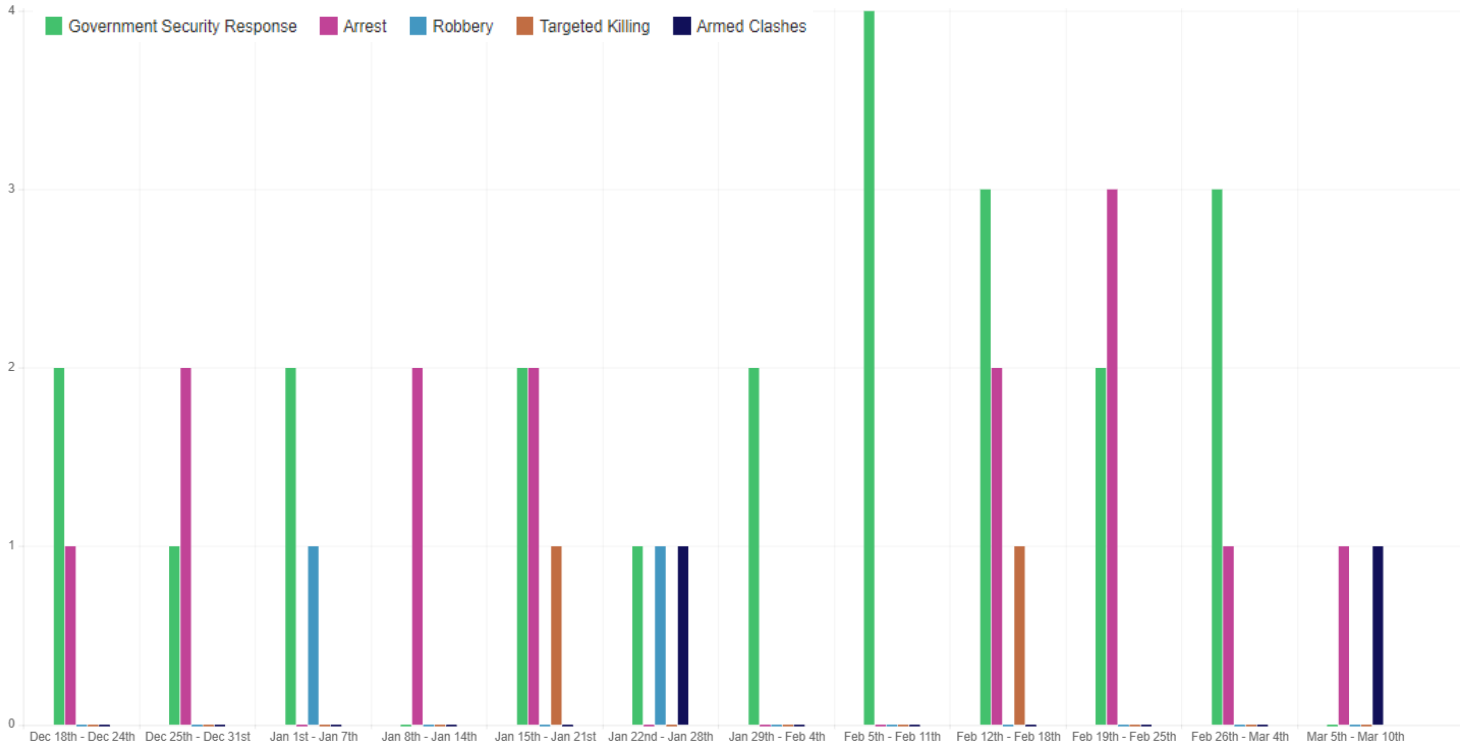
On 7 March, the 444<sup>th</sup> Brigade conducted a raid targeting criminal hideouts in Al Qurayyat, south of Mizdah. A brief exchange of fire was reported after armed local resisted the raid. Reports of abuses perpetrated by the 444<sup>th</sup> Brigade circulated after the raid. This prompted Zintani forces to say that they will deploy to the area to protect Zintani families. If the deployment materializes, there will be the risk of frictions between the Zintanis and the 444<sup>th</sup> Brigade in the area.

After the deployment of the 444<sup>th</sup> Brigade, at least two LNA convoys deployed to Ash Shwayrif, about 86km south east of Al Qurayyat. The LNA deployments are likely a way to secure Ash Swayrif from possible (but very unlikely) advances of the 444<sup>th</sup> Brigade beyond AL Qurayyat. After the arrival of the LNA convoys, GNU forces reportedly ordered the deployment of reconnaissance drones to monitor any suspicious activities in the area. Aside from the tension caused by deployments on both sides, the situation is unlikely to develop.

## MILITIA CLASHES REPORTED IN ZAWIYAH

On 7 March, a clash broke out between the Al Far militia and a local armed group in the Awlad Ajina area, Al Zawiyah. Reports indicate that the clash was triggered by Al Far's arrest of a wanted individual belonging to the Al Shawish family. The individual was later handed over to Rada SDF, and calm was restored. The incident likely comes in the context of the GNU-Mol security plan, which involves the implementation of arrest warrants against wanted suspects in Tripoli and the surrounding areas. As previously assessed, these arrests increase the risk of clashes, especially if they involve individuals with links to local militias.

**FIGURE 3: INCIDENT TRENDS IN FEZZAN, 18 DECEMBER 2022-10 MARCH 2023**



### FEZZAN REMAINS STABLE

The security situation in Fezzan has remained stable during the reporting period. Aside from a clash between the LNA and armed robbers in Sabha, incidents in Fezzan were mostly related to petty crime, including smuggling, thefts and robberies. Incidents in Fezzan remain under-reported, however.

### LNA GRADUATION CEREMONY IN GHAT

On 8 March, the LNA held a ceremony for the graduation of a batch of trainees from the Ubari area at the Ghat Training Center (see figure 4). The training is part of continued efforts by the LNA to increase the efficiency and capability of its forces.

The development also falls in the previously assessed LNA activities aimed at strengthening and expanding its influence in the region.

**FIGURE 4: LNA GRADUATION CEREMONY IN GHAT, 8 MARCH 2023**



**FIGURE 5: INCIDENTS IN CYRENAICA, 18 DECEMBER 2022-10 MARCH 2023**



## REPORTS OF HAFTAR MEETING WESTERN-BASED COMMANDERS

Multiple unconfirmed reports indicated that some western militia commanders arrived in Benghazi:

- 5 March:** Pro-LNA sources claimed that former TRB commander Haithem Al Tajouri and Nawasi Battalion commander Mustafa Kaddour arrived in Benghazi. The two reportedly met Saddam Haftar and discussed national reconciliation arrangements. To note, both Tajouri and Kaddour have been expelled by pro-GNU forces in Tripoli in late September 2022. While both are no longer based in western Libya, it remains possible that they still have links to their respective networks present in Tripoli and may still hold sway in local militia dynamics.
- 2 March:** Unconfirmed reports claim that Zintani commander Osama Al Juweili arrived in Benghazi and met with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. The meeting allegedly covered the current security situation in Libya.

If confirmed, the development would fall or might be part of the previously reported efforts to bridge the gap between the eastern and western blocs. If so, other high-profile visits between east and western military figures may occur in the short to medium term. Other observers argued that the meetings could be indicative of an LNA plan to take Tripoli. However, this does not look likely.

## LNA SECURITY CAMPAIGN CONTINUE ACROSS EASTERN LIBYA

The LNA and GNS Mol joint security campaign in eastern Libya continued during the reporting period, resulting in several operations and the arrest of criminal suspects. Listed below are some of the most significant incidents:

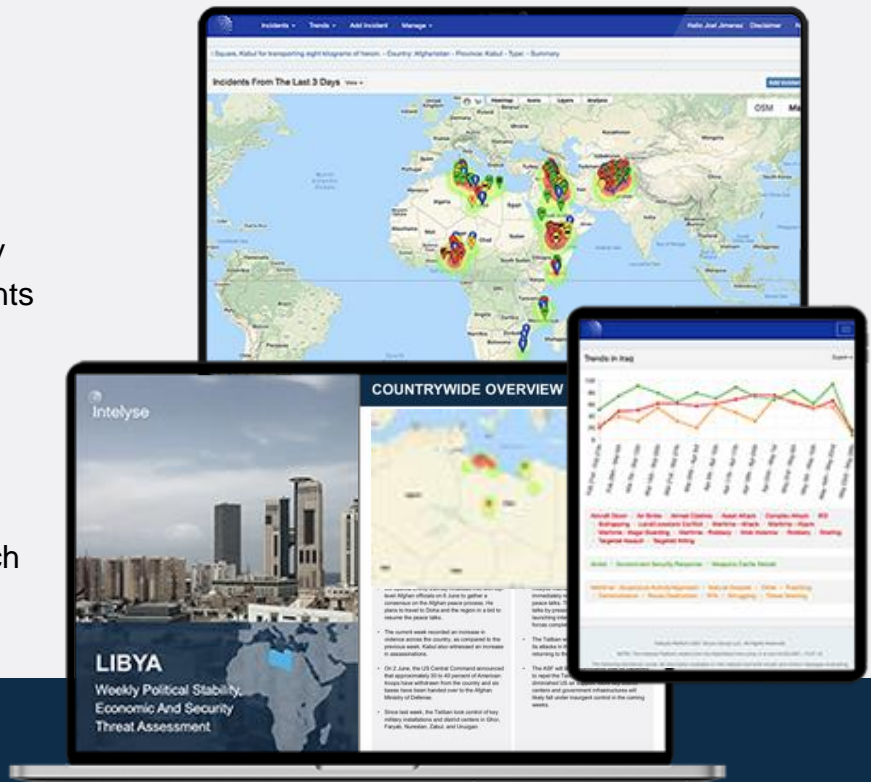
- 4 March:** Security raid in Al Bayda, resulting in the arrest of Egyptians and Libyan nationals involved in narcotics trade. Weapons, ammunition and narcotics seized.
- 5 March:** Deployment of CPs in Suluq, resulting in the arrest of criminal suspects.
- 7 March:** LNA mobilization reported in Ajdabiya as part of a security operation against criminal groups in the city.
- 7 March:** Benghazi security directorate raided a prostitution den in Benghazi.

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