

Libya daily security analysis report

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Latest Developments

Political Developments

- The GNU held their third Regular Cabinet Meeting for 2023 on March 09 in Khoms. The GNU stated that the vision of the SRSG expressed during his UN Security Council address on February 27 “corresponded” with their vision and the Libyan people to hold elections. They also stated that to ensure elections were held, the GNU should not be removed, and nor should the head of the HNEC, two issues currently being pushed for by the HoR and HCS.

Security Developments

- Further analysis, reporting and activity from armed groups over the last 24 hours suggest that 444 Combat Unit may intend to establish new lines of control (LoC) south of Tripoli in a bid to contain Major General Osama Jweli, commander of the Western Mountains Military Region (WMMR).
- On March 09, CID in Sabha raided several Non-Governmental Organisations in Sabha, arresting at least four employees. They were reported to have been released by the early hours of March 10.

Assessment

Security Developments

Tripolitania troop movements

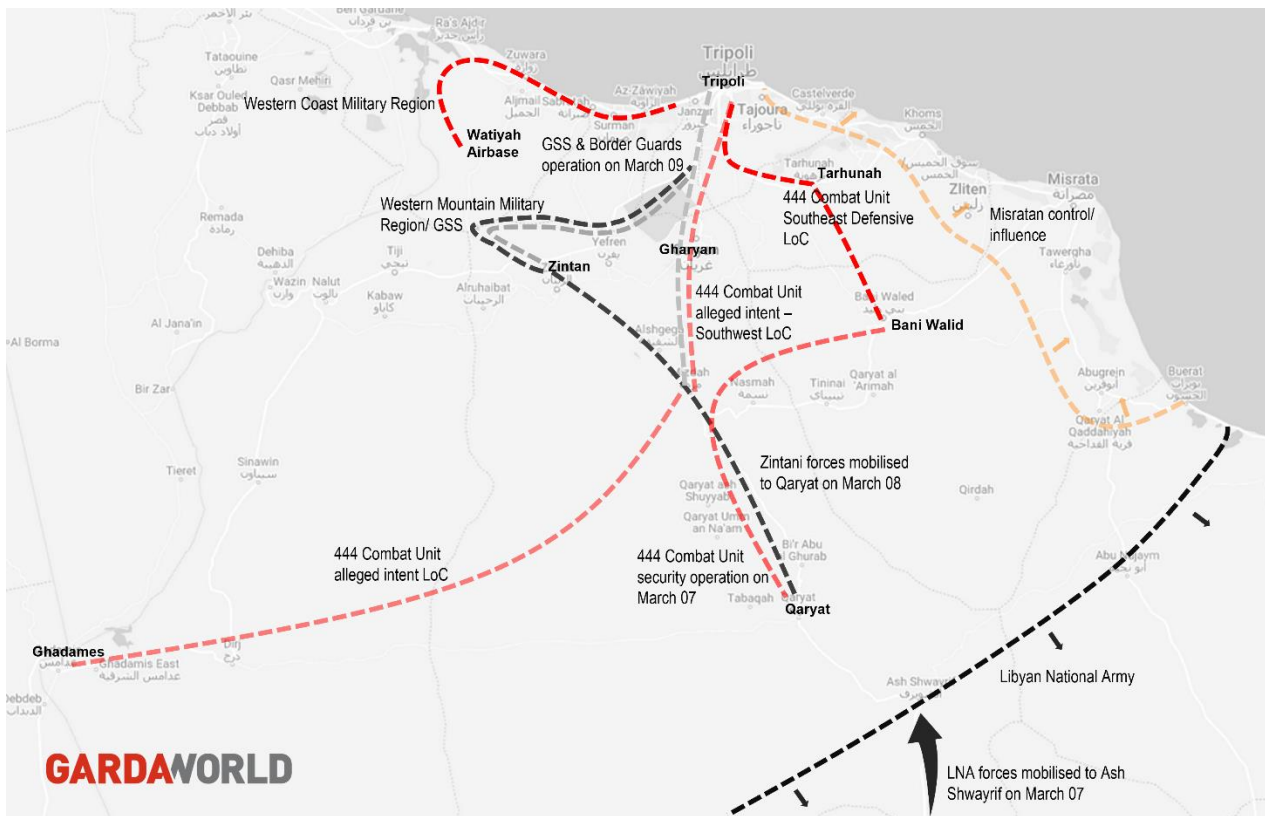
Further analysis, reporting and activity from armed groups over the last 24 hours suggest that 444 Combat Unit may intend to establish new lines of control (LoC) south from Tripoli in a bid to contain Major General Osama Jweli, commander of the WMMR. This remains unconfirmed and the situation continues to develop.

444 Combat Unit

This move to contain Jweli is assessed to include a push from Bani Walid to Qaryat. On 07 March, a joint force, comprising 444 Combat Unit, GASO LEF and CIA launched an operation in Qaryat after deploying from Bani Walid. The operation triggered a response the following day from Zintani forces (likely Jweli's) which deployed into Qaryat. This deployment was said to be in the protection of local residents however was likely aimed at dislodging any remaining 444 Combat Unit forces and to re-assert their dominance in the area, securing the supply route to the south and disrupting attempts by 444 to potentially establish a southwest line of control (LoC) from Tripoli to Gharyan to Mizdah. Gharyan remains a strategic location in the Nafousa Mountains, holding a key position on the southern supply route from Sabha to the capital, hence why the LNA prioritised taking control of the location in 2019 prior to starting Operation Flood of Dignity.

Reports indicate that 444 Combat Unit may also be intent on creating a line of control from Mizdah Ghadames. Ghadames currently sits outside the control of any major national group but has repeatedly found itself occupied with only local forces to protect itself. This would contain Jwelis forces to the north and possibly cut off additional supply routes to the south where Zintan has maintained influence over the years.

444 Combat Unit is assessed to have around 8000 fighters and 2000 vehicles. It holds Tikbali camp in Tripoli and may have access to air support. It is assessed as one of the more professional forces in Tripolitania after emerging from SDF in 2019.



Graphic: Red – 444 and WCMR. Light Grey – GSS. Dark Grey – WMMR/ Zintan. Black – LNA. Orange – Misrata.

General Security Services

Of note, General Security Services (GSS) and Border Guards mobilised to Mizdah on March 09, “as per orders from the Ministry of Interior (GNU).” The units are both based in western Tripoli and were under the command of the Zintani commander, Emad Trabelsi before he took up his current position as the Minister of Interior (GNU). The units are now under the control of his brother, Abdullah. GSS is known to hold checkpoints, some jointly with Jweli, south of Tripoli and up to Zintan, but have not been known to push outside of their areas of control previously. While the border guards are also deployed to the Tunisian border, its unclear what remit they would have to push into Mizdah other than to support GSS.

The move by the two units into Mizdah suggests Trabelsi is looking to create his own LoC south of the city, mirroring 444 Combat Unit’s intent. Trabelsi’s motive however remains unclear. He sided with the GNU in 2022 while his fellow Zintani commander Jweli sided with the GNS however the two have continued to cooperate. It’s possible that he is acting as part of a wider GNU-aligned plan to contain Jweli, or he may be looking to act as a buffer, providing some protection to Jweli and Zintan in general by creating space, pushing 444 to the east. Trabelsi may also have not decided who to support but is injecting himself into the developments, enabling him to open negotiations with both sides to secure further concessions. Trabelsi has, like many commanders, shown a willingness to switch loyalties and for a long time was under the LNA until he switched to the GNA and secured locations in Tripoli in 2018 in the face of the Kani/ Badi assault.

Western Coastal Military Region

To Jweli’s west sits his peer, Major General Salahuddin Namroush, former Minister of Defence (GNA) and current commander of the Western Coast Military Region (WCMR). The creation of this region saw Jweli’s region split and signalled his sidelining by the GNU. Reports indicate that the WCMR has recently expanded its operations. Namroush was patrolling along the Tunisian border on 06 March with 52 and 62 Brigades. Reports also suggest he may have a presence in Watiyah Airbase, an airbase which had been held by Zintani forces loyal to the LNA prior to Operation Flood of Dignity, and has access to drones.

Significant Incidents

Tripolitania Region



1 Security Operation - Mar 09, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Province, Mizdah: General Security Service (GSS) and the border guards carried out static and mobile security operations along the Mizdah to Qaryat route, as per orders from the Ministry of Interior (GNU). Reports indicate they may be establishing security locations and checkpoints along the route. It should be noted that the Minister of Interior, Emad Trabelsi, commanded both GSS and the border guards prior to his appointment as minister and handed over to his brother, Abdullah Trabelsi.

2 Security Operation - Mar 09, Tripoli Province, Tajura Port: Naval Special Forces seized a vessel and arrested 65 illegal immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa.

3 Kidnap - Mar 09, Misrata Province, Misrata: A 20-year-old woman was kidnapped for ransom from east Misrata. She was allegedly forced to strip in a video uploaded to TikTok.

4 Arrest - Mar 09, Tripoli Province, Tripoli: The Tripoli Forensic Investigation Bureau arrested someone for the theft of 200 camels. His accomplice remains at large. The animals were to be sold on in the Islamic District area.

5 Murder/ Execution - Mar 09, Tripoli Province, Tajura: A body was found in a burned-out Lancer vehicle on the beach in front of the Shifen Clinic.

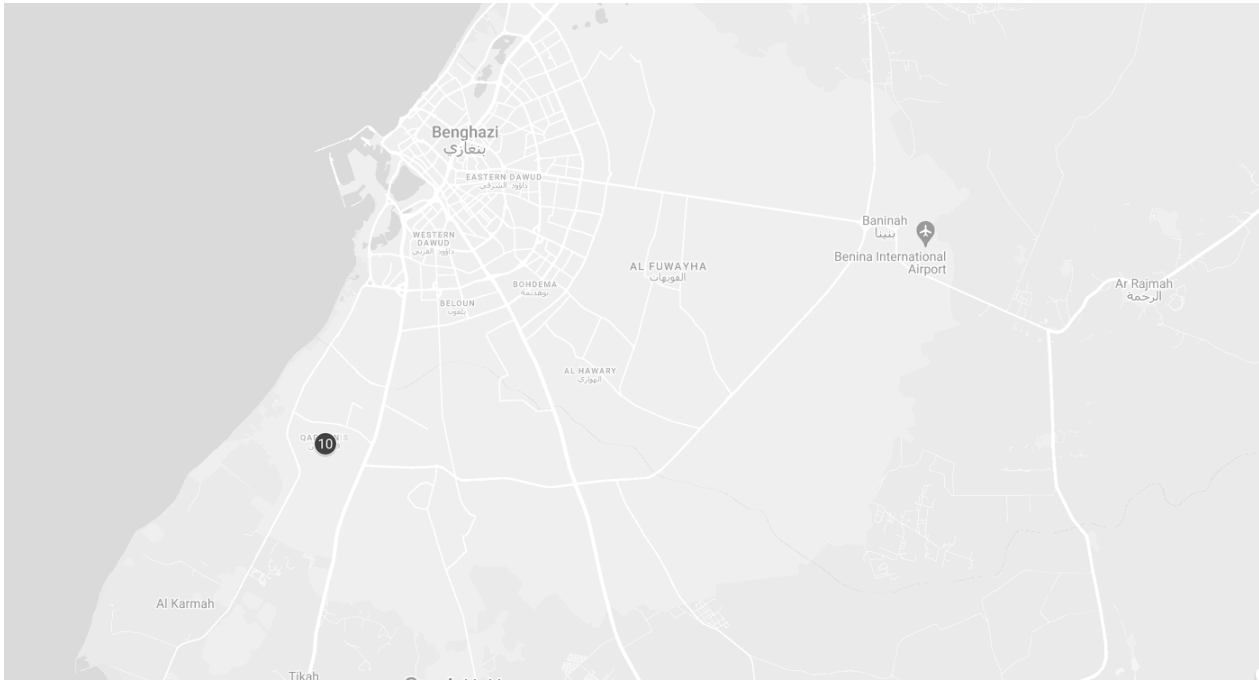
6 Demonstration - Mar 09 10:48, Misrata Province, Al-Qoshi: Residents protested outside the Attorney Generals' office against security operations by the Joint Operations Force and the subsequent demolition of buildings.

7 Troop Movements - Mar 09 20:30, Al-Jafara Province, 4 Brigade Camp: Major General Osama Jweli's forces reportedly mobilised in the area.

8 Arrest - Mar 10 00:00, Misrata Province, Misrata: A woman who had been kidnapped for ransom from eastern Misrata was freed and two perpetrators were arrested.

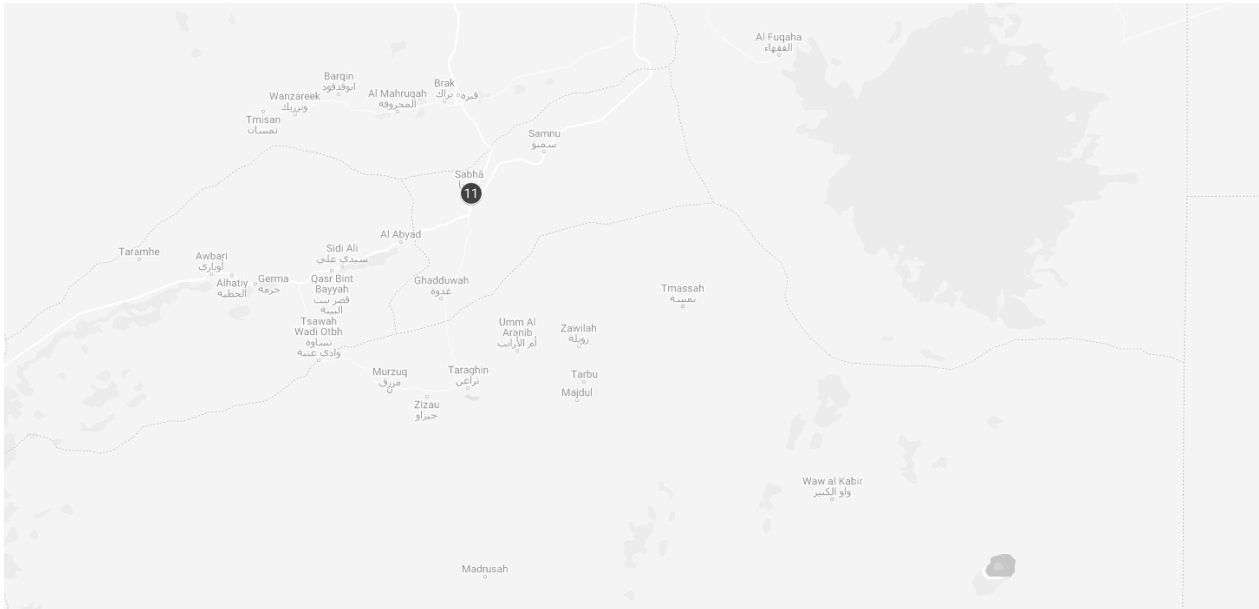
9 Security Announcement - Mar 10 11:57, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Province, Zintan: Reports indicate that a meeting of military commanders is to take place in Zintan with speculation this is to gather forces under the command of Major General Osama Jweli.

Cyrenaica Region



10 Security Announcement - Mar 09 22:00, Benghazi Province, Garyounis: Garyounis Police, Military Police, and CID carried out vehicle checkpoints, resulting in the arrest of 50 illegal immigrants.

Fezzan Region



11 Arrest - Mar 09 12:00, Sabha Province, Sabha: CID raided the offices of a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and arrested four employees. Another NGO office was also raided while at least one other NGO sent their staff home. The four arrested were later released. It's unclear why the NGOs were targeted however four possible motives have been suggested. The first is that local authorities believed there had been some "irregularities" and "favouritism" in the way aid has been distributed to refugees. The second stated that ten days previously, a senior CID officer had demanded to be allocated some aid intended for refugees. His demand was rejected by the NGO involved. The third motive suggested concerns had been raised locally following a visit by the UN between March 05 and 09 where a strong working connection was

witnessed between the UN and some NGOs. And lastly, a decree was issued on March 08 demanding that all national NGOs established after 2011 had to be dissolved. This came from the Superior Committee of Justice which allegedly emphasized the need for NGOs to secure proper permissions to legitimise their activities. Tensions between local and national authorities and NGOs in Libya have been noted before with authorities taking action in a bid to exert increased influence and oversight over NGO activity.

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, SRSG 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
March 22, 2023	Start of Ramadan (+/-)	
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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SECURE EVERY DAY

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