

Libya daily security analysis report

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Latest Developments

Threat Warnings

- Protest activity in Tripolitania is escalating and becoming more intense. The region has been seeing an increase in the frequency of demonstrations in the run-up to Ramadan. This trend is likely in part driven by the upcoming holy month as well as the expectation of political change this year which gives a closing window for groups to secure concessions from a possible outgoing government.
- Fuel queues in Tripoli have also been driven in part by Ramadan with many people in the capital preparing to drive to their hometowns to spend at least some of the upcoming holy month with family. As a result, the demand for fuel has increased which has also likely sparked some level of panic buying as well.

Political Developments

- US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Barbara Leaf, arrived in Benghazi on March 19 to meet with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, commander of the LNA.
- Prime Minister (GNS) Fathi Bashagha met with members of the HCS at the GNS HQ in Sirte. The meeting was held to discuss the political situation in Libya, "especially with regard to building upon the consensus reached by the HoR and HCS on the constitutional basis."
- Prime Minister (GNU) Abdulhamid Dbeibah met with notables from Zintan and Misrata at his home in Tripoli. His minister of Interior, Emad Trabelsi, Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Al-Haddad, and the Undersecretary for the Ministry of Local Government were also at the meeting.

Security Developments

- On March 19, a protest by Volcano of Rage veterans escalated outside the Prime Minister's office in Tripoli with security forces opening fire. A number of protestors were reportedly wounded with at least one being taken to hospital. Protestors blocked the road and breached the compound. This is their third protest with others on March 12 and 16.

Oil & Gas Developments

- Head of the NOC, Farhat Bengdara, has conducted a reshuffle of the administrative committee of the Arabian Gulf Oil Company (AGOCO). This has allegedly included the replacement of the head of the company, Saleh Qatrani, with Mohamed Shatwan, according to a leaked document obtained by a news outlet.

Regional Developments

- On March 18, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu visited Cairo, Egypt to meet with his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukry.
- Syrian President Bashar Assad arrived in Abu Dhabi for an official visit on March 19. This is part of a trend towards reducing Assad's regional isolation and was marked with more ceremony compared to his visit in 2022.

Assessment

Political Developments

Senior US delegation visits Benghazi

US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Barbara Leaf, arrived in Benghazi on March 19 to meet with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, commander of the LNA. Barbara Leaf the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs and a prominent member of the US administration.

COMMENT: 'This is the latest senior US delegation to visit the east of Libya this year. The US is reportedly looking to prioritise the stability of Libya's oil and gas industry as Europe looks to pivot away from Russian oil and gas as well as reduce Wagner Groups' presence in Libya. The visit suggests that the US is tentatively building relations with the east of Libya which in turn helps to legitimise Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar and eastern authorities more broadly and comes after a visit by CIA Director Bill Burns in January.' **COMMENT ENDS.**

Oil & Gas Developments

NOC: AGOCO changes

Head of the NOC, Farhat Bengdara, has conducted a reshuffle of the administrative committee of the Arabian Gulf Oil Company (AGOCO). This has allegedly included the replacement of the head of the company, Saleh Qatrani, with Mohamed Shatwan, according to a leaked document obtained by a news outlet.

COMMENT: 'The move is not wholly unexpected with speculation of a wider reshuffle in the works across the NOC and its subsidiaries. This is likely another development linked to the Ibrahim Dbeibah/ Saddam Haftar relationship which has also seen the appointment of Bengdara and the replacement of the deputy chairman of the Central Bank of Libya who ran the eastern bank. Qatrani had been seen as close to the eastern authorities, including Haftar, and was assessed as loyal to Bengdara when he took over in 2022.

Mohamed Shatwan is believed to have been Chairman of the AGOCO board between 2013 and 2020 before moving to be co-chair of Mellitah Oil and Gas between 2020 and 2022. Prior to being appointed as chairman of AGOCO, Shatwan held a number of positions with the company (which is wholly owned by the NOC) over a number of years.' **COMMENT ENDS.**

Regional Developments

Egypt and Turkey take another step towards better relations

On March 18, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu visited Cairo, Egypt to meet with his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukry. The two discussed bilateral relations which likely included pledges for economic cooperation and Egyptian aid following the February 06 earthquakes in Turkey.

At a joint news conference with his Turkish counterpart, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said talks with Turkey on the possibility of restoring ties to ambassadorial level would happen at "the appropriate time". He said the talks had been "honest, deep and transparent". Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Turkey would upgrade its diplomatic relations with Egypt to ambassador level "as soon as possible".

COMMENT: 'The visit will build on the slow-moving normalization of ties between the two countries, a process which had a boost in November 2022 when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi met at the World Cup in Qatar. It is the first visit by Cavusoglu to Cairo since ties between the nations deteriorated a decade ago when President Sisi ousted then President Mohamed Morsi. It comes after Shoukry visited Turkey to show solidarity in the aftermath of the earthquakes.

The visit was welcomed by the US. Turkey and Egypt are two of the main regional stakeholders in Libya with Ankara supporting Tripoli authorities while Egypt backs eastern authorities. The thawing of relations between them could have a positive impact on Libya in the longer term and help reduce the threat of a return to civil war.’ **COMMENT ENDS.**

Assad conducts official visit to the UAE

Syrian President Bashar Assad and his wife, Asma al-Assad, arrived in Abu Dhabi for an official visit on March 19. This is part of a trend towards reducing Assad’s regional isolation and was marked with more ceremony compared to his visit in 2022. Assad’s plane was met by Emirati fighter jets. Upon landing, he was met by President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan after his convoy was greeted with cannon fire as it entered the royal palace. Sheikh Mohamed stated that they had held “constructive talks aimed at developing relations between our two countries.” The visit was Asma’s first official visit abroad since 2011. She met with Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, the president’s mother.

COMMENT: ‘The UAE has led a shift in attitudes in the region towards Assad. This is being driven in part by a growing consensus that isolating Syria is not working. This is despite Qatari and US objections. Doha has cited the Assad regime’s brutality during the conflict while Washington continues to try and counter Iranian influence after Tehran’s support to Assad along with Moscow. The push by the UAE to normalise relations with Assad is part of a regional shift of relations ongoing in the Middle East at present. This includes an agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran to restore bilateral ties.

The east of Libya established ties with Assad in March 2020, opening an embassy in Damascus. Speaker of the HoR, Aquila Saleh travelled to Damascus on February 26 and met with Assad as part of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union. Saleh’s visit garnered some criticism in Libya from individuals largely associated with Turkey.’ **COMMENT ENDS.**

Significant Incidents

Tripolitania Region



1 UXO - Mar 15, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Province, Gharyan: The Ministry of Interior (GNU) destroyed six tons of explosive remnants of war in the Dhahra area. The items were gathered from several areas of southern Tripoli, Al-Jafara and the Nafousa Mountains. Two tons were destroyed on March 14 and four tons were destroyed on March 15. A further 14 tons remain to be destroyed.

2 RTA - Mar 19, Tripoli Province, Nasr Forest: A two-year-old girl died in a car accident involving three cars on Nasr Forest Road.

3 Murder/ Execution - Mar 19 10:00, Az Zawiyah Province, Coastal Road - Hospital Road Junction: Mohamed al-Dabbashi (aka Faridi) was shot dead in Sabratah at the western entrance near the hospital. Mohamed is a cousin of Amu Dabbashi, a prominent armed group commander in the town. Local speculation has blamed IS for the attack. This may stem from the association the wider Dabbashi family had with IS when it was operational in Sabratah around 2015.

4 Demonstration - Mar 19 10:30, Sirte Province, Sirte: Teachers continued to protest in Sirte which is experiencing a partial shut-down of educational facilities as a result of the protests.

5 Demonstration - Mar 19 11:30, Misrata Province, Misrata Municipal Council: Al-Qoshi residents continued to protest over their eviction and demolition of homes. The protest took place outside the Municipal Council building.

6 Demonstration - Mar 19 13:30, Tripoli Province, Industrial Research Centre: Employees at the Industrial Research Centre continued their sit-in protest demanding an increase in salaries and the payment of overdue salaries. The sit-in began on March 12.

7 Troop Movements - Mar 19 14:00, Tripoli Province, Tripoli International Airport: An unidentified armed actor mobilised in the area.

8 Demonstration - Mar 19 15:30, Tripoli Province, Prime Minister's Office: Wounded veterans of Operation Volcano of Rage protested outside the prime minister's office. This is the third such protest by the group in just over a week with protests on March 12 and 16.

9 SAF - Mar 19 16:13, Tripoli Province, Prime Minister's Office: Security forces opened fire on Operation Volcano of Rage protestors after tensions escalated in an effort to disperse. A number of protestors were reportedly hurt with at least one being taken to hospital. Protestors were trying to blockade the compound and were being manhandled by security prior to the shooting. Later reports suggested they had also managed to breach the compound. Protestors did disperse after the shooting and the situation calmed.

10 SAF - Mar 19 20:30, Tripoli Province, Gypsum Gate: Small arms fire was heard in the area. This was allegedly celebratory fire related to the release of Ziad Fariwan from prison. Fariwan, from Misrata, was wounded during Operation Volcano of Rage and imprisoned on criminal charges in Jadida prison. He was released on the evening of March 19. Its unclear if his release was related to the recent protests by wounded veterans from Operation Volcano of Rage.

11 SAF - Mar 19 20:30, Tripoli Province, Airport Road: Small arms fire was heard in the area. This was allegedly celebratory fire related to the release of Ziad Fariwan from prison.

12 SAF - Mar 19 20:30, Tripoli Province, 7 April Camp: Small arms fire was heard in the area. This was allegedly celebratory fire related to the release of Ziad Fariwan from prison.

13 SAF - Mar 19 21:00, Tripoli Province, Dahra: Small arms fire was heard in the area.

14 Security Operation - Mar 19 22:00, Al-Murqub Province, Qasr al-Akhyar: 444 Combat Unit raided a den of alcohol and drug dealers. Three young men and a woman were arrested.

15 Security Operation - Mar 19 22:00, Al-Murqub Province, Qasr al-Akhyar: A car carrying illegal migrants was intercepted in the desert as they attempted to enter Tripoli.

16 Murder/ Execution - Mar 19 23:00, Tripoli Province, Suq al-Khamis: The body of an unidentified person was found in the Sidi Moussa Road area.

17 Arrest - Mar 19 23:30, Tripoli Province, Suq al-Khamis: Four people were arrested after a body was discovered near Sidi Moussa Road.

18 Demonstration - Mar 20 11:25, Tripoli Province, Prime Minister's Office: PFG members paraded up outside the Prime Minister's office to protest and demand various concessions including a wage increase. The PFG has been protesting since March 02 when PFG at Zawiyah Refinery gave the GNU 10 days to come to an agreement before they went on strike. They were joined on March 05 by the PFG at Mellitah. Neither have yet gone on strike, but three protests have now taken place outside the prime minister's office with the others occurring on March 14 and 16. This latest protest comes after one outside the prime minister's office on March 19 in which security forces fired shots, wounding at least one veteran from Volcano of Rage. Protestors also breached the compound.

Cyrenaica Region

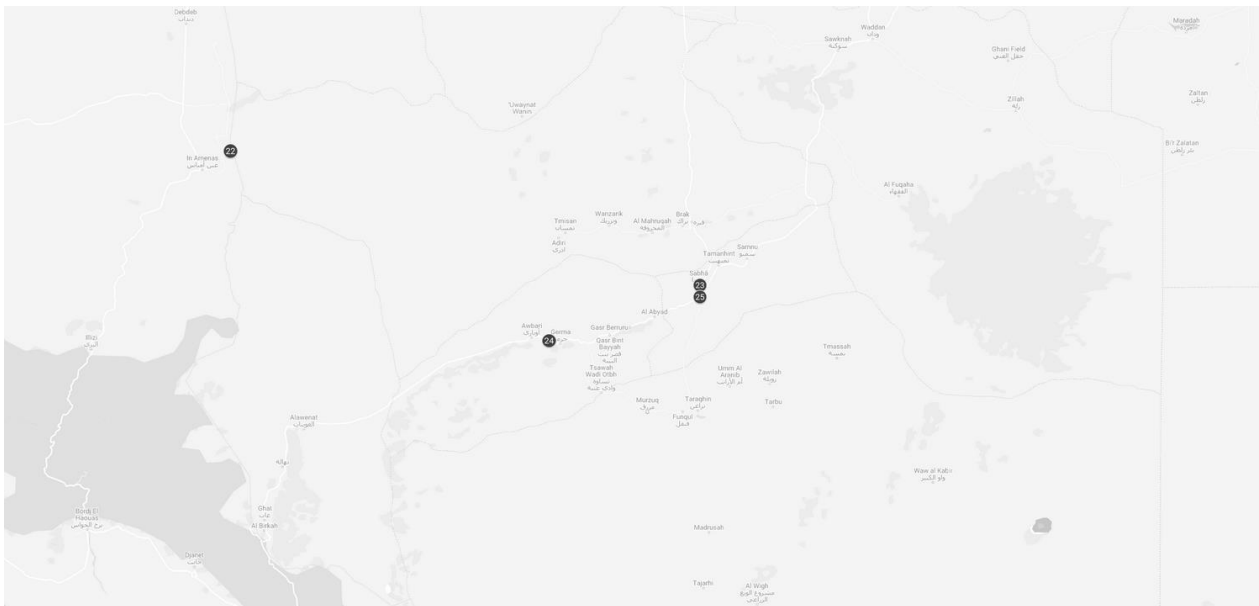


19 Arrest - Mar 19 16:00, Al-Marj Province, Marj: Colonel Abdul Moneim Al-Warfalli was arrested by elements of 106 Brigade under the command of Fathi Salem Bouchuishin Al-Mismari. Warfalli is an operation room commander and has allegedly been involved in a dispute with Khalid and Saddam Haftar.

20 Assault - Mar 19 23:00, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: A young man was allegedly knocked by a military vehicle with the occupants exiting and assaulting and insulting the victim in front of other people.

21 Security Operation - Mar 20 00:00, Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar Province, Bayda: The Jebel Akhdar Joint Security Room carried out ad-hoc vehicle checkpoints along agricultural roads. This led to the arrest of an unknown number of illegal immigrants.

Fezzan Region



22 Security Operation - Mar 19, Ghat Province, Libya - Algeria Border: 128 Brigade (LNA) carried out security patrols along the Algerian border. The patrols started from the Ghat military base towards Essen

and Takhrhkouri border crossings. The LNA is "seeking to secure the border in order to combat terrorism, trafficking, smuggling and other criminal activities."

23 Troop Movements - Mar 19, Sabha Province, Sabha: The LNA General Command mobilised medical supplies and equipment to Sabha.

24 Other - Mar 19, Wadi Al-Hayaa Province, Wadi Al-Hayat: The LNA General Command sent fuel supplies to the area, secured by 10 Battalion (LNA)

25 SAF - Mar 19 22:00, Sabha Province, Sabha: Small arms fire was heard in downtown Sabha.

Offshore

NSTR

Outlook

Short Term Outlook

- Libya 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. SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily is attempting to wrest some control away from the two entities in a bid to make progress towards elections in 2023, however, they continue to enjoy the support of key regional and international backers. 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.
- 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. This instability along the coastline may be positively impacted by efforts in Zawiyah to reorganise armed groups which could increase cooperation. 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, the path to elections in 2023 will be fraught with difficulties 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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