

Libya daily security analysis report

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Latest Developments

Political Developments

- Deputy member of the Presidential Council, Musa Koni, has met with the President of Niger, Mohamed Bazoum. The two men allegedly discussed ways to develop relations between the two countries, enhance cooperation in the field of border security, economy and trade and work to complete the road between Niger and Libya which would contribute to increasing trade.
- Deputy Member of the Presidential Council, Abdullah al-Lafi, met with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, on May 24. Lafi requested the League's support for the inclusive conference on national reconciliation to be held in the next few months. The meeting took place at the league's HQ in Cairo and was also attended by the Libyan representative to the league, Abdul Muttalib Thabet.
- Head of the Audit Bureau, Khaled Shakshak and HoR MP Rabia Aburas took part in the conclusion of the symposium 'Supporting the Independence of Supreme Audit Institutions in the Arab Countries' hosted by the Qatari Audit Bureau over two days.
- German Ambassador Michael Ohnmacht has suggested there remains hope elections could be held this year should there be a decision from the 6+6 Committee. He stated there was no alternative to elections to end the transitional period and establish sustainable peace in Libya.
- President Mohamed Menfi met with a delegation from Derna in Tripoli to discuss the needs of the city and ways to overcome the difficulties it faces in various service fields. Menfi also stressed the need to include Derna in the national reconciliation project adopted by the Presidential Council.
- A delegation from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) met with local officials from southern Libya to discuss US cooperation and assistance to the southern region in addition to investment opportunities for the United States in southern Libya.

Security Developments

- A series of airstrikes have taken place in Zawiyah and west of Tripoli. The strikes, allegedly carried out by Bayraktar drones, targeted SSA Western Branch locations, a fuel smuggling den and the passport office in Abu Surra.
- Ministry of Interior Deputy (GNS) Faraj Gaim met with Abdul Hamid al-Zawi, the Security Director of Tazribu along with a delegation from the city. The discussion included the possible creation of a new headquarters for the security directorate, new security equipment for the directorate and new electronic security measures at the entrances to the city. They also discussed problems the area is experiencing including illegal migration activity.
- President Menfi met with a number of military leaders in Misrata on May 24. No further details were disseminated.

Economic Developments

- The Minister of Economy and Trade (GNU), Muhammad Al-Hawij, met Turkish business owners to participate in implementing projects approved by the GNU with the cooperation of the private sector in Libya. "The meeting with the Turkish delegation comes in continuation of the Istanbul meetings in mid-May and within the framework of strengthening economic ties and networking between business owners and investors in both countries," the ministry's media office said.

Travel Developments

- Flights are set to return to Misrata Airport on May 27 after a period of maintenance on the runway.

International Relations

- Libyan National Security Adviser, Ibrahim Bushnaf, took part in the 11th session of the International Security Forum in Moscow. More than 100 countries are participating in the forum in the presence of Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov and Russian President, Vladimir Putin.

Assessment

Political Developments

Koni meets with President Bazoum

Deputy member of the Presidential Council, Musa Koni, has met with the President of Niger, Mohamed Bazoum. The two men allegedly discussed ways to develop relations between the two countries, enhance joint cooperation in the field of border security, economy and trade and work to complete the road between Niger and Libya which would contribute to increasing trade.

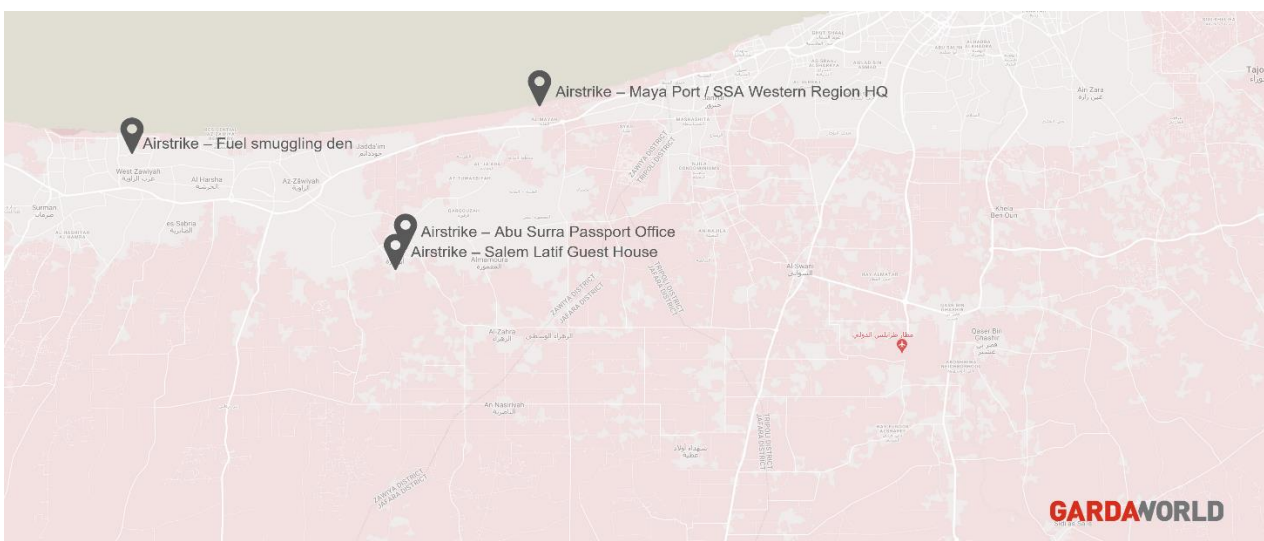
COMMENT: 'President Bazoum has been involved in negotiations over the release of senior former Gadhafi regime members. In February, this led to the release of Abdullah Mansour after nearly nine years in prison. Both the president and Mansour, a former senior intelligence official, come from the Awlad Suleiman tribe which is spread across southern Libya, Niger and Chad. Mansour travelled straight to Niger after his release, where he had originally been granted asylum after the revolution. President Bazoum is believed to be involved in negotiations over other former regime members who remain in prison. Following Mansour's release, a trade convoy left Misrata, headed for Niger.

Koni has recently returned to Libya after an extended absence due to medical issues however since returning, he has been notably active on numerous fronts.' **COMMENT ENDS.**

Security Developments

Airstrikes hit targets around Zawiyah

During the early afternoon of May 25, four drone strikes were reported against locations west of Tripoli and in Zawiyah. This included al Maya port, the HQ of the SSA Western Branch where a small boat was hit. Some reports claim the boat is connected to illegal migration. Two attacks were reported in Abu Surra to the southeast of Zawiyah. One attack hit a guesthouse associated with the Bouzriba family while a second hit an unknown target near to the passport office. A fuel smuggling den in Motrid, to the west of Zawiyah, was also hit.



Graphic: Airstrikes on May 25

Ali Bouzriba, a HoR MP for Zawiyah, released a statement confirming the attacks and claiming they had been carried out by Turkish Bayraktar drones. He framed the attacks as targeting “several locations near my regions of Abu Surra and Maya,” and claimed civilians had been injured in the attacks. He further stated that the attacks were “unjustified” and that they did not know the reason but blamed Prime Minister (GNU) Abdulhamid Dbeibah.

The GNU later announced, “the implementation of air strikes against the hideouts of fuel smuggling, drug trafficking and human trafficking gangs.” The strikes were described as successful in achieving their desired goals and were carried out by “national warplanes.” The strikes were attributed to the Ministry of Defence as part of efforts to “cleanse the western coast and the rest of Libya from the dens of crime and gang acts.”

COMMENT: ‘Drones have been used to target fuel smugglers and those involved in human trafficking previously in the region with the last attack reported in Janzour on October 31, 2021 when a boat manufacturing location, connected with human trafficking, was targeted.

Zawiyah is currently seeing a protracted period of instability which has resulted in a protest movement calling for armed groups, which have proliferated in the city, to be reigned in. Many of these armed groups are militias heavily involved in organised crime which have legitimised themselves over the years into the state apparatus under the Ministries of Defence and Interior. These groups have created a delicate balance of enemies, allies and pragmatic relationships over the years, the disruption of which has often led to armed confrontations.

Chief of the General Staff Mohamed Haddad, along with President Menfi, has headed a response external to the city in an attempt to begin crafting a new security plan to deal with the many problems the city has. In this, they have their work cut out for them with significant difficulty in projecting influence into the city. An attempt by 52 Brigade back in April to enter the city after unrest was rejected and 52 Brigade is led by Major General Namroush, who is from Zawiyah. Haddad was also warned of any attempts to enter.

The attacks however suggest Haddad has found another way to project influence into the city. The airstrikes, which may have had minimal impact on the ground in terms of taking out capability, do however send a strong message to not just the Bouzirbas, but all armed groups operating in the area. It's possible the Bouzirba's interests were targeted above others in the area due to their allegiance to the GNS making them a good target for the GNU. The GNU's framing of the attacks as targeting organised crime including people and fuel smuggling, also steers them away from targeting one particular faction, especially with political implications. It also puts Ali Bouzriba in a somewhat difficult position given he had already suggested his interests were targeted in the attacks.

Given the attacks look very much to part of Haddad's new security plan, their impact will be felt far beyond the Bouzirba's with all those armed groups, which largely operate in areas they control, suddenly vulnerable to attacks. They may perhaps now be more willing to sit and negotiate over their future, and that of Zawiyah's. **COMMENT ENDS.**

Significant Incidents

Tripolitania Region



1. UXO - May 24, Al-Jafara Province, Hira: The Military Engineering Department destroyed 10 tons of Explosive Remnants of War collected at Tripoli Naval Base.

2. Security Operation - May 24, Tripoli Province, Abu Sitta: SDF destroyed a large amount of 'non-conforming food and medicine' intercepted at Tripoli Port. This was the first time such an operation had been undertaken for a number of years. The operation was undertaken under the supervision of a committee formed by the Customs Authority, the Food and Drug Control Centre, the Ministry of Health, Environmental Sanitation, and the SDF.

3. Security Announcement - May 24, Tripoli Province, Tajura: The Undersecretary of the Minister of Interior for Public Affairs of the GNU, Major General Mahmoud Saeed, inaugurated a marine observation point in Tajura. The ceremony was attended by several dignitaries including the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment, Dr Haneen al-Maawi and the Director of the General Department of Coastal Security.

4. Security Announcement - May 24, Tripoli Province, Garabuli: The Information and Documentation Centre at the Ministry of Interior launched an electronic 'criminal status certificate issuance system' and a 'unified security reporting and enquiry system' at the Garabuli Security Directorate.

5. Kidnap - May 24 16:30, Az Zawiyah Province, Jadda'im: Unidentified gunmen in an armoured vehicle allegedly took an unidentified person in a suspected kidnapping.

6. SAF - May 24 19:35, Tripoli Province, Wildlife Neighborhood: Small arms fire in the area was a result of 111 Brigade carrying out weapons training.

7. Other - May 24 21:56, Az Zawiyah Province, Sabratah: The body of a woman was found at her grandfather's home in the area. Reports indicate she had suffered from a mental illness.

8. Surveillance - May 24 23:30, Tripoli Province, Ain Zara: A drone was noted flying over the area.

9. Arrest - May 25, Tripoli Province, Tripoli: The Public Prosecutor announced they had detained the person responsible for the death of Abdel-Mahmin Al-Falah, an Ittihad fan who was shot in the head after a match on May 15. The perpetrator was a member of the Ministry of Interior security forces who confessed to shooting into the car Al-Falah was in after hearing 'obscene' words without knowing who they came

from. Another police officer was also detained after it was found he knew who had fired the shot and had not reported it.

10. SAF - May 25 01:30, Tripoli Province, Hay Istanbul: Small arms fire was attributed to unidentified armed groups with reports that there may have been criminal activity ongoing in the area prior to the shots being fired.

11. Airstrike - May 25 13:00, Az Zawiyah Province, Abu Sura: An airstrike targeted the Salem Latif Guesthouses which is reportedly associated with the Bouzribas.

12. Airstrike - May 25 13:10, Tripoli Province, Maya Port: An airstrike targeted a small boat at Maya Port, the SSA Western Region HQ. Some reports suggest the boat is connected to illegal immigration.

13. Airstrike - May 25 13:20, Az Zawiyah Province, Motrid: An airstrike targeted a fuel smuggling den.

14. Airstrike - May 25 13:30, Az Zawiyah Province, Passport Office Abu Surra: An airstrike hit an unknown target near the passport office.

Cyrenaica Region



15. Accident - May 24, Kufra Province, Kufra: An LNA Mi-8 helicopter crashed moments after take-off at Masala Oil Field. The crash was caused by mechanical failure after the engine failed. All nine people on board survived but were taken to a hospital locally before being transported to Benghazi for treatment.

16. Prisoner Release - May 24, Benghazi Province, Benghazi: A TikTok user named Al-Kandar was released from prison in Benghazi and met with his family. Al-Kandar had been arrested on May 08 at Benina Airport.

17. Arrest - May 24, Benghazi Province, Sidi Akribesh: Police from Benghazi Police Station arrested two people accused of dealing narcotic pills and hashish. The suspects attracted attention to themselves after roaming around in a vehicle with blacked-out windows. After being stopped, a police search found five pieces of hashish and three narcotic tablets.

Fezzan Region

NSTR

Offshore

NSTR

Outlook

Short Term Outlook

- Election momentum is failing to gain traction in Libya at present. The 6+6 Committee from the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) remains the focal point of the political process for now but has failed to make any progress towards its goals. SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily is progressing his High-Level Panel for Elections (HLPE) concept with June given as a deadline for the 6+6 Committee to come to an agreement. Meanwhile, heads of both the HoR and HCS continue to meet in Cairo, however, political elites remain subject to accusations that they are employing stalling tactics to avoid elections. At the same time, some international stakeholders are becoming more wary of elections, suggesting they could bring about more instability and may not be the answer to solving Libya's complex issues.
- The security situation in and around Tripoli remains fundamentally unstable. After significant changes to the capital's security makeup in August and September 2022, tensions are once again increasing as mistrust and competition grow. This is leading to increased concerns of a further outbreak of violence in or around Tripoli with tensions mainly building to the west of the capital at present.
- The outbreak of violence in Sudan has the potential to cause conflagration across the region and potentially destabilise the southern border areas with Libya. There has been speculation that the Libyan National Army (LNA) and even the National Oil Corporation (NOC) have been providing support to the Rapid Support Force (RSF), one of the belligerents of the Sudanese conflict, however there has been no evidence to support this. While the border has allegedly been closed on both sides, local reports suggest traffic is moving normally at this time. Efforts are underway in Kufra to establish mechanisms to support any refugees coming across the border, however, for now, reports suggest most Sudanese refugees moving over land borders are heading to other countries including Chad and Egypt.

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 whether elections are held or not. 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.
- The resurgence of Jihadist Salafism in Tripolitania remains a potential source of destabilisation with indications of renewed tensions between adherents and those of Madkhali Salafism. This competition between the opposing ideologies seeps into the political as well as the military spaces and is expected to slowly intensify as the Jihadist Salafi adherents gain strength in the region. This could increasingly become a defining factor for various groups involved in the political and military spaces.
- While the political process continues to falter, armed groups are exploiting the situation to increase their strength, influence and power across Libya which will likely have a longer-term negative impact on the political situation.

- 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 |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 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
ISA – Internal Security Agency
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
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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