

Libya daily security analysis report

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Latest Developments

Political Developments

- SRSB Bathily met with Prime Minister (GNU) Dbeibah on May 29. They discussed recent political and security developments in the country. SRSB Bathily stated: “We have reviewed the situation and I reiterated my call for sustained efforts towards the establishment of unified and legitimate institutions in Libya.”
- Prime Minister (GNU) Abdulhamid Dbeibah held several other meetings on May 29. He met with delegations from Zuwara and Ajaylat, both of which are along the northwest coastline where the GNU has been conducting an air campaign, as well as a delegation from the eastern Awaqir tribe.
- President Mohamed Menfi received a delegation from the Obeidat Tribe from Tobruk at the Presidential Council building in Tripoli. The tribe pressed their right to protection, especially for their presidential candidate, Hassan Tatanaki, and condemned the treatment he had his family had received in Tripoli in the past.
- Presidential Council Deputy, Abdulla Lafi, met with the Grand Mufti, Sadiq al-Ghariani on May 29. The Presidential Council (PC) said that the meeting was an “important step towards promoting national reconciliation in Libya, in order to discuss issues related to national reconciliation, which were at the top of the PC’s priorities.”
- The British Ambassador to Libya, Caroline Hurndall met with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar in Benghazi on May 29. The meeting dealt with a number of issues, including the role of the United Kingdom in supporting security and stability in Libya. As well as the illegal immigration crisis, and its impact on the security and stability of the UK and EU.
- The second deputy in the HoR, Abdul Hadi al-Saghir, has resigned from his position as deputy but will remain as an MP. Saghir stated his decision was due to “the difficulty of harmonizing the aspirations and hopes of the nation and its national entitlements on the one hand, and the available tools and mechanisms of action on the other hand.” His resignation was accepted by a majority of attendees at the latest HoR session on May 29. He was replaced by Mesbah Duma from Sabha “after the withdrawal of the rest of the candidates.”
- Ali Bouzriba, an HoR MP from Zawiyah, used the latest HoR session to issue a statement on the air campaign which has targeted his family’s interests along the north-west coastline. He called on the HoR to “address the Turkish Parliament to request clarification about the drones, and whether these were borrowed or bought and sold between the Turkish and Libyan sides.”
- The Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita, has stated that his country expects to open two consulates, in Tripoli and Benghazi, this summer.

Security Developments

- The Ministry of Defence (GNU) has announced that “Phase 1” of their operation along the Northwest Coastline has been completed with “Phase 2” now beginning. This comes as those being targeted begin to take action, closing the refinery and the coastal road. In addition, political pressure is now starting to build as concerns grow over an escalation.
- A member of SDF, Mohamed Aweitei, has died from wounds he sustained during fighting with 444 Brigade overnight May 28/29. This could inflame existing tensions between the two militias.

Sudanese Crisis

- Foreign Minister (GNU) Najla Mangoush has condemned the looting of the Libyan Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan. This comes after an attack on the Libyan Military Attaché’s home last week. The Libyan diplomatic mission has already been evacuated from the country. There are no indications that the buildings have been targeted specifically but are affected by the growing destabilization of Khartoum where fighting has continued to erupt despite an agreement to extend the ceasefire.

Assessment

GNU: Prime Minister Dbeibah holds a round of meetings on May 29

Prime Minister (GNU) Dbeibah met with several local delegations on May 29 as well as with SRSG Bathily. The prime minister met with a delegation from the Awagir Tribe “as part of his follow-up to the situation in different regions of the country.” The meeting discussed a number of service and social files, and the prime minister “affirmed the GNU’s keenness to consolidate the social ladder and improve the services provided to the citizens in the eastern region.” The head of the Awagir delegation “renewed its support for the efforts of the GNU in achieving stability, development and ending conflicts through the elections, citing the efforts of the government in achieving this merit.”

The prime minister also met with a delegation from Zuwara. The meeting came “within the framework of a series of intensive meetings with social and security leaders from different regions of the country.” The delegation discussed the latest developments on the security, social and political levels, and their “support for the efforts of the GNU to establish security and stability.” The Prime Minister “emphasized the GNU’s keenness to listen to the demands of all citizens, especially regarding the security situation and improvement of services, referring to the Back to Life Plan and what it includes for the municipality of Zuwara.”

The prime minister then met with a delegation from Ajaylat as “part of an intensive series of meetings with social leaders from different regions of the country.” The Ajaylat delegation stressed their keenness to “cooperate with the GNU to achieve social peace, prevent sedition and end conflicts, affirming their support for the GNU’s vision to conduct elections, end the transitional phases and achieve stability.” In return, the prime minister praised the efforts of the people of Ajaylat in “national reconciliation, praising their efforts in maintaining social order in the city.”

Prime Minister (GNU) Dbeibah also met with the western members of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC). Members of the committee briefed the Prime Minister on the results of their meeting last week with the Security Working Group. The Prime Minister confirmed his support for the efforts of the JMC “in the file of unification of the Libyan Military Institution, achieving security, stability, and supporting the political process to reach electoral merit.”

COMMENT: ‘This comes as the GNU announces the end of Phase 1 and the start of Phase 2 of its operations along the north-west coastline. Both Zuwara and Ajaylat have been affected by the air campaign and the meetings were likely aimed at ensuring support for the next phase. The prime minister also met with the Awagir tribe while a minister met with members of the Obeidat tribe, both of which are from the east. These meetings could be in the context of the power-sharing deal being discussed between the Haftar and the Dbeibah family. The Awagir and Obeidat are two of the most powerful tribes in the east, based in Benghazi and Tobruk respectively and their support would be needed for a deal.’ **COMMENT ENDS.**

Security Developments

GNU: Phase two to begin

The Ministry of Defence (GNU) has announced that “Phase 1” of their operation along the Northwest Coastline has been completed with “Phase 2” now beginning. The Ministry has indicated that this will include a continuation of the air operation. The operation has so far destroyed seven boats connected to human trafficking, six stores belonging to drug dealers, nine fuel tankers used to smuggle fuel abroad, and weapons and equipment belonging to criminal gangs. The Ministry of Defence, led by Prime Minister (GNU) Dbeibah in his capacity as minister of defence, has warned civilians to fully cooperate with the armed forces and to stay away from “suspicious sites of criminal gangs.”

This comes as those groups being targeted along the coast begin to take action. Fuel and gas supplies to Zawiyah refinery have been stopped threatening to cause blackouts. In addition, the coastal road was closed in Maya on May 28 and between Motrid and Surman on May 29.

On May 29, the US Embassy stated that they were “closely monitoring the situation in Zawiyah with concern amid reports of weapons being used in civilian areas and the potential for further violence. Libyan leaders should do everything they can to de-escalate and take every precaution to protect the lives of civilians.” The UK issued their own, perhaps more robust statement: “The UK is closely tracking the situation in the city of Zawiya. Use of weapons that puts civilian lives at risk is unacceptable. All those involved must de-escalate and avoid any actions that further threaten people's daily lives.”

COMMENT: ‘The air campaign comes against the backdrop of power-sharing talks between the Haftar and Dbeibah families. It is beginning to look increasingly as though the campaign is aimed at shoring up Dbeibah’s support base in Tripolitania and placing him at the top of the region's politicians and military entities following reports his support base was fracturing and some militia commanders were contemplating a replacement. The airstrikes have changed the battlespace in the north-west and they send a message beyond those currently being targeted, that anyone who stands against the prime minister can be hit from the air, increasingly painting him as a “strong man.” It also helps ‘level up’ the northwest military capability in the face of the LNA. This comes as talks between the 5+5 Joint Military Committee are edging towards the establishment of a joint military unit under the command of the two chiefs of staff. With the 6+6 Committee making progress, time is potentially running out for deals to be made before the HoR and HCS track gains momentum towards the creation of a new mini-government.

The campaign however comes with a significant amount of risk attached to it. Those currently being targeted are starting to push back, closing the refinery and the coastal road as they look to build leverage over the prime minister. The northwest coastline is home to a delicate balance of competing armed groups with various consequences, intended or not, when that balance is affected. It's unclear what Phase 2 is to consist of, but further airstrikes have been indicated. Some have suggested the potential for a ground operation, a move which would escalate the current situation and likely result in significant destabilisation along the coastal areas. It is perhaps this which has prompted the release of statements from the US and UK, although the UK's is arguably much more robust in its wording than the US statement. It's also possible that the campaign could spread geographically to other groups which stand opposed to the GNU.

It's possible that in the longer term, the air campaign and its implications could result in a consolidation of those opposed to the prime minister. This may also include those opposed to a possible power-sharing deal and/or those leaning towards the LNA who do not want to see a strengthening of Dbeibah's position at the negotiating table.

The question of how the prime minister has come to control such a capability remains unanswered. The Turks imported TB2s in 2020 into Tripoli against the backdrop of Operation Flood of Dignity. After the Turks refused to support him with drones during Fathi Bashagha's attempts to enter Tripoli, Dbeibah established the Electronic Aviation Authority (EAA) in May 2022 under Brigadier General Hadi Makhlof Ibrahim. The Ministries of Interior and Defence were instructed to hand over any associated capability they had to the EAA as Dbeibah looked to not only consolidate control but reduce the influence of rivals such as Lt Gen Osama Jweli. Unconfirmed reports have indicated that since the EAA was established, Dbeibah has increasingly influenced the hiring and training criteria. This could feasibly have given him a somewhat independent capability however, the ownership and level of influence the Turks have remains unclear. Despite a recent denial by Turkish Ambassador Kanaan Yilmaz of his country's involvement, MP Ali Bouzriba is demanding questions are asked of the Turkish parliament.

While the use of TB2s in the campaign remains unconfirmed, at present, it is the most likely scenario. TB2s are known to present in Tripolitania having been brought in during Volcano of Rage, training on the airframes including maintenance has been ongoing, pictures have emerged claiming to show them flying in recent days which includes footage of them taking off from Mitiga Airport, strikes have occurred at night with apparent high precision, and there is as of yet, no other known drone capability in the Tripolitania region.’ **COMMENT ENDS.**

Significant Incidents

Tripolitania Region



1. Military Announcement - May 29, Tripoli Province, Abu Sitta Naval Base: The Ministry of Defence (GNU) stated that Phase 1 of their military operation against the northwest coastline had finished. They have destroyed seven boats connected to human trafficking, six stores belonging to drug dealers, nine fuel tankers used to smuggle fuel abroad, and weapons and equipment belonging to criminal gangs. Phase 2 is set to be launched with the MoD warning civilians to fully cooperate with the armed forces and to stay away from suspicious sites of criminal gangs.

2. CP/ Roadblock - May 29, Az Zawiyah Province, Motrid: The coastal road was closed between Motrid and Surman.

3. Demonstration - May 29 18:00, Az Zawiyah Province, Zawiyah Refinery VCP: Fuel and gas valves have been closed at Zawiyah refinery with elders of the community demanding the removal of Prime Minister (GNU) Dbeibah.

4. Assault - May 30 00:30, Tripoli Province, Mitiga Airport: Members of the Al-Nasr Sports team were detained by police at Mitiga Airport with the incident causing a commotion. Mobile phones were removed from those detained resulting in a loss of communications with them and their team. The incident has been strongly denounced by the club, which is Benghazi based. They have held Prime Minister (GNU) Dbeibah and the Ministry of Interior (GNU) responsible and called on the football association to ensure the safety of its players. This could trigger tensions between east and west and may even see reciprocal behaviour in Benghazi if the situation is not resolved.

5. Accident - May 30 00:52, Tripoli Province, Tripoli University: A fire broke out in trees near the back gate of Tripoli University.

6. Airstrike - May 30 03:00, Az Zawiyah Province, Alsayidat Zaynab: An airstrike hit the area.

7. Troop Movements - May 30 13:10, Al-Jafara Province, Zahra Bridge: Military vehicles mobilised at Zahra Bridge. Zintani forces as well as 55 Battalion are known to be in the area.

Cyrenaica Region



8. Armed Attack - May 29, Al-Butnan Province, Musaid: The Haboun and Qatan tribes stormed the local LNA military camp and burned their vehicles. This was in response to the killing of Ahmed al-Habuni, a child from the Haboun tribe by the LNA force under the command of Miftah Shaqlouf a few days previously. The LNA is likely to send reinforcements to the area to regain control.

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. SRSB 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. Bilateral talks between the Haftar and Dbeibah families may also yet cause a significant rupture in the political space in the short term. 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 Tripolitania is becoming increasingly unstable. As political divisions deepen, tensions amongst armed groups are growing with increasing competition over territorial control. This is particularly evident around Zawiyah and the northwest coastline as well as Tripoli International Airport. This trend is likely to continue to escalate with factions solidifying and looking for an advantage over opponents.
- The outbreak of violence in Sudan has the potential to cause conflagration across the region and destabilise the southern border areas with Libya. Speculation continues to suggest that the Libyan National Army (LNA) is providing material support to the Rapid Support Force (RSF), one of the belligerents of the Sudanese conflict. Convoys heading south from Libya have been targeted by the Sudanese Armed Forces, activity which may well have encroached on Libyan territory. 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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