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Very high

LIBYA

MONTHLY BRIEF
February 2023



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GENERAL

POLITICS: February saw several events in Libya's political scene, in relation to the HoR-HCS dialogue aimed at setting a constitutional basis for elections. On multiple occasions, Libyan leaders issued declarations pledging for scheduling elections by the end of 2023. On 11/02, the chairman of the PC, Mohamed Menfi, called on Libyan parties to find a consensus on the electoral process before April, or else the current laws would be used to assure the holding of elections this year. On 17/02, the Head of the HCS, Khaled Al-Mashri, promised that elections would take place this year and no later than November.

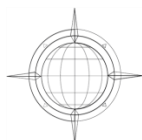
The advancement of the HoR-HCS dialogue took a new turn on 07/02, when the HoR voted in favour of a new constitutional amendment, the 13th amendment, which defines powers and structure of legislative and executive authorities and sets rules for the electoral process. According to the document, officially published on 23/02, the executive body would be headed by a President, elected by the people, and a Prime Minister, appointed by the President. The legislative authority would be a bicameral "National Assembly", to be elected within 240 days from the approval of the electoral laws and composed of a Benghazi-based HoR, and a Tripoli-based Senate. The amendment also includes the formation of a 6+6 HoR-HCS committee to prepare electoral laws drafts. On 15/02, the HoR declared that it had submitted the amendment's text to the HCS to allow them to review the proposal and express opinion in accordance with what had been agreed between the two chambers. However, the Head of the HoR further stressed that the HCS only has a consultative role, implying its impossibility to reject the amendment.

Significant reactions were witnessed from parts of Libya's civil society, mainly including criticism of the amendment and pressure on the HCS to reject it. On 16/02, the Amazigh Supreme Council, issued a statement condemning the document, accusing it of having been set unilaterally without the participation of all Libyan actors. Protests were also witnessed in Tripoli. On 19/02 and 20/02, supporters of the "Dar Al-Ifta Movement" of Libya's Grand Mufti Sadiq Al-Ghariani protested in front of the HCS headquarters in Tripoli, demanding a halt to discussions involving the 13th amendment, and calling for elections to be held as soon as possible by using the constitutional declaration of 2011 as constitutional basis. A small number of protesters reportedly attempted to enter the building on 20/02, chanting slogans against Khaled Al-Mashri. On 23/02, another protest took place in central Tripoli's Zawiyat Al-Dahmani neighbourhood, in front of the HCS session's venue, leading to the postponement of the session to 26/02.

Furthermore, a clear divide was noticed amongst HCS members. On 26/02, following another postponement of the HCS session, 68 members of the Tripoli-based chamber signed a statement in support of the amendment and complained about the "security threats and riots inside and outside the Council". On the same day, 54 members of the HCS issued a statement rejecting the amendment, indicating the persistence of unclear points within the document, including the extent of presidential powers and criteria for the acceptance of presidential candidacies.

In response to the criticism, the Head of the HCS, Khaled Al-Mashri, on 25/02, declared that the 13th amendment was the result of long HCS-HoR consultations. He added that it safeguards the electoral process from any contestation at the constitutional level, and that it supports a mixed parliamentary and presidential system, granting representation to all parties from all Libyan regions. According to him, disruptions in the implementation of the constitutional reform only benefit the GNU. Al-Mashri accused the latter's Prime Minister, Abdulhamid Dbeibah, of intending to produce laws without HoR and HCS approval.

Reactions to the passing of the 13th amendment came from international actors as well. On 24/02, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement affirming its approval of the HoR-passed document, viewing it as an important step towards achieving elections this year.

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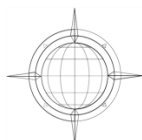
- Despite a potential advancement in HCS-HoR talks, controversy around the 13th amendment and opposition by a number of Libyan actors appeared to further delay the possibility of reaching a consensus on a constitutional framework that would pave the way to elections. Late February’s events also highlighted frictions inside the HCS itself, between those in favor of the amendment and those against. One should not rule out the possibility that an approval of the amendment by a majority of HCS members – as 68 of them already welcomed it – continues to be challenged until all controversial aspects are resolved. This might continue to cause setbacks and disruption of the electoral process. Further protests can be expected about the 13th amendment, especially in Tripoli.

POLITICS: February was also marked by the reiterated announcement by the Head of the HoR of the intention to create a new government in Libya, as a replacement for both the GNU and the GNS. In the past few months, the HCS and HoR leaderships have indeed expressed their interest in the formation of a new transitional government which would lead Libya to elections. This project was first announced in late 2022 as part of the HCS-HoR negotiations and has been repeatedly condemned by the GNU’s Prime Minister, who accused the heads of the two chambers of delaying the electoral process.

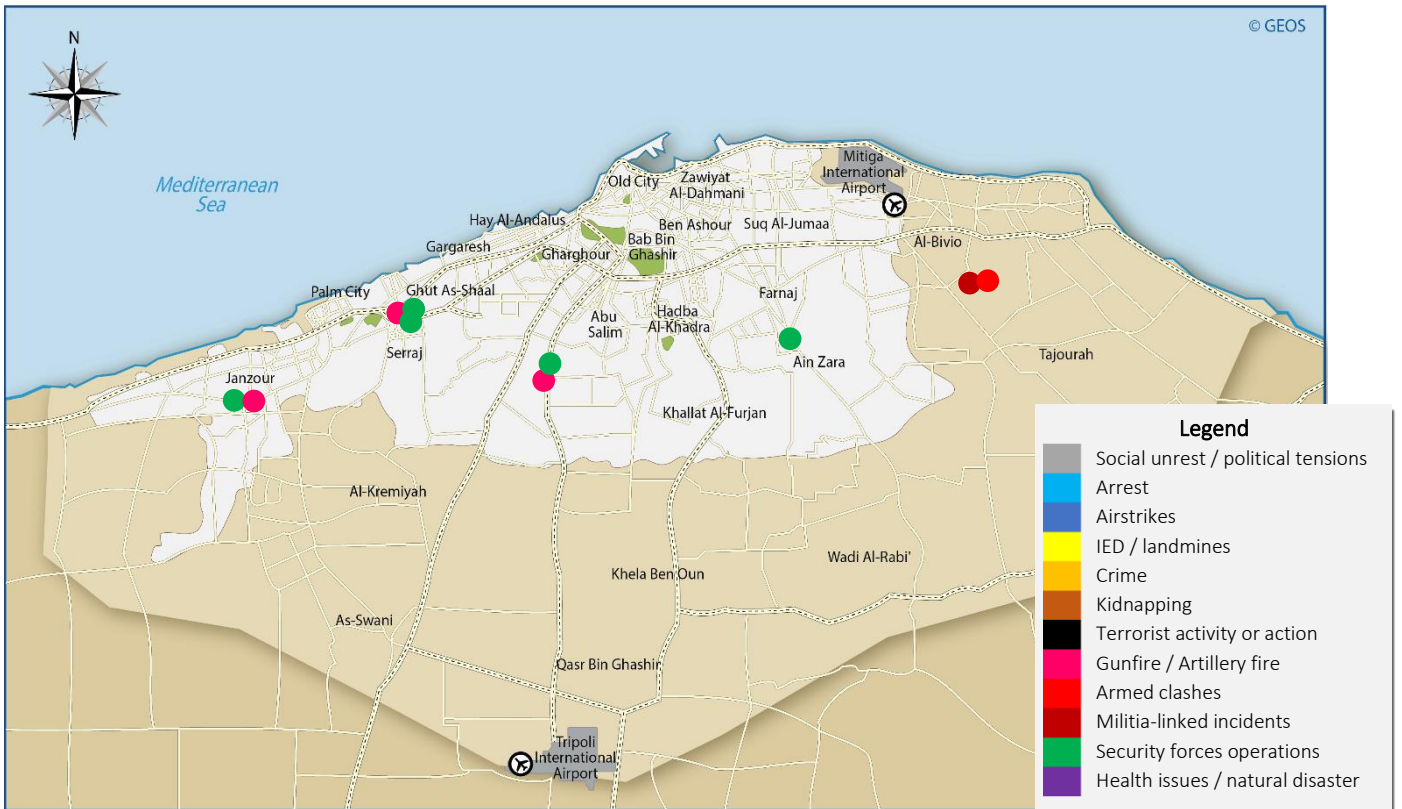
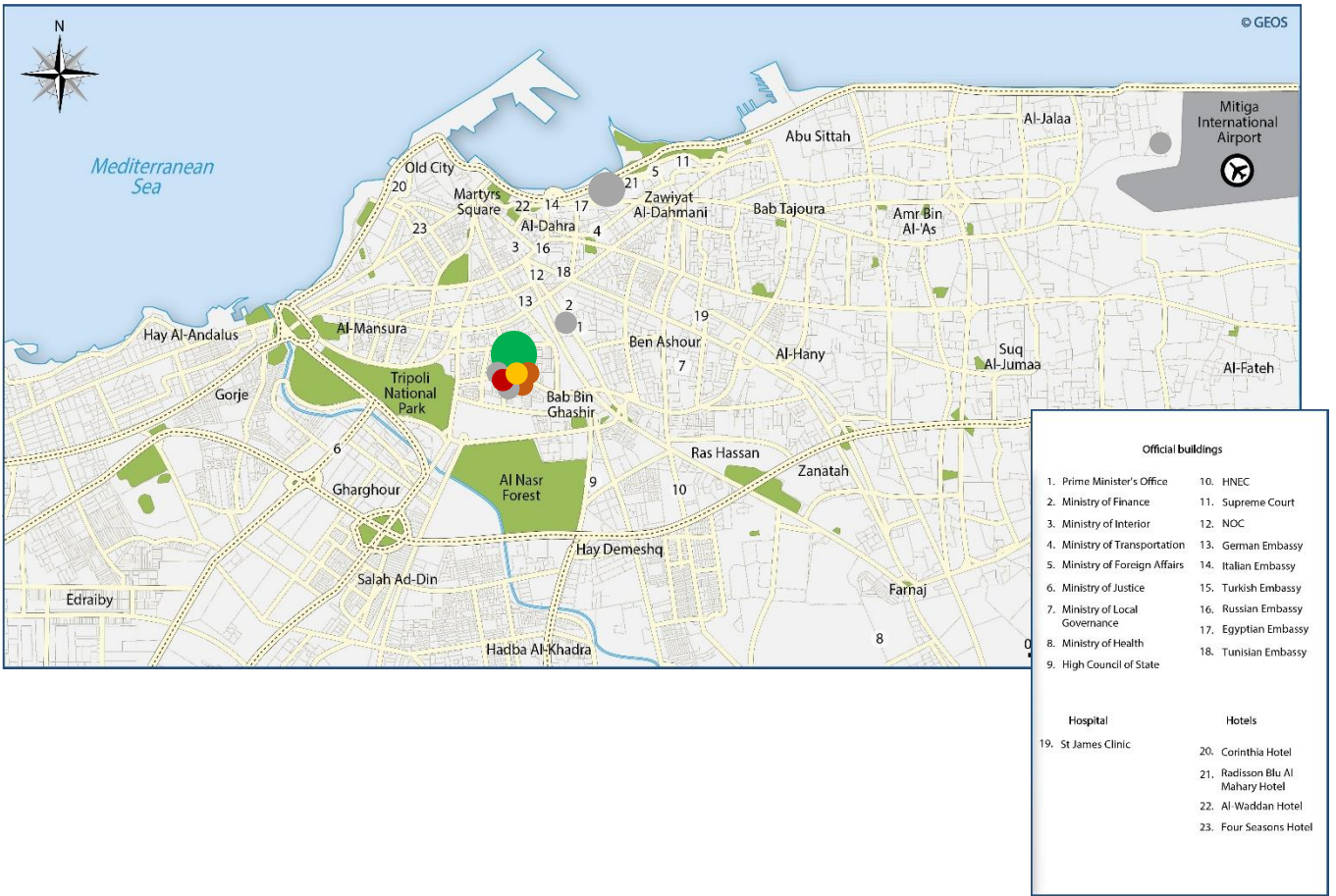
This month, heavy criticism was expressed from within the HoR towards the GNS’ Prime Minister, Fathi Bashagha, when on 03/02, 65 HoR members signed a joint statement urging him to clarify the reasons for the delay in his government’s taking over its duties in Tripoli. The statement called for a reshuffle of the cabinet to reduce the number of ministers, cut the related spending, and reach “national consensus on one government”. The 03/02 statement highlighted the opinion of at least a part of the HoR, and their will to replace both the GNS and the GNU with a new executive body.

Moreover, opposition by the HoR towards the GNU has continued to be expressed this month, when on 18/02, the Head of the HoR, Aguila Saleh, declared rejecting any supervision of elections from the Tripoli-based government, insisting that the HoR is the only legislative authority in Libya that has the right to take decisions and enact laws, repeating his non-recognition of the GNU, which he has often accused of being illegitimate. Furthermore, in a speech delivered through video-call at the annual “National Council on US Libya Relation” Conference on 16/02, Saleh announced a new proposal to form a mixed committee tasked with appointing a “unified executive authority for Libya, under international supervision”. The committee would be made up of 45 members, including 15 HoR-members, 15 HCS members and 15 independents. He stressed that the objective of a new unified government would be to solve Libyan citizens’ urgent needs, while helping with the organisation of parliamentary and presidential elections at an agreed date. A goal of the new executive would also be to remove foreign forces from the Libyan territory, as well as to ensure a fair distribution of wealth among Libya’s regions. Saleh highlighted the inclusion of the HCS in the formation of such committee, but nonetheless emphasized again that the HoR was currently the sole legislative body in Libya able to pass laws and grant or withdraw confidence to a government. Despite the signs of progress in HoR-HCS talks underlined by such proposal, Saleh appeared determined to highlight such difference between the two chambers.

- The creation of a new executive body would alter Libya’s political status quo, of which the GNU-GNS divide has been the main aspect since the appointment of Fathi Bashagha’s government by the HoR in early 2022. Such a development would likely lead to strong condemnations from the Tripoli-based government, as already signaled by reiterated criticism from Dbeibah over the past months, and rejections from the GNS side are not to be ruled out. Regardless the GNS’ willingness to strengthen his support base among eastern-based authorities – as suggested by Bashagha’s recent meeting with LNA’s Head Khalifa Haftar on 04/02 –, the renewed proposal for a new government by Saleh and a group of HoR members indicated increasing restlessness with the ongoing impasse and growing criticism towards the GNS from within the anti-GNU camp.



TRIPOLI

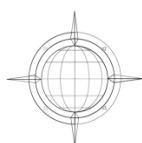


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Main incidents of the month

February 28 th	Tripoli: On 28/02, Shahat's former security director, Mohamed Faraj Al-Hassi, was reportedly kidnapped by an unidentified armed group in Tripoli.
February 28 th	Tripoli: A civilian was arrested on 28/02 in Tripoli, and 1400 narcotic tablets were seized. He is accused of drug trafficking.
February 27 th	Tripoli: A member of the HoR was reportedly kidnapped on 27/02 by an unidentified armed group in Tripoli. No further information available.
February 27 th	Tripoli: A civilian was arrested by security forces in Tripoli on 27/02. He is accused of assault and embezzlement amounting to LYD 27,000.
February 27 th	Tripoli: A civilian was arrested by security forces in Tripoli on 27/02. He is accused of kidnapping, shooting and assault.
February 27 th	Tripoli: A civilian was arrested by security forces in Tripoli on 27/02. He is accused of assault and kidnapping
February 27 th	Tripoli, Al-Seka Road: On 27/02, a number of workers of the GNU's ministry of environment protested on Tripoli's Al-Seka Road, in front of the GNU's Ministry of Finance, demanding the disbursement of their overdue salaries.
February 27 th	Tripoli, Ain Zara: On 27/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Tripoli's Ain Zara neighborhood. He is accused of murder.
February 23 rd	Janzour: On 23/02, unidentified shooting was heard in Janzour. No further information was available.
February 23 rd	Tripoli: On 23/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tripoli. He is accused of murder.
February 23 rd	Tripoli, Zawiyat Al-Dahmani: A number of civilians protested on 23/02 in central Tripoli's Zawiyat Al-Dahmani neighbourhood, in front of the Radisson Blu Al-Mahary Hotel, where an HCS session was to be held. They protested against the HCS and the HoR, and against the 13th constitutional amendment recently passed by the latter. Some of the protesters allegedly attempted to enter the premises. The HCS session, which was expected to discuss the 13th amendment, was suspended and postponed.
February 22 nd	Tripoli, Ghut Shaal: A civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in western Tripoli's Ghut Shaal neighborhood on 22/02. He is accused of assault and armed robbery.
February 22 nd	Tripoli, Tripoli International Airport Road (south): 3 civilians were arrested and 1,590 tablets of drugs along with a quantity of cannabis were seized by security forces during a security operation on southern Tripoli's Tripoli International Airport Road on 22/02. They are accused of drug trafficking.
February 21 st	Tripoli, Tripoli International Airport Road: In the late hours of 21/02, unidentified shooting was heard towards Tripoli International Airport Road.
February 20 th	Tripoli: A number of workers of the National Council for Public Liberties and Human Rights held a protest in Tripoli on 20/02, demanding for the head of the HoR, Aguila Saleh, to dismiss the President of the National Council for Public Liberties and Human Rights, accusing him of failing to manage the affairs of the council and demanding Libya's Attorney General to open an investigation into the president's alleged financial abuses.
February 20 th	Tripoli: On 20/02, a number of civilians supporting the Grand Mufti of Libya, Sadiq Al-Ghariani, continued to protest outside the HCS headquarters in Tripoli, demanding that they cease discussions related to the 13 th amendment that was referred to the HCS by the HoR. A few civilians reportedly tried to storm the building.
February 20 th	Tripoli: A civilian was arrested on 20/02 by security forces in Tripoli. He is accused of murder and assault.
February 19 th	Tripoli: On 19/02, a number of civilians supporting the Grand Mufti of Libya, Sadiq Al-Ghariani, protested outside the HCS meeting at their HQ in Tripoli. They demanded that they cease discussions involving the 13th amendment that was referred to the HCS by the HoR.

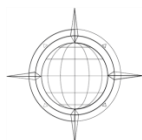


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February 19 th	Tripoli: On 19/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tripoli. He is accused murder and kidnapping.
February 18 th	Tripoli: On 18/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tripoli. He is accused of human trafficking.
February 17 th	Tripoli: On 17/02, a DAOCT member, also known as Rada Special Deterrence Force, was killed by unknown perpetrators in Tripoli.
February 15 th	Tripoli: On 15/02, the HQ of the National Anti-Corruption Authority was stormed, and confidential documents were looted by unknown perpetrators in Tripoli. Investigation is ongoing.
February 14 th	Tajoura: On the evening of 14/02, a number of armed groups members, reportedly affiliated to the GNU MoD's 51 st Brigade, led by Bashir Khalfallah, also known as Al-Bograh, mobilized in front of the 51 st Brigade and the Rahba Al-Durua armed group's headquarters in Tajoura.
February 12 th	Tripoli, Ghut Shaal: On 12/02, unidentified shooting reportedly erupted in western Tripoli's Ghut Shaal neighborhood.
February 9 th	Tripoli: A civilian was arrested, and 6 Bangladeshi nationals were freed by GNU MoD's 444 th Brigade forces during a security operation in Tripoli on 09/02. The arrested civilian is accused of kidnapping.
February 9 th	Tajoura: In the late hours of 09/02, 2 security forces members were injured when clashes erupted in Tajoura between the Tajoura-based armed groups Martyr Sabria Battalion and Rahba Al-Durua. The clashes were reportedly started in retaliation for the alleged killing of a Martyr Sabria member by Rahba Al-Durua and led to the killing of a Rahba Al-Durua member. Due to the clashes in Tajoura, flying activities at the nearby Mitiga International Airport were temporarily suspended during the night and some flights were diverted to Misrata International Airport.
February 7 th	Tripoli: On 07/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tripoli. He is accused of assault.
February 5 th	Tripoli: A number of health workers protested in Tripoli on 05/02, demanding an increase in their salaries.
February 5 th	Tripoli, Mitiga International Airport: On 05/02, a number of Libyan Ground Service workers protested in Mitiga International Airport in Tripoli, demanding the payment of their overdue salaries.
February 3 rd	Tripoli: A civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tripoli on 03/02. He is accused of armed robbery and assault.
February 2 nd	Janzour: On 02/02, an Iraqi citizen was allegedly arrested by the DAOCT, also known as Rada Special Deterrence Force, from her house in Janzour. She was allegedly arrested for violating privacy and publishing content against Libyan values. A spokesperson of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry declared that the ministry was following up with Libyan authorities about her arrest.
February 2 nd	Tripoli, Ghut Shaal: A Nigerian national was arrested by security forces during a security operation in western Tripoli's Ghut Shaal neighborhood on 02/02. He is accused of having committed a number of armed robberies.
February 1 st	Tripoli: A number of civilians were arrested, and 8 Bangladeshi nationals were freed by the GNU MoD's 444 th Brigade forces during a security operation in Tripoli on 01/02. The arrested civilians are accused of kidnapping and demanding a ransom of USD 15,000 for each kidnappee.

ARMED GROUPS: In February 2023, Tripoli continued to witness sporadic resurfacing of tensions between armed groups, especially in the southeastern suburb of Tajoura, involving the local Rahba Al-Durua armed group. On 09/02, following the killing of a Rahba Al-Durua member by elements of the Martyr Sabria Battalion in retaliation for a previous death, armed clashes erupted between the two sides in Tajoura. The exchanges of fire lasted until the morning of 10/02, creating a significant risk for the people in the area. Mitiga International Airport, located just north of Tajoura, was also affected by the incident, as a temporary suspension of flight operations was implemented as a precaution during the night. Furthermore, movements in the area were



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impacted, as several roads were closed on the background of continuing fighting. The Rahba Al-Durua armed group proves to be at the core of tensions in Tajoura, as shown by the successive mobilization of GNU MoD's 51st Brigade-affiliated forces in front of the Rahba Al-Durua and 51st Brigade headquarters in the area on 14/02. Even if no escalations were witnessed after 10/02, the deployment illustrated the persistence of high tensions in the suburb.

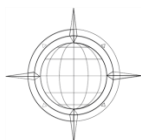
These events exemplified the constant conflicting atmosphere dominating relations between armed groups in the Greater Tripoli area. The reason for these clashes and mobilizations are often unclear but also frequently related to territorial control matters and retaliatory acts, such as in this week's case. Skirmishes in Tajoura were also a reminder of the potential instability of the area and the impact these tensions can have on civilians' safety and daily movements.

- **Persisting risk of clashes between armed groups**, instigated by local feuds and territorial disputes, or motivated by siding with rival political actors;
- **Possible escalation after a single incident**, potentially causing immediate responses or later-on retaliation by the affected armed groups.

SECURITY: In February, Tripoli continued to witness a relatively high crime rate and numerous violent crimes were recorded in the city. Frequent shootings, mostly of unidentified origin, were again recorded in the city and especially its peripheral neighborhoods. Furthermore, murders continued to be reported throughout the month. Criminal activities perpetrated in the capital, as well as the presence of criminal groups, was again shown by the incidence of security operations in the city. Among such operations, on two separate occasions, security forces managed to arrest a number of kidnappers and to free 14 Bangladeshi abductees for whom a ransom had been demanded. These events proved the persisting risk of kidnapping for foreign workers, especially migrants who continue to be at risk of being victims of human trafficking. It is also worth mentioning that during the month, unknown perpetrators targeted institutional headquarters in Tripoli. This was the case on 15/02, when unidentified individuals stormed the National Anti-Corruption Authority's HQ, reportedly looting confidential documents.

While the incidence of security operations increased in February, the Greater Tripoli area continues to witness more criminal activities than other parts of Libya. This is due not only to the city's larger population, but also to the presence of groups engaged in crime and to the relatively high diffusion of firearms.

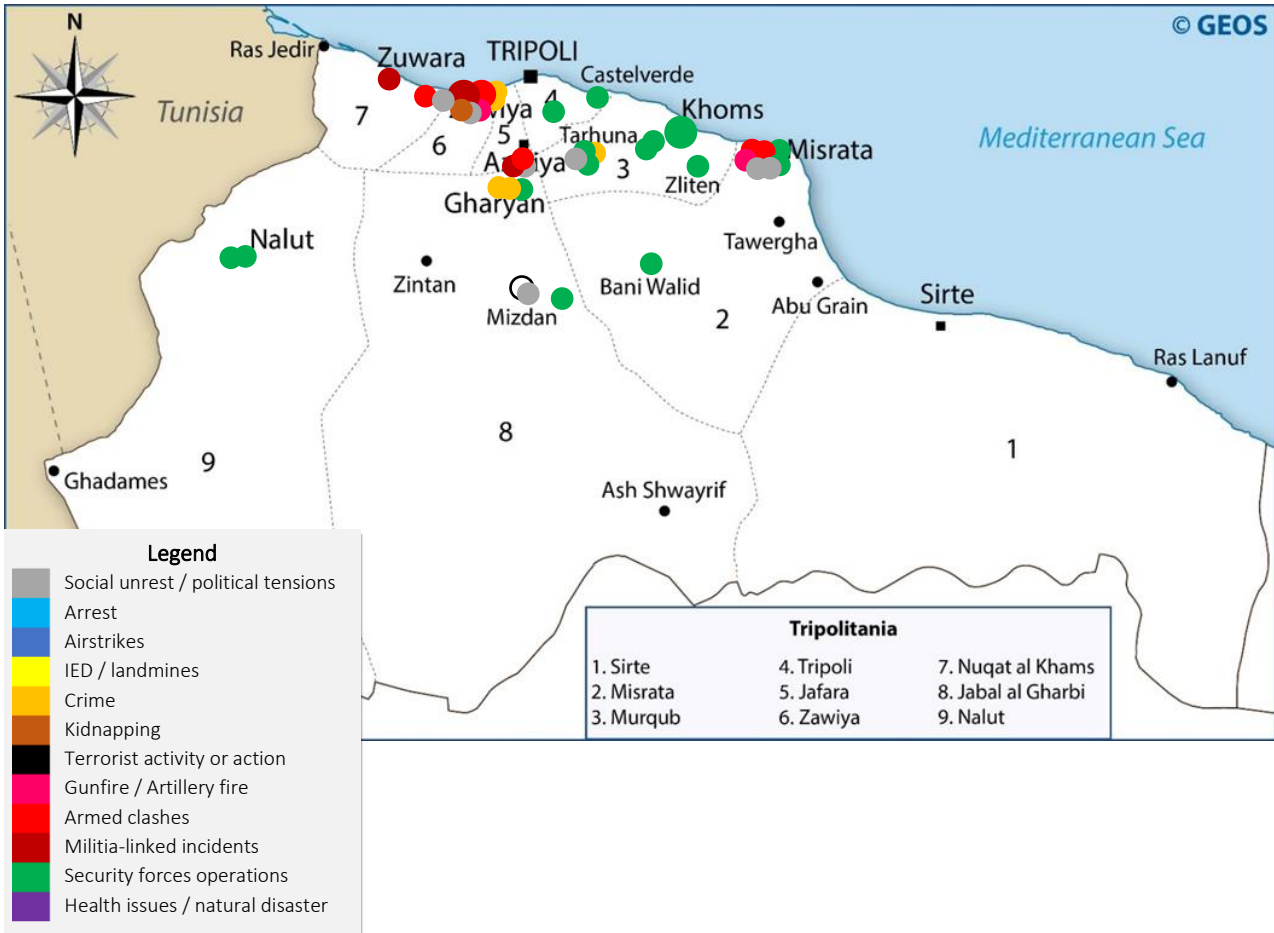
- **Persistence of significant crimes**, especially in the capital's western and southern outskirts (murders, shootings);
- **Continuation of unidentified gunfire reports**, with the risk of civilian casualties.



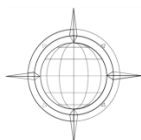
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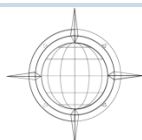
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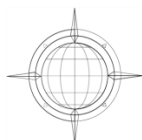
Main incidents of the month	
February 28 th	Tripolitania, Bani Walid: On 28/02, 3 fuel trucks smuggling 6,000 litres of fuel were seized by SSA forces during a security operation between Bani Walid and Ash-Shwayrif.
February 28 th	Tripolitania, Khoms: On 28/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Khoms. He is accused of attempted murder on a civilian.
February 27 th	Tripolitania, Tarhuna: On 27/02, a number of employees of the Tarhuna municipal office protested in Tahruna, demanding the disbursement of their overdue salaries.
February 27 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: Around 6pm on 27/02, clashes erupted between unidentified armed groups in western Zawiya’s Al-Mutrad neighborhood, reportedly due to the arrest of a member of one of the two groups, whose release was obtained after negotiations. Clashes reportedly ended around 9pm and led to the killing of two armed individuals, allegedly affiliated to the Mol, and the injury of a civilian.
February 25 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: On 25/02, a number of armed tribesmen protested by closing the Zawiya Oil Refinery and the gates leading to it in Zawiya, forcing a halt to production, in protest against the disappearance of one of their members. Sounds of gunfire were allegedly heard as well. The roads around the refinery were temporarily closed.



February 24 th	Tripolitania, Misrata, Zureik - Zawiyat Al-Mahjoub: Unidentified sounds of shooting and explosions were heard in western Misrata's Zureik and Zawiyat Al-Mahjoub neighborhoods in the early hours of 24/02. They were allegedly caused by a local armed group opening fire in the air in protest against the security operation conducted by DAOCT in Misrata on 23/02.
February 23 rd	Tripolitania, Tarhuna: On 23/02, a number of individuals, allegedly members of the Kaniyat armed group, were arrested by GNU MoD's 444 th Brigade in Tarhuna. They are accused of planning assassinations and of illegal possession of firearms.
February 23 rd	Tripolitania, Zawiya: 2 members of an unidentified armed group were reportedly injured when an RPG shell was fired on their armoured vehicle on 23/02 by perpetrators allegedly belonging to forces led by Mohamed Bahroun, also known as Al-Far.
February 23 rd	Tripolitania, Misrata, Zawiyat Al-Mahjoub: 2 gunmen were killed, 2 DAOCT members were injured, and another gunman was arrested, after an exchange of fire between gunmen and members of DAOCT, also known as Rada Special Deterrence Force, during a security operation in Misrata's Zawiyat Al-Mahjoub area on 23/02. The gunmen were accused of drug trafficking and a large quantity of drugs was seized by DAOCT. The exchange of fire reportedly led to a heightened deployment of local forces in the area from Zawiyat AlMahjoub to Al-Dafniya Gate, west of Misrata, and warnings of a possible closure of Al-Dafniya Gate by some residents in response to the incident. The gate reportedly remained open.
February 22 nd	Tripolitania, Gharyan: On 22/02, a civilian was killed by an unidentified gunman in Gharyan. Investigation is ongoing.
February 21 st	Tripolitania, Khoms: On 21/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Khoms. He is accused of arson.
February 21 st	Tripolitania, Al-Ajaylat, Jinan Attia: On 21/02, at dawn, clashes erupted between an armed group affiliated to the GNU's MoD, and a Zawiya-based armed group affiliated to the GNU's Mol, in Al-Ajaylat's Jinan Attia area, allegedly due to a dispute over the arrest of wanted individuals. The clashes lasted a few hours, and at least one member of the Zawiya-based armed group affiliated to the GNU's Mol was killed.
February 19 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: Unidentified armed groups mobilised in Zawiya in the evening of 19/02, allegedly due to the recent disappearance of a civilian. No further information available.
February 18 th	Tripolitania, Gharyan: On 18/02, a civilian and a security forces member were killed by unidentified gunmen in Gharyan.
February 17 th	Tripolitania, Sabratha: On 17/02, a number of civilians protested in Sabratha, demanding the payment of overdue wages and the implementation of a unified salary scale.
February 16 th	Tripolitania, Suq Al-Khmies: On 16/02, 2 civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Suq Al-Khmies. They are accused of the theft of LYD 104,000.
February 16 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: On 16/02, a security forces member was killed when an unidentified gunmen opened fire at him in Zawiya.
February 16 th	Tripolitania, Al-Hira Gate: In the late hours of 16/02, clashes erupted between MoD's Gharyan Brigade and Mol's Central Support Forces at the Al-Hira Gate, north of Gharyan. No casualties were reported.
February 16 th	Tripolitania, Misrata: Clashes erupted between unidentified armed groups in Misrata's Al-Sawawa and Zawiyat Al-Mahjoub areas in the early hours of 16/02.
February 16 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: On 16/02, 6 Egyptian Copts were kidnapped by an unidentified armed group near Zawiya.
February 15 th	Tripolitania, Msallata: On 15/02, 3 civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Msallata. They are accused of arms trafficking and theft.
February 15 th	Tripolitania, Misrata: On 15/02, an unidentified armed group protested by closing the Al-Dafniya Gate in Misrata, on the Coastal Road, obstructing the circulation of fuel trucks to Zliten and demanding the disbursement of their overdue salaries and compensations.
February 14 th	Tripolitania, Al-Hira Gate: On 14/02, the Abu Ghilan Martyrs Battalion, led by Nasser Ishtiba, closed the access to the Al-Hira Gate, north of Gharyan, to prevent the visit of the GNU's Prime Minister, Abdulhamid Dbeibah, accusing him of failing to implement development projects in Gharyan.



February 13 th	Tripolitania, Nalut: On 13/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Nalut. He is accused of murder.
February 13 th	Tripolitania, Misrata, Al-Dafniya Gate: An individual was killed, and 2 others were injured when clashes allegedly erupted on the evening of 13/02 at the Al-Dafniya Gate in Misrata, where a number of the GNU's Volcano of Anger Operations members have been stationed for 2 days, closing the gate in protest of the non-payment of their dues by the GNU. No further information available.
February 13 th	Tripolitania, Msallata: On 13/02, 3 civilians, reportedly part of a car theft gang led by the mayor of Msallata, were arrested by the DAOCT, also known as Rada Special Deterrence Force, in Msallata.
February 12 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: On the evening of 12/02, an armed group was reportedly seen mobilizing in Zawiya, allegedly linked to the 05/02 clashes in Zawiya and the alleged demand of the group to the CTF, asking to hand over the accused in the clashes.
February 11 th	Tripolitania, Misrata, Al-Dafniya Gate: On 11/02, a number of members of the GNU's Volcano of Anger Operations protested and closed Al-Dafniya Gate, west of Misrata, denouncing the non-payment of their dues by the GNU.
February 11 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: On 11/02, a civilian was reportedly tortured and killed in Zawiya, allegedly by a local armed group from Zawiya.
February 9 th	Tripolitania, Mizdah: An unidentified explosion was heard in Mizdah in the late hours of 09/02. No further information was available.
February 9 th	Tripolitania, Nalut: On 09/02, 2.5 kg of heroin and 250 kg of cannabis were seized by security forces during a security operation in Nalut.
February 9 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: Unidentified shooting reportedly erupted in the early hours of 09/02 in Zawiya's Simafro Al-Dhaman area. Social media sources reported burning of tires and blocking of part of the Coastal Road in the Zawiya area at the same time. No further information was available.
February 8 th	Tripolitania, Zliten: 2 civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Zliten on 08/02. They are accused of murder.
February 8 th	Tripolitania, Tarhuna: A civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tarhuna on 08/02. He is accused of assault on a security forces member.
February 8 th	Tripolitania, Gharyan: On 08/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Gharyan. He is accused of shooting.
February 7 th	Tripolitania, Al-Hira gate: On 07/02, a number of individuals reportedly armed, prevented the access to the Al-Hira gate, north of Gharyan, in protest against the GNU's municipality development system and condemning the marginalization of the city.
February 7 th	Tripolitania, Tarhuna: On 07/02, a security force member was injured when he was assaulted by unknown perpetrators.
February 6 th	Tripolitania, Khoms: On 06/02, 269 kg of cocaine were seized by security forces during a security operation in Khoms. Investigation is ongoing.
February 6 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya, Coastal Road: On 06/02, a judicial official was allegedly subjected to an assassination attempt when unidentified gunmen opened fire on him on Zawiya's Coastal Road.
February 5 th / 6 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: 2 individuals were killed when clashes erupted in the late hours of 05/02 and continued until the early morning of 06/02 in Zawiya, between unidentified armed group members from Zawiya. The reason behind the clashes remains unknown.
February 5 th	Tripolitania, Mizdah: A number of civilians protested in Mizdah on 05/02, demanding the overthrow of the city's executive council, accusing it of failing to manage the city, and asked the GNU to hold municipal elections, threatening civil disobedience if their demands are not met.
February 5 th	Tripolitania, Castelverde: On 05/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Castelverde. He is accused of armed robbery.



February 5th	Tripolitania, Zuwara: On 05/02, a Zuwara-based armed group was seen mobilising in the city, reportedly to prevent a Zawiya-based armed group from entering Zuwara. The latter group reportedly gathered to receive the Zawiyan armed group leader Shaban Hadiya, also known as Abu Obeida Al-Zawy, former head of the Libya Revolutionary Operations Room, coming through Zuwara Airport from Istanbul. The Zawiyan armed group reportedly gathered in the vicinity of Mellitah Oil and Gas Complex, east of Zuwara, closing the access to the facility.
February 3rd	Tripolitania, Khoms: On 03/02, 2 civilians were arrested by security forces in Khoms. They is accused of armed robbery.
February 1st	Tripolitania, Misrata International Airport: A civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation at Misrata International Airport on 01/02. He is accused of cash smuggling to Turkey, amounting to EUR 700,000.
February 1st	Tripolitania, Nasmah: 18 migrants were arrested by SSA forces during a security operation near Nasmah on 01/02. They are accused of illegal migration.

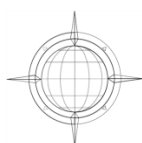
ARMED GROUPS: This month, western Tripolitania’s coast witnessed a multiplication of mobilizations and armed skirmishes, on the background of persisting tensions between local armed groups, especially in the areas of Zawiya and Al-Ajaylat.

The situation of Zawiya was particularly tense in February. On 05/02, clashes erupted between unidentified armed groups in the Al-Shurafa area, leading to the death of 3 individuals including a civilian. A number of social media sources suggested that the armed groups might be affiliated to GNU’s MoD and Mol but conflicting information did not allow to confirm such identifications. Motives sparking the eruption of violence remained unclear. The Zawiya Council of Elders’ Spokesperson, who called on conflicting parties to accept mediation, relayed that fighting lasted until the morning of 06/02. Following this event, the MoD’s 103rd Battalion and the 52nd Brigade, led by the Commander of the GNU’s MoD Western Coast Military Region, Salah Al-Din Al-Namrush, were deployed in Zawiya to prevent any threat. In the following weeks, tensions persisted, likely contributing to a deterioration of the local security framework. On 09/02, unidentified shooting occurred in Zawiya’s Simafro Al-Dhaman neighborhood and the Coastal Road was temporarily blocked in the area by unknown individuals setting tires on fire on it. Moreover, a large mobilization of unidentified armed vehicles was spotted in the area on 12/02, reportedly in relation to the 05/02 clashes.

High tensions and new clashes in western Tripolitania were again seen in the second half of the month. On 21/02, an armed group, allegedly affiliated to the GNU’s MoD, clashed in the Al-Ajaylat area with elements of Zawiya-based group, allegedly affiliated to the GNU’s Mol. This confrontation, purportedly due to a dispute over the arrest of wanted individuals, caused at least one death among Mol forces. Two days later, violence arose again in Zawiya with the injuring of 2 unidentified armed group members after an RPG shell was fired on their armored vehicle, reportedly by forces linked to Zawiyan leader Mohamed Bahroun, also known as Al-Far. On 27/02, other armed clashes erupted between unidentified armed groups in Zawiya’s Al-Mutrad neighborhood killing 2 individuals and injuring a civilian.

Over the past months, and at least since late 2022, western Tripolitania’s coastal towns have seen a continuing deterioration of their security situation, given the recurrence of multiple clashes between armed groups on its territory, often affecting the security of civilians. It also had significant consequences on movements in the area, with the closure of some roads, including the vital Coastal Road. Despite significant efforts implemented by security forces at the beginning of 2023, tensions revolving around territorial disputes and local rivalries have continued and can be expected to remain high in the area in the short term.

→ **Persisting risk of clashes between armed groups in parts of western Tripolitania’s coast**, potentially concerning highly populated areas and leading to temporary road closures;



- **Possible escalation after a single incident**, potentially causing immediate responses or later-on retaliation by the affected armed groups.

ARMED GROUPS: Repeated protests by armed groups, notably in the Gharyan and Misrata areas, were also examples of emerging local tensions in Tripolitania during this month, heightening security risks in the two locations and bearing the potential of escalating violence.

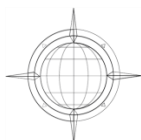
The first of these incidents was recorded on 07/02, when a number of unidentified gunmen gathered to prevent access to Al-Hira Gate, north of Gharyan, to protest against the GNU's municipality development projects, denouncing the marginalization of the city by the GNU. These demonstrations were renewed on 14/02 by local armed group members reportedly headed by the GNU's MoD-affiliated leader, Nasser Ishtiba, when the GNU's Prime Minister, Abdulhamid Dbeibah, was expected to visit Gharyan. They reiterated their accusations against the GNU and closed the Al-Hira Gate, thus preventing the use of the Gharyan - Al-Hira Road. The blockage lasted three days and culminated in the eruption of clashes at the Gate on 16/02 between Gharyan Brigade forces led by Ishtiba and the MoI's Central Support forces. The confrontations led to the injuring of several individuals and caused at least one death. An agreement was reached on 17/02, allowing the withdrawal of Nasser Ishtiba's forces and thus the reopening of Al-Hira Gate.

Misrata witnessed similar events during the month, which contributed to a rise of insecurity in its western periphery. On 11/02, armed group members affiliated to the GNU MoD's Volcano of Anger Operation protested at Al-Dafniya Gate, west of Misrata, demanding the payment of overdue salaries. The situation was significantly strained by the protest and by the interruption of a Coastal Road section resulting from the closure of Al-Dafniya Gate. On 13/02, after two days of blockade, violent clashes broke out near the gate between unidentified armed groups and elements reportedly part of the Volcano of Anger forces, leading to the death of an individual and the injury of 2 others. However, the situation remained unchanged, and the blockade continued.

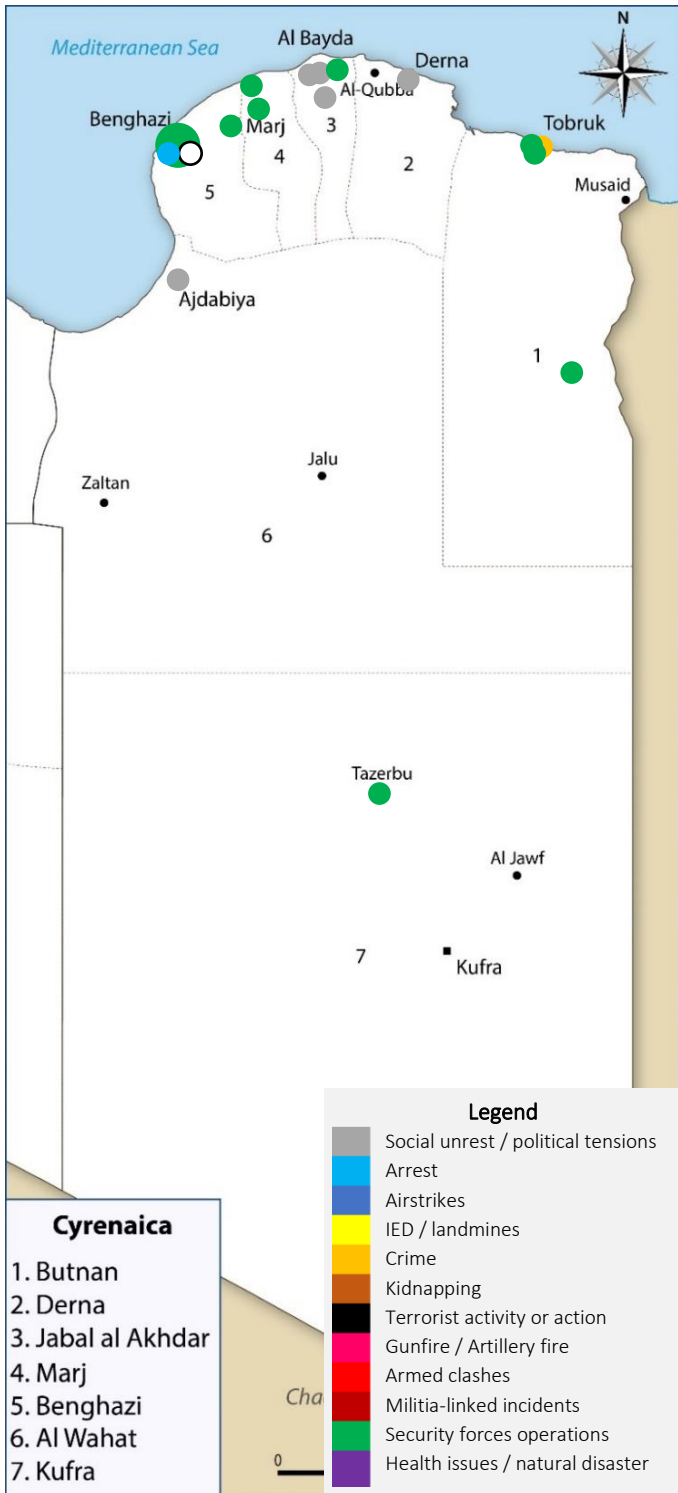
The several days of protest at Al-Dafniya had reportedly an impact on various provisions of goods, including the gas supply, for the Misrata and Zliten areas, as the blockade prevented movements on that part the Coastal Road. On 16/02, new skirmishes were reported in western Misrata in the vicinity of Al-Dafniya Gate, namely in Al-Sawawa and Zawiyat Al-Mahjoub neighborhoods, opposing unidentified armed groups. Whilst no evident connection with the protests emerged, clashes in the area flagged again the rising mobilization of armed formations in this part of the city and the consequent increase of the risk of violence. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of the 16/02 clashes, a solution to protest was seemingly found through an agreement between protesting armed group members and the GNU on the payment of dues in exchange for the reopening of Al-Dafniya Gate.

Events in Gharyan and Misrata reminded of the potential destabilizing capacities of Tripolitania's armed groups, which can deeply affect the daily life of civilians, including their safety, their movements on local roads, and their access to essential goods. Both cases also show the effectiveness of mediation efforts to resolve such critical situations amid the related risk of their escalation into armed clashes. However, one must note that agreements on specific issues are not guarantees of long-term stability and lasting peace between local armed groups, and that renewed increases of tensions should not be ruled out.

- **Latent possibility of renewed protests by armed groups in the Gharyan and Misrata areas**, potentially leading to tensions with security forces or other armed groups.

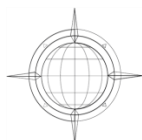


CYRENAICA



Main incidents of the month

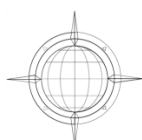
Feb. 26 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, Al-Majouri: In the early hours of 26/02, a number of civilians were arrested by forces of the Joint Military Security Committee, consisting of LNA forces and MoI forces, during a security operation targeting a hideout of drug traffickers in Benghazi's Al-Majouri area. The civilians are accused of drug trafficking.
Feb. 24 th	Cyrenaica, Al-Abyar: On 24/02, a number of civilians were arrested, and 100,000 liters of fuel were seized by security forces during a security operation in Al-Abyar. They are accused of fuel smuggling.
Feb. 23 rd	Cyrenaica, Al-Bayda: On 23/02, 2 civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Al-Bayda. They are accused of armed robbery.
Feb. 22 nd	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, Bohdema: On 22/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi's Bohdema neighborhood. He is accused of assault, drug trafficking, and theft.
Feb. 21 st	Cyrenaica, Jabal Al-Akhdar: On 21/02, a number of civilians protested in Jabal Al-Akhdar's Al-Haniyah area, demanding relevant authorities to change the management of the hospital, and threatened to take new measures if their demands are not met.
Feb. 20 th	Cyrenaica, Derna: On 20/02, a number of Derna residents protested in the city, calling on the GNU's Prime Minister, Abdulhamid Dbeibah, to look into the suffering of Derna's Al-Maghar neighbourhood residents, demanding a rant allowance for their displacement.
Feb. 20 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 20/02, an Egyptian national was arrested by security forces in Benghazi. He is accused of drug and weapons trafficking.
Feb. 19 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 19/02, a civilian was allegedly arrested by the LNA's Tariq Ben Ziyad Brigade during a security operation in Benghazi. He is accused of drug trafficking.
Feb. 18 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, Al-Qawarishah: On 18/02, 2 civilians were arrested, and 22,000 liters of fuel were seized by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi's Al-Qawarishah neighborhood. They are accused of fuel smuggling.
Feb. 18 th	Cyrenaica, Al-Jaghub: On 18/02, a number of weapons, including missiles and bombs, were seized by security forces during a security operation in Al-Jaghub. They were reportedly intended to be smuggled into Egypt.
Feb. 18 th	Cyrenaica, Tobruk: On 18/02, a fugitive was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tobruk. He is accused of armed robbery.



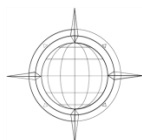
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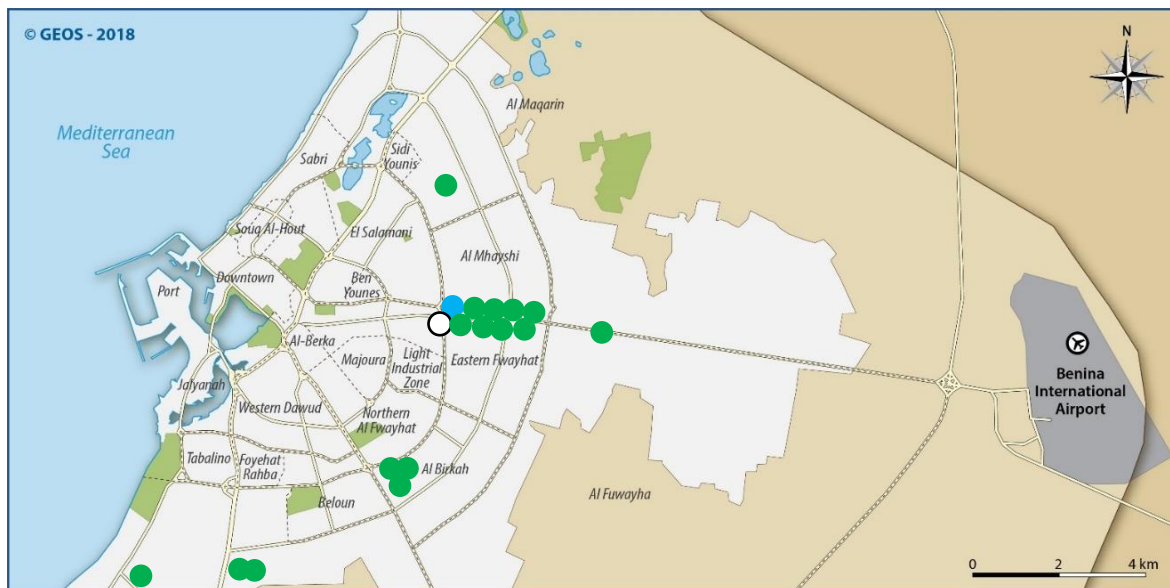
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Feb. 17 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 17/02, 3 civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi. They are accused of drug and arms trafficking.
Feb. 16 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 16/02, a civilian was arrested, and 37,600 narcotic tablets were seized by security forces in Benghazi. He is accused of drug trafficking.
Feb. 16 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, Bouatni: On 16/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi's Bouatni neighborhood. He is accused of assault.
Feb. 16 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, Al-Qawarishah: On 16/02, 5 civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi's Al-Qawarishah neighborhood. They are accused of prostitution and drug possession.
Feb. 14 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 14/02, 3 Sudanese nationals were arrested by security forces in Benghazi. They are accused of fraud and trafficking.
Feb. 14 th	Cyrenaica, Tokra: On 14/02, 5 Egyptian nationals were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tokra. They are accused of drug trafficking.
Feb. 14 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: In the morning of 14/02, 3 civilians were killed, and one was injured when a fire broke out in their house in Benghazi. The injured were transferred to hospital. Investigation is ongoing.
Feb. 13 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, Al-Wahaishi: In the early hours of 13/02, an exchange of fire was reported when a hideout of drug and liquor traffickers was raided by security forces and LNA forces during a security operation in Benghazi's Al-Wahaishi neighborhood.
Feb. 13 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: In the early hours of 13/02, a civilian, brother of killed armed group leader Mahmoud Al-Werfalli, was reportedly arrested by members of the LNA's Tariq Ben Ziyad Brigade in Benghazi. The reason for his arrest is unknown.
Feb. 12 th	Cyrenaica, Tobruk: On 12/02, a security forces member was killed, and 3 others were injured in an exchange of fire when a hideout of drug traffickers was raided by security forces during a security operation in Tobruk. A number of civilians were arrested, and around 380 kg of hashish and 1 million tablets were seized. They are accused of drug trafficking.
Feb. 12 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 12/02, 2 civilians were arrested by security forces in Benghazi's Bohdema neighborhood. They are accused of assault.
Feb. 11 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: In the early hours of 11/02, 5 foreign nationals and 3 security forces members were killed when clashes erupted as a hideout of drug and liquor traffickers was raided by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi's Al-Wahaishi and Bohdema neighbourhoods. A number of civilians were arrested, accused of drug trafficking.



Feb. 11 th	Cyrenaica, Al-Marj: On 11/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Al-Marj. He is accused of assault on Al-Marj's Security Director.
Feb. 8 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: A civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi on 08/02. He is accused of armed robbery.
Feb. 7 th	Cyrenaica, Al-Bayda: On 07/02, a number of civilians protested in Al-Bayda against the resignation of their mayor, calling him to resume office until municipal elections are held.
Feb. 6 th	Cyrenaica, Tazirbu: On 06/02, around 120 illegal migrants were freed by the LNA's Subul Al-Salam Brigade during a security operation in Tazirbu.
Feb. 6 th	Cyrenaica, Tobruk: On 06/02, 3 civilians were injured when an unidentified gunman opened fire on them at Tobruk University. The injured were transferred to hospital.
Feb. 5 th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: A civilian was arrested by security forces in Benghazi on 05/02. He is accused of robbery.
Feb. 2 nd	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, Qaryunis: A civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in southern Benghazi's Qaryunis neighborhood on 02/02. He is accused of assault and armed robbery.
Feb. 1 st	Cyrenaica, Ajdabiya: A number of health workers protested in Ajdabiya on 01/02, demanding a raise of salaries and an improvement of medical supplies.
Feb. 1 st	Cyrenaica, Al-Bayda: Dozens of civilians protested in Al-Bayda on 01/02, demanding the holding of new municipal elections in the city and against attempts to extend the mandate of the municipal council.
Feb. 1 st	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: A number of civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi on 01/02. They are accused of having committed a number of armed robberies.





SECURITY: During the month the eastern region saw a reduction in the number of reported violent crimes after the surge witnessed in January, indicating a potential improvement in the security situation of cities like Benghazi and Tobruk. Nonetheless, the persisting threat exerted by criminal activities, especially in Cyrenaica’s main city, was evidenced by the frequent operations and arrests conducted by security forces including LNA units. Indeed, in parallel with the diminution of crimes, the number of such security operations rose significantly, showing a heightened effort by authorities about law enforcement in eastern Libya’s urban areas. In Benghazi, on 08/02, the GNS’ Undersecretary of Interior, Faraj Egaim, met with the Head of the LNA’s Anti-Terrorism Prosecution, Colonel Issam Adbish, and agreed on cooperation between police forces and LNA in the city against the diffusion of firearms and in support of arrest operations.

Such a strengthened collaboration yielded results during the following weeks, being concretized in an effective security campaign which was focused on targeting drug trafficking, smuggling, and illegal possession and trafficking of firearms. On 11/02, security forces conducted an important operation in Benghazi, raiding the hideouts of illegal drug and liquor traffickers in southern neighborhoods. Ultimately resulting in various arrests, the operation included an exchange of fire with traffickers, and led to the death of 5 members of criminal groups and 3 security officers. The GNS’ Interior Ministry communicated that several people of various nationalities had been arrested in the operation, confirming that a campaign was ongoing to “eliminate the nests of corruption”. Journalistic sources also reported that the aim of enhancing security in parts of Benghazi would also be linked to plans of urban renewal in neighborhoods as Bohdema.

On the following day, another large-scale operation against drug trafficking took place in Tobruk, also leading to an exchange of fire with drug traffickers and the seizure of a high quantity of cannabis and narcotics tablets. Security operations against drug trafficking and smuggling continued however to be concentrated in Benghazi, where the LNA-Moi campaign continued during the following weeks, with arrests and seizures like the one of 22,000 litres of smuggled fuel in Al-Qawarishah on 18/02.

The security initiative launched in eastern Libya, while effectively leading to numerous arrests and a reduction in the incidence of violent crimes in the region, also highlighted the significant presence of criminal groups in cities like Benghazi and Tobruk, the diffusion of firearms among them, and their consequent ability to engage in armed confrontations with security forces, continuing to pose a risk to residents and bystanders.



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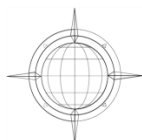
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- **Persistent risk of violent crimes in Benghazi relatively low**, mainly due to ongoing security campaigns and cooperation between police and LNA, likely to continue in the near future.

SECURITY: In addition to the abovementioned security operation in Tobruk, shedding light on the presence of armed criminal groups able to engage in clashes with security forces, the city witnessed a significant case of gun violence. On 06/02, over unclear circumstances and motives, an unidentified gunman opened fire inside the University of Tobruk, west of the city, injuring 3 students. The university was then temporarily closed as a security measure.

Both incidents proved that, despite not being at the same level as in Benghazi, the diffusion of firearms and the risk of gun violence by criminal perpetrators are not to be underestimated in Tobruk. Indeed, the eastern city has seen in the recent past, including late 2022, incidents involving the actions of gunmen such as armed attacks on police stations.

- **Continuing potential for sporadic cases of gun violence in Tobruk**, although rarer in comparison with Benghazi.



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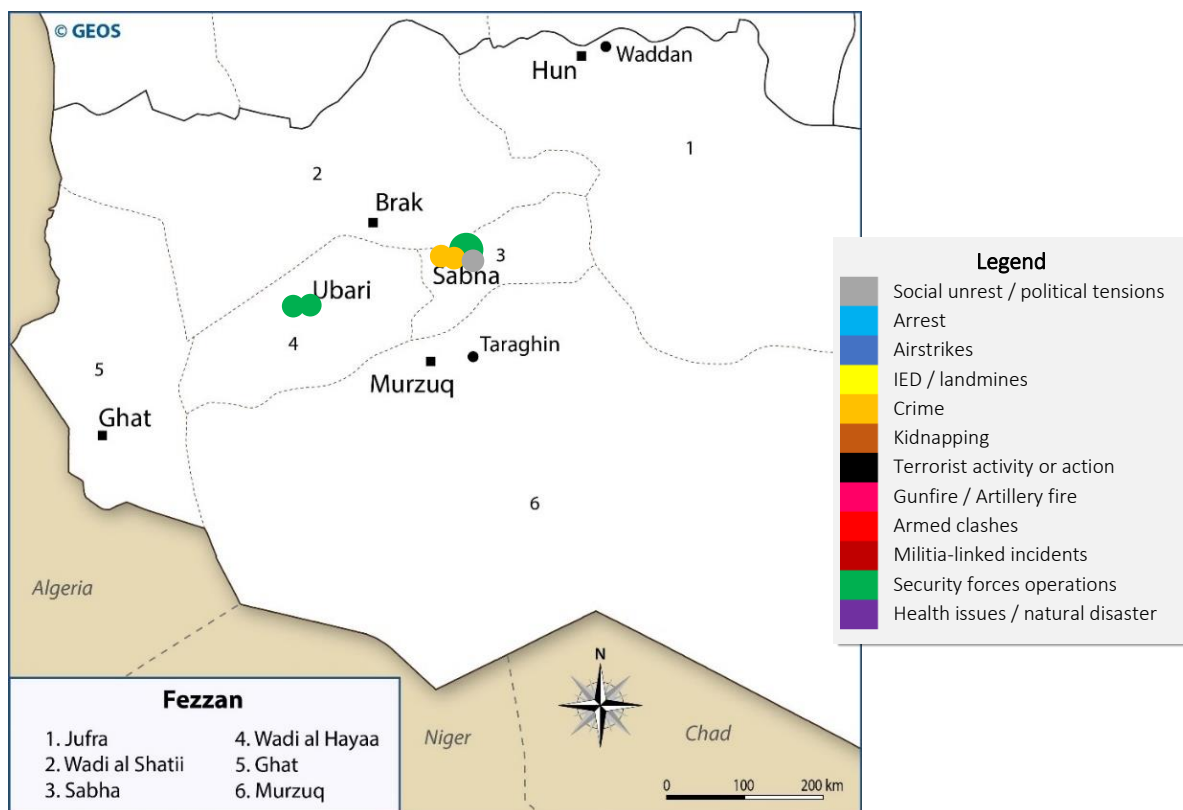
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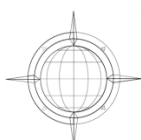
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FEZZAN



Main incidents of the month

February 27 th	Fezzan, Sebha: On 27/02, a large number of war remnants were removed by local authorities in Sebha, near Sebha International Airport.
February 26 th	Fezzan, Ubari: On 26/02, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Ubari. He is accused of theft from a bank.
February 24 th	Fezzan, Sebha: On the evening of 24/02, a security forces member was subjected to an assassination attempt when unidentified gunmen opened fire on him in Sebha.
February 22 nd	Fezzan, Ubari: 7 foreign nationals from African countries were reportedly arrested and a large quantity of cannabis was seized by LNA forces during a security operation near Ubari on 22/02. They are accused of drug trafficking.
February 19 th	Fezzan, Ubari: On 19/02, 2 civilians were arrested by security forces in Ubari. They are accused of murder.
February 15 th	Fezzan, Sebha: A number of civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Sebha's Mahdia neighborhood on 15/02. They are accused of having committed a number of armed robberies.
February 15 th	Fezzan, Sebha: On 15/02, 2 Sahara Bank employees were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Sebha. They are accused of embezzlement.
February 13 th	Fezzan, Sebha: On 13/02, a civilian was injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire on him in Sebha.
February 2 nd	Fezzan, Sebha Airport: A number of Libyan Ground Service workers protested at Sebha Airport on 02/02, demanding the payment of overdue salaries and announcing a strike starting on 05/02.



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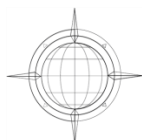
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SECURITY: In February, despite the relatively low number of security incidents reported from Fezzan in comparison with other parts of Libya, journalistic and social media sources continued to evidence a persisting risk of gun violence in the southwestern region. This was highlighted for instance by an incident occurred on 13/02, when a civilian was injured in a drive-by shooting by unidentified gunmen in Sebha. The region's main city and the other town of Ubari remain the two locations of Fezzan displaying the highest incidence of events bearing potential threats for the security of residents and travellers.

Furthermore, two security operations conducted by police and LNA forces in Sebha during the month evidenced the presence of criminal groups engaging in drug trafficking and armed robberies, flagging the continuing risk of gun violence linked to such criminal activities. Among operations carried out by LNA forces in Fezzan, one in Ubari on 22/02 led to the arrest of 7 individuals, reportedly foreign nationals from African countries, on drug trafficking charges, and the seizure of a large quantity of cannabis. It is worth noting that Fezzan has continued to be the theatre of various illegal cross-border activities including smuggling and human trafficking, and that foreign groups, often from Chad, have been frequently involved in such activities.

Whilst the security situation in Sebha appeared to improve over the past months, following the surge in armed robberies and shootings witnessed in the second quarter and in the third quarter of 2022, the risk of sporadic eruption of violence should not be ruled out. This is evident especially if considering news reports confirming the need for operations against traffickers and robbers' hideouts. In addition to this, Sebha also witnessed a gun violence case possibly resulting from tensions between criminal groups and security forces in the city. On 24/02, a captain in the LNA and member of those LNA forces stationed in Fezzan was subjected to an assassination attempt by unidentified perpetrators opening fire on his vehicle in Sebha. The possibility that the attack was a retaliation against previous security operation conducted by the LNA is not to be ruled out.

- **Continuing risk of gun violence in Fezzan towns**, despite a decrease in the incidence of violent crimes over the past months;
- **Possibility of tensions between criminal groups and security forces**, as suggested by the targeting of an LNA official in Sebha.

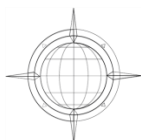


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ACRONYM LIST

AAS – Ansar al-Sharia	JTF – Joint Task Force
ACA – Administrative Control Authority	LIA – Libyan Investment Authority
AFRICOM – United States Africa Command	LNA – Libyan National Army
AQ – Al-Qaeda	LPDF – Libyan Political Dialogue Forum
AV – Armoured Vehicles	LSM – Libyan Stock Market
bpd – Barrel per day	MBL – Muslim Brotherhood in Libya
BPMC – Brega Petroleum Marketing Company	MoD – Ministry of Defence
CP/(I)VCP – Check Point / (Illegal) Vehicle Check Point	MoF – Ministry of Finance
CBL – Central Bank of Libya	MoFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CID – Criminal Investigation Department	MoH – Ministry of Health
Col – Chief of Intelligence	MoI – Ministry of Interior
ERW – Explosive Remnants of War	MoJ – Ministry of Justice
EU – European Union	MoO – Ministry of Oil
EUDEL – Delegation of the European Union to Libya	MoT – Ministry of Transportation
FACT – Front pour l'Alternance et la Concorde au Tchad	NCDC – National Centre for Disease Control
GECOL – General Electrical Company of Libya	NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
GMR – Great Man-Made River	NOC – National Oil Company
GNA – Government of National Accord	O&G – Oil and Gas
GNC – General National Congress	PAX – Person or Passenger
GNS – Government of National Stability	PC – Presidency Council
GNU – Government of National Unity	PFG – Petroleum Facilities Guard
HCS – High Council of State	PM – Prime Minister
HNEC – High National Election Commission	PMCs – Private Military Contractors
HoR – House of Representatives	RADA SDF – RADA Special Deterrence Forces
HVT – High-Value Target	RPG – Rocket Propelled Grenade
ICC – International Criminal Court	SSA – Stabilization Support Authority
IDP – Internally Displaced Person	TPF – Tripoli Protection Force
IED – Improvised Explosive Device	TRB – Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade
IOM – International Organization for Migration	TURAF - Turkish Air Force
IS – Islamic State	UAV – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
JMC – Joint Military Commission (5+5)	UN – United Nations
	UNSMIL – United Nations Support Mission in Libya
	UAE – United Arab Emirates
	USA – United States of America
	UXO – Unexploded Ordnance
	WHO – World Health Organization



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