

GEOS



Libya

WEEKLY BRIEF

April 12th – April 18th, 2023



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LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- ✦ **POLITICAL:** This week, a number of meetings took place involving Libyan and international actors over Libya's electoral process, revealing a continuation of the process.

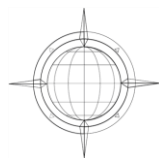
On 11/04, the Head of the HNEC, Imad Al-Sayeh, met with the UK ambassador to Libya, Caroline Hurdnall, where they discussed the efforts of the HNEC regarding the establishment of an electoral process in Libya and reviewed ways to support proposals and efforts to ensure the respect of international standards on electoral laws. Recently, the Head of the HNEC has held numerous meetings with local and diplomatic actors in Libya to discuss technicalities of the electoral process and electoral stages, underlining the HNEC's commitment towards the electoral process and the holding of elections during the year.

The Head of the HCS, Khaled Al-Mashri, met with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, in Istanbul, where they discussed mechanisms of consensus on laws and legislation around Libya's electoral process, and ways to make Libyan elections successful.

This week, the UNSMIL also met national actors in Libya, in the framework of the initiative of the Head of the UNSMIL, Abdoulaye Bathily, to hold a Libyan-led electoral process in the country this year. On 16/04, the acting head of the UNSMIL, Raisedon Zenenga, met with a delegation of Tuareg notables and civil representatives. They discussed the need for the inclusion of cultural components in Libya's political process and an equal representation of the South in Libyan institutions. He also met, on 17/04, with a group of members of the HoR representing Tripoli, Benghazi, Murzuq and Warshafana, and discussed the importance of completing electoral laws on time in order to hold elections this year, whilst HoR members presented their views on political and security challenges preventing progress in Libya. Zenenga reiterated the UNSMIL's offer in providing technical support to the HoR-HCS 6+6 Committee. On the same day, he met with representatives of a network of political parties (Libya's Growth Party, Party for Change, Justice & Construction Party, Libya's Technocrat Party, and the National Front and National Labour Party) to discuss the UNSMIL's approach to elections. They discussed ways to avoid repeating the factors that prevented elections in 2021, and their opinion on the shortcomings in the 13th constitutional amendment.

During a UNSC session on Libya in New York on 18/04, Abdoulaye Bathily briefed the UNSC on the situation in the country. He shared that all parties in Libya have expressed their willingness to abide by all criteria that lead to the holding of elections. He added that he had agreed with the security and military parties in the country on several points such as securing the elections, renouncing to violence, releasing detainees and ensuring an inclusive national reconciliation process. He also declared he urged the leaders of the HoR and HCS to expedite the work of the 6+6 Committee and publish a timebound work programme, as the electoral laws must be completed in time for the HNEC to begin implementing the electoral process by early July.

Assessment: The various meetings held this week show efforts made towards Libya's electoral process, with many holding the hope that they would take place by the end of this year. Efforts by the HNEC and the HCS underline the work of both institutions on the technicalities that come with organizing elections and highlight their will to show commitment towards this file. The UNSMIL continues to follow the initiative led by its head, Abdoulaye Bathily, regarding elections and the inclusion of local actors as meetings were held by the acting Head, Raisedon Zenenga, with significant Libyan actors including HoR members and representatives of the Tuareg population. The week was concluded with Bathily's meeting with the UNSC and his summary of the advancement towards the electoral process, where he underlined progress towards a possible holding of elections if electoral laws are completed soon. Similar meetings are expected to take place in the upcoming weeks.

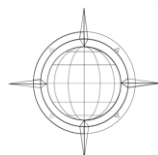


✦ **MILITARY:** This week, the GNU's Chief of Staff, Mohamed Al-Haddad, met with the LNA's Chief of Staff, Abdulrazzaq Al-Nadhuri. On 13/04, the two officials met in Benghazi where Al-Haddad carried out an official visit to discuss the unification of the military sector in Libya, with the participation of a number of military leaders from Eastern and Western Libya. During the meeting, they discussed the creation of a joint force that would represent the first step towards unification and could eventually lead to more stability and peace in Libya. Al-Haddad declared that the military institution would support the holding of elections according to Libyans' will and would also act to defend and protect the process when the time comes.

Assessment: This meeting represents an important step in Libya's military reunification, as the process has been moving at a slow pace due to ongoing tensions between eastern and western Libya on the matter. Their last talks on the framework to unify the military institution in Libya date back to March, when the two actors met in Rome. Despite the activation of the dialogue between the JMC, made relevant by their recent meetings where they confirmed they would provide all forms of support for elections, the issue of the unification of the military sector in Libya seems to continue to be a contentious one. A lack of progress on this file could possibly further add to tensions surrounding Libya's electoral process as the unification of military and security institutions represents an essential step for stability in Libya.

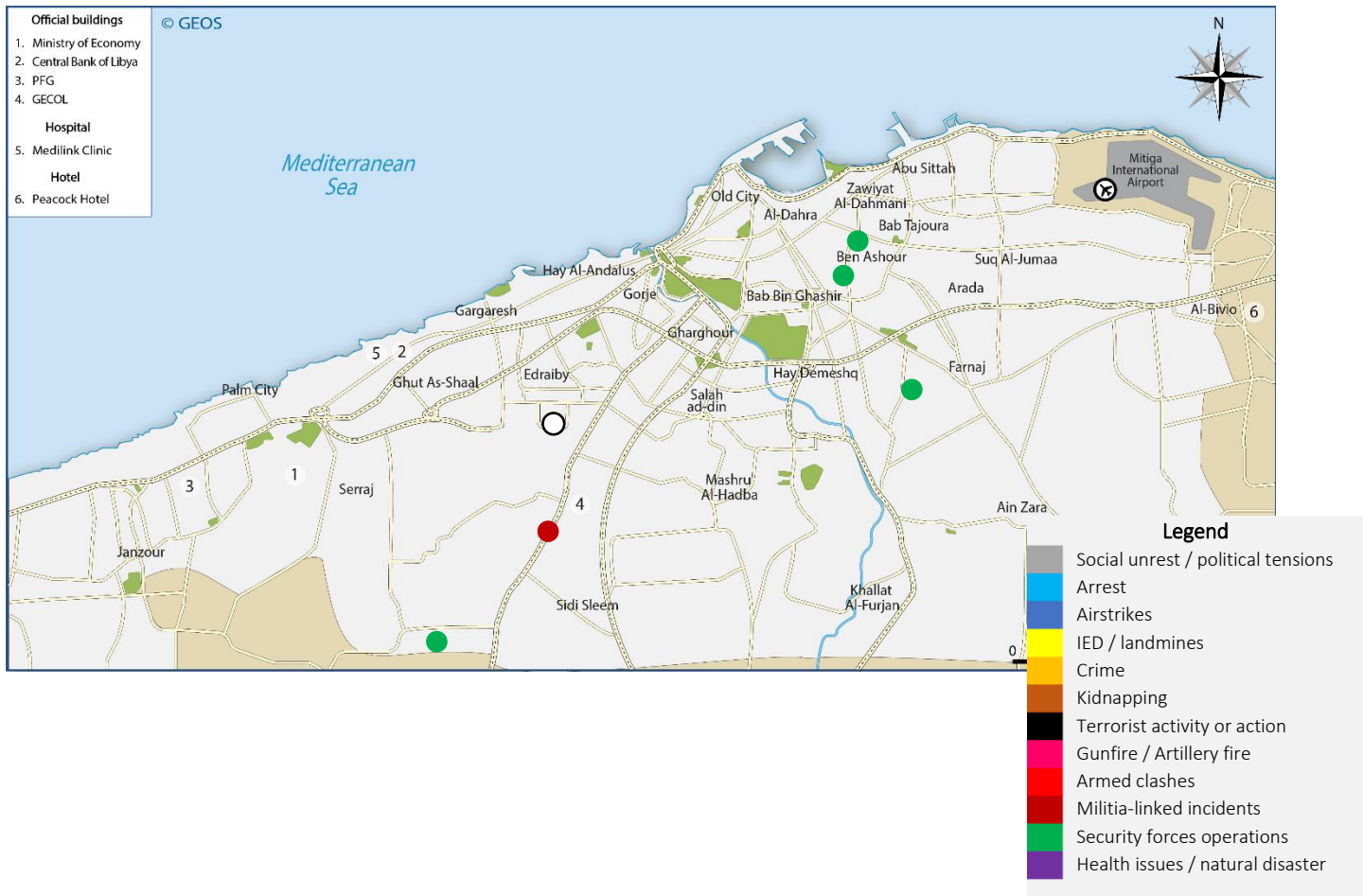
✦ **TERRORISM:** On 15/04, the LNA's War Information Division allegedly announced that a terrorist cell affiliated to IS had been found and its members arrested. According to the declaration, the cell was preparing to carry out terrorist attacks targeting the LNA's military units. 6 operatives were arrested in the operation carried out by the LNA's General Command and the Internal Security Service in the Eastern Region, after they had monitored their movements for two months. Media sources reported that the cell had ties to IS in Syria. The report did not disclose where the arrest was performed.

Assessment: Last year, in June 2022, the LNA's Spokesperson, Ahmed Al-Mismari, announced that the LNA was conducting operations to clear southern Libya of terrorist operatives. While no terrorist activity has been recorded since 2022, the LNA conducted a few counterterrorism operations in Libya's three regions this year, highlighting a significant security enforcement by the group on the file of terrorism.



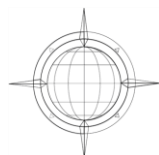
SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

TRIPOLI



Main incidents of the week

April 18 th	Tripoli: On 18/04, a civilian was killed, and 3 others were injured when a fire broke out in their house near the World Islamic Call Society building in southwestern Tripoli.
April 16 th	Tripoli: On 16/04, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Tripoli. He is accused of murder.
April 16 th	Tripoli, Tripoli International Airport Road: On 16/04, an armed convoy reportedly belonging to the GNU MoD's 444th Brigade was seen passing on Tripoli International Airport Road (south).
April 15 th	Tripoli, Al-Swani: On 15/04, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Tripoli's Al-Swani neighborhood. He is accused of murder.
April 13 th	Tripoli: On 13/04, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tripoli. He is accused of murder.
April 12 th	Tripoli: On 12/04, an American national was reportedly arrested by the Internal Security Agency (ISA), presumably in Tripoli. He is accused of proselytism. This arrest comes a day after another US citizen was detained by the ISA on similar charges. Both individuals are said to be employed at the Gateway School of English and are suspected of using the school to convert Libyans to Christianity. No further information was available on their current whereabouts.



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SECURITY: This week, a number of foreign nationals were arrested by security forces in Tripoli. On 11/04 and 12/04, two American nationals were arrested by the Internal Security Agency (ISA), presumably in Tripoli. The two individuals are said to be employed at the Gateway school of English and have been suspected of using the school to convert Libyans to Christianity. On 13/04, journalistic and social media sources affirmed that the GNU's Prime Minister, Abdulhamid Dbeibah, had successfully organised the release of the two Americans and would have been sent back to the US through a private plane departing from Misrata International Airport and going through Malta. Social media sources later added that 4 individuals in total were sent back to the US as the wives of the two men were also repatriated. No official statement was made on the topic.

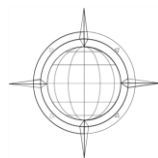
On 14/04, the 5+5 JMC issued a statement to denounce an alleged qualification made by the USA following the arrest, calling the ISA a 'militia', bringing about controversy. The JMC's statement affirmed that the ISA is a security institution affiliated to the Libyan state, that its actions are legitimate, including the arrests it conducts. Indeed, shortly following the announcement of the arrest, social media sources claimed a source from the US State Department had declared being aware of the detention of US citizens and would have described the ISA as the "militia" responsible for the arrest. It should however be noted that no official statement was released by the US State Department or the US Embassy in Libya using such terms.

Around the same time, 3 foreign nationals from Ireland, Romania, and Croatia, and at least 4 Libyan nationals were arrested by the DAOCT (Rada) at Mitiga International Airport. Social media sources, which reported the incident on 13/04, disclosed that the suspects are employees of the security company Gardaworld, in charge of protection for EUBAM, and have reportedly been accused of illegal possession of firearms in public, as well as conducting security activities without appropriate permits. No further information about their detention has been released and their whereabouts are unknown.

Assessment: Although the two incidents mentioned above do not seem to be related, the arrest of foreign nationals that have taken place over the past week are a reminder that foreigners, including nationals from western countries, should remain vigilant and avoid any implication in unsanctioned religious or political activities. Security protocols and controls might be reinforced in light of recent events.

Outlook

- **High tensions between armed groups, risk of armed clashes and of retaliatory attacks** (targeted killings, kidnappings);
- **Increased risk of protests** linked to the political transition process and the deterioration of socio-economic conditions;
- **Latent terrorist threat in the capital;**
- Volatile security environment due to the **high circulation of weapons among the population;**
- Pursuit of the **reinforcement of the security apparatus and anti-criminal operations**, especially in the city's southern outskirts;
- **Risk of ERW and IED explosions** in the southern outskirts.



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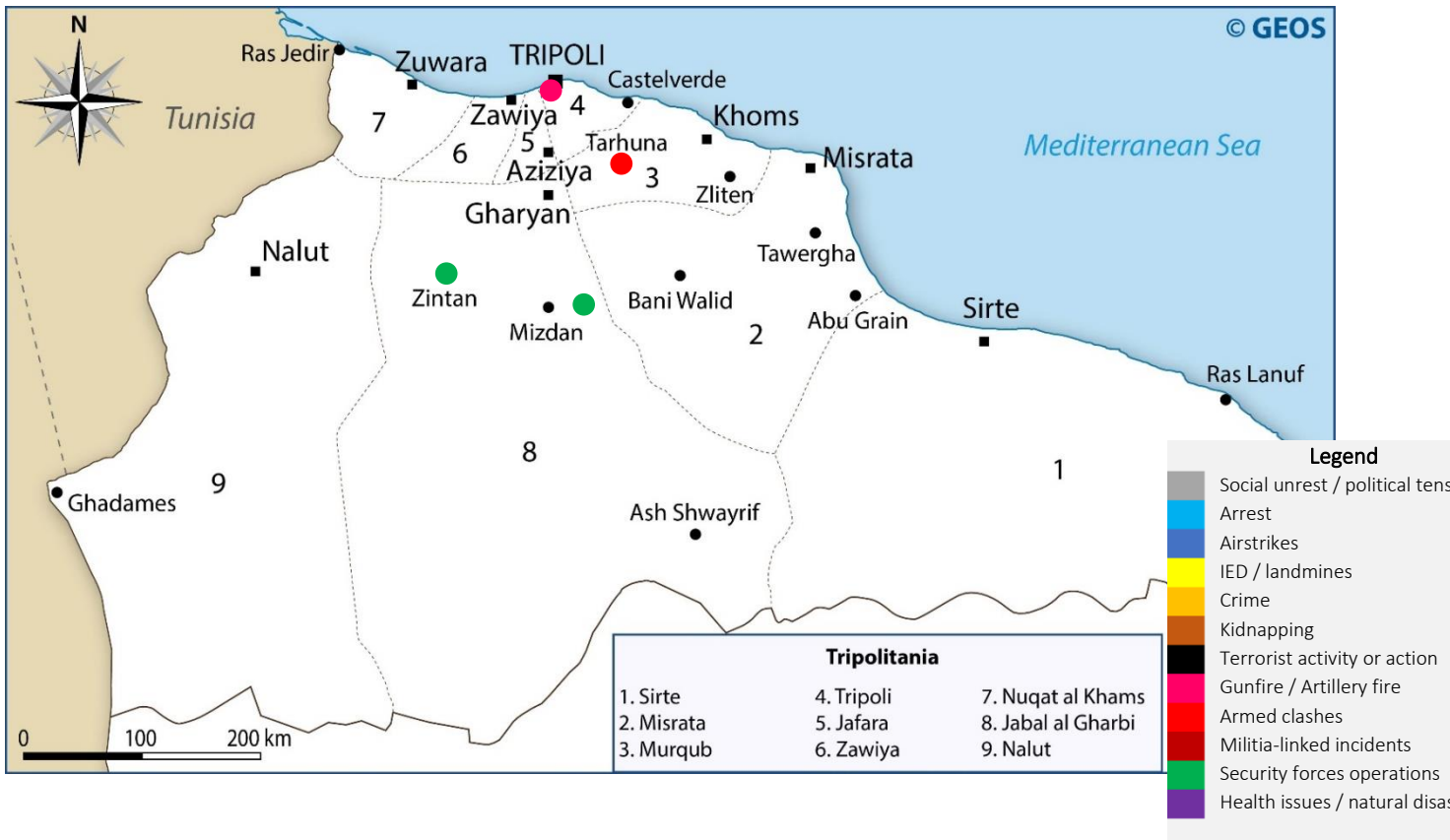
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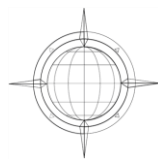
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TRIPOLITANIA



Main incidents of the week	
April 18 th	Tripolitania, Tarhuna: In the early hours of 18/04, a civilian was injured when clashes reportedly erupted between an armed group affiliated to Faraj Al-Kushar, a Tarhuna armed-group leader, and members of the CTF in Tarhuna. Unidentified gunmen opened fire leading to the injury of the civilian, and the GNU MoD's 444th Brigade intervened to stop the clashes. Social media sources reported that the clashes took place in the middle of the busy city, causing panic among civilians.
April 15 th	Tripolitania, An-Najila: On 15/04, unidentified shooting was heard in An-Najila. No further information available.
April 15 th	Tripolitania, Zintan: On 15/04, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Zintan. He is accused of murder and shooting.
April 14 th	Tripolitania, Nasmah: On 14/04, a civilian was arrested, and a fuel truck used for smuggling was seized by the SSA during a security operation in Nasmah. He is accused of fuel smuggling.



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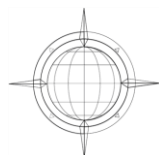
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Outlook

- Tensions between armed groups which can lead to targeted attacks (drive-by shootings, kidnappings) and escalate into armed clashes, notably in the localities west and south of Tripoli and along the western coastal road;
- Tensions linked to the continued presence of mercenaries and foreign armed forces;
- Risk of sporadic clashes between security forces and criminal groups during anti-criminal operations;
- Risk of demonstrations linked to insecurity, the deterioration of socio-economic conditions, and the ongoing political divide;
- Risk of blockades of oil sites;
- Latent terrorist risk.



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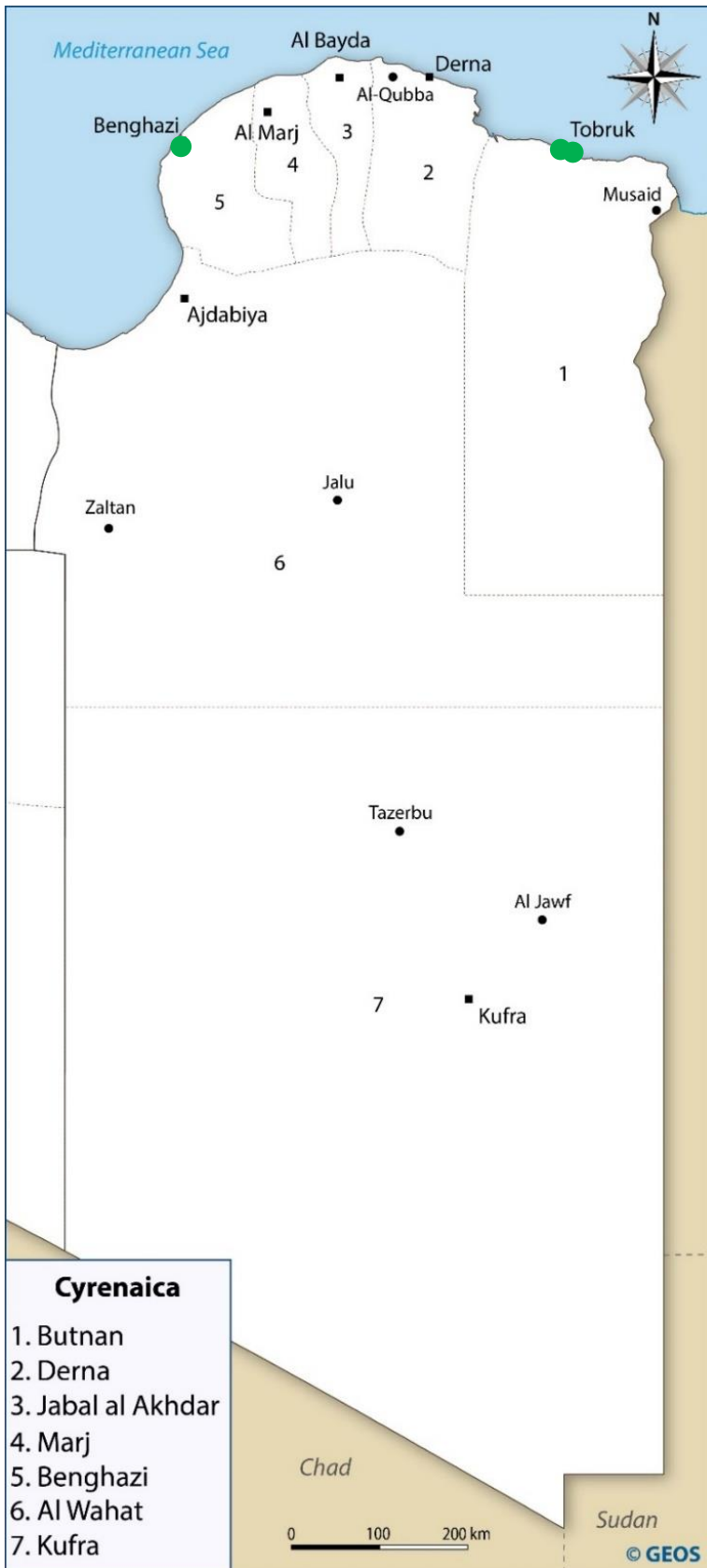
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CYRENAICA



Legend	
	Social unrest / political tensions
	Arrest
	Airstrikes
	IED / landmines
	Crime
	Kidnapping
	Terrorist activity or action
	Gunfire / Artillery fire
	Armed clashes
	Militia-linked incidents
	Security forces operations
	Health issues / natural disaster

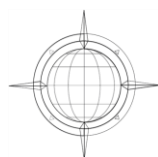
Main incidents of the week	
	<p>April 16th</p> <p>Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 16/04, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Benghazi. He is accused of armed robbery. Investigation is ongoing.</p>
	<p>April 15th</p> <p>Cyrenaica, Tobruk: On 15/04, 8 Sudanese and Nigerian nationals were arrested when a hideout was raided by security forces in Tobruk. They are accused of prostitution and drug possession.</p>
	<p>April 13th</p> <p>Cyrenaica, Tobruk: On 13/04, 3 civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Tobruk. They are accused of armed robbery.</p>

Outlook

- Latent tensions between LNA-affiliated units leading to sporadic skirmishes and targeted attacks/killings and retaliations;
- Tensions between the LNA and the population/local tribes;
- High crime rate in Benghazi;
- Increase in protests linked to insecurity, the deterioration of socio-economic conditions and the political transition process;
- Risk of blockades of oil sites.

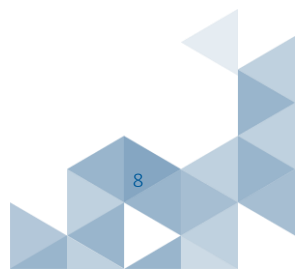
Cyrenaica

1. Butnan
2. Derna
3. Jabal al Akhdar
4. Marj
5. Benghazi
6. Al Wahat
7. Kufra



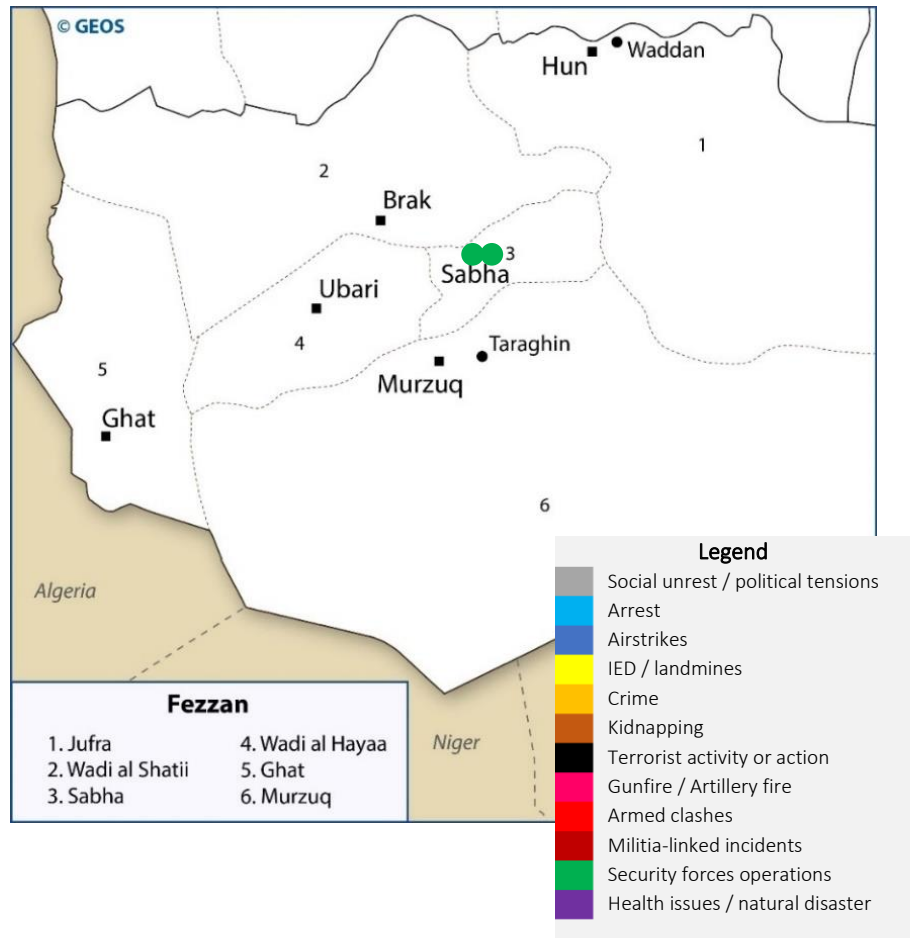
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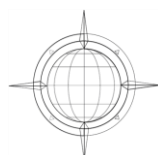
FEZZAN

Main incidents of the week	
April 14 th	Fezzan, Sebha: On 14/04, 450 000 narcotic tablets were seized by the LNA's 128th Brigade during a security operation near Sebha.
April 14 th	Fezzan, Sebha: On 14/04, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Sebha. He is accused of armed robbery, murder and drug trafficking.



SECURITY OPERATION: On 14/04, a large security operation took place near Sebha, led by the LNA's 128th Brigade. Several vehicles were spotted by the LNA heading towards Sebha: when trying to stop them, criminal elements in the vehicles opened fire which resulted in clashes that reportedly lasted hours. Whilst the smugglers escaped, authorities confiscated illegal items and two of their vehicles, leading to the seizure of 450,000 hallucinogenic tablets which were reportedly to be brought into the city of Sebha.

Assessment: This operation comes against the background of the recent announcement of the deployment of a joint desert patrol led by the LNA's Southern Operations Force and including units of the LNA's 128th brigade, and of LNA's Tariq Ben Ziyad Brigade in several locations along Libya's southern border strip, aimed at enforcing security and ensuring stability in the region. Security operations have frequently been performed by the LNA in Libya's south and have on occasion led to clashes between the forces and criminal elements in refusal of their arrest.



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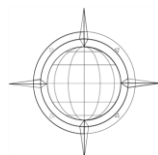
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Outlook

- **Very high criminal rate in Sebha:** regular attacks targeting properties (carjackings, armed robberies) and people (drive-by shootings);
- **Risk of protests and blockades of oil sites** to denounce the deterioration of life conditions and ongoing political divide;
- **Latent terrorist risk in the region;**
- **Latent tribal tensions** which can lead to skirmishes or retaliation acts between tribes or with LNA forces in the area;
- **Tensions between the GNU and the LNA due to military deployments;**
- **Deteriorated situation along the Chadian border and continued incursion of Chadian armed groups.**

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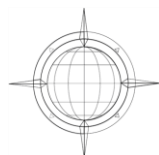
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OFFSHORE

- ✦ Offshore: On 18/04, 4 illegal migrants were killed, and 5 others were injured after their boat capsized off the coast of Zliten. The injured were transferred to hospital and investigation is ongoing.



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ACRONYM LIST

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


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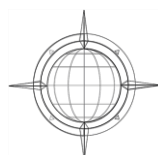
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Securing your projects	Expert advice
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Protecting your people and assets	Skilled staff (CPOs, drivers & guards)
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