

GEOS



Libya

WEEKLY BRIEF

April 26th – May 2nd, 2023



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LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- PROTEST:** This week's main event was a day of civil unrest in the coastal town of Zawiya, about 35 Km west of Tripoli, on 27/04. A large protest, which started before dawn, lasted for the entire day, and was sparked by the circulation of a video in which unidentified individuals, seemingly foreign nationals from African countries, were torturing others who appeared to be Libyan citizens in Zawiya. The city's security situation has been deteriorating significantly over the past six months, due to the presence of armed groups operating in the area, often engaging in criminal activities including fuel smuggling and human smuggling. Demonstrations against this situation had already been held in late 2022 and in March 2023, and the GNU's MoI had formed a Joint Security Room at the beginning of this year, tasked with coordinating and improving law enforcement in the city.

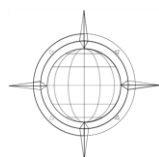
Continuing tensions between local armed groups and sporadic clashes between them, a growing number of cases of violence concerning civilians, and diversion of fuel supplies by smugglers appeared to be the main factors behind the strong discontent seen in Zawiya on 27/04. Protestors saw the violence recorded in the abovementioned video as the result of a growing territorial control of criminal groups, often including members from Sahel countries, and accused security forces and local authorities of not doing enough or even of being colluded with such groups. Demonstrators established roadblocks to prevent access to Zawiya from east and west, and closed access to the Zawiya Municipal Council building and to the Zawiya Oil Refinery. During the late hours of 27/04, after talks between protestors, led by the Zawiya Youth Movement (ZYM), MoD officials, and the local Council of Elders, the demonstrations in the city ended, roadblocks were removed, and access to the refinery and the municipality was reopened.

The ZYM issued a statement on the same day of the protest, presenting its main demands on behalf of Zawiya residents who demonstrated on 27/04. In this document, they asked for the dissolution and restructuring of the Joint Security Room; the punishing of torturers involved in the video that sparked the protest; the election of a new Municipal Council in Zawiya; the restructuring of security at Zawiya Oil Refinery in coordination with PFG forces in order to eliminate fuel smuggling; the closure of gas stations involved in fuel smuggling. The statement also accused elements of the security forces of taking part in smuggling activities together with African foreigners' groups. On 27/04, the Commander of the GNU MoD's West Coast Military Region, Salah Al-Din Al-Namrush, met with a ZYM delegation.

They discussed the movement's demands and Al-Namrush stressed the willingness of the West Coast Military Region to ensure security of citizens and state institutions, and its support to Zawiya's residents, adding that the MoD will contribute to law enforcement in Zawiya and ordering the outlining of a security plan for the city. The MoD's commitment was confirmed in the following days by the visit of the GNU's Chief of Staff, Mohamed Al-Haddad, in Zawiya and by his meeting with protest leaders, including ZYM, and notables from the city, in which he agreed to form a 15-member committee comprising military and civilian representatives, aiming at discussing the protestors' demands.

The protest in Zawiya also led to criticizing declarations against the GNU, which some accused of having been unable or unwilling to improve security in the city over the past year. The Head of the HCS, Khaled Al-Mashri, who has frequently expressed his stance against the GNU's Prime Minister, accused in a tweet the Tripoli government of neglecting the problem of national security outside of the capital, ignoring the situation in Zawiya, and employing state funds only for its own survival. Among Zawiyan protesters, the leader of another local movement called "Movement to Correct the Course in Zawiya", also accused the Tripoli-based government of neglecting Zawiya and being unable to respond to Zawiya people's demands so far.

Showing the GNU's and the PC's commitment to resolve the problem of insecurity in Zawiya, on 02/05, a meeting was held at the PC's headquarters in Tripoli with the Chairman of the PC, Mohamed Menfi, the Vice-Chairman of the PC, Abdullah Al-Lafi, the GNU's Prime Minister, Abdulhamid Dbeibah, the GNU's Chief of Staff,



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Mohamed Al-Haddad, and a number of military and security leaders, and representatives of the civil movements from Zawiya. Menfi urged Al-Haddad to develop a plan to combat crime and improve Zawiya's situation, with the full support of Dbeibah.

Assessment: The 27/04 protest showed how the situation in Zawiya has reached a critical point, in which the decline of security and the growing violence have become evident and increasingly affecting the population, together with the impact that criminal activities like fuel smuggling have on living conditions. In this context, new demonstrations can be expected in the next months. Besides, while the protest is not per se political, it must be noted how it could expand to political stances in the medium term if the situation were not to improve and governmental authorities were to be increasingly blamed for persisting insecurity in the city. It is worth noting how security in the coastal region between Zawiya and Zuwara is particularly important not only for its being highly populated and close to the capital, but also for movements along the Coastal Road linking Tripoli to the Libyan-Tunisian border and for the presence of important oil and gas facilities.

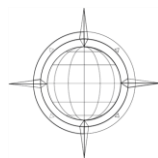
- ✦ **POLITICS:** On 02/05, Tripoli saw a second meeting of the HCS-HoR 6+6 Committee, tasked with the drafting of electoral laws as per the 13th constitutional amendment passed in February. The HoR's Spokesperson, Abdullah Blihaq, announced that the meeting resulted in a convergence of views among the committee's members, including agreement on the committee's mechanisms of work and of communication with institutions involved in the electoral process.

Assessment: The new 6+6 Committee meeting showed a continuation of the electoral process along the lines indicated by HCS and HoR in the past months. Nonetheless, after the 02/05 session of this second meeting of the committee no specific results in terms of electoral laws were communicated. Such results can be expected if more sessions are held on the following day or in the next weeks.

- ✦ **DIPLOMACY:** In the observed period, US diplomacy returned to show Washington's commitment to security in Libya and the north African region in general. On 26/04, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Barbara Leaf, held separate calls with the GNU's Foreign Minister, Najla El-Mangoush, and with the Head of the LNA, Khalifa Haftar, in which she reiterated the importance of regional security amid growing destabilization in Libya's neighbor Sudan. The call with El-Mangoush reportedly revolved around increasing coordination and cooperation between Tripoli and Washington regarding the situation in Sudan and a return to dialogue in the country. El-Mangoush has recently suggested that the GNU could assume a mediating role to restore dialogue between Sudan's conflicting parties. During her talks with Haftar, as communicated in a tweet by the US State Department, Leaf spoke on the need to prevent "outside actors", including Russian Wagner Group, from "further destabilizing Libya or its neighbors, including Sudan".

On 28/04, at the HQ of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in Stuttgart, the US Ambassador and US Special Envoy to Libya, Richard Norland, met with the Commander of AFRICOM, General Michael Langley, and his deputy for civil-military engagement, Ambassador Andrew Young. The US Embassy to Libya, commenting on the meeting, declared that the "regional security situation gives more importance than ever to diplomacy, development, and defense to support Libya in forming a unified army with civilian leadership" to protect the country. On 02/05, the GNU's Chief of Staff, Mohamed Al-Haddad, received in Tripoli a delegation from the US Defense Department headed by the US Defense Attaché to Libya. The two sides reportedly discussed relations between the two countries military institutions and possibilities to develop them.

Assessment: This week's diplomatic activity by the US showed the importance given by Washington to Libya's stability, and especially military reunification. It also showed how the developments in Sudan are raising concerns among international actors for the whole region's security and for possible repercussions on the already delicate situation in a neighbor of Sudan's such as Libya.



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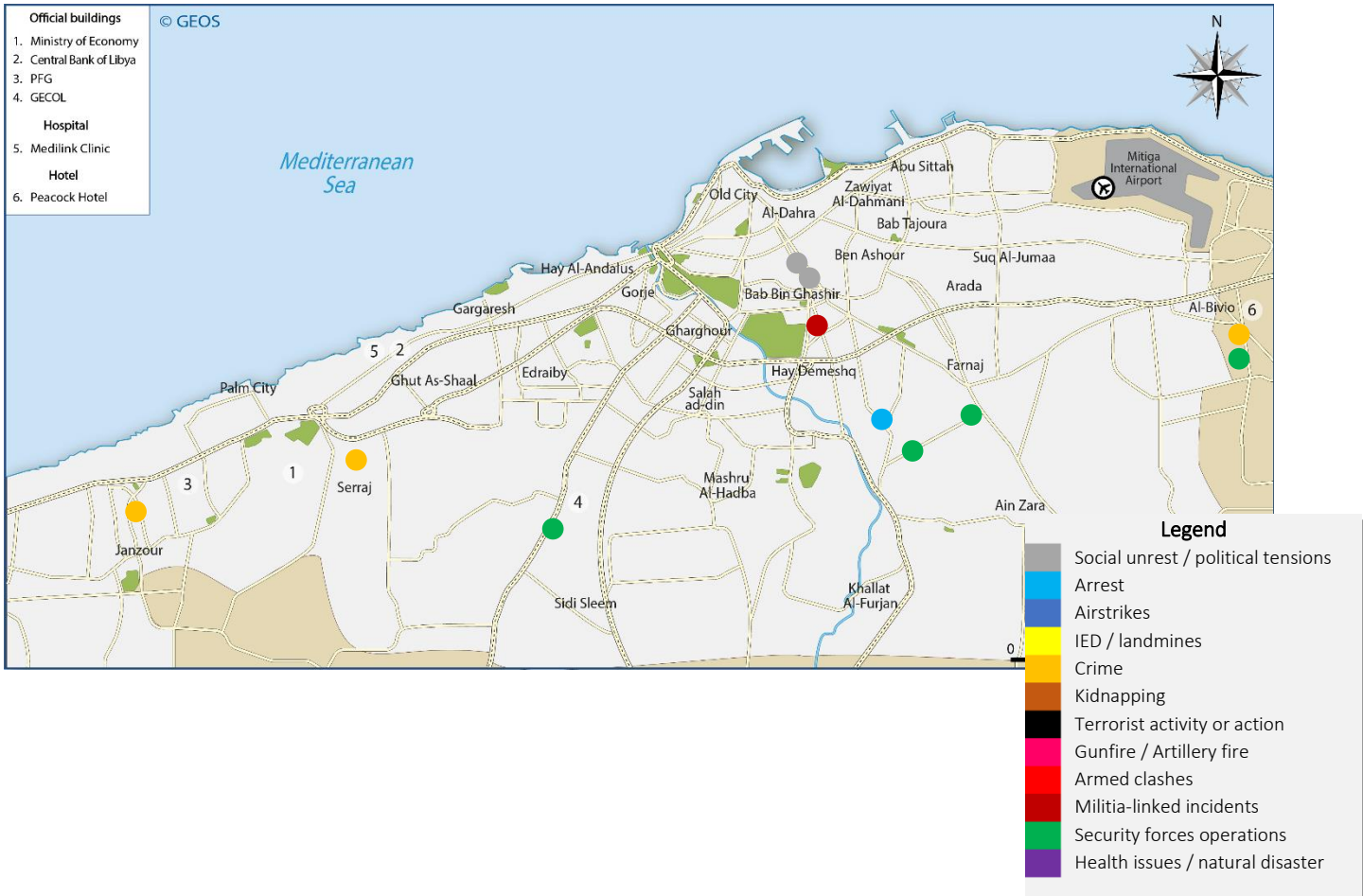
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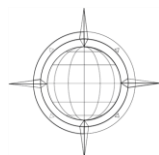
SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

TRIPOLI



Main incidents of the week

May 2 nd	Tripoli, Al-Seka Road: On 02/05, a number of supporters of the Grand Mufti of Libya, Sadiq Al-Ghariani, protested on Tripoli's Al-Seka road, demanding the GNU to dismiss the Head of the General Authority for Endowments, Muhammad Al-Abani.
May 2 nd	Tajoura: On 02/05, a Sudanese national was arrested in Tajoura. He is accused of setting another Sudanese national on fire.
May 2 nd	Tripoli, Al-Seka Road: On 02/05, a number of higher education staff protested on Tripoli's Al-Seka Road, demanding the payment of overdue salaries.
May 2 nd	Tripoli, Al-Sarraj: In the early morning of 02/05, a civilian was reportedly robbed, and his vehicle was stolen along with LYD 22,000 by unidentified gunmen in Tripoli's Al-Sarraj neighborhood.
May 1 st	Tajoura: On 01/05, 2 civilians were reportedly killed when a number of unidentified gunmen opened fire on them in Tajoura.
April 30 th	Tripoli: On 30/04, 4 members of forces affiliated to Mohamed Bahroun, also known as Al-Far, were arrested by the DAOCT (Rada) in Tripoli. No further information available.
April 30 th	Tripoli, Tripoli International Airport Road (south): On 30/04, around 300 illegal migrants were arrested when an immigration hideout was raided during a security operation carried out by a joint force of the GNU MoD's 111th Brigade, the Anti-Illegal Immigration Authority and Tripoli's Security Directorate on Tripoli International Airport Road (south).



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April 30 th	Janzour: On 30/04, a civilian was injured during an armed robbery perpetrated by 3 gunmen in Janzour. The injured was transferred to hospital.
April 29 th	Tripoli, Bab Ben Ghashir: In the late hours of 29/04, an armed convoy of about 40 vehicles belonging to the DAOCT (Rada) was seen near Tripoli's Bab Ben Ghashir neighbourhood and reportedly raided the area. Social media sources reported that they arrested a close associate of the Head of the SSA-affiliated Ghneiwa Brigade, Abdulghani Al-Kikli. A state of emergency was allegedly declared in some areas of the capital.
April 29 th	Tripoli: On 29/04, a civilian was arrested by the SSA during a security operation in Tripoli. He is allegedly accused of criticizing a religious leader in a video posted on the social media platform, TikTok.
April 28 th	Tripoli: On 28/04, a civilian was arrested by security forces in Tripoli. He is accused of fraud amounting to USD 80,000.

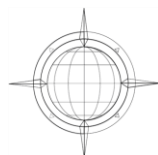
SECURITY: This week saw multiple security operations led by the DAOCT (Rada Special Deterrence Forces) and arrests of multiple armed group members. On the evening of 29/04, an armed convoy of about 40 vehicles belonging to the DAOCT was spotted near Tripoli's Bab Ben Ghashir neighborhood. Social media sources reported that the armed group raided the area and arrested a close associate of Abdulghani Al-Kikli, who is the leader of the SSA-affiliated Ghneiwa Brigade, without mentioning the arrestee's name. A temporary state of emergency was allegedly declared in some areas of the capital.

The day after, on 30/04, 4 members of First Support Division forces led by Mohamed Bahroun, also known as Al-Far, all from Zawiya, were arrested and detained by the DAOCT in Tripoli. The reason for their arrest was not disclosed.

Assessment: These security operations and the passing of the large armed convoy on 29/04 highlighted the DAOCT's increased activity in Tripoli and what appeared to be a crackdown on members of a number of Tripolitan armed groups. Such arrests might increase tensions between armed groups, potentially threatening security in the capital as they could lead to mobilizations or skirmishes.

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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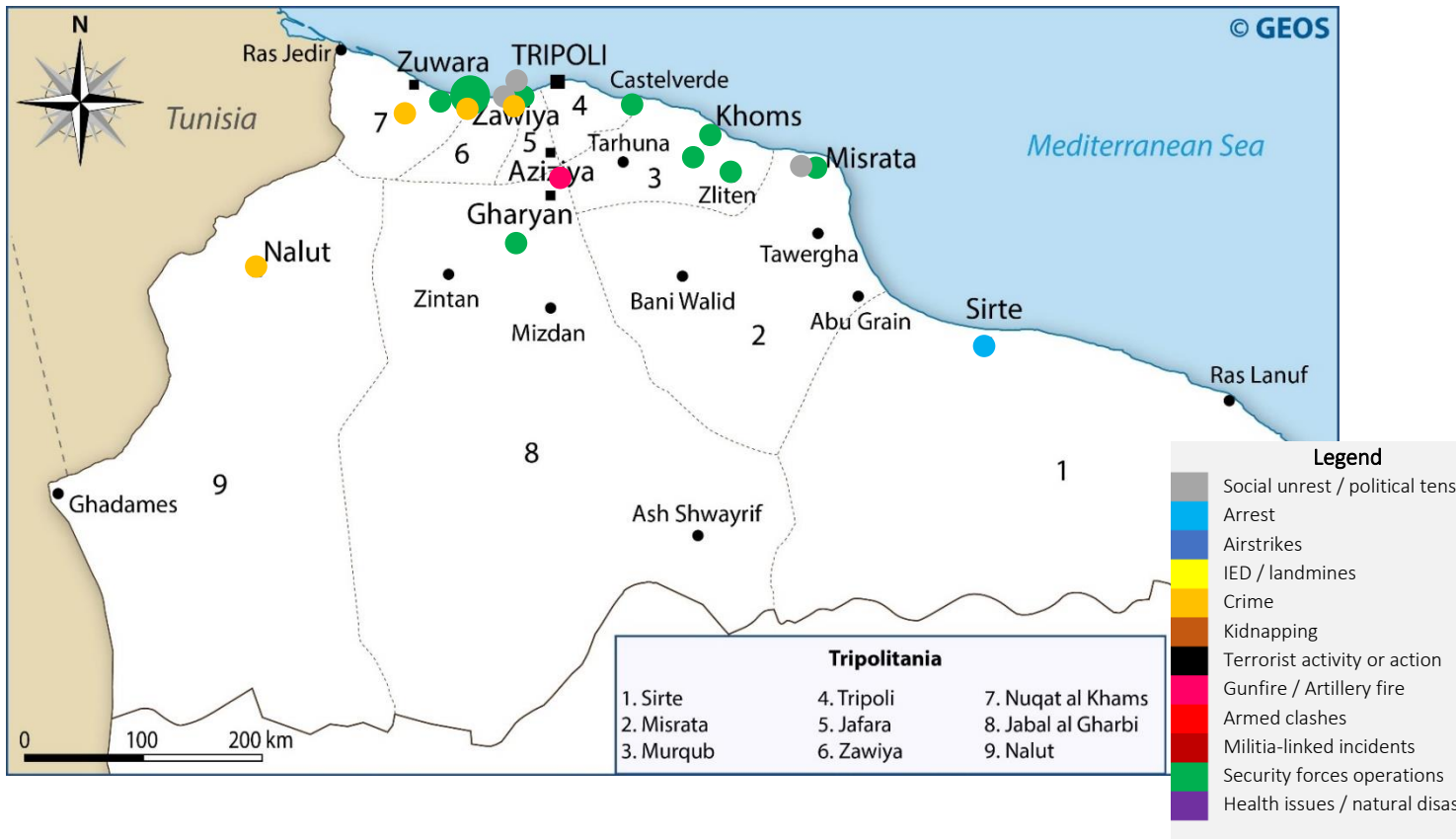
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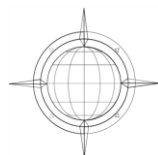
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TRIPOLITANIA



Main incidents of the week

Armed clashes	May 2 nd	Tripolitania, Qawasim: On 02/05, unidentified shooting was heard in Qawasim, north of Gharyan. No further information available.
Social unrest / political tensions	May 2 nd	Tripolitania, Misrata: On 02/05, a number of Misrata University lecturers protested in Misrata, denouncing the exploitation and discrimination they allegedly are subjected to by the GNU's Ministry of High Education, and demanded the payment of overdue salaries and better work conditions.
Arrest	May 1 st	Tripolitania, Sabratha: On 01/05, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Sabratha. He is accused of armed robbery.
Crime	May 1 st	Tripolitania, Zawiya: In the early hours of 01/05, a civilian was killed when unidentified gunmen opened fire on him in Zawiya. No further information available.
Crime	April 30 th	Tripolitania, Sabratha: On 30/04, a civilian was killed and 2 were injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire at them in Sabratha. No further information available.
Arrest	April 30 th	Tripolitania, Sabratha: 2 civilians were arrested on 30/04 by security forces in Sabratha. They are accused of murder and drug trafficking.
Arrest	April 30 th	Tripolitania, Sirte: On the evening of 30/04, a civilian was reportedly arrested and detained by the LNA's 604 th during a security operation in Sirte. The reason for his arrest is unknown.
Arrest	April 29 th	Tripolitania, Sabratha: On 29/04, 3 civilians were arrested during a security operation by security forces in Sabratha. They are accused of shooting and murder.
Arrest	April 29 th	Tripolitania, Sabratha: On 29/04, 3 civilians were arrested during a security operation by security forces in Sabratha. They are accused of armed robbery.
Crime	April 29 th	Tripolitania, Jumayl: On 29/04, a civilian was killed by unidentified gunmen in Jumayl. No further information available.



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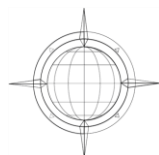
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April 28 th	Tripolitania, Al-Ajaylat: On 28/04, 2 civilians were arrested when a hideout of drug trafficking was raided by the DAOCT (Rada) in Al-Ajaylat. They are accused of drug trafficking and escaping prison.
April 28 th	Tripolitania, Zliten: On 28/04, 3 civilians were arrested by security forces in Zliten. They are accused of shooting at Zliten's Waadi Kaam gate and injuring a citizen.
April 27 th	Tripolitania, Wadi Kaam: 3 civilians were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Wadi Kaam on 27/04. They are accused of shooting and injuring a civilian.
April 27 th	Tripolitania, Castelverde: 21 illegal migrants, including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Egyptian, and Indian nationals were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Castelverde on 27/04. They are accused of attempting to reach Europe illegally.
April 27 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: A number of civilians continued to protest in Zawiya on 27/04, blocking access to the city from the Coastal Road, as well as access to the Municipal Council building, and to the Zawiya Oil Refinery, denouncing deterioration of security in the city. The GNU MoD's 52 nd Brigade was deployed to remove roadblocks and ensure security. The 52 nd Brigade withdrew hours later, allegedly after some of the protestors forced it to leave, accusing it of involvement in the security crisis in the city. Roads and facilities, including the Zawiya Oil Refinery, were reportedly reopened following mediation by the local Council of Elders with protestors and other civil society components.
April 27 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: Thousands of people protested in Zawiya's Martyrs' Square, in front of the Zawiya Security Directorate and in other areas of Zawiya in the early morning of 27/04, blocking roads and setting fires, denouncing the deterioration of security in the city and demanding the resignation of the local Security Director, following the circulation of a video in which Libyan youths in Zawiya are tortured by foreign nationals from African countries. Western and eastern access to the city along the Coastal Road were blocked. Protesters also blocked access to Zawiya Oil Refinery by setting earth mounds, denouncing oil smugglers' activity in the city. Students in Zawiya closed schools and demonstrators announced a continuation of the protest on the same day.
April 27 th	Tripolitania, Zawiya: In the early hours of 27/04, a number of wanted foreign nationals from African countries were arrested and a number of firearms were seized by security forces during a security operation in Zawiya. They are accused of various crimes and illegal possession of firearms. No further information available.
April 26 th	Tripolitania, Nalut: A civilian, reportedly from Zintan, was killed and 2 others were injured by unidentified gunmen in unclear circumstances in Nalut on 26/04.
April 26 th	Tripolitania, Khoms: On 26/04, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Khoms. He is accused of murder.
April 26 th	Tripolitania, Misrata: On 26/04, 50 Kg of cocaine were found on the seashore and seized by security forces during a security operation east of Misrata.
April 26 th	Tripolitania, Kikla: On 26/04, 1,420 liters of illegally trafficked liquor were seized by security forces during a security operation in Kikla.

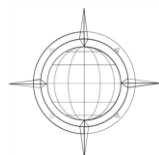
PROTEST: Large demonstrations were witnessed in Zawiya on 27/04 during a day of protest. They started in the early morning of 27/04 in Zawiya's Martyrs' Square, in front of the Zawiya Security Directorate and in other areas of the city, where thousands of demonstrators protested by blocking roads and setting fires. Protestors denounced the deterioration of the security situation and demanded resignations of local authorities and restructuring of security forces in the city. Protests continued throughout 27/04 and access to the city, to the Municipal Council Building, and to the Zawiya Oil Refinery was blocked. The GNU's MoD's 52nd Brigade was deployed to remove the roadblocks, and ensure security, and withdrew a few hours later allegedly due to protestors forcing them to leave. Roads and facilities, including the Zawiya Oil Refinery, were reportedly reopened following mediation by the local Council of Elders with protestors and other civil society components. (See Latest Developments section)



Assessment: The continued deterioration of the security situation in Zawiya has sparked large protests indicating the growing discontent of the Zawiyan population. Further protests can be expected in the next months if no significant security improvement is achieved.

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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CYRENAICA



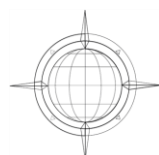
Legend	
	Social unrest / political tensions
	Arrest
	Airstrikes
	IED / landmines
	Crime
	Kidnapping
	Terrorist activity or action
	Gunfire / Artillery fire
	Armed clashes
	Militia-linked incidents
	Security forces operations
	Health issues / natural disaster

Main incidents of the week

	May 2nd	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 02/05, a number of workers of the Benghazi cement factory protested in Benghazi, demanding a raise in their salaries and the improvement of their work conditions.
	May 1st	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, An-Nawwaqiyah: On 01/05, a civilian was killed by an unidentified perpetrator in Benghazi's An-Nawwaqiyah area. Investigation is ongoing.
	May 1st	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 01/05, at least 11 Nigerian nationals were arrested by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi. They are accused of running a den to practice prostitution.
	May 1st	Cyrenaica, Benghazi, Bouatni: On 01/05, a civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in the Bouatni area of Benghazi. He is accused of armed robbery.
	April 30th	Cyrenaica, Al-Bayda: On 30/04, 2 civilians were arrested by security forces in Al-Bayda. They are accused of kidnapping and assault.
	April 30th	Cyrenaica, Al-Bayda: On 30/04, an explosion reportedly took place in Al-Bayda as a result of a quarrel between two civilians. No casualties were reported.
	April 29th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: On 29/04, a number of foreign nationals from African countries were arrested by security forces in Benghazi. They are accused of prostitution.
	April 27th	Cyrenaica, Benghazi: A civilian was arrested by security forces during a security operation in Benghazi on 27/04. He is accused of armed robbery and assault.
	April 26th	Cyrenaica, Al-Bayda: On 26/04, a number of civilians were arrested by security forces in Al-Bayda. They are accused of armed robbery.

Cyrenaica

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

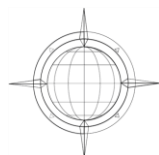


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Outlook

- **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.**



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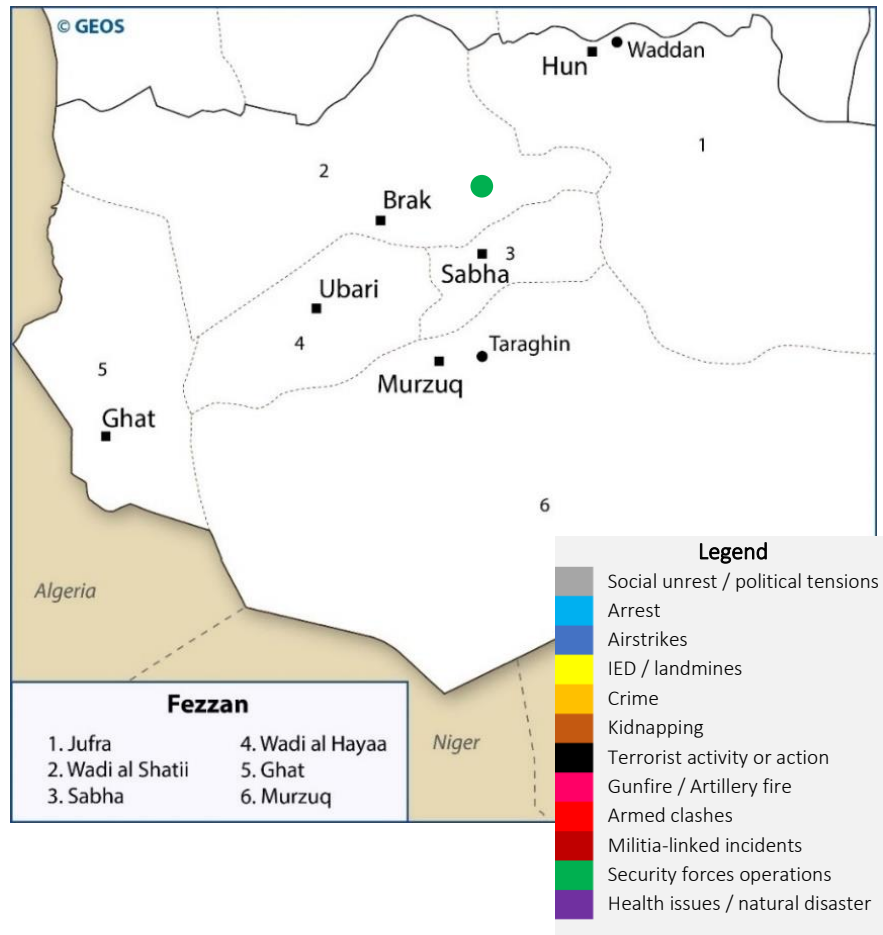
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FEZZAN

Main incidents of the week

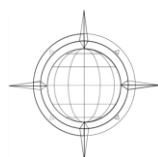
May 1st

Fezzan, Sebha: On 01/05, at least 4 civilians were arrested by security forces and LNA forces during a security operation in Sebha. They are accused of arms and drug trafficking.



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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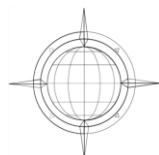
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OFFSHORE

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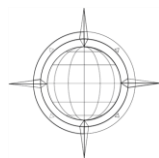
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ACRONYM LIST

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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Franklin Tower 23rd floor - CS 20093 - 100-101 Terrasse Boieldieu

92 042 La Défense Cedex - France

+33 (0) 1 77 74 15 10

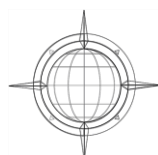
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GEOS IN LIBYA - A 12-YEAR PRESENCE



Through its permanent representation in Tripoli since 2011, GEOS supports the development of national and international institutions and companies in Libya. Based on its strong local network, knowledge of the region and expert teams, GEOS advises and supports its clients at any stage of their projects.

YOUR NEEDS	OUR SOLUTIONS
Securing your projects	Expert advice
Understanding the Libyan environment	Accurate and updated reports on the security situation
Protecting your people and assets	Skilled staff (CPOs, drivers & guards)
24/7 operational assistance	Adapted vehicles (armoured and soft skin)
Crisis assistance	Defence and protective equipment
Medical support and evacuation	Safe havens
Transportation and logistics expertise	Logistics and accommodations
	Sea, air and land solutions



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