



Intelyse



LIBYA

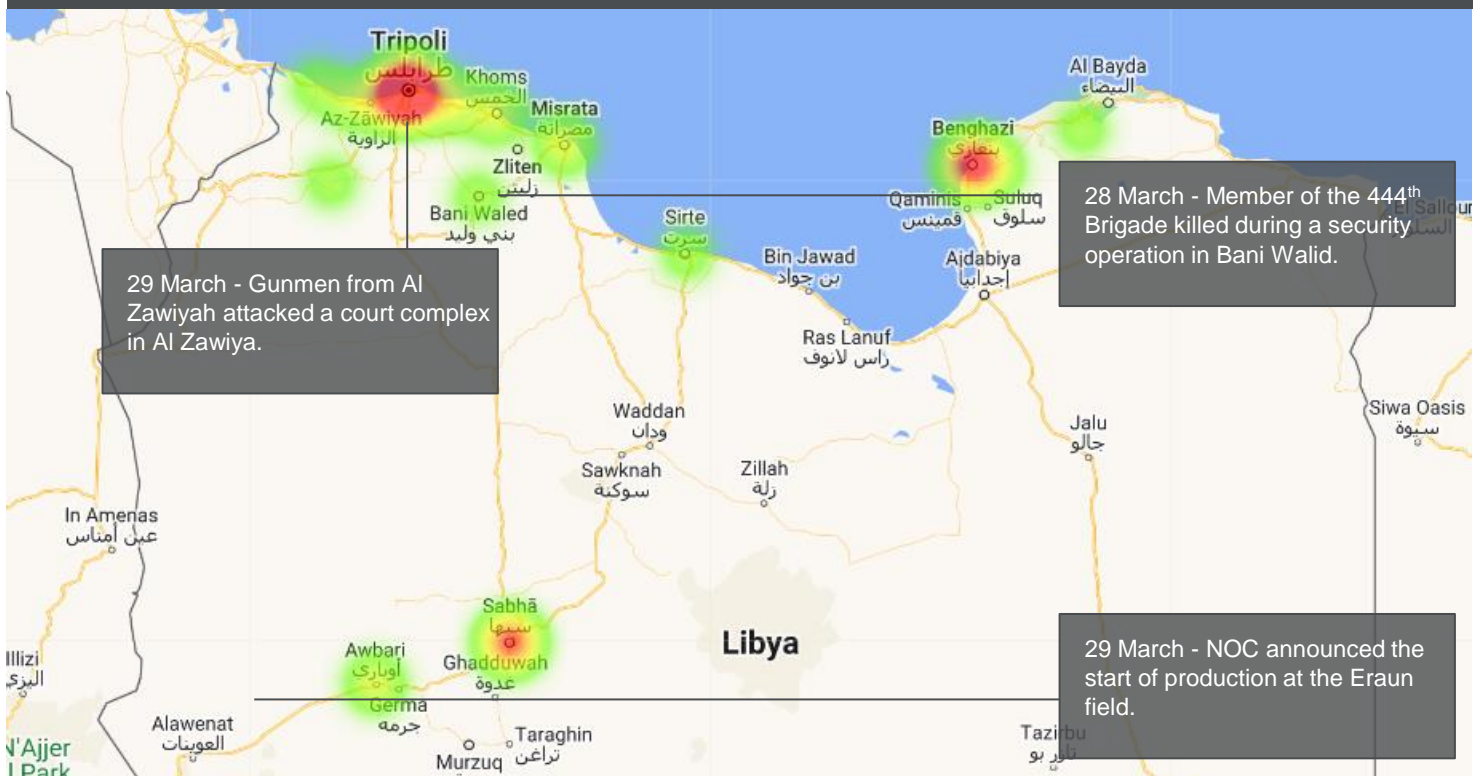
Weekly Political Stability,
Economic And Security
Threat Assessment

25-31 MARCH 2023



COUNTRYWIDE OVERVIEW

FIGURE 1: HIGHLIGHTED INCIDENTS IN LIBYA 25-31 MARCH 2023



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- On the evening of 29 March, eastern and western military leaders, members of the JMC 5+5 and UNSMIL head Bathili met at the Rixos hotel in Tripoli. This was the first official meeting in years between high-level security leaders from the whole country.
- Prominent Tripolitania-based militia leaders participated in the 29 March meeting.
- There has been a notable increase in arrests and government security operations reported in Tripoli and the surrounding areas in the past three months. This is due to the ongoing Mol security campaign and, to a lesser extent, to the absence of significant militia tensions, which causes local media to report lower-level events.
- Ongoing demolitions of old buildings in Benghazi to make space for new projects have gained attention.

OUTLOOK

- The meeting confirms that ongoing coordination between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, supported by international efforts, promotes stability at the country-wide level. East-west stability is likely to last at least until the end of 2023, with Russian-backed proxies remaining a possible spoiler.
- Their participation confirms that the initial phases of this east-west rapprochement are not just an empty diplomatic effort which excludes the real power-brokers on the ground. For them, the meeting was a stage to showcase their political influence and draw international recognition and, possibly, also a stepping stone to support even more ambitious political aspirations.
- The trend is expected to continue in the short term.
- The development is expected to allow foreign companies to enter the Libyan construction market.

COUNTRYWIDE OVERVIEW

EASTERN AND WESTERN SECURITY LEADERS MEET IN TRIPOLI

On the evening of 29 March, eastern and western military leaders, members of the JMC 5+5 and UNSMIL head Bathili met at the Rixos hotel in Tripoli. This was the first official meeting in years between high-level security leaders from the whole country. The meeting discussed ways to coordinate and secure a possible election. It was agreed to hold another meeting on an unspecified date before the end of Ramadan in Benghazi to continue the discussion.

- Eastern attendees included: LNA Chief of Staff Abdulrazak Al Nadori, GNS Interior Ministry Undersecretary Faraj Qaim, Director of Khalifa Haftar's office Khairy Al Tamimi, 128th Brigade commander Hassan Maatouq Al Zadma, TBZ commander Omar Marajeh, and JMC 5+5 members Marajeh Al Amami, Mahdi Al Sharif and Basem Al Buaishi.
- Western attendees included: GNU Interior Minister Emad Trabelsi, SSA leader Ghneiwa Al Kikli, 52nd Infantry Brigade commander Mahmoud Bin Rajab, 444th Brigade commander Mahmoud Hamza, Counter-Terrorism force commander Mukhtar Al Jahawi, 310st Infantry Battalion Abdulsalam Al Zoubi, ad Joint Operations Force commander Omar Bogdada.

The meeting confirms previous analysis:

- The ongoing coordination between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, supported by international efforts, promotes stability at the country-wide level. East-west stability is likely to last at least until the end of 2023, with Russian-backed proxies being a possible spoiler (see 10 February Weekly Threat Assessment).

Scheduling an election before the end of 2023 would be a trigger for a disruption of the status quo, with likely destabilizing effects on the east-west balance and possible effects on militia balances in Tripoli. The status quo can only last until all stakeholders know their positions of power are not at risk.

- Tripoli-based militias understand the red lines they cannot cross (see 24 March Weekly Threat Assessment). If this was not true, the delegation from Cyrenaica would have not come to Tripoli. As already stated, this is also a strong indication that significant violent escalations between militias in Tripoli remain unlikely at least until the end of Q2 2023.

The participation of prominent militia leaders at the meeting confirms that the initial phases of this east-west rapprochement are genuine, as opposed to being an empty diplomatic effort which excludes the real power-brokers on the ground. Foreign pressure is key to maintain the momentum (see 10 February Weekly Threat Assessment).

Tripoli-based militias managed to use the meeting as a photo op from which to draw legitimacy and international recognition. The meeting was a stage to showcase their increased political influence and, possibly, a stepping stone to support even more ambitious political aspirations, following the same path of Mol Trabelsi.

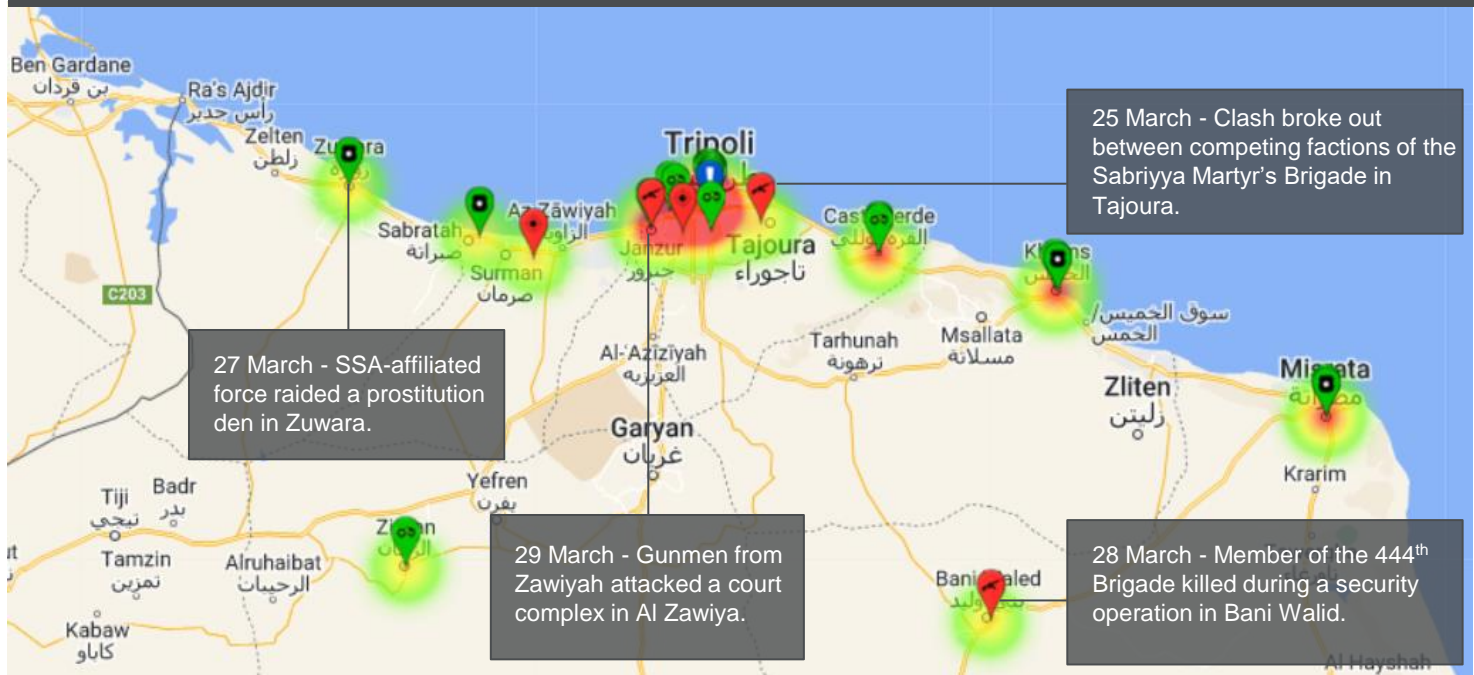
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

At the international level, Turkish presidential spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin on 26 March claimed that the steady development of Turkish-Egyptian relations will benefit Libya and the entire region. The statements follow Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu's visit to Cairo on the previous week, in which he reassured his Egyptian counterpart that Turkey and Egypt "do not compete in the Libyan arena."

The Turkish-Egyptian rapprochement is a further positive step for countrywide stability in Libya throughout 2023. However, it does not necessarily have a significant impact on the Libyan political process, because key Libya stakeholders want to retain their power regardless of how Turkish-Egyptian bilateral relations develop. It also does not look likely that Turkey and Egypt would jeopardize the leverage they have on their respective Libyan proxies by risking to lose them because of an election.

TRIPOLITANIA

FIGURE 2: HIGHLIGHTED INCIDENTS IN TRIPOLI, 25-31 MARCH 2023



SECURITY UPDATES FROM TRIPOLITANIA

The security environment in Tripolitania remained stable over the past week. Intelyse recorded low-impact clashes due to petty disputes which are unlikely to escalate significantly over the coming weeks:

- 25 March - Internal fighting broke out between competing units of the Sabriyya Martyr's (Lions) Brigade in Bir Al Usta Milad, Tajoura. The clash was caused by competition over control of one of their camps in the area. Multiple clashes were recorded in Bir Al Usta Milad in the past weeks, but they always remained localized. The area is about 5-7km from Mitiga airport, meaning that flight disruptions are unlikely unless there is a significant escalation in the intensity of the clashes.
- 28 March - A member of the 444th Brigade was killed during a security operation in Bani Walid, when members of a criminal gang tried to resist arrest. The 444th Brigade remain engaged in continued counter-crime activities in the area.
- 29 March - A clash broke out in Janzour after an armed group from Al Zawiya attempted to break a prisoner out from court custody. Armed guards at the court repelled the attack and managed to arrest one of the attackers.

UPTICK IN LOW-LEVEL SECURITY OPERATIONS IN TRIPOLITANIA

A notable increase in arrests and government security operations has been reported in Tripoli and the surrounding areas in the past three months (see Figure 3).

The main reason for this is the Mol security campaign launched into the Tripoli area.

The campaign resulted in arrests of wanted individuals and numerous retrievals of stolen vehicles. The trend is expected to continue in the short term. To a lesser extent, the increase in reported arrests and security operations might be due to local media reporting low-level events more often due to the absence of significant militia tensions.

FIGURE 3: SELECTED INCIDENTS IN TRIPOLITANIA, 22 JANUARY – 31 MARCH 2023

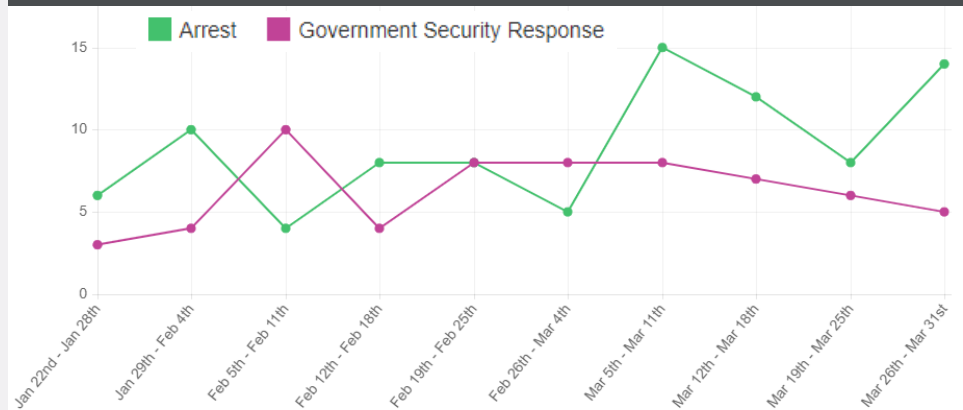
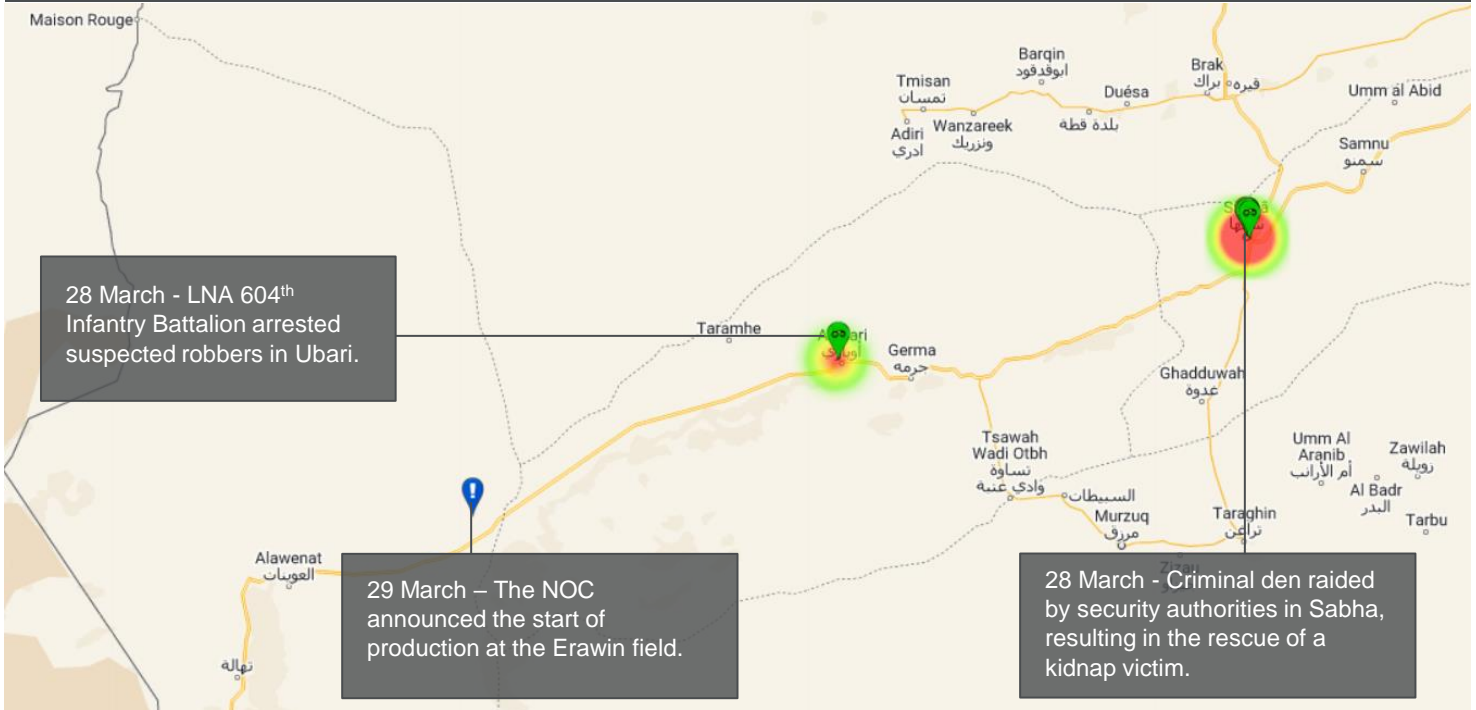


FIGURE 4: HIGHLIGHTED INCIDENTS IN FEZZAN, 25-31 MARCH 2023



IAEA VISIT IN SOUTHERN LIBYA

On 24 March, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that most of the natural uranium ore concentrate (UOC) that was previously reported missing was found at the same site. The IAEA added that, although a small amount of uranium is still missing, it is less than the quantity needed to make a nuclear bomb. Following the IAEA inspection, it was agreed to assign more guards to secure the undisclosed site.

GENERAL UPDATE ON THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN FEZZAN

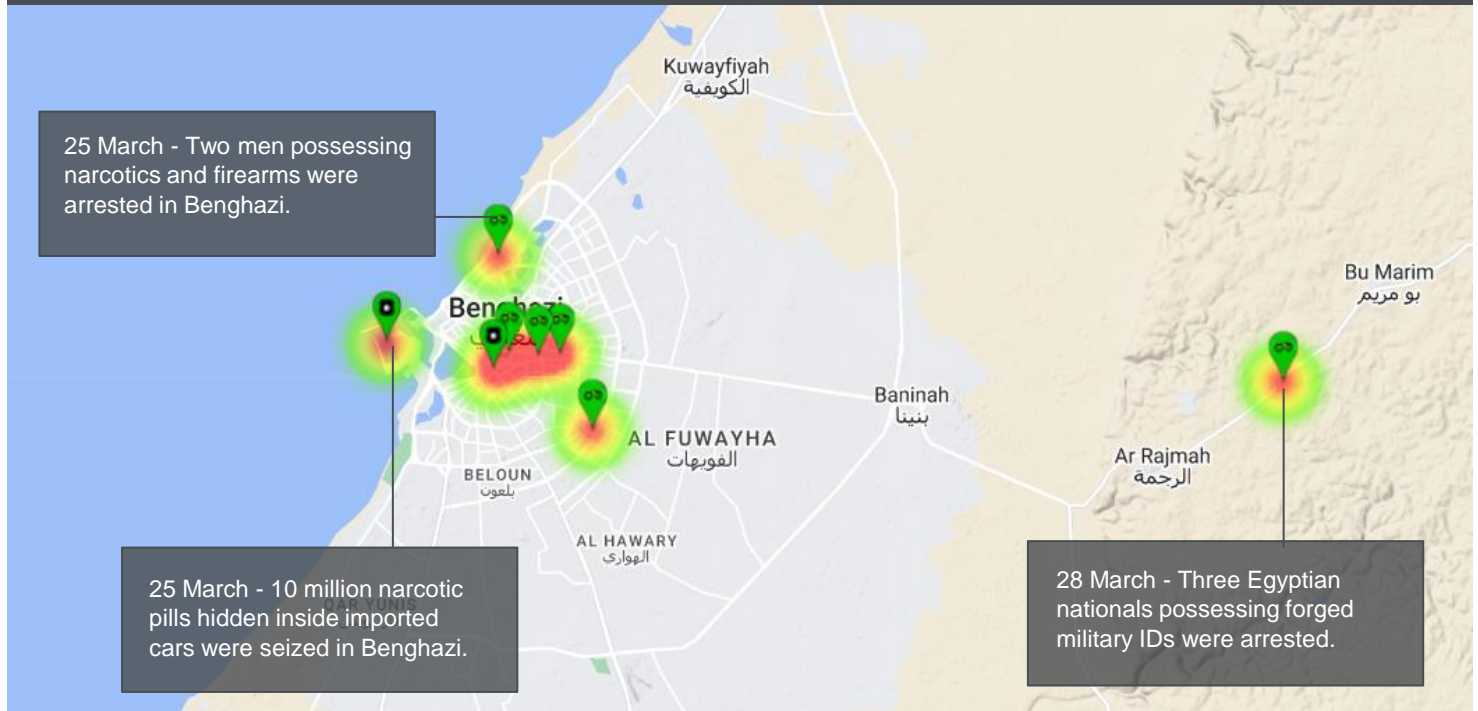
No significant security developments occurred in Fezzan during the reporting period. Arrests of wanted individuals and raids on criminal dens are part of the usual activities of the LNA and its affiliated forces in the region.

The LNA 166th Battalion, which has a strong presence in Fezzan, has been elevated to the status of a Brigade. The Brigade will be under the command of Ahmed Al Tabouli Al Warfalli. The LNA will continue to expand its control and influence in the region.

START OF PRODUCTION AT THE ERAWIN FIELD ANNOUNCED

On 29 March, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced the start of production at the Erawin field, about 40 km northwest of Alawenat. The production rate is 3,000 barrels per day (bpd) and is expected to increase to 16,000 bpd once the field is fully operational. The development comes amid ongoing efforts to avoid oil disruptions in Libya (see 17 March Weekly Threat Assessment) and increase oil production.

FIGURE 5: HIGHLIGHTED INCIDENTS IN CYRENAICA, 25-31 MARCH 2023



ONGOING WAVE OF DEMOLITIONS IN BENGHAZI LEAVES QUESTIONS, BUT GENERATES BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The ongoing wave of demolitions of historical buildings and other sites in Benghazi is gaining attention. Demolitions are occurring to make space for new construction projects, but even locals in Benghazi struggle to understand what the projects behind the demolitions are, who sanctioned them, and who is paying for them.

It can be assumed that the Military Investment Authority, tightly controlled by the Haftar family, would be at least involved in the projects.

Intelyse sources also reported the interest of American and Japanese companies to enter the Libyan construction market via Benghazi. It is possible that companies from other countries, including Turkey and Egypt, share the same interest.

US business engagement in Benghazi occurs in the context increased US interest in Libya, as recorded in the last few months, both at the political and commercial level.

Some examples from the last quarter include:

- The GNU awarding new construction contracts to US companies in Tripoli.
- Expected energy contracts to be awarded to US companies amounting to USD 1.4 billion, for the reopening of Al Dhara oilfield and the construction of a refinery in Fezzan.

GENERAL SECURITY SITUATION IN CYRENAICA REMAINS STABLE

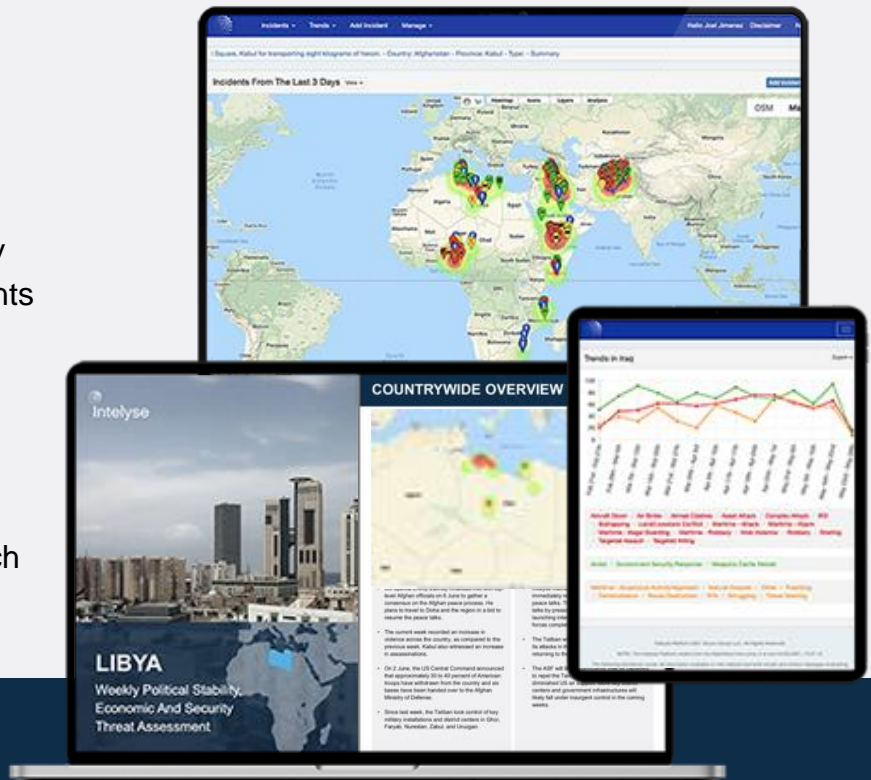
The security situation in Benghazi and the rest of eastern Libya remains stable. In Benghazi, several low-level arrests were reported (see Figure 5). The arrests are the result of the joint operations by the GNS Mol and the LNA to maintain stability and security in the region. The arrests targeted several foreign workers for failing to provide their identification and work permits, wanted individuals, individuals possessing narcotics and unlicensed weapons, and a group of Egyptians using forged military IDs to move freely around the country.

INFORMATION AND ADVISORY SERVICES

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Clients choose Intelyse to get in-depth situational awareness from an accessible and reliable source who truly understands the complexity of the environments in which people operate.



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