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LIBYA

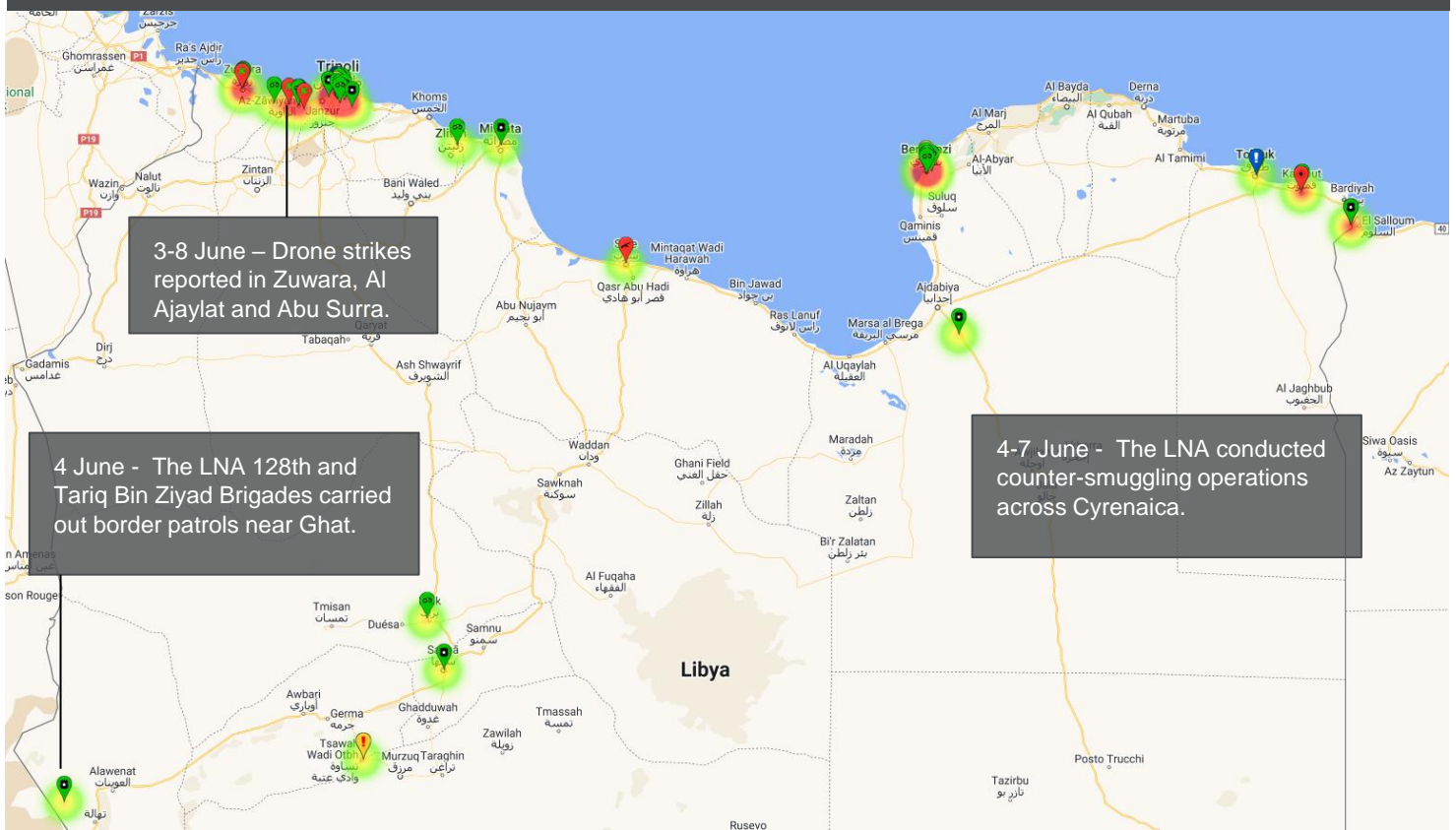
Weekly Political Stability,
Economic And Security
Threat Assessment

03-09 MAY 2022



COUNTRYWIDE OVERVIEW

FIGURE 1: INCIDENT ACTIVITY IN LIBYA, 3-9 JUNE 2023



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- After announcing a press conference on 5 June to reveal an alleged deal on the electoral laws, the HoR-HCS 6+6 Committee has gone silent. The rumors say it is still arguing on the possibility for dual citizens to run.
- GNU PM Dbeiba visited Rome and met with Italian PM Giorgia Meloni. The two signed several memoranda of understanding.
- On the evening of 5 June, the Public Prosecutor Siddiq Al Sour met with Western Military Region commander Salahuddin Al Namroush, 52nd Infantry Brigade commander Mahmoud Bin Rajab and Mol and MoD officials. Al Sour mandated to form a security unit to investigate violations committed in Zawiyah.
- As anticipated, the LNA wants to match the crackdown on smugglers and crime implemented by the GNU, to take credit for it.

OUTLOOK

- Page 4 presents four scenarios on the possible outcomes of the Committee's work and the Libyan political process.
- The Italian government is tacitly keen on preserving Libyan political stability (namely supporting Dbeiba while the GNU remains in place) in exchange for genuine cooperation on the illegal migration issue, as are the UK, the US and Turkey. There are preconditions for Dbeiba to remain in charge, if he manages militias and public opinion effectively.
- It is unlikely that such violations are those potentially committed by the GNU in carrying out airstrikes, given the attendees of the meeting. The security unit might actually be tasked with collecting information on militia violations against citizens in Zawiyah, to further crack down on anti-GNU militias.
- Such operations will work to allay international concerns for illegal migration, and local concerns about the LNA not doing as much as the GNU to crack down on smuggling.

COUNTRYWIDE OVERVIEW

PROSPECTS ON THE WORK OF THE HoR-HCS 6+6 COMMITTEE

After announcing a press conference on 5 June to reveal an alleged deal on the electoral laws, the HoR-HCS 6+6 Committee has gone silent. The rumors say it is still arguing on the possibility for dual citizens to run. In the current situation, there are four scenarios relating to the outcomes of the Committee's work, and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive:

- **Likely:** The Committee fails to achieve any result, but the détente between Haftar and Dbeiba continues and the status quo is maintained. In this scenario, an election would be unlikely and Libya would likely remain split but stable under Haftar and Dbeiba. Aqila Saleh and Khaled al Mishri would be either coopted by Haftar and Dbeiba, or replaced with loyalists.
- **Medium Likelihood:** The Committee fails to achieve any result, but a new deal or power arrangement is found between Haftar and Dbeiba. The new arrangement might or might not involve an election, but Aqila Saleh and Khaled al Mishri would be either coopted by Haftar and Dbeiba, or replaced with loyalists.
- **Medium Likelihood:** The Committee fails to achieve any result, and UNSMIL starts a new process. In this case, UNSMIL's process would have very limited chances of success, because Libyan and international stakeholders would have very low confidence in it.
- **Unlikely:** The Committee finally agrees on an electoral law, and UNSMIL tries to maintain the momentum in Libya and internationally to organize elections in the next 12 months. This scenario has some caveats:
 - Even if the Committee genuinely finalizes a deal, it should not be assumed that the deal would necessarily result in the scheduling of an election.
 - Even if the election is scheduled, it should not be assumed that it will be held, and that its results will be accepted by the losers.

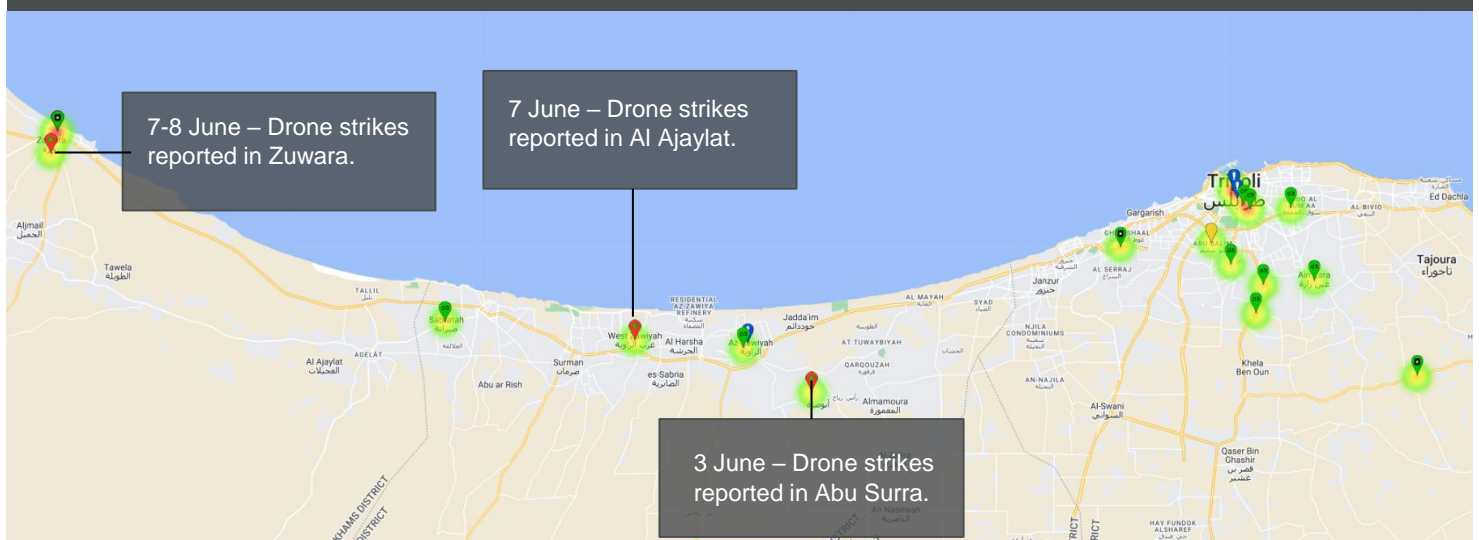
DBEIBA VISITS ROME, ITALIAN-GNU RELATIONS GROW STRONGER

On 7-8 June, GNU PM Dbeiba visited Rome and met with Italian PM Giorgia Meloni. The two signed several memoranda of understanding to expand cooperation in the oil and gas field, in the Mediterranean and Ghadames basins. To recall, Italy and the GNU had already signed a USD 8 billion energy deal in 2023. Other agreements were also signed, covering immigration, border protection and the construction and maintenance of water and sewage treatment plants. Meloni and Dbeiba also discussed lifting the air embargo on Libyan civil aviation flights in Italy, and agreed to set a deadline for that. This would allow the resumption of direct flights between Libya and Italy. Giorgia Meloni reiterated that political stability in Libya and reducing illegal migration towards the EU are among Italy's priorities.

Meloni's last statement summarizes the approach that her government has been taking on Libya since she took office. Reading between the lines, she hinted that the Italian government is tacitly keen on preserving Libyan political stability (namely supporting Dbeiba while the GNU remains in place) in exchange for genuine cooperation on the illegal migration file. Signing new business agreements sweetens the deal for both parties. It should be noted that, since 25 May, the GNU has been conducting a drone strike campaign targeting the assets of smuggling networks established on the Tripolitania coast. Weeks prior, Meloni had also met Khalifa Haftar, stressing the same concerns and receiving reassurances.

Regarding Dbeiba, he is seen as a reliable partner by most Western governments, including the US and the UK, in addition to Italy and Turkey. Every foreign stakeholder is aware that implementing elections might jeopardize the current stability in Libya, and there is no appetite for this. Dbeiba takes advantage of this and makes political or business-related concessions in exchange for foreign political support. These are the preconditions for Dbeiba to remain in charge, if he manages militias and public opinion effectively.

FIGURE 2: INCIDENT ACTIVITY IN TRIPOLITANIA, 3-9 JUNE 2023



AL FAR ARRESTED THREE SALAFISTS

On Sunday, the Al Far militia arrested three Salafist men who used to gather young people and give them religious lectures in Zawiyah. This episode might be linked to the simmering tensions between religious authorities in Tripoli, which sees the Salafist-leaning General Authority for Endowments at odds with the Dar Al Ifta, supported by PM Dbeiba. The identities of the three men who were arrested are unclear; if they are close to any militia, their arrest might result in tensions.

UPDATES ON SECURITY SITUATION IN ZAWIYAH

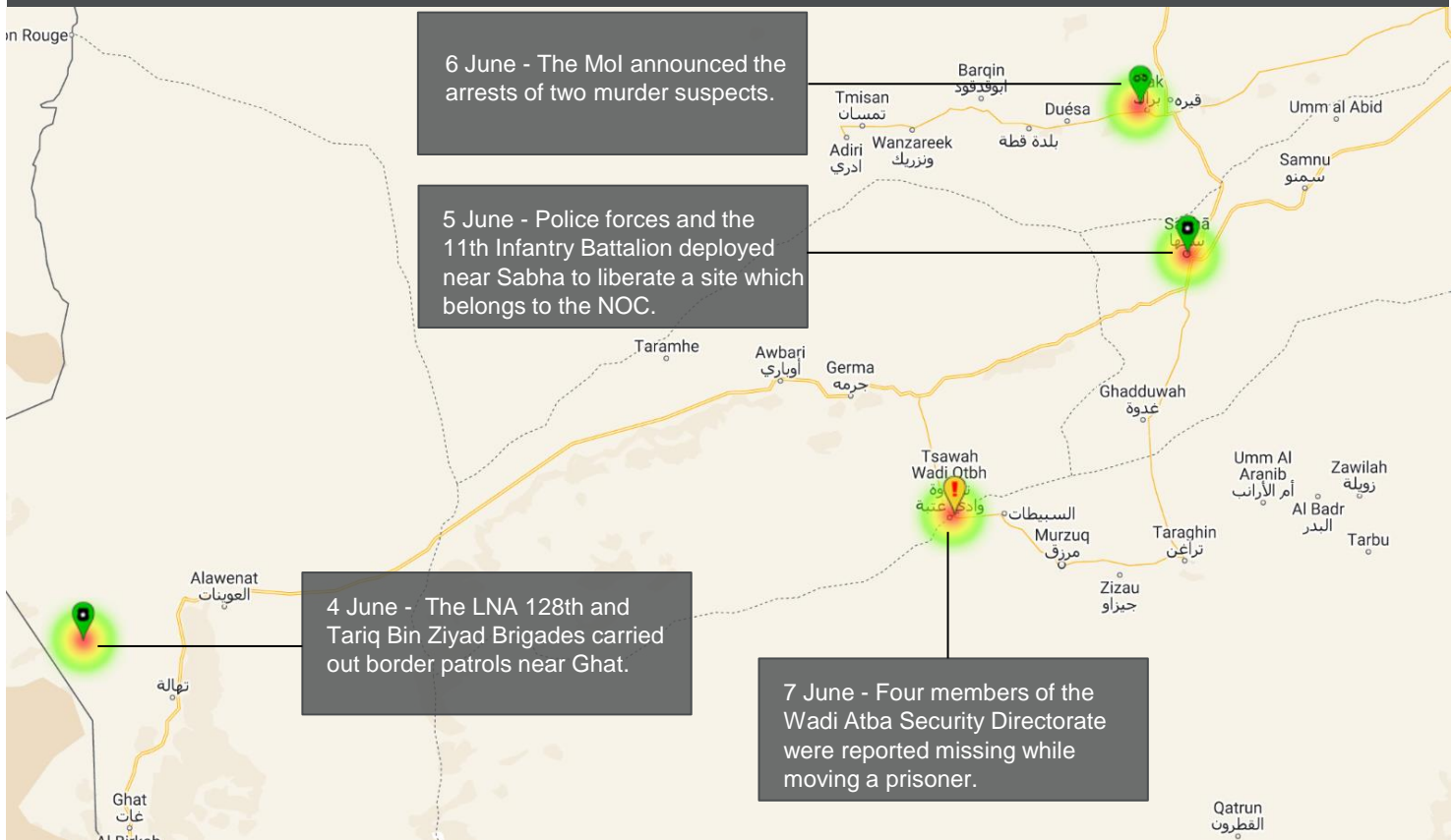
On the evening of 5 June, the Public Prosecutor Siddiq Al Sour met with Western Military Region commander Salahuddin Al Namroush, 52nd Infantry Brigade commander Mahmoud Bin Rajab and MoI and MoD officials. Al Sour mandated to form a security unit to investigate violations committed in Zawiyah. Sources did not specify which violations Al Sour referred to, but it is unlikely that such violations are those potentially committed by the GNU in carrying out airstrikes, given the attendees of the meeting.

The security unit might actually be tasked with collecting information on militia violations against citizens in Zawiyah, to further crack down on anti-GNU militias. At the same time, in this way, the GNU might be trying to rebuild its image in Zawiyah after the local discontent caused by the drone strikes. This would support previous analysis saying that the airstrikes are a long-term deterrent for militias, and that in the short term the GNU will try to rebuild its support base in the city by awarding benefits (see 2 June Weekly Threat Assessment) and prosecuting those responsible for violations against civilians.

Unconfirmed sources also reported another possible upcoming meeting between Zawiyah-based militia leader Hassan Abuzreiba, whose property was targeted in the recent drone strikes; GNU military Chief of Staff Mohammed Al Haddad; the commander of the Western Military Region Salahuddin Al Namroush; GNU-aligned, Zawiyah-based militia leader Al Far; and GNU Public Prosecutor Siddiq Al Sour. The unconfirmed reports say that the goal of the GNU is to obtain the lists of members of Zawiyah-based SSA militiamen in exchange for a halt in airstrikes. The information remains unconfirmed and might have been spread to cause divisions in Tripoli and between GNU and SSA.

If the above is confirmed, it might strain the relations between the GNU and Tripoli-based SSA leader Ghneiwa Al Kikli. Ghneiwa will not openly antagonize the GNU, because at this stage it would mean raising tensions with Rada. Ghneiwa is also likely benefiting from his alignment with the GNU.

FIGURE 3: INCIDENT ACTIVITY IN FEZZAN, 3-9 JUNE 2023



SECURITY PATROLS IN THE BORDER AREAS

Sources reported large patrols of the LNA 128th Brigade in areas around Ghat, Ubari, Tamanhint and Samnu, in western Fezzan, on 8 and 9 June. These are regular security operations to monitor the border areas and crack down on smuggling and crime.

In late 2022, significant unrest has occurred in the Sabha area, triggered by an incident related to fuel smuggling. Now that the GNU is cracking down on fuel and human smuggling networks in Tripolitania, the LNA wants to show that it is also involved in fighting the phenomenon of smuggling and protecting citizens from it in its areas of control. The LNA does not want to be seen to be doing less than the GNU, because part of its legitimacy is built on the idea that the LNA is a reliable security provider.

An additional explanation for the patrols might be that on 7 June, four members of the Wadi Atba Security Directorate were reported missing while transferring a prisoner. The LNA deployments might therefore also be, at least partially, a search operation to find the missing LNA personnel.

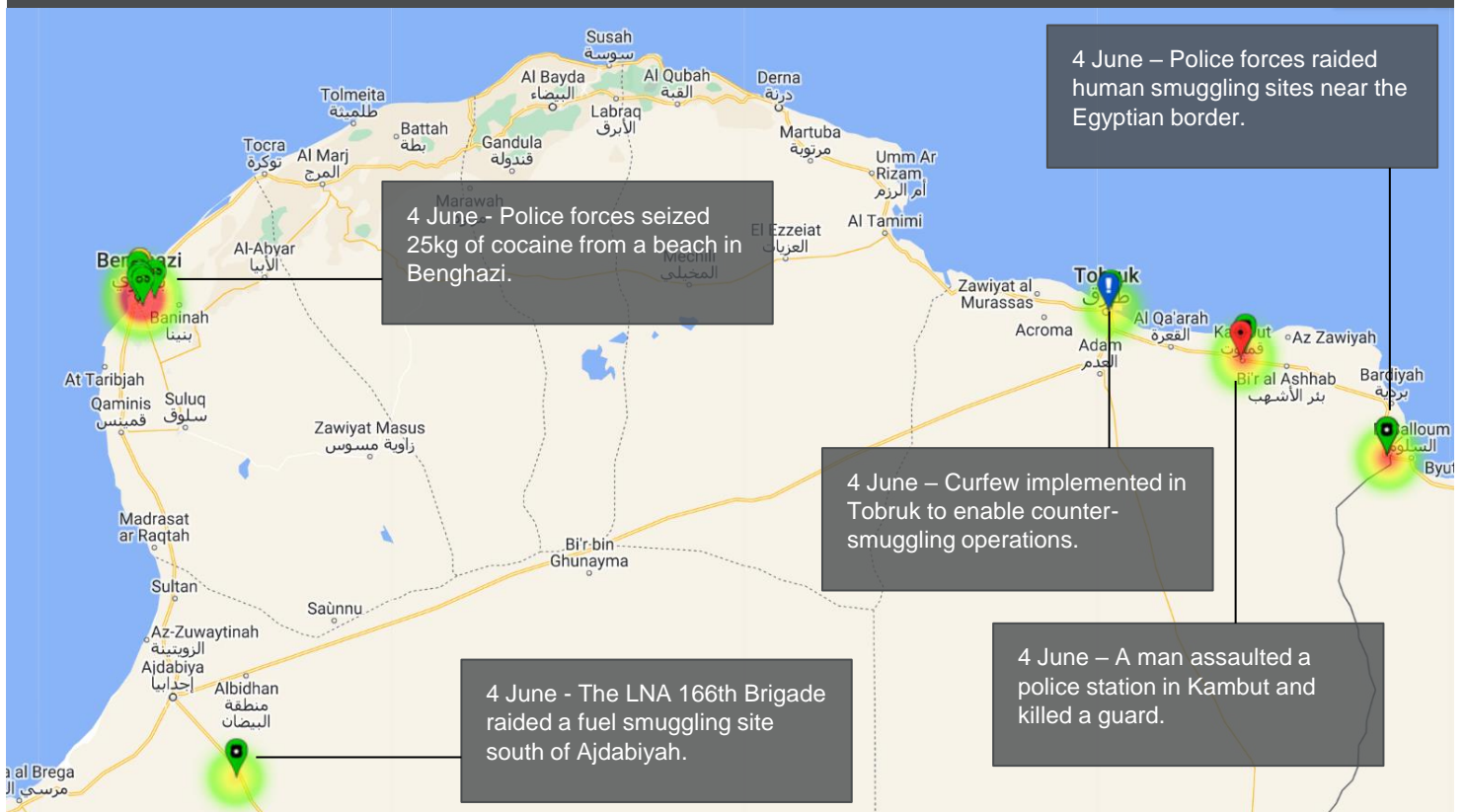
SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN FEZZAN REMAINS UNCHANGED

No significant deviations from normal security trends were reported in Fezzan in the last week. The region remains affected by a security vacuum and widespread crime. There is no indication of significant tribal tensions.

During the summer, the likelihood of protests due to electricity blackouts will increase across the whole country, and especially in Fezzan. Authorities in Tripoli and Benghazi will be blamed for the blackouts and asked for solutions.

The protests are unlikely to turn violent; however, authorities might respond to prolonged protests harshly, with the risk of fueling more unrest.

FIGURE 4: INCIDENT ACTIVITY IN CYRENAICA, 3-9 JUNE 2023



LNA FOLLOWS SUIT AND CRACKS DOWN ON SMUGGLING NETWORKS

As anticipated, the LNA wants to match the crackdown on smugglers and crime implemented by the GNU, to take credit for it. This is due to two main causes:

- The LNA wants to show that it cares about the problems caused to the local population by smuggling just like the GNU, to preserve its popularity over the GNU.
- The LNA was pressured by European countries to crack down on illegal migration during recent meetings. The greatest share of migrants leaving Libya to directly reach Europe departs from Cyrenaica, not Tripolitania. Those who depart from Tripolitania pass via Tunisia before reaching Italy.

Below is a summary of recent counter-smuggling activities implemented in Cyrenaica in the last week:

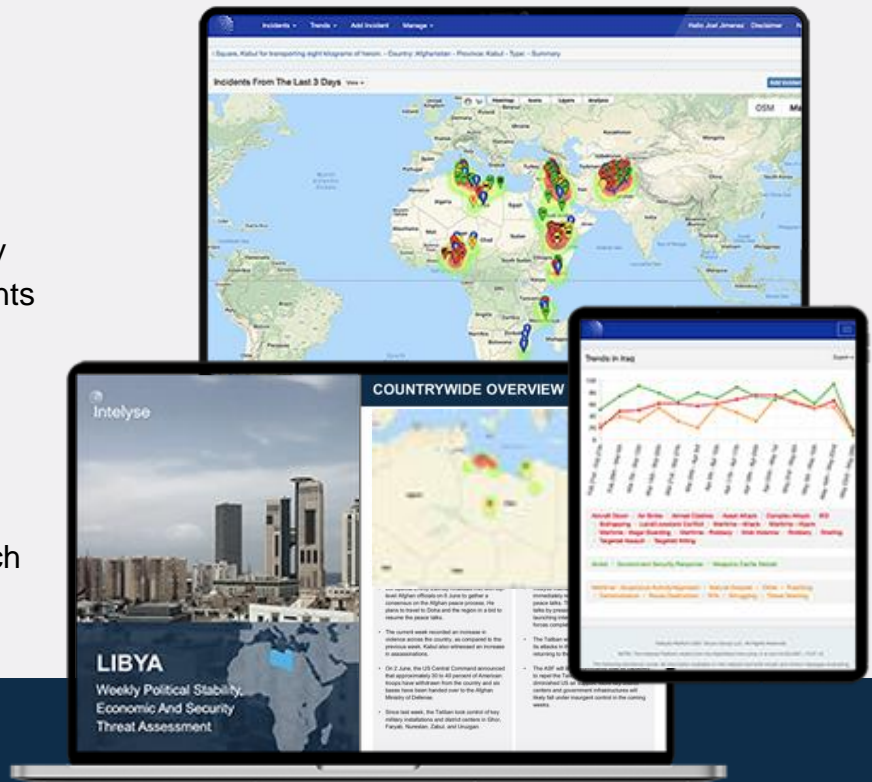
- In Tobruk, authorities implemented a curfew from 2000hrs to 0600hrs to enable the security operations. The curfew reportedly concluded on 8 June.
- LNA forces have been conducting security raids in the Kambut area, east of Tobruk, targeting illegal migration warehouses, a port and an illegal fuel station used by human smugglers.
 - This provides possible context to an episode which occurred on 4 June in Kambut, when a man attacked the local police station. The attack resulted in the killing of a security guard.
 - The raids resulted in 2,000-4,000 Egyptian illegal residents being sent back to Egypt. According to local sources, the Egyptians were taken 2km from the border by Libyan authorities, and then walked back into Egypt. Security operations near the Egyptian border also resulted in armed skirmishes with smugglers.
- The LNA 166th Brigade raided a fuel smuggling site south of Ajdabiyah.
- The LNA seized 25 kg of cocaine ready to be smuggled to Europe from a beach in Benghazi.

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