

Libya

Year Review

2020

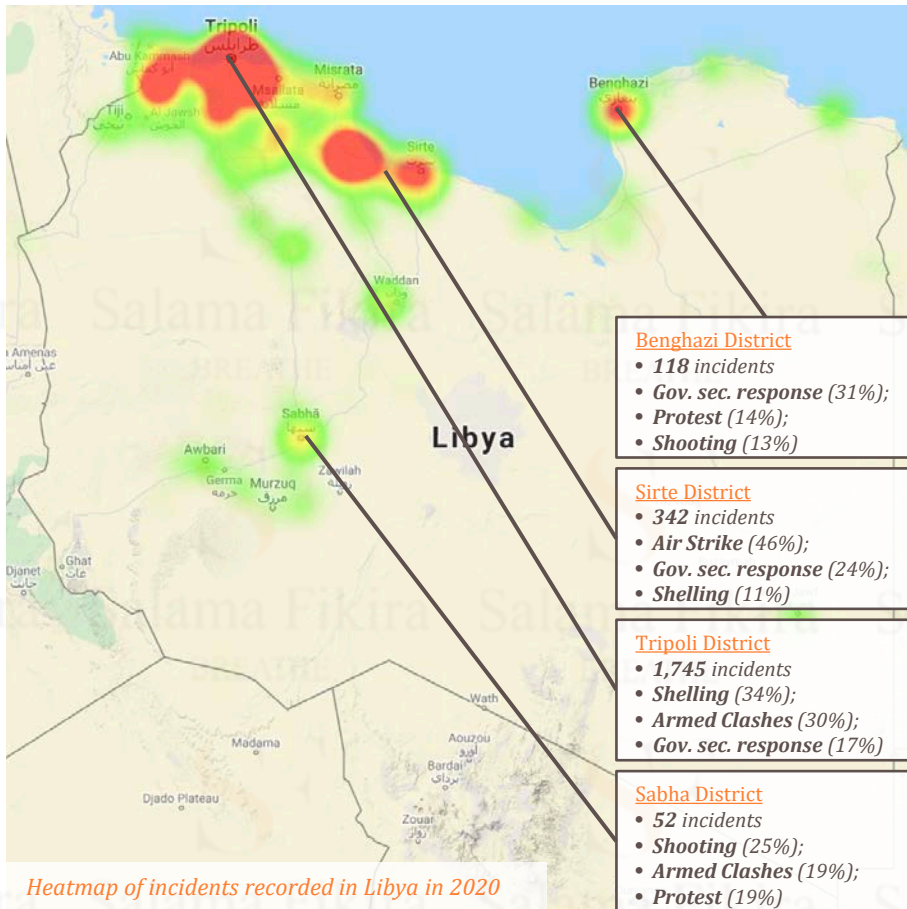


SF Breathe is a personal and executive travel security solution that delivers vital information and peace of mind whilst travelling within challenging environments.



This report is private and confidential and intended for the addressee only. It is provided for information purposes only and does not constitute professional advice. Professional advice should be obtained before taking or refraining from any action as a result of the contents of this report. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information within the report but Salama Fikira can take no responsibility for inaccuracies of fact or deduction. All images are subject to copyright.

Overview – Countrywide



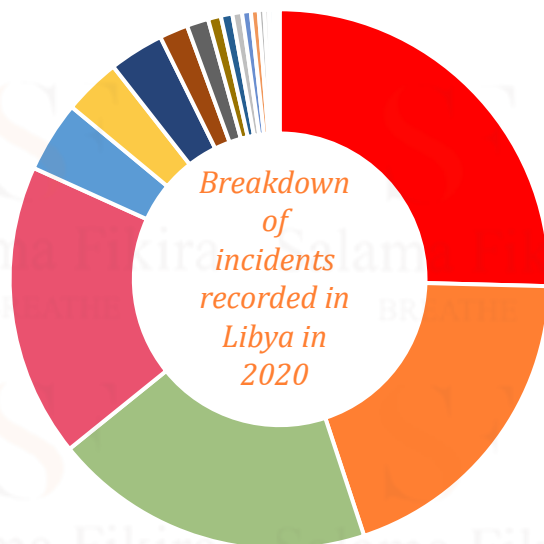
Heatmap of incidents recorded in Libya in 2020

Key figures

- **3,660** – Total number of security-related incidents recorded countrywide
- **1** – Total number of catastrophic events of international significance
- **21** – Total number of incidents related to Islamic State
- **1,745** – Highest number of incidents recorded in a single District (Tripoli)
- **55** – Most incidents recorded on a single day (29th March)

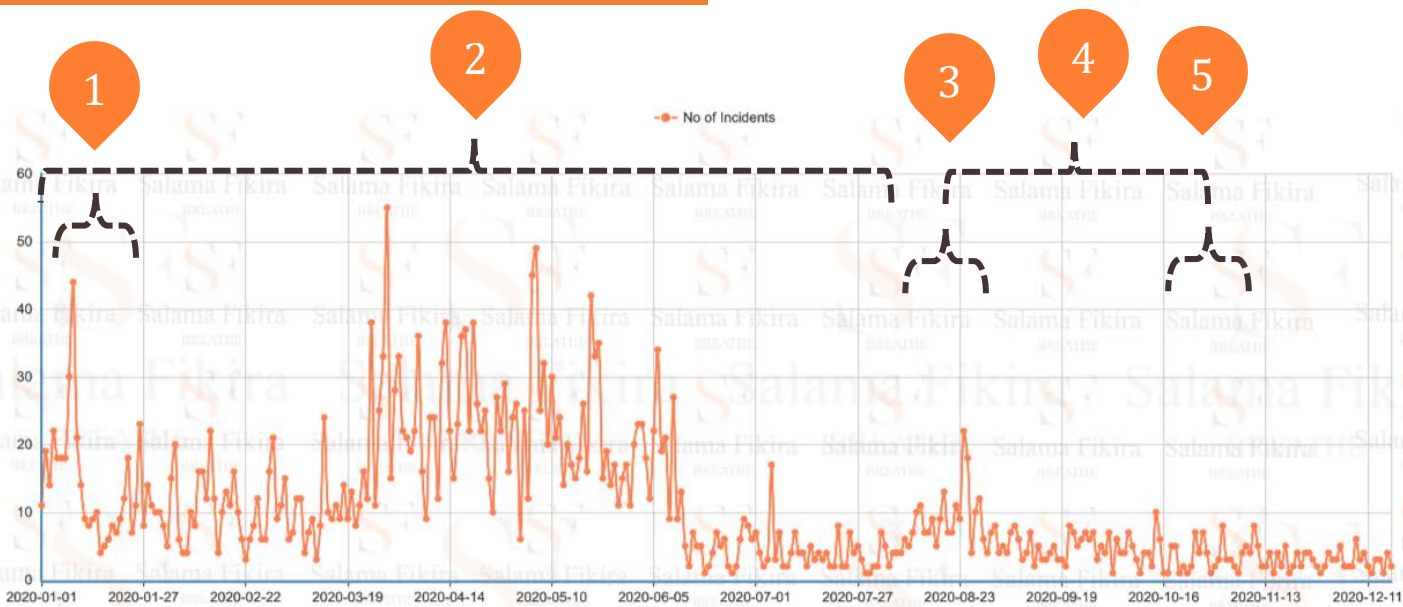
Overview – Incident Patterns

■ Air Strike (921)	■ Shelling (708)
■ Armed Clashes (698)	■ Government Security Response (637)
■ Shooting (154)	■ Protest (124)
■ Other (119)	■ Killing (62)
■ Criminal activity (47)	■ Armed Attack (28)
■ Kidnapping (25)	■ Smuggling (21)
■ Threat Warning (19)	■ Assassination (17)
■ Natural Disaster (12)	■ Rebel Activity (10)
■ Riot (9)	■ IED (7)
■ Human Trafficking (7)	



- Spatial Patterns** – The majority of Districts in Libya experienced an uptick in security-related incidents in 2020 as a result of escalating conflict between rival pro-Government of National Accord (GNA) and Libyan National Army (LNA) forces during the first half of the year. Similarly to 2019, Tripoli District witnessed the majority of security-related incidents nationwide in 2020 (1,745), marking an eight per cent decrease in incidents in the capital in contrast to the year prior, however.
- Temporal Patterns** – Security-related incidents were most frequent in Q1 and Q2 of 2020 as conflict continued to rage between pro-GNA and LNA until the August 2020 ceasefire.
- Tactical Patterns** – Civil unrest markedly increased in 2020 in comparison to 2019 (+54%) resulting from a weakening ‘rally ‘round the flag effect’ following the August 2020 cessation of conflict on the Sirte-Al Jufrah axis. The application of varied forms of IEDs by threat actors fell substantially from 2019 (-46%) as Islamist insurgent groups continued to lose sway across the country. Activity involving insurgents fell (-53%) in 2020. Kidnappings also decreased in frequency (-31%) while assassination numbers remained relatively constant. Incidents involving killings increased by 24 per cent in 2020, prompted, in part, by the discovery of mass grave sites in Tarhunah after pro-GNA forces repelled the LNA’s Tripoli offensive as well as heightened migrant deaths on the Central Mediterranean thoroughfare.

Overview – Timeline 2020



Timeline of incidents recorded in Libya in 2020

- 1 – **January** – Turkey deploys forces to Libya on 05th January while the Libyan National Army (LNA) capture Sirte on 06th January
- 2 – **January-August** – Conflict between pro-Government of National Accord (GNA) forces and the LNA continues to rage with noticeable intensity between March and June
- 3 – **21st August** – GNA and House of Representatives (HoR) commit to ceasefire in separate statements
- 4 – **August-October** – Escalation in nationwide civil unrest as Libyans stage protests and riots denouncing living conditions and government corruption
- 5 – **23rd October** – 5+5 Joint Military Commission representatives sign permanent ceasefire at United Nations (UN) headquarters in Geneva

Commentary – Security

Reaching a ceasefire

Libya entered 2020 in a state of civil war, with the Libyan National Army (LNA) continuing its offensive on Tripoli, prompting Turkey to dispatch an intervention force in support of pro-Government of National Accord (GNA) fighters on 05th January that would significantly change facts on the ground. Amidst high-intensity conflict between warring Western and Eastern-based factions, the country faced a new threat. On 14th December, the head of the Presidential Council (PC) Fayeze al Sarraj declared a State of Emergency in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak before the GNA confirmed its first COVID-19 case ten days later. By the 31st December, Libya had confirmed a total of 100,744 cases of COVID-19 and 1,487 fatalities.

In Q1 and Q2, warfare dominated Libya's threat landscape while criminal activity in the form of armed robberies, killings and smuggling of illicit commodities continued in the background. A number of air strikes, shelling attacks and armed clashes were reported nationwide that caused substantial loss of life among fighters and civilians alike in Western districts and the Sirte-Al Jufrah axis. The most fatal incident occurred at the onset of the reporting period on 04th January when an LNA aircraft carried out an airstrike targeting pro-GNA forces' positions at Al Tikbali Camp in Salah al Din, Ain Zara, Tripoli District. At least 30 individuals, identified as military cadets, were killed and another 21 wounded as a result of the airstrike. Infrastructure with strategic importance for rival forces' war efforts was also targeted, including Tripoli's Mitiga International Airport (MJI) and Al Waityah Airbase.

By mid-May, GNA forces backed by Turkish offensive air assets had begun to successfully force LNA forces as well as LNA-aligned mercenary fighters, including Russian Wagner private military contractors (PMCs), to withdraw towards the Sirte-Al Jufrah axis.

Terrorism

Security forces continued to apply pressure on Islamist insurgent groups throughout 2020 in the

form of counter-terrorism (CT) operations. CT raids were conducted by pro-GNA forces in the outskirts of Tripoli and in Al Khoms on 18th October. At least four suspected militants, including Libyan and foreign nationals, were detained in the operations in possession of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). On 01st September, one of Libya's four IED attacks in 2020 occurred in the Duran al Ghiran area of Tripoli, when an unidentified suicide bomber on board a motorcycle detonated his device.

Violence against civilians

The remnants of war rapidly emerged across recaptured GNA territory from May onwards, most explicitly in Tarhunah where hundreds of bodies were recovered from mass grave sites, believed to have been allegedly extrajudicially killed by occupying LNA forces. Furthermore, a substantial number of civilians were killed and injured in Tripolitania from unexploded ordnance (UXOs) in the months following the LNA's retreat. Throughout the reporting period, moreover, kidnappings and assassinations were reported nationwide. Most noticeably, on 10th November, an outspoken critic of human rights abuses in Cyrenaica Region, Hanan al Barassi, was shot and killed in her car in Benghazi on one of Benghazi's main high streets in broad daylight. Libya continues to represent a high threat environment for foreign nationals as well as activists. On the same day, several foreign workers in two vehicles were reportedly kidnapped in Ash Shwayrif, Al Jabal al Gharbi District, with one being shot and killed in the incident.

Finally, as the conflict subsided following the August ceasefire, armed groups across the country began to transition from military action to counter-protest operations as Libyan civilians took to the streets to denounce perceived poor living conditions and government corruption. Pro-GNA and LNA armed groups reportedly used lethal force to disperse protests in August and September, and arbitrarily detained, tortured, and disappeared civilians in Libya's urban centres.

Commentary – Politics & Miscellaneous

UN-led talks lead to ceasefire, stumbling blocks remain

In 2020, the Libyan conflict both intensified and became increasingly internationalised before reaching a stalemate that prompted rival authorities to lay down their arms and deliberate through diplomacy. One of the most noteworthy events of the year took place on 23rd October when the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) announced that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC), comprising senior officials of the Government of National Accord (GNA) and Libyan National Army (LNA), had agreed on a permanent, nationwide ceasefire with immediate effect during UN-sponsored talks at UN headquarters in Geneva.

According to the agreement, the UN would be tasked to monitor the withdrawal of all frontline forces from the Sirte-Al Jufrah axis to their respective military bases and the departure of all foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya by 23rd January 2021. Rival factions also committed to reopening roads across front lines. This deadline has become increasingly unlikely to be reached. The deal also stipulated that any military agreements either side had prior to the 23rd October with foreign powers must be suspended until a new government is put in place.

It remains unclear as to whether the agreement will be adhered to by stakeholders amidst declarations by important GNA-aligned figures and armed groups that they have no intention of abiding to the deal. On 25th October, the Minister of Defence, Salah al Namroush, stated that the JMC agreement would not affect the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) concluded between the GNA and Turkey earlier in November 2019. On 26th October 2020, the GNA Ministry of Interior signed a separate MoU with Qatar to strengthen cooperation in the fields of

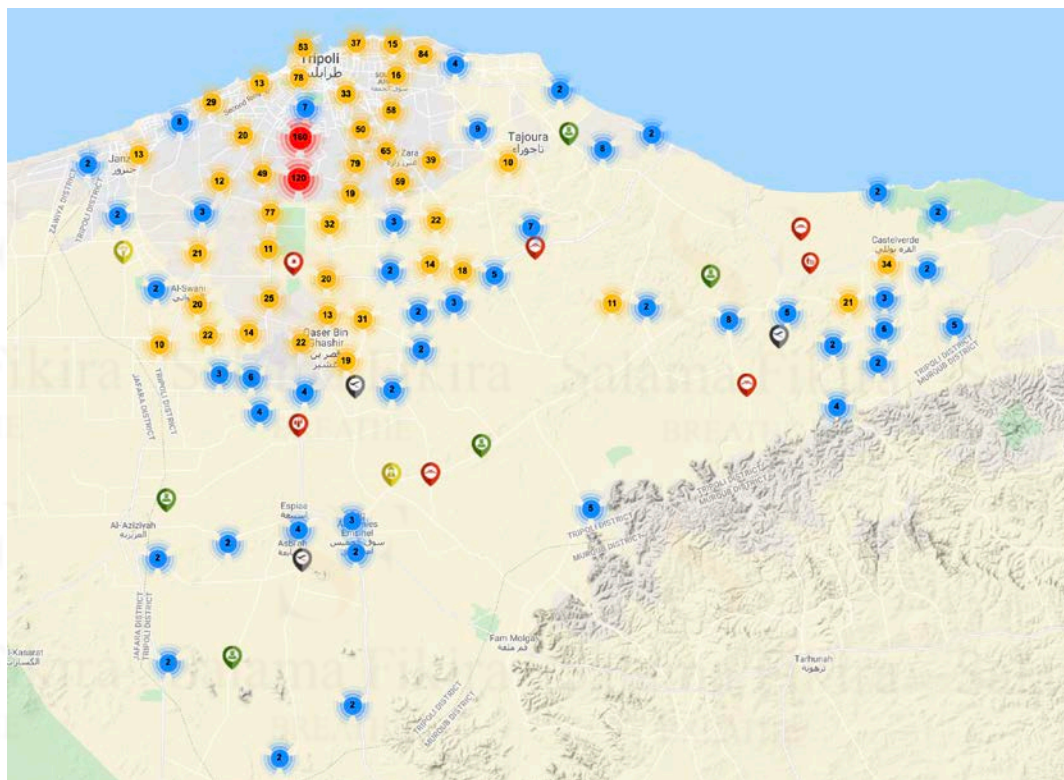
counterterrorism, narcotics trafficking and money laundering. The LNA lambasted the move as a violation of the Geneva agreement.

The ceasefire has for the most part held since coming into force, while certain elements of the agreement have been realised; flights between Tripoli and Benghazi have resumed and foreign fighters have departed oil facilities – the mainstay of Libya's economy.

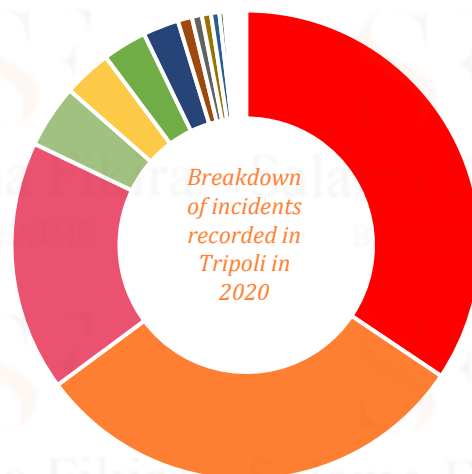
However, meetings of the 5+5 JMC in Sirte's Ouagadougou Conference Centre have yet to make progress on other key demands, highlighting the tentative nature of the cessation of hostilities. Rival authorities in the civil war that has claimed the lives of thousands have yet to withdraw forces from front line positions on the Sirte-Al Jufrah axis and to reopen the section of the Coastal Highway connecting Misratah and Sirte. As of the end of 2020, the departure of mercenary forces by the January 2021 deadline moreover looks unlikely. UN acting Libya envoy, Stephanie Williams, stated to the UN Security Council in November that rival forces continued to patrol and build fortifications as materiel continued to enter the country to resupply troops.

The Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), the political track of the UN-led diplomatic effort to quell hostilities in the country, has formulated a roadmap to General Elections on 24th December 2021 and implemented an audit of the Libyan Central Bank, which is divided between rival authorities. The LPDF's 75 members have not agreed on a unified transitional government to oversee the upcoming elections, however. More specifically, the LPDF has so far failed to find consensus selecting a head of the Presidential Council (PC) and Prime Minister.

Tripoli – Overview



- Shelling (600)
- Government Security Response (301)
- Air Strike (58)
- Protest (43)
- Criminal Activity (12)
- Armed Attack (10)
- Assassination (4)
- Rebel Activity (3)
- Riot (3)
- Smuggling (1)
- IED (1)
- Robbery (1)
- Trafficking (1)
- Armed Clashes (531)
- Shooting (76)
- Other (53)
- Killing (17)
- Kidnapping (11)
- Threat Warning (6)
- Fraud (4)
- Route Obstruction (3)
- IED (PPIED) (2)
- Natural Disaster (1)
- Human Trafficking (1)
- IED (PBIED) (1)



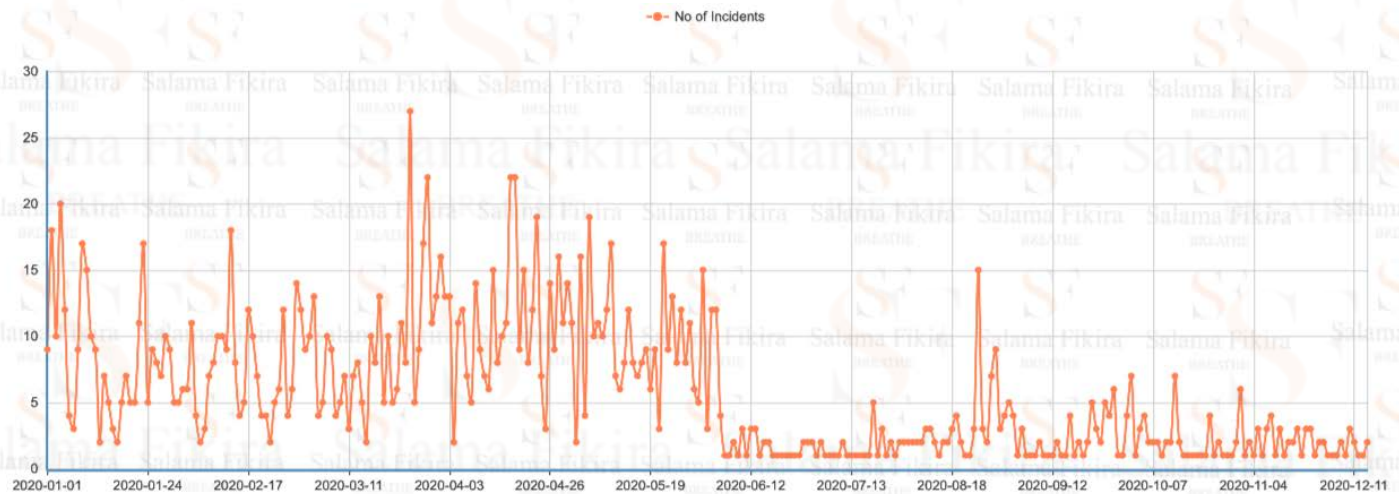
Key figures

- **1,745** – Total number of security-related incidents recorded in Tripoli
- **21** – Total number of incidents related to Islamic State
- **30** – Most fatalities recorded from a single incident (04th January LNA airstrike on pro-GNA Al Tikbali Camp)
- **662** – Total number of high-impact attacks (shellings, air strikes and IED attacks)

Tripoli – Commentary

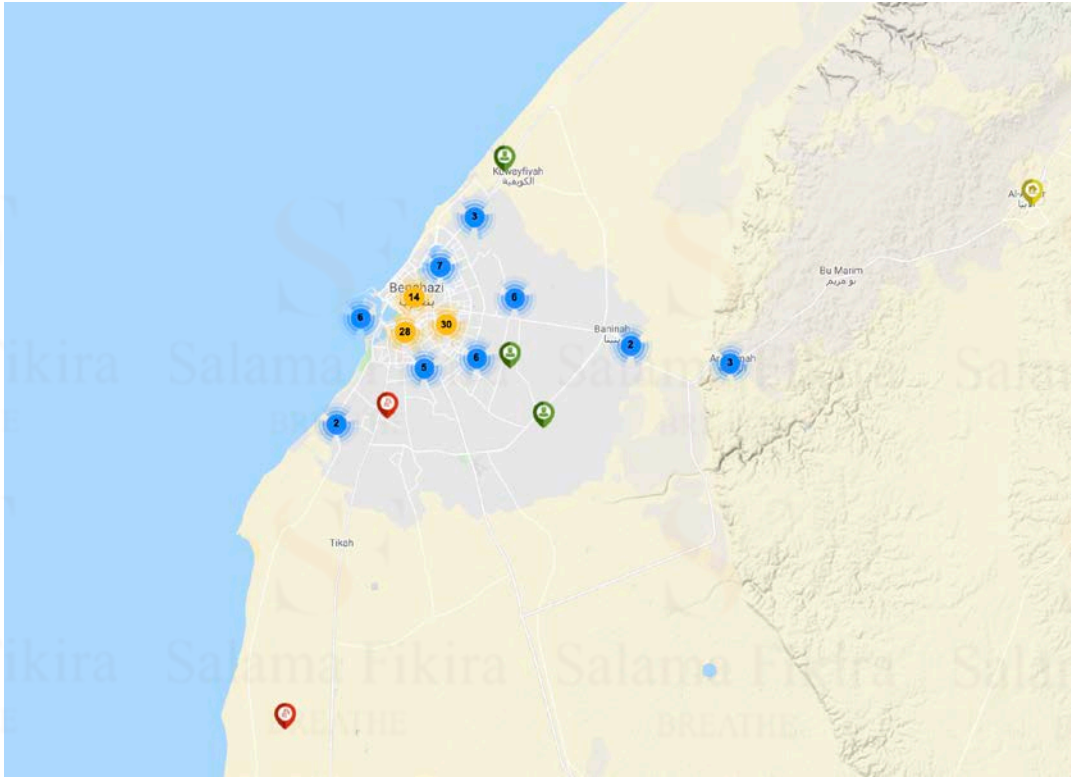
Approximately 48 per cent of security-related incidents occurred in Tripoli District in 2020 (1,745), accounting for an eight per cent fall in incidents in the Capital in contrast to 2019. The majority of incidents unfolded in Q1 and Q2 of 2020, during the Libyan National Army's (LNA) ultimately unsuccessful offensive on Tripoli, with incidents subsiding substantially from summer onwards. As military-related incidents fell (e.g. air strikes and shelling) following the August 2020 ceasefire, civil unrest increased as the Libyan population began to refocus its attention on perceptively poor living conditions and government corruption. Cessation of conflict between pro-Government of National Accord (GNA) and LNA forces moreover served to unravel cohesion amongst disparate armed groups within Tripoli, previously aligned within a pragmatic coalition to defeat the LNA and its Tripoli operation. In 2020, incidents in Tripoli District were predominantly concentrated within the area comprising Abu Salim and the Al Hadba Project, flanked by a noticeable number of incidents to the West in Edraibi and Ghut Shaal area in the vicinity of the strategic Airport and Coastal highways as well as Ain Zara to the East. Other strategic locations that witnessed insecurity in 2020 included Mitiga International Airport (MJI), the Port of Tripoli as well as a number of Tripoli's plazas including, but not limited to, Martyrs' and Algeria squares.

The conflict between pro-GNA and LNA forces showcased a change in *modus operandi* between armed groups as air strikes reduced by 90 per cent while shellings increased by 109 per cent in 2020. Moreover, a ten per cent decrease in armed clashes were recorded in 2020 in comparison to 2019, with clashes and armed attacks falling significantly following the ceasefire. Kidnappings and assassinations also decreased by 27 per cent and 33 per cent respectively in the capital while improvised explosive device (IED) attacks rose by 100 per cent. Civil unrest in the form of protests and riots also increased by 24 per cent in 2020 compared to 2019. What's more, incidents involving killings rose by 42 per cent since 2019, a figure influenced by increased deaths among Europe-bound migrants on the Central Mediterranean route.

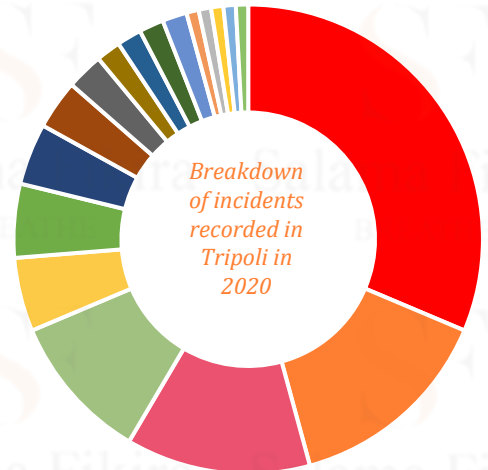


Timeline of incidents recorded in Tripoli District in 2020

Benghazi – Overview



- Government Security Response (37)
- Shooting (15)
- Kidnapping (6)
- Killing (5)
- Fraud (3)
- Assault (2)
- Shelling (2)
- Trafficking (1)
- Natural Disaster (1)
- Protest (17)
- Other (12)
- Armed Clashes (6)
- Smuggling (4)
- Criminal Activity (2)
- Assassination (4)
- Riot (1)
- SGBV (1)
- Armed Attack (1)



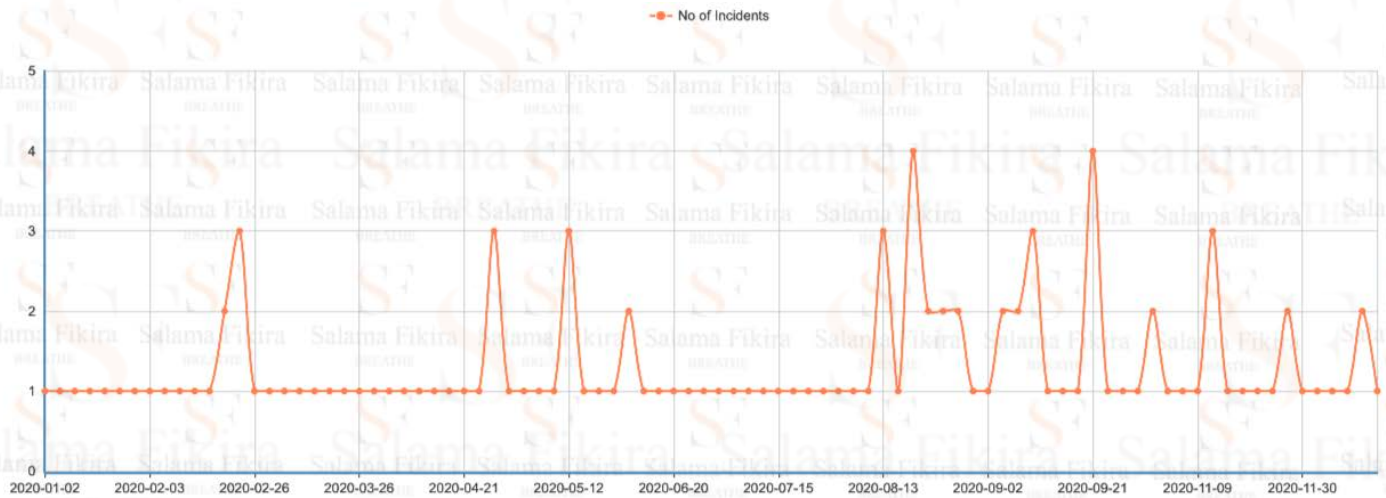
Key figures

- **118** – Total number of security-related incidents recorded in Benghazi
- **6** – Total number of kidnappings documented
- **2** – Total number of assassinations committed
- **1** – Total number of incidents related to terrorism

Benghazi – Commentary

Benghazi District witnessed 118 security-related incidents in 2020, accounting for approximately three per cent of all recorded incidents nationwide, and representing an eleven per cent increase compared to 2019 figures. The spatial distribution of incidents in 2020 was increasingly focused within Benghazi's metropolitan area during the reporting period. From a temporal perspective, moreover, the majority of incidents in 2020 were recorded in Q4, similar to 2019.

Testament to the Libyan National Army's (LNA) increased control over Benghazi's security environment, government security responses increased by 23 per cent in 2020 while no improvised explosive device (IED) attacks were recorded, in contrast to six in 2019. Another significant distinction noted this year was the 60 per cent reduction in the number of assassinations committed in Benghazi District, down to two in 2020 from five in 2019. However, armed clashes and attacks in the District witnessed a 75 per cent increase in 2020 from 2019.



Timeline of incidents recorded in Benghazi District in 2020

Images of the Year



First year students at Al Arab Medical University in Benghazi, Benghazi District, sit an exam during a blackout



An improvised explosive device (IED) attached to a teddy bear, allegedly left behind in Southern Tripoli by retreating private military contractor (PMC) Wagner Group personnel in June 2020. The teddy bear was subsequently paraded by pro-Government of National Accord (GNA) personnel on Martyrs' Square.





Salama Fikira

BREATHE

For any enquiries regarding this report or any other company deliverables, please contact the Information & Analysis team on infoteam@salama-fikira.com

Please send us your feedback on this, or any of our information products. Either follow this [Link](#) Or scan the QR Code below



www.salamafikira.com | www.sfbreathe.com