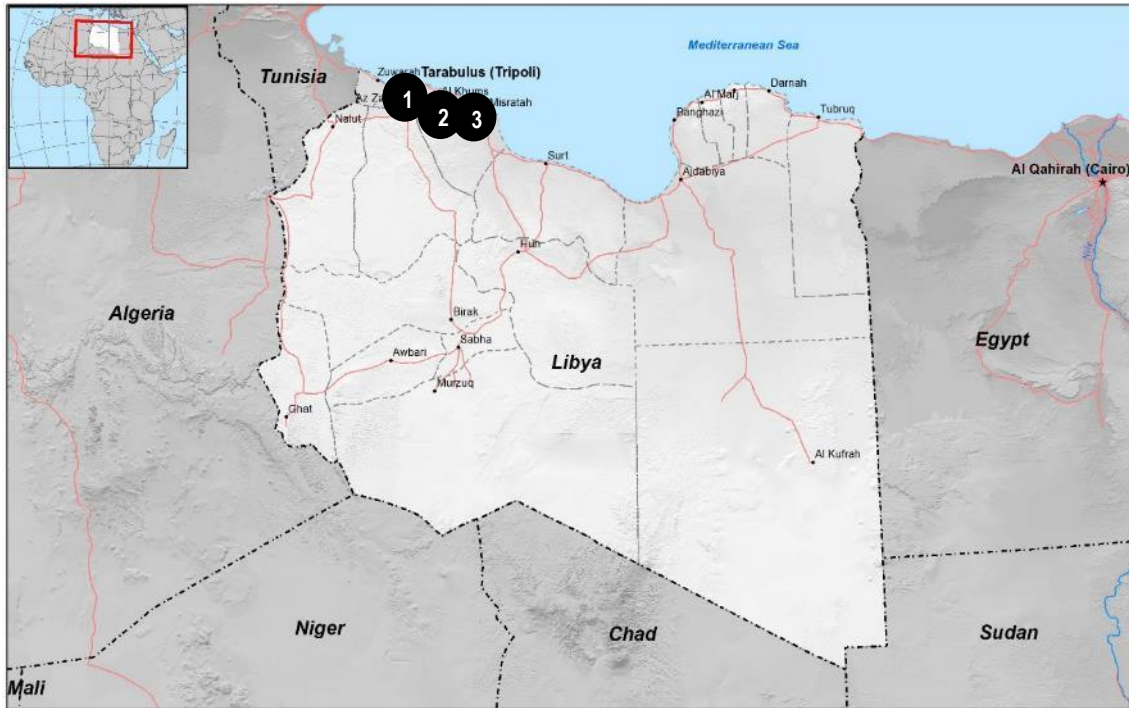


EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA

Weekly Report 29 SEP - 06 OCT 2021

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1	30SEP-01OCT	Security actions by IGNU in Tripoli in light of upcoming elections and against illegal migrants
2	02-04OCT	Military, Security militias meet in Tripoli
3	03-05OCT	Unconfirmed, conflicting reports on withdrawals of mercenaries

SUMMARY:

Security wise not much happened last week in Libya, upfront the confrontation on the elections. In the Western region large scale operations against illegal migration activities, e.g. drug trafficking and alcohol production, have taken place. Being part of the Tripoli Security plan's implementation. Basic message: militias demonstrate its capability of securing and controlling, acting as if they are official security institutions. A similar message as from the LNA when operating joint control and security activities at the Great Man-Made-River system and the Southern borders.

5+5 JMC, as we speak, are discussing the Stabilization plan. Main topic on the agenda: withdrawal of the Foreign Fighters and Mercenaries (FF/M). Small but hopeful steps have been made already both in the East and West, as stated by the MOFA. A modest start, but not sufficient and highly likely not (completely) feasible before the elections, although an international stabilization conference will be convened on 21st October.

Security militia meetings in Tripoli anticipate possible unrest against opposing candidacies.

1 CURRENT SITUATION

1.1 Security actions by IGNU in Tripoli in light of upcoming elections and against illegal migrants

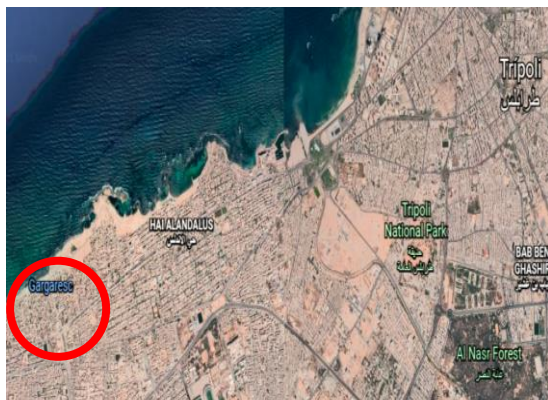
Since the last 5+5 JMC session – held in presence of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) Commander, General Stephen Townsend, and US Special Envoy and Ambassador to Libya, Richard Norland - IGNU seeks to demonstrate the capability to maintain increased security conditions in light of the upcoming elections.

On 30 September, The Chief of the General Staff, Mohammed Al-Haddad, accompanied by the Chief of Staff of the Ground Forces, Al-Fitouri Greibel and the Commander of the Tarhuna Operations Room, Abdul Qadir Mansour, visited the 444 Brigade`s headquarters in Al-Takbali camp to assess its readiness and encourage them to conduct security activities.



On 01 October, Ministry of Interior`s affiliated units, following the instructions of the Attorney Prosecutor, conducted a large-scale raid against illegal migration activities, namely drug trafficking and alcohol production in the Gargaresh area, in the vicinity of the Andalusian neighbourhood. Afterwards, Prime Minister Dbeibah inspected the area.

Local sources reported that around 4000-5000 illegal migrants, including hundreds of women and children, were detained; which resulted in at least one-person dead and 15 persons injured in this sweeping operation aiming to seize ammunition, weapons and explosives.



COMMENT: This operation was carried out as part of the first phase of Tripoli Security plan`s implementation.

Gargaresh is a very well-known departing point for migrants. Several waves of raids against migrants took place last year without relevant results.

On 3 October, United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Assistant Secretary-General Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Georgette Gagnon, stated that the United

Nations warned the IGNU against use of excessive and lethal force during law enforcement operations.

Later on, Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah paid an inspection visit to the Agency against Illegal Migration, to monitor the humanitarian and health conditions of migrants, especially vulnerable groups. Furthermore, he announced some measures to improve the area's living conditions, not reverting to its previous unbearable state.

Unconfirmed sources reported similar operations are likely to be conducted in the wider Souq Al-Jouma area.



ASSESSMENT: It is very likely that such operations will be replicated in order to demonstrate to both the national and International Community a greater capability in controlling and implementing security, as part of a national security strategy commitment.

It is highly likely that this operation was carried out jointly between units affiliated to Ministry of the Interior's 301 Battalion and Ministry of Justice's Department of Operations and Judicial Security (DOJS).



However, due to the high media negative impact on the international sphere, it is very likely that measures to improve migrants and detention centers living conditions will be announced to counteract that pressure and condemnation.

The narrative will continue highlighting the critical porous Southern border and Western coastline, for illegal migration to necessitate logistical and technical-financial sustainment by International actors, namely EU.

1.2 Military, Security Militias meet in Tripoli

On 02 October, Western and Central region militias met in Tajura, aiming to seek an agreement upon security conditions in Tripoli ahead of the elections.

Unconfirmed sources reported that the main issues addressed were to avoid mutual armed conflicts and the creation of a national body, bringing political and security perspectives together and taking care of country's interests. Participants were:



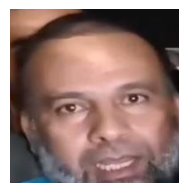
166th Battalion
Commander Muhammad Al-Hassan



Zawiyah Criminal Investigation Department (CID)
Cpt Muhammad Al-Bahron



Nawasi Brigade
Commander Muhammad Al-Hassan



Furzan Janzour
Commander Mohamed Al-Baroni

This meeting took place after Muhammed Menfi, Head of the Presidential Council (PC), received Muhammad Al-Hassan, Commander of the 166th Battalion on 30 September. At that time, Menfi stressed that establishing a joint force to secure the Great-Man-Made-River Authority (GMMRA) was a critical step towards unifying the military institution in Libya



On 4 October, unconfirmed sources reported that some members of the security forces and militias involved in 'Volcano of Rage' operation held a meeting at Tripoli airport, rejecting that Saif Al Islam Gaddafi and Khalifa Haftar should be allowed to run for elections and the electoral law approved by House of Representatives (HoR).

COMMENT: In August 2021, the Tarik ben Ziyad Brigade and the Misratan 166th Battalion started a coordinated joint patrol activity in order to control and secure GMMRA critical infrastructure in the vicinity of Ash Shwayrif, which constitutes a first so far and unique LNA and GNU joint operation.

It is worthwhile mentioning that in the meetings of 2nd and 4th October important militias such as SSA, which is affiliated with aka Ghneiwa and Bin Rajab's militia, were absent.

ASSESSMENT: It is highly likely that some Tripoli militias aim to demonstrate their capability of securing and controlling the area of interest, acting as official security institutions, with the approval of IGNU.

With this alleged agreement, it is highly likely that militias involved can both improve their strength in their area of interest, clashing with the interests of other militias, as well as increasing the risk of instability.

Some militias, supported unofficially by governmental institutions, are likely to act in order to prevent or delay future elections. Haftar's candidacy, if it happens, is very likely to be a trigger for such actions.

Evolution following this agreement must be taken under observation.

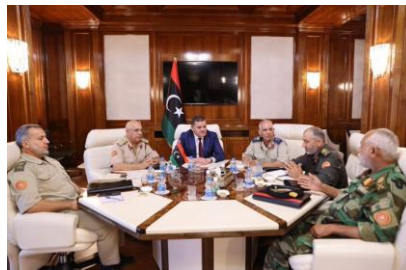
1.3 Unconfirmed, conflicting reports on withdrawals of mercenaries

On 3 October, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Najla al-Mangoush, announced during her visit in Kuwait, that some foreign forces had left Libya. She added that it was a "very modest start" of the withdrawal of foreign mercenaries. No more details were given. Since then, meetings and declarations have followed one another with the aim to promote withdrawal of mercenaries in the country. However, there have also been contradictory statements on the issue:

- On 4 October, local SOHR sources confirmed that the Turkish-backed Syrian mercenaries are still in their military barracks on Turkish-bases in Libya;
- Nevertheless, on 5 October, the same SOHR sources confirmed the return of the first batch of nearly 300 Syrian Turkish-backed fighters/mercenaries from Libya.

After 29 September meeting between Tur and Russia Presidents in Sochi, on 4 October Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry discussed the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Libya.

On 4 October IGNU Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah met with Western members of the 5+5 JMC, prior to the committee's meetings in Geneva 6-8 October, under United Nations auspices. They discussed mechanisms for the departure of mercenaries.



COMMENT: Since last week, mercenary movements in both Western and Eastern Libya, have been reported.

Not only Western affiliated forces, but also Eastern-alleged Russian Private Military Contractor (PMC) Wagner Group forces have increased their activities, aiming to demonstrate a demobilization or redeployment of equipment.

In this respect, announcing the next technical meeting going to be held in Geneva, Major General Al-Fituri Gahribel, 5+5 JMC Western member, reported that the plan would be structured in two phases:

- the 1st stage includes the removal of mercenaries from the lines of contact;
- the 2nd phase includes foreign forces from Russia, Turkey and other nationalities, not mentioning any specific date for the beginning of either phases.

Important events related to discuss withdrawal of foreign forces from Libya are as scheduled and pending:

- 6-8OCT, 5+5 JMC, Geneva;

- 21OCT, Stabilization Conference, Tripoli;
- 12NOV, International Conference on Libya (Paris/France), more to be focused on the primary concern represented by the elections.

International interested actors have stressed that any withdrawal effort must be gradual, transparent, organized and controllable, preserving the balance of power on the ground, highlighting the criticality represented by a lingering deployment of UN Monitors.

ASSESSMENT: No evidence of a possible mercenary's withdrawal neither in the Western nor in the Eastern region can be assured. It is likely that the statements made by the Libyan Foreign Minister had a political aim, but without providing details.

It is very likely that the next possible steps, if reached, can be announced after the 5+5 JMC meeting on 6-8 OCT, as something to serve and appease during the 21OCT Stabilization Conference in Tripoli, and 12NOV International Conference in France.

It is likely that some preliminary agreements will be reached in the aftermath of the Geneva meeting, which would justify a balanced and sequenced withdrawal of fighters not being perceived as an impediment to run out for Elections. However, it is highly likely that Russia and Turkey will not withdraw the majority of its forces before the elections (Presidential and Parliamentary). At the same time, TUR has already represented that Tur military forces are not to be considered as Foreign Forces while Russian Wagner PMC are already present in the Region with a new anticipated presence in Mali.

2 OTHER SECURITY RELATED FACTS/EVENTS

- On 30 September, French ambassador Beatrice du Hellen launched the Moutaalleg Training Programme with Libyan local authorities, with the aim of creating professional reintegration of 100 former militias in Zintan and Misrata.

The selected candidates will be granted for:

- four-months training and support to open their business or find technical jobs in their cities;
- technical and vocational training, entrepreneurship and tech-oriented courses and psychological support;
- financial support up to LD 10,000.

The Moutaalleg programme is also part of EU-Libya Expertise, Analysis and Deployment (EULEAD).



- On 3 October, TUR Ministry of Defense confirmed that Turkey will continue with training, assistance, cooperation and military advisory activities in favour of the Libyan government. TUR outlined it within the framework of the training, cooperation and military consultancy agreement that was signed with the Libyan legitimate government. Turkish deployed personnel have provided sniper training to Libyan soldiers.



- c. On 5 October, the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Abdul Hamid Dbeibah paid a visit to the Military Engineering College. He was received by the Chief of the General Staff, Mohammed Al-Haddad. The Prime Minister was briefed about several projects and researches prepared by the college's experts.



- d. On 5 October Gen. Al-Mahdawi was officially appointed as Commander of the Kufra Military Zone replacing Gen. Al-Mabrouk. The ceremony was presided over by the General Command Committee headed by Major General Ali al-Hamidi.



3 CONCLUSIONS

During current period, persisting the contrast between different Libyan institutions to held elections on the 24th December, the security actors are willing to show that proper security conditions could be in place.

The current 5+5 JMC venue in Geneva, with the mediating role of UNSMIL, in light of the anticipated Stabilization Conference on 21st October, and concerning the possible implementation of mercenaries withdrawal, should be used as a tool to express to relevant parties a gradual, transparent, coordinated and balanced withdrawal of mercenaries/foreign fighters.

However, such a planned withdrawal, considered an important and necessary condition, is not considered sufficient for a future stable environment to be preserved, whenever:

- the electoral process could not proceed as commonly agreed;

- no unified Libyan institution and/or International Organization could be empowered for the withdrawal direction, supervision and coordination;
- the activities of disarmament, withdrawal, arms embargo and border control are not effectively synchronized within a unique security architecture.

Furthermore a genuine political signal in favor of the unity of the country, no matter the results of the election, should complement the mandate of current GNU in the short time still available, vis a vis last week meetings in Tripoli by security actors contesting candidacies of former opposing representatives. This, to corroborate that SSR and DDR processes are intertwined.

Because of that, the Conference proposed by France on 12 November appears to be a very important critical venue on which to focus. That could help to maintain aside the more operational issues related to the withdrawal of mercenaries, that very likely will continue to capture the attention and dominate the external actors' narrative during current month of October.

A part the Humanitarian perspective, both the control of illegal migration and the withdrawal of mercenaries along the borders, enlarge the focus at regional level (Libya-Sahel) where coordinating forum between EU and external actors are relevant from a security perspective, both at strategic and operational-technical level.

Sign-off for release: Brig. Gen. STELLA, V.