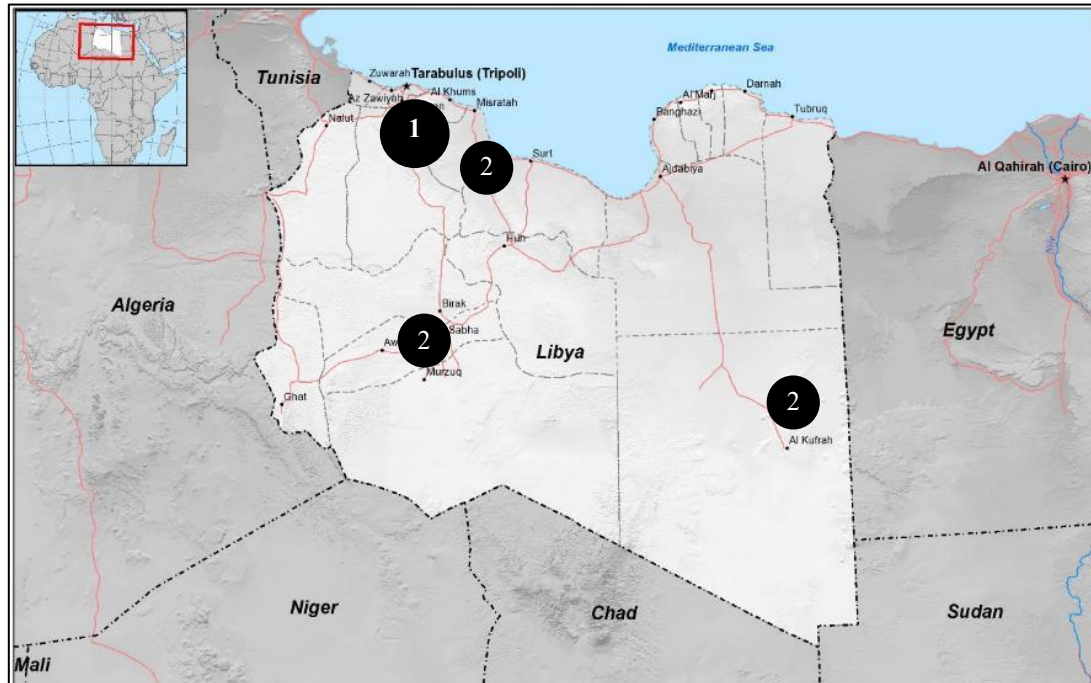


## EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA

### Weekly Report 02-08 JUN 2022

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### SUMMARY

The GNU has processed adjustments to secure Tripoli and consolidate its forces, trying to redefine its security and intelligence structure and prevent GNS attempt to gain further territory. That, while relevant security actors confirm their effort not to escalate, willing to compromise and progress independently from “*foreigners and occupiers*”.

In the surging of an Islamic rhetoric in the Region and the need to control critical infrastructures, LNA deploys reinforcements to the Southern and bordering area, trying to defuse tension with local actors.

Pending a political set-up, the Joint Military Commission (JMC) appears to attract the attention on different international events, like the Security Working Group (SWG) plenary held in Tunis, within a renewed attention on mercenaries and Foreign Forces/Fighters. This, while Libyan Units participate at a relevant NATO exercise in TUR, where LIB/TUR representatives allegedly discuss about training and development programs for the Presidential Forces.

## 1 SECURITY ADJUSTMENTS IN THE GTA

During the week, the GNU has processed necessary adjustments to secure and consolidate Tripoli and its forces, redefining its security and intelligence structure.

Following, the most significant related events:

- on 02 Jun, GNU responded to the LNA deployments by dispatching its forces towards the Southern borders of Tripolitania. Unconfirmed social media sources reported that the Tripoli-aligned South Protection Force (SPF), made by two main Units (116<sup>th</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Bn) and under the command of Ali Kanna, was reorganizing to restart targeting LNA forces with its typical asymmetric attacks. The SPF was renowned because of his capability to conduct low-level hit-and-run attacks against checkpoints and LNA detachments, and to move quickly across desert areas.
- On the same day:
  - Zawiyah Criminal Investigation Department (CID) informed of the leadership handover from Muhammad Al-Bahron (aka al-Far) to Ashraf Misbah Duraid, following Zawiyah Security Directorate orders. Some days later, localised sources informed of General Intelligence Service (GIS) Head, MG Hussein Muhammad Khalifa al-'Aib appointment of Bahron (al-Far) as Director of GIS in the Western Region;
  - local sources reported that the clashes which had occurred the previous day between the Judicial Police (supported by the Nawasi Bde) and the Presidential Guard (PG) forces, in the area near the Foreign Security General Headquarters, could be related to Nawasi's intention to retake the old intelligence facilities. Reports indicated that a Judicial Police military convoy, accompanied by the Nawasi Bde, attacked the Libyan Intelligence Services (LIS) building in an attempt to expel the PG forces securing the building;
  - an unconfirmed report talked about the GNU new security force based in Gharyan. This report underscored that the new force will be called Brigade 999 and will conduct anti-crime operations in the city, in order to allow the 444<sup>th</sup> Bde to focus on security in Tripoli. In the same line, GNU PM Minister Dbeibah ordered a new Bn to be established in Gharyan. The new unit, called 122<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Bn, would be commanded by Brigadier Ali Abdul Majeed Al-Sharif;
  - localised sources informed of GNU PM Minister Dbeibah promotion of SSA/Abu Salim Central Security Head Kikli (Ghaniwa) to the rank of Brigadier General;
- on 03 Jun, localised sources informed of a meeting at Al-Watyah Airbase between GNU Army COS, LTG Muhammad Al-Haddad and Joint Operations Room of the Western Military Region Cdr, LTG Usama al-Juweili;
- on 04 Jun, an increased rhetoric amongst Islamist-leaning actors was noticed, including Grand Mufti of Libya, Al-Sadiq al-Ghariani. Sadiq Al-Gharyani's called to target the GNS because of the oil blockade and its relationship with Egyptian intelligence. Al-Gharyani issued a Fatwa legitimizing waging war against the LNA. Additionally, the Head of the former Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), and al-Watan political party, Abdel Hakim Belhaj released a political statement, claiming for Libyan unity and a fair political transfer of power.  
On the same day, Security Unit 777<sup>th</sup> Cdr, Haitham Al-Tajouri, reiterated that *"the capital is the red line"*. He also accused GNU PM Dbeibah to have facilitated Belhaj's return to Tripoli. Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports indicate that GNU-PM Abdul Hamid Dbeiba announced the dissolution of the 777<sup>th</sup> Bde;
- on 05 Jun, a ceremony was held for the opening of the Academy of Maritime Studies in the Sidi Bilal area, Janzour, with i.a GNU Army COS, LTG Muhammad Al-Haddad, Western Coast Military Region Commander, MG Salah Al-Namroush, and GNU Navy COS, Major General Nouredine Al-Buni in attendance. For his part, LTG Muhammad Al-Haddad delivered a speech, stating i.a., that *"We are in a*

*race to build the state this year, otherwise we will remain slaves guarding **foreigners and occupiers***", urging unity of state institutions, and recruits' commitment to the country, rather than tribe and region;

- on 06 Jun, local reports alleged that Zintan will form a new military force headed by a pro-LNA local figure and supported by the former GNU chief of military intelligence Osama Juwaili. The reports indicated that this force would be joined by pro-GNS formations such as Abu Zreiba (Al-Zawiya) and the Nawasi Brigade. Also unconfirmed reports alleged pro-GNS forces including Juwaili and pro-LNA Zintan commander Idris Madi are planning to establish a foothold in Tripoli's Western flank in areas such as Sabratah, Surman, and Al-Ajaylat;
- on 07 Jun, sources reported several militia members affiliated with wounded forces from Al-Zawiya closed the Al-Zawiya Coastal Road for some hours on both lanes at the Al-Summoud Checkpoint in demand of government-funded medical treatment.

### **Comment**

During last week, GNU PM Dbeibah instructed the formation of the 999<sup>th</sup> Infantry Bde in Gharyan, including Units under the now former Gharyan Protection Bde, commanded by Nasser Eshtiba (Weekly Report 18MAY-01JUN22). The 999<sup>th</sup> Infantry Bde would operate under the GNU Ministry of Defence (MoD), in the wider Gharyan area including Al-Hira, Jendouba Bridge, and Al-Qadama Checkpoint (CP). In addition, LNA reinforced its positions in the Central and Southern Regions. In this regard, local sources informed of the establishment of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Bn under the General Staff, located in the same area of Gharyan, under the command of Brigadier Ali Abdul Majeed al Sharif in order to face possible LNA encroachment.

### **Assessment**

It is very likely that PM Dbeiba's readjustments were carried out to respond to the interest in maintaining its power in Tripoli, in where the major institutions are located.

The last week deployments permits GNU PM Dbeibah to avoid or limit a new GNS's entry into force in Tripoli. At the same time, the increased GNU stronghold out of Tripoli area will highly likely be aimed to prevent any further possible attempt of pro-Eastern forces to influence the Central and Southern part of the country, as GNU area of interest. With the creation of new units near Gharian, the GNU is also likely limiting the influence of Zintan and Juweili. It is very likely that PM Dbeiba's decision to maintain Juweili as Joint Operations Room of the Western Military Region Cdr responds to the necessity to appease Zintan on his side.

This week appointments and promotions of key militia's figures responded very surely to the purchase and consolidation of loyalties, additional influence and benefits.

At the same time, Nawasi representatives have been trying to keep their privileged influence in Tripoli, including the control of institutional buildings and port facilities. Competition for areas of influence between different groups is likely to result in further hostilities.

The growing Islamist influence confirms the indicators of the past EULPC WEEKLY REPORTS in which PM Dbeibah was looking for Islamist groups' support. It is very likely that in the short/medium term, Islamist forces will gain more relevance.

## **2 SECURITY ADJUSTMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE GTA**

- On 02 Jun, local sources indicated the LNA's Subul Al-Salam Bde received military reinforcements, in al Kufra to maintain security on Libya's South-Eastern border with Chad, Sudan, and Egypt.

On the same day, the Great Man-Made River Administration (GMMRA) announced that the Tarhunah-Abu Zayan line has been subject to three attacks over the past weeks, thus halting pumping to the Tarhunah Station and causing subsequent water cuts in the areas on the targeted route;

- on 03 Jun, GNS Deputy Interior Minister, Faraj Aqim supervised formation of an operations room, under command of Major General Salah Houidi, to implement arrest warrants issued by Attorney General, Al-Siddiq Al-Sour in the area extending from Sirte to Musaid (Libya/ Egypt border), with support from i.a., LNA Tariq bin Ziyad (TBZ) and 106th Brigades.

On the same day, localised sources informed of a meeting in the frame of the Cairo talks between HoR Speaker, Aqilah Saleh and GNS security commanders, Abdelghani al-Kikl, Emad Trabelsi, and Mahmoud bin Rajab;

- on 05 Jun, following speculation of potential offensive towards Sirte by Islamist, a single source claimed alleged deployment of the LNA "Rocket and Artillery Battalion" to the Sirte and Oil Crescent areas.

On the same day, localised sources informed the April and May salaries' payment to personnel of Libyan National Army (LNA);

- on the 7 Jun, LNA deployed reinforcements to the Fezzan Region in support of the Southern Operations Room, including units from 51st Bde, 71st Bde, 188th Bn, 684th Bn and 666th Bn. Furthermore, localised sources informed that the increased LNA presence in the area is creating potential tension with local actors. There was also an attempted assassination reported of Field Commander Baraka Koso in the Qatrun area.

### Comment

During last week, LNA has reinforced its positions in the Southern Regions. Units of the 106<sup>th</sup> Bde have deployed in Murzuq and near the Libyan-Chadian border, and to face militant movements. In fact, the deployment was initiated after the rise in tensions near the mining area in the Kouri-Bogoudi region witnessed frequent confrontation between competing tribes.

### Assessment

It is very likely that LNA readjustments and reinforcement were carried out to respond to keep control on the Southern Area of responsibility after last week events. However LNA is facing hostility that will likely increase in the short term.

## 3 OTHER INTERNATIONAL SECURITY RELATED EVENTS

The International Community and Organizations maintain their commitment to the stability of the country by supporting a consensual solution that would allow the replenishment of the oil market in the fore ground of the conflict in Ukraine.

Following, some of the main significant events:

- on 01 Jun, Italian press reported that Italy is leading a diplomatic initiative before the end of June 2022. Italy will reportedly convene a technical discussion between the P3+2 (France, United Kingdom, United States, Italy, Germany). It should also bring together Turkey, Egypt, and representatives of the GNU and GNS, in a neutral Arab country in the next few weeks.
- on 02 Jun, Member of Libyan High Council of State (HCS) Idris Boufayed called for **NATO** to intervene in Libya "militarily or peacefully" to remove **mercenaries** from the war-torn country;
- on 03 Jun, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2635 which allows for a 12-month extension of the European Union's Operation **IRINI** to enforce the UN-imposed arms embargo on Libya. Russia abstained, criticizing IRINI for a lack in effectiveness and transparency;

- on 4 Jun:

- during a media interview, HCS President, Khaled Al-Mishri i.a., rejected **Sirte** as the seat of government, stating that Tripoli is the capital of Libya and no government can operate affairs from outside of the capital, as well as claiming that Sirte is neither safe nor neutral, especially due to the presence of **Wagner Group**;
- media reported that a number of Units of the ground and naval forces of the Libyan Army would participate in the exercise of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**), hosted by Turkey and with the participation of 37 countries. On 08 Jun, social media reported the presence of GNU PM Dbeibah and a GNU Army COS LTG Muhammad Al-Haddad in Smirne to follow the NATO exercises, and allegedly discuss training and development programs for the presidential forces.

#### Comment

NATO SG Mr Stoltenberg has emphasized in the past that NATO fully supports the work of the United Nations to find a political solution to the crisis in Libya and he urged all parties and members of the international community to support the UN-led process. He has highlighted the importance to all parties to respect the UN arms embargo while NATO remains prepared to assist Libya with building up its defence and security institutions, as restated by NATO Heads of State and Government in 2018, in response to a possible request by the Libyan Government;

- on the 5 Jun, after the British Ambassador announced the reopening of the British Embassy in Tripoli, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov announced that the Russian Embassy in Libya will reopen “*very soon*”;
- on 06 Jun, Mahamat Deby, leader of Chad’s ruling Transitional Military Council, visited the border with Libya where clashes broke off between Chadian rebels and LNA forces on 23-24 May. Deby announced the establishment of a military camp 10km from the Libyan border to secure the area;
- on 07 Jun, UNSG Special Adviser on Libya Stephanie Williams co-chaired, in cooperation with France, a Security Working Group (**SWG**) plenary for Libya in Tunis, attended by the Western and Eastern members of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (**JMC**). It was discussed ceasefire monitoring, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (**DDR**). Williams praised the 5+5 JMC to continue on their work, while both Western and Eastern representatives stated that any development is closely related to a political setting, still pending. Before to that, on 05 Jun, PC President, Mohamad Al-Menfi, in the role of Supreme Commander of the Libyan Army, met with the Western Region 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) delegation to review the results of last 5+5 JMC participation in the last DDR Workshop organized in Toledo.

On the same day, during the commemorating ceremony of the eighth anniversary of the LNA’s Operation Dignity, Haftar vowed that the LNA stands ready with all its forces and equipment to protect the path chosen by the people, nominating Libya’s Western region as “*colonised*” and a hub for paid mercenaries.

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

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*Disclaimer: This report is based on security events and reports from multiple open sources, whose accuracy may not always be verified. Therefore, the information and conclusions expressed are subject to change without notice.*