

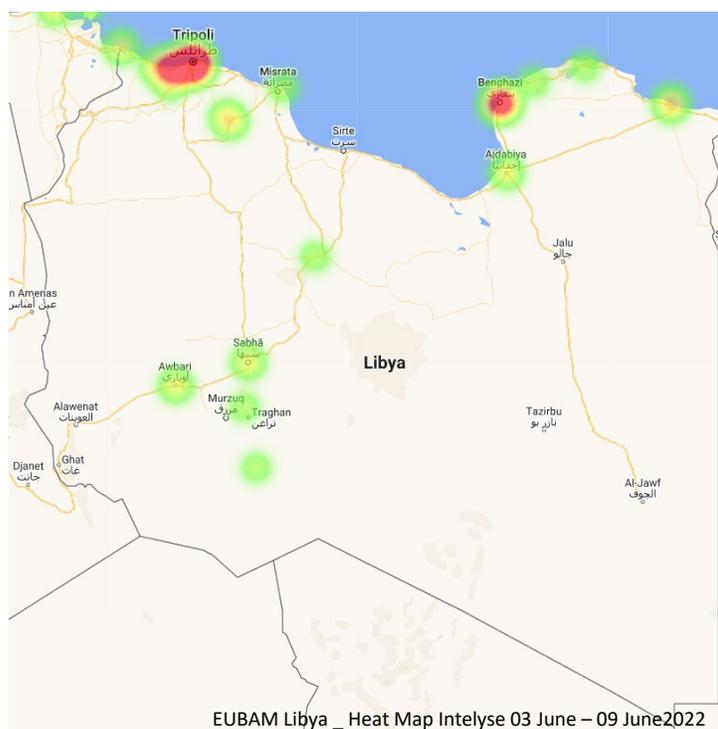
SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

Security & Covid-19: WEEKLY SECURITY REPORT

Country: Libya & Tunisia

Period: 03/06/2022 – 09/06/2022

SECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW



1. Key developments

- Tripoli - security developments
- Other security developments
 - Ongoing tensions and Libyan National Army (LNA) deployments in the South to assert control on the Libyan-Chad & Libyan-Sudan border
 - LNA inflammatory rhetoric's
- Tunisia security update

2. Findings

2.1. Tripoli – security developments

The last week saw relative stable security atmospherics in the capital; however, increasing levels of armed groups/military actor actions continue to be perceived in the current context of uncertainty created by Libya's return to a situation with two opposing governments [GNU vs. GNS], divided along eastern and western lines. Overall, there are clear indicators to suggest armed groups are in coalition-building phase and are now attempting to clarify their positions.



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

GNU Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant-General Mohamed Al-Haddad, meeting with 444th Brigade commander Lieutenant-Colonel Mahmoud Hamza in Tripoli on Tuesday, 07 June, to discuss the military and security operations of the 444th Brigade in Greater Tripoli area exemplifies the ongoing efforts of GNU to remain control over the capital and oppose any GNS forceful entry attempts.

Example of the intra armed groups tensions is the 04 June statement of 777 Brigade led by Haytham Al-Tajouri¹ asserting that it will defend the capital against alleged attempts by Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) to strew divisions. In a statement the brigade asserted that it should not be considered part of the LIFG and the 777 Brigade will resist any attempt to provoke a war in Tripoli.

Reports allege 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 latter is claimed in parallel to circulated images across social media on 07 June showing GNS Prime Minister Fathi Bashagha alongside a pro-LNA figure from Zintan identified as Major Ramadan Abu Rgeiga².

The reports further imply that this force will be joined by pro-GNS formations such as Abu Zreiba (Al-Zawiya) and the Nawasi Brigade to engage pro-GNU forces upon the expiry of the GNU's mandate by 21st June. The reports allege an ultimatum was also given to the Zintan General Security Apparatus to clarify its position and pick a side in the GNU/GNS power impasse.

Related 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. The reports allege pro-GNS forces will attempt to seize Mellitah Oil and Gas (MOG) complex to raise their bargaining leverage in the ongoing GNU/GNS power struggle.

SDCD COMMENT

Many observers interpreted the 777 Bde commander statement as evidence of the brigade's anti-GNU stance. GNU PM Dbeibah has been criticized of siding with the LIFG in exchange of their support which threatens to stain Dbeibah's public image causing loss of supporters who distance themselves from the LIFG and could side with the GNS. It is likely that the statement of 777 Bde is made in response to pro-LIFG cleric Sadiq Al-Gharyani's fatwa (ruling) on 04 June legitimizing the targeting of GNS, LNA and Egyptian interests, in what many commentators interpreted as a call to arms. The later likely triggered a demonstration on 08 June in front of the Egyptian Embassy calling on GNU-PM Dbeiba to stop Egypt's interventions in Libyan affairs. Al-Gharyani's ruling triggered adverse reaction from Mohamed Sawan³.

It is likely the situation to prompt citizens to conflate anti-LIFG and anti-GNU sentiment, among other issues such as support for the GNS and Nawasi Brigade, as seen on 06 June at the anti-GNU demonstration⁴ of the residents of Souq Al-Jumaa who publicly opposed Al-Gharyani's statement.

Concerns of altercation between Zintan affiliated militia and armed groups from Tripoli are about to spark were amplified by reports of armed convoys moving from Zintan in direction Tripoli⁵. it remains to be seen what will be the reaction of the Tripoli based fractions to the movements.

The genuineness of reports alleging formation of pro-GNS armed fractions coalition is difficult to be verified in the atmospherics of proactive efforts by pro-LNA sources to spread disinformation over media and social networks. Rumours of armed alliances are in line with common understanding that armed groups across the west have entered the coalition-building phase ahead of a potential resumption of the armed conflict.

¹ former Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) commander

² who formed the 71st Brigade under LNA command and vowed to avenge the dismissal of Osama Juwaili.

³ the pro-GNS founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Libya

⁴ to protest the dismissal of Nawasi Brigade commander Mustafa Gaddour as deputy chief of Libyan Intelligence Services (LIS)

⁵ Media reference: <https://twitter.com/LaylaG11825502/status/1534888355292487681>;
<https://twitter.com/ObservatoryLY/status/1534897856305324032>



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

2.2. Other security developments

Ongoing tensions and Libyan National Army (LNA) deployments in the South to assert control on the Libyan-Chad & Libyan-Sudan border

LNA deployed reinforcements to the Fezzan Region in support of the Southern Operations Room, including units from 51st Infantry Brigade, 71st Infantry Brigade, 188th Battalion, 684th Battalion, and 666th Battalion. Further followed by armed attack against 634 Battalion (LNA) Agra Checkpoint and attempted assassination of Umm Al Aranib Martyrs Brigade 2nd Company Field Commander, Baraka Koso, in the Qatrun area.

On 06 June, Mahamat Deby, leader of Chad's ruling Transitional Military Council, visited the border with Libya where clashes broke off between Chadian rebels and Libyan National Army (LNA) forces on 23-24 May. Deby announced the establishment of a military camp 10km from the Libyan border to secure the area.

SDCD COMMENT

The attack coincided with an attempted assassination of Al-Mandi Baraka Kusu Mohammed, a commander with Umm Al Aranib Martyrs Brigade who was shot near Wigh Air Base however it's unknown if the two incidents were linked. No one has claimed responsibility however 634 Battalion has suggested the attack bore the hallmarks of Da'esh. It appears that the targeting of Field Commander Kusu comes amidst increased LNA presence in the area, indicating potential tension between the two factions, including LNA attempted takeover of the Umm Al Aranib Martyrs Brigade headquarters (HQ).

The LNA has been carrying out a heightened tempo of operations in the south over the last month, of which Da'esh has been a target, after the group carried out a VBIED attack against the LNA in Umm al-Aranib on April 18. On May 29, the Tariq Bin Zayid Brigade (LNA) arrested an Da'esh commander during an operation in or near Qatrun where the brigade have been conducting smuggling disruption operations.

The border area was destabilised at the end of May following a large clash near the Kouri Bougouri gold mines on the Chadian side, which also attracted LNA attention to the area

LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar inflammatory rhetoric.

LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar warned that any settlement in Libya will be deemed a failure unless it enjoys the support of the people, calling on all components of Libyan society to draft their own roadmap without anyone's supervision in a speech delivered at a ceremony commemorating the eighth anniversary of the LNA's Operation Dignity on 07 June. Haftar vowed that the LNA stands ready with all its forces and equipment to protect the path chosen by the people. Meanwhile, Haftar argued that previous agreements and political initiatives that did not enjoy the support of the people resulted in "frustration, waste of time and hope, spread of corruption, and a drain of wealth." Haftar singled out Libya's western region as "colonised" and a hub for paid mercenaries. Of note, Haftar's

SDCD COMMENT

LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar reference to the western region and his subsequent remarks on the LNA standing ready to support the will of the people was interpreted by some as a tacit call for renewed military conflict in the west. His statement comes at a time when the LPDF agreement expires, leaving the GNU open to renewed attacks on its legitimacy and political impasse between GNU and House of Representatives designated HoR, and when in parallel the House of Representatives and High State Council are engaged in discussions in Cairo to agree on the constitutional basis that creates the conditions for the elections. To some commentators the statement is indicative for the LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar frustration on the inability of the GNS to take over control over the state governance. Although the statement has not been picked up and commented by the GNU, further escalation of the rhetoric will inevitably damage the GNS chances for a peaceful take over since every politically charged LNA statement is considered by the parties in the west as a reminder of the inter-dependability and the connections between LNA and GNS triggering harsh reactions among armed fractions and political figures in Tripoli.



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

2.3. Tunisia security update

On 07 June Tunisia’s Judges have initiated a strike after the recent firing of 57 Judges by President Saied, who accused the judiciary of corruption and ‘protecting terrorists’, referring to the alleged involvement of his political opponents, Ennahda, in an Da’sh-claimed assassination in 2013. The Judges have stated they will suspend work in courts on until the fired Judges are reinstated. In reply, Presiden Kais Saied has stated that any striking Judge’s pay will be frozen until they return to the courts.

The UGTT labour party has called for strikes in June their members, who are more that 5% of the country’s population. The coalition of opposition parties “National Salvation Front” are also expected to hold demonstrations. On June 4th, protestors against Saied had minor altercations with the police.

SDCD COMMENT

On 30 June the Tunisia’s new draft constitution is expected to be published, and a national referendum on its contents will be held on 25 July. As these dates approach, Saied and his opposition have taken steps to prepare for the publishing of the draft and the outcome of the popular vote and the related upcoming political standoff.

The turbulent political situation ahead of those events increases the likelihood of civil unrest in the coming months. The removal of judges, dismissal of parliament, and the reappointment of the Independent High Authority for Elections, all point to the hypothesis of steps taken to consolidate the power of the president.

On the other hand, President Saied actions point to a disregard for democratic values that will continue His discourse surrounding his opponents, particularly the claimed alleged connection of his main rival Ennahda to Da’esh is worrying indicator of president’s intentions to use speculative information to spread fear and discredit opponents. Any violence in protests or demonstrations will likely be blamed on the opposition and use public fears to implement suppression of some social activities and services, calling the economic political crisis, as well as any violence at protests, a state of emergency.

5. COVID-19 Update⁶

Country	Cases in the last 7 days	Cases in the preceding 7 days	Weekly Case % Change	Cases in the last 7 days/1M pop	Deaths in the last 7 days	Deaths in the preceding 7 day	Weekly Deaths % Change	Overall Covid cases
Libya *	24	112	-79%	3	0	0	0 %	502.040
Tunisia **	668	510	- 31%	55	7	9	- 22%	1.043.540

⁶ Data from WorldOMeter. Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> [online]. Last updated: 02/06/2022 15:00GMT
As of 04/04/2022 The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) of Libya is publishing only weekly COVID-19 related statistics

SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

LIST OF ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

AQ - Al-Qaeda
AQIM - Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BCP – Border Crossing Point
BDB – Benghazi Defense Brigade / Saraya Defend Benghazi (SDB) (Al Qaeda-aligned – AAS and RSCB associated/umbrella group)
CBL – Central Bank of Libya
CNI – Critical National Infrastructure
DACOCT - Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism
DDR - Disarmament, demobilising and reintegration
DPF – Derna Protection Force (an amalgamation of all militias in Derna, including the MSCD)
GECOL – General Electricity Company of Libya
GNA – Government of National Accord (UN-backed)
GNC – General National Congress
IGNU – Interim Government of National Unity (2021)
GTUC - Greater Tripoli Union Council (Tripoli militias and others, established in June 2020)
HCS - High Council of State
HNEC – High National Elections Commission
HoR – House of Representatives (Tobruk-based)
IDF – Indirect Fire (mortars/rockets)
IDP - Internally Displaced Persons
IED - Improvised Explosive Device
IOC - International Oil Company
5+5 JMC – 5+5 Joint Military Commission
IS/DAESH - Islamic State
LNA – Libyan National Army
LNG – Libyan National Guard
LPA – Libyan Political Agreement (2015)
LPDF - Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (2020)
LROR - Libyan Revolutionary Operations Room
MoD - Ministry of Defense
MoF - Ministry of Finance
MoFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHE - Ministry of Higher Education
MoI - Ministry of Interior
MoJ - Ministry of Justice
MoO - Ministry of Oil
MoT - Ministry of Transportation
MSCD – Mujahideen Shura Council of Derna (AQ aligned)
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation (aid/charity)
NOC – National Oil Company
NSG – National Salvation Government (GNC)
PC – Presidency Council (IGNU)
PFG- Petroleum Facilities Guard
RPG - Rocket Propelled Grenade
RSCB - Revolutionary Shura Council of Benghazi
RTA - Road Traffic Accident
SAF - Small Arms Fire
SDF – Rada Deterrence Force/ Special Deterrence Force/ Rada
SSA - Stability Support Agency
Technical - An improvised weapon-mounted pick-up truck
TPF – Tripoli Protection Force (TRB, Nawasi 8 Force, Bab Tajoura Brigade and Ghneiwa umbrella group, established in December 2018)
UNSMIL – United Nations Support Mission in Libya
UXO - Unexploded Ordnance

Disclaimer: This report is based in security incidents reports from multiple sources, including international partners and open sources, whose accuracy may not always be fully verified. It cannot be assumed that all security incidents in Libya and Tunisia were reported to and/or tracked by EUBAM Libya. The Security and Duty of Care Department (SDCD) emails a daily security update (DSR) which includes a full description of the incidents that



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