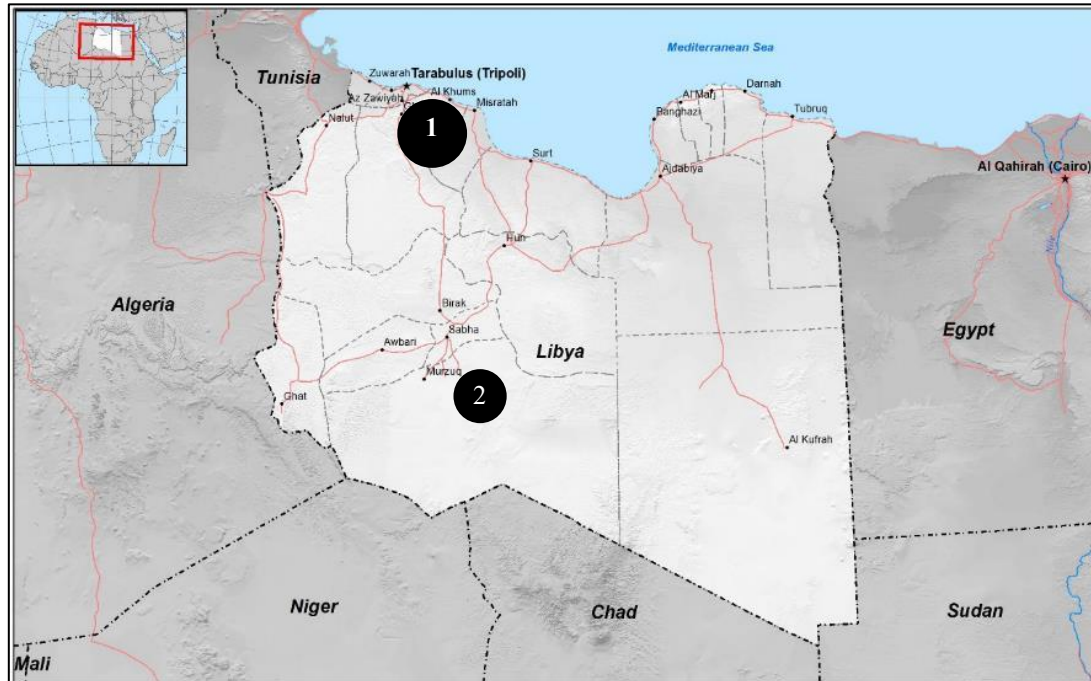


EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA

Weekly Report 07– 13 JUL 2022

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SUMMARY

The past week has been characterised by a relative calm. No demonstrations were any longer reported, also due to Eid al-Adha festivities and a light improvement in the power network provision. However, significant potential for renovated tensions remain. GNS PM quote that he is intending to take office in Tripoli in the coming days could be considered as an opportunity to trigger events, with changes in the deployment of the forces in the GTA in an evolving balance of power.

Outside the GTA, apart the reopening of the coastal road, both GNU and GNS forces intensify efforts to increase their control and influence on the respective regions/AORs, also in an anti-illegal migration role. The LNA spokesperson stated the Eastern forces will not become involved in the political conflict, while the 5+5 JMC will continue playing a role as security guarantor, to ensure that results of would be elections could be accepted.

The international Community is shifting its commitment to the stability process in Libya, from considering the electoral roadmap as a precondition for current conflict over power to offering a mediating role, from rejecting any unilateral move to pursuing in the sensitive contested effort of a balanced share of oil revenues. This, impacting on the change of the guard at the National Oil Corporation. In the meanwhile the renewal of the UN Panel of Expert mandate calls for the Libyan Government to improve the implementation of the arms embargo.

1. MOBILIZATION IN THE GTA

Among the most significant events:

- on 09 July, local sources claimed that GNS PM Fathi Bashagha intended to set up his governmental office in Tripoli. GNS PM Bashagha stated in several public declarations that he planned to take office in Tripoli as soon as possible. He highlighted that armed forces changed their position and will not interfere GNS entering the capital. Bashagha also stated that two governments were not acceptable. He also warned for continued demonstrations, which he expects to continue after the Eid;
- on the same day, the Presidential Council (PC) announced a general framework to address the political blockage. Mohamed Menfi met with the leaders of 31 political parties to discuss the political, economic and security issues within the country. The group also stressed their rejection of international interference and any internationally imposed or managed mechanism for Libyan resources;
- on 10 July, the 51st Bn took control of a camp that was previously controlled by an armed group affiliated to the 777th Bde in Ain Zara. Unconfirmed sources stated that the order to take over the camp came from the GNU military COS Mohammed Al Haddad. The 777th Bde mobilized in Ain Zara, withdrew without taking any further action. A source reported that Ayoub Abu Ras, the commander of the TRB and the PG, pledged to Bashir Khalafallah, the head of the Battalion, that Tajouri would not station troops at the camp. Khalafallah then agreed to hand Al-Na'am over to the PG.

Comment

The 51st Bn is a significant stakeholder in the area, it controls the eastern entrance to Tripoli and it has also elements deployed in Tajoura. Although the 51st Bn has declared its own neutrality, the Bn is considered supporting the GNU. The 777th Bde Commander is Haytam Tajoury, he has been previously very critical with GNU PM Dbeibah's management.

Assessment

The takeover of the camp is likely a readjustment movement to gain loyalties into strategic zone of the Great Tripoli Area.

The security situation in GTA is likely to continue to be extremely volatile. Any attempt to establish itself in Tripoli by the GNS will likely lead to clashes between the rival groups, although changes of support at the last minute should not be ruled out;

- on 12 July, a dozen pro-GNU militiamen issued a video statement from Tripoli's Martyrs' Square affirming their support for elections as the only way out of the current political crisis and rejection of another transitional phase in reference to the GNS led by Fathi Bashagha. The militiamen declared that Tripoli is a "*red line*" and that any attempt to sow divisions in Tripoli will be dealt with swiftly. The statement was issued in the presence of Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) commander Abdulghani Al-Kikli, Zintan General Security Apparatus commander Emad Trabelsi, Fursan Janzour Battalion commander Mohamed Al-Baroni, Misrata's 301 Battalion commander Abdussalam Al-Zoubi, Al-Zawiya's 52nd Brigade commander Mahmoud Bin Rajab and Al-Zawiya 's Criminal Investigations Department (CID) commander Mohamed Bahroun "Al-Far".

2. SECURITY ADJUSTMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE GTA

Tensions continued into Fezzan province. Border control and security upon areas where national sovereignty is not clearly defined are a priority issue for both governments, also in an anti-illegal migration role.

These are the most significant events:

- on 07 July, UNSMIL has expressed concerns about the sporadic closures of the coastal road, west of Sirte. This comes after two separate incidents that lead to the closure of the road at the 50km area and at the Kararim 20km Checkpoint. These were the latest attempts by armed groups to extort money

using the disruption of that critical line of communication;

- on 07 July, local sources informed that the LNA dispatched military units to the Southern town of Murzuq to boost security. Forces of the 634th Bn were tasked to secure the city entry and exit points. Control of the area was complemented by the LNA 155th Bn that deployed mobile patrols on the Murzuq region. The LNA also affirmed that security in Murzuq “*will be strengthened to prevent illegal actions, including acts of terrorism*”;
- on the same day, COS LTG Muhammad Al-Haddad visited the 53rd Bde in Misrata to intensify efforts and coordination between military and security institutions, to raise the level of alert and preparedness, and to increase 53rd Independent Infantry Brigade patrol operations in the Central Military Region areas of operations;
- on 10 July, the GNU MoI announced the creation of the Anti-Illegal Immigration Authority. Its executive force will be the Desert Patrols Branch. Desert Patrols Branch tasks include combating illegal immigration and also smuggling across Algerian-Libyan borders;
- on the same day, the 444th Brigade has arrested a gang, consisting of nine Bangladeshis and two Libyans, that had kidnapped 110 Bangladeshis for a ransom. The Brigade said that its forces succeeded in the liberation of the kidnapped, who had previously been subjected to torture and extortion, pointing out that the kidnappers demanded a ransom of 25,000 dinars to free each one of them;
- on the same day, local sources informed about delays to cross the Tunisian border in Wazen. The estimate time to cross it was more than ten hours.

Assessment

GNU and GNS are dealing with border issues to likely get legitimacy to their own governmental posture and control the ground. GNS will likely continue exploiting issues concerning organized crime, smuggling and border control because, apart more legitimacy, that can also provide consistent economic benefits deriving by the wide spectrum of illegal business linked with border control and border crossing.

The 444th Bde continues offering a very professional military conduct with relevant accomplishment and effectiveness in security operations.

3. OTHER INTERNATIONAL AND SECURITY RELATED EVENTS

The International Community is maintaining its commitment to the stability of the country by supporting a consensual political solution and a contested financial sharing of oil revenues mechanism that would sustain an agreed roadmap to lead the country to elections.

Following, some of the most significant events:

- on 07 July, The Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi reaffirmed their strong commitment to Libya’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity. They also stressed the importance of holding free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possible, and rejected any unilateral measures that could lead to violence or greater divisions in the country, saying they support the UN-facilitated and Libyan-led political process;
- on the same day, local sources informed that the Maghreb Union invited its members to hold a specific meeting on Libya, noting that the situation that has deteriorated recently was a cause for great concern;
- on 12 July, the UN Special Advisor on Libya, Stephani Williams, has been reported saying “*the dispute over the executive authority will continue as long as there is no vision for elections and the power and resources remain confined to Tripoli*”.

Assessment

It is very likely that most members of the international community will continue to advocate for a political agreement that would allow the establishment of unified institutions and a mechanism to control the share of oil revenues. But it is unlikely that these agreements will obtain the necessary consensus due

to the different vision and interests that countries have on Libya.

A renewal of the UNSMIL mandate is expected at the end of July, although the nomination of the head of mission will likely continue to be controversial.

- on 08 July, a report issued by the Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) has quoted several reports by Syrian mercenaries detailing their involvement in looting and civilian property seizures in the Tripoli area. According with the reports, Syrian fighters had started to move towards Libyan armed groups following a reduction in their salaries. Some of the fighters, after joined the SSA, have been involved in armed robberies and clashes between opposing groups. A second report claimed that 35 Syrian fighters joined the Nawasi Bde. A third report claimed that Syrian fighters had exploited local clashes and after residents fled their homes, they have entered the homes to steal valuable items.

Comment

The accuracy and truthfulness of these reports cannot be confirmed due to the inconsistency in parts of the same report.

Assessment

Although the accuracy of the reports cannot be confirmed, however it is likely a trend among the Syrian fighters to make profit during their time in Libya. It is very likely that those fighters will not be included in any DDR/SSR process. For this reason their presence will likely increase the risk of organized crime and terrorism.

- on 09 June, LNA spokesman MG Ahmed al-Mismari, stressed that the Libyan military would not become involved with political conflicts within the country. Mismari stated that the 5+5 JMC maintained good relations and continued to aspire to unify the military institutions. He added that the 5+5 JMC unification would act as a guarantor for the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections by ensuring that the results were accepted;
- on 10 July, the report on the UN Fact-finding Mission on Libya, highlighted the serious challenges facing Libya, including the political division, insecurity, the proliferation of weapons and the increasing phenomenon of irregular migration and external intervention. Despite these circumstances, Libya was moving forward on the path of protecting and promoting human rights. This commitment had been reflected in many political, legal, and practical initiatives, most recently by the Cabinet's creation of a permanent national authority to coordinate the Government's preparation of reports to human rights mechanisms. Libya had decided to submit a draft resolution through the African Group to extend the Mission's mandate for an additional and final term, ending within nine months;
- on 11 July, the GNU promoted 35 security officials from Cyrenaica. Of these 35, 15 Officers were promoted from the rank of Brigadier General to the rank of Major General. Many of the promoted officers are close to the LNA.

Assessment

With this security leader's promotion GNU is likely sending a public message to show the legitimacy of the GNU to promote senior military Officers and the capability to order such promotions;

- on 12 July, the GNU appoints Farhat Bengdara as the new CEO of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), replacing Mustafa Sanallah. Bengdara was the governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) from 2006 until March 2011. Some reports have claimed that Sanallah's dismissal is part of a power sharing arrangement brokered by Dabaiba's representatives and Saddam Haftar in the UAE. However, it appears that Sanallah and the current board recognise Dabaiba's authority to make these changes unilaterally, rejecting the dismissal. Then there is likely to be chaos within the NOC's leadership and among the NOC subsidiaries, creating an even more unstable operating environment in the short term. In fact, on 13 July, NOC chief Mustafa Sanallah is reported saying that Dbeibah government is illegitimate, adding that Dbeibah is implementing a plot by the United Arab Emirates to control the Corporation. Following that statement, Sanalla is reported being pursued by Omar Boughadada, the

Joint Force of Misrata, a notorious armed group formed by al-Dabiaba, with dozens of armed vehicles from this force surrounding the NOC building in Tripoli;

- on 13 July, the UNSCR 2644 (2022) renewing the PoE mandate has been approved, calling upon the Government of Libya to improve the implementation of the arms embargo, including at all entry points, as soon as it exercises oversight, requesting all Member States to cooperate in such efforts.

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

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.