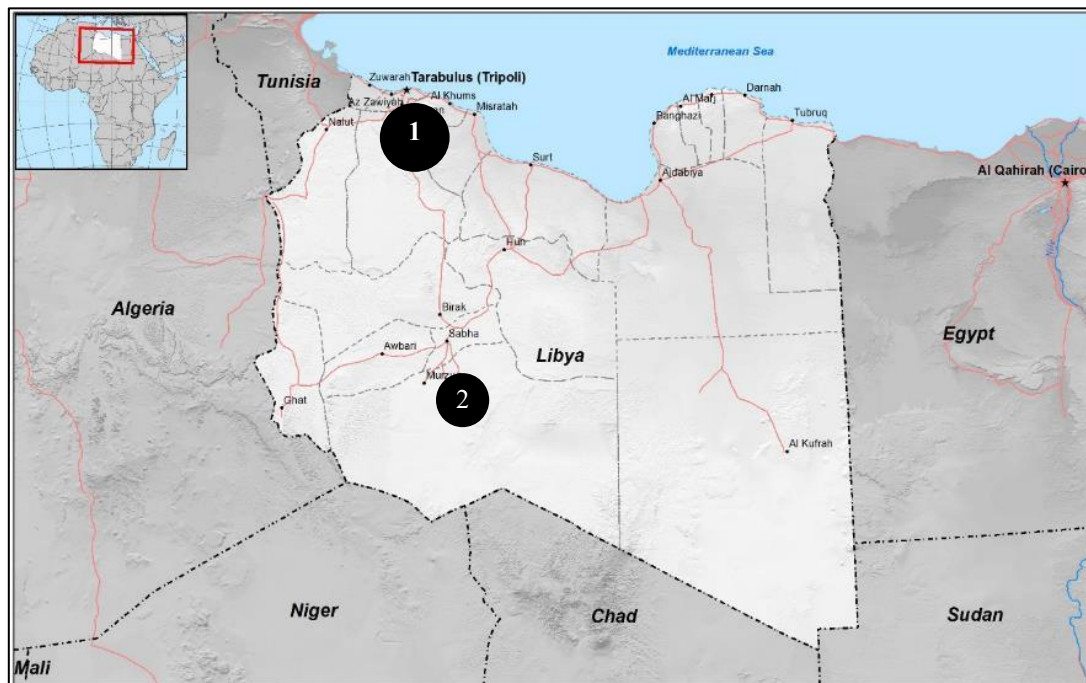


EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA

Weekly Report 09-16 JUN 2022

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SUMMARY

The past week has been characterised by a series of acts of violence in Tripoli, apparently not politically driven, between GNU and GNS supporting militias. These have become a constant attitude in the Capital area. However, such an outbreak of violence was particularly heavily condemned by both national and international institutions, as a recognition of the very limited progressing of the Cease Fire Agreement and any SSR/DDR process at such a critical political time.

The expansion of LNA troops in Southern Libya continues in the framework of LNA conducting operations to clear the area from terrorists and Chadian rebels, mainly involved in smuggling weapons and illegal immigration through the border.

Continuous pressure by various international organizations, together with stronger statements provided by regional countries, have been expressed to move Libya toward a more stable settlement. This, at the final stage of the 2020 UN-led political dialogue process and in favour of the legitimization of the extension of the Turkish military mandate in Libya, in a role related to its renewed strategic relevance¹.

¹ See USA Annual Threat Assessment (ATA) 2022 and ANNEX to Weekly Report 31MAR – 11APR 2022: “On the US strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability in Libya”.

1. TENSIONS IN THE GTA

GNU and GNS continue with their own adjustment to consolidate their security alliances and positions. However, the events that occurred in Tripoli on the 10th and 11th have marked the possibility for stronger political commitments, due to the limited time before the expiration of the LPDF legitimacy (22 June). In addition to that, national and international political declarations were calling for restraint.

Among the most significant related events:

- on 09 Jun, localised sources informed of GNU PM order to transfer several units of the MoD, including the 444th Bde to the direct control of GNU Army COS, LTG Muhammad Al-Haddad;
- on 10 Jun, two separate clashes erupted in Tripoli overnight. The first started around 2230hrs at the Suq Al-Thalatha roundabout between Nawasi Bde and the Stability and Support Apparatus (SSA). The presence to the 444th Bde helped to contain those clashes and supported to evacuate civil population. The second set of clashes erupted some hours later around Almadar street between Al-Alam militia and the Tripoli Security Directorate, which was supported by the Judicial Police. The clashes were triggered by the arrest of a member of the Libyan Intelligence Service (LIS) by the Tripoli Security Directorate. Al-Alam forces, under the command of Captain Muhammad Al-Bahron launched an attack against a directorate checkpoint in response, triggering the clashes;
- on 11 Jun, as reaction to these clashes:
 - GNS PM Fathi Bashagha called for a **UN-supervised security arrangement to disarm the militias and remove all weapons from Tripoli**;
 - the Presidential Council (PC) ordered the Ministries of Defence and Interior to submit a report regarding Tripoli's clashes. The PC warned with legal prosecution to the ones that would endanger life of civilians and/or private and public properties;
 - UNSMIL released a statement that showed consternation for the clashes in Tripoli between armed groups. UNSMIL also urged political and security actors to restraint their actions and maintain dialogue;
 - under instructions issued by GNU PM Dbeibah, GNU Ministry of Interior (MoI) Undersecretary for District Affairs, MG "Bashir Al-Amin" started the investigations on the clashes;
- on 13 Jun, localised sources informed of GNU PM Dbeibah formation of the **"Intervention and Preservation of Order Force"**. To command this new unit he nominated the Deputy Head of the Anti-Illegal Immigration Authority, Major Muhammad Al-Khouja. The unit's main task will be mediation and resolution of disputes and clashes between armed actors.
On the same day, unconfirmed reports alleged that former GNU Military Intelligence Chief Osama Juwaili (Zintan), in cooperation with a former founding member of the Fursan Janzour Bn, planned to exert control over the Palm City Residences in Tripoli's Janzour area. Their alleged aim was to prepare the reception of GNS PM Fathi Bashagha in Palm City.

Comment

Suq Al-Thalatha roundabout is the border in which several militias converge their's Areas of Responsibility. On April 04, SSA and Nawasi members clashed on Sareem street, which is home to a number of fighters and commanders from both forces.

Al-Alam militia is the militia from Zawiyah commanded by Muhammad Al-Bahron (aka al-Far). This militia (also known as al-Far militia) is associated with the Libyan Intelligence Service because his director, MG Hussein Muhammad Khalifa al- Ayeb, appointed Al-Far as Director of LIS in the Western Region and head of the LIS counter-terrorism office.

There have been increasing tensions in Tripoli since GNS PM Bashagha attempted to establish his government in Tripoli on 17 May. The commander of Nawasi Brigade, Mustapa Qaddour, was dismissed

by MG Hussein Muhammad Khalifa al-Ayeb from his role as deputy of the LIS and because his support to GNS. However Qaddour was reinstated by the Head of the PC Menfi on 25 May.

On 25 May, GNU PM Dbeibah instructed the formation of the 999th Bde in Gharyan, including Units under the now former Gharyan Protection Bde, commanded by Nasser Eshtiba (Weekly Report 18MAY-01JUN22).

On June 01, the Judicial Police launched an attack against the LIS building in Asaba'a, which had been taken by the Presidential Guard following Bashagha's attempt to enter in Tripoli.

On 09 June, Menfi appointed Ayeb's son, Mohammed, as deputy commander of the Presidential Guard. Also, the LIS commander appointed Mahmoud Trabelsi (son of GSS Cdr Imad Trabelsi) to the LIS in an unnamed position, to monitor foreign intelligence.

The SSA is an umbrella organization of Tripoli, Warshefana and Zawiyah-based groups created to provide security to Tripoli main institutions. However; it has recently split over political allegiances.

Assessment

It is very likely that Nawasi fighters were out of their areas and ignited the confrontation, lately fuelled by members of both organizations. It is highly unlikely that the clashes are politically driven despite their Cdr's affiliation to GNS or GNU. However, competition for gaining and keeping areas of influence is highly likely a common interest.

The second event is unlikely connected with the first one. Although the timing and affiliation to the LIS are coincident, the link between both events is not clear. It is highly likely that Muhammad Al-Bahron (aka al-Far) has reached a more powerful position. GNU leaders are likely continuing with the purchase and consolidation of loyalties, providing additional influence and benefits.

The clashes between the militias developed very easily, which shows the high degree of tension that keeps the situation so volatile and under turmoil. However, the low number of casualties is an indicator of the lack of appetite for escalation no matter the likelihood that new clashes could erupt in the short term.

- on 13 Jun, SSA conducted an anti-illegal migration operation, detaining 25 migrants in the area of Al Jabal Gharbi in Gharian. The SSA has not been operating in this area before and there is no information available about which forces were involved.

Comment

During last week, GNU PM Dbeibah instructed the formation of the 999th Infantry Bde in Gharyan, including units under the now former Gharyan Protection Bde, commanded by Nasser Eshtiba (Weekly Report 18MAY-01JUN22). On the other side, LNA reinforced their positions in the Central and Southern Regions.

2. SECURITY ADJUSTMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE GTA

Between the most significant events:

- on 09 Jun, local sources indicated that LNA shelled Chadian rebels at the South of Qatrun. The attack appeared after an LNA reconnaissance mission revealed the position of the Chadian rebels. The day after, 634th Bn was attacked in this area;
- on 11 Jun, LNA spokesman Ahmed Al-Mismari, stated that the LNA is continuing to clear Southern Libya of terrorists and Chadian rebels. Al-Mismari added that these groups work within the Southern border areas and are involved in smuggling weapons, illegal immigration, and transporting of terrorists. On the same day, local sources speculated with potential takeover scenarios related to oil and gas infrastructure as well as continued reports of LNA deployments of reinforcements in South-West Libya. There are reports

confirming LNA deployment of reinforcements to the South-West, including the 71st Bde, 51st Bde, 648th Bn, 188th Bn and the 666th Bn;

- movements were reported along the Hamada Desert route, and a possible cooperation between the Joint Operation Room in the Western Region under the Zintan Military Council banner and LNA forces. Notably, several of these LNA units currently deploying to the South-West have ties to the Western Region, including the 600th Bn, which has ties to the Zintan area.

Comment

During last week, LNA has reinforced its positions in the Southern Region. Units of the 106th Bde have deployed in Murzuq and near the Libyan-Chadian border, to face militant movements.

On the 7 Jun, LNA deployed reinforcements to the Fezzan Region in support of the Southern Operations Room. Furthermore, localised sources informed that the increased LNA presence in the area is creating potential tension with local actors.

Assessment

There is no change since last week assessment; it is very likely that LNA readjustments and reinforcement were carried out to remain in control of the Southern Area of Responsibility. It is unlikely that movements were motivated to take over any other infrastructure because they already can exercise control of the infrastructures through proxies.

3. OTHER INTERNATIONAL SECURITY RELATED EVENTS

The International Community maintain their commitment to the stability of the country by supporting a consensual political and financial solution that would allow a roadmap to the elections and the replenishment of the oil market in relation to the shortage created by the conflict in Ukraine.

Following, some of the main significant events:

- on 09 Jun, local media reported about a meeting in Turkey, between GNU PM Dbeibah and LTG COS Haddad with the Turkish minister of Defence, Hulusi Akar. The meeting followed a joint press-conference held between Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Turkish counterpart Melvut Cavusoglu in Ankara during which they confirmed the willingness to reach a common ground on contentious issues about Libya.
- on the same day:
 - in a speech in the presence of General Al-Haddad, at the end of NATO EFES2022 Exercises in Turkey:
 - President Erdogan is reported saying “*Our armed forces have responsibilities in Libya, and they are also present in Qatar and Kosovo and they **will remain indefinitely***”;
 - Turkish Defence Minister, Hulusi Akar, said that world peace in many countries, including **Libya, is among the responsibilities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**;
 - continued reports of foreign actor (alleged United States, United Kingdom, and Turkey) running military cargo flights to the Western Region, including at Misrata Air College and Al-Watyah Airbase. Localised sources claimed also the arrival of the Head of the former Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), and al-Watan political party, Abdel Hakim Belhaj to Al-Watyah Airbase;
- on 10 June, localized sources reported that an LNA delegation was scheduled to meet with a military delegation from Western Libya in Morocco on 22 Jun. According with the source, HoR Speaker Aquila Saleh said that the Western Libya delegation would include 52nd Bde commander Mahmoud bin Rajab, General Security Apparatus(GSA) Cdr Emad Trabelsi and Tripoli Revolutionaries Bde (TRB) Cdr Ayoub Aburas;

- on the same day, Tunisian President Kais Saied and the Foreign Ministers of Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia held a meeting in Tunis. The participants stressed the importance of achieving national reconciliation in Libya and completing the Libyan-Libyan political process via the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections. In social media, GNS MP Basagha accused GNU of lack of legitimacy. Tunisian President, Kais Saied said he rejected any attempt to divide neighbouring Libya, stressing that Tunisia's position "*supports a peaceful Libyan-led solution away from foreign interference*";
- on the 12 June, the consultations of the Libyan constitutional track committee formed by the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) started in Cairo under the auspices of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Libya, Stephanie Williams stated the need of consensus on the constitutional framework to encourage Libya to national elections as soon as possible. Consultations will continue until 19 June;
- on 13 June Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan requested the Turkish Parliament to extend the deployment of its military forces in Libya for another 18 months "***to protect national interests and provide support to the legitimate government***";
- on 14 Jun, the Turkish Grand National Assembly approved an 18-month extension to Turkish military force presence in Libya;
- on the same day, PC Head Mohamed Menfi received Turkish Ambassador to Libya Kenan Yilmaz at the PC Office. Menfi recognized ongoing cooperation with Ankara in support of Libya's stability;
- on the same day, with a video recorded, a Tobruk notable identified as Faraj Abu Attiwa aka "Abou Akkouz" called on Libyan tribes to mobilise towards the Oil Crescent to carry out "*holy war to secure the region*". This call for mobilization followed allegations that the US, UK, and Turkey intended to deploy troops to control the oil fields and terminals in the short term;
- on 15 June, local sourced reported that PC Head, Mohamed Menfi, planned to send members of the 5+5 JMC to Egypt in an official mission. The 5+5 JMC would be accompanied by GNU Army COS, LTG Muhammad Al-Haddad and LNA GNS Army COS, LTG Abdel Razek Al-Nadori;
- on the same day, GNU MoI delegation hold meetings with Tunisian authorities, discussing security cooperation at the Ras Ajdir Border Crossing.

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.