

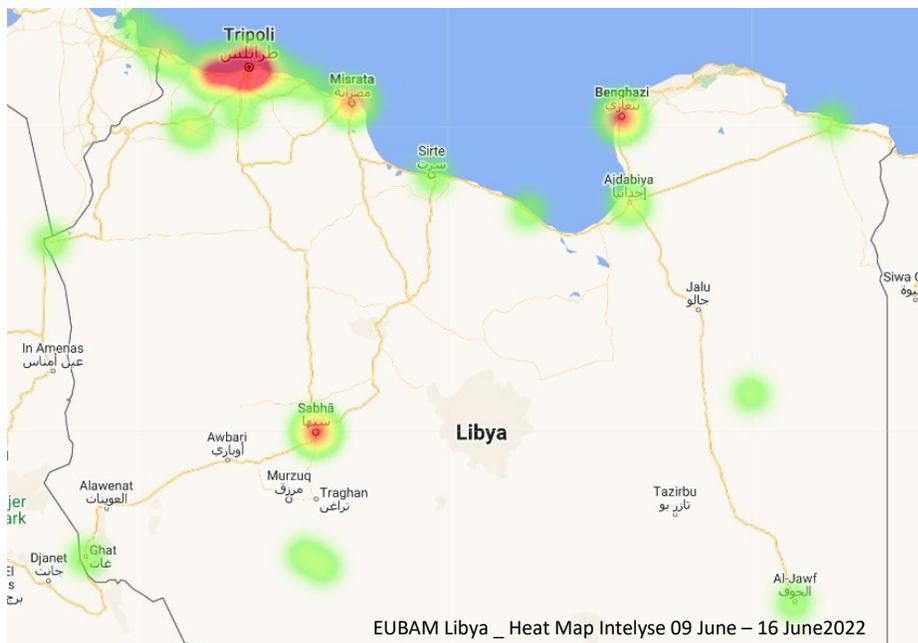
SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

Security & Covid-19: WEEKLY SECURITY REPORT

Country: Libya & Tunisia

Period: 09/06/2022 – 16/06/2022

SECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW



1. Key developments

- Tripoli - security developments
- Other security developments
 - Libyan National Army (LNA) deployments in the South to assert control on the Libyan-Chad & Libyan-Sudan border
 - Sudanese armed groups discuss withdrawing from Libya
- Tunisia security update

2. Findings

2.1. Tripoli – security developments

This week, intra-armed groups tensions in Tripoli escalated on 10-11 June with the outbreak of skirmishes between the Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) and Nawasi Brigade in a densely-populated downtown Tripoli. Available information suggests the dispute was sparked by Nawasi’s detention of SSA members, triggering retaliation before tensions subsided the following day. Significant number of civilians spending evenings in public parks and spaces in downtown, due to power outages. The 444 Fighting Brigade’s intervention succeed to deescalate the situation in Tripoli and extract civilians stranded between the fighting fractions. Current security atmospherics are calm but tensed and there are credible concerns that events on 10-11 June could be the precursors to a broader escalation.

In the sequence of events:

- **09 June**, movement of significant amounts of troops and armament Zintan forces to the 4 Brigade Camp in Aziziyah, south of Tripoli. As consequence after Prime Minister (GNU) Dbeibah sidelined Major General Osama



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

Jweli for his alleged support of Prime Minister (GNS) Fathi Bashagha during his attempt to establish himself in Tripoli on May 17.

- **10-11 June**, pro-GNU Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) and pro-GNS Nawasi Brigade at Tuesday Mall Roundabout at approximately 2315hrs on 10 June. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) 444 Fighting Brigade deescalated tensions in the early hours of 11 June.
- **10 – 11 June**, two separate clashes erupted in Tripoli overnight June 10/11. The first started around 2230hrs at the Suq Al-Thalatha Roundabout between Nawasi Brigade and the Stability and Support Apparatus (SSA). The clashes went on for a number of hours and saw 444 Fighting Brigade intervention to defuse the situation. The second set of clashes erupted at midnight around Almadar Street between 777 Brigade (associated with the Libyan Intelligence Service) and the Tripoli Security Directorate, supported by the Judicial Police.
- **13 June**, GNU announced formation of the “Intervention and Preservation of Order Force”, headed by Deputy Head of the Anti-Illegal Immigration Authority, Major Muhammad Al-Khouja, tasked with resolving clashes and disputes between armed actors. Seemingly Tripoli militia commanders, including Special Deterrence Force (SDF) Commander Abdulraouf Kara, Nawasi Brigade Commander Mustafa Qaddour, 777 Brigade Commander Haithem Tajouri, and former Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) Commander Hashim Bishr, attended a meeting at the SDF-controlled Mitiga Base at unspecified time over the past 2 days (13 or 14 June). Reports allege the participants discussed unifying ranks and overcoming differences in order to maintain security and stability in the capital and reached agreement to expel armed fraction which do not fall under the command of the Tripoli Military Region due to their alleged involvement in criminal activity across the capital.
- **13 June**, a tense security environment and increased security presence build-up at the Zintan-controlled 7 April Camp of pro-GNS Osama Juwailidue to alleged a closed-door security meeting held between SSA Commander Abdulghani Al-Kikli, former GNU Military Intelligence chief Osama Juwaili, and Zintan General Security Apparatus Commander Emad Trabelsi.
- **14 June** – Meeting between Joint Operations Room of the Western Region Commander Lieutenant General Usama al-Juweili, General Security Service (GSS) Commander, Emad Trabelsi, and Stability Security Agency (SSA)/ Abu Salim Central Security Head, Abdelghani al-Kikli (aka Ghaniwa) at the April 07 Camp during which security arrangements in Tripoli were discussed.
- **14 June** – Numerous reports indicating unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) monitored over Al-Swani, Ain Zara, Souq Al Jumaa areas of Tripoli, the Wershiffanah Region "Jafara District" and Tajoura, across Western Mountains "Nafusa Mountains" including Zintan.
- **15 June** - Heavy sporadic gunfire audible in Airport Road, Ain Zara and Souq Al Jumaa, Al-Swani, and Al-Kremiya areas, Tripoli by armed fractions affiliated to the Juwaili-led (Zintan) Joint Operations Room in the Western. Earlier that afternoon, heavy sporadic gunfire was reported in the western parts of the Qasr Bin Ghashir area in the afternoon on 14 June, when reportedly Zintan armed factions tested weapons in Wershiffanah's Al-Twaisha area, southwest of Tripoli International Airport (TIP). Reports indicate Zintan armed factions loyal to former GNU Military Intelligence Chief Osama Juwaili (Zintan) mobilised in Al-Twaisha later that night.

SDCD COMMENT

In the immediate term, tensions are expected to persist between the Nawasi Brigade/ Zintan forces and the pro-Dabaiba armed groups i.e. Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) with 444 Fighting Brigade being relied upon to defuse tensions in the city. Despite calls for calm from domestic and international actors, the risk of skirmishes in the capital remains high and increases with the approach of the expiry of the GNU's mandate by 21st June. The period between 16 and 24 of June is considered likely for escalation of security situation in the capital with potential for increased armed groups movement, deployments (incl static checkpoints and patrols) and kinetic engagements/skirmishes.

In the absence of a roadmap after 21st June, rumours and misinformation are widespread. The pillars of stability that prevailed since March 2021 appear to be gradually eroding as highlighted by the expansion of the LNA-sanctioned oil blockade, faltering efforts to unify the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), and the widening institutional divide. Prior to Government of National Stability (GNS) PM Fathi Bashagha's failed incursion in Tripoli on 17 May, the Nawasi/SSA skirmishes would be regarded as a one-off incident. However, given the current context of shifting alliances, events on 10-



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

11 June were seen as a continuation of the GNU/GNS standoff after the Nawasi Brigade's overt alignment with Bashagha. As a case in point, notorious SSA/Ghneiwa commander Abdulhamid "Al-Madghota" declared on 11 June that a return to peace in Tripoli is contingent on the dissolution of all armed groups loyal to GNS PM Fathi Bashagha. Competition between the two governments serves as the ideological divide between key armed groups across the western region, which explains why seemingly minor disputes can escalate into broader skirmishes. Still, it is important to note that there is a "turf war" element underpinning the latest dispute, besides broader ideological differences. Ever since the dismissal of Nawasi Brigade commander Mustafa Gaddour, the pro-GNU alliance has been attempting to fill the void and control territory under Nawasi influence. This was the case for example when Judicial Police and Nawasi elements attempted to regain control of a Libyan Intelligence Services (LIS) building in AlSabaa, east Tripoli, on 01 June. Territorial control is an important factor especially for field commanders who are not directly engaged in broader political manoeuvring. Of note, by siding with the GNU, the SSA has gradually expanded its area of operations (AO) across the Tripoli area and more recently in Gharyan, south Tripoli. Should inter-militia tensions be driven by turf wars in the next few weeks, a more favourable security outlook is anticipated in Tripoli relative to a major escalation fuelled by the GNU/GNS power struggle. Nevertheless, there are no guarantees that the GNS will cease attempts to exploit these divisions to its advantage. Meanwhile, the threat posed by a Zintan advance on the capital looms. Zintan convoys arrived in Al-Aziziyah's 4th Brigade camp. Columns of technicals and at least one BM-21 multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) were spotted en route to the camp south Tripoli. Some observers are of the view Zintan is engaged in posturing to raise its bargaining leverage and is unlikely to escalate tensions. In general, the context of shifting alliances is highlighted by backchannel negotiations. Some observers argue Zintan is historically more amenable to negotiating. Of note, reports indicate a meeting was held between the SSA, Zintan General Security Apparatus, and forces affiliated with former military intelligence chief Osama Juwaili at the Zintancontrolled 7 April Camp on 13 June. It is unclear if Zintan forces are attempting to pressure the SSA to side with the GNS, which indicates that the GNU's posture in Tripoli is directly linked with its ability to maintain SSA support.

Zintani aligned forces have been increasingly active in their areas of control in western Tripoli over the past week and now to the south of the Tripoli International Airport (Zintani forces were blamed for destroying the location along with Misratan forces after they fought for control during the civil war in 2014 and disused since). Commentators indicate that the meeting between Major General Osama Jweli and fellow Zintani Emad Trabelsi with SSA/Ghneiwa did very little if anything to defuse tensions or build any trust between them. Unconfirmed speculation suggests that Zintani forces may be interested in securing a footprint at the disused Tripoli International Airport, which remains a strategic location used by both Kani Brigade in 2018 and the LNA in 2019 to launch offensives on the capital.

Increasing tensions around Zintani-controlled areas could trigger armed confrontations with opposition groups, especially SSA/Ghneiwa who is located nearby. Further drone activity is also likely as factions look to gather information on what forces are doing in the capital. This could add to tensions as well as further surface-to-air fire. It is likely the mobilization of 444 Fighting Brigade in the Al Fornaj and Salah al-Din areas, south of Tripoli to be a pre-emptive tactics to create a buffer area alongside Zintani and SSA/Ghneiwa possible armed engagement contact line.

Uncorroborated reports alleging 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 with the aim was to prepare the reception of GNS PM Fathi Bashagha in Palm City **have been proofed as unsubstantiated and rejected as fake by the Palm City Residence General Manager**. The information appeared in Libyan Facebook news flow by a single source and haven't been confirmed by other outlets.

The clashes between the armed groups can rapidly erupt, which indicates the high degree of frictions and animosity which keeps the situation volatile. The low number of casualties is an indicator of the lack of drive for escalation no matter the likelihood that new clashes could erupt in the short term. The clashes between Nawasi BDE and SSA on 10-11 June are unlikely to be politically motivated regardless that the fractions affiliation to GNS or GNU, but to be a result of dispute over territory control above overlapping areas.

In political aspect, the impact on security situation is dominated by the expectation of the results from the High Council of State (HCS) and House of Representatives (HoR) last round of UN facilitated talks to establish a constitutional basis for



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

elections in Cairo. Despite reports of preliminary agreement on at least 140 articles, it is questionable if key issues such as enabling military officials to run for office will be resolved.

2.2. Other security developments

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

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. 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.

In sequence of events:

- On 09 Jun, LNA allegedly shelled Chadian rebels at the South of Qatrun, closely following an LNA reconnaissance mission revealed the position of the Chadian rebels. On 10 June, the 634th Bn was targeted in retaliatory attack 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, working within the Southern border areas and involved in smuggling weapons, illegal immigration, and harbouring alleged terrorists.
- On 12 June joint movements along the Hamada Desert route, of units affiliated to 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.

SDCD COMMENT

Commentators, speculate that continued reports of LNA deployments of reinforcements in South-West Libya are potential takeover scenarios related to oil and gas infrastructure although LNA already can exercise control of the facilities through proxies. 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 in Hamada Desert draw further attention with the fact that several of the LNA units, currently deploying to the South-West have ties to the Western Region, i.e. the 600th Bn, which has ties to the Zintan area.

It is likely LNA to continue its course of deployments and reinforcement in south -West Libya and alongside Libyan-Chad & Libyan-Sudan border with the goal to remain in control of the Southern Libya.

Sudanese armed groups discuss withdrawing from Libya

Media articles indicate Sudanese military delegation held informal talks with seven armed factions from the Darfur region, to discuss withdrawing their forces from Libya, and joining the peace process in Sudan¹.

Several rebel factions based in Libya signed the “Democratic Path Forces” declaration, calling to complete peace in Sudan, end war, and address the root causes of the Sudanese crisis. The process also seeks to ensure “the withdrawal of their fighters from Libya and reintegration in the security forces and society” and “contribute to the stabilization of both Sudan and Libya”.

The Sudanese delegation was led by the Head of Military Intelligence, Major General Mohamed Ahmed Sabir, Maj Gen Hamza Youssif Burah of the General Intelligence Services, and other military officials. The discussions on security arrangements focused on technical details such as assembly sites, the DDR process, and a timetable for the return of fighters from Libya.

SDCD COMMENT

¹ Media reference: <https://libyareview.com/24550/sudanese-armed-groups-discuss-withdrawing-from-libya/>



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

The aim of this informal, preliminary meeting, (between) non-signatory armed movements based in Libya and a high-level government's delegation, was to discuss the inclusion of these movements in the peace process.

Darfurian armed groups sought refuge in Libya, where they served as mercenary groups alongside the warring parties mainly on LNA side. Sudanese armed fractions, as well as other foreign armed groups continued presence in Libya, i.e. from Chad, Syria and Russia is opposed by the international community seeks to bring stability to the country. The meeting and the declaration come as a consequence of October 2021 former Sudanese Foreign Minister, Mariam Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi confirmation the presence of Sudanese mercenaries in Libya and assumption of responsibility by the Sudanese government to ensure that those fighters do not pose a threat to Libya.

2.3. Tunisia security update

The Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) declared a general strike in the public sector in protest against the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of workers on 16 June. Protests with potential to escalate into violence, are likely to continue throughout June due to continued confrontation between president Saied's and political opposition and labour syndicates, high unemployment, continued pay freezes, and rising prices, specifically on food and fuel. Protests will have. The UGTT nationwide public sector general strike is considered to have biggest disruptive potential on public peace. The strike includes 159 state-owned firms including airlines, and maritime and land transport companies. The UGTT has rejected spending cuts and demands wage increases for state workers and plan to reform the companies excluding their privatisation. Following Saied's firing of 57 judges, accusing them of corruption and protecting terrorists, 99% of Tunisia's magistrates, as well as lawyers and other court officials have initiated a strike that began the week of 4-10 June. On 9 June the Judges announced their plans to extend their strike for a second week, until Saied reverses his decision to dismiss the 57 judges.

Counterterrorism operations have focused on low level arrests. Two men have been arrested. One was arrested on Mount Salloum, Kasserine after pledging logistical support to an IS-affiliate organization in the area, locally known as Ajned Al Khilefa. A second man was charged with religious extremism in Tozeur, Southwest Tunisia, after being arrested by a counter-terrorism unit.

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. The likelihood of president Saied continuing to take actions criticised by the domestic and international community remains high. Opposition groups have initiated protests and demonstrations in resistance of his specific decrees, which protests have not gained traction as a larger movement. It is highly likely Tunisia to see mass protests and demonstrations in the lead up to 30 June and particularly after the Constitution draft is published, which is expected to foresee strong executive powers to the President i.e. to have an 'executive with the power to lead and not just block'. It cannot be excluded the referendum to be delayed due to protests or logistical issues, it will realistically occur on 25 July as there is no interior political power to slow down president's roadmap. Oppositional groups have voiced their desire to boycott the referendum, which is unlikely to occur as voter registration numbers are high. Tunisia has proactive civil society groups, like the UGTT and the National Salvation Front, that have proven their ability to organize large demonstrations and strikes. If the referendum passes, the UGTT and the National Salvation Front will assert their political power in the wake of a strong executive. If the referendum fails, the UGTT and the National Salvation Front will have leverage on the president Saied into a renegotiation of the draft constitution.

SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

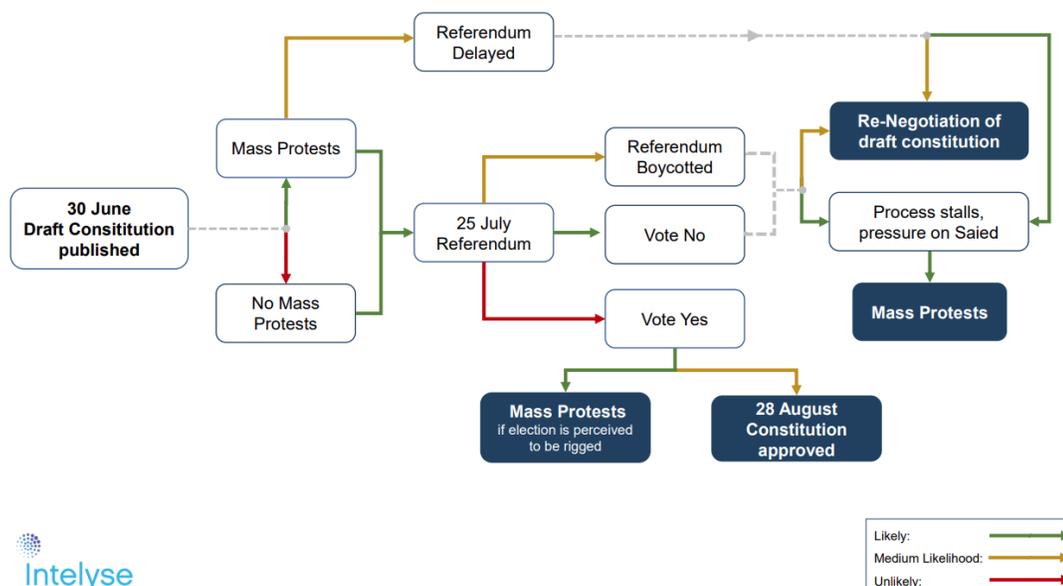


Diagram 1 (credit Intelyse)

Compared to the previous two months, the frequency of counterterrorism operations has declined, with a noticeable drop in numbers of arrests and government security operations in atmospheric of absent significant shift of on the ground operations. President Saied has stated that the new constitution will be secular, with no mention of Islam. This, along with political steps to suppress Ennahda and the Dignity Coalition (Tunisia’s main Islamic parties), will likely mean an increased security focus on suppressing extremist activities. Although threat level for domestic terrorism remains low in Tunisia, the anti-Islamic rhetoric of the government have the potential increase this threat, especially if the economic crisis and social instability escalates over the next month.

5. COVID-19 Update²

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 *	36	24	+50%	5	0	0	0 %	502,076
Tunisia **	886	668	+33%	73	7	7	- 8%	1,044,426

² Data from WorldOMeter. Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> [online]. Last updated: 16/06/2022 15:00GMT

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



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

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