

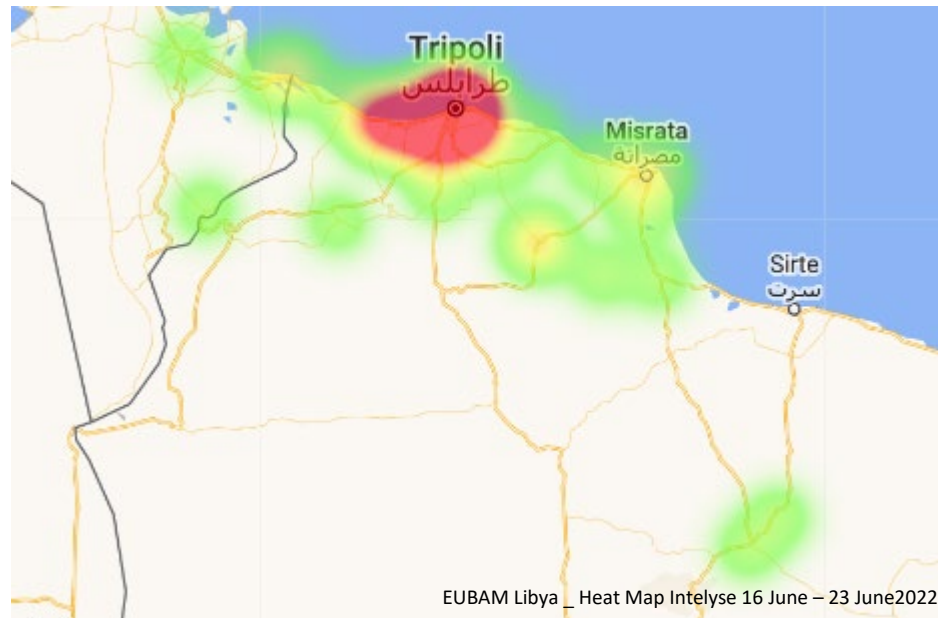
SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

Security & Covid-19: WEEKLY SECURITY REPORT

Country: Libya & Tunisia

Period: 16/06/2022 – 23/06/2022

SECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW



1. Key developments

- Tripoli - security developments
- Other security developments
 - 5+5 Joint Military Commission renewed calls for unification of Libyan armed forces and departure of all foreign mercenaries and armed groups.
 - Increased activities of Wagner PMC in Central Libya
- Tunisia security update

2. Findings

2.1. Tripoli – security developments

This week, the trend of military build-up of armed group movements peaked on 20-21/06/2022, when pro-GNS Zintan armed groups deployed to Tripoli, triggering pro-GNU armed fractions rapid deployments and establishment of perimeter around strategic locations. Movements continued also on 21 and 22 June. The tensions prompted skirmishes between pro GNU groups and roadblocks on west coastal road. Institutional divide between the GNU and GNS grows after formal end of the UN LPDF roadmap on 21 June, triggering concerns of a potential pro GNS-led entry by armed force in Tripoli attempt. The outbreak of skirmishes between the Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) and Security Deterrence Force – Al RA'DA (SDF/RA'DA), over territory control in a densely-populated downtown Tripoli during night hours of 22-23 June resulted in 5 casualties – 3 from the armed groups and 2 civilians. Further indications of the fragile relations between the armed groups considered to be pro-GNU are the tensions are the roadblocks on the western coastal road between Tripoli and Zawiya and rising of earth/sand mounds. Additional tensions between SDF/RA'DA and the Tajoura Brigades sparked on 23 June, due to the release of the commander of the Tajoura militia - Ali Daridar, and a 72-hour deadline to return him

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to prison given by Tajoura brigade to avoid clashes with SDF/RA'DA. Later during the day the Semaforo Al Bifio road in Tajoura has been blocked with sand berms and armed vehicles belonging to the Tajoura Brigades blocked al Shat road, blocking traffic at the Doran Span roundabout, east of Tripoli.

On 23 June GNU sources claimed GNU PM Dbeiba released of 30 million dinars to Imad Trabelsi, commander of the Public Security Service in Tripoli, and Ghaniwa al-Kikli, commander of the Stability Support Aparatus. In addition, it was announced the formation of a new agency, named the "Desert Patrols and Border Guards Service", headed by "Mohamed al-Marhani, Imad Trabelsi's deputy and former Undersecretary of the GNU Interior Ministry.

Significant effect of the heightened tensions and worsening security atmospherics in Tripoli have also hybrid disinformation campaign which led animosity between armed groups and insisting fear into citizens. On 22 June when families were urged to leave Girls College Park, Lido park and public beach areas along Al Kurnish & Al Shad roads. Later in the evening the announcement of the evacuation of the public park areas was proofed fake. On 21 June a document claimed to be originated by the Presidential Council (PC) and suspected to be fake, announcing the appointment of West Coast Military Region commander Salaeheddien Al-Namroush as Al-Haddad's successor, was circulated across social platforms and triggered armed clash at the Missiles Camp when the camp force protection element prevented the military forces from leaving the camp.

In the sequence of events:

- Tensions prompted skirmishes between pro GNU groups and roadblocks on west coastal road night of 22-23 June:
 - On 23 June armed group affiliated to Zintan Commander Gen. Osama Jawili prevented the GNU PM Dabiba column from passing through the Warshefana, in direction to the mountain area, heading towards Jadu. PM GNU Dabiba used a helicopter to reach the city of Jadu.
 - The tensions prompted skirmishes between pro GNU groups and roadblocks on west coastal road. Skirmishes during night hours of 22-23 June between the Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) and Security Deterrence Force – Al RA'DA (SDF/RA'DA), over territory control in a densely-populated downtown Tripoli, resulted in casualties the armed groups and civilians.
 - Additional tensions on 23 June between SDF/RA'DA and the Tajoura Brigades sparked, due to the release of the commander of the Tajoura militia - Ali Daridar, and a 72-hour deadline to return him to prison given by Tajoura brigade to avoid clashes with SDF/RA'DA.
 - Further indications of the fragile relations between the armed groups considered to be pro-GNU are the roadblocks on the western coastal road between Tripoli and Zawiya and rising of earth mounds. It is not clear if those are not part of preventive measures to deter alleged expected pro-GNS armed groups to enter Tripoli by force.
- military and armed group movement and mobilisations overnight across Tripoli during the night of 21-22 June:
 - pro-GNU Joint Operations Force (JOF) convoy from Misrata arrived in Tripoli.
 - pro-GNS convoy affiliated with Osama Juwaili (Zintan) from Al-Aziziyah arrived in Tripoli &th April Camp.
- military and armed group movement and mobilisations overnight across Tripoli during the night of 20–21 June:
 - Prime Minister (GNU) Dbeibah is reported to have ordered the Constitution and Elections Support Force (CESF), the SSA and TRB/Presidential Guard to deploy in Central Tripoli
 - Pro-GNU groups carried out a show of force, mobilising to Martyrs Square and parading through several areas of the city
 - SSA (Ghneiwa) mobilised as part of the show of force in Abu Salim
 - General Security under Emad Trabelsi (Zintani) mustered at Draiby Street near his HQ at the Tobacco Factory in apparent response to the above show of force with weapons testing reported
 - Mahjoub Brigade have been observed with CESF on Tariq al-Seka guarding the Prime Minister's office
 - SSA (under Ghneiwa's command) at the Suq Roundabout
 - Convoys were observed travelling along the Shat Road

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- An Unknown group moved into Janzour from the coast road - this may be 52 Brigade from Sidi Bilal under West Coast Military Region
- 166 Battalion mobilised in the Suq al-Thalata area
- An increase in heavy calibre mounted weapons were observed at CP 17 last night although stable atmospherics were reported at the time
- Small Arms Fire was reported in Tajura (possible weapons testing)
- In Gharyan, the "Gharyan Airforce" mobilised to the Medical Bridge where they took stationary positions.

SDCD COMMENT

In the immediate term, it is likely tensions and the institutional divide between the GNU and GNS to continue to grow throughout 2022, possibly resulting in a military confrontation. The GNU/GNS political standoff is fuelling tensions, though the majority of the skirmishes witnessed over the past few months were sparked by local disputes. Intra-militia tensions in Tripoli are expected to persist on between GNS and GNU affiliated groups on one hand and inside the considered to be pro-GNU loose coalition of armed groups including SSA, SDF/RA'DA, Tajoura Brigade, Tripoli Revolutionary Brigade (TRB), Fursan Janzour (Janzour Knights), Judicial Police, Al-Far Militia (CID Zawiya) on the other hand and with 444 Fighting Brigade being relied upon to defuse tensions in the city, while the Nawasi brigade remained mostly passive after the 10-11 June skirmishes with SSA. Despite calls for calm from domestic and international actors, the threat of skirmishes in the capital remains high and increases with the expiry of the GNU's mandate by 21st June. In a separate development, a bloc of pro-GNS HCS members issued a statement on 20 June demanding the GNU to hand over power to the GNS in conjunction with the expiry of its mandate on 21 June. United Nations on 22 June warned against attempts of political manipulation by parties in Libya¹.

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.

In terms of alliances, the position of the 444 Fighting Brigade and Special Deterrence Force (SDF) is difficult to ascertain as their neutrality was described by influential pro-GNU SSA commander Abdul Hamid Madghota as "treason" on 21 June e.g. the Al-Madghota (who was also involved in triggering the skirmishes with Nawasi brigade last week) claimed that the entire area from Tuesday Mall Roundabout to Mitiga International Airport (MJI) is under the influence of rogue pro-GNS elements. Al-Madghota warned that any armed formation that does not follow the directives of the GNU must be eliminated, while noting that the SSA does not mobilise without the orders of the GNU Defence Ministry and PM Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

Meanwhile, there are allegations pro-GNS armed factions currently mobilized in 7 April Camp alongside Juwaili's Zintan forces include pro-LNA elements from the 71st Infantry Brigade. Of note, the 71st Infantry Brigade is led by Major Ramadan Abu Rgeiga who hails from Zintan. The brigade was reportedly formed in May on LNA orders and comprises remnants of the LNA's 9th Brigade Tarhunah Al-Kaniyat. Separately, sources indicate the state of alert was declared in Gharyan by the pro-GNU Gharyan protection force on 20 June, clearly indicating existing concerns of a GNS-led military attempt to enter the capital by force.

Commentators claim that formation of a new agency, named the "Desert Patrols and Border Guards Service", is an attempt of GNU PM Dbeibeh to split the Zintan forces, commanded by Major General Osama al-Juwaili. It appears that GNU PM had succeeded to convince Imad Trabelsi to back him up. Trabelsi recently announced his armed group joining the Tripoli Protection Force, formed to repel any expected attack from Major General Osama al-Juwaili's forces.

Within this context, heightened disinformation is posing obstacles. It appears that opposing sides are aware of the repercussions of starting wider ranging military operations, which could portray them as the aggressor, a position which could reflect unfavourably on them by national, and foreign actors.

In political aspect, the impact on security situation is dominated by the failure of the High Council of State (HCS) and House of Representatives (HoR) UN facilitated talks to establish a constitutional basis for elections in Cairo, which did not reached

¹ Media reference: <https://twitter.com/libyaherald/status/1539991850462990338>

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agreement on some aspects i.e. governance during the transitional period till the elections, eligibility of government and military officials to run for office etc., pushing the final decision further to 28 June, when it is expected Libyan Parliament Speaker Ageela Saleh to meet High State Council Chairman Khalid Al-Mishri in Geneva.

2.2. Other security developments

5+5 Joint Military Commission renewed calls for unification of Libyan armed forces and departure of all foreign mercenaries and armed groups.

The 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) official confirmed the LNA JMC members proposal that any citizen is eligible to run for president during consultations with the Constitutional Committee in Cairo. The proposal is among the competing interests of HoR's resolve to allow all candidates to run for office and remove all restrictions applicable to military officials and dual nationals. The General Command, said that the last meeting of the 5+5 Joint Military Committee focused on building confidence between the two sides as entail practical step in the plan to withdraw the foreign mercenaries and armed groups. The committee agreed to move forward with implementation of the arrangements for disarmament of Libyan militia, rehabilitating and integrating their affiliates in the military structures. The meeting stressed on the need to advance with the process of unifying the military institution from the working cadres and the need to get out of the cycle of the Libyan crisis, especially after the state worsening security atmospherics for the citizens. High point of the 5+5 JMC meeting conclusions was that the committee stressed not to return to war again and work to move forward the arrangements, setting the timetable and coordination and cooperation with the UN mission.

SDCD COMMENT

5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) Faraj Al-Sawsaa declared on 19 June that the JMC proposed to the joint HoR/HCS Constitutional Committee to annul the clause that stipulates military officials cannot run for president for at least five years. The JMC official confirmed the LNA JMC members proposed that any citizen is eligible to run for president during consultations with the Constitutional Committee in Cairo. The controversial clause would enable LNA commander Khalifa Haftar to run for president. The subject was a contentious issue that delayed the presidential polls in Dec 2021. The comments by the LNA JMC representative prove that key issues remain unresolved and the goal to build a strong army away from all political strife is yet to be achieved.

Increased activities of Wagner PMC in Central Libya

Last week saw increased reports of an LNA military build-up west of Sirte alleging the LNA forces are backed by Russian Wagner Group private military contractors (PMCs) and pro-Russian Syrian mercenaries.

The same day media articles quote The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, claiming that the presence of Wagner Group mercenaries in Libya is "on a commercial basis," saying the private security company was invited by the authorities in Tobruk - referring to the House of Representatives. In the article Lavrov reiterated his country's official position that Wagner "has nothing to do with the Russian state and said he had made this clear to his French colleagues when they got concerned. He said Wagner agreed with the government in Mali to provide security services.

SDCD COMMENT

The private military company Wagner Group is known to be close to Russian President Vladimir Putin, and its members are suspected of committing violations in Libya, Mali² and Syria.

Although it is considered that due to engagements in Ukraine, only small number of Wagner PMC staff Russian nationals still remain in Libya. The number of Syrian nationals affiliated to the group is estimated at 250 plus. Latest movements of the PMC staff allegedly with LNA elements towards the considered as potential contact line with GNU affiliated forces is

² Media reference: https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/lavrov-wagner-libya-commercial-reasons-upon-tobruk-authorities%E2%80%99-request-https://t.me/ok_spn/19742;

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like related to LNA efforts to strengthen their western flank. It is also likely the relocation of LNA and Wagner troops to the west to be in response to the increased deployment of GNU affiliated armed units south east of Misratah and Bani Walid i.e. 53 Brigade, 444 Fighting Brigade, CTR, 166 Battalion and several others, tasked to repel any possible LNA offensive towards Tripoli aimed at facilitating GNS PM Bashagha entry into the capital.

2.3. Tunisia security update

The week saw increased political activities following president Saied Kais 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. Members of the Tunisian Judiciary scheduled series of protests in Tunis. The wave of demonstration will likely continue over the weekend and next week. The protest escalated with the announcement of 3 judges who decided to start a hunger strike to defend the independence of the judiciary and call on the Head of State to reconsider his decision. Other sectors may also join the protest to express their support in denouncing President Saied's decision.

SDCD COMMENT

As already known, the Tunisia's new draft constitution is expected to be published on 30 June, 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. The conflict with the magistrates remains pivotal for the further development of the political crisis in the country and has the potential to receive support from civil society, trade unions and political parties. Threat of deepening political tensions and potential for civil unrest will remain in short and mid term.

5. COVID-19 Update³

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 *	34	36	-6%	5	0	0	0 %	502,110
Tunisia **	2277	886	+157%	189	15	7	+114%	1,046,703

LIST OF ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

AQ - Al-Qaeda

³ Data from WorldOMeter. Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> [online]. Last updated: 23/06/2022 15:00GMT



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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 serve as the basis for this report. These documents may not be copied, forwarded or reproduced, manual, electronic, photographic to any other person or organization outside EU Institutions and EU Members States without further approval from the originator.