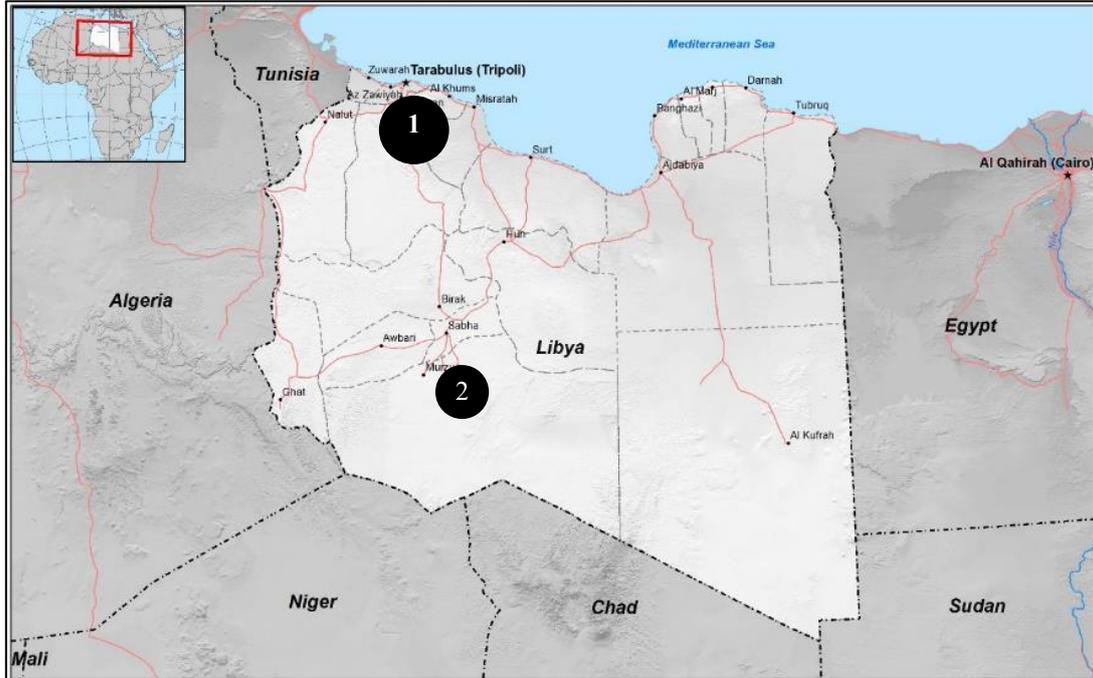


EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA
Weekly Report 30 JUN - 06 JUL 2022

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SUMMARY

The unsettled political situation, indicated by the unsuccessful negotiations in Cairo, together with the deteriorating economic situation, the poor living conditions and the energy outages, created tension among the population and eventually resulted in nationwide demonstrations with the siege of the HoR Headquarters in Tobruk and a protester died in Sabha on the 4th of July, as the low points.

The unrest in Fezzan has led the LNA to emphasise its presence, willing to prevent the regional initiative to form an independent government and autonomous security institutions from progressing.

The International Community continues to possibly influence an agreed roadmap towards peaceful unified elections and distribution of evenly needed resources. This contrasts however with the refusal to allow a Turkish ship to be inspected by IRINI under the arms embargo control activities.

The longer such political stalemate and the competition for financial resources the more untenable will be the deterioration of the internal security conditions, and the more difficult the possibility for the military forces to remain aside, apart the more limiting of any reconciliation effort.

1. PROTESTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The extension of the Cairo Talks in Geneva (Switzerland) did not achieve the reform of the constitution and the agreement on a new political roadmap. The non-renewal of the LPDF has left the country in a difficult political stalemate with a direct reflexion in the security situation. The failure to nominate former Algerian Foreign Minister Sabri Boukadoum as head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has driven the Special Advisor for Libya of the UN SG to continue in her position.

The protracting of the instability, together with the outbreak of the economic crisis, poor living conditions and power outages have increased tension among citizens. Several demonstrations in different areas throughout the country were claiming for an improvement of the living conditions, and the necessity to exit from the impasse. These protests happened in a gradient of different violence, from a pacific gathering to the assault of governmental buildings. As a common point, it has been the request for an exit from the critical polarized political and economic situation. Among the most significant events:

- on 28 June, Tripoli local youths demonstrated against the increased power outages and load shedding hours. The demonstration involved burning tyres and the area was monitored by governmental UAV;
- on the same day, there was a replication of the Tripoli demonstrations in other locations as Gharyan and Jendouba;
- on 29 June, demonstrations took place along all day in different locations of the Tripoli area;
- on 30 June, demonstrations continued along all day in different locations of the Tripoli area and in other provinces of Great Tripoli Area as Murqub, Zawiyah, Misratah. Demonstrators blocked several road and burning tyres, which has been a common practice in most of the locations. Security forces mobilized to control demonstrations, secure the government buildings and maintain main roads open;
- on 01 July, there was an increase in the events across the country, with replication in Nalut and Nuqat province with direct implication of the closing of the coastal road. Many government building were threatened by the protesters;
- on the same day, protesters broke into the HoR headquarters in Tobruk. The assailants set fire on the building and looted its contents. According with localized sources, it was in response to the long hours of power interruptions, political grievances and delay in the payment of public sector salary;
- on 02 July, there was an increase in the civil unrest events across the country, only in Tripoli area there were more than 60 events recorded;
- on 03 July, the population continued to burn tyres and close off roads across Tripoli and other parts of the country also in demand of the dissolution of the existing political bodies. In Misrata, locals erected barricades and marched on foot towards the Municipality. Some reports indicated that Misrata's Al-Sumoud Bde Cdr Salah Badi took part for the second time in the protest outside the Municipality;
- on 04 July, the Baltris Youth Movement announced the postponement of the demonstrations scheduled on the same day, without indicating a new date. The movement initially called for demonstrations in several location around the country;
- the number of protests dropped significantly overnight. Security forces increased their deployment and began to take a harder posture. Security forces broke up protests in several location as in Sirte and Sabha where a protestor died;
- on 05 July, protests continued across the country including Tripoli Wershiffanah, Al-Ajaylat, Nalut, Garaboli, Tarhunah, Bani Walid, Misrata, Sirte, Tobruk, Sabha, and Al-Kufra.

Among the most significant political and security reactions to the demonstrations:

- the adviser to the UN Secretary-General, Stephanie Williams, called on Libyan authorities to respect the rights of people to hold protests, however the storming of the HoR headquarters in Tobruk, has been declared as not acceptable;
- in response to the protests, GNU-PM Abdul Hamid Dbeiba called on political bodies, including his Government, to step down, adding that the only possible way forward is the election;

- at the same time, HoR spokesperson Aquila Saleh showed the understanding for the population's suffering and stating their rights to peaceful protest. However, he reiterated that acts of sabotage will be persecuted by law;
- on 03 July, localised sources informed of a possible GNU reorganisation of the Military Regions in preparation for a possible declaration of a state of emergency, declaration of martial law, closure of airspace/ borders, withdrawal of external forces, formation of temporary government, and holding of a constitutional referendum;
- on 04 July, GNU PM Abdul Hamid Dbeiba directed to arrest those demonstrators who were threatening public security in Tripoli, Misrata and other cities in Tripolitania;
- on the same day, the spokesperson of the LNA, MG Ahmed Al Mismari stated that the LNA supports the demonstrators and will protect them, because they are not violent. He further accused the Muslim Brotherhood of been behind the protest.

Comment

Libya's electricity infrastructure has been in decline since the 1990s, when international sanctions made it difficult for Muammar Gaddafi's regime to hire foreign engineering companies. Many components of Libya's infrastructure, including its electricity grid, have received minimal maintenance for decades. Power outages in Tripoli typically last five hours per day during spring and autumn and they last up to 40 hours at a time during the peaks in summer and winter months.

Over and above illegal power connections, theft of copper wires, sabotage of transmission towers, destruction of power stations by petty criminals and armed groups, institutional corruption are the main responsible for the energy crisis. The Libyan Audit Bureau has accused the national electrical company GECOL in the past of serious administrative negligence and operational mismanagement, which lead to a considerable reduced output capacity.

The blackouts have led to protests and storming of electricity facilities during the past years.

On 01 July, the spokesperson of the Baltris Youth Movement, Omar Al-Taraban, announced the beginning of the mobilization in Tripoli and in many other Libyan cities. Al-Taraban reported that the Tripoli Security Directorate secure the protest after an official request made by the movement. Beltress demands were very comprehensive, including election, dissolution of political bodies under Presidential Council authority, declaration of state of emergency to tackle electricity crisis, effort to improve living conditions and push to have all foreign forces and mercenaries exiting the country.

The leader of the Baltris Youth Movement, Omar Al-Taraban, stated on 3 July that blocking roads, acts of vandalism and storming state headquarters did not represent the movement, that aim to remains peaceful.

Assessment

It is very difficult to appease populations that are living in such hard living conditions. Main problem for the country is identified with corruption and politicians bad practices. It is very likely that political parts will try to get political benefit from the situation blaming the other.

Libya's electricity infrastructure inefficiency will likely continue to cause problem in the near future until the grids will not be repaired and properly maintained.

It is likely that security will be reinforced in main axes of communications and main government facilities. It is also likely that main armed groups will keep their areas under control avoiding an extension of the civil unrest. It is very likely that security measures, as the possible eventual reorganization of the Military Regions, will support the new security architecture if the state of emergency will be raised.

Demonstration and civil unrest have followed a pattern of extension by mirroring the effects, starting in Tripoli and spreading to the rest of the country. It is very possible that this will continue replicating in the following days, but it is unlikely that it will gain momentum. This, because the identified leader of the protest, in principle, decided to disassociate himself from the civil unrest and because of the security forces deployments. Not clear which external party could support such movement.

However, if the new deployments and adjustments of the security services will not be able to manage adequately the social unrest could gain strength and escalate. Security-militia forces have not the training nor the equipment to enforce mob control and it is possible that militias could even exploit the social unrest.

2. OTHER SECURITY EVENTS

- On 30 June, National Oil Corporation finally declared force majeure status on oil exports on the As Sidra and Ras Lanuf terminals and the El Feel oilfield on Thursday.

Comment

The Gulf of Sirte includes four main oil export terminals with a total capacity of 630,000 b/d. The Libyan National Army (LNA), which supports the East-based Government of National Stability, has backed the population protests. LNA controls most of Libya's oil and gas infrastructure, but does not control the sales and distribution of revenues.

Assessment

It is likely that oil weaponization will continue to be exploited by Eastern forces in order to get revenues and possibly consolidate their aspirations. However, it is likely that LNA will reduce the pressure to the population as a result of the last week events in Tobruk.

- On 03 July, local sources informed that Zintan forces attempted to down an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) intercepted over southern Tripoli.
- On 03 July, the second round of the Fezzan Forum took place. The following points were released in the final communication of the Forum demanding for:
 - military and security autonomy, withdraw from the “military establishment”, formation of self-governed military/ security forces;
 - self-governance, formation of Fezzan government, similar to parallel governments in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica;
 - the withdrawal of armed actors from Fezzan without confrontation;
 - presidential and parliamentary elections, and rejecting of the new transitional stages;
 - grievances concerning perceived marginalisation of Fezzan, and calling for collective action.

Comment

On 23 June, local sources informed that the LNA 155th Bn based in Tamanhint, deployed mobile patrols on the Murzuq basin as part of the efforts to secure the region.

On 27 June, the LNA allegedly carried out the blockade of the forum.

On 07 June, LNA deployed reinforcements to the Fezzan Region in support of the Southern Operations Room.

Assessment

Fezzan local actors likely seek to undermine the LNA's authority in the region. The LNA dispatched reinforcements from Cyrenaica towards Western Fezzan and the increased LNA presence in the area will likely create potential tension with local actors in the short term.

3. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY RELATED EVENTS

- On 01 July, local sources reported of a ten-hour disruption at the Libyan-Tunisian Ras Ajdir border crossing point (BCP) as a result of a technical failure of the passport system on the Libyan side.
- on 03 July, House of Representatives (HoR) Speaker Aguila Saleh stated that the disagreement over the constitutional track with the High Council of State (HCS) is related to the eligibility of dual nationals and those holding military posts to run for the position of head of state. Saleh also stated that Turkey has shown support for the HoR's elections to form a new Government and that his personal assessment is that Turkey no longer

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supports the GNU. Saleh stated a senior Turkish official will visit Libya post Eid Al-Adha to meet with GNS PM Fathi Bashagha after which an HoR delegation will conduct a visit to Ankara in mid-August;

- on the same day, US Special Envoy to Libya Richard Norland spoke to Presidential Council (PC) Head Mohamed Menfi and expressed deep concern over the civil unrest across the country caused by the political, economic, and financial stalemate. Notably, Norland warned that any effort to impose a unilateral solution would result in violence;
- on 4 July, the European Naval Operation IRINI revealed that Turkey refused to inspect its ships bound for the Libyan port of Misrata for the eighth time. The Turkish ship, MV Parpali, denied a request for inspection by Operation IRINI. IRINI reiterated that the UN Security Council's call to all UN members to cooperate with the embargo;
- on 5 July, UN Advisor on Libya, Stephanie Williams, said that protests in the country were similar to August 2020 protests when Libyans spoke against the outage of electricity and poor services. She also told that legitimacy of the institutions should come through elections. Williams urged for achieving the roadmap toward elections and called on all political parties to materialize that.

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.