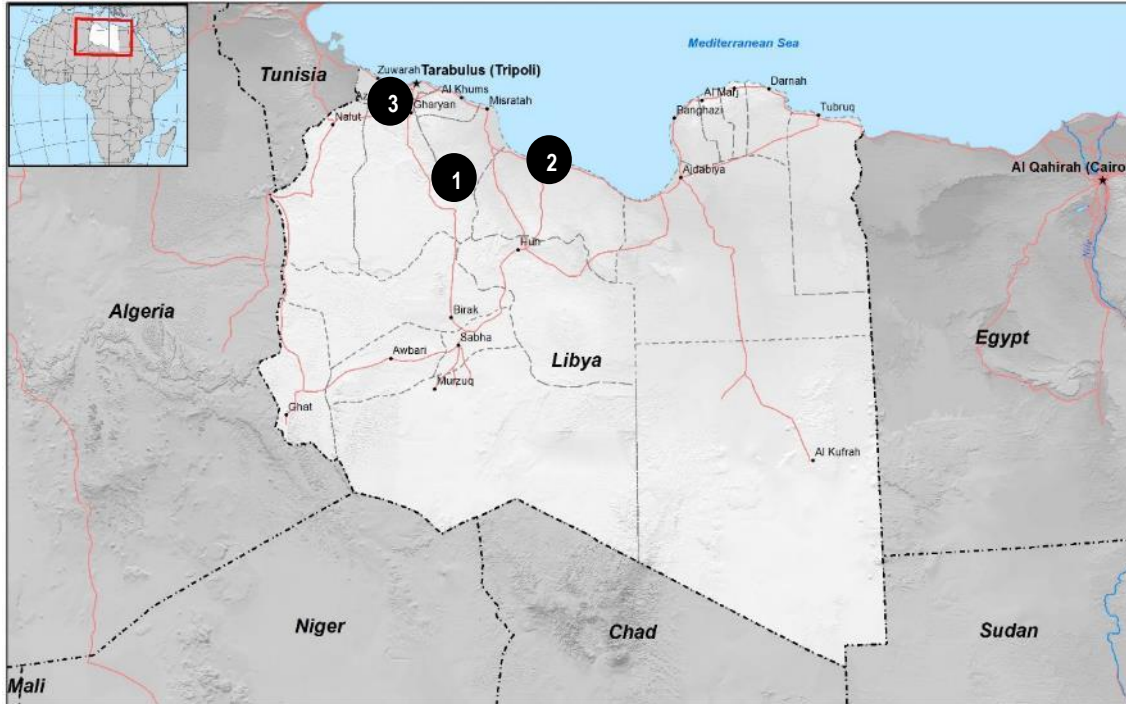


EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA

Weekly Report 29JUL-04AUG21

Author: MAJ VALERO, LTC TAFZI

Revised: LTC VAN DER WERFF



1	29JUL	A new attack destroys a water station of the Great Man-made River System
2	30JUL	The Joint Military Commission announces the reopening of the coastal road
3	30JUL-02AUG	Clashes between al Far militia and the 55th Company spread violence around Zawiya

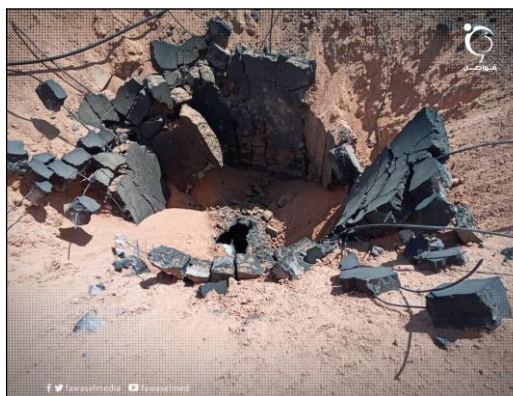
SUMMARY: After two years of blockade and some disagreements within the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC), the reopening of the coastal road has eventually become a landmark and a positive step forward in the current reconciliation process. Despite this achievement, there are still crucial (security) issues that need to be addressed, namely the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries, and the demobilization of armed militias. Russia and Turkey will keep on engaging with the existing peace process; nonetheless, both will try to consolidate their presence in Libya and preserve their interests. The presence of armed groups affiliated with the main political institutions in Tripoli remains one of the main security concerns for the stability in the country, notably in the western region. The current instability increasingly affects critical infrastructures (water and power stations) and thus the Libyan population.

1 CURRENT SITUATION

1.1 A new attack destroys a water station of the Great Man-made River System.

On 29 July, the Misrata Municipality announced the water supply to the city has been completely cut off due to an attack on one of the main stations of the Great Man-made River (GMMR) system near Ash Shwayrif. According to the GMMR Authority, the attackers sabotaged the station 353 on the eastern route of the Hasouna system, which supplies water to Bani Walid, Misrata, Khums, Tripoli and Zliten.

Unverified information added that authorities arrested several people connected to this incident. According to them, the saboteurs' main goal was to cut off the water to western Libya and create instability.



Damages at Ash Shwayrif station



Location of the incident and affected route (in red)

COMMENT: Reports indicate that the saboteurs planted several explosive devices at the station.

The Misrata Municipality has requested the General Company for Water and Sanitation to provide people with water trucks until the completion of maintenance work.

The GMMR network has suffered from similar attacks the last months¹.

The Tripoli branch of the General Administration for Security Operations has commissioned joint patrols to monitor the water pipelines. These patrols are composed of Agricultural Police units and GMMR Authority.

ASSESSMENT: These attacks against critical infrastructures will highly likely create further instability in certain urban areas, especially in Western Libya.

1.2 The Joint Military Commission (JMC) announces the reopening of the coastal road.

On 30 July, the 5+5 JMC announced the reopening of the coastal road between Misrata and Sirte, permitting the traffic of civilian cars and cargo.

Khalifa Haftar welcomed this decision and praised the LNA's contribution for the reunification of Libya. He also added that this process will not be complete without the withdrawal of foreign forces.

¹ For further details see EULPC Weekly Report 14-21JUL21, issued on 22 July 2021.

On 31 July, Turkey also welcomed this resolution and congratulated the efforts made by the interim Libyan authorities, UNSMIL and the 5+5 Joint Military Commission.



The LNA commander MGen Ahmed Salim Dersi (right) embraces western 5+5 delegation head MGen Abu Shahma, at Gate 50.



Official ceremony attended by 5+5 JMC members and Tripoli's Interior Ministry authorities.



Gate 50, west of Sirte

On 31 July, there was a security meeting in Sirte chaired by BGen Ali Ahmed al Nuwasri, the General Administration for Security Operations commander, with some 5+5 JMC members to deal with the security coordination along the coastal road.

COMMENT: The coastal road has been closed since April 2019, when Haftar launched the military operation to take the capital. This road carries a great symbolism since it unifies Eastern and Western Libya. Unconfirmed information suggests that the road is serviceable and operational between Misrata to Benghazi.

Likely, this confidence building measure was part of the discussion during last month, when the heads of both 5+5 JMC delegations paid a visit to Moscow to discuss military and security issues with relevant Russian authorities: LNA-affiliated LtGen Khairy al Tamimi (21 July) and MGen Fituri Grebel (26 July), and on 19 July, when unconfirmed information stated that Turkish intelligence officials met western-affiliated military authorities at Watiya airbase.

Libyan sources have revealed that militias have started to withdraw widely from west of Sirte, while the joint security force will be deployed to secure the coastal road.

Though the reopening of the road marks a significant step in the reconciliation process, the 5+5 JMC has yet to address the most delicate tasks, namely the withdrawal of mercenaries and militia demobilization.

ASSESSMENT: The reopening of the coastal road between Misrata and Sirte was highly likely facilitated by both Russian and Turkish authorities.

This agreement is likely linked to a potential and gradual withdrawal of mercenaries from Libya, especially Syrian fighters. The withdrawal of Turkish or Russian forces will be unlikely in the short and mid-term.

Any militia demobilization process will highly likely face the resistance of those militias affiliated to the official institutions, especially in Western Libya.

Further security arrangements between eastern and western authorities are likely to take place, within the 5+5 JMC framework.

1.3 Clashes between al Far militia and the 55th Company spread violence around Zawiya.

On 30 July, clashes came out south of Janzour between Mohammed Salem Bahroun's al Far militia and the 55th Infantry Company —linked to Abu Zariba network—, between Bridge 27 and Zawiya. The fighting extended to west of Zawiya, affecting the traffic in certain Coastal Road sections.

Though the GNU Minister of Interior (MoI) commissioned the Zawian branch of the General Administration for Central Support to mediate in the dispute and appease tensions, sporadic fighting and mobilization resumed on 31 July around these areas. MoI forces have deployed at Fursan Gate, east of Zawiya.

These clashes have impacted on the power distribution. The General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) reported that the Zawiya Power Plant was slightly damaged due to the fighting.



Location of the clashes

On 2 August, violence has continued and unconfirmed reporting informed about an assassination attempt of Ali Abu Zariba —brother of Hassan Abu Zariba and member of the House of Representatives— and Muammar al Dhawi in West Tripoli.

COMMENT: The clashes on 30 July erupted after Bahroun's militiamen allegedly shot at a Stability Support Apparatus (SSA) checkpoint in the south of Surman.

As a result of the clashes, Bahroun's al Far militia was expelled from its headquarters in Zawiya.

The 55th Company hails from Warshefana area, where this militia controls the Bridge 27 checkpoint. Its commander, Muammar al Dhawi has close links to Osama Juweili, the GNU Western Military Region commander, and Hassan Abu Zariba, the SSA deputy commander. In June 2021 Dhawi has established a SSA branch in his area of influence. Since 21 April, the 55th Company has assigned about 200 militiamen to the SSA.

Tensions between the SSA and al Mohammed Bahroun have increased notably since last April 2021 and the armed confrontation has spread across the western coastal region. The risk of a military escalation is significant.

Further mobilization of 55th Infantry Company affiliated forces was detected on 3 August south of 27 Bridge. Unconfirmed reporting indicates that the SSA and the 55th Infantry Company may be planning to take control of Zawayah from local militias. Additional information suggests that the Shalfou militia —from al Ajaylat—, is planning to retake control of Ajaylat from al Far (**see Annex**).

ASSESSMENT: The persistent violence exerted by western security institutions-affiliated militias will highly likely continue to challenge Libyan authorities.

The militia competition will highly likely remain one of the most difficult internal problems to be addressed.

Further clashes between both armed groups are highly likely in the very short-term.

2 OTHER SECURITY RELATED FACTS/EVENTS

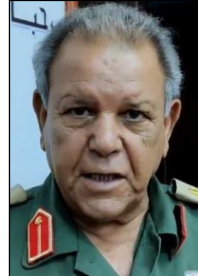
- a. On 31 July, the commander of the western military region, MGen Osama al Juweili from Zintan, inspected the security situation in Ghadames —605 km south of Tripoli— and met with its municipal council to discuss the security conditions. He also checked Debdeb border crossing with Algeria. Ghadames defines the Western Military Region southern limit. This region is mostly dominated by Zintan and Amazigh towns.
- b. On 1 August, Abdelghani al Kikli, head of the Stability Support Apparatus (SSA), has established a new branch of his group in Misrata. This new branch involves several names sought for criminal offenses by the public prosecutor.
- c. On 3 August, unconfirmed reporting stated the presence of some elements belonging to the LNA Tariq Bin Ziyad Brigade in Ubari area and the presence of unconfirmed units close to the Algerian border.
- d. Since 3 August MGen Fawzi al Mansouri has replaced MGen Abdelqader al Na'as as Sebha military region commander. Mansouri is a Salafist LNA commander, who

previously led the Ajdabiya Operations Room. In April 2021, military personnel from the 117th Battalion requested to the LNA General Command Na'as substitution.

This replacement is likely a direct consequence of Nazouri inspection to Sebha on 30 July.



MGen Fawzi Mansouri



MGen Abdelqader al Na'as

- e. On 4 August, the Sirte Security Directorate stopped 25 illegal immigrants coming from Sudan, and hand them over to the General Security Agency (GSA).



The Sirte Security Directorate taking the migrants to the GSA

- f. On 4 August, the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Abdelhamid Dabaiba, held a regular meeting of the Supreme Military Judiciary Council, in the presence of the Chief of General Staff, Colonel General Mohammed al Haddad. One of the main issues highlighted during this meeting was the criticality represented by the lack of an appointed Defence Minister.



Supreme Military Judiciary Council meeting at the MoD premises

3 CONCLUSIONS

LNA and western-GNU security forces continue to operate independently with the aim to consolidate their role, and their proxies presence, within the conditions offered by the CFA.

A part the positive confidence building measure related to the opening of the coastal road, further signs of progress are needed on the unification of the military establishment, while current armed militias' competition and tensions result in violence and confrontations along the Western Coastal Region.

The progress on the implementation of the CFA remain in the capability of the international / regional actors to more directly influence the Libyan owned and led process, keeping into consideration the latent instability in the region.

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

ANNEX. WESTERN COAST MILITIAS AND AFFILIATIONS

