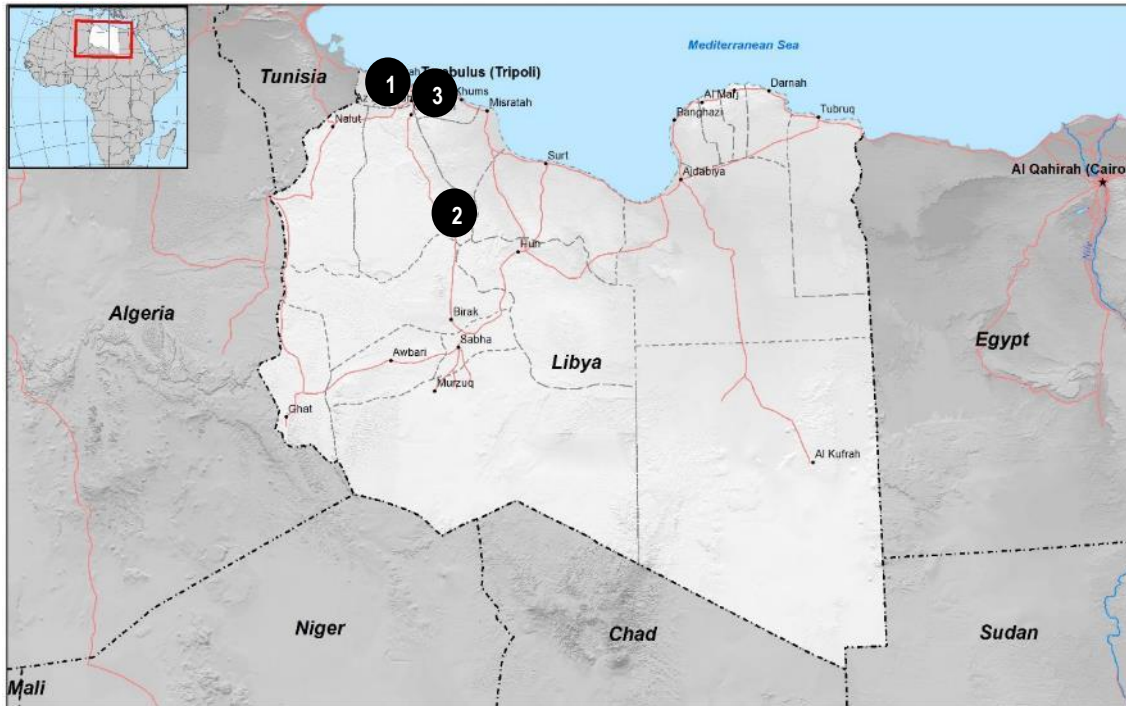


EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA

Weekly Report 25AUG-01SEP 2021

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1	27-30AUG	Militia clashes continue to deteriorate security along the Western coastal road
2	28AUG	The force securing the Great-Man-Made River system has detected a RCIED
3	31AUG	Heavy gunfire around the Administrative Control Authority headquarters

SUMMARY: Militia instability remains one of the most prominent challenges facing the new executive authorities. Militias remain instrumental for the political level to increase their influence and be able to manage the uncertain implementation of the ceasefire agreement through the appointment of senior positions within lucrative state institutions. Tripoli's authorities prove their powerlessness to contain the instability across the Western Region, including within the capital. No events leading to unification of security institutions have been progressed.

1 CURRENT SITUATION

1.1 Militia clashes continue to deteriorate security along the Western Coastal Road.

Clashes between Zawian militias affiliated with Hassan Abu Zariba —deputy commander of the Stability and Support Apparatus (SSA)— and Mohammed Salem Bahroun —head of Al Far militia and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Zawiya—, have persisted between the 26 and 30 August.

On 27 August, the fighting started around the Bridge 27 checkpoint, and extended to areas within and West of Zawiya, affecting the movement along the Western Coastal Road.

On 30 August, the SSA reportedly arrested several CID-affiliated militiamen in Zawiya.

On 31 August, Khaled Mazen, the Interior Minister, held a meeting with Ali Khalifa al Lafi, the Zawiya Security Directorate head, to deal with the ongoing insecurity around Zawiya area.

COMMENT: Ostensibly, on 27 August, SSA gunmen attacked a CID police detachment, wounding at least four of its members. Unconfirmed information indicated that Mohammed Bahroun was wounded during this confrontation. Since the Bridge 27 is under the Warshefana 55th Infantry Company control, it is likely that this militia was also involved in the 27 August fight in support for the SSA.

Tripoli's institutions continue to show their inability to contain the increasingly high instability across the Western Coastal Region, caused by armed groups affiliated with the executive authorities in Tripoli.

Ali Khalifa al Lafi is associated with Mohamed Salem Bahroun.

ASSESSMENT: The current tension, along with the persistent hostility between rival militias, will highly likely end up in further escalation around Zawiya, and increase the risk of affecting the neighbouring areas.

1.2 The force securing the Great-Man-Made River system has detected a RCIED.

On 28 August 2021, the so-called joint force, composed of Tarik ben Ziyad Brigade and the Misratan 166th Battalion, has dismantled a potential Remote Control IED (RCIED) placed in the Great-Man-Made-River system (GMMR), inside one of the air valves located in the Hasawna field, nearby Ash Shwayrif.

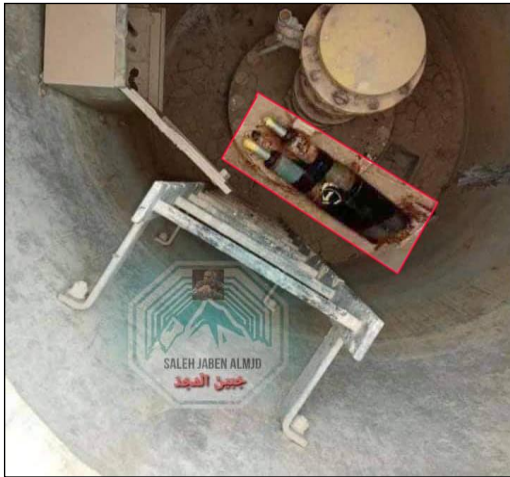
On 31 August, Prime Minister Abdelhamid al Dabaiba met with the Central Military Region commander —Mohammed Musa— the Misratan 166th Battalion commander —Mohammed al Hassan— and other officers dealing with security arrangements, to secure the GMMR system.

COMMENT: Both armed entities do not make up a proper joint force yet, just limiting to coordinating their actions along the Mizdah – Ash Shwayrif road.

The presence of this type of devices is an indication of the use of the GMMR system as an easy target by dissatisfied groups.

Mohammed al Hassan maintains close links with Abdulhamid Dabaiba.

ASSESSMENT: Other armed elements from the LNA or the General Staff of the Libyan Army (GSLA)-affiliated forces will likely take the same decision in other areas.



Alleged RCIED at the bottom of a valve

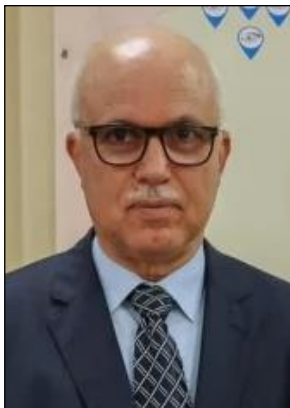


Dabaiba and Central Military Region authorities

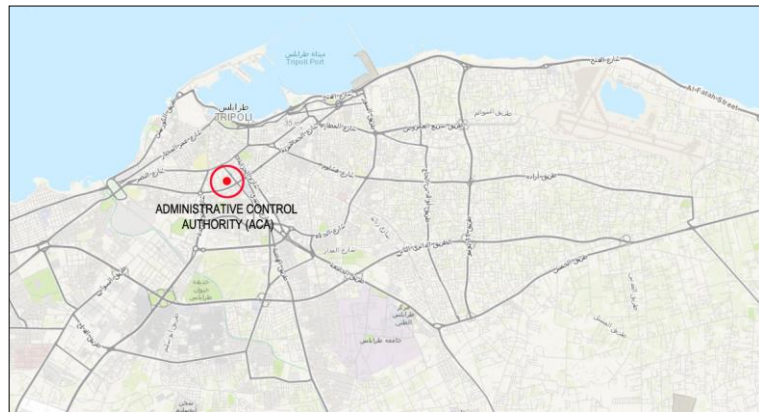
1.3 Heavy gunfire around the Administrative Control Authority headquarters.

On 31 August, unconfirmed militiamen reportedly stormed the Administrative Control Authority (ACA) premises in Tripoli downtown, with the objective of arresting Khaled Saeed, ACA's deputy president. Another armed group tried to repel the aggression by counterattacking.

Suleiman al Shanti –ACA's president– warned about the possibility that official documents that are under investigation could have been lost. Shanti demanded the public prosecutor to open an investigation into this attack.



Suleiman al Shanti



Location of the clashes

COMMENT: The ACA headquarters is located in a Nawasi-controlled area. Unverified information indicated that Nawasi stormed the ACA facilities.

The ACA aims to exert effective administrative control over the state executive bodies, subordinate to the legislative authority. The ACA also provides support to the government's ministries to perform duties in the areas of their competencies.

In the contest of the administrative institutions, on 29 August, the Minister of Oil and Gas, Mohamed Aoun, nominally suspended Sanalla from his duties. According to Aoun, Sanalla was under investigation. It might be worthwhile mentioning that Aoun and Sanalla have been at odds with

each other in the past. On 31 August, Khaled Saeed has suggested Prime Minister Dabaiba to replace the current National Oil Corporation (NOC) board of directors, headed by Mustafa Sanalla. A replacement of the NOC board of Directors could mean a change in potential beneficiaries in terms of power, influence or economic incomes, thanks to new senior positions.



Mohammed Aoun



Mustafa Sanalla

ASSESSMENT: Conflicting reporting do not shed light on which militia stormed the ACA building and which one repelled the attack, but it is highly likely that elements from the SSA and the Nawasi Battalion were involved in this confrontation. It is likely that after the skirmish, the SSA took control over the ACA building.

This incident is highly likely related to the intent of some Libyan actors to replace Mustafa Sanalla as the NOC chairman. These disputes provide evidence of the competition between different actors over the control of the Libyan institutions, in order to manipulate these in their own benefit.

This confrontation likely will persist the upcoming days and could affect the security conditions.

2 OTHER SECURITY RELATED FACTS/EVENTS

- a. On 24 August, the GSLA Chief of Staff, Mohammed al Haddad, and the Libyan Navy commander, Nouredine al Buni, went to the Turkish G-class Frigate TCG¹ Gediz (F495), off the coast of Libya. This visit was coordinated with the GNU Ministry of Defence. Turkish frigates operates normally off the coast of Libya, also as part of the NATO's Operation Sea Guardian².



Nouredine al Buni, in the middle



Mohammed al Haddad led the delegation

¹ TCG stands for Turkish Coast Guard.

² OSG is a non-article 5 maritime security operation to maintain maritime situational awareness, deter and counter-terrorism and enhance capacity building.

- b. On 26 August, members of the Stability and Support Apparatus (SSA), the General Administration of Central Support, and the General Administration of Security Operations (GASO) took part in a training course dealing with electoral security.



Stability and Support Apparatus



General Administration of Central Support



General Administration of Security Operations

- c. On 27 August, the 444 Unit has carried out another security operation against human and fuel smuggling activities in the south of Bani Walid and arrested a number of people. The 444 Unit remains deeply engaged in Bani Walid area.
- d. On 28 August, elements from the LNA 128th Brigade, within the Western Sirte Operations Room, conducted coordinated security patrols from Sirte to the Akhshum al Khair area, the Mabrouk field and the Ghani field.
- e. On 30 and 31 August, Western affiliated Syrian mercenaries protested in front of Yarmouk Camp in Southern Tripoli, demanding unpaid salaries. The 444 Unit arrested some senior Syrian mercenaries.
- f. On 1 September, Major General Osama Juweili, the Western Mountain Military Region commander hosted Mohammad al Haddad in Zintan. During this meeting, the mayor of Zintan municipality, Mustafa al Baroni, was also present. Haddad also met 33rd Battalion (aka al Bugra Battalion) in Tajoura.



Mustafa al Baroni, Osama Juweili and Mohammed al Haddad

- g. On 1 September, the Misrata Security Directorate carried out a security operation against Daesh in Misrata. As a result, one security member was killed and several people were arrested.

3 CONCLUSIONS

The security domain in Libya continue to tailor approaches implemented by Western-GNU and LNA forces, both having the aim to consolidate and polarize their power in the respective areas of influence. Tripoli areas, as the venue for the political disputes among institutional leaders, erupt in clashes on the ground at the hand of their supporting militias.

On the other hand, LNA tries to exploit the situation maintaining high readiness of their forces, which moved towards the Western border area of interest and in the South, officially carrying out operations aiming at countering criminal and terrorist activities.

Concerning the implementation of the 23rd October CFA, the 5+5 cannot create further security conditions for the elections to be timely and safely held, especially concerning the sensitive issue of the FF/Mercenaries withdraw.

The polarized political contest and the leading international actors, mainly Turkey and Russia, both apparently supporting the electoral process conditions, are firstly interested in consolidating their influence and their **hard power** in Libya. On the other side, **soft power** initiatives by other international agencies and institutions appears to be limitative and not able to provide any benefit to the reconciliation process.

Slight hints of appeasement have been caught on the field of forces unification, resulting in one coordination activity between West-GNU and LNA forces in the Ash Shuwayrif area. This might constitute a timid starting point to improve relationships between Western and Eastern forces.

Concerning the terrorist threat, it seems that the issue could be instrumental in strategically polarizing the relations between Libya and the neighbouring countries, in a volatile region that could be impacted by relevant extremism ignited by other international interests.

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