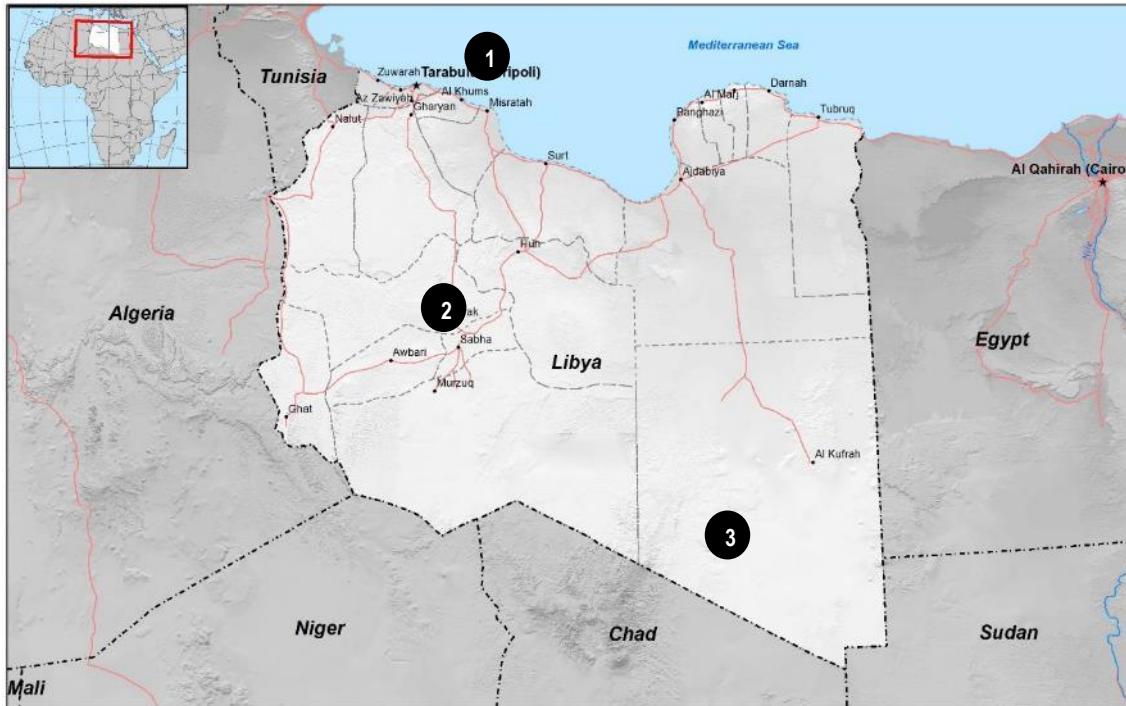


EU LIAISON AND PLANNING CELL LIBYA

Weekly Report 08-15SEP 2021

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1	11SEP	Libyan Navy personnel receive military training on board Turkish frigates
2	12SEP	LNA continues to patrol borders with southern neighbouring countries
3	14-15SEP	LNA forces clashed with Chadian rebels

SUMMARY: Turkey remains the main partner for the Western-affiliated forces. Turkey influence over Western-affiliated forces is vital to maintain its military interests in the country on the longer term. On the LNA side, its military build-up in Southern Libya is justified because of the presence of terrorist elements and trans-bordering militia, even though most of these groups have been part of the LNA rank-and-file. Tripoli state of alert has not defused, pending political developments and the possible celebration of elections. Haftar remains the main ally for Egypt, continuing to compete with Turkey in Libya, even if throughout the first half of 2021 the relationship between Egypt and the new Libyan executive has evolved positively.

1 CURRENT SITUATION

1.1 Libyan Navy personnel have received military training on board Turkish frigates.

On 11 September, Libyan Navy personnel have received military training onboard of Turkish frigates, the TCG Gediz (F495) and TCG Gökova (F496).



COMMENT: This military training is based on the security cooperation agreements signed between the previous Libyan government (GNA) and Turkey. On 11 September, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlut Cavusoglu, has again justified Turkey's legitimate presence in Libya, due to these Memorandums of Understanding (MoU).

The Turkish armed forces remain the main partner of the Western General Staff of the Libyan Army (GSLA) with regard to military training.

As already reported:

- On 11 April 2021, the Turkish Defence Ministry announced the training of the Libyan Navy in Underwater Defense, likely in the al Khoms Joint Maritime Training Center Command;
- On 24 August, the GSLA Chief of Staff, Mohammed al Haddad, and the Libyan Navy commander, Nouredine al Buni, paid a visit to the Turkish G-class Frigate TCG Gediz, off the coast of Libya.

Both Turkish frigates are G-class Frigate, modernized ex United States Oliver Hazard Perry class Guided-Missile Frigate (FFG).

ASSESSMENT: Turkey will continue its primary training and advisory role and will highly likely try to preserve its increasing influence in Libya in the near future.

1.2 LNA continues to patrol borders with Southern neighbouring countries.

On 12 September, elements from different LNA units, stationing in Southern Libya, deployed along the Southern borders with Algeria, Niger and Chad. Between these units are the:

- 128 Infantry Brigade
- 628 Infantry Battalion, subordinated to the 73rd Brigade and stationed in Taraghin,
- Umm al Aranib Martyrs Brigade,
- 634 Battalion, stationed in Qatrun,
- 672 Battalion
- Waw Martyrs Battalion, likely assigned as a border battalion in February 2021 and stationed in Umm al Aranib.



Umm al Aranib Martyrs Brigade



634 Battalion



628 Battalion

COMMENTS: LNA-affiliated forces represent the main military actor present in Southern Libya. Most of the units engaged in patrolling the Southern borders hail from the Tebu tribe.

ASSESSMENT: The LNA is highly likely trying to portray an image of a reliable security actor in this region and an advocacy of a patriotic role in the South, especially due to the upcoming electoral period.

1.3 LNA forces clashed with Chadian rebels

On 14 September, LNA forces clashed with Chadian rebels from the 'Front pour l'Alternance et Concorde du Tchad' (FACT), nearby the Chadian border and the area around East of Umm al Aranib.

Unconfirmed reporting indicated the presence of Russian MIG-29 fighter aircraft supporting the LNA ground operations. The Tariq Bin Ziyad Brigade also targeted the FACT mercenaries.

On 15 September, LNA General Command sent additional reinforcements, including attack helicopters for close air support.

COMMENTS: FACT's bases in Libya were located in Doualki, near Sebha, and Jebel Saoudah, near the Chadian border. Some of its elements were assigned to the LNA 116th Battalion and the 128th Brigade.

While some Sudanese armed elements participated in the fighting on the LNA side, other Chadians groups supported the FACT rebels.



Aftermath of the clashes



Russian MiG-29 possible present at the scene



LNA armed groups combat preparations

ASSESSMENT: These confrontations will highly likely continue in those areas of Southern Libya where foreign forces have more freedom of movement.

2 OTHER SECURITY RELATED FACTS/EVENTS

- a. On 11 September, the 444th Unit arrested Hassan Qidi, a Somali human smuggler wanted for leading a human trafficking network and committing crimes against migrants. He was one of the inmates at the Abu Salim Prison from where he escaped during the August 2011 prison raid. The 444th Unit is engaged in security operations fighting human trafficking, especially around the Bani Walid area.
- b. Tensions between the 444th Unit and the Stabilization Support Apparatus (SSA) continue in the capital. On 11 September, the 444th Unit required the Military Prosecutor to release 11 of its members captured by the SSA after the 3 September clashes in Tripoli.
- c. On 12 September, the LNA General Command disbanded the 116th and 117th Infantry Battalions planning to integrate their forces and equipment into the Sebha Military Region. This comes after the GNU statement in June 21, saying that the 117th Battalion, together with the 116th Battalion and 97th Battalion, had defected from the LNA.

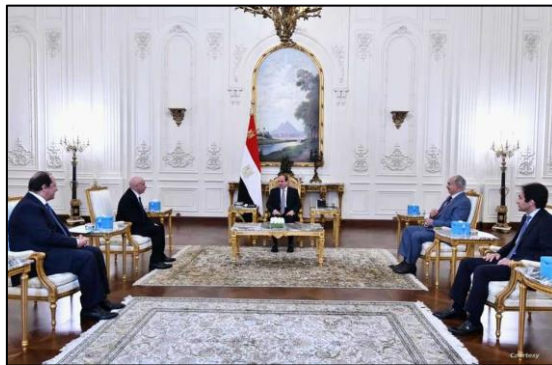


116th Battalion



117th Battalion

- d. On 14 September, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al Sisi received the Head of the House of Representatives (HoR), Ageela Saleh, and Khalifa Haftar, in Cairo. Al Sisi marked the importance of removing all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya. Abbas Kamel, the Head of the Egyptian General Intelligence Directorate, also attended the meeting. Both Libyan actors met al Sisi before in June 2020, after Haftar's failed offensive on Tripoli.



3 CONCLUSIONS

Western and Eastern sides continue to follow their path independently aiming at maximizing their specific interests.

Western forces keep acting in order to consolidate their influence over competing militias, in the large Tripoli area.

LNA forces, on their turn, are involved in security and counter terrorist activities, mainly performed in the South, aimed at countering criminal activities and terrorist/rebel operations along the borders. Those operations have also the ambition to inspire a sense of indispensability, which can improve the LNA's chances in gaining support before and in the aftermath of the elections.

In the light of the preparation and management of the election, in accordance to SE Kubis slogan "*better elections somehow than no elections at all*", a tailored security plan should be aimed at preventing any severe incident before, during and after the election polls.

Concerning the implementation of the other provisions included into the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA), especially concerning the sensitive issues of the Foreign Fighters/Mercenaries (FF/M) withdrawal and Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR), a Stabilization conference with critical external partners of Libya is due to be convened next October, not to defer that commitment to a still doubtful post-electoral period.

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