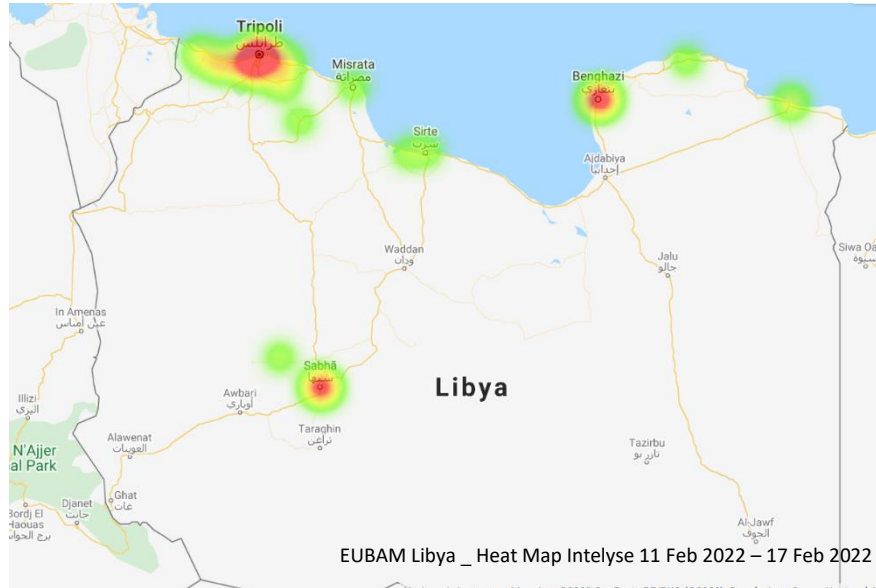


## Security & Covid-19: WEEKLY SECURITY REPORT

Country: Libya & Tunisia

Period: 11/02/2022 – 17/02/2022

### SECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW



#### 1. Key developments

- Increased political polarisation - Heightened division on the security landscape in Western Region
- Tunisia security update

#### 2. Findings

##### 2.1. Increased political polarisation - Heightened division on the security landscape in Western Region

*In a short review of the political developments during this week:*

- On 10 Feb, the House of Representatives (HoR) approved the constitutional amendment, as well as the appointment of Fathi Bashagha as Prime Minister of the Government of National Stability (GNS). The declared unanimous support through the voting process was criticised by various observers, with the HoR voting session footage<sup>1</sup> depicting a show of hands determining the outcome.
- Shortly after the announcement of a new PM nomination, Fathi Bashagha travelled from Tobruq to Tripoli Mitiga airport to give a public address<sup>2</sup>.
- IGNU Prime Minister Dadaiba countered Bashagha's appointment stating that he would continue in his role, as per the 18-month Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) timeline which runs to June 2022. He also announced that he would soon be revealing a framework for the holding of parliamentary elections in June 2022, including a new draft parliamentary election law.

<sup>1</sup>Social Media reference of the HoR session vote footage [مباشر >جلسة مجلس النواب للتصويت على اختيار رئيس جديد للوزراء وانسحاب صحيفة المرصد الليبية -](#) [Facebook](#) | [المترشح خالد البياص #ليبيا#المرصد](#)

<sup>2</sup> Source reference Al Marsad <https://www.facebook.com/ObservatoryLY/videos/313895080796478/>

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- Intense internal divisions of the national political, social, and military groups expressing their positions between two camps pro-IGNU PM Dadaiba and pro-GNS designated-PM Bashagha escalated to gain momentum over the control of the government administrative seat in Tripoli.
- Meanwhile Dadaiba and Bashagha engaged in consultations with key power brokers, local administrations and community representatives likely in a race to ensure their support.
- At the same time, misinformation networks increased efforts across traditional and social media are likely aimed to build on the general confusion and further tense the environment.

### On the international community positions:

- On 10 Feb, the first international message was released by Egypt's Foreign ministry stating support for the appointment of Bashagha, adding that Egypt continues to communicate with all Libyan parties in order to safeguard the security and stability of the country.
- On 14 Feb, Russian Foreign Minister Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova expressed hope that the PM-designate Fathi Bashagha's cabinet will "unify the Libyan society"<sup>3</sup> through a new transitional period and called for his appointment made by "Libyan lawmakers" to be respected. Zakharova stressed that the disagreements among Libyan factions must not lead to a serious conflict, but be resolved via negotiations and compromises.
- On 16 Feb, President Erdogan of Turkey commented on the current political developments in Libya stating that "postponing the elections for a period of a year and a half is not appropriate, but this is in the hands of the Libyan people", and that Turkey has good relations with both Prime Minister designate Fathi Bashagha and with Dadaiba.

### Heightened division on the security landscape in Western Region

The security environment was dominated by the heightened military and armed groups exhibition of power and pro-GNU demonstrations in the aftermath of the House of Representatives (HoR) nomination of Fathi Bashagha as PM-elect. However, no significant escalation has been reported between the fluid re-alignment of armed actors.

### In a sequence of events:

- On 10 Feb, military/ security and armed group actors<sup>4</sup> were reported present at the arrival of HoR designated PM Bashagha, indicated as: Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) Deputy Head, Hassan Abu Zariba, Warshefana 55th Infantry Brigade Commander, Muammar al-Dawi, Misrata 166th Battalion Spokesman, Khaled Abu Jazia, Zawayah Coastguard Captain, Abd al-Rahman Milad ("Bidja"), as well as other Zawayan actors. *It should be noted that the presence of these actors, some of whom were previously opposed to Bashagha, and targets in the latter's Operation Snake Hunt in January 2021, indicates a realignment amongst military/ security and armed group actors in Tripoli, Warshefana, and the Western Coastal Region towards the political developments.*
- The same day, Pro-IGNU units were reported increasing their presence in the areas of the Prime Minister's office on Al-Sekka Road, while a Counter-Terrorism Force (CTF)-manned checkpoint near Al-Yarmouk Camp stopped motorists to check IDs. No escalation of events was reported.
- On 12 Feb, armed force mobilizations continued towards the city with the al-Samud Brigade under Saleh Badi arrival<sup>5</sup> in Tripoli from Misrata. The mobilisation followed released statements<sup>6</sup> from Misrata elders/ notables and Misratan



Source: <https://twitter.com/TRTWorldNow/status/1492747868540702722>

<sup>3</sup> Source reference, TASS Russian News Agency: <https://tass.com/world/1402801>

<sup>4</sup> Social media footage <الكتيبة 55 مشاة "ورشفانة... صحيفة المرصد الليبية (facebook.com); [https://twitter.com/wady\\_dynar/status/1491845410088001547](https://twitter.com/wady_dynar/status/1491845410088001547)

<sup>5</sup> Misratan armed brigades' movement to Tripoli <https://twitter.com/ObservatoryLY/status/1492492913573613569>

<sup>6</sup> Social Media reference [https://twitter.com/emad\\_badi/status/1492281284881793026](https://twitter.com/emad_badi/status/1492281284881793026)

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Brigades rejected the formation of a parallel government and called for the implementation of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) roadmap to hold elections by June 2022.

- On 13 Feb, a convoy of more than fifty pickups affiliated with Wershiffanah's 55<sup>th</sup> Company "Al-Dawi militia"<sup>7</sup> headed from the west Al Zawya towards Tripoli up to Bridge 27, in an exhibition of power and stated support for PM-designated Bashagha.

- On 15 Feb, a military convoy affiliated with Misrata armed factions arrived in Tripoli's Tajoura area and further monitored near the World Islamic Call Society HQ, heading westward.



Source: <https://twitter.com/ObservatoryLY/status/1492859921070706690>

#### Pro-GNU rallies/demonstrations were organised in Tripoli:

- On 11 and 12 Feb, Pro-GNU supporters joined PM Abdul Hamid Dadaiba support and called for the dissolution of the HoR and High Council of State (HCS) at Martyrs' Square. On 12 Feb, the civilian demonstration was supported by large convoys mobilized with armoured vehicles (AVs)<sup>8</sup> at the square between 1900hrs-2000hrs. Fireworks were reported at the square during the statement. Sources indicate the militia commanders were predominantly affiliated with Misrata's Counter-Terrorism Force (CTF).

- On 12 Feb, dozens of protesters mobilized in front of Radisson Blu Al Mahary Hotel, where the High Council of State (HCS) meets, to reject the new government by Bashagha and call for the dissolution of both the HCS and HoR at approximately 1200hrs. Reports indicate the protesters restricted HCS members from entering/leaving the hotel.

- On 15 Feb, a civilian protest was held outside the UN HQ located at the OEA village demanding the overthrow of the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) and the holding of elections. The protesters also carried anti-Haftar banners, where reports suggest the protesters are affiliated with radical cleric Sadiq Al-Ghariani<sup>9</sup>.

Overall, the week was overwhelmed with local media reports of statements from community leaders/elders, municipalities and armed fractions divided in their support towards either Dadaiba or Bashagha. The lists of allegiance and messages of support follow the fluid environment of the current meetings and backstage negotiations conducted by both camps to ensure their leverage over who controls the government administrative seat in Tripoli.

As such, two statements<sup>10</sup> from Misrata notables and brigade commanders released this week oppose their declared support for the HoR voting on a new designated PM for Libya. For Tripoli, while the significant armed groups' players have taken a more precautionary stand in openly choosing sides with an unclear alignment, others have shown their support (e.g. Misratan Al-Samoud brigades, Warshefana Brigades) and released statements of support for one of the two sides.

Within this dynamics, two armed attacks against public institutions (Tripoli's Licensing and Traffic Department and the Ministry of Transport's Roads and Bridges Authority HQ) by unidentified shooters compound on the instability of the security environment. Similarly, crime specific threats associated with targeted assassinations were reported on 15 Feb. against the family of a founding member of the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) in Tripoli's Al-Dahra area have the potential to trigger retaliation attacks.

<sup>7</sup> Of note, Muammar Al-Dawi was one of the militia commanders receiving Bashagha at Mitiga International Airport (MJI) in the evening on 10 Feb.

<sup>8</sup> Social media footage <https://twitter.com/TRTWorldNow/status/1492747868540702722>

<sup>9</sup> Of note, Al-Ghariani recently met with the High Council of State (HCS) Chairman, Khaled Al-Meshri, where he stressed the need to hold parliamentary elections as soon as possible and accused those of attempting to establish a new government of prolonging the Libyan crisis.

<sup>10</sup> Misratan statements [https://twitter.com/emad\\_badi/status/1492908684493611008](https://twitter.com/emad_badi/status/1492908684493611008)



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Furthermore, constant friction between rival armed groups and militias, whose main interests lie in protecting financial resources and controlling areas in the city, continue to be reported. On 16 Feb., skirmishes erupted between the 55th Company "Al-Dawi militia" (Warshiffana) and 3rd Company "Al-Lefaa militia" (Warshiffana) in southern Tripoli, likely sparked by turf wars as both sides gradually expanded their reach in the Tripoli and Warshiffana regions.

During the assessed week, preparation for the celebration of the eleventh anniversary of the Libyan 17 Feb Revolution were undertaken in Tripoli Martyr's Square with restriction of movement on the connecting roads and subsequently postponed due to unfavourable weather conditions for 18 Feb. Although previous year's commemorations remained largely peaceful, this year, with heightened tensions and political instability in Libya, particularly Tripoli, the likelihood of increased politicization of the event is high.

Despite the postponement announced by the Ministry of Youth, celebrations were held across the country on 16 Feb., including in Tripoli's Algeria Square, with fireworks heard across the capital, particularly in the Downtown and Souq Al Jum'aa areas. Other western cities celebrated by lighting a torch in Misrata. Gharyan and Al-Zawiyah. In the south, dozens of locals fired multiple rounds with their AK-47 rifles in front of Sabha's Municipal Council Park at approx. 0000hrs on 17 Feb. GNU PM DAadadiba, Presidential Council (PC) Deputy Head Abdullah Al-Lafi (west), and High Council of State (HCS) Head Khaled Al-Meshri participated in the celebrations held at Al-Zawiyah's Martyrs' Square. Other ministers and military officials also attended the celebrations, including GNU Interior Minister Khaled Mazen. The participants delivered separate speeches that called for the unity of Libya and the need to enable Libyans to choose their representative through fair and transparent elections.

#### **SDCD COMMENT**

*The political landscape will likely continue to shift in the coming weeks as negotiations proceed, especially when the new PM-designated Bashagha is set to form his cabinet and nominate ministers within 15 days from the date he won a majority vote (10 Feb), as directed by the HoR. The ambiguous stance of the main powerbrokers underlines the current context of manoeuvring and backchannel negotiations as both Bashagha and Dadaiba race to strengthen their posture and destabilise the other camp.*

*The most immediate question provoked by Bashagha's appointment is whether Libya will revert to split governments—which last year's creation of the GNU had sought to resolve after years of division—or violent escalations in a force attempt to take Tripoli's administrative seat. The balance of political and security forces in Tripoli in the coming week could produce a shift in government.*

*The multiple divided statements from communities and armed formations supporting the two camps underline the polarising impact of the current political situation on Libya's prospects for stability. At the same time, Libya's militias positioning toward the contending political players is one of the main deciding factors in the shape of the security landscape to come. As such, both Fathi Bashaga and Abdelhamid Dadaiba have engaged in recent alliance forging in Tripoli, mobilising armed groups aligned under them in a policy of brinkmanship and military entrenchment which could devolve into armed clashes. However, both Bashagha and Dadaiba seek to gather domestic and external diplomatic support to guarantee their political survival, while renewed widespread violence would not be accepted.*

*While the goal of the Western armed groups is to maintain control over their territories and achieve their self-serving objectives of sharing the new Government positions among the various Ministries and institutions, the risk of resumption of armed confrontations is less likely if their needs are fulfilled. Similarly, Misratan brigades and some of the Tripoli operating armed groups are likely to continue exploiting the unstable environment to gain an advantage in their interests.*

*Tensions might be expected to increase between armed groups, particularly in the capital; however, an attempt to oust the GNU, while not entirely discounted, appears unfeasible unless there is a significant shift in loyalties within the military and armed groups. Force mobilisations and localised clashes may occur, though higher authorities will likely put efforts to avoid the resumption of violence.*



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*Within the polarised landscape, both anti-HoR/HCS and pro-Bashagha protests are expected to increase and gain nationwide momentum in the coming days. Similarly, Dadaiba's populist strategy and projects versus Bashagha's new alignment with Haftar are likely to add further tensions, increasing the likelihood of large protests.*

## 2.2. Tunisia security update

On 13 Feb, thousands of anti-government protesters gathered on Avenue Mohamed V in Tunis in a rally organised by the Ennahda movement and the Citizens Against the Coup initiative against the administration of President Kais Saied. The protest was initially planned for 6 Feb but was postponed because it coincided with anti-Ennahda protests commemorating the anniversary of the death of Chokri Belaid, whose assassination in 2013 has been attributed to Ennahda and is pending investigations. The demonstrations were reported to be peaceful.

The previous day, 12 Feb, a protest was also held in front of the residence of Rached Ghannouchi, Ennahda's cofounder, after President Kais Saied issued a decree formalizing the establishment of the 21-member provisional Supreme Judicial Council (CSM), replacing the existing council.

On the Supreme Judicial Council (CSM) file, on 09 Feb, Justice Minister Leila Jaffel stated that President Kais Saied will not abolish the Supreme Judicial Council (CSM) but reconfigure the laws regulating it, stopping short in providing further details on the planned changes. On the same day, President Saied said he rejected foreign interference after the US, UN, EU, and G7 denounced the dissolution of CSM. Thus, on 12 Feb, a presidential decree published in the Official Gazette of the Tunisian Republic (JORT)<sup>11</sup> established a provisional supreme judicial council composed of three committees relating to the judicial, administrative and financial orders. The decree allows Saied to dismiss judges failing to fulfil their duties and bans judges from holding strikes.

### **SDCD COMMENT**

*The recent move taken by President Saied with the latest decision to suspend the Supreme Council of the Magistrature (SCM) and instate a provisional supreme judicial council with an extension of his powers raised growing concerns over the independence of the judiciary system in Tunisia.*

*The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) urged President Kais Saied to restore the SCM, warning that "its dissolution would seriously undermine the rule of law, the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary in the country."*

*Protests and strikes will almost certainly continue in the coming weeks in Tunisia following Saied's dissolution of the CSM, accusing the body of corruption. Political parties, civil society, and the international community have expressed strong opposition to Saied's decision.*

*The government is expected to be increasingly cautious in its response to opposition groups to appease international stakeholders amid already started negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (pressures on anti-government figures are still expected to continue through judicial procedures).*

*In this context, virtual discussions between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Tunisia kickstarted on 14 Feb., when Tunisia aimed to secure a loan from the IMF and another USD 7 billion from foreign lenders to address the anticipated budget deficit in 2022.*

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Top-News-EN/14874548-decree-establishing>



SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

### 3. Situational Awareness for EUBAM-Libya

#### 3.1. Armed conflict

##### Libya-Tripoli

- The armed conflict *remains HIGH, concern to the political developments focused on expected 24 December elections.*
- **Inter-militias' clashes:** Competition amongst armed groups in Western Region is increasing as the IGNU's official mandate rapidly approaches its end, resulting in high levels of instability manifesting in targeted murders and kidnappings of armed group members/ affiliates, kidnappings/ detainment of mid-level political actors, and armed clashes. In a scenario of heavy clashes in Tripoli and on the western coastal areas, obstructions of movement are likely to affect traffic towards the Mitiga Int. Airport and the western coastal highway, including an expansion closer to Tripoli western neighbourhoods including Janzour (location of the EUBAM Libya HQ offices) with potential impact Mission's operational freedom of movement and relocation/evacuation capabilities.

##### Tunisia-Tunis

- The main threat categories for the capital are **terrorism, criminality, and hazards** (especially road traffic accidents). Threats related to armed conflict are assessed as *non-existent*.

#### 3.2. Terrorism

##### Libya-Tripoli

- Ahead of elections, the terrorism threat can be perceived as high across all major urban centres, despite the fact both Daesh and AQIM have been degraded in Libya. The latest IGNU-LNA Joint Force engagement in several counterterrorism raids is likely to trigger tit-for-tat drive-by shootings and medium-impact explosive attacks against IGNU and LNA positions. The active semi-structured and small terrorist-cells could be operating in Southern Libya (Fezzan Region) and some active elements in the western coastal area near Sabratha (Tripolitania Region).

##### Tunisia-Tunis

- The Security Services in Tunisia continue with the counter-terrorist operations to tackle the terrorist threat.
- Radicalized individuals and informal cells could pose a threat with limited capabilities for low-medium lethality incidents in the Tunisian capital.
- **Special attention in displacement towards/throughout:**
  - **Southern area:** Southern desert area formed by Bir Rijm Maatoug - Borj Bourguiba - Ben Guardane, due to terrorist threat at Libyan border with terrorist infiltrations.
  - **Saharan area bordering with Libya and Algeria:** terrorist skirmishes against security forces. Military exclusion area created since 2013.
  - **Western Central and Northern West region of Tunisia:** relevant and continuous counter-terrorist activities against jihadist elements in the mountain areas of Kasserine, Siliana, Kairouan et du Kef.

#### 3.3. Criminality

##### Libya-Tripoli

- The security environment was marked by continued acts of violent crimes (murders, targeted killings, kidnapping, carjacking, thefts), random/unaccounted and celebratory shooting incidents resulting in collateral victims through stray bullets incidents. Meanwhile law enforcement efforts conducting arrests and security operations against organised crime gangs continued.



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**Tunisia-Tunis**

The Tunisian security forces maintain their *operations to tackle organised criminality* (burglary, car break-in, petty theft, financial scams, blackmail, homicides). Most dangerous scenario, the violent assault targeting EUBAM assets and personnel.

**3.4. Civil unrest**

**Libya-Tripoli**

- Civil unrest, caused by the deteriorated political context, increases the risk of destabilization actions at the institutional and security levels, notably through demonstrations of force affiliated to political parties or personalities. Social and financial grievances continue to trigger protests demanding better conditions.
- Ad-hoc demonstrations and potential violent encounters with security forces have the potential to create temporary movement restrictions, thus impacting a mission operational moves in the city.

**Tunisia-Tunis**

4. In light of the recent extension of the presidential executive powers, the opposition calls for protests in the near to medium future cannot be ruled out. A continuation of the Parliament suspension could prompt further political divisions and translate into further social unrest, potentially with small-scale violence between protesters.

**5. COVID-19 Update<sup>12</sup>**

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	<b>17,624</b>	21,362	- <b>17%</b>	2,509	62	63	- <b>02%</b>	480,945
Tunisia	<b>15,665</b>	28,459	- <b>45%</b>	1,303	354	445	+ <b>20%</b>	974,214

<sup>12</sup> Data from WorldOMeter. Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> [online]. Last updated: 18/02/2022 16:00GMT



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LIST OF ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

AQ - Al-Qaeda  
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.