SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT
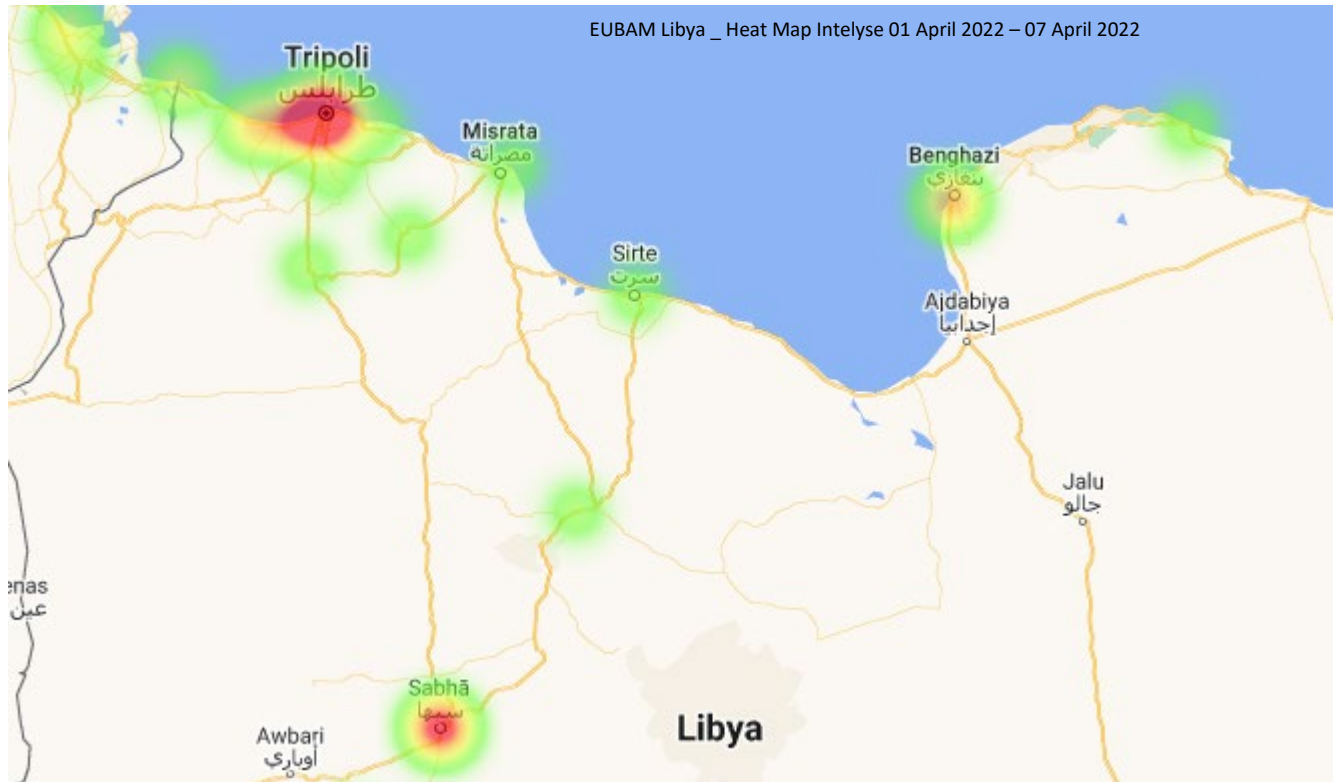
5Security & Covid-19: WEEKLY SECURITY REPORT
Country: Libya & Tunisia Period: 01/04/2022 – 07/04/2022

_____

SECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW

1. Key developments

EUBAM Libya _ Heat Map Intelyse 01 April 2022 – 07 April 2022

- **Tensed security situation within the GNU - GNS power impasse:**
  - **Armed factions' deployments, static and mobile security operations in Tripoli & Tripolitania**
  - **Continuous statements of oncoming Government of National Stability (GNS) a move into the capital agitates security situation.**
- **Other security developments**
  - **Armed Clash in Sabha between LNA personnel and Abdul Kafi Youth/ "Abdul Kafi Brigade"**
- **Tunisia security update**

2. Findings
2.1. Tensed security situation within the GNU - GNS power impasse

Armed factions' deployments, static and mobile operations in Tripoli & Tripolitania

The security environment with the start of the Ramadan showed signs of continuation of the tensions between armed groups affiliated to both sides of GNU - GNS axis power impasse.

Sudden armed clashes erupted between Stability Support Apparatus (SSA) affiliated forces and Nawasi Brigade in Central Tripoli, over territorial dispute sparked by a Nawasi Brigade checkpoint at Palestine Square, followed by mid-scale armed factions mobilisations and defusal of tensions on 07 April.

During the period 01 – 07 April Armed factions forces deployments remained to be seen as maintaining readiness for potential GNS-linked movement in the Western Region:

- 03 April: Constitution and Election Support Force (CESF) mobilization & deployment at GNU PM Office. No kinetic engagements reported.
- 03 April: armed faction aligned with the SSA (Zawiyah) under the command of Hassa Abuzriba established vehicle checkpoints (VCP) on the coastal road to allegedly to facilitate the stealing of personal items from passing motorists.
- 04 April: Armed clashes between SSA affiliated forces (specifically the Abdul Hamid Al-Maghouta armed group) and Nawasi Brigade forces in the Libyan Passport Authority/ Sareem Street area, Central Tripoli, over territorial dispute sparked by a Nawasi Brigade checkpoint at Palestine Square, an area usually under SSA control in downtown Tripoli resulting in 7 casualties: 5 Nawasi, 1 from SSA personnel and 1 civilian. The incident triggered military deployments of 28th Infantry Battalion, 777 and 444 brigades into Tripoli downtown without consequent armed clashes.
- 05 April: Nawasi Brigade affiliated assailants, allegedly from Al-Khadra Bridge, fired a rocket-propelled grenade (PRG) targeting a Stabilisation Support Agency (SSA) outpost near the Bawabt Demashq Hospital. In response, SSA-affiliated gunmen fired in the direction of the highway. No casualties were recorded

SDCD COMMENT

The 04 and 05 April skirmishes between SSA and Nawasi brigade, two factions which were considered to be presently allied[1], are unlikely not lead to protracted clashes, but activities of which they are part of, perpetuate violence in Tripoli and impact the security conditions. Secondary possible negative development might be other armed groups to be dragged into the conflict indicators of which were visible on 04/04 when 777 and 444 brigades started mobilisations and deployments in Tripoli which triggered an SSA threatening statements against the Nawasi and 444 Brigades and what is considered to be Nawasi and SSA retaliatory actions on the 05 Apr. Although the skirmishes indicate fragile relations between Tripoli armed groups, the history of relations between SSA and Nawasi Brigade and the attempt to contain the tension leads to the conclusion that the development is not related to the current GNU/GNS power struggle.

Despite reported intervention efforts, and the attempted downplaying of the armed clashes by the SSA, it is possible that follow-up hostilities may occur, especially after yesterday's RPG attack.

As of 07 Apr, armed factions' hostilities in the Tripoli area are defused. Nonetheles, the reported unconfirmed overnight mobilisation, including Nawasi Brigade forces in Souq Al-Jouma, and support from the 444th Combat Brigade and 28th Infantry Battalion triggered speculations of a rift between the Nawasi, and 444th Combat Brigades on one side, and SSA/ Ghaniwa affiliated forces on the other. In a statement on the alleged social media profile of Abdul Hamid Al-Maghouta, Commander of the Abdul Hamid Al-Maghouta armed group, he threatened Nawasi Brigade Commander, Mustafa Kaddour, and 444th Combat Brigade Commander, Mahmoud Hamza, claiming that they were preparing to attack his forces. Meanwhile, the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Libya (AOHR) has warned of repercussions from the armed clashes, and has called on the "international community" to place "warlords" on the UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions list.

The extent of impact on security conditions from the military/ security and armed group actor competition over influence and territorial control, outside of the ongoing political power struggle, is exemplified by the two incidents.

Although there is no confirmation of direct link between the recent hostilities and the GNU-GNS political power struggle, the silence on the events from the GNU side, including its Ministry of Interior (MoI), and the relatively rapid statement from the GNS Interior Minister, Issam Abu Zariba, indicate that the events are likely reflecting the political dynamic. The political power impasse is likely to worsen the security conditions in western region, prior to a potential development of a sustainable balance of power. The incidents on 04 and 05 Apr in the prespective of the January 16, 2022 armed clashes between the Nawasi Brigade and the Special Deterrence Force (Rada) indicate a trend of violence in Tripoli areas and key transit routes (Second Ring Road, and Al-Shat Road). The fluid allegiances of the armed factions increase the volatility and unpredictability of the security atmospherics.

---

[1] Assumption collaborated by SSA in official statements in media and social networks describing the clashes as a simple dispute between "brothers" and confirmed that tensions subsided thanks to the intervention of elders. The SSA accused media outlets of amplifying the events to sow discord between "brothers". Media references: https://twitter.com/alwasatengnews/status/1511148190455767047; https://libyaupdate.com/interior-ministry-condemns-armed-clashes-in-tripoli/

SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

Continuous statements of oncoming Government of National Stability (GNS) a move into the capital agitates security situation.

The week saw renewed statements of upcoming Government of National Stability (GNS) PM-designate Fathi Bashagha move into the capital by.

The announced intent Bashagha will attempt to enter the capital during the month of Ramadan is considered as likely based on the increased urgency for the GNS to enter the capital as the political momentum recently gained by Bashagha through his diplomatic consultations in Tunis is gradually dissipating. On 03 Apr, GNS Spokesman and Health Minister Othman Abdel Jalil stated that the government's pledge not to use violence is the reason for the delay in entering the capital and that the GNS "will not use force to seize power because we believe that violence will generate more tragedies for our people".

Underlining mounting pressure on PM-designate Bashagha and his government, also reiterated his intent to enter Tripoli and take over government headquarters peacefully "in the coming days. The prognosis that Bashagha will attempt to enter the capital from its western flank is supported by the occurance on 03 Apr, when convoy headed by Interior Minister Issam Abu Zreiba (Al-Zawiya) arrived in Abu Sourrah, southeast Al-Zawiya, at night on 03 April. GNS Minister of Local Government Sami Al-Dawi, Foreign Affairs Minister Hafid Qadour, Civil Aviation Minister Hisham Abu Shkaiwat and Defence Minister Ahmeid Houma were also onboard the convoy.

In regards to the intermittent armed clash between SSA and Nawasi brigade, Government of National Stability (GNS) Interior Minister, Issam Abu Zariba issued a response, calling on all parties to stop hostilities and deescalate, adding that the GNS Ministry of Interior (MoI) is following "with great interest what is happening in the capital, Tripoli, in terms of armed confrontations that threaten the safety of citizens, and endangers their property"; MoI is "keen to bring real peace by alleviating the suffering of our beloved people, by achieving security and stability".

SDCD COMMENT

Available information renders that major/protracted armed clashes should Bashagha's GNS supported by allied armed factions attempt to enter the capital are unlikely.

The efforts of GNS to gain support from armed factions in the west region are indicatively focused to SSA[2] and 55th Company "Al-Dawi militia" commander Muammar Al-Dawi (Wershiffanah)[3] as main affiliates. While some of the armed groups in Tripoli have consolidated into the CESF, some of the most influential ones i.e. Security Deterrence Force (SDF) Rada, Al Nawasi Brigade, 444 and 777 brigades have not taken openly nightery GNS nor GNU side.

The arrival of a GNS ministerial convoy in Al-Zawiya on 03 Apr raise the probability of Bashagha to enter the capital from its western flank, using the protection of (SSA) leads to the assumption of likely connection between the SSA deployed VCPs in vicinity of Zawiya, with de-facto task to facilitate the GNS convoy movement to the city and the military build-up of CESF personnel and deployment at GNU PM Office as preparation to prevent potential assault of GNS affiliated factions. CESF presence at the location remains and as of the time of the reporting no kinetic engagements with opposing factions are reported. The GNU's position towards Tripoli military/ security and armed group actors, including recent financial allocation from the Emergency Fund, has been highlighted by media reports as a reason for the passive stance, and the GNS MoI seems to be trying take advantage from the situation. Potentially, the GNU may increase its efforts and resources to avoid further hostilities in Tripoli, although it appears that the GNU ability to influence intra-military/ security and armed group activity and relations, is decreasing.

In seemingly related development, an anonymous & unconfirmed social media sources, aligned to GNS, have been claiming that Prime Minister (GNS) Fathi Bashagha might be considering to delay his move to Tripoli until June 24, when the LPDF set life span of the GNU expires. This alleged move according to the same source has the support of the main security and armed group actors in Tripoli. the alleged move would also give hypothetically GNU and the GNS more time to negotiate the handover of power, and the transition might be smoother because also the GNU has already claimed that it wants to organize elections in June. It cannot be excluded the later to be intentional GNS deception aimed to outwit the GNU to "lower its guard". Considering latest statements, GNS has not given indications of willing to delay take over of power for

---

[2] The deputy commander of Hassan Abu Zariba is brother of GNS Interior Minister, Issam Abu Zariba

[3] The commander of 5th Company "Al-Dawi militia" Muammar Al-Dawi is brother of Sami Al-Dawi is GNS Minister of Local Government.

nearly three months. Nevertheless, the GNS is highly dependent at present on negotiations with internal and international interlocuters and due to that their goals and messaging are likely to change as the situation evolves.

2.2. Other security developments

Armed Clash in Sabha between LNA personnel and Abdul Kafi Youth/ "Abdul Kafi Brigade".

April 05-06 – Armed clashes between LNA Tariq Bin Ziyad (TBZ) affiliated forces and Abdul Kafi Youth/ "Abdul Kafi Brigade" in the Abdul Kafi neighbourhood, North Sabha. Clashes broke out after LNA affiliated forces attempt to carry out security response, targeting suspected criminal locations in the neighbourhood.

SDCD COMMENTS

Announced by media and social networks reason for the clashes was the entry of LNA convoy into the neighbourhood in order to raid the locations individuals involved in organised crim. Allegedly, LNA passage into neighbourhood was not coordinated with local factions, which led to an exchange of fire between the two parties, and the LNA forces surrounded the entire area.

LNA affiliated units are often been accused by local citizens and tribes of connections and profiting from criminal activity across Fezzan.

2.3. Tunisia security update

On 6 April, President Kais Saied announced that the parliamentary elections scheduled for December will adopt majority electoral system (single-member ballot system) in two rounds, effectively puting an end to the proportional (party-list) system. The message came amid escalating political tensions after the President dissolved the parliament on 30 March, against which the Citizens Against the Coup and the Ennahda movements announced protests in Tunis on 10 April respectively[4]. Tensions are further escalated from summon (consequently cancelled) of Ennahdha Movement MPs before the anti-terrorist brigade, on instatements for their participation in a plenary session on March 30.

On separate note, Tunisian security forces dismantled a terrorist cell in Tozeur on Tuesday on charges that the suspects were publishing media online promoting Daesh (Islamic State).

SDCD COMMENTS

The decision to adopt majority electoral system can be perceived as Saied's attempt to marginalize partisanship to remove polarization among political parties and guarantee that independent MPs support his policie. Security forces are likely to attempt to prevent the upcoming gatherings from occurring, which raises the likelihood of civil unrest. The 6 April decision will likely further antagonize opposition party leaders, including secular ones that were initially aligned with Saied's initiatives last year. It also triggered reactions from international community.

Tunisian security forces have been continuously engaged in counterterrorist operations countrywide, conducting raids and arrests against suspected members, affiliates and cells of terrorist organisations.

5. COVID-19 Update[5]

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	**81**	361	- 78%	12	6	24	- 75 %	501,738
Tunisia	**1,054**	1,959	- 46%	88	74	142	- 48%	1,037,358

---

[4] Media references: https://www.tunisienumerique.com/le-mouvement-ennahdha-organise-une-manifestation-ce-dimanche/; https://www.tunisienumerique.com/le-mouvement-des-citoyens-contre-le-coup-detat-organise-une-manifestation-ce-dimanche/
[5] Data from WorldOMeter. Source: https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ [online]. Last updated: 17/03/2022 16:00GMT

SECURITY AND DUTY OF CARE DEPARTMENT

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.