

FACT SHEET LIBYA

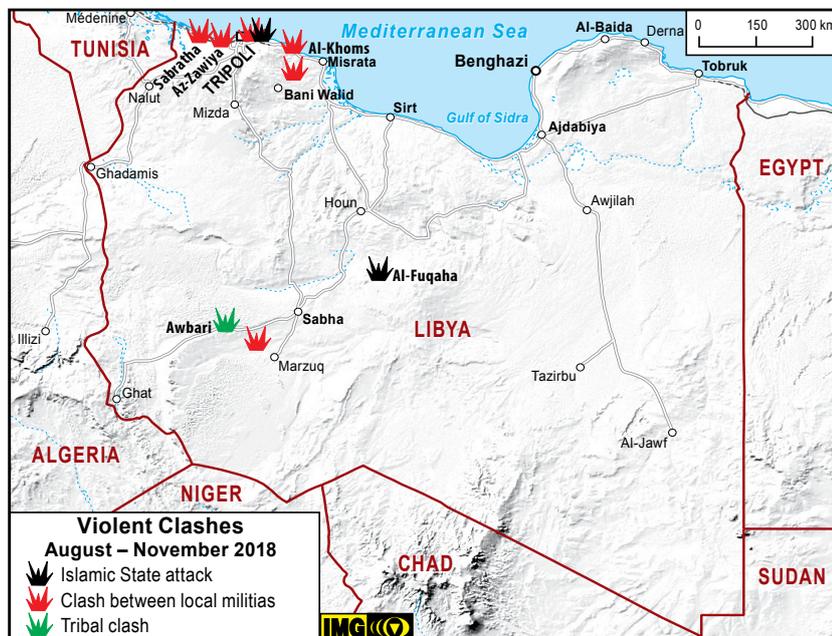
24 July 2018 - 13 November 2018 Nr. 7

Libya was rattled by heavy clashes between militias in and around Tripoli in August and September. Moreover, the Islamic State carried out two major attacks targeting Libyan National Army (LNA)-affiliated soldiers in Al-Fuqaha and Libya's National Oil Corporation in Tripoli in an attempt to shock the resurgent oil and gas sector. Russia allegedly deployed soldiers in Libya's east, building on its presence of private military contractors.

The House of Representatives (HoR) and High Council of State (HCS) decided to restructure the Presidential Council (PC), seemingly in retribution for having replaced four ministers—a symptom of the east-west power struggle. The HoR's neglect of passing a constitutional referendum law ahead of

the Paris-brokered December 10-elections led to UNSMIL announcing that it would shift attention away from holding elections and towards a national conference in early-2019 as proposed by UN Special Envoy Salamé's 2017 Action Plan.

The Palermo Summit conclusions of November 13 committed to the UN Action Plan roadmap towards a national conference. It aims at establishing a constitutional framework for elections in mid-2019, strengthening local governance, unifying military institutions, and a fair distribution of Libya's resources. The Summit saw PC Chairman Serraj meet LNA commander Haftar for the first time since May and endorse a political solution to Libya's crisis.



Note: No claim to completeness of the map is put forward.

GRAPHIC

The most violent clashes took place in Tripoli where local militias, notably the Tripoli Revolutionaries Battalion and Deterrence Organization, fought off armed groups from Tripoli's periphery, e.g. the 7th Brigade from Tarhouna. A reported 39 people were killed. Sabratha, an important oil and migrant boat port, saw clashes between the Al-Wadi Brigade and the 48th Brigade battling for influence over the city. The Islamic State killed six in Al-Fuqaha and Tripoli. Near Marzuq, four local militiamen were killed in clashes with Chadian rebels, prompting calls for LNA intervention.

FORECAST

The Palermo Summit marked a diplomatic victory for Italy which managed to rewrite the Libyan agenda and sideline the French efforts to hold elections in December. However, in the absence of any serious US involvement, a unified EU position on Libya is of paramount importance. This is decisive particularly with respect to the future of LNA commander Haftar who enjoys the backing of Russia, Egypt and France, but whose forces have repeatedly conflicted with Italy's navy.

The intended UN-guided national conference in 2019 will have to find a way of ending the stalemate situation between the Tobruq-based HoR and an increasingly anaemic PC. The conference will also have to answer the question of who will command the Libyan forces once they are unified—a process orchestrated by Egypt which by no means acts as a neutral broker.

The recent Islamic State attacks are a grim reminder of a potential jihadist blaze fanned by the security vacuum in Libya and an influx of jihadists from the Levant.

The periodically published Fact Sheet compiles and analyzes significant developments pertaining to the Libya conflict while providing maps and an outlook of possible future events.

INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

04/09: Following heavy clashes in Tripoli, a ceasefire agreement was reached under the auspices of UN Envoy for Libya Salamé between GNA representatives, military commanders, security forces and armed groups present in Tripoli.

30/09: UN Envoy Ghassan Salamé expressed doubt as to whether elections could indeed be held in December 2018 after conflicts in Libya's capital and legislative inertia on the HoR's part.

09/10: Unconfirmed media reports inform that after involvement of private Russian military companies since March 2017, Russia allegedly deployed its own troops and weapons and may set up two military bases in East Libya (Tobruq and Benghazi). The armament is believed to comprise an S-300 air defence missile system and Kalibr anti-ship missiles.

18/10: LNA commander Haftar visited Chadian President Idriss Deby in N'Djamena for the second time in two months to discuss bilateral relations and the security situation in southern Libya after clashes between Chadian rebels and Libyan militias.

22/10: Foreign, Defence and Interior Ministers as well as intelligence officials of Libya, Niger, Chad and Sudan met for a two-day conference aiming to establish cooperation mechanisms against terrorism, trafficking and cross-border crimes.

07/11: UNSMIL abandoned the Paris roadmap to elections on December 10 and instead prioritised a national conference in 2019 aiming to bridge Libya's many divides. UNSE Salamé accused the HoR of having deliberately failed to pass the necessary legislation for the intended elections.

09/11: Ahead of the Palermo conference, LNA commander Haftar met Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu. They discussed ways to resolve the Libyan crisis and the fight against terrorism.

09/11: PC Chairman Serraj met Turkish President Erdogan to discuss the political crisis, prospective economic cooperation and bilateral relations.

13/11: The Palermo conference brought about an agreement on the UN Action Plan which envisages an early-2019 national conference in the run-up to Libyan national elections. Serraj and Haftar met for the first time since May and committed to a political solution.

MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

27/08: Clashes occurred between the 7th Brigade of Tarhouna against Tripoli-based armed groups such as the Tripoli Revolutionaries Battalion (TRB) and Deterrence Organization. The 7th Brigade attacked positions in Tripoli including the TRB-controlled Yarmouk military base. 39 people were killed and 119 injured during the attacks.

31/08: Following an escalation of violence between militias in Tripoli, the Mitiga Airport in Tripoli had to be closed temporarily.

10/09: The headquarters of the Libya National Oil Corporation (NOC) in Tripoli were attacked by ISIS, killing two and injuring ten.

08/10: High-profile Islamist militant El-Ashmawy was captured in Derna. In Egypt, El-Ashmawy had been convicted to death for a 2013 assassination attempt against Egypt's then-Interior Minister.

10/10: Naval forces of the LNA allegedly fired at two fishing boats of six and seven fishermen without warning before seizing and navigating the boats to Ras al-Hilal.

16/10: Following the kidnapping of nine inhabitants of Sharqiyah in Southern Libya, the local Khalid Ibn Al-Walid Battalion clashed with Chadian rebels. Four members of the local battalion were killed.

27/10: Three people were killed by explosive remnants of war in Benghazi, in areas of former clashes between the LNA and the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council.

28/10: Four people were killed in an ISIS attack on Al-Fuqaha in Libya's Jufra region. Another ten people were reported to be kidnapped by the attackers. Al-Fuqaha is located in the LNA's influence sphere.

04/11: Fighting broke out between the Salafist Al-Wadi Brigade of the Anti-Islamic State Operations Room and the local militias headed by the 48th Brigade which tried to enter Sabratha.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

07/10: The PC made four changes at the helm of the Ministries of the Interior, Economy, Finance as well as Youth and Sport. This decision evoked outrage from the HoR which called the changes a breach of the Libyan Political Agreement, because the PC did not seek the endorsement of the HoR.

14/10: After a four-year suspension due to local clashes, Sirte Oil Company resumed gas field development drillings.

15/10: Egypt allegedly proposed a unification plan for Libya's military institutions under one military council headed by LNA commander Haftar. A few days later, PC spokesman Sallak urged that PC Chairman Serraj should be defined as the Commander-in-chief of a unified army.

25/10: LNA spokesman Mismari stressed that there was consensus that the leader of the armed forces should be an elected president.

29/10: HoR and HCS agreed upon a restructuring of the PC, by limiting its members from nine to three members (a head and two deputies) and installing a separate government. The members of the PC would represent the three historic regions Tripolitania, Fezzan and Cyrenaica.

07/11: The LNA announced the start of military trials against more than 200 people it accuses of terrorism. This decision came after the LNA declared that the fighting in Benghazi and Derna is over.

12/11: Following a stabilisation of the region, National Oil Corporation Chairman Sanallah assured his support for the Ras Lanuf oil complex and the local polyethylene manufacture.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

07/10: IOM reports that there are currently about 690,000 irregular migrants in Libya, mostly coming from Niger, Egypt, Chad, Sudan and Nigeria. Around 60% of them are resident in Western Libya, in and around Tripoli. UNHCR reports that 14,000 migrants have been rescued by the coastguard since the start of 2018. Moreover, around 8,000 migrants are currently held in detention centers in Tripoli.

07/10: In two separate operations, the Libyan Navy rescued 114 migrants in rubber boats 80 miles north of the coastal city Khoms.

18/10: With regard to the Palermo Conference on Libya on 12-13 November, EP President Tajani called upon member states to find a common position on Libya and accept to host migrants. A strong common position of the EU's member states, specifically of France and Italy, was paramount for both stability in Libya and EU interests, Tajani urged.

19/10: Libyan FM Siala said that Libya rejected the EU's proposal to build assessment centres for migrants in North Africa. Instead, Siala said that Libya was working with its southern partners to protect its borders. Siala sees the EU's role in providing technical support by means of patrol vehicles, helicopters, drones and light weapons.

21/10: After Italy had donated twelve decommissioned Coast Guard patrol boats in August to be operated by the Libyan Coast Guard and the Ministry of the Interior, the Libyan Naval Forces confirmed that the Italian navy provided another coastguard ship named after one of Libya's ancient provinces, Fezzan. Another ship and ten dinghies were set to be sent in the weeks to follow. Italy also trains Libyan sailors.

01/11: Human Rights Solidarity reports that in the period from Jan. to Sept. 2018, 859 people became victims of abductions or assassinations in Libya. Of this number, 717 (83%) were civilians. 50% of these incidents were reported to have been assassinations while 26% were kidnappings and 15% arrests.



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