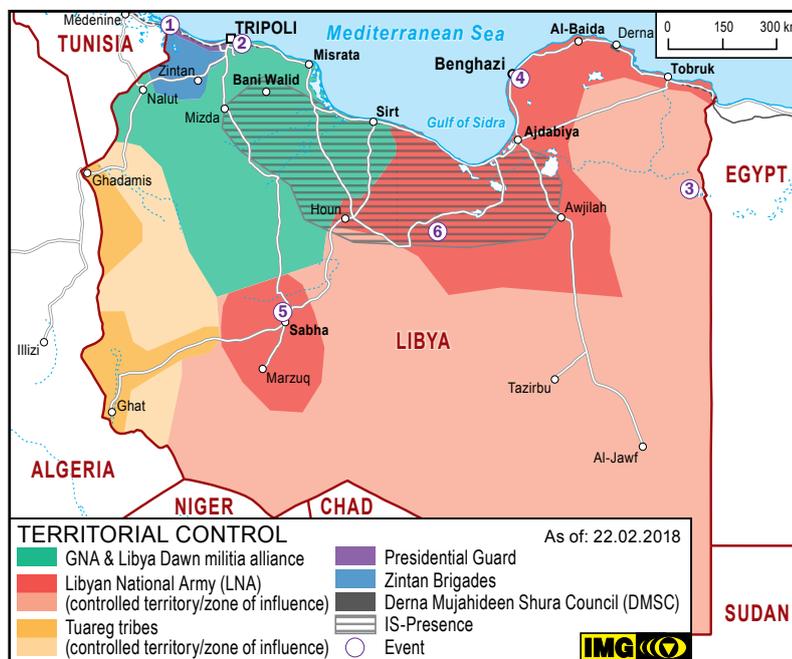


Haftar's announcement not to accept the LPA and its institutions any more after the 17th of December caused international condemnation. The broad support for the LPA and the UN road map for Libya shows that the majority of actors are in favor of stabilisation in Libya.

With the election registration ending on February 15th close to 2,5 million Libyans of the 3 - 3,5 million eligible voters were registered for elections. Voices demanding holding the constitutional referendum before holding elections are getting louder. Two twin bomb attacks on two mosques in Beng-

hazi lead to the sudden rise of civilian casualties in January this year. Although the last militant holdout in the city was cleared by the end of December the security situation worsened in recent weeks due to rising criminal activities and conflicts within the ranks of the Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). While the International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized the return of more than 18.000 migrants to their countries of origin in 2018, occasionally a small number of boats are still departing from the shores of Libya causing dozens of casualties every month.



MAP ANALYSIS

Militias form the Government of National Accord (GNA) established control over the strategically important area west of Tripoli.

In the central Libya the Islamic State (IS) extended its spare presence eastwards and was active in the oil rich area south of Ajfabiya as well as in the oil crescent east of Sirte. After some of the last militants opposed to the LNA fled Benghazi the LNA announced the end of military operations inside the city.

FORECAST

Although the LNA announced several times that a military operation to take Derna from the local Shura Council fighters is starting soon and troops were deployed near the city, a large scale offensive remains unlikely to happen. Egypt, however, will continue pushing to LNA in this regard because Derna is known as harbor many Egyptian jihadists.

A constitutional referendum is the next step towards a democratic and united Libya, the struggle over who is able to put his finger print on the constitution will be one of the biggest issues. It is still a long way to go until national elections will take place, and when it comes to that point, it is not given that elections will bring a major breakthrough.

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.

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SOURCES.: MEDIA ANALYSIS; LAYOUT.: REF III/Medien, IMG



INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

15.12: Russia stressed the importance of the UN-led “conference of a national dialogue” to end Libya’s political crisis. At a meeting with GNA foreign minister Siala in Moscow they discussed among other issues the restoration of bilateral trade and economic ties. Rumours about Russia’s intention to build military bases in Libya and Egypt were denied.

15.12: Russia supports a partial lifting of the arms embargo on the condition a unification of the army. The process of Libyan army unification was discussed in a new meeting on 10.12. in Cairo.

17.12.: On the occasion of the second anniversary of the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) Haftar announced that he no longer accepts the LPA and its institutions due to its expiration. The international community condemned Haftar’s interpretation, stressing that the agreement has not yet been approved by the House of Representatives (HOR) and therefore is still valid. Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Italy, France, UN special envoy Salamé and the Arab League reiterated that the LPA remains the cornerstone of a political solution.

21.12: France’s foreign minister steps up his efforts to convince the head of PC, Fayiz Serraj and General Haftar to cooperate in support of the UN road map. The meeting also included discussions on France’s support to secure Libya’s southern border, combating illegal migration and human trafficking.

25.12: Salamé announced that the inclusive “conference of a national dialogue”, proposed by the UN road map in September 2017 and planned for February 2018 will be postponed.

13.01: Greek authorities confirmed the seizure of a ship transporting explosive material from Turkey presumably to Misrata.

15.01: Italy has also increased its cooperation with Libya concerning migration. On 09.12 both countries agreed to establish a joint migration operations centre. Furthermore a new bilateral crime fighting room focusing on transnational crime, human smuggling and terrorism was set up in Rome.

19.02.: Italy announced not only the to send 470 troops to Niger to combat immigration, but also the Italian parliament decided to increase the number of forces in Misrata, Libya. The HOR considers this action as as violation of the sovereignty of Libya.

25.01: The Netherlands and Germany started the preparations to reopen their embassies in Tripoli. Germany was the largest foreign aid donor in 2017 with € 233 Million.

07.02: A UN report indicated the participation of ISIS fighters in human trafficking in southern Libya. The Algerian foreign minister also warned of ISIS militants returning from Syria and Iraq regrouping in Libya and in the sahel region. ⑥

DOMESTIC POLITICS

17.12.: The mayor of Misrata, Mohamed Eshtewi, was kidnapped and assassinated. Such incidents are not rare in Misrata, however never before such a high ranking person was targeted. Eshtewi had many opponents because of his designation to the LPA. Mustafa Karwad was elected his successor.

18.12.: The Shura Council of Derne, the dominant militia in the city, arrested several IS members, two people were killed during the arrests.

19.12: Mohammed al-Shukri was elected governor of the Central Bank of Libya by the HoR, however this vote was rejected by the Central Bank in Tripoli as well as by the GNA for being illegal.

15.02: The election registration ended with more than 2.4 million people being registered. The registration for Libyans living abroad continues until the end of February. There is currently no election law agreed upon and the date for elections is not fixed yet.

20.02.: The HoR announced to vote for a law for the constitutional referendum. Demands to implement a constitution before national elections are getting louder, especially after the constitutional court confirmed the current version of the constitution to be the rightful one. A group of HoR-MPs recently rejected the constitution draft for disadvantaging eastern Libya.

MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

28.12.: After a few dozen fighters from the last non LNA-held part of Benghazi, Sidi Kribesh, fled to Derna while others engaged the LNA into a fight, the end of all military operations inside Benghazi was announced. ④

05.01.: In the course of an offensive forces of the Zintani PC-commander of the western military zone, Osama Juwaili, took the highly frequented Ras Jedir border crossing to Tunisia, which is a known for smuggling. The offensive lasted 2 days and caused 3 victims. Juwaili took Ras Jedir from local militias which are also employed by the PC. ①

15.01.: The 33rd brigade from Tajoura attacked Mitiga, the only operating airport in the Tripoli, where the headquarter and prison of the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) is located. Serraj declared a local state of emergency and disbanded the 33rd brigade, which is officially part of the GNA. At least 20 people were killed in the clashes which lasted a few days and ended with the retreat of the attackers. ②

18.01.: Sudanese militias from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) killed 5 LNA soldiers near Jaghub at the Egyptian border. Three days later the LNA announced the start of Operation Desert Fury and bombed a JEM-convoy further south in Kufrah. ③

23.01.: In Benghazi two bombs exploded close to a mosque killing 35 and wounding more than 100 people. Three weeks later on 09.02. another twin bomb went off close to a mosque killing 2 and injuring dozens. ④

01.02.: Tribal killings in Sebha between the arabic Awlad Suleiman and the Tubu lead to a worsening of the security situation in the city. A week later tribal elders of both factions agreed on a ceasefire deal. Meanwhile the mayor of Sebha called for security forces to be sent to town because of the strong presence of Sudanese and Chadian militias. ⑤

07.02.: After another execution-video appeared online, the ICC-wanted Saiqa member Mahmud Werfalli turned himself in to the LNA. After protests in Benghazi erupted other Saiqa commanders were arrested for instigating riots. It is not clear whether Werfalli remains in custody.

16.02.: Saiqa commander Wanis Bukhamada was relocated to Derna, following the deployment of troops to the last non-LNA held city in eastern Libya. General Nazouri, a close ally of Hafar, replaced Bukhamada as commander of the Benghazi Joint Security Room after the security situation in Benghazi worsened recently.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

01.01.: In 2017 around 18.000 migrants were brought back to their home countries, IOM stated. The Italian foreign minister Alfano underlined the role of Italy in these efforts.

01.01.: UNSMIL reported 433 civilian casualties in 2017, of which 79 were children. 39 civilians died in January, another 63 were injured. This high number was due to the bomb attacks in Benghazi.

10.01.: The Libyan coastguard reported that it brought back 18.810 migrants to Libya from the Sea in 2017, 11 dead bodies were recovered and 483 are reported missing.

24.01.: Six people were arrested south of Sirte following the release of videos showing Sudanese migrants being tortured in Libya.

01.02.: FRONTEX launched Operation Themesis as continuation of Operation Triton, assisting the Italian coastguard, with the legal difference that from now on Italy can decide whether rescued migrants are brought to Italy or not.



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Videoblog „Feichtinger kompakt“
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