Libya remains in chaos as a failed state since the 2011 uprising against then-leader, Muammar al-Qadhafi, supported by a military intervention led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and endorsed by the United Nations (UN). Recent political dialogue intended to restart efforts at national government cohesion have yet to resolve any of the current disputes that prevent further progress on the December 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), the plan to govern post-Qadhafi Libya.

The individuals, political movements, and the armed groups that partnered each other in the 2011 uprising have splintered into internal disputes and conflicts. The result is a continually shifting and complex array of allegiances and alliances between armed groups, political movements/parties, and managers of crucial national resources (such as the oil industry). The two major political divisions are between the United Nations-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) and the 2014-elected House of Representatives (HOR), each backed by armed groups and various regional and international governments and essentially in Tripoli and western Libya. A third power center is that of General Khalifa Haftar, whose military mercenaries and armed group coalitions operate in the eastern portion of Libya and moving west. The influences and actions of a number of international, regional, and local government and non-government organizations (NGO) heighten the divisions between the Libyan actors and their agencies.

Consequently, security throughout the country is unreliable in most areas and near civil war in other areas. While there is currently an uneasy cease-fire in place, heavy conflict continues in clusters (essentially around the major cities and oil industry locations). Many observers believe Tripoli, the country’s capital, is the political and security “center of gravity” for Libya. Therefore, they predict that successful settlements and agreements for Tripoli will significantly reduce the conflict narratives throughout the rest of the country. Major considerations are:

- Libya’s challenges are exacerbated by its four decades of undermined and dysfunctional government institutions, “tribal and regional tensions, the absence of political norms and the suppression of independent elites and civil society.” Therefore, the resolution of the political landscape is paramount
before addressing Libya’s other issues. Consistent Libyan governance is further tested by three power foci. **After a full year**, the UN-recognized GNA, led by **Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj**, seems to have accomplish little to improve governing conditions. When his Presidential Council (PC) move to Tripoli (from its previous location in a secure naval base), it was perceived as “a victory” although it still depends primarily on informal militia arrangements for its protection. Military successes against Islamists and/or the armed forces of **General Haftar** are limited and does not compensate for the lack of basic services to the population. In addition, the GNA’s support is, perhaps, reflective of apathetic-to-hostile population outlook regarding UNSMIL, in particular the **Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Martin Kobler (German)**. Further complicating matters for the GNA is its disputed legal status. Neither the GNA, nor the PC, are recognized by the 2014 elected-HOR, as the Tobruk-based HOR failed to approve the LPA (a constitutional amendment). Therefore, neither are ratified as Libya’s executive body. Consequently, many agreements and contracts between the GNA/PC and other international entities are considered invalid by the Libyan courts, thwarting implementation. Further, the **HOR itself is not technically a legal body**, as its mandate expired in October 2015 and was dependent on the LPA implementation to retain legitimacy. Meanwhile, General Haftar in the east expects continued support from external actors, such as Russia, and further expects his continued demonstration of military power—particularly against Daesh elements—to earn him a “seat” at future political negotiations. HOR politicians are already insisting that General Haftar **must be part of any eventual political solutions**.

- Libya is a historic trade and ethnic nexus due to its geographic position on the continent and the Mediterranean Sea. It is also **strategically important**, with potential to exploit huge energy (oil) resources. Other international and regional concerns regarding Libya include, but are not limited to: trans-national criminal and terrorist threats emanating from Libya; the continued export of Libyan oil and natural gas; the security of Libyan weapons stockpiles and the violations of the arms embargo; and the country’s orientation in region-wide political competition among political-Islamists and secular authoritarians.

* In early April 2017, **General Haftar forces—which included aircraft**—attacked the Tamenhint Airbase in Jufra (central district of Libya) to push out a Misrata militia group (Third Force). Another occupying militia group, the **Benghazi Defence Brigade**, also operated in the area and apparently announced its subsequent departure from the airbases, “and handed it over the general chief of staff of the Libyan army (the army supporting the Presidency Council).” The Misrata force remained in place at the time.

* In a new operation called Al-Amal Al-Muad ("The Promise of Hope", now called “Desert Wrath”) forces loyal to the Presidency Council (PC) were expected at the time to move south to engage both Haftar’s forces (called the Libyan National Army, or the LNA) as well as “remnants of the so-called Islamic State in the area.”

* In 2015, **Daesh (Islamic State/ISIS/ISIL)** elements expanded into Libya in the city of Sirte, near the oil resources. While many locals appeared to favor Daesh at the time, many others joined in a resistance and partnered with pro-GNA and international forces, as well as other militias, to defeat Daesh in Sirte. While remaining elements of Daesh continue to harass their opponents in Sirte and surrounding areas, armed forces led by **General Khalifa Haftar** (a former Qadhafi officer who was a major figure in the 2011 rebellion) occupied the oil refineries and ports and negotiated with the GNA for access to those resources. Control of the oil industry locations have passed back and forth in violence between Haftar, Islamists groups, and GNA forces since then.

* Libya is both the **main route of travel** and the most perilous transition point between North Africa and the Middle East into Europe (through Italy) for **migrants** and refugees, due to its long coastline, lack of border control, and the relatively short distance between its shoreline and Italy’s island of Lampedusa. The annual migrant/refugee density has more than doubled in less than five years, from 64,000 (estimated) in 2011 to over 150,000 (estimated) in 2015. **Migrants and refugees** are from more than 12 countries across the North African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian regions for a **myriad of reasons** such
as economic uncertainty and physical insecurity due to civil war or religious/ethnic persecution. Many, if not most, of the migrants and refugees find themselves in great danger while in Libya, often detained and trafficked like slaves or killed outright due to their religion or ethnic background. While the European Union (EU) launched Operation Sophia in May 2015, focused on the human traffickers and smugglers’ infrastructure, it found itself involved in rescues without the resources. One major criticism of the operation is that it inadvertently encourages migrants rather than barring smugglers. This is due to the operation’s practices, which enact rescues when the smugglers’ vessels are outside of Libyan waters—a distance of only twelve miles.

Another estimated 400,000 Libyans are also internally displaced.

Mission Overview

1. **Background.** In the post-World War II era, Libya achieved independence and was part of an early UN administration. In 1969, Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi enacted a military coup to establish his leadership and his political system of socialism and Islam. From the 1970s through the 1990s, he leveraged the Libyan oil revenues to promote his ideology regionally, support and promote terrorist activities, develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and maintain a flamboyant lifestyle for himself, his family, and his inner-circle of supporters. In 1992, the UN imposed sanctions to isolate Libya economically; they were removed in 2003 when Qadhafi acknowledged responsibility for the terrorist attacks and agreed to compensation for claimants, as well as ending the WMD program. The early 2000s marked an uneasy normalization of relations between Libya and its regional neighbors and other UN Member States. However, a decade later, the “Arab Spring” discontent spilled into Libya. The Libyan government’s brutal response created the environment for civil war, leading to an international air and naval intervention under NATO and UN auspices. By summer 2011, the Qadhafi government was overthrown and replaced by a transitional government supported by the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

2. **Mandate.** UNSMIL is considered one of the UN’s special political missions. Its first mandate, UNSCR 2291(2016), was renewed in December 2016 [UNSCR 2323(2016)] until 15 September 2017. The mandate directs support of the Libyan political process through mediation and good offices. In addition, UNSMIL is mandated to conduct human rights monitoring and reporting, support key Libyan institutions
and efforts to secure uncontrolled arms, the provision of essential services and delivery of international and humanitarian assistance. UNSMIL is currently headquartered in Tunis, Tunisia.

3. Deployment. While there are many UN entities in place in Libya, there are no UN-funded troops or police deployed in support of the mandate. The United States (US) has one soldier assigned to UNSMIL. The US also supports Libya with an unspecified number of other military forces, to include the airstrikes of Operation Odyssey Lightning (concluded in December 2016), which involved precision airstrikes against Daesh targets in Sirte, Libya, at the request of the GNA.

4. Casualties. There is no current UN peacekeeping or police mission in Libya, so there have not been any causalities to peacekeepers in country in recent years. However, the number of UN peacekeeper fatalities is steadily rising across all current peacekeeping missions. The most accepted reason for this growth is that UN members are deliberately targeted by increasingly capable armed groups. However, the rise in fatalities may also correspond to significant growth to the overall numbers of peacekeepers, combined with the ever more risky environments in which they are deployed. While this is a political mission, not peacekeeping, many of the same factors of risk can affect this mandate.

Situation

5. Drivers of Conflict. The drivers of Libyan conflict are intertwined and fluid. As one observer points out:

Mitigating the crises through separate policy responses is unrealistic...the multiple and fluid interests of Libya’s most powerful actors have linked the sub-crisis in Libya: political actors cannot be understood as purely political, military forces can be both state-linked and extremist (even anti-state) in nature, and many of the factions that are linked to the two governments are also involved in illicit activity. Similarly, the political impasse cannot be resolved with the involvement of political actors alone, the smuggling crisis calls for more than a plan to hit trafficking assets – and any future initiatives to curb the proliferation of jihadism in Libya need to take into consideration the links between jihadis and other military actors. Throughout Libya’s transition, numerous and sometimes opposite interests have converged, and it is difficult to resolve the crises in Libya without untangling these interests first.

In a most basic sense, Libya—like many of its neighbors in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region—has a limited history of stable, self-sustaining, democratic governance. Its many hundreds of years as a colonial outpost was followed by a dictatorship which depended on a sole-source economic base (in this case, oil) and leveraged disputes between local authorities (mostly tribal) in order to maintain power.

In the wake of Libya’s current internal conflict, and in the absence of a central national authority with perceived (as well as actual) legitimacy, tribal leaders (and associated armed groups) are exercising local governance, particularly in policing, security, and justice services. While Libyans have, in the past, indicated a preference for governance “independent of tribal influence,” at this time “a significant minority (in some areas majorities) see tribes as effective security providers…” Consequently, the tribes have (re)emerged into the already dense landscape of political (and armed) parties included in any negotiations for Libya’s governance future.

The major spoilers to any Libyan peace agreement include: “...both [government] coalitions in Tobruk and Tripoli.” It is also now apparent that some regional neighbors—as well as international actors such as Russia and the US--are using the Libyan crisis to forward their own security, economic, or other influence agendas. In 2016, GNA Prime Minister Fayiz al-Sarraj was more direct, claiming four spoilers: “Field Marshall Haftar, the eastern parliament in Tobruk, the restrictions on cash flow caused by the
hostility of the Central Libyan Bank and the country’s Grand Mufti and the various religious fatwas…(issued)...in support of a variety of issues.”

Thus far, little has changed regarding conflict drivers inside Libya. Instead, deepening economic depression due to oil export inconsistencies—Libya’s main source of economic viability—coupled with the issues of internal displacement due to violence have continued the spiral into even greater security chaos.

6. Significant Events.

a. Recent Events. (April 2016-April 2017)

- 10 April 2017. The G7 (consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) with the EU represented, announced its continued support of the UN-recognized GNA government.
- 6 April 2017. GNA air forces attacked the LNA aircraft during an engagement in southern Libya.
- 14 March 2017. The British, French, Italian, and US ambassadors to Libya warned in a joint statement that "Russia was trying to do in Libya what it did in Syria."
- 20 February 2017. Prime Minister Sarraj’s convoy attacked in Tripoli.
- 19 January 2017. US conducted massive airstrikes near Sirte against Daesh members believed to be planning attacks in Europe, in an attack which killed 80 people.
- 11 January 2017. General Khalifa Haftar is given a tour of a Russian aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean. The event is understood as a show of Kremlin support for the faction leader who opposes Libya’s U.N.-backed Government of National Accord headed by Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj.
- 9 January 2017. Italy announces re-opening of its embassy in Libya’s capital Tripoli as part of a broader effort to curb migration departures.
- 19 December 2016. GNA authorities declare that IS group is defeated and drawn out from Sirte, its stronghold in Libya.
- 26 October 2016. Saudi Arabia announced its intention to host an international/regional dialogue on Libya.
- 15 October 2016. Armed groups aligned with Khalifa al-Ghwell, former prime minister of the GNS/GNC, attempt a coup against the GNA.
- 22 September 2016. A Joint Communique on Libya (by Algeria, Canada, Chad, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union, United Nations, the League of Arab States, and the African Union) was issued to: “…commend the continuous efforts of the neighboring countries in support of the UN-led political process” and “welcome the efforts of the African Union and its Contact Group in this regard.”
- 13 September 2016. The US, the EU, and the UN condemned an offensive by forces of General Khalifa Haftar against three oil exporting ports, insisting Libya’s oil should be administered by the UN-backed, Tripoli-based GNA.
- 8 September 2016. Libya’s last chemical arms reached a European destruction plant.
- 5 September 2016. Tunisia hosted two days of UN-brokered talks to discuss power struggles and jihadist threats.

Appointed by the 2012 National Transitional Council, the Grand Mufti Sadeq al-Ghariani is Tripoli-based. He espouses firm opposition to both General Haftar and the GNA. While he has publicly praised radical Islamist fighters like Ansar al-Sharia, he is not openly affiliated with Daesh.
1 August 2016. Prime Minister Serraj announces invitation to the US to conduct airstrikes against Daesh targets, called Operation Odyssey Lightning.

22 July 2016. UNSC adopted Resolution 2298 providing for Libya’s category 2 chemical weapons to be transferred and destroyed outside of the country.

13 June 2016. UNSC extended the UNSMIL mandate to 15 December 2016, unanimously adopting Resolution 2291(2016).

30 May 2016. Significant gains by GNA forces reduced ISIS to 200 km of coast line.

b. Upcoming Events.


October 2017. LPA-determined date for general national elections.

Operational Environment (GPMESII)

7. Geographic. Libya is located in Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria. It is about 2.5 times the size of Texas. More than 90% of the country is desert or semi-desert of mostly barren, flat to undulating plains, plateaus, and depressions. Only 8.8% of the land is agricultural, of which the majority is in pasture land and negligible cropland and forests. The natural hazards are the dry ghibli (a southern wind lasting one to four days in spring and fall) and other sandstorms. Current issues in the environment include desertification; limited natural freshwater resources; and the Great Manmade River Project (the largest water development scheme in the world, it brings water from large aquifers under the Sahara to coastal cities.

8. Political. Voting is universal at 18 years and above. December 24th is recognized as Libya’s Independence Day (as of 1951) and October 23d is Liberation Day (from the 2011 overthrow of the Qadhafi government). The 2011 transitional government [National Transitional Council (NTC)] formed a parliament in 2012 and elected a prime minister. For the 2012 elections, over 130 political parties and 3700 individuals registered. In 2014, nation-wide elections (but only 15% of the Libyan population) determined a House of Representatives (HOR) (the country is currently divided in 22 districts), but several unelected representatives of the transitional legislature would not relinquish power. They remained in Tripoli, creating a parallel Islamist-led government called the Government of National Salvation (GNS or, often, SG), headed by former Prime Minister Khalifa Ghwell [retaining many members of the General National Congress (GNC) and sometimes also called by that name]. The 2014-elected HOR moved to the port of Tobruk and had international support at the time—to include the UN and UNSMIL—based on its democratic legitimacy.

Each government has associated military forces: “Operation Dignity” and/or the Libyan National Army (LNA)—led by General Haftar—was generally affiliated with the 2014-elected HOR, and the “Libya Dawn” forces were generally associated with the 2012-elected, Islamist-leaning, SG. However, the political-militia dynamics were much more complex than a binary struggle between the SG and the HOR suggests. Each of those entities and their members enacted various ceasefires and agreements and temporary alliances from 2014 through 2016. In October 2015, after a lengthy process of many versions, the UN brokered the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) (finalized in Skhirat, Morocco, in December 2015). Some actors perceived the LPA as controversial even as it was signed for a variety of reasons. In particular, some quarters claim the process was “exclusionary” in that, allegedly, not all parties (ideological or ethnic) were allowed to participate. The agreement called for the formation of an interim Government of National
Accord (GNA) with representatives from both rival governments and holding general elections within two years, or by October 2017. In April 2016, Fayiz al-Sarraj (sometimes Sarra or Serraj) assumed the position of Prime Minister of the GNA, supported by UNSMIL, the US Government, the European Union, and many regional governments [he is also the Chairman of the Presidential Council (PC)]. In spring 2016, a GNA Presidency Council (made up of representatives from Libya’s key factions and regions) returned to Tripoli to assume national security and economic program implementation authorities. Under the LPA, the HOR retains legislative power in partnership with a State Council (also known as the “Tripoli Parliament”), which is made up in part of former GNC/SG members. At that point, with several members of the GNC/SG now part of the State Council, it became more closely aligned with the HOR. The HOR consequently appointed its own Prime Minister, Abdullah Al-Thinni, based in another city (Beida, or al-Bayda). Together, the HOR and the State Council are often referred to as “Tobruk authorities.”

LIBYA’S INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE LIBYAN POLITICAL AGREEMENT (LPA)

PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL
(Functions as head of state)
Nine members, headed by prime minister

Selects members of Government of National Accord

APPOINTS MILITARY LEADERS

MILITARY LEADERSHIP

GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL ACCORD
(Executive branch)

Approves members of Government of National Accord

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(Legislature)

STATE COUNCIL
(Consultative body)

Some decisions and appointments must be taken jointly by State Council and House of Representatives

However, the LPA has yet to be approved by the HOR as required in the agreement, and the HOR’s own legitimacy is dependent on the LPA’s implementation. Elements of the SG continue to make their presence known in various ways, to include pronouncements in governmental tones and armed control over Libyan national assets. Therefore, no government agency fully represents Libya at a national level, excepting that the GNA is the only government recognized by the international body of the United Nations and associated international and regional partners.

On 15 October 2016, armed groups aligned with Khalifa al-Ghwell, former prime minister of the GNS/GNC, attempted a coup against the GNA, with uncertain results. During the coup attempt, Ghwell allegedly reached out to Thinni to offer a power-sharing arrangement which Thinni allegedly rejected on the grounds that Ghwell had to accept the HOR “as Libya’s sole legitimate legislature.” Ghwell’s attempt appeared to fail. About the same time, al-Thinni allegedly stepped down from his leadership role in his organization after a physical attack on his family. However, he still remains in position.

The two primary government entities (the GNA, and the HOR and its Tripoli Parliament) compete for influence and resources against each other and with the international organizations, regional neighbors, and local communities and tribes. All governments have geographic centers and armed affiliates, which flex given ongoing military operations and arrangements of convenience. In April
2017, the HOR outlined its conditions before it will participate in more talks to improve Libyan governance. They are:

- No foreign bodies (such as UNSMIL) to have any say on who takes part in discussions between the HoR and the State Council to amend the LPA, and the discussions must take place on Libyan soil;
- The Presidency Council to consist of three people – a head and two deputies which will appoint a separate prime minister;
- The prime minister to from a government to be submitted to the HoR for approval;
- The State Council to consist of those elected to the General National Congress (GNC) on 7 July 2012;
- Additional Article 8 (which calls for all powers of senior civil and military posts to be transferred to the Presidency Council) to be removed from LPA;
- The Libyan National Army under the command of Field Marshal Khilfa Hafter and instituted by the HoR to be recognized as the sole legitimate armed force.

In late 2016, Sarraj’s remarks indicate openness to negotiation on the topic of Haftar’s inclusion in the senior levels of Libyan government. Some analysts suggested the US and selected European nations were agreeable to Haftar’s inclusion at the time, with alleged evidence of the US and European military support (specifically France) support to Haftar’s forces in the summer of 2016 fight against Daesh and other moderating language and actions from the international community towards General Haftar’s leadership future in Libya. However, more recent reports and assessments suggest complete withdrawal of US or European support for Haftar, in light of human rights accusations against his forces and his alleged acceptance of Russian arms and assistance.

Potentially compounding all the political complexity that currently exists in Libya is the role of the al-Qadhafi tribe. With the recent release of Saif-al-Islam al-Qadhafi (son of Muammar al-Qadhafi) from his detention, a small number of observers suggest he and his family could participate in a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (similar to South Africa’s) in the late 1990s.

Once the government is firmly installed, it is expected to be a representational democracy with a unicameral Council of Deputies or Majlis Al Nuwab of 200 seats (including 32 reserved for women) elected by direct popular vote; a presidential Head of State; and the parliament’s Prime Minister as Head of Government. The Constitution is also transitional with a Constitution Drafting Assembly still working on the new Constitution.

9. Military/Security. Like the political environment, the Libyan security environment is complex, with relationships and alignments often based on near-term advantages rather than definitive ideologies. Often called “fractured and tribalized”, many of the Libyan armed groups are derived from one of five

In recent weeks, some of the influential tribal leaders have allegedly aligned themselves with General Haftar in direct opposition to the Grand Mufti al-Ghariani.

Haftar’s representatives recently announced an “entry ban” for citizens of Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen and Syria, to include those who have “prior security clearance”. This primarily affects the air and sea ports within his control in the northeastern section of Libya.
sources (or a combination): the remains of the Qadhafi government forces; the National Transitional Council’s armed groups that participated in the dissolution of the Qadhafi-government; infrastructure security (such as the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG); tribal police or militias; and regional/international armed groups (part of international or regional formal endorsements as well as unilateral interventions on behalf of one armed group over another). They are also ideologically divided: militant or moderate Islamists, secessionists, some monarchists, and liberals. They are further distributed along regional, ethnic and local lines. Few of them are influential outside of their respective communities, with some exceptions. While the constellation of militias and brigades changes constantly, a summary can isolate the following categories and entities:

The GNA-affiliated factions, which include, but not limited to, the Misratan militia forces, the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) (although the PFG—in total or in parts—has allegedly pledged loyalty to other entities at times), a French-trained Presidential Guard, and (perhaps) the Department of Diplomatic Police and Security in Tripoli; The HOR-affiliated faction, which is predominately supported by General Haftar and his Libyan National Army (LNA) (and the LNA itself is comprised of many tribal and ethnic entities); and The Islamists’ and Salafists’ armed groups, such as Daesh and Ansar al Sharia (who are often in conflict with each other).

a. National Military Forces. The transitional government had an affiliated Army, Air Force, and Navy forces (as of 2015) where mandatory service was expected for men age 18 years and above. Much of that force still exists as the Libyan National Army (LNA), commanded by General Haftar in opposition to the GNA. Therefore, the GNA currently depends on affiliated militias and evolving capabilities (such as the GNA’s Presidential Guard) for its national (and personal) security.

The Presidential Guard. The French-trained, GNA-approved Presidential Guard is still developing.

Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG). This armed group is led by Ibrahim al-Jadran with the responsibility to protect the oil infrastructure. It was generally regarded as a “pro-government” (meaning, in this case, “pro-GNA”) and as an “anti-Islamist” entity, even though Jadran allegedly has a brother who was a Daesh leader. In early 2016, the PFG seemed to demarcate itself from both the GNA and from General Haftar, the commander of the LNA. However, as coordinated by GNA and in parallel to the Misrata militia (and with US military air support), the PFG participated in the liberation of Sirte from Daesh elements, ending in August 2016. The PFG allegedly pay the Tebu tribal militias to align themselves with them.

Department of Diplomatic Police and Security in Tripoli. This force may be the most effective security force in Tripoli at this time, although its capacity appears limited.
b. Non-State Armed Groups. Libya is a geographic cross roads for a myriad of transnational as well as domestic armed groups. Estimates are that up to 1,700 armed groups emerged in post-Qadhafi environment. Some of the groups were legitimate at a given point in the past five years (since 2011), but have recently operated without state-authority. Other militia groups operate with GNA-authority. A sampling of the non-state armed groups follows:

Ajdabiya Revolutionaries Shura Council (ARSC). The ARSC is an Islamist militant group based in Ajdabiya, a coastal town west of Benghazi. In 2015, Daesh reported the ARSC pledged their allegiance to them, but the ARSC denied those reports. Its main adversary appears to be the LNA.

Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). AQIM operates in the southwest and northeast of Libya, in concert or in conflict with other Islamist organizations and armed groups. In many cases, certain groups operate in support of their own agendas and only lightly consider themselves AQIM-affiliated.

Ansar al-Sharia Libya (ASL). ASL is both AQIM- and Daesh-affiliated, located between Benghazi and Derna (a small town on the north-eastern coast and 450 miles from Tripoli). In Benghazi, its militants participated in the Qadhafi overthrow and they continue to fight the LNA (regardless of the LNA’s own affiliation in support of—or non-support of—the GNA). Most observers accuse ASL in the attack on the US consulate in September 2012 in which Ambassador Chris Stevens was killed. Ironically, a few of its associated militias (such as the Derna Mujahidin Shura Council and the Abu-Salim Martyrs Brigade) were prominent in the fight against Daesh in Derna. It appears related to the Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia (AST), with elements located between Derna and Ajdabiya.

Benghazi Defence [sic] Brigades (BDB). Also known as the Saraya Defend Benghazi, the BDBs are Islamist militia group formed in June 2016 to oppose the LNA. While it professes to be non-aligned with any other specific group, it appears somewhat affiliated with the Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries. The BDBs categorically rejects any political settlement that may accommodate General Haftar, and consequently is in opposition to the HOR. While it currently appears to be in support of the GNA, that may be temporary. Its elements fought over oil industry locations several times against the LNA and other entities for the past year.

Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council (BRSC). BRSC is another Islamist umbrella group that includes members of Ansar al-Sharia, the 17 February Martyrs Brigade (which is allegedly the same group assigned to, and failed in the US Ambassador’s protection in 2012), and the Rafallah al-Sahati Brigade. It may also link to the Benghazi Defence [sic] Brigades (BDB), Islamist fighters out of Benghazi, as well as Daesh-allied forces. The common bond of these elements is the opposition to the LNA. In 2016, Daesh criticized the BRSC for “not pledging allegiance to the group, accusing it of being loyal to Libya Dawn…"

Daesh (Islamic State/ISIS/ISIL). With a presence in both East and West Africa, Daesh expanded operations and recruiting efforts into Libya as “the key to Egypt, the key to Tunisia, Sudan, Mali, Algeria and Niger too.” First noticed in large numbers in 2015, a Daesh cell of about 3,000 Tunisians, Yemenis, Algerians, and Libyans (which included former supporters of the Qadhafi regime and members of Ansar al-Sharia) set up base of operations in Sirte (Qadhafi’s hometown) and an oil-rich desert area. In June 2016, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director John Brennan indicated that Daesh in Libya was between five thousand and eight thousand in strength. In the fall of 2016, Daesh was forced from Sirte
by the Misrata militias, the LNA, and US military air strikes (and allegedly Special Forces). However, Daesh remains a presence in the country.

**Islamic Youth Shura Council (IYSC).** In October 2014, the IYSC was the Daesh’s “most prominent affiliate in Libya.” Originally located in Derna, it was pushed out of the town by the AQIM-linked Derna Mujahideen Shura Council.

**Libyan Arab Armed Forces in South Libya.** In fall 2016, former Qadhafi army officers in south Libya announced the organization of their own military command, calling on all former army personnel to join them. Led by General Ali Kannah, most of these officers and soldiers were part of General Haftar’s LNA and Operation Dignity. Thus far, General Kannah indicates his new army will not intervene in politics and “will only operate under a unified command for the Libyan army when the state is built.”

**Libyan National Army (LNA)/”Operation Dignity” and General Khalifa Haftar.** The LNA is derived from remnants of the former LNA (of the Qadhafi government) and the LNA of the post-Qadhafi transitional government. In September 2014, the elected HOR appointed General Haftar as the senior commander of the new LNA. Under Haftar’s command, the LNA partnered with like-focused militia groups and commenced “Operation Dignity” with an initial focus on attacking Islamist militant groups. However, by summer 2016, Haftar’s LNA forces demonstrated their non-affiliation with the internationally recognized GNA. As an example, the LNA occupied oil infrastructure areas, restricting (or eliminating) GNA access to those resources. In addition, Haftar continues to indicate dissatisfaction with the GNA in many of his public comments. He is not supportive of the GNA’s plan to enforce Article 8 of the **Libyan Political Agreement**, which insists on government civilian control over the armed forces. He also wants the GNA to disavow the militia groups that currently provide the government security (in the absence of the LNA which is following General Haftar). Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Russia are alleged to support this armed group (with equipment and funding, as well as some direct military support) due to its anti-Islamist ideology. (In January 2017, the United States conducted massive airstrikes near Sirte against Daesh members which some observers suggest aided General Haftar’s military and political positions.) At one point in late 2016, Prime Minister Sarraj announced his intention to seek a negotiated compromise with General Haftar, but an attempt to engage in talks in February 2017 was unsuccessful.

The LNA’s operations against Islamist-groups and GNA-affiliated militias continues. In both cases, allegations of human rights abuses emerged against the LNA for actions towards opposing forces and civilian populations. Most recently, Haftar himself announced an investigation of LNA troops’ activities at the end of a siege in Benghazi. A critic observed: “The abuse allegations raise fresh questions over the coherence of the LNA as a professional fighting body… it is a loose collection of armed groups with fickle loyalties and little discipline…” Other observations include the use of mercenaries in the LNA, many from smaller tribes but also from regional neighbors, such as the Sudanese Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Perhaps due to these allegations, or possibly due to General Haftar’s perceived “over-reach” in Libyan governance matters, some previous domestic/regional/international alignments and affiliations appear to be fluctuating yet again.

**Libya Shield.** The Libya Shield grouping is made up of several militias of the same name that operate in various parts of the country. In January 2016, it was considered a supporter of the GNC as part of its Ministry of Defence [sic] forces and was/is allied with other Islamist organizations.

**Misrata Militias.** The Misrata militias (often considered Islamists; often not so considered) come from the town along the coast of the same name, which bore the brunt of the violence in the 2011 uprising and in post-Qadhafi Libya. Its “Third Force” was developed by the SG in 2015 from mostly Misratan brigades,
ostensibly to hinder Operation Dignity forces (the LNA) access to the southern Libyan strategic assets. It operated in conjunction with other Islamists and militias as Libya Dawn, supported by Qatar, Sudan, and Turkey for different reasons. In late 2015 and into 2016, Libya Dawn split up into various brigades with differing loyalties. Some of them—to include Misrata militias—participated in the summer and fall 2016 battles against Daesh and the retaking of the oil infrastructure in parallel to (not in conjunction with) the LNA at great cost to themselves. They currently remain divided in their own loyalties. In March 2017, several Misrata militias claiming allegiance with Khalifa Ghwell (a former Prime Minister and leader of the SG, which believes itself the legitimate national government) were forced out of Tripoli by local militia groups in support of the GNA. Yet other Misrata militias are “broadly supportive of the GNA” as evidenced by the Third Force’s defense of the Tamanhent Air Base (Jufra) in concert with the GNA.

The Special Deterrence Force (SDF). Based at Matiga airport in Tripoli, the SDF arose from the Salafi-leaning militias that dominated the policing sector, primarily focused combating Daesh. It has been perceived as allied with Awdal Suleiman tribal militias and the Misrata’s Third Force.

Zintan, al-Sawaq, al-Qaqa Forces. The Zintan, al-Sawaq and al-Qaqa forces are anti-Islamist militias that operate especially in the west of Libya, essentially supporting the GNA. The Zintan detained Saif-al-Islam al-Qadhafi, the son of Muammar al-Qadhafi, for several years, releasing him in early 2017.

Other Islamist and/or Tribal Groups. Smaller Islamist groups operating in the region include Majlis Shura Shabab al-Islami, Muhammad Jamal Network, and Al-Murabitun. There are over 20 tribal groups and associated militias with their own agendas, interests, and historical resentments. A recent peace agreement enacted in Rome, Italy, between the Tebu, Tuareg, and the Awdal Suleiman tribes was subsequently rejected by the Tebu, with unclear consequences at this time.

Organized Criminal Elements (Domestic and Transnational). Terrorist organizations are often intertwined with criminal groups. They operate in all areas of crime, to include, but not limited to: trafficking (human and drugs), smuggling (variety of goods as well as people), bribery, theft, kidnapping, and extortion. A recent report also levied charges of antiquities trafficking, highlighting the relationship between southern Europe (Italian) crime organizations and Daesh. Allegedly, the Italian mafia (in cooperation with Russian crime entities) provides Daesh (in Libya) with weapons in exchange for smuggled antiquities.

c. Other International Actors. Beyond the UN and its UNSMIL, there are many other international actors and organizations as well as regional neighbors interested in the long-term stability of Libya (albeit within their own national or regional concerns). The following list is not complete, but provides examples:

Regional Neighbors. With several shared borders, Libya has many ongoing partnerships and disputes with its neighbors:

- Algeria and Tunisia. In a dormant dispute, Libya claims about 32,000 square kilometers of land in the southeastern part of Algeria. Algerian and Tunisian leaders remain engaged in talks to assist in a Libyan resolution to its political crisis, for the sake of Libya as well as neighboring states. In 2016, the Minister of Maghreb Affairs (African Union and Arab League), said:

  The absence or delay in the resolution of the crisis in Libya serves terrorism and its connections with the organized crime and all forms of cross-border trafficking, especially drug and arms trafficking, the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters and illegal migration, which constitute a threat to peace and stability not only in Libya, but also in all its neighbouring [sic] countries, and may lead to chaos and division.
In 2017, Algeria announced that it opened a new air base in its southern area in order to secure its borders with Mali, Niger and Libya.

Meanwhile, Tunisian officials often express concern regarding Daesh, with about 1,000-4,000 Tunisians estimated to be fighting in Libya. In 2013, several cross-border violent incidents led Tunisia to establish a military buffer zone along the eastern border with Libya to prevent the smuggling of arms and ammunition from Libya into the country. They recently completed a 125-mile earthen wall "about half the length of its border with Libya." Tunisia also allows the US to operate drones from Tunisian bases into Libya.

- Chad. Rebels from Chad’s Aozou region use southern Libya as a home base. In the summer of 2016, Libya closed its embassy and general consulate in the Chadian capital of N’Djamena, one day after the Chadian foreign ministry decided to expel a number of Libyan diplomats, indicating their stay in Chad was “unjustified.” In January 2017, Chad closed its borders with Libya, allegedly due to fear of “terrorist infiltration.” It opened one crossing to allow for commercial exchanges and migrants. President Idriss Déby of Chad recently asserted, “As long as the Libyan chaos lasts, security in the Sahel and the Sahara will always be strained.”

- Ethiopia and Niger. Libya claims about 25,000 square kilometers in Niger which is still disputed. The US is apparently building a drone base in Niger, with the intention to observe Libyan southern borders. Ethiopians and Nigerians are among the largest groups and poorest migrants and refugees that pass through Libya. Many have been murdered or enslaved.

- Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Gulf States’ brief alliance in 2011 against the Qadhafi government splintered in the post-Qadhafi Libyan political and military crisis. In the past few years, it appears that Egypt and the UAE partner to support General Haftar’s LNA operations against Islamist targets, such as the August 2014 airstrikes against a Muslim Brotherhood-linked (Libya Dawn) militias that reportedly enjoyed support from Qatar. In February 2015, Egyptian warplanes carried out air strikes against purported Daesh targets in the eastern city of Derna, in retaliation for the alleged killings of 21 mostly Egyptian Coptic Christians. In 2016, observers reported a UAE military base in eastern Libya, which was operating light attack aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), again supporting LNA forces fighting Islamist militants. However, the Egyptian/UAE military and political support of Haftar and the LNA may be on the decline by early 2017. This may be due to Haftar’s own intransigence regarding accommodation with the GNA as well as international pressure on Egypt (particularly) to cease its support of Haftar.

What remains unclear is how much access Egypt provides to Russia military assets to operate in Libya. Some Egyptian witnesses claim a Russian special forces unit and aircraft use an Egyptian air base from which to stage. However, an Egyptian army spokesman deny it: "There is no foreign soldier from any foreign country on Egyptian soil. This is a matter of sovereignty”. If Egypt is providing access to Russia, it may be part of a larger policy objective to partner with Russia. In October 2016, the two countries conducted joint military exercises.

- Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Turkey allegedly supports Islamists groups. Qatar, however, seemingly "provides political and financial support to both Islamists and their ideological opponents." In late 2016, Saudi Arabia announced its intention to host an international/regional dialogue—including all

Assumed here is Saudi Arabia’s role as both a religious and regional leader, credited with facilitating the Taif Agreement in 1989 that ended the Lebanese civil war. In the case of Libya, however, there are already cautions regarding the use of the Taif Agreement as a model for national political reconciliation.
the Libyan parties to the continuing conflict—in order to re-energize existing agreements or broker new ones.

- **Sudan.** Sudan had "many scores to settle" in Libya in post-Qadhafi Libya. It supported the 2011 uprising, and still may be providing medical and arms to several factions of varying political ideologies. The Sudanese government allegedly offers support to some Islamists groups; while some members of the **Sudanese Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)** (the opposition rebels from Darfur) may be serving with Haftar’s LNA.

- **Uganda.** The Ugandan government recently moved to repossess from Libya its shares of the **Uganda Telecom Limited (UTL) company.** The Libyan government owns 69% majority share, acquired by Qadhafi in 2010. Poor management since the 2011 uprising left the UTL in debt, leading to its seizure by Uganda.

**Other Countries.**

- **Italy.** Italy has a long colonial history and retains significant economic ties with Libya. In addition, the **migrant crisis considerably impacts Italy.** Consequently, Italy supports the GNA and was the **first to return its embassy to Tripoli.** However, critics suggest that its support is essentially **neo-colonialism.**

- **France.** France also has a long colonial history in Chad and Niger, adjacent to Libya. Therefore, France’s interests in Libya appears to be **directly related to its interests in Sahel stability,** particularly in Niger, which is “of utmost importance for the French nuclear industry.” Its official position is impartiality between the various political factions. However, in 2016 France provided military assistance to General Haftar’s forces, where **three French soldiers were killed.** Yet, by 2017, France appears to be fully supportive of the GNA, evidenced by their **training** of the GNA’s Presidential Guard.

- **Russia.** General Haftar **visited Moscow** more than once in 2016, seeking military support. Several observers **note** Russian equipment (surveillance, arms, and aircraft) and advisors operating alongside or indirectly with Haftar’s LNA. One report suggests that Russia strives for a "broad spectrum of engagement," assisting Haftar on one side and **refusing to recognize the GNA,** and investing in Libya state institutions as well. Russia **denies** their support and uses their state media to accuse the West of **exaggerating** the Russian influence.

- **United States (US).** The US **Special Forces** may be operating inside Libya, in part to identify assets to “trust and support”. It also **conducted airstrikes** against **Daesh** elements in latter part of 2016 and again in January 2017, appearing Haftar-leaning to many Libyans.

**International Organizations.**

- **African Union (AU).** The AU’s **Countries Neighboring Libya** meets periodically to facilitate political solutions for Libya and begin state-building. Its effectiveness and influence is unclear. Reportedly, the AU will be setting up a yet **another conference** before summer 2017 in Addis Ababa, which will comprise all Libyan stakeholders, to include representatives of the previous regime.

- **European Union (EU).** The EU established the “**Operation Sophia,**” empowered to use force against people smuggling and trafficking networks in Libya. In October 2016, the EU announced the second phase in which it would “conduct boarding, search, seizure and diversion, on the high seas, of vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking.”
• **International Organisation [sic] for Immigration (IOM).** IOM commenced activities in Libya in 2006, and continues to maintain a strong presence in the country since the establishment of the mission in Tripoli. Despite the present evacuation of all international IOM staff from Libya to Tunisia, IOM Libya remains fully operational and continues to provide humanitarian repatriation assistance to migrants, particularly to the most vulnerable, such as victims of trafficking (VoTs) and other forms of abuse, women and single mothers, as well as to families, to return home to their country of origin in a safe and dignified manner.

• **Joint Technical Coordination Committee (JTCC).** The JTCC is the technical body within the Coordination Framework for international cooperation with the Libyan Government of National Accord. It is tasked with facilitating and enhancing the coordination of development assistance to Libya. It met in early October in Tripoli, and is chaired by the Director of Technical Cooperation Department of the Libyan Ministry of Planning and the United Nations’ Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim for Libya (RC/HC a.i.). It includes representatives of Germany, Italy, Spain, Turkey, UK, the US, UNICEF and UNSMIL.

• **League of Arab States.** The Arab League includes 21 members states from the Middle East and Africa, and four observer states (Brazil, Eritrea, India, and Venezuela) that meet regularly and on an emergency basis. Its most recent summit was in Amman, Jordan, in March 2017. At that time, the Arab leaders indicated their “absolute” support for the GNA and said they would “drop any links” with any other Libyan government-claimant.

• **World Bank.** The World Bank is:

…the committed to supporting Libya’s transition and economic recovery through technical assistance and analytical services, as well as trust fund and grant financing. The Bank has been implementing a program of post-conflict Technical Assistance (TA) with the authorities and development partners, and carrying out analysis since reengaging in October 2011…Despite the current political crisis, the World Bank has not stopped its technical assistance to Libya. The on-going work has been selective in content and counterparts, focusing on building the capacity of the public administration counterparts with whom strong working relations had been established before the political crisis materialized. In particular in the areas of public financial management, governance, internal control, Islamic banking, energy, private sector development and decentralization. This program is being funded by World Bank and trust fund resources.

10. **Economic.** Qadhafi’s government was based on a socialist model, although only a small segment of the population saw that income. Still, the government heavily subsidized the basic food products and paid 80% of the workforce. The economy is still predominantly dependent on oil and gas exports. The civil war, subsequent occupation by terrorist organizations such as Daesh, and the global depression of oil prices caused a decline in Libyan crude oil production. (Production of crude oil fell to around 0.4 million barrels per day or the fourth of potential.) Since the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) continues to cover the government payroll and to fund subsidies for fuel and food, the resulting budget deficit is about 49% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). At this rate, reserves will be depleted in two years.

Among the many expiring government and state institutions’ terms and mandates is that of the Central Bank governor. His mandate expired in September 2016 and no replacement has been made, compounding Libya’s economic status domestically and internationally.

In addition to petroleum and oil, Libya counts natural gas and gypsum among its natural resources, all of which also serve as its primary exports. Despite a problematic history, Italy remains Libya’s major trading partner (32%), with other European countries (Germany, 11.3%; France, 8%; Spain, 5.6%; and Netherlands, 5.4%). China (8%) and Syria (5.3%) share the remaining large percentages of exports from
Libya. Libya’s major imports are in the commodities categories and include machinery, semi-finished goods, food, transport equipment, and consumer products. Its major import partners are China (14.8%), Italy (12.9%) and Turkey (11.1%). Tunisia, France, Spain, Syria, Egypt, and South Korea provide between 4-6% of Libyan imports each.

The Libyan unemployment rate is 30%, with youth unemployment (15-24) at almost 49%. One-third of Libyans are living at or below the national poverty line. Over half of the labor force is in the services sector and another fifth is in industry. Per capita income has fallen to less than $4,500 USD compared to almost $13,000 USD in 2012, and the World Bank reported inflations as “strongly accelerated.” The World Bank’s support to Libya is in three areas: Increasing accountability and transparency, improving the delivery of services, and creating jobs.

In the near term, the export of oil remains complicated. Control of the oil ports and other parts of the oil industry have alternated between the rival government forces as well as rival militia groups of various ideologies. However, UNSCR 2278 “condemns attempts to illicitly export crude oil from Libya, including by parallel institutions which are not acting under the authority of the Government of National Accord.” Therefore, oil can legally be sold only to the National Oil Company (NOC), part of the GNA, or risk more international intervention. Still, the NOC itself has been divided in its loyalty. One economist observed:

Reforming the budget and reining in spending is a gigantic task. Whoever wants to reform the Libyan economy will fight against several odds: the vested interests which profits from the current system, including organised [sic] crime and militias; the lack of political legitimacy in a country with extremely weak institutions and no functioning parliament; an angered population that had high expectations from the unity government and has seen the situation getting worse and worse.

11. Social. 91% of the population over 15 years old is literate. Arabic is the official language of Libya, although Italian and English are also understood in urban areas. Libya’s population is estimated at 6,541,948 as of July 2015, with immigrants contributing to over 12% of the total population. The vast majority of the population is ethnically and religiously Berber (Nafusi, Ghadamis, Suknah, Awjilah, and Tamasheq) and Muslim/Arab (virtually all Sunni) (96.6%). Other religious groups represent less than 3% of the population. Although the remaining 3% of Libya’s population is extremely diverse ethnically, they mostly represent Greeks, Maltese, Italians, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Turks, Indians, and Tunisians.

There is no birth-right citizenship; at least one parent or grandparent must be a citizen for any individual to claim Libyan citizenship. Since 2014, transiting migrants use Libya as a primary departure area to Europe. In addition, almost 350,000 people were displaced internally as of August 2016 by fighting between armed groups in eastern and western Libya and, to a lesser extent, by inter-tribal clashes in the country’s south.

47% of the population is between the ages of 25-54 years of age; a negligible percentage is older than 55, despite an average life expectancy of 76.5 years. In contrast, Libya’s young population (younger than 25 years) is over 44%. The population growth rate is only 1.8%, with an average of two children per woman. (An estimated 48% of women use contraception.) 75% of the population lives in the urban areas and had generally good population health and health support programs prior to the civil war. Since the civil war, however, the UN reports:

Libya’s healthcare system has deteriorated to the point of collapse. Hospitals…capacities (are) reduced by continuous power cuts…Making matters worse, the general insecurity and instability in the country has prevented foreign technicians from entering the country to carry out urgently needed and well overdue essential maintenance…
In addition, overall living conditions, to include sanitation and access to drinking water, are significantly degraded throughout the country, exacerbating the migrant/refugee/and internally displaced persons crisis.

**a. Rule of Law.** Libya does not have a definitive legal system at this time, although local leaders and tribes enforce a version of law on their respective communities. At this time, Libya has not submitted a jurisdiction declaration for the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and it is a non-party state to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

**b. Humanitarian Assistance.** The humanitarian assistance environment is congested, with a number of international, regional, and local entities attempting to both mitigate the humanitarian crisis and influence the population. The humanitarian community provided non-food items (NFIs), hygiene kits, food and medical supplies to the internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as refugees and migrants. Health assistance is still a priority as the situation gets worse by the day. Food assistance requires urgent funding. Humanitarian assistance for Libya totals more than $121 million. An estimated 400,000 Libyans are also internally displaced.

**c. Human Rights.** In a report delivered in early October 2016, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated the Libyan environment is devolving rapidly: “Perpetrators – not without foundation – believe there are no consequences for their actions. Victims believe for good reason that there are few prospects for justice. In this impunity context all Libyans suffer…”
In the early part of 2017, the LNA was accused of abuses against militia fighters in the city of Benghazi.

…several videos were posted online showing its men killing captured fighters. In one piece of footage, a senior LNA commander kills three men lined up against a wall on their knees; they were shot at point-blank range. In another, soldiers drag a captured, unarmed man, who they believe is a militant. He gets thrown into a pile of rubble, slapped, and is asked if he has anything to say before he dies. Then at least three in the group can be seen opening fire on him with assault rifles…There have also been unconfirmed reports of civilians being killed as they tried to escape. Some of them are believed to be relatives of fighters…Human Rights Watch, said: “Fighters aligned with the Libyan National Army in eastern Libya seem to have torn up the rule book, as they stand accused of summary executions, desecration of corpses of opposing fighters and attacking civilians with impunity.

In a statement, General Haftar condemned the summary executions and said “they were individual acts not sanctioned by top commanders”.

In March 2017, several mass graves were uncovered. Most were victims of gunshot wounds.

Regarding trafficking in persons, Libya is both a destination and transit country. It is a Tier 3 country in that the Libyan Government does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so. However, its capacity is hampered by the ongoing power struggle and violence. Since 2013, militia groups and other informal armed groups, including some affiliated with the government, are reported to conscript Libyan children under the age of 18.

Between January and September 2016, over 127,600 migrants headed to Italy and Greece from Libya (with Nigeria and Guinea peoples accounting for the largest number in September 2016). This route is called the Central Mediterranean route, which accounts for about half of the total arrivals in Europe but most of the migrant deaths. Some observe that one in every 47 migrants/refugees dies during the crossing. Complicating rescue and recovery efforts is the danger from Libyan militias or allegedly official security groups. Several international rescue operations were shot at or boarded by armed men for supposedly sailing too close to Libyan waters and coastline.

12. Information. Instability disrupted Libya’s telecommunications sector, but much of its infrastructure remains superior to that in most other African countries. There is both state-funded and private TV stations and some provinces operate local TV stations. Only about 10% of the population owns fixed-line telephone connections, but there are 155 cellular subscriptions for every 100 persons. Almost 1/5 of the population use the Internet. Libya’s media environment is virtually unregulated and polarized along various political and armed groups. Satellite TV is a key news source and many outlets are based outside Libya. Daesh group operates its own media.

13. Infrastructure. There are over 146 airports with 68 paved runways and another 78 unpaved. Libya has two major seaports, Marsa al Burayqah, and Tripoli. Roadways total 100,024 kilometers, of which just half is paved. While 99-100% of the population has access to electricity (99.2% fossil fuels), to include rural areas, electrical shortages are persistent due to instability. In January 2017, an electricity blackout resulting from militia activity “extended for 900 kilometres, from the Tunisian border in the west to Ajdabiya in the east. It was the largest such blackout in living memory.”

Peace Operations Functions

14. Command and Control. Since November 2015, the Head of Mission and Special Representative of the Secretary-General is Mr. Martin Kobler (German). Thus far, his replacement has not yet been determined.
15. Intelligence. As there is no current UN deployment, there is no military intelligence apparatus in place. However, the US and other nations allegedly have several assets operating near or within Libyan territory, both unilaterally and in partnership with each other and one or more Libyan factions.

16. Operations. There are no current UN peace operations.

17. Protection. There is no current UN peace mission that requires protection. However, the most recent mandate [UNSCR 2323(2016), as renewed in December 2016], encouraged the Political Mission to re-establish a permanent presence in Libya and to make the necessary security arrangements. In regards to Protection of Civilians, there is no current task of Protection of Civilians in the current mandate. However, there are several UN and other International Organizations' (IOs) agencies and other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) present in Libya with tasks generally associated with protection of civilians, especially among migrants and refugees. Captive migrants suffer from great indignities, especially among the Daesh elements, to include sex slavery. Even when they are released from that captivity, they are often detained by their alleged liberators, for unknown reasons.

18. Sustainment. There is no current mission. However, any mission will have sustainment challenges as indicated by the poor infrastructure and sporadic violence.

Issues and Considerations.

19. Libya and the International Community. The Issues and Considerations as described by all sources focus on political resolution as the foremost requirement for peace and stability in Libya. As one observer notes: “Reconciliation is crucial, not only to keep violence down but also to make Libya’s institutions work.” Other policy themes emphasized are: Economic—It is crucial for the GNA to deliver services to the populations to mitigate the humanitarian crisis, and Partners—International actors should pressure the “regional drivers of violence and chaos in Libya.” Some suggest that issues of Security and Migrant/Refugee/IDPs cannot be addressed until there is a legitimate working government with access to its national resources. To that end, there are three parallel approaches for the international community and Libya to consider:

- Build shared Libyan economic governance with a budget agreed upon by all parties and transparency on how oil revenues are spent. Some ideas may include:
  - Implement immediate-impact projects such as provision of basic services.
  - Continue or restart government salaries and distribute through municipal authorities.
- Conduct a consensual rewriting of the existing Constitutional draft to approve new shared interim ground rules while the Presidential Council of the GNA continues as the interim authority.
  - Resolve the national identification quandary.
- Provide logistical and technical support to create a dialogue on issues that could fuel further escalation, with focus on security.
  - Support civil society initiatives, especially cross-tribal, cross-communal endeavors.

The United States Institute of Peace further reminds policy makers that any “reform efforts need to draw on tribal expertise and experience in peacemaking and negotiation, bearing in mind what modern tribalism means to Libyans.”

However, other observers believe that no effective governance can be had until a central, legitimate, national government has control over one or two (military, police) security forces created from the various armed groups in country. Therefore, they advocate that the priority effort in Libya from Libyan actors as
well as the international community is to cease the violence and create one nationally-recognized security apparatus.

One economist suggested that stabilization might be forced by leveraging the economic drivers, pointing out that the actors are not inclined to seek peace and political reconciliation without monetary incentives.

…stabilisation [sic] through the economy still seems more promising than through an agreement on who heads the security sector…Haftar is unlikely to bow to the militias of the west and accept the oversight of a civilian government…On the other hand, it is in his interest to keep oil flowing, reach an agreement on the budget, make it work and get payments of salaries and money for the part of the country that he controls.

Recently, a few observers suggested that a Libyan confederation (creation of independent states within Libya) may be more helpful to stability than enforcing a national identity that was not historically recognized. However, critics of that concept were quick to assert that most Libyans still think of themselves as "Libyan" regardless of their ethnicity, tribe, or religious or political ideology.

They don’t think of themselves as Tripolitanian or Cyrenaican or Fezzani. The solution for Libya’s crisis is to foster this sense of “Libyaness” as a way of countering the zero-sum mentality that is driving the current crisis. The National Oil Corporation recognizes this. It has consistently maintained in the face of all sorts of confrontations that Libya’s oil is for Libyans, east and west, north and south. The challenge now is to spread the “Libya for Libyans” mentality to other governmental institutions. Admittedly, a plan for doing this doesn’t fit on a napkin, but neither would any plans for dealing with the mess created by divvying up Libya into borders from a bygone era.

20. The United States (US). Between 2011 and 2014, US funding and engagement in Libya was predominately for humanitarian assistance, converting into government transition assistance and security sector support. This included over $25 million for USAID programs alone. The past couple of years saw limited direct funding to Libya, as the US and its representatives seek to determine the most effective programs and actors to support. Instead, there has been military support to the GNA with special operations, surveillance, and air support.

While the Trump Administration does not yet appear to have a definitive Libyan policy, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) 2017 Posture Statement determines that “the instability in Libya and North Africa may be the most significant, near-term threat to U.S. and allies' interests” in Africa: “…stability in Libya…(is) a long-term proposition requiring strategic patience...and Libya's absorption capacity for international support remains limited, as is our ability to influence political reconciliation between competing factions, particularly between the GNA and the House of Representatives.”

For many, it is difficult to understand how the Libyan instability impacts any US national interests. While there are negligible direct economic interests, Libya itself occupies a geographically strategic location—"close to the sea lines of communication from the Strait of Gibraltar through the Mediterranean to the Suez Canal and its proximity to important allies like Egypt and the southern European countries.” Further:

America’s interests (in Libya) transcend al Qaeda, ISIS, and other Salafi-jihadi groups. The Libyan conflict has serious implications for the U.S. and its allies in Europe. The war itself exacerbates the migrant crisis that is destabilizing Europe. Russia is also engaging in Libya as part of a larger plan to roll back the influence of the U.S. and NATO in the Mediterranean. Libya is part of Russia’s efforts to woo Egyptian President Sisi away from the U.S. and the Gulf states. It is an important theater of global geopolitics as well as of counter-terror operations.
Resources


- Armed Conflict Location and Event Data--Libya
- Atlantic Council _The Failed Serraj Experiment of Libya (March 2017) and Atlantic Council _Saving Libya to Defend NATO’s Southern Flank (October 2016)
- Brookings _Libya’s Implosion (September 2016)
- Carnegie Endowment _Libya Insecurity and Governance Challenges (March 2017) and Carnegie Endowment _Unraveling of Lebanon Taif Agreement Limits Sect-based Power Sharing (May 2016)
- Chatham House _Libya Power Vacuum (April 2017)
- CRS (Congressional Research Service) _Libya Transition and US Policy (March 2017)
- Counterextremism Project--Libya
- Council on Foreign Relations Global Conflict Tracker Libya
- Le Courrier du Maghreb et de l'Orient _A Failed State and No Return to Stability (March 2017) and Le Courrier du Maghreb et de l'Orient _Mistakes Risks and Opportunities for America in Libya (December 2016)
- Critical Threats _Fighting Forces in Libya (January 2017)
- Georgetown Security Studies Review _Libya Could Be the Trump Test for US and Russia Cooperation (March 2017)
- Humanitarian Response Report Libya
- IPI (International Peace Institute) Global Observatory--Libya (October 2016)
- ISPI (Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale) _Chaos in Libya (February 2017) and ISPI (Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale) _Libya’s Political Stalemate (February 2017)
- MacroGeo _Can Libya Economy Create Stability (January 2017)
- National Counter Terrorism Center
- The New Arab _Outside Interference is Fueling Discord in Libya (March 2017)
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