COI QUERY

Country of Origin	**LIBYA**
Main subject	**Security Situation between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020 in Al-Butnan, Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi, Al-Wahat, Al-Jifara, Al-Margeb, Al-Marj, Al-Nuqat Al-Khams, Azzawiya, Benghazi, Derna, Misrata, Nalut, Sirt, and Tripoli**
Question(s)	1. What are the main armed groups nation-wide and in the provinces of interest (their structure, relations with other actors, areas of presence and operation, activities, including methods and tactics)?
	2. What are the numbers of security incidents and civilian casualties in the provinces of interest (with their geographical distribution)?
	3. What is the overall number of IDPs? What are the recent IDP movements? What are the return patterns and how are returnees treated in the provinces of interest?
	4. Other acts/forms of violence against civilians?
	See **Table of Contents**
Date of completion	7 December 2020
Query Code	Q31-2020
Contributing EU+ COI units	**N/A**

Disclaimer

This response to a COI query has been elaborated according to the **EASO COI Report Methodology** and **EASO Writing and Referencing Guide**.

The information provided in this response has been researched, evaluated and processed with utmost care within a limited time frame. All sources used are referenced. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive neither conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

The information in the response does not necessarily reflect the opinion of EASO and makes no political statement whatsoever.

The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on 7 December 2020. The reference period for research was 1 January 2019 - 30 September 2020. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.

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1 Map of Libya

Map 1: UN map of Libya, 2015, url

For a detailed administrative map showing all provinces/districts please see UN OCHA, Libya Administrative Map, 12 July 2015, available here.

The present query addresses the security situation in Libya, between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, while focussing on following provinces: Nalut, An-Nuqat al-Khams, Az-Zawiyah, Al-Jifarah, Tripoli, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi, Al-Margeb, Misrata, Sirte, Al-Wahat, Benghazi, Al-Marj, Al-Jabal al-Akhdar, Derna, Al-Butnan.

The information about these provinces/districts (sha'biyāt or *mantikas*) is presented in geographical order from West to East.

2   Background

Libya has a fragmented and fluid political scene, with numerous militias/armed actors active at district, town, and community level. While the country is divided along several fault lines (city-states, tribes, ideological and religious affiliation, political orientation, international backing and influence), two broad entities confront each other on the ground, corresponding roughly to the West (Tripolitania) and the East (Cyrenaica), with the latter dragging most of the South (Fezzan) within its area of influence.[1] In the West, the coalition is led by the Tripoli-based internationally recognised and UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), led by Fayez al-Sarraj, while the East, with centres in Benghazi/Tobruk, is the de facto fiefdom of general Khalifa Haftar led-coalition, and its army, the so called Libyan Arab Armed Force (LAAF), also known as the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA).[2] Although not always perfectly aligned with it, Haftar (also spelled Hiftar) and the LAAF extort substantial influence over the House of Representatives - the Libyan parliament elected in 2014 and relocated to Tobruk on grounds of security concerns, and whose president is Aguila Saleh Issa – as well as over the corresponding 'interim' executive branch. This was led until recently by Al-Thani,[3] and is based in Bayda.[4] Within this context, the South, which is particularly influenced by tribal politics (Tebu, Tuareg, other tribes), has recently increasingly engaged with the LAAF, as a result as well of the 'South Liberation and Purge Operation' launched by LAAF in January – March 2019.[5]

In general terms and from an ideological point of view, the two entities, West and East, reflect two different takes of the anti-Gaddafi uprising (at least in the professed claims of their respective ruling circles). In the West, they are the expression of political Islam, Islamist tendencies (such as the Muslim Brotherhood), and the will of the 'true revolutionaries' who wish to build a new state from scratch.[6] In the East, as often propagandised by Haftar, the coalition's advocated claim is to 'clean' Libya of Islamists and Jihadists (including Al-Qaeda and ISIS or ISIL), and rebuild a State free from 'terrorists and extremists'.[7] Such an end result, which the LAAF de facto pursues with the support of Salafist and other strongly religiously connoted groups such as the Madkhalis,[8] would be more in continuity, various sources claim, with the authoritarian tendencies of the deposed Gaddafi.[9] In the period 2014-2020 these two opposing understandings of the Libyan revolution have openly confronted each other

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[1] Laessing, U., Understanding Libya since Gaddafi, 2020, Hurst and Company London; Lacher, W., Libya's Fragmentation, Structure and Process in Violent Conflict, 2020, I. B. Tauris

[2] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, 17 March 2020, url; Wolfram, Lacher, Who is fighting whom in Tripoli, How the 2019 Civil War is Transforming Libya's Military Landscape, Small Arms Survey, SANA Briefing Paper August 2019, url; Jason Pack, Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, ISPI Analysis, 31 May 2019, url

[3] BBC, Khalifa Haftar's rival Libya government resigns after Benghazi protests, 14 September 2020, url

[4] ICG, Interpreting Haftar's Gambit in Libya, 4 may 2020, url; Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, 17 March 2020, url, pp. 5, 22-23

[5] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, 17 March 2020, url, pp. 37-38, 41

[6] Ashur O., Between ISIS and a failed state: The saga of Libyan Islamists, Brookings Institution, Rethinking Political Islam Series, url, pp. 1-5; Toaldo, M., Libya's Political Stalemate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 3 February 2016, url

[7] Toaldo, M., Libya's Political Stalemate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 3 February 2016, url; Al Arabiya, Libya's General Haftar vows to crush jihadists, 25 May 2014, url

[8] ICG, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url

[9] Middle East Eye, Khalifa Haftar declares himself ruler of Libya with 'mandate' from the people, 28 April 2020, url

and clashed militarily. In 2014 general Haftar launched 'Operation Dignity' to restore law and order in the country, to which Islamist groups and milieus in the West initially reacted self-organising in the 'Libya Dawn' coalition.[10] Later, the LAAF coalition engaged successfully in the Battle of Benghazi (16 May 2014 – 5 July 2017), and Derna (7 May – 29 June 2018), to eradicate extremist elements from the two cities, while Sirte was regained from ISIS by Misratan and GNA allied forces in the course of 2016 (12 May – 6 December 2016).[11]

Against the background described above, and for analytical purposes, the period in Libya spanning January 2019 – September 2020 can be sub-divided into four main sub-periods with the following characteristics.

1) January 2019 – April 2019. During this period, and in line with how the context has been characterised ever since the fall of Gaddafi, Libya continued to be affected by endemic conflicts at local and regional level. These dynamics reflected, as described above, a highly contested political and military scene. Within this context, during the first months of 2019, general Haftar secured the control of the South provinces (see 'South Liberation and Purge Operation' above), and then launched, on 4 April 2019 'Operation Flood of Dignity' with the aim to capture the western provinces and then Tripoli.[12]

2) April 2019 – June 2020. During this period the LAAF and affiliated forces engaged in the siege of Tripoli, where GNA aligned militias and armed groups pooled together in an anti-Haftar coalition.[13] The military confrontation, which relied heavily on remote-controlled air power – 'the largest drone war in the world'– was also highly internationalised.[14] Despite the military embargo that was in force since 2011, both 'coalitions' relied on military advice, equipment and mercenaries provided by external actors. Turkey and Qatar supported the GNA, while UAE, Egypt, and Russia, among others, supported the LAAF 'coalition'.[15] While the Covid-19 pandemic raged in the country, thus exacerbating the humanitarian crisis, the 14-month battle reached a standstill at the beginning of June 2020. On 4 June all LAAF forces pulled back from the Tripoli's suburbs, and on 5 June forces loyal to Libya's internationally recognised government entered Tarhuna, LAAF's launch pad for the offensive against the capital.[16]

3) June 2020 – August 2020. During this period the frontline between the West and the East repositioned itself around Sirte,[17] which remained under the control of the LAAF coalition (it had been captured in January 2020).[18] While LAAF's foreign backers threatened a counteroffensive in case of GNA's attack, the oil strategic town represented the new 'red-line' that would prompt an escalation of the conflict.[19] The eight-month long oil blockade that was imposed by general Haftar in January 2020 started to be lifted in some of the eastern oil terminals (although for exports only),[20] while the parties to the conflict, with the mediation of third actors, started to discuss how to resume ceasefire talks and

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[10] Al Arabiya Institute for Studies, Libyan Dawn: Map of allies and enemies, 25 August 2014, url

[11] Airwars, All Belligerents in Libya, November 2020, url; Reuters, Libyan forces clear last Islamic State holdout in Sirte, 6 December 2016, url

[12] Jason Pack, Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, ISPI Analysis, 31 May 2019, url, pp. 8-9

[13] Lacher W., Who is fighting whom in Tripoli, How the 2019 Civil War is Transforming Libya's Military Landscape, Small Arms Survey, SANA Briefing Paper August 2019, url, pp. 6-9; RFI, Libya: Haftar forces thwarted as offensive to take Tripoli begins, 5 April 2019, url; The Guardian, Battle for Tripoli escalates as fighting nears Libyan capital, 7 April 2019, url

[14] Al Jazeera, 'Largest drone war in the world': How airpower saved Tripoli, 28 May 2020, url

[15] Al Arabiya, Libya crisis timeline: The battle for Tripoli, Sirte, and oil from November to today, 12 November 2020, url

[16] Reuters, Eastern forces quit Libyan capital after year-long assault, 4 June 2020, url; Al-Jazeera, Libyan government forces seize Haftar stronghold Tarhuna, 5 June 2020, url

[17] Reuters, Libya's Haftar pulls back east as Tripoli offensive crumbles, 5 June 2020, url; Al Jazeera, Libya: GNA says Sirte offensive launched as Haftar backs truce, 7 June 2020, url

[18] Al Jazeera, Libya: Haftar forces announce capture of large parts of Sirte, 6 January 2020, url; DW, Libya: Haftar's forces capture strategic Sirte, 7 January 2020, url

[19] Al-Monitor, Why is Sirte everyone's 'red line' in Libya?, 20 June 2020, url; The Defense Post, Egypt's Sisi Says Turkey/Qatar-Backed Assault on Libya's Sirte Is 'Red Line', 21 June 2020, url

[20] Libya Herald, The Hafter-aligned PFG announces resumption of the export of stored oil and gas, 19 august 2020, url; Libya Herald, NOC to export first shipment after lifting of 7-month blockade, 24 August 2020, url

find a fair agreement on oil revenues' sharing.[21] In the meantime, across the country, people affected by months of open conflict, deprivations, water, food, and electricity shortages as well as the on-going pandemic, took to the streets to manifest their grievances. Starting in August 2020 these protests, which broke out in the major towns of the country (Tripoli, Misrata, Azzawiya, Benghazi and Sabha), continued in September and October 2020, in some cases to be violently dispersed.[22]

4) September 2020 – October 2020. During this period the parties held to a de facto ceasefire while between the end of September 2020 and through the course of October 2020 internationally brokered (peace) talks were facilitated from different actors in various venues. On 18 September, a Russia-brokered agreement between Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's son, and the Vice President of the Presidency Council, Ahmed Maiteeq, provided for resuming oil production and exports in the country.[23] On 28-29 September in the Red Sea resort of Hurghada, an Egypt sponsored meeting facilitated by UNSMIL, saw the fruitful collaboration of police and military officers from both sides.[24] These endeavours boosted the continuation of the 5+5 Joint Military Committee (JMC) talks,[25] a UN backed mediation that had started in February 2020,[26] and the resuming of face-to-face meetings.[27] This culminated with the ceasefire agreement signed in Geneva on 23 October 2020.[28] This agreement made official the informal nationwide ceasefire that both sides had been observing since August, and committed the parties, among others, to: (1) stopping all hostilities with immediate effect; (2) departing from Libya of all foreign fighters by 23 January 2021; (3) immediate departing of all foreign military officers and freezing of all training agreements; (4) withdrawing of both coalitions' forces from the front lines to home bases.[29]

The general impact of the conflict and other on-going forms of violence on the civilian population can be summarised as follows:

Civilian Fatalities and Casualties. ACLED registered in the reference period (January 2019 – September 2020), and in the areas covered by this query - Nalut, An-Nuqat Al-Khams (Zwara), Az-Zawaya, Al-Jifarah, Tripoli, Al-Margeb, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi (Zintan and Gharyan), Misrata, Sirt, Benghazi, Al-Marj, Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar, Derna, Al-Wahat (Ejdabia), and Al-Butnan (Tobruk) - a total of 2 121 incidents (769 battles, 1 225 explosions/remote violence, 90 instances of attacks against civilians, 37 riots), which resulted in over 3 000 fatalities, including 555 civilians.[30] For the same period, Airwars reported 346 incidents (airstrikes and artillery strikes) directly affecting the civilian population, overall in Libya.[31] UNSMIL documented, during the first 6 months of 2020, a total of 489 civilian casualties (170 deaths and 319 injuries), overall in Libya, resulting from ground fighting, explosive remnants of war (ERW)/unexploded ordnance (UXO), airstrikes, IED, and deliberate killings.[32] Human Rights Solidarity reported during the first 6 months of 2020 a total of 1 982 casualties, overall in Libya, including 765

[21] Al Arabiya, Rival sides in Libya agree return to ceasefire talks, says UN mission, 3 June 2020, url; Al Arabiya, Libya forces call for mechanism to distribute oil revenues fairly: Haftar spokesman, 12 July 2020, url

[22] Libya Herald, Shooting at Tripoli demonstrations: MoI identifies shooters, will investigate and reveal results, 24 August 2020, url; Al Jazeera, Anger in Libya's Benghazi over power cuts, living conditions, 11 September 2020, url; Libya Observer, Protesters in Sabha blame Haftar for bad living conditions in south Libya, 17 October 2020, url

[23] Libya Review, GNA Vice President Reveals Oil Agreement Details, 1 October 2020, url

[24] UN News, Libyan rivals conclude talks on key security and military issues, 30 September 2020, url

[25] UNSMIL News, UNSMIL welcomes Acceptance by the Libyan Parties of Resumption of the Joint Military Committee (5+5) Talks, 1 June 2020, url

[26] UNSMIL News, UNSMIL Statement on the first round of Talks of Libyan 5+5 Joint Military Commission in Geneva, 8 February 2020, url

[27] UN News, Libyan rivals conclude talks on key security and military issues, 30 September 2020, url

[28] International Crisis Group, Fleshing Out the Libya Ceasefire Agreement, Briefing no. 80, Middle East and North Africa, 4 November 2020, url

[29] International Crisis Group, Fleshing Out the Libya Ceasefire Agreement, Briefing no. 80, Middle East and North Africa, 4 November 2020, url

[30] ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/

[31] Airwars, All Belligerents in Libya, Civilian Casualties, January 2019 – September 2020, n.d., url

[32] UNSMIL, Civilian Casualties Report, 1 April – 30 June 2020, 29 July 2020, url

civilians (86 children).[33] According to the same source the total number of casualties for 2019 was 8 131 (including civilians).[34]

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population. As per IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data, in April 2019 there were in Libya (overall) 179 400 IDPs and 372 022 returnees. Almost two years later, in September 2020, the total number of IDPs had reached 392 241 people (after having peaked in June 2020 with 425 714), while the number of returnees had reached a new peak climbing to 493 716 persons.[35] At the same time, the overall number of migrants had dropped from 666 717 at the beginning of 2019 (January-February) to 584 509 in August 2020.[36] Within this context, on 16 August 2020, the UN Security Council reported around 2 347 'migrants and refugees held in State-run migrant detention centres', while expressing concern about other migrants held by smugglers and traffickers in an 'unknown number' of 'illegal sites.'[37] An August 2020 media report, quoting the IOM, stated that 'more than half of the over 6 200 people returned to Libya' in 2020 remained 'unaccounted for after being loaded onto buses and driven away from the disembarkation points on the coast.'[38] Several sources have highlighted that men, women, boys and girls have undergone sexual abuse, rape, and gender-based violence, from perpetrators including 'smugglers, traffickers, members of armed groups and detaining authorities'.[39] According to a UN report, sexual violence including rape, was used by guards of the Directorate for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) and armed groups as 'a routine method for controlling and humiliating' detained migrants. Moreover, 'women and girls are routinely held in facilities without female guards and strip-searched by, or in front of, male guards.' Further, 'individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities' were afraid to report abuse due to 'fear of retaliation', while 'refugees and migrants with disabilities continue[d] to be at particular risk of violence in detention centres.'[40]

Other acts/forms of violence against civilians (kidnapping, torture, extra judicial killings and gender based violence). During the first 6 months of 2020 Human Rights Solidarity reported, overall in Libya, 688 casualties of violent incidents, 662 of which were civilian victims with the following breakdown: 55% victims of arbitrary detentions, 31% victims of assassinations and murder, and 9% victims of kidnappings.[41] In 2019 the same source documented at least 1 155 casualties of violent incidents in various cities in Libya, 906 of which were civilian victims with the following breakdown: 39% victims of assassinations, including bombings, terrorist attacks and extrajudicial killings, 33% arbitrary detentions, and 20% kidnappings.[42] Various sources, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, indicated in their 2019/2020 reports on Libya, persistent widespread human rights abuses including war crimes, arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment, hostage-taking, and gender based violence perpetrated by various actors (militias, armed groups, and security forces).[43] Within this context, there were reports of harassment, abduction, and

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[33] Human Rights Solidarity, Casualties of Armed Clashes in Libya, January – June 2020, url

[34] Human Rights Solidarity, Casualties of Armed Clashes in Libya, 2019, url

[35] IOM, IDP and Returnee Report, Round 32, July - August 2020, url , p. 5

[36] IOM, DTM Libya Flow Monitoring, January – February 2019, Key Findings, url; IOM, DTM, Libya's Migrants Report, Key Findings, Round 32, July - August 2020, url

[37] UN SC, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 57

[38] TNH, What happens to migrants forcibly returned to Libya?, 5 August 2020, url

[39] UN General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Libya, and the effectiveness of technical assistance and capacity-building measures received by the Government of Libya, 23 January 2020, url, para. 30; UN SC, Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) Report of the Secretary-General, 6 April 2020, url, paras. 36-38; Women's Refugee Commission, "More Than One Million Pains": Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys on the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy, March 2019, url, p. 20

[40] UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) Report of the Secretary-General, 2 September 2020, url, para. 14

[41] Human Rights Solidarity, Libya: Crimes of Abductions and Assassinations, (January – June 2020), url

[42] Human Rights Solidarity, Libya: Crimes of Abductions and Assassinations in 2019, url

[43] CIHRS, Libya: Human Rights Briefing (January – May 2020), 10 June 2020, url; AI, Libya 2019, n.d., url; Human Rights Watch, Libya Events of 2019, n.d., url

attack of politicians, human rights defenders and other activists. Sources also refer to the targeting of journalists, bloggers, and media workers, especially by the LNA and affiliated militias, including the al-Kaniyat militia from Tarhuna.[44]

Several UN Security Council reports published during the reporting period highlighted the prevalence of torture in Libya. According to the UN, torture is committed throughout the country, and has 'led to fatalities' in many cases,[45] in particular of Libyan nationals, migrants and refugees held in 'government detention centres and informal holding facilities'.[46] Amnesty International further reports that 'a sense of impunity has fuelled rampant torture by militias and armed groups affiliated to the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) and rivals with *de facto* control of territory because of real or perceived family, tribal, political or regional affiliations.'[47] According to the organisation, this is demonstrated by the increasing trend of perpetrators publishing videos of torture on social media networks. In some cases, the videos have featured the faces of the perpetrators, but 'officials or those in control of the forces responsible take no steps to investigate, prosecute'.[48]

2.1   Government of National Accord (GNA) (aligned) Forces

The GNA armed forces count more than 30 000 fighters and comprise 'the remains of Libya's official military as well as local militias' that receive military aid from Turkey, Qatar, and intelligence from Italy.[49] The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) stated that there are very few national actors in Libya, and that the 'vast majority are local players'. The Libyan Presidency Council acts as 'head of state and supreme commander of the armed forces'.[50] In a report published on 14 August 2020, the Jamestown Foundation stated that 'the GNA has relied heavily on myriad militia groups' which constituted the majority of the GNA's fighting force against the LNA. According to the source, those militias vary in ideological orientations and loyalties, and signs of division resurfaced following the LNA's withdrawal from Tripoli on 4 June 2020.[51]

According to the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), in April 2019 the following GNA-aligned militias were present in Tripolitania: Al-Nawasi Brigade (700 fighters - Tripoli); Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) (1 300 fighters - Tripoli); Special Deterrence Force (SDF) (1 500 fighters - Tripoli); 301 Battalion (1 500 fighters - Tripoli and Misrata); Al-Bunyan Al-Marsous (Misrata and Sirte); Abu Slim Brigade (800 fighters - Tripoli) as well as Amazigh militias in Zuwara.[52]

As of June 2020, The Arabic news outlet Noon Post stated that the GNA-aligned armed forces comprised, among others, the following main groups:[53]

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[44] AI, Libya 2019, n.d., url; Human Rights Watch, Libya Events of 2019, n.d., url; CIHRS, Libya: Human Rights Briefing (January – May 2020), 10 June 2020, url

[45] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 29 October 2019, url, para. 54; UN SC, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 51; UN SC, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, paras. 44, 51

[46] UN SC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 29 October 2019, url, para. 54; UN SC, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 51

[47] AI, Libya: UN Rights Council members must address widespread torture during periodic review, 10 November 2020, url

[48] AI, Libya: UN Rights Council members must address widespread torture during periodic review, 10 November 2020, url

[49] CFR, Who's Who in Libya's War?, 18 June 2020, url; US Department of Defense, Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Report to the United States Congress, East Africa Counterterrorism Operation – North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, July 1 2020 – September 30 2020, url, p. 36

[50] ECFR, A quick guide to Libya's main players, n.d., url

[51] Jamestown Foundation, What Does the Future Hold for Libya's GNA Militias? 14 August 2020, url

[52] ISPI, Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, url

[53] Noon Post, خريطة الفصائل والمليشيات المسلحة في ليبيا.. ارتباطاتها وتحالفاتها [Map of Armed Factions and Militias in Libya.. Their Affiliations and Alliances], 30 June 2020, url

- Libya Dawn groups: these groups include, among others, what were known as 'the Shields', or the Libya Shield Force, an umbrella organization, which was established in April 2012 by the National Transitional Council as a 'substitute army'. It was made up of revolutionary forces that supplanted the Gaddafi's formal armed forces.[54]
- Tripoli Protection Forces (TPF): formed in December 2018 following the failed attempt of the 7th Brigade (Tarhuna) to capture Tripoli. The TPF comprise the following groups: Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB), the Nawasi Brigade, Special Deterrence Forces (SDF) (a Madkhali Salafist-leaning group according to ISPI[55]), Tajoura Brigades, the 92nd Infantry Battalion, the 155th Infantry Battalion, Yousef Al-Bouni Battalion, the 301st Battalion, and Abu Slim Brigade. For more details see the chapter on [Tripoli].
- Misrata Brigades: considered as the largest organised armed group in Libya with more than 17 000 fighters, 5 000 armed vehicles, hundreds of tanks, surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, as well as Meg 25 jet fighters and military cargo aircrafts. For more details see the chapter on [Misrata].
- Zintan Brigades: the Brigades' military council is headed by Usama Al-Juwaili. These forces were sided with Haftar owing to their rivalry with the Misrata Brigades. However, the Zintan Brigades split in alignment following the agreement of Al-Skhirat,[56] and finally opposed Haftar's announcement to capture Tripoli.[57] For more details see the chapter on [Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi].

For more details about the armed groups mentioned above and other GNA-aligned groups please see the remainder of the query.

2.2 Libyan Arab Armed Forces/Libyan National Army/ (LAAF/LNA)

The LAAF- self-styled LNA - is a coalition of militias, military personnel and tribal groups, and is led by Khalifa Haftar,[58] a Gaddafi military defector.[59] The LNA is headquartered near Benghazi[60] and, according to the US Congressional Research Service, the LNA and local partners 'control much of Libya's territory and key oil production and export infrastructure'.[61] According to Haftar, the LNA targets 'political Islam in all its forms', including radical groups like Al-Qaeda and moderate groups such as those associated with the Muslim Brotherhood.[62]

Sources indicated that the LNA has about 25 000 fighters,[63] including 18 000 militias members.[64] Alongside Libyan groups, there are several foreign armed groups from Sudan and Chad that are

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[54] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 40; Lacher, W. and al-Adrissi, A., Capital of Militias: Tripoli's Armed Groups Capture the Libyan State, June 2018, in: SANA, url, p. 4; Badi, E., Exploring Armed Groups in Libya: Perspectives on Security Sector Reform in a Hybrid Environment, November 2020, url, p. 75

[55] ISPI, Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, url

[56] According to Reuters, Al-Skhirat agreement was a UN-brokered agreement signed in Al-Skhirat, Morocco by delegates from Libyan warring factions on Thursday 17 December 2015 aimed at forming a national unity government. Reuters, Libyan factions sign U.N. deal to form unity government, 17 December 2015, url

[57] Noon Post, [خريطة الفصائل والمليشيات المسلحة في ليبيا.. ارتباطاتها وتحالفاتها Map of Armed Factions and Militias in Libya.. Their Affiliations and Alliances], 30 June 2020, url

[58] US Congress, In Focus: Libya and U.S. Policy, 21 September 2020, url, pp. 1-2; Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 23

[59] US Congress, In Focus: Libya and U.S. Policy, 21 September 2020, url, pp. 1-2

[60] Harchaoui, J. and Lazib, M., Proxy War Dynamics in Libya, 2019, url, p. 4

[61] US Congress, In Focus: Libya and U.S. Policy, 21 September 2020, url, p. 1

[62] Harchaoui, J. and Lazib, M., Proxy War Dynamics in Libya, 2019, url, p. 4

[63] CFR, Who's Who in Libya's War?, 18 June 2020, url; France 24, Military stalemate, foreign players in Libya offensive, 3 May 2019, url

[64] France 24, Military stalemate, foreign players in Libya offensive, 3 May 2019, url

supporting Haftar and the LNA.[65] The LNA is also supported by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, France and Jordan.[66] The UAE and Egypt supply equipment such as planes, helicopters, armoured vehicles and weapons[67], with the UAE reportedly being the 'most generous' financer, while Egypt has provided training and logistical support to shape the LNA into a more 'conventional and professional military'.[68] The UAE has also provided the LNA with drones, while Russia has reportedly sent about 2 000 mercenaries belonging to the Wagner Group.[69]

For more details about the main LNA-aligned armed groups - including a) from the Benghazi area, the 106th Brigade, the 73rd Brigade, and the Tareq ben Ziyad Brigade; b) from Tarhuna, the al-Kaniyat militia; c) from Sirte, the 604th Brigade[70] - as well as other minor groups, see the remainder of the query.

3 Security situation

3.1 Nalut

Main armed groups

According to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, as of October 2019, the only armed presence in Nalut was that of the Military Council of Nalut. Military councils emerged in western Libya as military associations, compensating for the fact that towns in that area 'were too small to support their own major fighting forces and too politically diverse to allow a single force to assert hegemony.'[71] While the current capacity of the Council is not known, in 2014 it commanded some 5 000 fighters.[72] In April 2019, the Council declared its support for the GNA, although it also stated that it was not taking part in active fighting.[73] In December 2019, the Council reconfirmed its 'support for the GNA and [its] continuing participation in the efforts to repel Khalifa Haftar's aggression on Tripoli', although it was not clear whether it was involved in active fighting.[74]

Moreover, few people from areas such as Kabaw and Nalut town joined armed fighting elsewhere, and according to Small Arms Survey (SAS), the reason for this was that they faced 'potential threats from forces loyal to Haftar in neighbouring towns and bases.[75] A SAS August 2019 report indicated that, among the Western Libyan armed groups fighting against LNA, 'a 150-strong Naluti battalion [was] deployed at the airport front', while some '40-50 combatants' from Nalut town were fighting in

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[65] ISPI, Forces on the Libyan ground: Who is Who, 28 May 2018, url; UN Security Council, Letter dated 29 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 December 2019, url, paras. 19-30
[66] US Congress, In Focus: Libya and U.S. Policy, 21 September 2020, url, p. 2; Harchaoui, J. and Lazib, M., Proxy War Dynamics in Libya, 2019, url, p. 4
[67] France 24, Military stalemate, foreign players in Libya offensive, 3 May 2019, url
[68] Harchaoui, J. and Lazib, M., Proxy War Dynamics in Libya, 2019, url, p. 7
[69] France 24, Military stalemate, foreign players in Libya offensive, 3 May 2019, url
[70] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, pp. 13-15; US Department of Defense, Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Report to the United States Congress, East Africa Counterterrorism Operation – North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, July 1 2020 – September 30 2020, url, p. 39
[71] MEPC, Rebuilding the National-Security Forces in Libya, n.d., url; W. Lacher, P. Cole, Conflicting Interests in Libya's Security Sector, October 2014, url, p. 18
[72] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 9 December 2019, url, Figures 6.1, 6.2; SAS, Politics by Other Means: Conflicting Interests in Libya's Security Sector, October 2014, url, p. 18
[73] Alwasat, Military Council of Nalut issues statement saying it is not party to the conflict, 4 April 2019, url
[74] Libya Al-Ahrar, More western Libyan cities mobilize forces to repel Haftar's offensive as GNA units advance, 19 December 2019, url
[75] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 8

Tripoli.[76]

Security incidents

Based on ACLED data, during the reference period a limited number of security incidents, notably airstrikes, took place in Nalut.[77] For 2019, ACLED recorded two security incidents in the province of Nalut: one airstrike in Kabaw, and one incident of violence against civilians in Ghadamis, where civilians were deliberately targeted.[78] For the period 1 January-30 September 2020, three security incidents were recorded – all air strikes - in Al Jawsh, Nalut city, and Kabaw (one each).[79]

Incidents: Battles - Explosions/Remote Violence - Violence Against Civilians
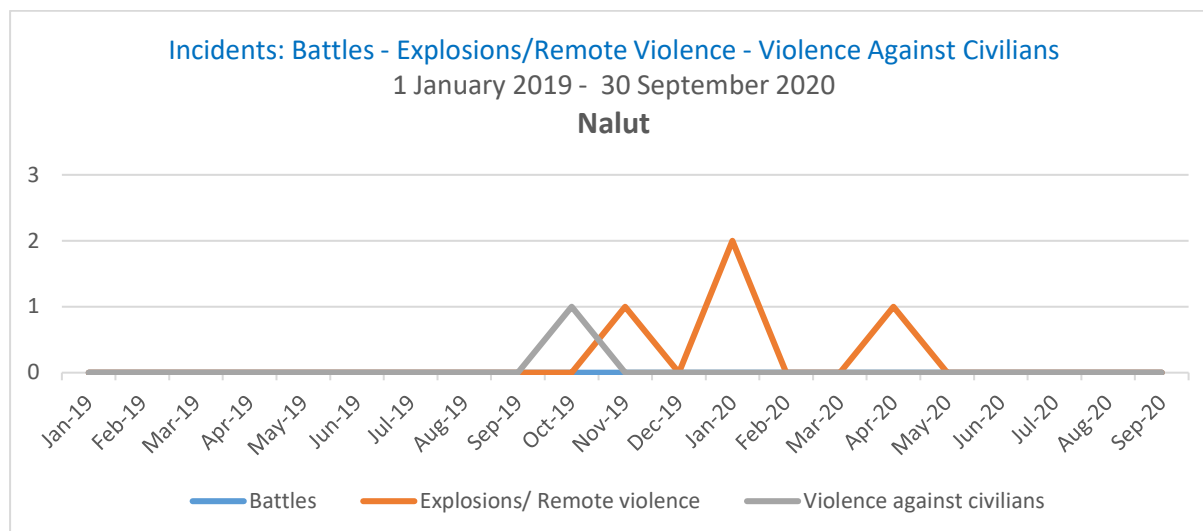1 January 2019 - 30 September 2020
Nalut

Figure 1: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Nalut between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[80]

Some of the indicative security incidents recorded during the reference period included:

- On 29 November 2019, the GNA accused the LNA forces of conducting airstrikes on 'a civilian airstrip [...] used for humanitarian purposes in the town of Kabaw'.[81]
- In May 2020, GNA forces took control without armed fighting over 'the towns of Badr and Tiji' after LNA forces left the area.[82]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

In 2019, ACLED recorded one incident of violence against civilians in Nalut, where civilians in Ghadamis were affected. No civilian fatalities were recorded by ACLED. Between 1 January-30 September 2020, in Nalut there were no incidents of violence against civilians recorded by ACLED, nor any civilian casualties.[83]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

No information regarding other acts or forms of violence against civilians in Nalut was found for the

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[76] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 8
[77] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[78] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[79] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[80] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url
[81] Yahoo News, Libyan government accuses Haftar's army of attacking airstrip in Kabaw, 30 November 2019, url
[82] Libya Observer (The), Libya's GNA forces seize control of Badr and Tiji towns south of Al-Watiya airbase, 19 May 2020, url
[83] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url

reference period.

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

The IOM DTM for Libya provides the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants in Nalut:
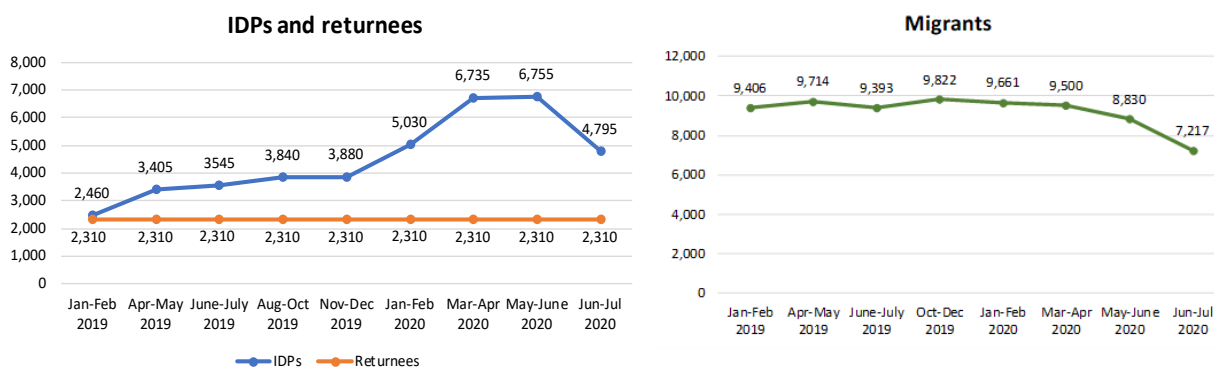

Figure 2: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Nalut between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[84]

Some of the displacement related events in Nalut include:

- In February 2019, around 200 migrants arrived in Wazin from neighbouring countries, while an unknown number of IDPs from other municipalities in Libya was also recorded.[85]
- In August 2019, around 60 IDPs from Ain Zara arrived in Alhawamid, while another 70 IDPs from Ain Zara were reported in Ghadamis.[86]
- Eight IDPs arrived in Nalut city in September 2019, and 10 others arrived in Alhawamid in October 2019, after fleeing from Tripoli due to the 'unstable security situation'.[87]

3.2 An-Nuqat al-Khams

Main armed groups

According to SAS, loyalties towards the warring sides were split in An-Nuqat al-Khams: around '150 fighters from Sabratha and Al-Ajaylat' were fighting against LNA forces in areas around Tripoli, while smaller groups from the same two towns were fighting alongside the LNA.[88] According to SAS, the Sabratha groups that had joined Haftar's forces were 'dominated by Madkhalist Salafists' (for more details about Madkhalis see Derna, Sirte and oil crescent, Misrata and Government of National Accord (GNA) aligned forces) and did not enjoy 'broad-based community support'.[89] In January 2019, Human Rights Watch reported that, at the time, 'a militia known as the Zuwarah Protection Force' was 'responsible for providing security' in Zuwarah city.[90] The UN Panel of Experts on Libya stated that, as of October 2019, in An-Nuqat al-Khams there were several armed groups present:

- In Zuwarah city: the 4th Brigade under the LNA;
- In Sabratha: the Al-Madina battalion under the GNA; the 129th infantry battalion, the Oruba

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[84] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url

[85] IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (1- 28 Feb 2019), 14 March 2019, url, p. 2

[86] IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (1-31 August 2019), 6 November 2019, url, pp. 1, 2

[87] IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (September 2019), 10 October 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya Displacement Event Tracking Report (1-31 October 2019), 30 November 2019, url, p. 2

[88] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 8

[89] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, pp. 8-13

[90] HRW, No Escape from Hell: EU Policies Contribute to Abuse of Migrants in Libya, 21 January 2019, url, p. 15

battalion (a foreign armed group), and the Wadi battalion under the LNA. According to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, the LNA forces had a majority of control of Sabratha;

- In Al-Watiyah: the 78th infantry battalion of the LNA.[91]

Security incidents

During the reference period, the majority of security incidents in An-Nuqat al-Khams focused on Al-Watiyah airbase, an important strategic point, as it was 'the largest military base in the region' and a command centre of LNA operations in the Western region. [92]

In April 2019, the BBC reported that the GNA forces had 'deployed units in Sabratha', as a response to LNA forces entering the city 'as part of their military push in the western region towards Tripoli'.[93]

On 9 October 2019, the GNA announced it had shot down an aircraft of the LNA near the Sabratha.[94]

In March 2020, armed fighting had escalated from 'southern Tripoli and spread to areas around the airbase in Al-Watiyah, and by 27 March 2020 it was reported that LNA forces had captured the towns of Jumail, Riqdalin, and Ziltun.[95]

On 13 April 2020, fighting in An-Nuqat al-Khams was reported, and on 14 April 2020, the GNA announced it had gained control in Sabratha, Al-Ajaylat, Riqdalin, Al-Jumayl, Ziltun and Al-Assa.[96] According to witnesses quoted by Amnesty International, as Sabratha was captured, 'members of GNA affiliated armed groups looted several civilian houses and public buildings, including the Sabratha main hospital, and set homes on fire.'[97]

On 18 May 2020, GNA forces took control of Al-Watiyah airbase from the LNA. The capture of the 'strategic' airbase which had been under LNA control since 2014, was deemed to 'change the balance of power in favour of the GNA'.[98]

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[91] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 December 2019, url, Figures 6.1, 6.2
[92] MEMO, Sarraj announces launch of Operation Peace Storm in response to Haftar attacks, 27 March 2020, url
[93] BBC, Tripoli militias announce offensive against east-based army, 5 April 2019, url
[94] Xinhua, Libya's UN-backed gov't forces announce shooting down aircraft of eastern-based army, 9 October 2019, url
[95] UN Security Council, UNSMIL: Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 8; Guardian (The), Libya fighting intensifies as rival forces defy UN call for global ceasefire, 27 March 2020, url; UN OCHA, Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Yacoub El Hillo, welcomes positive responses by Libyan parties to calls for a humanitarian pause and appeals for facilitation of COVID-19 prevention and response efforts in Libya, 22 March 2020, url
UN Security Council, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 7
[96] AA, Libya's GNA launches air operation to Haftar's militias, 25 April 2019, url; AJ, Haftar forces suffer string of defeats in battle for Tripoli, 14 April 2020, url; UNSMIL, Acting SRSG Stephanie Williams briefing to the Security Council, 19 May 2020, url; AJ, Libya: Tripoli gov't retakes three cities from Haftar's forces, 14 April 2020, url; Health Cluster/WHO, Libya: Health Sector Flash Update | Monitoring violence against healthcare, 13 April 2020, url
[97] AI, Libya: Retaliatory attacks against civilians must be halted and investigated, 5 June 2020, url
[98] UN Security Council, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 8; MEMO, Sarraj announces launch of Operation Peace Storm in response to Haftar attacks, 27 March 2020, url; AJ, Libya's GNA recaptures strategic al-Watiya airbase, 18 May 2020, url
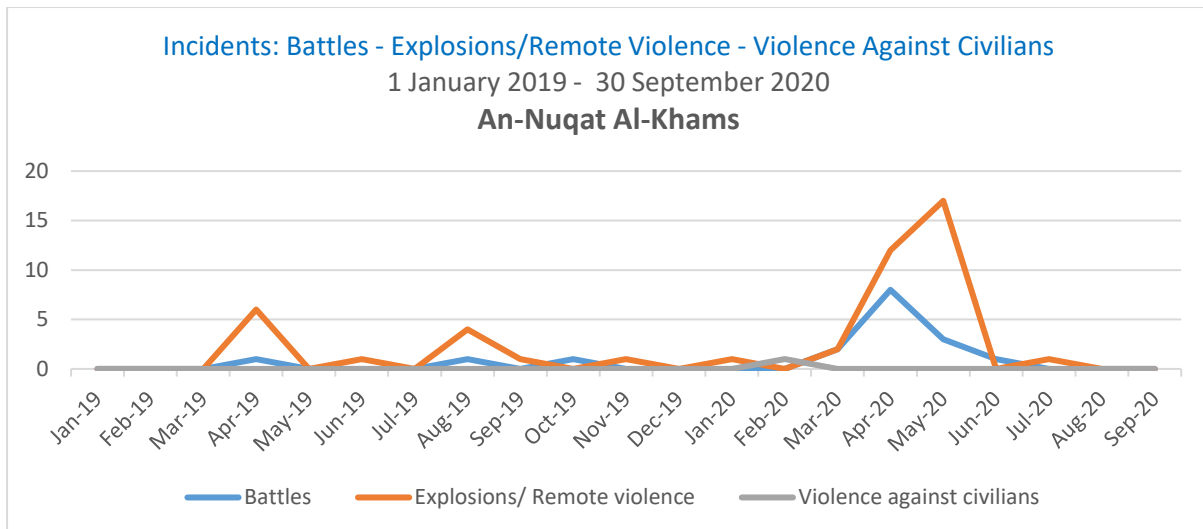
Figure 3: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in An-Nuqat al-Khams between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[99]

For 2019, ACLED recorded 16 violent events in An-Nuqat al-Khams, of which 13 were episodes of explosions/remote violence, and three were battles. With regards to location, incidents were recorded in Al-Watiyah (7), Zuwarah (4), Abu Kammash (2), and Al-Jadidah, Sabratha and Ziltun (1 each). [100]

For 1 January-30 September 2020, ACLED recorded in An-Nuqat al-Khams 48 violent events, of which 33 were explosions/remote violence, 14 were battles, and one was an incident of violence against civilians. With regards to location, the events took place in Al-Watiyah (26), Al-Ajaylat and Al-Jumayl (5 each), Riqdalin (4), Coast of Zuwarah (3), Sabratha (2), and in Zuwarah, Mellitah, and Al-Assa (1 each). [101]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

In 2019, ACLED recorded no incidents of violence against civilians, and no civilian deaths in An-Nuqat al-Khams.[102] However, a UNSMIL report of May 2019 stated that 'armed clashes and related shelling between 1 February-31 March 2019 saw 2 civilians killed in Sabratha.'[103] On 15-16 August 2019, 'two consecutive LNA-claimed airstrikes' hit and damaged Zuwarah Airport. A field visit by UNSMIL confirmed that the airport housed 'neither military assets nor military infrastructure', and was a civilian facility.[104]

Between 1 January-30 September 2020, ACLED recorded one incident of violence against civilians in An-Nuqat al-Khams, with no civilian deaths recorded.[105]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

In An-Nuqat al-Khams, there are immigration detention centres in Zuwarah and Sabratha, both run by the Directorate for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM).[106] Libya's national laws allow authorities to

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[99] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url
[100] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[101] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[102] ACLED, Curated Data: Libya, 1 January 2019-30 September 2020, url; ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[103] UNSMIL, Civilian Casualties Report From 1 February To 31 March 2019, 22 May 2019, url
[104] UNSMIL, UNSMIL Dispatches Assessment Mission to Zuwara Airport, 17 August 2019, url
[105] ACLED, Curated Data: Libya, 1 January 2019-30 September 2020, url; ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[106] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 29 October 2019, url, Annex 19; Global Detention Project, Libya Detention Centres, n.d., url; UNHCR Libya: Activities at Disembarkation, monthly update, September 2019, url

detain foreigners, 'regardless of age', without authorization to be in the country.[107] According to HRW, 'immigration detention in Libya can be indefinite because the law does not specify a maximum term.'[108] The UN Security Council stated that, in addition to arbitrary detention, they face rights violation such as 'torture, sexual violence, abduction for ransom, extortion, forced labour and unlawful killings', from state actors such as government officials but also from 'members of armed groups, smugglers, traffickers and members of criminal gangs.'[109] For further details see the introduction.

Within this context, in January 2019, Human Rights Watch highlighted the poor conditions in the Zuwarah centre, recalling 'disturbing accounts from both adults and children of violence by guards, including beatings, whippings and use of electric shocks.' [110]

On 28 September 2020, 350 migrants 'mostly from West Africa', were kidnapped from their houses in Al-Ajaylat and taken to Sabratha where, according to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), they were 'being held on a former military base in appalling conditions.' [111]

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

The IOM DTM for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants in An-Nuqat al-Khams:
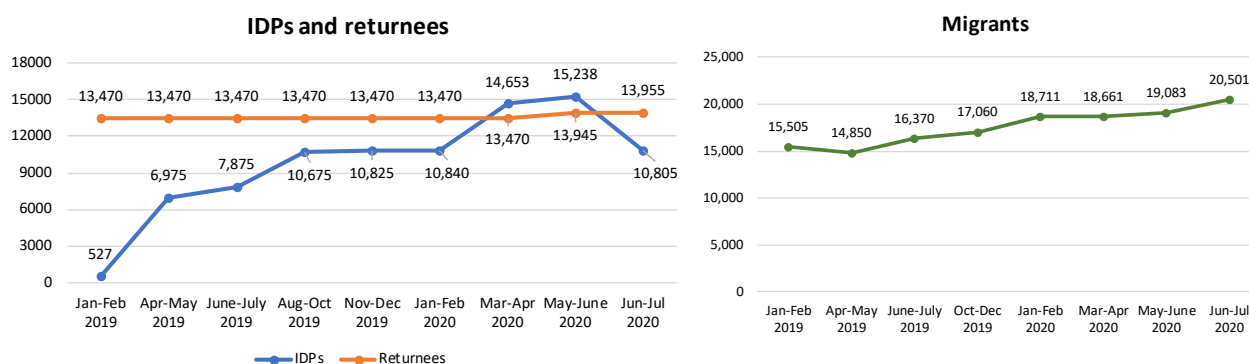

Figure 4: IDPs, returnees and migrants in An-Nuqat al-Khams between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[112]

The western coast of Libya is the main point of departure for migrants and refugees heading to Italy, and both Sabratha and Zuwarah have been described in previous years as the main people-smuggling hubs in the country.[113] Between 1 September 2018-2 August 2019, some 153 departures by boat of migrants towards Europe were recorded, with Sabratha being one of the major departing points during that period.[114] Meanwhile, for the period 1 September 2019-29 February 2020, Zuwarah was the location with 'most departures of boats with refugees and migrants along the central Mediterranean route', with 40 out of 143 departures overall.[115]

With regards to returned migrants to Libya, in 2019 'the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG) intercepted and

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[107] Global Detention Project, Libya Country Report, 2019, url, para. 2.3

[108] HRW, No Escape from Hell: EU Policies Contribute to Abuse of Migrants in Libya, 21 january 2019, url, p. 14

[109] UN Security Council, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 51

[110] HRW, No Escape from Hell: EU Policies Contribute to Abuse of Migrants in Libya, 21 January 2019, url, p. 37

[111] MSF, Libya: 350 migrants abducted from their homes by armed men, 9 October 2020, url

[112] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url

[113] Reuters, Migrant flows slow to trickle in Libyan former smuggling hub, 27 November 2018, url; Reuters, U.N. assisting thousands of migrants in Libyan smuggling hub, 9 October 2017, url; AJ, Libya's coastguard rescues 290 migrants off Tripoli's coast, 24 May 2019, url; BBC, Inside Zuwara, the heart of Libya's people-smuggling trade, 4 September 2015, url; Reuters, More than 300 migrants intercepted in boats off Libya: coastguard, 19 February 2018, url

[114] UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2437 (2018) Report of the Secretary-General, 5 September 2019, url, para. 6

[115] UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) Report of the Secretary-General, 6 April 2020, url, para. 5

returned 9 035 refugees and migrants at sea', while between 1 January-30 September 2020, around 9 448 refugees and migrants were intercepted and returned to Libya by the LCG.[116]

Some of the displacement related events include:

- In May 2019, some 130 migrants were recorded in Sabratha.[117]
- In August 2019, around 60 people displaced by conflict from Tripoli arrived in Al-Jumayl.[118]
- Between September-October 2019, around 300 migrants and 75 IDPs arrived in Sabratha.[119]
- On 9 April 2020, some 175 IDPs from Tripoli arrived in An-Nuqat al-Khams, after being displaced on 6-7 April 2020 by airstrikes.[120]

3.3 Az-Zawiyah

Main armed groups

In August 2019, SAS reported that 'the largest contingent of fighters' (around 400) among the anti-LNA Western Libyan groups came from Az-Zawiyah, and were 'deployed on various front lines, most of them around the airport' in Tripoli, while 'significant forces' remained in Az-Zawiyah to defend against potential attacks by 'Haftar loyalists' in Surman.[121] However, the same source also reported that smaller groups of fighters from Surman had joined fighting along the LNA. [122]

According to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, as of October 2019, in Az-Zawiyah town, there were several armed groups present: under the GNA, there were the Abu Surra Martyr's battalion (Ali Busriba), the National mobile force battalion, the Farouq brigade, the Hamdi bin Rajab Martyr's battalion, the Ibrahim Hneish battalion, the Martyr Mohamed al Kilani brigade, and the Muammar Al Dhawi battalion, under the GNA. Meanwhile, the presence of the 107th infantry battalion legion under the LNA was also reported in Az-Zawiyah town. According to the same source, the GNA forces had an overwhelming majority of control in the area. In Az-Zahra, the presence of the Muammar Al Dhawi battalion was reported, while the pro-GNA Al-Nasr brigade had control of the Az-Zawiyah oil complex.[123]

In addition to being in control of the Az-Zawiyah oil complex, the Al-Nasr brigade, 'with a force of around 3 000 men', was also reportedly in charge of the Az-Zawiyah (Al-Nasr) detention centre, located 'on the southern edge of the oil complex'. [124] The leader of the group is Mohammed Kachlaf, who 'is under UN Security Council sanctions for human trafficking'.[125] According to the 2019 report of the Panel of Experts on Libya, 'the brigade is involved in a range of illicit activities' including in 'trafficking and extortion of migrants'; according to the same source, 'the Al-Nasr detention centre is a known hub for human trafficking' where migrants suffered human rights abuses.[126]

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[116] IOM Libya, Monthly Update - September 2020, 13 October 2020, url; UNHCR, Update Libya, 3 January 2020, url
[117] IOM DTM Libya Displacement Event Tracking Report (1-31 May 2019), 3 July 2019, url, p. 2
[118] IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (1-31 August 2019), 6 November 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya — Displacement Event Tracking Report (September 2019), 10 October 2019, url, p. 2
[119] IOM DTM Libya — Displacement Event Tracking Report (September 2019), 10 October 2019, url, p. 2
[120] IOM DTM Libya - Abusliem Flash Update, 9 April 2020, url
[121] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 6
[122] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 13
[123] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 9 December 2019, url, Figures 6.1, 6.2
[124] Global Detention Project, Libya Detention Centres, n.d., url; UN SC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 9 December 2019, url, Annex 21
[125] Euronews, UNHCR in Libya, 2 October 2019, url
[126] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 9 December 2019, url, Annex 21

Security incidents

Based on ACLED data, during the reference period, Az-Zawiyah was the site of about 1 % of the total number of (reported) violent events in Libya, and registered one of the lowest number of civilian casualties (3).[127] At the end of March 2019, it was reported that the LNA had 'established forward bases with allies' in Surman, and it was not until 14 April 2020 that the GNA announced it has regained control.[128] Meanwhile, in Az-Zawiyah town it was reported that between August 2019-January 2020, the LNA launched several airstrikes that hit 'military, government and public installations'.[129]

In 2019, ACLED recorded 21 violent events, of which 11 were explosions/remote violence, 7 were battles and 3 were episodes of violence against civilians. With regards to locations, the incidents took place in Az-Zawiyah city (16), Al Harsha (3), and in Abu Isa and Al Mutrad (1 each).[130]
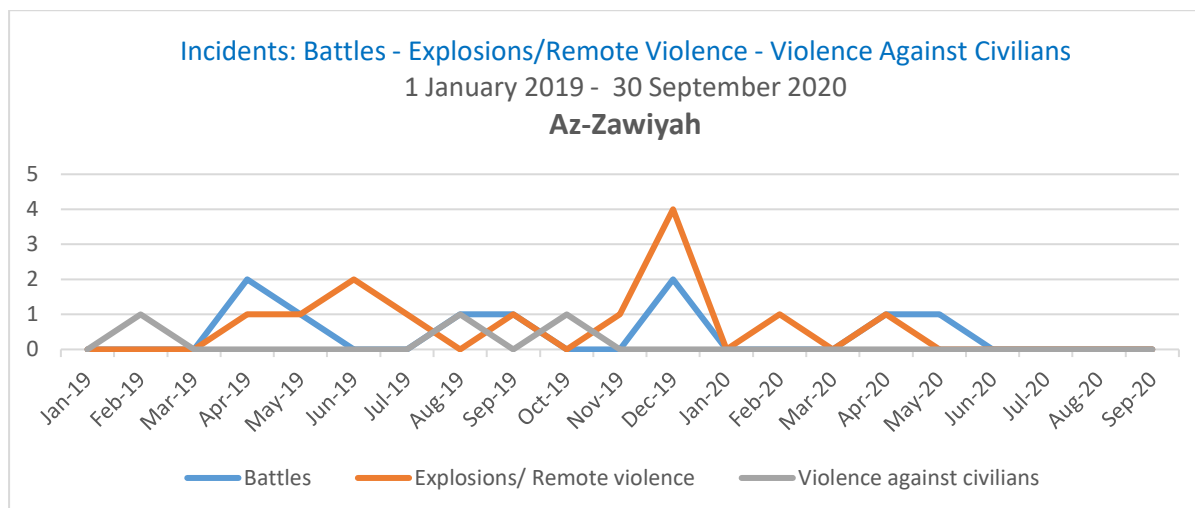

Figure 5: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Az-Zawiyah between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[131]

For 1 January-30 September 2020, ACLED recorded four violent events: two battles, and two explosions/remote violence. The events took place in Surman (3) and Abu Isa (1). [132]

Some of the security incidents recorded during the reference period include:

- On 9 December 2019, a car bomb exploded on a street in Az-Zawiyah city, near a building where 'Amer Al-Qajem, a senior leader of Haftar's militias' was being held. No casualties were reported by the source.[133]
- On 26 December 2019, airstrikes on Az-Zawiyah, reportedly conducted by General Haftar's forces, killed two civilians and injured eight others. [134]
- On 10 February 2020, three children were injured in an explosion 'near a school in Abu Isa village'.[135]

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[127] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[128] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 9 December 2019, url, para. 12; AA, Libya's GNA launches air operation to Haftar's militias, 25 April 2019, url; AJ, Haftar forces suffer string of defeats in battle for Tripoli, 14 April 2020, url; UNSMIL, Acting SRSG Stephanie Williams briefing to Security Council, 19 May 2020, url
AJ, Libya: Tripoli gov't retakes three cities from Haftar's forces, 14 April 2020, url
[129] UN Security Council, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 22
[130] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[131] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url
[132] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[133] Libya Observer (The), Car bomb explodes near military force HQ in Zawiya, 10 December 2019, url
[134] UNSMIL, SRSG Ghassan Salame condemns continued airstrikes causing deaths and injuries among civilians in western Libya, 28 December 2019, url
[135] Xinhua, UNICEF "saddened" by injury of 3 children in Libya blast, 11 February 2020, url

- On 13 April 2020, the WHO/Health Cluster in Libya reported that, due to active fighting in Az-Zawiyah, services in Surman hospital were suspended. [136]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

In 2019, ACLED recorded 10 incidents of violence against civilians in Az-Zawiyah, and three civilian deaths, while between 1 January-30 September 2020, ACLED recorded no incidents of violence against civilians in Az-Zawiyah, and no civilian deaths.[137]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

In the reference period, numerous acts of violence were reported against the migrant and refugee population, including those in detention. In Az-Zawiyah, there are two immigration detention centres currently in use, Abu Isa and Az-Zawiyah (Al-Nasr).[138] After visiting Az-Zawiyah (Al-Nasr) migrant detention centre between June-August 2019, UNSMIL reported that the authorities detained 'migrants and refugees arbitrarily in overcrowded, inhuman and degrading conditions'.[139] On 6 June 2019, 'in Al-Nasr detention centre in Az-Zawiyah, at least one Sudanese woman was killed and three other migrants [were] injured by gunshots' while protesting against the conditions of their detention. [140]

In a report of 6 April 2020, the UN Secretary-General stated that 'trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and possible enforced disappearances continued to be reported at Az-Zawiyah (Al-Nasr) detention centre'.[141] According to the report, one of the causes was 'the absence of strong State institutions', which allowed 'migrant smugglers or human traffickers and those in control of the detention' to develop a 'lucrative business model', including in Az-Zawiyah. [142] On 2 September 2020, the UN Secretary-General highlighted 'reports of extortion for money, forced labour, and disappearances of migrants and asylum seekers from [..] Al-Nasr and Abu Isa in Az-Zawiyah detention centres. '[143] The same source mentioned that boys in the Abu Isa detention centre were reportedly sexually abused.[144]

On 15 February 2019, 14 Tunisian workers were abducted in Az-Zawiyah city, by an armed group demanding 'the release of a Libyan national from prison in Tunisia'. The workers were released on 17 February 2019.[145] In July 2020 a group of 'men in uniform' kidnapped 127 Ethiopian and Eritrean nationals, and detained them in a location inside Az-Zawiyah city, demanding ransom to be paid for their release.[146] According to AI, evidence indicated that the men belonged to 'the Az-Zawiyah Support Forces – The First Division, a militia under the nominal command of the ministry of interior, [and] headed by Mohamed Bahron (also known as al-Far)', who has been wanted by the public prosecutor

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[136] Health Cluster/WHO, Libya: Health Sector Flash Update | Monitoring violence against healthcare, 13 April 2020, url

[137] ACLED, Curated Data: Libya, 1 January 2019-30 September 2020, url; ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url

[138] Global Detention Project, Libya Detention Centres, n.d., url

[139] UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Libya, and the effectiveness of technical assistance and capacity-building measures received by the Government of Libya, 23 January 2020, url, para. 39

[140] UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Libya, and the effectiveness of technical assistance and capacity-building measures received by the Government of Libya, 23 January 2020, url, para. 40

[141] UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) Report of the Secretary-General, 6 April 2020, url, paras. 36-38

[142] UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) Report of the Secretary-General, 6 April 2020, url, para. 39

[143] UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) Report of the Secretary-General, 2 September 2020, url, para. 14

[144] UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) Report of the Secretary-General, 2 September 2020, url, para. 14

[145] Libya Observer (The), 14 Tunisian workers abducted in Zawiya city, 16 February 2019, url; Al-Arabiya, 14 Tunisian oil workers kidnapped in Libya freed, says source, 17 February 2019, url

[146] AI, Libya: 'Between life and death': Refugees and Migrants trapped in Libya's cycle of abuse, 2020, url, p. 24

since 2017. [147] AI further reported that some of the detained migrants subsequently to the Abu Isa detention centre, and were again demanded money in order to be freed.[148]

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

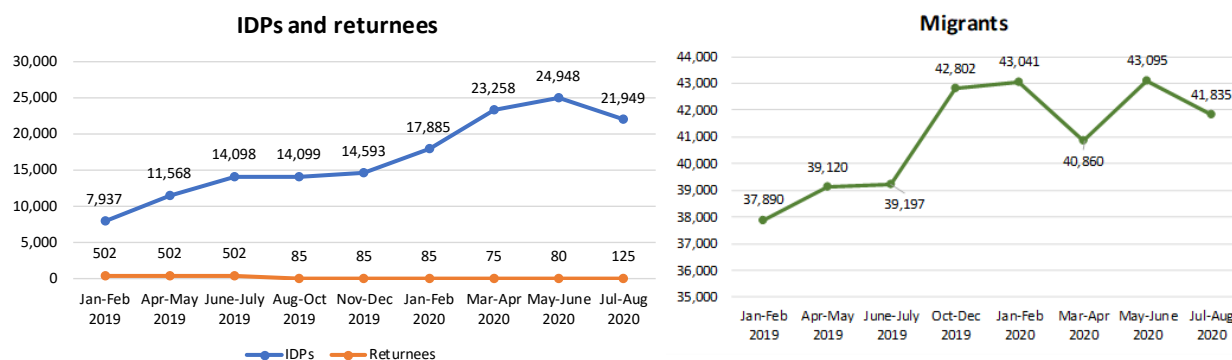The IOM DTM for Libya provides the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants:

Figure 6: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Az-Zawiyah between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[149]

The western coast of Libya is the main point of departure for migrants and refugees trying to reach Europe, and in 2018, an estimated 80 % of boats to Europe were boarded from the coastal areas between Sabratha and Az-Zawiyah.[150] In August 2019, some 100 migrants were reportedly transiting through Janoub Az-Zawiyah each day, while in October 2019 some 380 migrants in transit were again recorded in the same location.[151] In Az-Zawiyah there are disembarkation points in Surman, Az-Zawiyah refinery port, and Az-Zawiyah Marsa Dila,[152] while the two immigration detention centres, in Abu Isa and Az-Zawiyah (Al-Nasr), are still in use as of 2020.[153]

As the conflict in Tripoli escalated in April 2019 and then became protracted, Az-Zawiyah district became one of the destination areas for IDPs fleeing South Tripoli in particular. Some of the indicative displacement related events include:

- In April-May 2019, around 490 IDPs from South Tripoli and Az-Zahra were newly recorded in Janoub Az-Zawiyah.[154]
- In October 2019, 5 people displaced by conflict from Tripoli arrived in Janoub Az-Zawiyah.[155]
- According to a 9 April 2020 report, some 375 IDPs arrived in Az-Zawiyah, after being displaced from Tripoli on 6-7 April 2020, due to airstrikes.[156]
- On 5 June 2020, IOM DTM reported that some 425 people that had been displaced from South Tripoli by active fighting during the previous two days, had arrived in Az-Zawiyah.[157]

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[147] AI, Libya: 'Between life and death': Refugees and Migrants trapped in Libya's cycle of abuse, 2020, url, p. 24
[148] AI, Libya: 'Between life and death': Refugees and Migrants trapped in Libya's cycle of abuse, 2020, url, p. 25
[149] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[150] AJ, Libya's coastguard rescues 290 migrants off Tripoli's coast, 24 May 2019, url; MMH Libya Country Brief, March 2018, url
[151] IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (1-31 August 2019), 6 November 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (1-31 October 2019), 30 November 2019, url, p. 2
[152] UNHCR Libya: Activities at Disembarkation, monthly update, September 2019, url
[153] Global Detention Project, Libya Detention Centres, n.d., url
[154] IOM Libya Displacement Event Tracking Report (1- 30 April 2019), 30 May 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya Displacement Event Tracking Report (1-31 May 2019), 3 July 2019, url, p. 2
[155] IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (1-31 October 2019), 30 November 2019, url, p. 2
[156] IOM DTM Libya - Abusliem Flash Update, 9 April 2020, url
[157] IOM DTM Libya, Qasr Ben Gashir, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna, Ejdabia Flash Update (05 JUNE 2020), url

3.4 Al-Jifarah

Main armed groups

According to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, as of October 2019, the presence of the following armed groups was observed in Al-Jifarah:

- In Janzour: Fursan Janzour (Janzour Knights), the National mobile force battalion, and the General Security Service, under the GNA. According to SAS, the group Fursan Janzour was in control of the Janzour area. [158]
- In Swani: the 302nd Infantry Battalion, Fursan Janzour, and the Muammar Al Dhawi battalion, under the GNA,
- In Az-Zahra: the Muammar Al Dhawi battalion under the GNA,
- In Qasr Bin Ghashir: the 9th brigade (al-Kaniyat, for more details see chapter on Al-Margeb) and the 166th infantry battalion, under the LNA,
- In the Tripoli International Airport area: the Nawasi Brigade and the Central Security Force Abu Salim (A. Kikli), under the GNA,
- In Espeea: the Muammar Al Dhawi battalion under the GNA. [159]

Security incidents

According to ACLED data, during the reference period, the highest numbers of violent incidents and civilian casualties in the country were recorded in Al-Jifarah, after Tripoli only.[160] During the LNA's push to capture the capital through the south, several areas falling within Al-Jifarah's boundaries were the site of armed confrontations.[161]

On 16 January 2019, UNSMIL reported a 'recent military mobilisation of forces in southern Tripoli', while other sources reported armed clashes during the same day.[162] By 18 January 2019, at least six civilians had been killed due to the 'use of weapons with wide area impact and indiscriminate fire', with some of the fatalities being reported in Al-Aziziyah and Qasr Bin Ghashir. [163]

As detailed in the introduction, on 4 April 2019, the LNA began a surprise offensive to capture Tripoli, and advanced into 'Tripoli's southern outskirts in the first few days of the operation', a move that mobilized various armed groups to join the fight along with the GNA. [164] Following a period of stalemate, the fighting 'increasingly moved into populated areas' towards the end of 2019, leading to internal displacement and civilian casualties.[165] On 13 December 2019, General Haftar announced a new push to capture Tripoli. However, the offensive 'did not lead to significant territorial gains by

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[158] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 5; UN SC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 9 December 2019, url, Figures 6.1, 6.2

[159] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 9 December 2019, url, Figures 6.1, 6.2

[160] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url

[161] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url

[162] UNSMIL, WHO, WHO condemns unceasing attacks on civilians and health facilities in Libya, 19 January 2019, url; UNSMIL, Human Rights Report on Civilian Casualties – 1 to 31 January 2019, url; UNSMIL is monitoring military mobilisation of forces in Tripoli closely; warns against any breach of ceasefire and endangering civilians' lives, 16 January 2019, url;

[163] WHO, WHO condemns unceasing attacks on civilians and health facilities in Libya, 19 January 2019, url; UNSMIL, Human Rights Report on Civilian Casualties – 1 to 31 January 2019, url

[164] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 3; UN OCHA, Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020 (January 2020), 31 January 2020, url, p. 9

[165] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 3; UN OCHA, Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020 (January 2020), 31 January 2020, url, p. 9

either side in the Tripoli area'.[166]

According to a UN Secretary-General report, during the period August 2019-January 2020, 'most of the ground fighting' was ongoing in areas including Al-Aziziyah and Souq al-Khamis, while in areas including Janzour and Swani, LNA airstrikes had hit 'military, government and public installations'.[167] On 23 March 2020, the GNA launched Operation Peace Storm, reportedly to counter LNA attacks on Tripoli.[168] On 29 April 2020, the LNA announced it would stop all military operations during the holy month of Ramadan.[169] However, the GNA were 'reluctant to reciprocate' the ceasefire, reportedly as they were encouraged by recent successes on the battlefield.[170] On 4 June 2020, the GNA announced it had regained 'full control' over Tripoli, while a 'military source with the eastern forces' stated that 'they were pulling back from all of Tripoli's suburbs.[171] On 5 June 2020, IOM reported that areas including Qasr Bin Ghashir, Souq al-Khamis, Al-Aziziyah, and Espeaa had been 'heavily affected' by armed clashes during the previous two days.[172]

For 2019, ACLED recorded 228 violent incidents, comprising 120 incidents of explosions/remote violence (such as shelling and airstrikes), 101 battles, and 7 incidents of violence against civilians. Some of the more affected areas included Qasr Bin Ghashir (44 incidents), Tripoli International Airport (33), Swani (30), Al-Aziziyah (23), Asbiah (21), Al-Twaishah (18), Janzour (11), and in Souq al-Khamis and As Saadiya (10 each). [173]
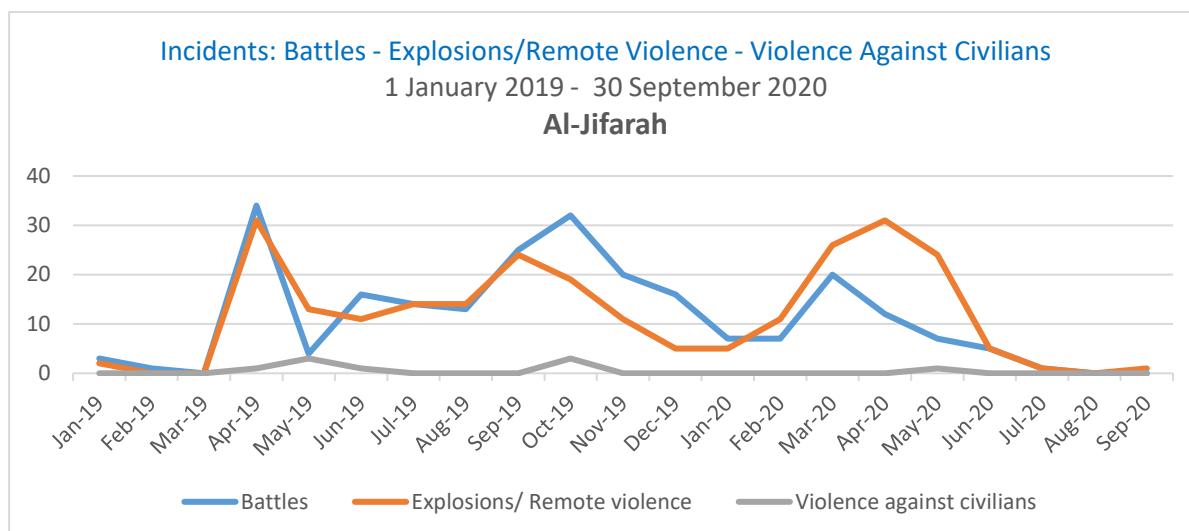

Figure 7: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Al-Jifarah between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[174]

Between 1 January-30 September 2020, there were 128 violent incidents recorded by ACLED, which included 81 incidents of explosions/remote violence, 46 battles, and one incident of violence against civilians. Some of the more affected locations include Qasr Bin Ghashir (36), Swani (32), Al Krimiyah

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[166] Small Arms Survey, Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? August 2019, url, p. 3; UN OCHA, Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020 (January 2020), 31 January 2020, url, p. 9; AJ, Libya's Haftar announces 'decisive battle' to capture Tripoli, 12 December 2019, url; MEMO, Libya: Haftar orders troops to advance on Tripoli in 'final battle', 13 December 2019, url UN Security Council, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 8
[167] UN Security Council, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 22
[168] AA, Libya's GNA launches air operation to Haftar's militias, 25 April 2019, url
[169] UN Security Council, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 10; UNSMIL, UNSMIL urges Libyan parties to seize upon calls for truce to resume the 5+5 Joint Military Commission talks, 30 April 2020, url
[170] UNSMIL, Acting SRSG Stephanie Williams briefing to the Security Council, 19 May 2020, url
[171] AJ, Libya's GNA says it regained full control of the capital, Tripoli, 4 June 2020, url
[172] IOM DTM Libya, Qasr Ben Gashir, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna, Ejdabia Flash Update (05 JUNE 2020), url
[173] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[174] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url

(12), Al-Aziziyah (10), Tripoli International Airport (8), Janzour (7), and Bir Attuta (6). [175]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

In 2019, ACLED recorded 7 incidents of violence against civilians in Al-Jifarah, as well as 57 civilian deaths. Between 1 January-30 September 2020, there was one incident of violence against civilians recorded by ACLED in Al-Jifarah, and 46 civilian deaths. [176]

Some of the security incidents that impacted civilians during the reference period include:

- On 10 April 2019, UN OCHA highlighted that many civilians were trapped close to the fighting 'due to access restrictions, hostilities and indiscriminate targeting of first responders' in Al-Aziziyah and Souq al-Khamis.[177]
- In Swani, 'indiscriminate shelling on densely populated areas' was reported on 11 April 2019, while on 16 July 2019, an attack on a field hospital injured three health workers.[178]
- On 23 April 2019, armed men 'opened fire on refugees and migrants' at Qasr Bin Ghashir detention centre, where some 700 people were held. 'Several deaths' were recorded. [179]
- In Janzour, several children were injured on 6 October 2019 by LNA airstrikes conducted targeting 'civilian facility.'[180] On 6 May 2020, two 'civilians were killed and four more injured […] by indiscriminate shelling on the Al Krimiyah area of Janzour.'[181]
- In Qasr Bin Ghashir, one of the most affected areas, two children were killed on 18-19 April 2019 in a Grad rocket attack. On 14 May and 22 July 2019, shelling and airstrikes attributed to the GNA hit residential buildings, killing at least nine civilians. [182] Between 19 May-3 June 2020, GNA artillery shelling and airstrikes hit Qasr Bin Ghashir on 3 separate occasions, killing at least 17 civilians.[183]
- On 23 October 2019, an LNA aircraft launched airstrikes on Al-Aziziyah and Ramlah, killing three civilians and injuring four others. [184]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

On 18 November 2019, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General highlighted the 'growing involvement of mercenaries and fighters from foreign private military companies', which had led to an increase in violence, as well as in the number of civilians killed and injured, and displaced.[185] A report of the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries stated that, in September 2019, some of the personnel of the Wagner Group private military company were alleged to have 'arbitrarily detained five civilians and summarily executed three of them in Espeaa village'.[186]

[175] ACLED, Data Export Tool, n.d., url
[176] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url
[177] UN OCHA, Libya: Tripoli Situational Report No. 4, 10 April 2019, url, p. 1
[178] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. in Libya Mr Ghandour strongly condemns the Direct Attack of Field Hospital in Swani, 18 July 2019, url; UN OCHA, Libya: Tripoli Situational Report No. 5, 11 April 2019, url, p. 1
[179] MSF, Libya: Brutal shooting of detainees shows need for immediate evacuation of migrants and refugees, 25 April 2019, url; AI, Libya: Horrific attack targeting refugees and migrants at detention centre must be investigated as a war crime, 24 April 2019, url
[180] UNSMIL, UNSMIL appalled by an airstrike targeting the equestrian club in Tripoli's Janzour, reportedly injuring a number of children, 06 October 2019, url
[181] Airwars, Civilian Casualties, 6 May 2020, url
[182] UN OCHA, LIBYA: Tripoli Clashes Situation Report No. 14, 20 April 2019, url, p. 2; AI, Libya's Relentless Militia War, 22 October 2019, url, p. 13
[183] Airwars, Civilian Casualties, 19 May 2020, url; Airwars, Civilian Casualties, 1 June 2020, url; Airwars, Civilian Casualties, 3 June 2020, url
[184] UN Security Council, UNSMIL Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 26
[185] UNSMIL, SRSG Ghassan Salame Briefing to the Security Council, 18 November 2019, url
[186] UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries, Libya: Violations related to mercenary activities must be investigated – UN experts, 17 June 2020, url

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

In Al-Jifarah there are disembarkation points in Janzour and Al-Maya, while one immigration detention centre in Janzour remains in use, after Qasr Bin Ghashir centre was closed in 2019 due to its proximity to the fighting. [187]

The IOM DTM for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants in Al-Jifarah:
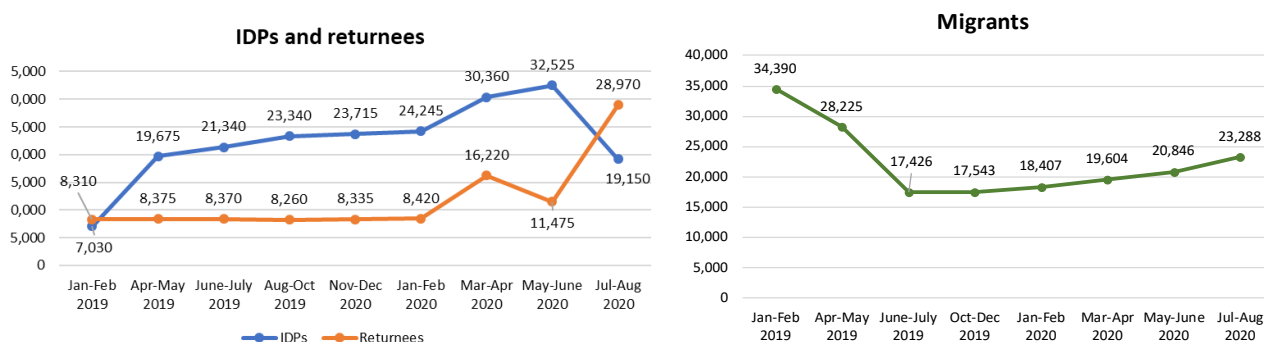

Figure 8: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Al-Jifarah between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[188]

According to IOM data, the number of IDP returnees has increased significantly during the last reporting period of July-August 2020. The distributions of the 28 970 IDP returnees across locations in Al-Jifarah, as of August 2020, is: Al-Aziziyah (8 100), Swani (5 965), Az-Zahra (3 620), Souq al-Khamis (3 550), Qasr Bin Ghashir (2 900), Espeaa (2 550), Sidi Assayeh (1 270), Janzour (590), and Al-Maya (425).[189]

Some of the displacement related events include:

- During February-April 2019, around 1 220 migrants arrived in Swani from other municipalities, while 400 migrants were also recorded in Qasr Bin Ghashir, and 330 in Janzour.[190]
- On 6 April 2019, IOM reported that active fighting in areas including Souq al-Khamis, Qasr Bin Ghashir and Al-Aziziyah had displaced some 1 550 people.[191]
- On 15 April 2019, an AI statement quoted a news report stating that at least 700 refugees and migrants were 'trapped' in Qasr Bin Ghashir detention centre, close to 'intense armed clashes', and according to UN OCHA, could not be reached by aid staff. [192]
- According to a 9 April 2020 report by IOM DTM, some 425 IDPs arrived in Janzour, after being displaced from several Tripoli neighbourhoods on 6-7 April 2020, due to airstrikes.[193]

3.5 Tripoli

Main armed groups

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[187] UNHCR Libya: Activities at Disembarkation, monthly update, September 2019, url; Global Detention Project, Libya Detention Centres, n.d., url; Euronews, UNHCR in Libya, 2 October 2019, url

[188] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url

[189] IOM DTM Libya - IDPs And Returnees Baseline Assessment Round 32, August 2020, url

[190] IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (1- 28 Feb 2019), 14 March 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Displacement Event Tracking Report (March 2019), 18 April 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya Displacement Event Tracking Report (1- 30 April 2019), 30 May 2019, url, p. 2

[191] IOM DTM Libya - Tripoli Flash Update (06 April 2019), 6 April 2019, url

[192] AI, Libya: Release migrants and refugees trapped in detention centres amid escalating clashes, 15 April 2019, url; UN OCHA, LIBYA: Tripoli Clashes Situation Report No. 9, 15 April 2019, url, p. 1

[193] IOM DTM Libya - Abusliem Flash Update, 9 April 2020, url

Liveuamap, a georeferenced information site dedicated to factual reporting on conflict settings, indicated in its Libya map from 22 October 2020 that the totality of Tripoli province was under the control of the Government of National Accord (GNA).[194]

According to various sources, around 30 armed groups were present in Tripoli in 2012 and competed for influence, while by mid-2017, only four dominated the city and exerted their almost exclusive control into clearly identifiable areas. These were 'the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB); the Nawasi Brigade; the Special Deterrence Forces (SDF); and the Abu Slim Central Security Unit'.[195] In addition to those four groups, ISPI mentioned that the 301st Battalion, 'a subset of one of the largest Misratan brigades' with around 1 500 fighters, was also present in Tripoli as of April 2019.[196] Noon Post made reference to two additional groups reportedly present in Tripoli: Al-Mahjub Brigade (also present in Misrata) and the General Security Apparatus (which controls the western part of Tripoli).[197] On 9 July 2020, Sky News Arabic provided the following information regarding the main militias controlling Tripoli, their presence and strength:

- TRB: operates under the GNA ministry of interior – 1 500 members – controls strategic points in eastern and central Tripoli.
- Nawasi Brigade: also known as the 8th Force – operates under the GNA ministry of interior – plays a role in securing the GNA premises, especially the residence of Al-Sarraj.
- SDF: operates under the GNA ministry of interior – 1 500 members – active in eastern Tripoli.
- Misrata Brigades.
- Al-Halbus Brigades: originated in Misrata – one of the most equipped militias – controls the airport road and is present in southern Tripoli.[198]

In addition, Wolfram Lacher, a senior researcher focused on conflict dynamics in Libya, made reference to other armed groups that took part in the fight against the LNA's march towards Tripoli in 2019. These included the Kikli militia (around 300 fighters, based around Tripoli International airport), Bab Tajoura and Al-Dhaman battalions (Ain Zara and Salah Al-Din fronts), Fursan Janzur (airport front), as well as Rahbat Al-Duru Battalion (around 200 members), Al-Rawased and Fath Mekka Battalions ('deployed on the easternmost front lines of Wadi al-Rabi' and al-Zatarna').[199]

In addition to Libyan armed groups and militias, sources reported on the existence of foreign mercenaries fighting alongside the warring parties. On 17 June 2020, the OHCHR stated that the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries 'expressed alarm at widespread reports about the use of mercenaries and related actors, particularly since the start of the offensive by the Libyan National Army (LNA) to seize the capital Tripoli in April 2019'. The report made specific reference to Syrian fighters used by both the GNA and the LNA.[200] The following mercenary groups were reported to have been present in Tripoli in different time spans:
- Syrian fighters: Sources provided different estimations of the number of Syrian mercenaries fighting in Libya. In two reports on the status of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and

[194] Liveuamap, Libya, 22 October 2020, url
[195] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, 17 March 2020, url; Lacher, W. and al-Adrissi, A., Capital of Militias: Tripoli's Armed Groups Capture the Libyan State, June 2018, in: SANA, url, p. 3, 9, and vv.
[196] ISPI, Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, url
[197] Noon Post, خريطة الفصائل والمليشيات المسلحة في ليبيا.. ارتباطاتها وتحالفاتها [Map of Armed Groups and Militias in Libya.. Its connections and Alliances], 30 June 2020, url
[198] Sky News Arabic, ليبيا.. أبرز الميليشيات الإرهابية والغطاء التركي المشبوه [Libya.. The Most prominent Terrorist Militias and the Suspicious Turkish Cover], 9 July 2020, url
[199] Lacher, W., Who is fighting whom in Tripoli? How the 2019 civil war is transforming Libya's military landscape, SANA, SAS, August 2019, url, p. 7
[200] OHCHR, Libya: Violations related to mercenary activities must be investigated – UN experts, 17 June 2020, url

the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, the US Lead Inspector General estimated the numbers of Syrian fighters in Libya at 3 500 – 3 800 as of April 2020[201] and at 5 000 as of July 2020 fighting alongside the GNA[202]. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) stated on 7 September that the number of Syrian mercenaries transferred by Turkey to Libya rose to 17 420.[203]

- Russian fighters: Russian private military personnel, notably from the Wagner Group, were reportedly deployed on the Tripoli frontline in support of the LNA between at least September 2019 and May 2020. The personnel served as snipers and directed artillery fire, and some were allegedly involved in the arbitrary detention of five civilians and the summary execution of three of them.[204] On 12 January 2020, the Libya Observer cited the commander of backup forces of the GNA Libyan Army who confirmed that many of the Wagner Group mercenaries 'have started pulling out from the frontlines in Southern Tripoli' to Al-Jufra airbase. The source added that as of 12 January, there were 500 Russian mercenaries deployed in Salah Al-Deen, Yarmouk, Khallatat and Abu Slim, fighting on Haftar's side.[205]

- Sudanese and Chadian fighters: the UN Security Council's report of 9 December 2019 stated that the Sudanese Justice and Equality Movement militia, comprising around 160 fighters, 'has been reported as operating in Tripoli' with the GNA.[206] Furthermore, the Libya Observer stated that more than 1 000 Janjaweed mercenaries[207] were fighting alongside Haftar's forces in Salah Al-Deen, Yarmouk, Khallatat and Abu Slim in Tripoli.[208] Other Sudanese and Chadian militias were present during the intensification of battles around Tripoli, mainly in the South of Libya and in Al-Jufra.[209]

Security incidents

In early 2019, Haftar pulled the majority of his forces towards Sirte, 'in a move widely viewed as paving the way for an eventual assault on Tripoli'.[210] On 4 April 2019, the battle of Tripoli started as Haftar launched an attack against the UN-backed GNA[211] aimed at capturing Tripoli.[212] On 12 January 2020, the LNA announced a conditional ceasefire, brokered by Russia and Turkey, in the offensive to capture Tripoli.[213] According to the UN Security Council's report of 5 May 2020, the humanitarian truce did not last long, and the armed conflict intensified in southern Tripoli. On 18 and 29 February 2020, unmanned aerial vehicles attempted to target LNA forces positioned in Ayn Zarah district and were shot down by the LNA air defence systems. The battle lasted for 14 months and Haftar's attempt to

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[201] US Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General (OIG), East Africa Counterterrorism Operation - North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation Lead Inspector General report to the United States Congress, 17 July 2020, url, p. 5

[202] US Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General (OIG), East Africa Counterterrorism Operation - North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation Lead Inspector General report to the United States Congress, 2 September 2020, url, p. 6

[203] SOHR, SOHR: Number of Syrian Mercenaries in Libya Rises to 17,420, 7 September 2020, url

[204] OHCHR, Libya: Violations related to mercenary activities must be investigated – UN experts, 17 June 2020, url

[205] Libya Observer (The), Army official: Russian Wagner Group mercenaries have started pulling out of Tripoli frontlines, 12 January 2020, url

[206] [206] UN Security Council, Letter dated 29 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 December 2019, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3838591/files/S_2019_914-EN.pdf, para. 22 - 30

[207] According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the Janjaweed is an Arab militia active in Sudan, and accused of genocide in Darfur by the US in 2004. Encyclopedia Britannica, Janjaweed, n. d., url

[208] Libya Observer (The), Army official: Russian Wagner Group mercenaries have started pulling out of Tripoli frontlines, 12 January 2020, url

[209] UN Security Council, Letter dated 29 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 December 2019, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3838591/files/S_2019_914-EN.pdf, para. 22 - 30

[210] Middle East Eye, Hoping for peace, preparing for war: Libya on brink of Tripoli showdown, 31 March 2019, url

[211] Responsibility to Protect Monitor, A bimonthly bulletin by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 15 September 2020, url, p. 17

[212] Aljazeera, Timeline: Haftar's months-long offensive to seize Tripoli, 19 February 2020, url

[213] DW, Libya ceasefire: Both sides accuse each other of breaking truce, 12 January 2020, url

seize Tripoli was unsuccessful[214] despite the LNA's initial air dominance and the military equipment he received from his backers[215]. The GNA launched Operation Peace Storm on 23 March 2020, in 'response to the increased attacks by the Libyan National Army on civilian neighbourhoods in Tripoli'.[216] In May 2020, the GNA-aligned forces, 'with the help of arms, troops, specialists and contractors provided by Turkey', managed to break the siege of Tripoli[217] and to route the LNA from 'much of its western territory in just a few weeks'[218].

A UN Security Council report dated 15 January 2020 stated that since 25 August 2019, 'most of the ground fighting continued in southern Tripoli and surrounding areas of the western region, such as Aziziyah, Gharyan[219] and Suq al-Khamis'. UNSMIL indicated that since the beginning of the conflict, the LNA and affiliated forces 'conducted some 850 precision air strikes by drones and another 170 by fighter-bomber, among them some 60 precision air strikes by foreign fighter aircraft' compared to 250 air strikes conducted by the GNA-aligned forces. Reportedly, the LNA bombed areas in Tripoli including Farnaj, Janzur, Sawani and Tajoura.[220] During the offensive on Tripoli, the LNA used Wing Loong II combat drones, manned aircrafts, and Pantsir-S1 surface-to-air missiles provided by the UAE.[221]

In a report published on 22 October 2019, AI reported on cases of 'indiscriminate attacks on residential areas' in which old rockets and artillery were used in urban areas in Tripoli. The report highlighted the following incidents:

- LNA rocket attack on Abu Salim on 16 April 2019, killing eight civilians and injuring at least four;
- GNA artillery attack on Qasr Bin Ghashir on 14 May 2019, killing at least five civilians and injuring more than a dozen;
- LNA air strikes on civilian homes and infrastructure in Tripoli in June and July 2019 that resulted in civilian deaths and injuries;
- GNA air strikes on civilian homes, including in Qasr Bin Ghashir on 22 July 2019. No casualties were reported in the attacks.[222]

Towards the end of 2019, hostilities moved closer to densely populated areas and the impact on civilians increased. UNSMIL reported the following incidents that took place between October and December 2019:

- On 6 October 2019, the LNA 'dropped four unguided bombs on an equestrian club in Tripoli', which resulted in six civilian injuries including five children;
- On 14 October 2019, a bombing of a residential building in Farnaj by the LNA resulted in the death of three children;
- On 23 October 2019, an LNA aircraft bombed the Aziziyah and Ramla neighbourhoods of Tripoli, killing three civilians and injuring four;
- On 18 November 2019, seven persons, of whom five were foreign workers, were killed in Tajoura when an aircraft supporting the LNA conducted air strikes close to a factory;

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[214] Aljazeera, Libya: The battle for Tripoli explained in 600 words, 5 June 2020, url
[215] Washington Institute (The), What Turned the Battle for Tripoli?, 6 May 2020, url
[216] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 8
[217] Jamestown Foundation, In Libyan Quagmire, Front Shifts East From Tripoli to Sirte, 11 June 2020, url
[218] Airwars, In lightening advance, GNA reverses 14 months of Haftar's Libya gains, 8 June 2020, url
[219] Administrative borders between provinces, especially Tripoli, Al-Jifarah and Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi seem not to be observed by some sources which report on security incidents; e.g. Aziziyah and Gharyan are included in reporting on incidents in southern Tripoli. This may result in occasional overlap of information among certain chapters of this query.
[220] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 22, 23
[221] Washington Institute (The), What Turned the Battle for Tripoli?, 6 May 2020, url
[222] AI, LIBYA'S RELENTLESS MILITIA WAR CIVILIANS HARMED IN THE BATTLE FOR TRIPOLI, APRIL-AUGUST 2019, 22 October 2019, url, pp. 10 - 16

- On 2 December 2019, three children were killed in an LNA air strike in the Swani area, southern Tripoli.[223]

The UN Security Council indicated that at least 131 civilian casualties occurred in Libya, of which at least 64 deaths, between 1 January and 31 March 2020.[224]

According to a UN Security Council report published on 25 August 2020, fighting in Tripoli intensified in early May 2020, 'with indiscriminate shelling and artillery exchanges', and both parties concentrated their presence particularly in the central region near Tripoli and Bani Walid.[225] On 3 June 2020, forces aligned with the LNA started to retreat from the areas it held around Tripoli, and the GNA-aligned forces entered those areas.[226] Human Rights Solidarity observed that since the retreat of the LNA, 'the number of victims of armed clashes in Libya has decreased dramatically'. According to the source, the two-month period prior to the publication of its last report on 14 October 2020 was 'free of armed confrontations and no victims'.[227]

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) provided the following statistics regarding incidents of battles, explosions/ remote violence, and violence against civilians in Tripoli for the period between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020[228]:
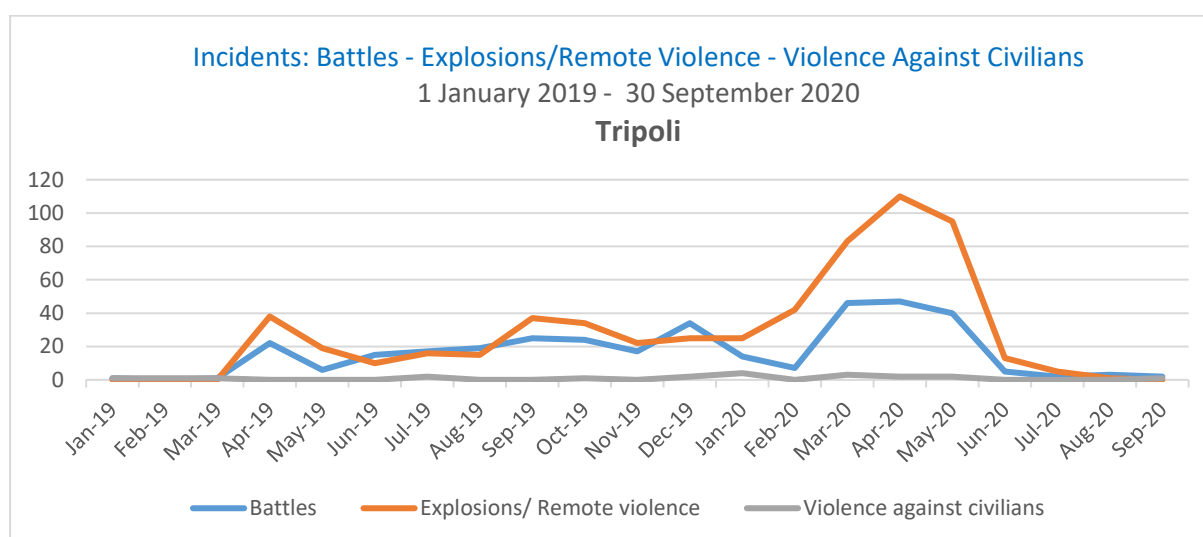

Figure 9: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Tripoli between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[229]

The data showed an increase in the number of incidents related to explosions/remote violence and battles starting in April 2019, i.e. when the LNA started the military operation to capture Tripoli. A significant peak in such incidents took place in April 2020, which later decreased in June 2020, following the announcement of ceasefire between the two warring parties. As regards violence against civilians, the data shows a stable pattern during the reporting period, with slight increases in January and March 2020.

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[223] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 26
[224] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 3
[225] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 29 - 31
[226] Economist (The), Libya's government regains control of western Libya, 11 June 2020, url
[227] Human Rights Solidarity, Dramatic decrease of victims armed clashes, 14 October 2020, url
[228] ACLED, Curated Data: Africa, n. d., url
[229] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url

Impact of security incidents on civilians

Civilian infrastructure. AI reported that civilian homes and infrastructure in and around Tripoli, including schools, businesses and Mitiga Airport, were struck by shelling and airstrikes by the two warring parties.[230]
On 18 February 2020, the LNA targeted the Tripoli port 'with a barrage of heavy artillery and Grad rockets aimed at destroying a cargo vessel allegedly delivering military equipment to the Government of National Accord'.[231] According to Aljazeera, this attack compelled the GNA to suspend its participation in ceasefire negotiations hosted by the UN in Geneva.[232]

Mitiga Airport served as the primary airport to Tripoli as well as the main gateway since Tripoli International Airport was damaged during the conflict.[233] According to sources, Mitiga Airport was targeted on several occasions[234], 'with indirect fire' by the LNA, 'with a peak of 50 shells on 28 February [2020]' incurring civilian casualties and causing disruption of operations in the airport.[235] Moreover, eight schools near Mitiga Airport were closed on 8 March 2020 'owing to the risks posed by shelling'. Reportedly, as of 16 March 2020, 930 families (around 4 650 persons) fled the vicinity of Mitiga Airport to neighbouring areas.[236] Mitiga Airport was targeted again with indirect fire on 9 May 2020, and the infrastructure of the airport was damaged together with a civilian aircraft.[237]

Health care facilities and personnel. According to the UN Security Council report of 15 January 2020, at least 50 attacks targeted health-care facilities, health-care workers and ambulances since the onset of the conflict on 4 April 2019.[238] AI documented attacks by the LNA that targeted field hospitals and ambulances. Reportedly, an air strike targeted a temporary field hospital in the vicinity of Tripoli International Airport on 27 July 2019, resulting in the death of five medics and rescuers and the injury of eight.[239] In 25 October 2019, UNSMIL condemned 'continuous attacks on health sector including field hospitals and health workers.[240] In a bulletin published on 22 May 2020, Insecurity Insight reported on ten attacks that impacted healthcare facilities and medical personnel in Tripoli in April 2020.[241] World Health Organisation (WHO) stated that on 14 May 2020, the Tripoli central hospital was hit by shrapnel and suffered infrastructural damage caused by the shelling that was taking place around Tripoli.[242]

Detention centres. The conflict between the GNA-aligned forces and the LNA had impacted migrants and inmates in prisons and detention centres in Tripoli. AI reported that on 2 July 2019, dozens of migrants and refugees (53 according to UNSMIL including 47 men and six boys[243]) were killed and injured in an attack by the LNA that targeted Tajoura, in the eastern side of Tripoli.[244] Moreover, a UN Security Council report stated that on 24 March 2020, a shelling, reportedly by the LNA, impacted the

[230] AI, Libya 2019, n. d., url
[231] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 25
[232] Aljazeera, Libya's GNA suspending ceasefire talks after Tripoli port attack, 19 February 2020, url
[233] CAPA, Tripoli Mitiga Airport, n. d., url
[234] AA, Libya : Mitiga airport closed due to Haftar attack, 18 February 2020, url; Garda World, Libya: GNA offensive in western Tripolitania prompts LNA rocket attack on Mitiga Airport (MJI) April 13 /update 2, 13 April 2020, url
[235] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 28
[236] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 28
[237] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/832], 25 August 2020, url, para. 33
[238] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 43
[239] AI, Libya 2019, n. d., url
[240] UNSMIL, UNSMIL condemns continuous attacks on health sector including field hospitals and health workers; denies accusations of receiving nor sharing field hospitals coordinates, 25 October 2019, url
[241] Insecurity Insight, Aid Security and COVID-19: Bulletin 6, 22 May 2020, url, p. 2
[242] WHO, HEALTH SECTOR BULLETIN, May 2020, url, p. 2
[243] UN General Assembly, Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Thirty-sixth session, 12 March 2020, url, pp. 3 – 4
[244] AI, Libya 2019, n. d., url

Ayn Zarah district of Tripoli, including the Ruwaymi prison. Several injuries in the shelling, including inmates and judicial police, were reported.[245] Global Detention Project listed five detention centres (located in Tripoli, Janzour, Abu Slim, Tajoura, and Al-Sabaa) that are still in use in the province.[246]

Unexploded Ordnances (UXO)/Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). A UNMAS Threat Mitigation Officer stated that 'Libya has the world's largest uncontrolled ammunitions stockpile' estimated at 150 000 to 200 000 tonnes of munitions across the country. The source added that following months of conflict between the GNA and the LNA in the suburbs of Tripoli, 'the threat posed by explosive remnants of war has increased', and that 'many of the areas that were previously cleared of UXO have now been re-contaminated as a result of the fighting'.[247]

According to a UN Security Council report dated 25 August 2020, UNSMIL recorded several incidents of landmines, booby traps and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) being found in areas previously held by the LNA.[248] Furthermore, UNSMIL registered the death of two humanitarian mine clearance workers in southern Tripoli on 5 July 2020.[249] On 2 September 2020, UNSMIL reported that although the number of incidents caused by booby traps, including IEDs, landmines and ERW, decreased, 'explosive hazard contamination remains a significant risk to many communities, particularly in southern Tripoli'.[250]

In a presentation delivered on 12 February 2020, UNMAS highlighted the employment of mines in the vicinity of Tripoli International Airport and that no minefield records were made of the mines employed during and since the revolution in Libya.[251]

Protests. The UN Security Council report of 15 January 2020 stated that 'peaceful protests and demonstrations were held in Tripoli' in September and October 2019 over employment and salary issues and to denounce Haftar.[252] The protests resumed in August 2020, as hundreds of Libyans took to the streets in Tripoli to protest the living conditions and corruption in the country.[253] Human Rights Watch reported that armed groups aligned with the GNA 'used lethal force to disperse largely peaceful anti-corruption protests in late August 2020 and arbitrarily detained, tortured, and disappeared people in the capital'.[254] UNSMIL called for a thorough investigation 'into the excessive use of force by pro-GNA security personnel in Tripoli' on 23 August 2020, which resulted in a number of injuries among protesters.[255]

Civilian Fatalities. Based on ACLED data, between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020 there were 254 fatalities among civilians in Tripoli.[256] The highest numbers occurred during the LNA operation to capture the capital (April 2019 to June 2020):

- In April 2019: 21 fatalities (from explosions/remote violence).

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[245] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 27
[246] Global Detention Project, Libya, n. d., url
[247] UN News, Libya's cities left 're-contaminated' by months of fighting, warn landmine clearance experts, 12 February 2020, url
[248] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 6
[249] UNMAS, Statement by Stephanie Williams, Acting SRSG UNSMIL, on the Death of Two Libyan Mine Clearance Workers in Southern Tripoli, 7 July 2020, url
[250] UNSMIL, Briefing of Acting SRSG Stephanie Williams to the Security Council on the situation in Libya, 2 September 2020, url, p. 2
[251] UNMAS, Libya - The Toxic and Explosive Legacy of Modern Conflict, 12 February 2020, url, p. 20
[252] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 27
[253] Arab News, Protests against Libya's GNA erupt in Tripoli over living conditions, 23 August 2020, url; Arab Weekly (The), Libyan protests deepen Sarraj's isolation and expose Turkey's role, 26 August 2020, url
[254] HRW, Libya: Armed Groups Violently Quell Protests, 10 September 2020, url
[255] UNSMIL, UNSMIL Statement On Protests In Tripoli On 23 August 2020, 24 August 2020, url
[256] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url

- In July 2019: 63 fatalities (from explosions/remote violence).
- In October 2019: 16 fatalities (15 from explosions/remote violence and 1 from violence against civilians).
- In January 2020: 50 fatalities (37 from explosions/remote violence and 13 from violence against civilians).
- In March 2020: 19 fatalities (12 from explosions/remote violence and 7 from violence against civilians).
- In April 2020: 15 fatalities (14 from explosions/remote violence and 1 from violence against civilians).
- In May 2020: 34 fatalities (31 from explosions/remote violence and 3 from violence against civilians).

The data showed that as of June 2020, the numbers of fatalities have dropped significantly which corresponds to the drop in security incidents highlighted in the Figure 9 above.

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

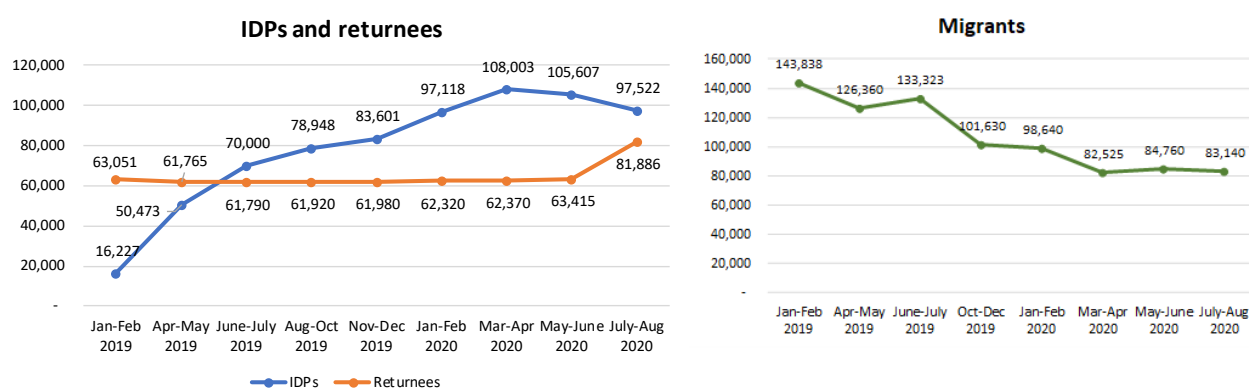The IOM DTM for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants:

Figure 10: IDPs, returnees and migrants Tripoli between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[257]

The data showed that the number of IDPs in the province of Tripoli increased from 16 227 in January-February 2019 to 108 003 in March-April 2020, i.e. when the LNA's offensive on Tripoli started. The number of IDPs reached the highest peak (108 003) in March-April 2020, which coincided with the peak in the number of incidents related to battles and explosions/remote violence in Tripoli as showed by ACLED data in Figure 10.

With regard to returnees, IOM data showed that the number of returnees in Tripoli remained relatively steady, at around 62 000, before it increased to 81 885 in July-August 2020 following the drop in the number of military activities in the region (Figure 10). Finally, as regards migrants, IOM data showed that in January-February 2019 there were 143 839 migrants in Tripoli. The number of migrants dropped to 126 360 in April-May 2019 and increased to 133 323 in June-July 2019. As of August 2020, there were 83 140 migrants in Tripoli. IOM observed that at a national level, '[t]he sustained decline in the number of migrants coincide…[d] with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated socio-economic impact and mobility restrictions.'[258]

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[257] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[258] IOM, DTM, Libya's Migrant Report July - August 2020, 23 September 2020, url, p. 4

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

In its report of 25 June 2020, USDOS stated that 'extra-legal armed groups' committed various human rights violations 'including unlawful killings' across Libya.[259] AI reported that hundreds of persons were detained by the SDF in Mitiga prison in the eastern outskirts of Tripoli without judicial process. According to the source, the detainees 'were kept in overcrowded cells with insufficient food and water and were denied access to medical services'. AI documented cases of mock executions, beatings, floggings, and prolonged solitary confinement to which detainees in unspecified prisons were subjected.[260] According to a UN Security Council report dated 5 May 2020, around 8 800 persons were detained in 28 official prisons 'nominally under the Ministry of Justice', of whom about 60 % were in pre-trial detention; in addition to thousands who were detained in facilities operated by the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Defence. The report added that UNSMIL and OHCHR 'continued to receive reports of arbitrary or unlawful detention, torture, enforced disappearances, overcrowding, a lack of sanitation and medical neglect, among others, in relation to detention facilities under the control of the Ministry of the Interior'.[261]

The UN Security General report of 15 January 2020 observed 'a series of abductions for political and criminal motives' in western Libya. According to the source, the LNA abducted a member of the High Council of State in southern Tripoli and released him later. Moreover, there were cases of arrests of Libyans during their movement between areas held by various groups, some of whom were reportedly killed.[262] The UN Security Council stated that '[a]rmed groups in Tripoli continue to threaten individuals who impede their access to resources'.[263]

With regard to gender based violence, in a report published in May 2019, Global Protection Cluster stated that '[r]ecent joint protection rapid needs assessment conducted in Tripoli indicate…[d] the general lack of safe places, privacy, insecurity and harassment as the major safety concerns for women and girls'. The report added that over-crowdedness of shelters 'shared by both family and non-relatives have been reported'.[264] Moreover, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict stated that due to 'severely limited access to detention facilities, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) verified only seven cases in 2019, affecting four women, two girls and one male activist for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex rights'. According to the report, in the Mitiga detention centre manned by the SDF, female inmates were 'denied due process and unable to challenge the legality of their detention'. The report added that '[f]our female detainees were subjected to rape and forced nudity, and the activist for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex rights was reportedly gang raped, by Special Deterrence Force guards.'[265] Furthermore, AI report stated that in October 2019, gunmen raided two cafes in Tripoli and intimidated women who were not accompanied by a male family member. The SDF was criticised on social media in the wake of the incidents, but a spokesperson denied responsibility.[266] According to the UN Security Council report of 15 January 2020, prison facilities for women throughout the country, with the exception of the Jadidah Women's Prison in Tripoli, do not employ female guards, 'thereby exposing them to increased risks of sexual harassment and violence'.[267]

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[259] USDOS – US Department of State: 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: Libya, 25 June 2020, url
[260] AI, Libya 2019, n. d., url
[261] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 44
[262] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 28
[263] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 28
[264] Global Protection Cluster, Gender-based violence sub-sector Libya – update, May 2019, url, p. 1
[265] Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Libya, n. d., url
[266] AI, Libya 2019, n. d., url
[267] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 55

3.6   Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi

Main armed groups

Based on Liveuamaps, at the end of October 2020, the LNA controlled the southwest corner of Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi as well as an enclave located in the west of the province containing the towns of Zintan, Rujban and Rahibat. The remainder of the province was controlled by the GNA.[268] ISPI indicated that in April 2019, LNA forces were present in Gharyan[269], a key town of 'great logistical importance for the LNA in its attack on Tripoli' due to its geographic location that made it difficult to penetrate by rival forces.[270] In addition, Gharyan had an armed group whose number grew to 200 fighters following the recapture of the town by the GNA-aligned forces. Reportedly, small armed groups of about 30 – 60 fighters from Yefren and Nalut were deployed in Gharyan during the LNA's campaign to capture Tripoli in 2019.[271]

According to Lacher, Zintan was divided in two loyalties, with around 100 fighters aligned with the GNA and commanded by Al-Juwaili, and roughly the same number of fighters aligned with the LNA.[272] The two LNA-aligned militias in Zintan were the General Security Service and Zintani Military Council.[273] Noon Post stated that the militias in Zintan were sided with Haftar owing to their rivalry with the Misrata Brigades. However, they split in alignment and finally opposed Haftar's announcement to capture Tripoli.[274]

Security incidents

Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi province witnessed several conflict-related incidents in 2019 and 2020. LNA forces held Gharyan since 2 April 2019 until it was recaptured by GNA-aligned forces on 27 June 2019.[275] Attempts by the LNA to retake Gharyan in August 2019 were repelled by the GNA.[276] Between January and May 2020, 'intense fighting' occurred in several localities including Gharyan.[277] In May 2020, GNA-aligned forces launched an attack on Al-Asabia that was repelled by the LNA, which in its turn targeted GNA-held positions in the vicinity of Gharyan, reportedly causing deaths among GNA militants.[278] Both Zintan and Mizda declared their support for the GNA as the latter's forces continued to advance towards Al-Asabia.[279] Arabic Post reported that prior to the liberation of Tripoli announced by the GNA on 4 June 2020, LNA forces had gathered to the south of Gharyan. The source added that the LNA captured Al-Asabia and made an advance towards Got Al-Rih using unmanned aerial vehicles.[280] On 13

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[268] Liveuamap, Libya, 22 October 2020, url

[269] ISPI, Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, url

[270] Economist (The), Forces of UN-backed government capture key city near capital, 3 July 2019, url

[271] Lacher, W., Who is fighting whom in Tripoli? How the 2019 civil war is transforming Libya's military landscape, SANA, SAS, August 2019, url, pp. 7-8

[272] Lacher, W., Who is fighting whom in Tripoli? How the 2019 civil war is transforming Libya's military landscape, SANA, SAS, August 2019, url, pp. 7-8

[273] ISPI, Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, url

[274] Noon Post, [خريطة الفصائل والمليشيات المسلحة في ليبيا.. ارتباطاتها وتحالفاتها Map of Armed Factions and Militias in Libya.. Their Affiliations and Alliances], 30 June 2020, url

[275] BBC, Libya crisis: UN-backed government 'retakes' key town of Gharyan, 27 June 2019, url

[276] Middle East Online, Battle for Libya's Gharyan heats up, 27 August 2019, url

[277] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 24

[278] Al-Bayan, [الجيش الليبي يصد هجوماً للميليشيات والمرتزقة في الجبل الغربي Libyan Army Repels an Attack by Militias and Mercenaries in Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi], 20 May 2020, url

[279] Middle East Monitor, Zintan and Mizda announce support for Libya's GNA, army forces move to liberate Asbi'ah from Haftar militias, 21 May 2020, url

[280] Arabic Post, [حفتر المطرود من العاصمة يستهدف الجبل.. تفاصيل التغييرات الاستراتيجية في ليبيا ولمن اليد العليا؟ Haftar Who Was Expelled from the Capital Targets Al-Jabal.. Details of the Strategic Changes in Libya and Who Has the Upper Hand?], 4 June 2020, url

June 2020, Aljazeera reported that the GNA captured several towns and villages in Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi and blocked the supply routes for the LNA forces present at the time in the province, which connected them to the Al-Jufra Airbase and the Tamanhat Airbase in Sabha.[281]

In a report published on 2 September 2020, UNSMIL observed that 'localised tensions among armed groups, most recently in the cities of al-Asabaa, Sirte and neighboring localities, are on the rise'. According to the report, there were allegations of arrests, detention, abuse of power and targeting of civilians.[282] UNSMIL also recorded an 'alarming increase in retaliatory acts in areas previously controlled by or perceived to be supportive of the Libyan National Army' including Al-Asabia and Rujban.[283] Al-Marsad reported on 1 July 2020 that fighters LNA and Central Security Service, who were captured in Gharyan, were executed by GNA militias at Gharyan Hospital.[284]

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) provided the following statistics regarding incidents of battles, explosions/ remote violence, and violence against civilians in Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi for the period between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020:
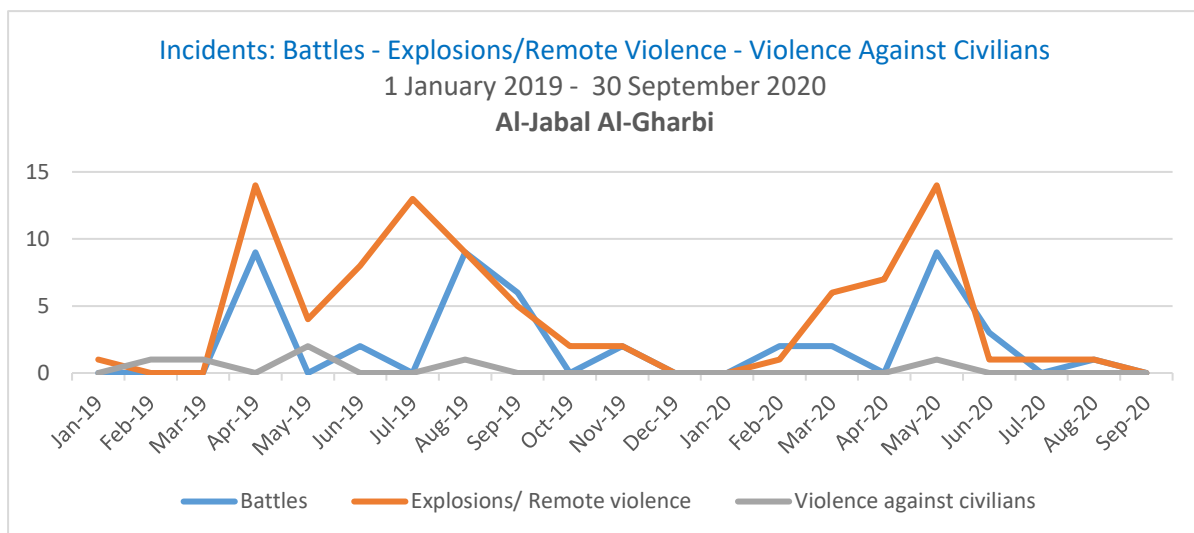

Figure 11: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[285]

The data for Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi showed an increase in the number of incidents related to explosions/remote violence and battles starting in April 2019, i.e. when the LNA started the military operation to capture Tripoli. Significant peaks in such incidents took place in April and July 2019 and in May 2020, and the numbers decreased in June 2020, following the announcement of ceasefire between the two warring parties.

Impact of security incidents on civilians

As regards fatalities in Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi, ACLED data showed that between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020 there were 62 fatalities among civilians.[286] The highest numbers occurred in August 2019 (11 fatalities) and May 2020 (38 fatalities) mainly caused by violence against civilians. The dataset

[281] Aljazeera, النفطي والهلال الجنوب لتحرير وتمهد "الغربي الجبل" تغلق الوفاق ..ليبيا [Libya.. the GNA Closes Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi and Paves the Way to Liberate the South and the Oil Crescent], 13 June 2020, url
[282] UNSMIL, Briefing of Acting SRSG Stephanie Williams to the Security Council on the situation in Libya, 2 September 2020, url, p. 2
[283] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, url, para. 5
[284] Al-Marsad, War Crimes in Gharyan: Forensics Confirm Executions by GNA Militias at Gharyan Hospital, 1 July 2020, url
[285] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya,7 November 2020, url
[286] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url

showed no fatalities registered between September 2019 and March 2020 and from July 2020 onwards.

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees and migrants in Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi:
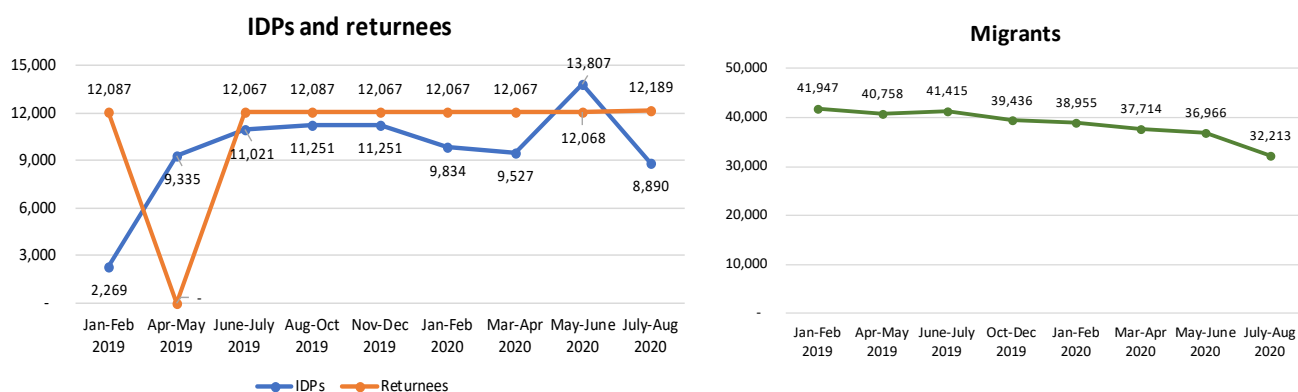

Figure 12: IDPs, returnees and migrants Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[287]

The data showed that the number of IDPs increased from 2 269 in January-February 2019 to 11 251 in August-October 2019 which concurred with LNA's attempts to recapture Gharyan[288]. The number of IDPs mounted to 13 807 in May-June 2020 following the intensification of military activity in the region as showed in Figure 12, and as of August 2020, the number dropped to 8 890. With regard to returnees, IOM data showed that the number of returnees in Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi remained stable at around 12 067 from January-February 2019 till May-June 2020 except for a sharp decrease in April-May 2019 where the number dropped to zero. In July-August 2020, the number of returnees increased to 12 189. Finally, as regards migrants, IOM data showed a steady decrease from 41 947 in January-February 2019 to 32 213 in July-August 2020. IOM observed that at a national level, '[t]he sustained decline in the number of migrants coincide…[d] with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated socio-economic impact and mobility restrictions.'[289]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

Figure 11 showed peaks in violence against civilians in May and August 2019, as well as in May 2020. Various sources reported on incidents of violence against civilians committed by different actors in Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi during the reporting period:

- OHCHR reported that in September 2019, members of the Russian Wagner Group 'allegedly arbitrarily detained five civilians and summarily executed three of them in al-Sbeaa village near Tripoli'.[290]
- A report published by the UN General Assembly on 12 March 2020 highlighted dire detention conditions and violence against detainees. According to the report, a witness detained in a centre in Gharyan reported that a man was shot dead by a guard for spilling his soup.[291]
- AI stated that in October 2019, a local armed group in Zintan abducted six medical workers and held them in captivity for 12 days. The motive was to pressure the GNA to release a Zintan resident

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[287] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[288] Middle East Online, Battle for Libya's Gharyan heats up, 27 August 2019, url
[289] IOM, DTM, LIBYA'S MIGRANT REPORT July - August 2020, 23 September 2020, url, p. 4
[290] OHCHR, Libya: Violations related to mercenary activities must be investigated – UN experts, 17 June 2020, url
[291] UN General Assembly, Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Thirty-sixth session, 12 March 2020, url, para. 60

detained by the SDF. AI stated that abductions often took places for ransom, or to press other actors to release a detainee or a captive. [292]

- In Mizda, 30 migrants were killed on 27 May 2020[293] in a revenge attack[294]. Reportedly, a Libyan human trafficker was killed by migrants held in a warehouse in Mizda. In retaliation, family members of the trafficker killed 26 Bangladeshi and four African migrants and injured eleven others.[295]

3.7 Al-Margeb

Main armed groups

Al-Margeb province is situated to the east of Tripoli and Al-Jfara. The main towns are Al-Khums, the capital of the province and where one of the 12 functioning ports in Libya are located[296], Tarhuna, Garabolli and Qasr Akhyar.[297] Liveuamaps indicated that the totality of Al-Margeb province is under the control of the GNA.[298] Prior to its recapture by GNA-aligned forces on 5 June 2020, Tarhuna was aligned with the LNA and was ruled by al-Kaniyat militia (named after the Kani brothers; also known as the 9th Brigade since its integration in the LAAF).[299] According to the Middle East Eye, the Kanis, the Kaniyat fighters and their families are presently hosted by Haftar in eastern Libya and their number is around 15 000.[300] Furthermore, Al-Arabiya reported on 18 August 2020 that Turkey has been using the port of Al-Khums city to transport weapons and mercenaries to Libya.[301] Sources reported on the arrival of two Turkish warships in the port.[302]

Security incidents

Between April and August 2019, Tarhuna was targeted by GNA air strikes that hit civilian homes and resulted in civilian casualties. Five air strikes were documented by AI that caused nine deaths and five injuries among civilians as well as a bomb that hit a house, injuring two women and damaging the house.[303] After the GNA captured Al-Watiya airbase on 18 May 2020 (see section 2.2 on An-Nuqat Al-Khams),[304] the GNA-aligned forces sent reinforcements to the areas adjacent to Tarhuna and besieged the town[305]. On 5 June 2020, the GNA-aligned forces gained control of Tarhuna, without resistance, 'effectively ending the Libyan National Army offensive on Tripoli, launched in April 2019'. According to the report, LNA forces and its aligned fighters withdrew to Al-Jufra and Qardabiyah to the east.[306]

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[292] AI, Libya 2019, n. d., url

[293] WHO, Health Sector Bulletin, May 2020, url, p. 4; UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, url, para. 57

[294] Garda World, Libya: Suspected revenge attack in Mizda kills 30 May 28, 29 May 2020, url

[295] Libya Herald, Massacre of 30 migrants in Mizda condemned, 30 May 2020, url

[296] Gard, Libya – port situation, 2 October 2020, url

[297] UNOCHA, Libya: Reference map – Mantiqua: Almargeb, 27 April 2017, url

[298] Liveuamap, Libya, 22 October 2020, url

[299] Lacher, W., Who is fighting whom in Tripoli? How the 2019 civil war is transforming Libya's military landscape, SANA, SAS, August 2019, url, pp. 12-13

[300] Middle East Eye, The killing fields of Libya's Tarhuna, 30 September 2020, url

[301] Al-Arabiya, تقرير: تركيا تستخدم ميناء الخمس لنقل السلاح والمرتزقة [Report: Turkey Uses Al-Khoms Port to Transport Weapons and Mercenaries], 18 August 2020, url

[302] Al-Mayadeen, ماذا تفعل تركيا بميناء "الخمس" الليبي؟ [What is Turkey Doing with the Libyan Al-Khoms Port], 18 August 2020, url; Al-Watan News, ليبيا.. تعزيزات عسكرية تركية بميناء الخمس شرق طرابلس [Libya.. Turkish Military Reinforcements in Al-Khoms Port to the East of Tripoli], 13 August 2020, url

[303] AI, Libya's Relentless Militia War Civilians Harmed in the Battle for Tripoli, APRIL-AUGUST 2019, 22 October 2019, url, p. 16

[304] Aljazeera, Libya's GNA recaptures strategic al-Watiya airbase, 18 May 2020, url

[305] Independent Arabia, تصعيد عسكري حول ترهونة الليبية ونداءات دولية للتهدئة [Military Escalation Around Tarhuna and International Calls for De-escalation], 21 May 2020, url

[306] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020 url, para. 4

Impact of security incidents on civilians

In a report published on 25 August 2020, the UN Security Council stated that UNSMIL recorded an 'alarming increase in retaliatory acts in areas previously controlled by or perceived to be supportive of the Libyan National Army' including Tarhuna during the reporting period (5 May – 25 August 2020).[307] Sky News Arabia reported on incidents of looting of houses and shops, as well as 'grave human rights violations' committed by militias and mercenaries aligned with the GNA.[308]

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) provided the following statistics regarding incidents of battles, explosions/ remote violence, and violence against civilians in Al-Margeb for the period between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020:
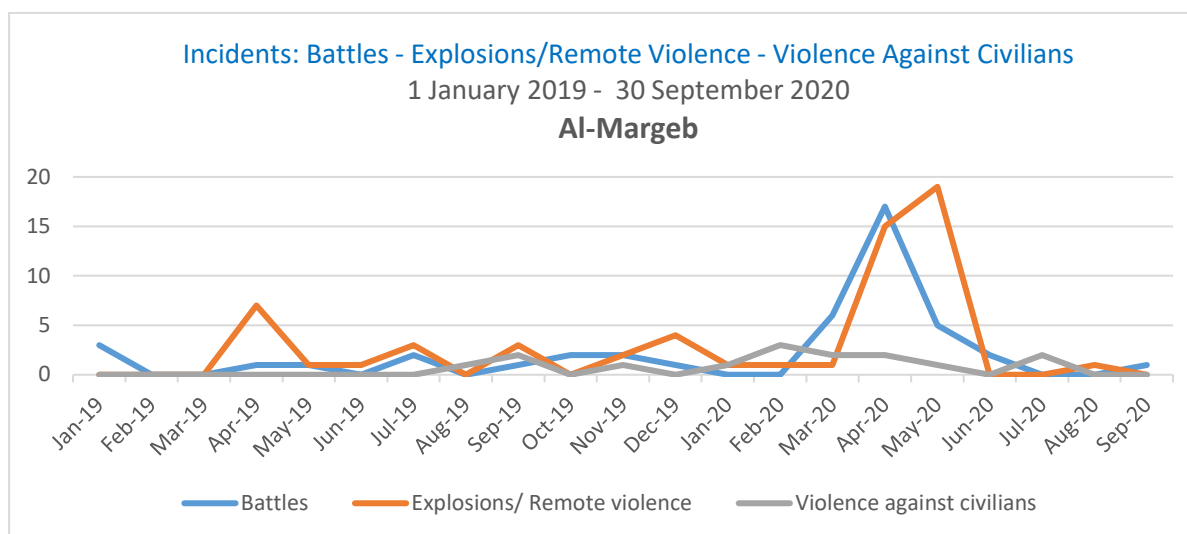

Figure 13: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Al-Margeb between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[309]

The data showed an increase in the number of incidents related to explosions/remote violence and battles starting in April 2019, i.e. when the LNA started the offensive to capture Tripoli. A significant peak in such incidents took place in May 2020 as the GNA launched a counterattack that culminated in seizing Tarhuna in early June 2020. The numbers dropped to almost zero in June 2020, following the announcement of ceasefire between the two warring parties.

Based on ACLED data, between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020 there were 84 fatalities among civilians in Al-Margeb.[310] The highest numbers occurred in August 2019 (14 fatalities), September 2019 (22 fatalities) caused by violence against civilians, and in February 2020 (9 fatalities), April 2020 (9 fatalities) and May 2020 (8 fatalities) caused by explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians. The numbers dropped following the ceasefire in June 2020 and both in June and September 2020, no fatalities were registered by ACLED.

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

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[307] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 5

[308] Sky News Arabia, بالصور.. الميليشيات والمرتزقة يعيثون فسادا ونهبا في ترهونة [In Photos.. Militias and Mercenaries Wreaking Havoc and Looting in Tarhuna], 8 June 2020, url; Middle East Eye, GNA militias run riot in Libya's Tarhuna after LNA retreat, 9 June 2020, url; ANHA, GNA admits in committing human rights violations in Tarhuna, 9 June 2020, url

[309] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url

[310] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url

The IOM DTM for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants in Al-Margeb between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020:
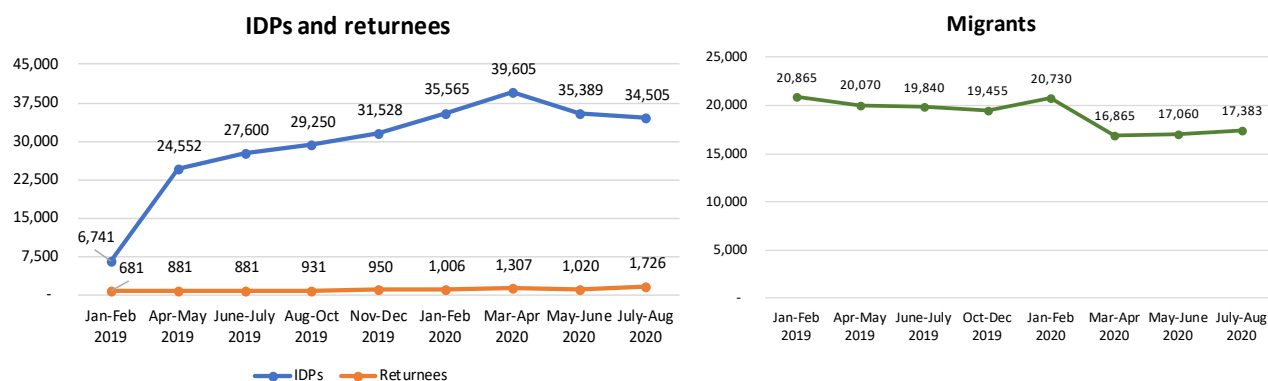

Figure 14: IDPs, returnees and migrants Al-Margeb between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[311]

The data showed that the number of IDPs increased from 6 741 in January-Fenruary 2019 to 39 605 in March-April 2020 which concurred with the sharp increase in battles and explosions/remote violence showed in Figure 5. The number dropped to 35 389 in May-June 2020 and as of August 2020, the number of IDPs was 34 5050. With regard to returnees, IOM data showed an increase in the number of returnees from 1 020 in May-June 2020 to 1 726 in July-August 2020 following the recapture of Tarhuna by the GNA. Finally, as regards migrants, IOM data showed that the number of migrants decreased from 20 865 in January-February 2019 to 19 455 in October-December 2019. The number rose to 20 730 in January-February 2020 and dropped to 16 865 in March-April 2020. As of August 2020, the number of migrants in Al-Margeb was 17 383.

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

Figure 14 above showed peaks in the numbers of incidents of violence against civilians in September and November 2019, as well as in February, March, April and July 2020.

The UN Security Council's report of 15 January 2020 stated that following the killing of leaders from the al-Kaniyat in Tarhuna, the group carried out 'extensive attacks against those who had been suspected of being sympathetic to the Government of National Accord'. The attacks took place between 26 August and 1 September 2019, and resulted in the death of 39 persons and the injury of dozens including civilians.[312] During the LNA offensive to capture Tripoli (April 2019 – June 2020), there were cases of disappearance of persons and families in Tarhuna based on suspicions of allegiance. Moreover, in its report of 15 May 2020, the UN Security Council stated that UNSMIL 'continued to receive reports of gross human rights abuses, including killings and the destruction of private property' by the al-Kaniyat militia.[313]

The Middle East Eye reported on cases of torture, where detainees were beaten and burnt in 'square-metre compartments' used to accommodate one crouched man each. Additionally, the majority of prisoners were held in the former Ministry of Interior's security branch in dire conditions. The source added that the Kani brothers who fled Tarhuna in June 2020 continue to pose a threat to the city's

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[311] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[312] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 15 January 2020, url, para. 28
[313] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 46

population.[314] SAS stated that the Kani brothers 'face arrest warrants for their alleged responsibility for numerous extrajudicial executions in public—a practice that was key to their establishment of control over Tarhuna—as well as the killing of 12 members of a single family in the town in 2017'.[315]

One major development following the withdrawal of the LNA forces from Tarhuna was the discovery of mass graves in the area in addition to numerous bodies in the hospital of Tarhuna.[316] The General Authority for the Search and Identification of Missing Persons reported in July that 226 bodies 'were recovered in Tarhuna and areas south of Tripoli during the period from June 5 to 16 July'.[317] According to War on the Rocks, 'Many of these bodies were bound and showed evidence of torture'. The source added that '[n]ot all of them were captured fighters: Some of them were civilians, including women and children as young as three'.[318] Furthermore, the Middle East Eye stated that the Haruda farm in Tarhuna contained the largest of the eight mass graves discovered until 30 September 2020, and that search teams believed that four additional mass graves could be found.[319] At the time of drafting this query, new mass graves continued to be discovered in Tarhuna.[320]

3.8 Misrata

Main armed groups

Misrata is a city-state in Western Libya whose militias have ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and have received support from Turkey and Qatar.[321] Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamist political organisation seeking to reform the society according to the Islamic laws and values,[322] and with ties to militias.[323] Its political wing in Libya is the Justice and Construction Party (JCP).[324]

Misrata's political and religious landscape comprises as well, according to the Libyan researcher Bashir al-Zawawi quoted by the Middle East Eye (MEE), three Islamic schools that are operated by the Madkhalis (as of December 2018).[325] Madkhalis are known as a Saudi Salafi branch of Islam that 'calls for unquestioning loyalty to governments'.[326] They have been described as 'ultra-conservative' and accused of destroying Sufi religious sites in Libya.[327] International Crisis Group stated that they are ready to 'to embrace tactical cooperation especially with paramilitary forces in both eastern and western Libya' and that their leader, Sheikh Rabee al-Madkhali, enjoys 'considerable political, military

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[314] Middle East Eye, The killing fields of Libya's Tarhuna, 30 September 2020, url

[315] Lacher, W., Who is fighting whom in Tripoli? How the 2019 civil war is transforming Libya's military landscape, SANA, SAS, August 2019, url, p. 15

[316] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 33; Council on Foreign Relations, Who's Who in Libya's War?, 18 June 2020, url

[317] Libya Herald, Five more Tarhuna mass graves discovered, 7 November 2020, url

[318] War on the Rocks, Tarhuna, mass graves, and Libya's internationalized civil war, 30 July 2020, url

[319] Middle East Eye, The killing fields of Libya's Tarhuna, 30 September 2020, url

[320] Al-Monitor, Another mass grave discovered in Libya's Tarhuna, 29 October 2020, url; Aljazeera, Seventeen bodies found in new Libya mass graves, 7 November 2020, url; Middle East Monitor, New mass grave found in Libya's Tarhuna, 15 November 2020, url

[321] CEP, Muslim Brotherhood in Libya, n.d., url; EER Turkey's Attempt to Tighten the Muslim Brotherhood's Grip on Libya, 10 January 2020, url; Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, In: AEI, url, p. 41; Watanabe, L., Islamist Actors: Libya and Tunisia, June 2018, in: CSS, ETH Zurich, url, p. 9

[322] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, In: AEI, url, p. 95

[323] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, In: AEI, url, p. 95; Watanabe, L., Islamist Actors: Libya and Tunisia, June 2018, in: CSS, ETH Zurich, url, pp. 5, 8

[324] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, In: AEI, url, p. 95; Watanabe, L., Islamist Actors: Libya and Tunisia, June 2018, in: CSS, ETH Zurich, url, pp. 5, 8

[325] MEE, Saudi-influenced Salafis playing both sides of Libya's civil war, 11 December 2018, url

[326] Middle East Eye, Saudi-influenced Salafis playing both sides of Libya's civil war, 11 December 2018, url

[327] ICG, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url; Reuters, FEATURE-Sufi cultural sites caught in crossfire of Libya civil war, 16 March 2020, url

and social influence'.[328] In early 2018 he issued a *fatwa* in support of Haftar,[329] although not all Madkhali militias in the country are pro-Haftar (for more details see [Government of National Accord (GNA) (aligned) Forces](#)). Madkhalis see political Islamists from the Muslim Brotherhood as apostates,[330] and they also joined the Misratan militia Al-Bunyan al-Marsous in fight against the ISIS in Sirte.[331]

Political Geography Now (PGN) reported that in May 2020, Misrata was under the control of the GNA and their allies, as well as other unnamed groups.[332] Sources indicate that Misrata has remained aligned with the GNA until the end of the reference period.[333] Militias from Misrata have been known to support the GNA, including in Sirte and Tripoli.[334] According to a Reuters article, '[t]here have long been tensions between armed groups from Tripoli and Misrata.'[335]

In May 2020, Jason Pack, a senior Libya analyst,[336] estimated that some 200 militias were present in Misrata, including moderate and Islamist factions, both aiming to preserve the city-state status and opposing the LNA.[337] Another source suggested instead that around 150 militias in all of Libya were divided mostly between six regions, including in Misrata. [338] According to the US Institute of Peace (USIP), most of the Misratan militias belong under the Misrata Military Council and include more moderate factions, such as Halbous and the Mahjoub Brigades, as well as more extreme factions, such as in Salah Badi's Sumoud Front.[339] The Military Council is headed by senior military officers but most armed groups under it are not part of the national military.[340]

The main armed groups in Misrata include:

- Anti-Haftar forces such as: Misrata's Joint Security Operations Room's 'Special Task Force,' Halbous Brigade, Marsa Brigade,[341] and the Misratan Brigades 301, 302, 166, and 55.[342] 'Larger' brigades include al-Mahjub (Mahjoub) and Hatin brigade.[343]
- The 301st batallion (also called brigade), operating under the Al-Habous (Halbous) brigades, has some 1 500 members, is aligned with the GNA and together with the 66th brigade pledged to protect Tripoli.[344]

[328] ICG, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url, pp. ii, 1
[329] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url, p. 11
[330] Lacher, W. and al-Adrissi, A., Capital of Militias: Tripoli's Armed Groups Capture the Libyan State, June 2018, in: SANA, url, p. 8
[331] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url, p. 11
[332] PGN, Libyan civil war map and timeline May 2020, 29 May 2020, url
[333] Africa Center for Strategic Studies (The), Shifts in the Libyan Civil War, 16 June 2020, url; Al Jazeera, Libya: Mapping areas of military control, 27 July 2020, url; Liveuamap, Libya, n.d., url; Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 20
[334] MEE, Libya: Strict security and disciplined forces boost local support for Haftar's LNA, 23 February 2020, url; Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, pp. 7, 22; Lacher, W., Who Is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? In: SANA, url, p. 8; UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 16
[335] Reuters, Influential Libyan interior minister suspended amid protests, 29 August 2020, url
[336] See the profile of Jason Pack at the Middle East Institute: url
[337] Pack, J., Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, In: ISPI, url, p. 27
[338] Foreign Policy at Brookings, Empowered decentralization: A city-based strategy for rebuilding Libya, 11 February 2019, url, p. 9
[339] USIP, Libya's Next Elections, United States Institute of Peace, August 2018, url, pp. 10-11
[340] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014 Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 53
[341] Pack, J., Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, In: ISPI, url, p. 27
[342] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014 Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 55
[343] Lacher, W., Who Is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? In: SANA Briefing Paper August 2019, url, p. 8
[344] Pack, J., Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, In: ISPI, url, pp. 9, 26

- Al-Bunyan al-Marsous is a 6 000 strong militia affiliated with the GNA. It provides security in Misrata and around it.[345]

Security incidents

On 4 April 2019, the Misrata central military announced the deployment of units to defend both, Tripoli and Sirte.[346] According to the UN Security Council, attacks on water supplies that affected Misrata "could amount to war crimes".[347]

New America and Airwars reported that in 2019 most strikes in Libya took place in Tripoli, followed by Misrata.[348] The LNA-associated attacks on GNA position in Misrata were reported, for example, on 27 July, 11 August, and 20 December 2019.[349]

On 26 January 2020, Haftar launched attack on the GNA forces south of Misrata.[350] Fighting in towns of Abu Grain and Qaryat al-Qaddahiyahs near Misrata continued into February 2020.[351] The UN Security Council reported that 'intense fighting' took place in the period of January-April 2020 in Misrata.[352] On 10 February 2020, three Turkish soldiers were killed and six others wounded during fighting in and around Misrata.[353] According to an August 2020 report by the same source, 'there has been increased mobilization of forces, air strikes by uncrewed aerial vehicles and fighter aircraft, and exchanges of indirect fire along the front lines near Abu Qurayn and Washkah, south of Misratah and west of Sirte' since March 2020.[354] On 15 June 2020, a creation of a naval base in Misrata was discussed between the GNA and Turkey for a possible Turkish use.[355]

During the reference period, several incidents on the Misrata airport (operating throughout the reference period[356]) have been reported. On 5 October 2019, the LNA forces were accused of bombing the Misrata airport, injuring one staff member and causing damage and suspension of flights.[357] Another LNA attacks were reported on 13 September 2019[358], 4 November 2019[359] and on 13 December 2019.[360] Amnesty International reported that Turkey-made drones, in support of the GNA, were based at the Misrata and Mitiga airports and that has caused attacks by the LNA.[361]

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[345] Pack, J., Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, In: ISPI, url, pp. 9, 27
[346] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 65
[347] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 65
[348] New America and Airwars, The Conflicts in Libya from 2011-2020, May 2020, url, p. 5. See pp. 45-99 of the report for a detailed list of the strikes.
[349] Euromed Human Rights Monitor, Escalating hell. Tripoli civilians under indiscriminate attacks, January 2020, url, p. 16; Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 18; UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 18
[350] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url para. 2
[351] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 26
[352] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 24
[353] Ahval, Three Turkish soldiers killed in Libya as Haftar's forces advance on Misrata, 10 February 2020, url
[354] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 34
[355] Al Arabiya, Libya crisis timeline: The battle for Tripoli, Sirte, and oil from November to today, 13 July 2020, url
[356] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, pp. 31-32
[357] Africanews, Haftar forces accused of carrying air raid on Libya's Misrata airport, 5 October 2019, url; Libya Observer, Foreign drones of Haftar's forces strike Misrata Airport causing casualties, damage, 6 October 2019, url; Libya Observer, Interior Ministry condemns attack on Misurata Airport, 6 October 2019, url
[358] Garda World, Libya: Airstrikes reported near Misrata Airport (MRA) September 13, 13 September 2019, url
[359] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, pp. 31-32; Xinhuanet, Libya's eastern-based army attacks airports in Tripoli, Misurata, 4 November 2019, url
[360] UNOCHA, Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, January 2020, url p. 14
[361] AI, Libya's Relentless Militia War, Civilians harmed in the battle for Tripoli, April-August 2019, 2019, url, p. 25

Misrata port has been used in the smuggling of drugs, including cannabis, ecstasy and amphetamines.[362]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) provides the following statistics regarding incidents of battles, Explosions/ Remote violence, and violence against civilians in Misrata between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020[363]:
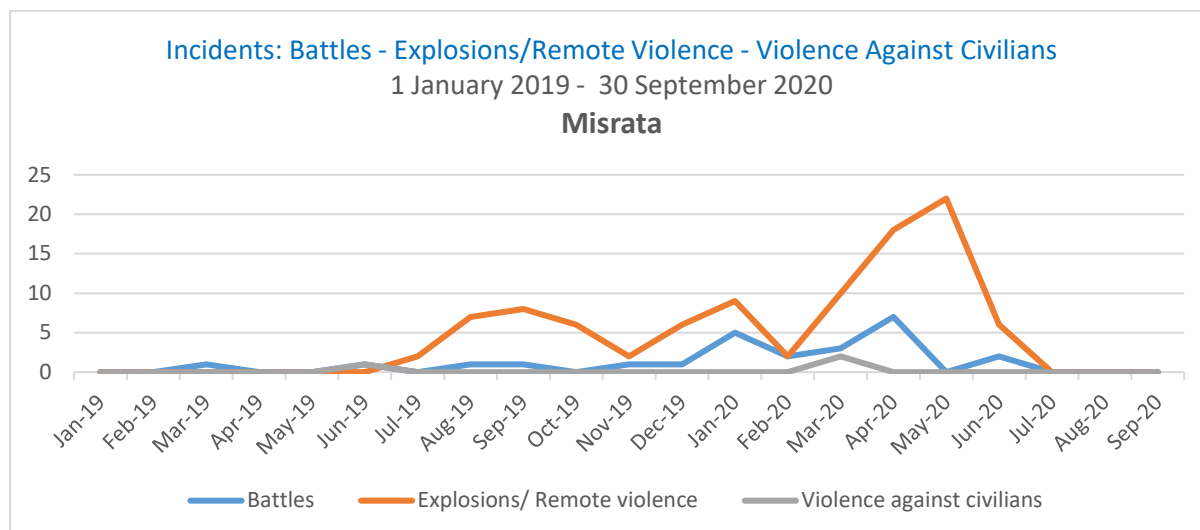

Figure 15: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Misrata between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[364]

The HRS did not report on any cases of casualties of armed clashes in the period of January - June 2020 in Misrata.[365]

Instances of incidents in the reference period in Misrata include:

- On 11 August 2019, a civilian was killed after the LNA carried out attacks on the GNA positions in Misrata.[366]
- On 14 November 2019, social media published photos of three dead civilians killed on a road between Tripoli and Misrata after being shot dead by unspecified gunmen.[367]
- On 20 December 2019, six civilians were wounded in an LNA attack on Misrata.[368]

The August 2019 UN Security Council report stated that in Misrata, 'the Mine Action Service completed the second phase of a project to clear and destroy hundreds of tons of explosive remnants of war.'[369] In 2020, the Mine Action Service continued to clear explosive remnants of war, with over 280 cleared from Misrata and southern Tripoli by August. On 6 May 2020, an ammunition storage exploded in Misrata, which prompted further emergency response.[370]

Protests in Misrata

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[362] USIP, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Use in Libya: Highs and Lows, May 2020, url, pp. 8, 11

[363] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 1 January 2019 -30 September 2020, 4 November 2020, url

[364] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url

[365] HRS, Casualties of Armed Clashes in Libya (January – June 2020), 19 July 2020, url

[366] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 18

[367] The Libya Observer, Haftar's forces murder three people in cold blood, continue to target Tripoli residential areas, 14 November 2019, url

[368] Euromed Human Rights Monitor, Escalating hell. Tripoli civilians under indiscriminate attacks, January 2020, url, p. 16

[369] UN Security Council, UNSMIL, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 65

[370] UN Security Council, UNSMIL, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 66

An August 2019 UN Security Council report stated that '[a]nti-war demonstrations have been organized regularly [in Libya] since April', including in Misrata.[371] On 23-24 August 2020, protests against the GNA over corruption and living conditions took place in Misrata[372], with dozens of people participating.[373] Following the protests, the GNA interior minister, originally from Misrata, was suspended.[374] An analysis by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) suggested that it could have been a political move to secure support of important politicians and businessmen from Misrata.[375] On 29 August 2020, demonstrators gathered in Misrata to show support to the suspended minister.[376] Sources reported that the protests were organized by a newly established movement called Harak Al-Shabab 23/8.[377] Alternatively, it was called Himt Al-Shabab.[378] Further information about the movement could not be found among the sources consulted by EASO within time constraints.

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

The IOM DTM for Libya provides the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants:
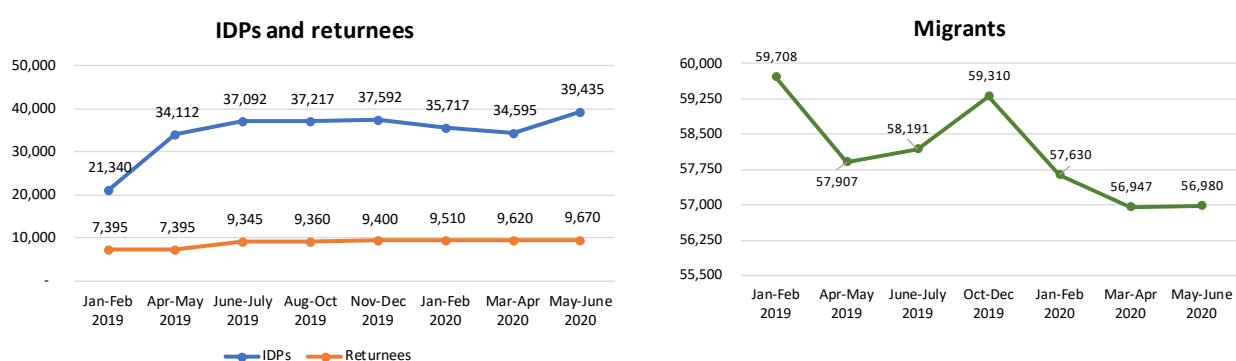

Figure 16: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Misrata between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[379]

In December 2019, UNOCHA reported that Misrata had the second highest number of the IDPs in Libya after Tripoli.[380] On the one hand the majority of IDPs in Misrata arrived from conflict areas in and around Tripoli since April 2019, and Sirte and Benghazi in previous years.[381] On the other hand, as reported by IOM in 2017, 29% of those displaced overall in Libya between 2011 and 2014 were from Misrata, and were Tawergha IDPs.[382] More recent sources confirmed that there is an ongoing tribal

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[371] UN Security Council, UNSMIL, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 7
[372] Al Arabiya, Watch: Anti-GNA protests erupt in Libya's Tripoli, Misrata over living conditions, 23 August 2020, url; AI, Libya: Heavy weaponry used to disperse peaceful protesters demanding economic rights, 26 August 2020, url; HRW, Libya: Armed Groups Violently Quell Protests, 10 September 2020, url; UNOCHA, OCHA Libya l Humanitarian Bulletin (August 2020), 31 August 2020, url
[373] Al Jazeera, Libya: 2nd day of Misrata protests over corruption, poor services, 24 August 2020, url; VOA News, Libyans Hit Streets Despite Cease-Fire, 24 August 2020, url
[374] Reuters, Influential Libyan interior minister suspended amid protests, 29 August 2020, url
[375] KAS, Inside Libya, Monthly Reports on inner-Libyan Developments, September 2020, url, p. 8
[376] Gardaworld, Libya: Demonstrators gather in Misrata on August 29, 29 August 2020, url; KAS, Inside Libya, Monthly Reports on inner-Libyan Developments, September 2020, url, p. 9
[377] Atalayar, Libya, the long and winding road to peace, 11 September 2020, url; Qantara.de, Violence and corruption: young people say enough's enough, 24 September 2020, url; HRW, Libya: Armed Groups Violently Quell Protests, 10 September 2020, url
[378] Gardaworld, Libya: Demonstrators gather in Misrata on August 29, 29 August 2020, url
[379] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[380] UNOCHA, Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, January 2020, url, p. 28
[381] IOM, Libya — IDP & Returnee Report, Round 29 (Jan-Feb 2020), 5 April 2020, url, accessed 1 December 2020, p. 7; IOM, Libya - IDP & Returnee Report, Round 14, September - October 2017, url, p. 8
[382] IOM, Libya - IDP & Returnee Report, Round 14, September - October 2017, url, p. 5

conflict between Misratan militias and IDPs from Tawergha (seen as pro-Gaddafi and displaced after the 2011 revolution) whose situation remained 'extremely difficult'.[383] June 2020 report of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Libya stated that no member of the Misratan militias had been prosecuted for crimes against the Tawergha.[384] In January 2020, the same source reported that almost half of the total number of people in need in Libya was in four *mantikas* (provinces) Tripoli, Ejdabia, Misrata and Benghazi.[385]

Some detention centers in Misrata are reportedly run by Madkhali principles.[386]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

The HRS reported on 22 victims of abductions and assassinations in Misrata in the period of January - June 2020[387] and none in 2019.[388]

The June 2020 report by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Libya noted restrictions on freedom of movement in Misrata, especially for persons coming from the opposition-held territories, in the period April 2019-April 2020.[389] On 4 March 2020, schools in Misrata reopened after a month-long closure due to the security issues.[390] According to Human Rights Watch, women and children (mostly foreign) liaised with ISIS suspects have been held in a prison in Misrata since 2016. [391] The UNFPA has been supporting activities aimed at the elimination of gender based violence in Misrata, including limitations to the freedom of movement and social pressure.[392]

3.9   Sirte and the oil crescent

Main armed groups

The UN Security Council final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya indicated that armed groups present in the Sirte area are in some cases aligned with Haftar and in others with the GNA. The identified group aligned with Haftar is the Soboul al Salam Battalion, while those aligned with the GNA include Halbous Battalion, Hateen Battalion, Dhaman Battalion, and Al Laa'sar Brigade. In the oil crescent area (the high intensity oil coast stretching from Sidra to Benghazi), groups are affiliated with Haftar, and include the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) in Ras Lanuf, and the 111th Infantry Battalion.[393] For information on the SLA/MM group, see EASO COI query Q24-2020.[394]

Another development worth noting was the increase of the Salafi Madkhalis' influence on Libya's 'security and institutional landscape'. According to Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), the ideological agenda of the Salafi Madkhalis is opposed to other Islamists groups and religious currents, including against Islamist extremist groups, and 'fatwas issued by Sheikhs in Saudi Arabia – notably one from Sheikh Rabee Al-Madkhali himself in 2016 – have explicitly encouraged and urged them to align with Haftar', who is seen more as a 'secularist'. The Salafi Madkhalis have 'established armed factions that have garnered sizeable influence within both the GNA-aligned and

[383] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, pp. 51, 52, 62
[384] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 54
[385] UNOCHA, Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, January 2020, url, p. 6
[386] USIP, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Use in Libya: Highs and Lows, May 2020, url, p. 21
[387] HRS, Libya: Crimes of Abductions and Assassinations, (January – June 2020), 21 July 2020, url
[388] HRS, Libya: Crimes of Abductions and Assassinations in 2019, 16 January 2020, url
[389] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 17
[390] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 28
[391] HRW, World Report 2020 - Libya, 14 January 2020, url
[392] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 56
[393] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 December 2019, url, Figure 6.2
[394] EASO, Armed groups, Security situation, Internal displacement situation, 13 October 2020, url, p. 8

LAAF-aligned coalitions', in eastern Libya as well as in other areas such as Sirte, where the 604th Brigade 'gained prominence' (for further details see chapters on [Derna](#), [Misrata](#), and [Government of National Accord (GNA) aligned Forces](#)).[395] International Crisis Group indicated that the 604th Brigade was an 'important player' in Sirte, showing itself as a 'policing force' and opening new mosques and religious schools.[396] The Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) (also called Oil Facilities Guard) group is affiliated with the LNA, and also operated in the oil crescent area[397], including in Sidra.[398] The PFG is a 'Gadaffi-era security structure tasked with securing oil fields and installations', who became a 'broad umbrella structure accommodating local armed groups [..] designed to be "provisional" substitutes for the army and the police'.[399]

Finally, unidentified mercenaries and Wagner group were reported present in Es-Sider, Ras Lanuf, and Zueitina.[400]

Security incidents

Since March 2020, the mobilisation of forces, clashes and air strikes with drones and fighter jets increased in the west of Sirte. On 5 June 2020, for example, the GNA launched a military operation in Sirte, suffering significant loses and setting up instead a front line 25 km west of Sirte.[401] On 6 June 2020, the GNA indicated that under 'Operation Volcano of Rage', it had launched five airstrikes on Sirte against pro-Haftar forces in order to 'liberate the city'.[402] On 8 June 2020, LNA's warplanes conducted airstrikes against GNA positions, killing five GNA fighters in Sirte and seven members of a family in Jarif, near Sirte.[403] As GNA forces 'advanced toward Sirte', on 20 June 2020 Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, who supports the LNA, stated that any attack on Sirte would cross a 'red line', and 'could could provoke "direct" Egyptian intervention'. On 20 July, the Egyptian parliament granted el-Sissi 'the authority to deploy Egyptian armed forces' in Libya.[404]

In August 2020, the UN reported that 'military mobilization and build-up continued' in the Sirte area, together with an 'uninterrupted delivery of increasingly sophisticated and lethal weapons to both parties in violation of the United Nations arms embargo'.[405] Moreover, as of August 2020 'GNA forces were supported by Syrian mercenaries, while LNA forces received support from Sudanese mercenaries and Wagner Group personnel',[406] although more recent sources seem to suggest the 'withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries from the area', even though the situation in Sirte remained 'tense'.[407]

Sirte is a particularly important area for both sides of the conflict. As highlighted by the UN, 'Sirte has strategic significance because of its proximity to Libya's oil crescent (where most of Libya's oil export

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[395] DCAF, Exploring Armed Groups in Libya: Perspectives on Security Sector Reform in a Hybrid Environment, 2020, url, pp. 86-88

[396] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url

[397] AA, Libye / Suspension des exportations de pétrole, un cas de force majeure, 18 January 2020, url; NOC, NOC: Deterioration of Security Situation in Gulf of Sirte, 18 July 2020, url

[398] PE, Libyan production languishes under 'illegal blockade', 4 August 2020, url

[399] DCAF, Exploring Armed Groups in Libya: Perspectives on Security Sector Reform in a Hybrid Environment, 2020, url, pp. 17-18

[400] PE, Libyan production languishes under 'illegal blockade', 4 August 2020, url

[401] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 34

[402] AA, Airstrikes hit Haftar militias in Sirte: Libyan army, 6 June 2020, url

[403] The Libya Observer, Over 10 persons killed in foreign warplanes' strikes on Sirte, 8 June 2020, url

[404] AP, Egyptian president says Libyan city Sirte a 'red line', 20 June 2020, url; Al Arabiya, Libya conflict: Sirte-Jufra 'red line' set to be next major flashpoint, 22 June 2020, url; UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 22

[405] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 5

[406] AFRICOM, New evidence of Russian aircraft active in Libyan airspace, 18 June 2020, url; SOHR, Number of Syrian Mercenaries in Libya Rises to 17,420, 7 September 2020, url

[407] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 35; UNSMIL, Remarks by Acting Special Representative Of The Un Secretary-General Stephanie Williams To The Security Council, 19 November 2020, url; UN OCHA, Libya: Situation report, 14 October 2020, url, p. 2

terminals are located)', all territory under LNA control. In January 2020, 'militias and mercenaries allied with Haftar blockaded Libya's major oil facilities', and sources indicated that the PFG has ordered the interruption of oil exports in several oil facilities located in the oil crescent region, including the ports of Ras Lanuf and As Sidr (in Sirte), and Marsa Brega and Az Zuwaytinah (in Ajdābīyā).[408] In July 2020, the Libyan National Oil Cooperation (NOC) resumed oil exports, but only for a few days, when the blockade was renewed.[409] In September 2020, a 'new deal to resume oil production and exports was struck' by the LNA and GNA; on 27 September 2020, media reported the announcement of Sirte Oil Company 'that it has resumed production at its oil refinery in Brega.'[410]

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) provided the following statistics regarding incidents of battles, explosions/ remote violence, and violence against civilians in Sirte for the period between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020:
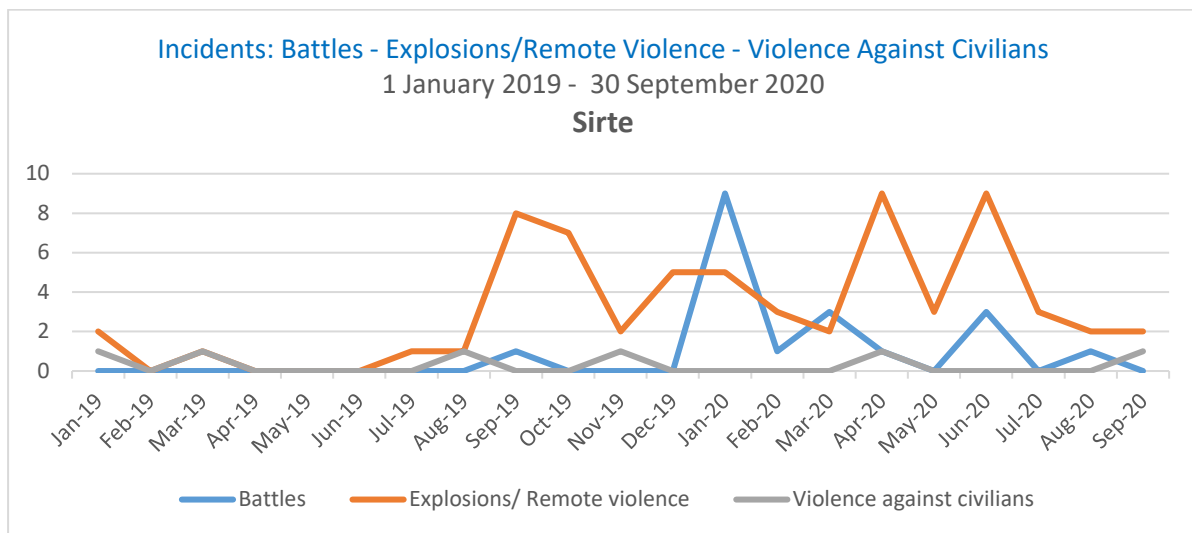

Figure 17: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Sirte between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data.[411]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

For 2019 ACLED reported 4 civilian casualties, while between 1 January-30 September 2020, it recorded 11 civilian casualties.[412] Airwars, on the other hand, reported 7 separate attacks during June 2020 only, which resulted in at least 24 civilian deaths in the area of Sirte.[413]

Some cases of security incidents affecting civilians included:

- The UN Security Council, quoting the Libyan Mine Action Centre, indicated that between May and June 2020, 57 people have been killed and 111 injured in Sirte and southern Tripoli due to mine contamination, including 7 children and 67 clearance operators. In Sirte, seven people were killed, including children. According to the UN Security Council, 'the scale of contamination in the Sirte

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[408] AA, Libye / Suspension des exportations de pétrole, un cas de force majeure, 18 January 2020, url; SCR, Libya September 2020 Monthly Forecast, 31 August 2020, url; The Libya Observer, PGF denounces NOC head statements accusing it of treason, 7 July 2020, url;
[409] SCR, Libya September 2020 Monthly Forecast, 31 August 2020, url
[410] Argus Media, Libya set for crude exports as fields restart, 21 September 2020, url; Libya Herald, Sirte Oil Refinery resumes production on back of Maetig-Hafter agreement to resume Libya's oil production-exports, 27 September 2020, url
[411] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url
[412] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url
[413] Airwars, All Belligerents in Libya, n.d., url

area cannot be quantified' as surveys cannot be conducted safely.[414]

- In January 2020, LNA-affiliated groups in Sirte set fire to the offices of the Information and Culture Authority[415] and two radio stations.[416] No additional information was provided by the sources.

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

Without providing further information, a report on Libya by the UN Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General indicated that their mission had received allegations of 'unlawful arrests and detention, abuse of power and targeting of civilians' in Sirte.[417] Cases of violence against civilians, as reported by sources, include:

- On 6 February 2020, UNSMIL reported that a Sufi shrine was destroyed in Sirte and that there are reports of Sufis being arbitrarily arrested in the city.[418] Additional information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of this query.

- On 26 January 2020, the Libya Observer reported that, according to Libyan Crimes Watch (LCW), 20 civilians have been kidnapped by pro-Haftar militias since the beginning of January 2020. Targets included the mayor of Sirte and those who participated in operations against ISIS. According to LCW, citizens have reported kidnappings, arrests without warrant and arbitrary detentions without charges or the conduct of proper judicial processes.[419] Additional information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of this query.

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

In Sirte district, the number of displaced people grew steadily across the reference period, as did the number of migrants who came looking for work opportunities or were in transit through the district.

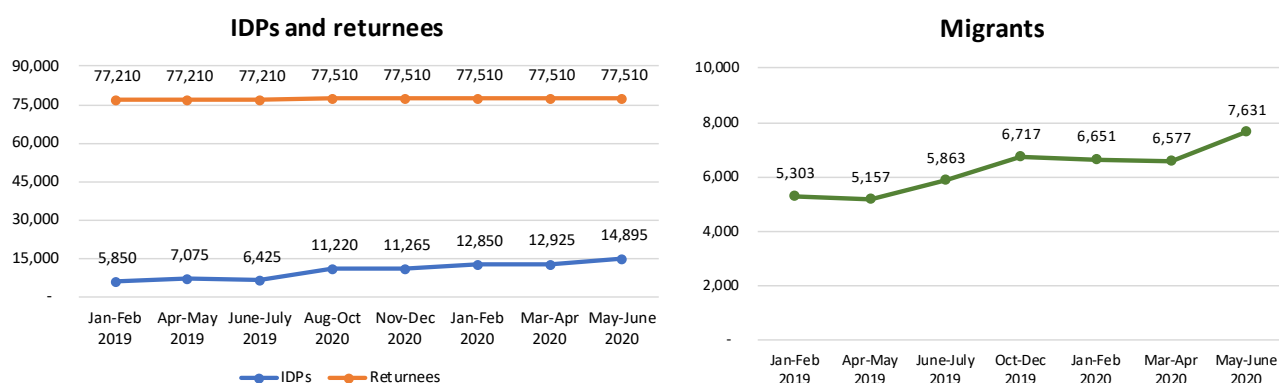The IOM DTM for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants:

Figure 18: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Sirte between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[420]

Some displacement events that took place in Sirte district include:

[414] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, paras. 78, 79
[415] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 50
[416] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 50; CIHRS, Libya: Human Rights Briefing (January – May 2020), 10 June 2020, url
[417] UNSMIL, Briefing of Acting SRSG Stephanie Williams to the Security Council on the situation in Libya, 2 September 2020, url, p. 2
[418] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 46
[419] The Libya Observer, 20 civilians kidnapped in Sirte since the fall of the city in Haftar's hands, 26 January 2020, url
[420] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url

- Between January-April 2019, at least 800 migrants reportedly arrived in Sirte city from locations such as Ejdabia, Aljufra, Misrata, and Sebha. According to IOM, some were 'looking for job opportunities, whereas others were planning to continue their journey'.[421]
- Between January-September 2019, at least 520 migrants arrived in Hrawa from locations including Alkufra, Ejdabia Aljufra, Sebha and Benghazi; some were reportedly looking for job opportunities, while others were in transit to other destinations.[422]
- In September 2019, 93 migrants reportedly arrived to Khaleed Assidra looking for employment.[423] During the same month, approximately 15 individuals arrived to Hrawa from Murzuq due to the unstable security situation. [424]
- In January 2020, the movement of IDPs from Abu Qurayn towards the Sirte region, as well as within localities of Sirte municipality, were recorded. As of 31 January 2020, some 1 425 new IDPs were recorded by IOM in the Sirte region.[425] By 16 March 2020, the number had increased to around 2 725 IDPs, according to the same source.[426]
- On 5 June 2020, due to the 'intensification of conflict in South Tripoli' between 3-4 June 2020, some 1 500 new IDPs were recorded in Sirte district.[427] The latest update of this displacement event showed that as of 18 June 2020, some 1 900 IDPs had arrived to Sirte district.[428]

3.10 Al-Wahat (Ajdabiya)

Main armed groups

The UN Security Council final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya indicated that groups present in the Ajdabiya area are aligned with Haftar and include: the 152 Mechanised Brigade, 192 Infantry Battalion, 101 Light Infantry Brigade, 111 Infantry Battalion, 121 Infantry Battalion, 155 Infantry Battalion, 166 Infantry Battalion, and 303 Infantry Battalion.[429] Other groups include the Wadi al-Rabi Front[430] and mercenaries in Zueitina.[431]

Security incidents

Based on ACLED data, no major security incidents took place in Al-Wahat district during the reference period. For 2019, ACLED recorded no security incidents, while for the period 1 January-30 September 2020, it recorded two violent incidents - one incident of violence against civilians (in Ajdabiya) and one battle (in Brega). [432]

In July 2020, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) indicated that members of the PFG and Al-Saiqa, both linked to the LNA, had engaged in clashes in the Marsa Brega region. According to the same source, the confrontation, which took place nearby oil tankers and involved medium-sized calibre firearms and rocket-propelled grenades, jeopardised the security of nearby oil facilities and exposed NOC

[421] IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, January 2019, url, p.1; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, February 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, April 2019, url, p. 2
[422] IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, January 2019, url, p.1; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, February 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, March 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, April 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, September 2019, url, p. 2
[423] IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, September 2019, url, p. 2
[424] IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, September 2019, url, p. 2
[425] IOM DTM Libya, Abu Qurayn, Sirt, Misrata Flash update, 31 Jan 2020, url
[426] IOM DTM Libya, Abu Qurayn, Sirt Flash Update, 16 March 2020, url
[427] IOM DTM Libya, Qasr Ben Gashir, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna, Ejdabia Flash Update, 05 June 2020, url
[428] IOM DTM Libya, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna, Sirt, Ejdabia, Benghazi Flash Update 4, 18 June 2020, url
[429] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), 9 December 2019, url, Figure 6.2
[430] SAS, Who is fighting whom in Tripoli, August 2019, url, p. 13
[431] PE, Libyan production languishes under 'illegal blockade', 4 August 2020, url
[432] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url

workers and residents in the crossfire.[433] The Saiqa Special Forces unit, led by Mahmoud al-Werfalli, is a mix of 'local young people, former Gaddafi-era commanders and a significant Salafist ideological element', that has 'assumed a formal security role' while at the same time retaining a 'degree of autonomy from the LAAF general command'. A source describes the fact that, for the Saiqa Special Forces, joining the LAAF was a 'vehicle for the pursuit of local goals.'[434]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

ACLED recorded no civilian casualties during 2019, while for the period 1 January-30 September 2020, 3 civilian casualties were reported in one incident. [435]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

Amnesty International reported that between April and May 2020, at least 11 persons from the Magharba tribe in Ajdabiya were abducted by armed men from the pro-LNA Internal Security Agency-Ajdabiya, and taken to the Gernada and Al-Kuwafiya prisons where they were reportedly 'tortured, subjected to inhumane conditions and denied contact with the outside world'.[436] The 11 persons were reportedly captured due to their perceived connections with the former leader of the PFG and GNA supporter Ibrahim Jadran. Sources recall that, while Jadran had been influential within the Magharba tribe, 'other parts of the tribe including its head, Sheikh Saleh Latioush, [..] believed the tribes' interests were better served by supporting the LNA'. According to sources, it was this division that allowed Haftar to persuade the 'sheikhs and elders to disown Jadran and facilitate the LNA takeover of the ports'. [437]

Without providing further information, LCW reported the abduction on 27 October 2020 of a journalist in Ajdabiya by the Internal Security Agency and taken to an unknown location.[438]

On 23 April 2020, Xinhua reported that two doctors, a nurse and an administrative assistant of a hospital in Sirte were kidnaped by an unknown armed group, without providing additional information.[439]

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

During the reference period, Ajdabiya saw a steady increase in the number of IDPs arriving into the district, with a sharp increase recorded in June 2020 due to the arrival of several thousand people that had been displaced from South Tripoli.

The IOM DTM for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants[440]:

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[433] NOC, NOC: Deterioration of Security Situation in Gulf of Sirte, 18 July 2020, url
[434] Eaton, T. et al., The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, 17 March 2020, url, pp. 23-24, 33
[435] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url
[436] AI, Libya: Abducted politician's fate remains unknown a year on, amid ongoing disappearances, 17 July 2020, url
[437] Eaton, T. et al, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, 17 March 2020, url, p. 23; Alison Pargeter, Haftar, Tribal Power, and the Battle tor Libya, 15 May 2020, url
[438] LCW, Report: Human rights violations in Libya during October, n.d., url
[439] Xinhua, Armed group kidnaps medical workers in Libya: health authorities, 23 April 2020, url
[440] IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
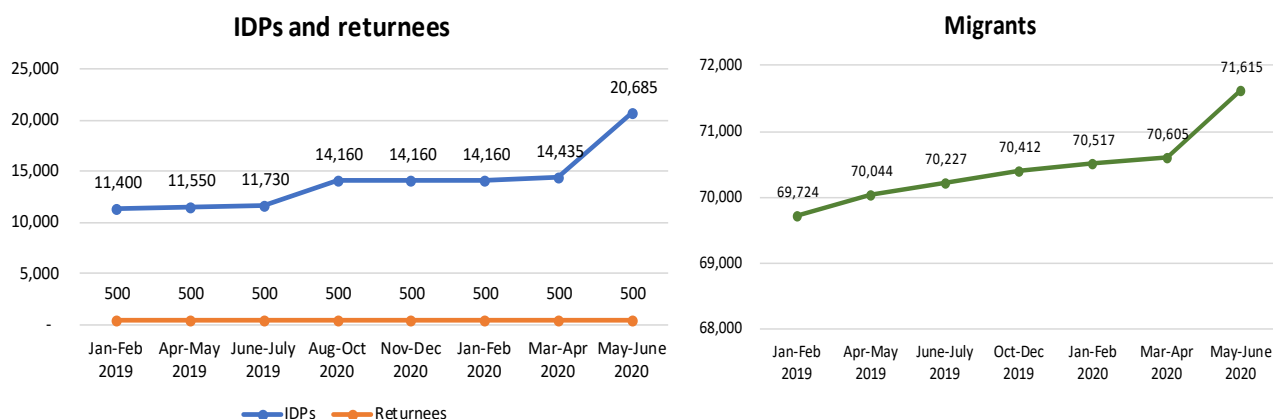
IDPs and returnees

Migrants

Figure 19: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Al-Wahat between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[441]

Some of the relevant displacement events include:

- In May 2019, some 83 migrants were reported to have arrive in Ajdabiya city, some were searching for jobs while others were in transit.[442]
- In March 2020, due to the escalation of conflict around Abu Qurayn, some 900 IDPs were recorded in Ajdabiya district, including 525 in Ajdabiya city and 150 in Marada.[443]
- On 5 June 2020, due to 'intensification of conflict in South Tripoll' betwen 3-4 June 2020, some 1 425 new IDPs were recorded in Ajdabiya city, and 375 in Albrayga.[444] The latest update of related displacement showed that as of 18 June 2020, some 6 550 IDPs had arrived in Ejdabia district.[445]

3.11 Benghazi

Main armed groups

The latest report of the Panel of Experts on Libya indicates that groups present in the Benghazi area are aligned with Haftar. The groups include the 106 Brigade Legion, 107 Infantry Battalion Legion, 21 Special Forces Battalion (Zawiyah), 276 Infantry Battalion, 298 Tank Battalion, Ain Mara Martyrs Brigade Company, Awliya al Dam Bu Hdima, the 123 Infantry Battalion[446], and the Sa'iqa Special Forces [also spelled out Saiqa Special Forces].[447]

The 106th Battalion is the 'largest single group within the LNA in terms of manpower, equipment, and territorial control', with a force of over 5 000 fighters. It is supported by Salafi groups and eastern tribes. It is unofficially led by Haftar's son, Khaled Haftar, and possess advanced weaponry, including UAE and Jordanian armed vehicles and Russian missiles.[448]

Another group based in Benghazi is the Madkhali-Salafist influenced Tariq Ibn Ziyad Brigade, led by

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[441] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[442] IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, May 2019, url, p. 2
[443] IOM DTM Libya, Abu Qurayn, Sirt, Misrata Flash update 3, 16 March 2020, url
[444] IOM DTM Libya, Qasr Ben Gashir, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna, Ejdabia Flash Update, 05 June 2020, url
[445] IOM DTM Libya, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna, Sirt, Ejdabia, Benghazi Flash Update 4, 18 June 2020, url
[446] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 December 2019, url, Figure 6.2
[447] UN Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 December 2019, url, Figure 6.2; SAS, Who is fighting whom in Tripoli, August 2019, url, p. 13
[448] Harchaoui, J. and Lazib, M., Proxy War Dynamics in Libya, 2019, url, p. 7

Omar Mraje.[449] The area of influence of Madkhali-Salafis is concentrated in Benghazi and Tripoli, although they have expanded to other cities such as Sirte, Al-Kufrah, and Sabratha.[450]

The Awaqir [also spelled out as Awagir] is a large tribe based in the Benghazi area and has been a major force for the LNA.[451] Certain factions within the Awaqir have been dissatisfied with Haftar for the lack of benefits received in exchange of their support,[452] which explains that the participation of groups in the Tripoli offensive are mostly from outside Benghazi.[453] According to Chatham House, the Awaqir have seized areas of Benghazi's economy, including the sectors of private businesses and real estate, as 'compensation' for their support to the LNA.[454] However, eastern tribes, including the Awaqir, Baraassa and Al-Obeidat, continue to back Haftar as the LNA is considered a means that meet their interests[455], even when the LNA has managed to secure that support through coercion and patronage.[456] According to Chatham House, members of the Awaqir tribe and the Sa'iqa Special Forces have a degree of autonomy from the LNA.[457]

Security incidents

The security situation in Benghazi has seen a relative improvement. For instance, while for 2019 ACLED recorded 30 security incidents, for the period 1 january-30 September 2020 only 5 such incidents were recorded by the same source.[458] A June 2020 report by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Libya, stated that 'no large-scale fighting occurred in the province of Cyrenaica' due to the control exerted by the LNA.[459] The UN Security Council similarly indicated that the situation in eastern Libya remained 'relatively calm, despite reports of criminality and incidents related to explosive remnants of war'.[460] About 9 455 people have benefited from the removal of more than 500 unexploded devices in Benghazi.[461]

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) provided the following statistics regarding incidents of battles, explosions/ remote violence, and violence against civilians in Benghazi for the period between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020:

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[449] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url; SAS, Who is fighting whom in Tripoli, August 2019, url, p. 13; SAS, Who is fighting whom in Tripoli, August 2019, url, p. 13
[450] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url
[451] Harchaoui, J. and Lazib, M., Proxy War Dynamics in Libya, 2019, url, p. 7; Pargeter, A., Haftar, Tribal Power, and the Battle for Libya, 15 May 2020, url
[452] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 23; MEI, Libya's Hifter and the false narrative of authoritarian stability, 3 September 2019, url
[453] MEI, Libya's Hifter and the false narrative of authoritarian stability, 3 September 2019, url
[454] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 24
[455] Pargeter, A., Haftar, Tribal Power, and the Battle for Libya, 15 May 2020, url; Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 24
[456] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 24
[457] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014: Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 24
[458] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url
[459] Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 16
[460] UN Security Council, UNSMIL: Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 36
[461] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 58
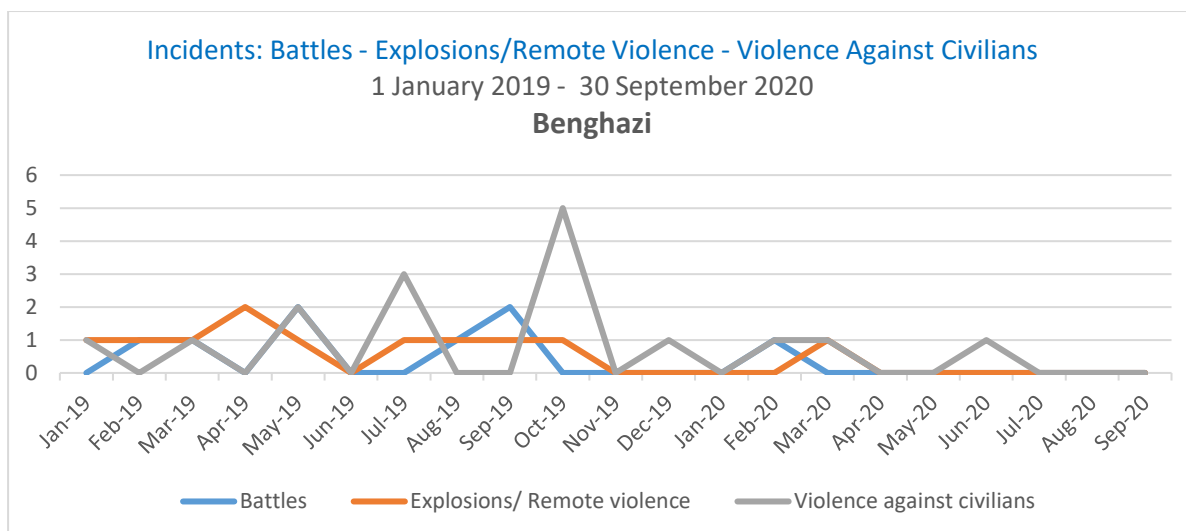
Figure 20: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Benghazi between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[462]

In 2019, ACLED recorded 30 violent incidents of which 13 were incidents of violence against civilians, 10 were explosions/remote violence, and 7 were battles. Between 1 January-30 September 2020, ACLED recorded 5 violent incidents, of which 3 were incidents of violence against civilians, 1 was a battle, and 1 explosion/remote violence. [463]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

In 2019 there were 16 civilian casualties recorded by ACLED, while the same source did not record any civilian casualties during the period 1 January-30 September 2020. [464] Some of the incident that affected civilians during the reference period include:

- On 19 September 2019, one civilian was killed and 12 were injured by artillery shelling, [465]
- On 2 June 2020, security forces discovered a 'vehicle-borne improvised device' in Benghazi.[466]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs report on Libya, there is a 'culture of fear' in the province of Cyrenaica due to the presence of 'numerous militias, gangs and armed groups', most of which are under the LNA, that have been responsible for abductions, torture, disappearances and killings of people critical of Haftar, the LNA or the provincial government, or of those with ties to the opposition.[467] Sources reported that Haftar's Chief-of-staff, Abdul Raziq al-Nadhuri, threatened the public and doctors[468] if they criticise the LNA's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that those who dissent should be considered 'traitors'.[469] On 22 May 2020, UNSMIL indicated in its Twitter account that military courts in eastern Libya hand out death sentences secretly without written or

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[462] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url

[463] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url

[464] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url

[465] Airwars, All Belligerents in Libya, n.d., url

[466] UN, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 36

[467] Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 29

[468] Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 30; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Libya and Coronavirus, url

[469] Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 30

reason judgements and that defendants are not able to challenge charges or have evidence against them examined.[470] The whereabouts of people who have been forcibly disappeared, including by the LNA and affiliated groups, remain unknown.[471]

Cases of violence against civilians, as reported by sources included:

- On 2 April 2020, an ophthalmologist based in Benghazi was reportedly forcibly disappeared after criticising the response of authorities to the coronavirus pandemic. [472] On 22 May 2020, UNSMIL reported that an engineer who was abducted on 11 March 2020 by an armed group, had been reportedly transferred to the Internal Security Unit in Benghazi and subsequently tortured.[473] In September 2020, an organiser of the anti-LNA protests that took place during that month was been reported missing. [474]
- In July 2019, Seham Serghewa, a member of the House of Representatives and a women's rights activist[475], was abducted from her home in Benghazi after she called for an end to the LNA offensive on Tripoli. The abduction was reportedly carried out by the Awliya al-Dam armed brigade, a group affiliated with the LNA.[476] According to UNSMIL, the forced disappearance of Serghewa is one among several cases of impunity regarding violence against women in Libya and an attempt at silencing women activists who speak out or engage in public affairs.[477] On 8 June 2020, the Supreme Judicial Council – the body responsible for overseeing judicial affairs in Libya - announced the establishment of two dedicated courts to address cases of violence against women.[478] As of July 2020, the whereabouts of Serghewa remain unknown.[479]

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

In the district of Benghazi, a steady influx of migrants was recorded throughout 2019, while in 2020, security incidents in the Western region of the country saw new IDPs arriving in the district.

The IOM DTM for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants:

[470] UN, UNSMIL, [Twitter], posted on: 22 May 2020, url
[471] UN, UNSMIL expresses concern about increased enforced disappearances in Libya, 18 March 2020, url
[472] The Libya Observer, Doctor goes missing in Benghazi after criticizing coronavirus response, 2 April 2020, url.
[473] UN, UNSMIL expresses concern about increased enforced disappearances in Libya, 18 March 2020, url
[474] BBC, Khalifa Haftar's rival Libya government resigns after Benghazi protests, 14 September 2020, url; AA, Libya: Demonstrators protest worsening in Benghazi, 12 September 2020, url; AA, Libya: Demonstrators protest worsening in Benghazi, 12 September 2020, url; Libya Herald, Pro democracy, anti-corruption Benghazi demonstrations disrupted by LNA spoilers, one organizer reported missing, 22 September 2020, url; Swissinfo.ch, Swiss call for probe into violent crackdown on Libya protests, 5 October 2020, url
[475] CNN, She's one of the most prominent female politicians in her country. A few days ago she was abducted from her house, 20 July 2019, url
[476] AI, Libya: Abducted politician's fate remains unknown a year on, amid ongoing disappearances, 17 July 2020, url
[477] UNSMIL, One year since the enforced disappearance of Siham Sergewa, 17 July 2020, url
[478] UN, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 25 August 2020, url, para. 72; ICJ, Challenges for the Libyan Judiciary: Ensuring Independence, Accountability and Gender Equality, July 2016, url, p. 23
[479] UNSMIL, One year since the enforced disappearance of Siham Sergewa, 17 July 2020, url; AI, Libya: Abducted politician's fate remains unknown a year on, amid ongoing disappearances, 17 July 2020, url
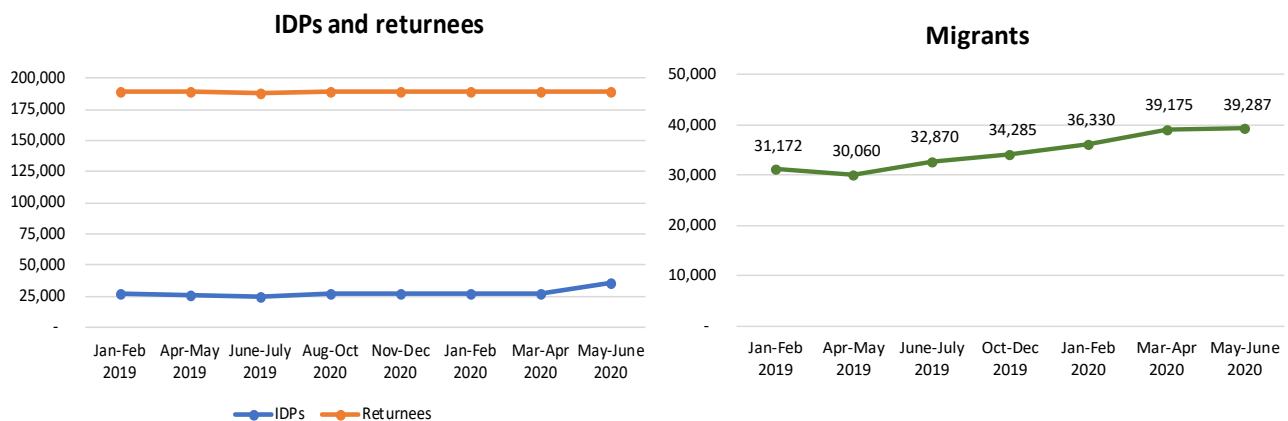
IDPs and returnees

Migrants

Figure 21: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Benghazi between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[480]

Some displacement related events include:

- Between January-October 2019, IOM recorded the arrival of some 3 995 migrants in Benghazi, most of them 'looking for work opportunities mostly in the construction sector'.[481]
- In March 2020, due to the escalation of conflict around Abu Qurayn, some 250 IDPs were recorded in Benghazi.[482]
- On 5 June 2020, due to the 'intensification of conflict in South Tripoll' between 3-4 June 2020, new IDPs were recorded in Benghazi district; the latest update of related displacement showing that as of 18 June 2020, some 7 900 IDPs had arrived in Benghazi district.[483]

3.12 Al-Marj

Main armed groups

According to the BBC, Al-Marj province lies in the Gen Haftar's LNA 'controlled' area.[484] Al-Marj is a stronghold of of Khalifa Haftar and its LNA.[485] ECFR add on to that, indicating that 'Haftar oversees his forces from his headquarters in Marj.'[486] In addition, the International Crisis Group indicated that 'in the 2000s, Gaddafi's son Saadi began engaging with the Madkhali current […] at that time Madkhali-Salafism […] also won adherents in […] Marj […] in the east […] Madkhali elements in the LNA and its affiliated security branches have acted as self-appointed "morality police"'.[487]

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[480] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[481] IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, January 2019, url, p.1; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, February 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, March 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, April 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, May 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, September 2019, url, p. 2; IOM DTM Libya, Event Tracker Update, October 2019, url, p. 2
[482] IOM DTM Libya, Abu Qurayn, Sirt, Misrata Flash update 3, 16 March 2020, url
[483] IOM DTM Libya, Qasr Ben Gashir, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna, Ejdabia Flash Update, 05 June 2020, url; IOM DTM Libya, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna, Sirt, Ejdabia, Benghazi Flash Update 4, 18 June 2020, url
[484] BBC News, Khalifa Haftar's rival Libya government resigns after Benghazi protests, 14 September 2020, url; European University Institute, the City in the Middle: Fragile Stability and Future Opportunities in Libya's Sirte, December 2019, url, p. 4
[485] DW, Libya's eastern government resigns amid protests, 13 September 2020, url
[486] ECFR, A quick guide to Libya's main players, n.d., url
[487] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url

Libya's al-Khadim air base, located in the east of the country, 'has been widely reported to be under the control of the UAE since 2016 in support to LNA […] it is presumed that this airbase is used by the LNA as a logistics hub for personnel and their equipment.'[488] In January 2020, in Tripoli, 26 cadets were killed by a drone, allegedly 'operat[ed] by the […] UAE;' the drone's origin was tracked back to al-Khadim' airbase.[489] According to Reuters reports 'Emirati assistance […] has significantly boosted air power for forces loyal to […] commander Khalifa Haftar […] air power has helped […] [the] Libyan National Army (LNA) gain the upper hand since last year [2016] in Libya's conflict between rival groups vying for power.'[490] The UN reports that 'Haftar's forces had received aircraft as well as military vehicles from the United Arab Emirates, and had built up an air base at al-Khadim.'[491]

Security incidents

According to ACLED data, most of the security incidents (five out of seven) that occurred in Al-Marj during the reference period were related to demonstrations and protests. Protests included students demonstrating against Turkish interference in Libya, LNA supporters condemning the GNA, Darsa clan members demanding the release of their fellow clan members, judges demonstrating after a lawyer was abducted and demonstrators outlining the worsening living conditions during which protestors attacked a police station. With regards to the last event, the police responded with live bullets, leaving one person killed.[492]

On 17 August 2019, ACLED reported clashes 'between the 166th Brigade of the LNA and the members of the Criminal Investigations Department in the town of Tocra following the arrest of drunken militiamen, the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) also downed a surveillance drone operated by the militia.'[493]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) described security related events and provided an overview of events for Al-Marj district within the reference period between 1 January 2019 - 30 September 2020. Within the reference period, ACLED recorded seven incidents in Al-Marj, out of these five were related to protests, while one incident was related to clashes and one incident was related to the abduction of a lawyer.[494] Airwars, gathering information on civilian casualties, did not report on civilian casualties in Al-Marj within the reference period of this query.[495] However, ACLED reported one fatality occurred during protests against poor living conditions on 12 September 2020, when the police fired live bullets.[496] No additional fatalities related to security incidents were reported during the reference period by the sources consulted.

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[488] Geospatial World, Libyan Civil War: A reality check through VHR satellite imagery, 26 July 2020, url
[489] BBC, UAE implicated in lethal drone strike in Libya, 28 August 2020, url
[490] Reuters, Covert Emirati support gave East Libyan air power key boost: U.N. report, 9 June 2017, url
[491] Reuters, Covert Emirati support gave East Libyan air power key boost: U.N. report, 9 June 2017, url
[492] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[493] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[494] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[495] Airwars, Conflict, All Belligerents in Libya, n.d., url
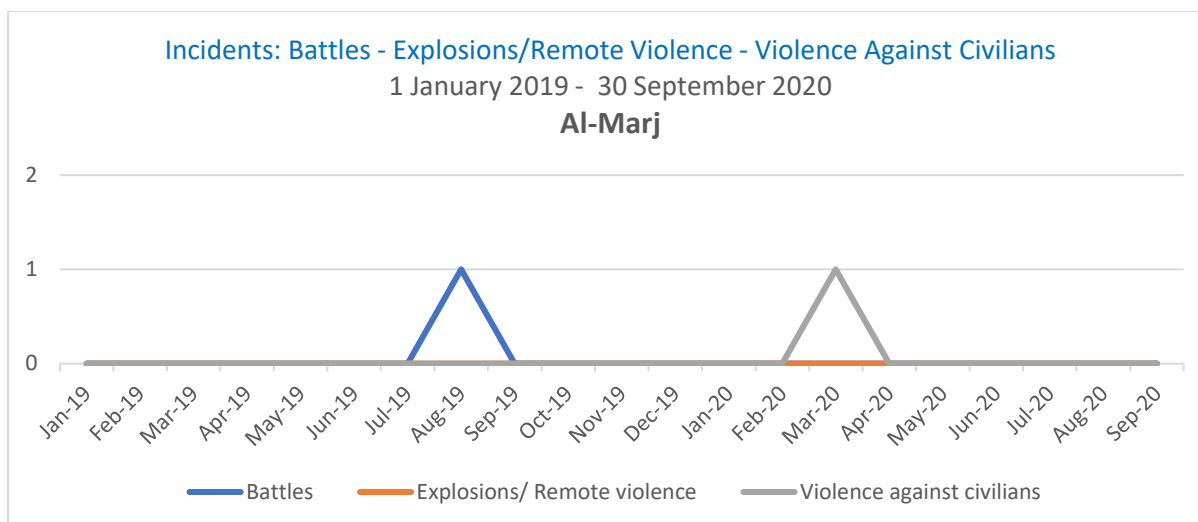[496] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url

Figure 22: Evolution of security incidents in Al-Marj between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[497]

Protests. The province of Al-Marj had several protests reported during the reference period; most demonstrations reported were related to worsening living conditions. They started on 18 July 2020[498] and followed by protests on 12[499] and 13 September 2020. While on 18 July 2020, protestors also demanded the release of two fellow Darsa clan members, while on 12 September 2020, protests were also against government corruption. During a demonstration on 13 September 2020, the protest turned into clashes between demonstrators and security personnel.[500]

UNSMIL noted that in protests on 12 and 13 September 2020 '…one civilian was killed, three were injured, and a number of other demonstrators were arrested […] following the reported excessive use of force by eastern authorities against peaceful demonstrators in the city of al-Marj.'[501] The Libya Observer, in an article published on 14 September 2020, reporting about the security apparatus' response to these demonstrations, stated that 'the Libyan Crimes Watch has accused the Security Directorate of Al-Marj town in eastern Libya […] of using live ammunition to disperse demonstrators […] leading to a number of injuries'.[502] Similarly, UNSMIL requested investigations and the release of 'arbitrarily' arrested persons.[503]

Other protests were related to the Turkish interference in Libya, such as on 16 December 2019, when Al-Marj's students demonstrated against it.[504]

Remnants of War. On 5 May 2020 the UN Security Council stated that 'in the eastern region, there were continued reports of […] incidents related to explosive remnants of war.[505] No additional information on remnants of war in the area of Al-Marj could be found among the sources consulted by EASO within time constraints and for the reference period of this query.

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[497] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url
[498] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[499] LNA refers to the Benghazi-based Libya National Army, which is led by a former general, namely, Khalifa Haftar. Council on Foreign Relations, Who's Who in Libya's War?, 18 June 2020, url
[500] DW, Libya's eastern government resigns amid protests, 13 September 2020, url
[501] UNSMIL, Statement on the Protests in Al-Marj City on 12 September 2020, 13 September 2020, url
[502] The Libya Observer, Human rights group: Security Directorate of Al-Marj fired live bullets at demonstrators, 14 September 2020, url
[503] UNSMIL, Statement on the Protests in Al-Marj City on 12 September 2020, 13 September 2020, url
[504] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[505] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya: Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, url, para. 30

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

While no returnees were registered during the entire reference period, and the migrant population remained relatively stable, from July 2020 onwards the numbers of IDPs increased significantly to 1 265 IDPs by August 2020.[506]

The IOM DTM for Libya provided the following statistics regarding IDPs and migrants. Records on returnees were not included in the DTM for the period January 2019 till August 2020:[507]
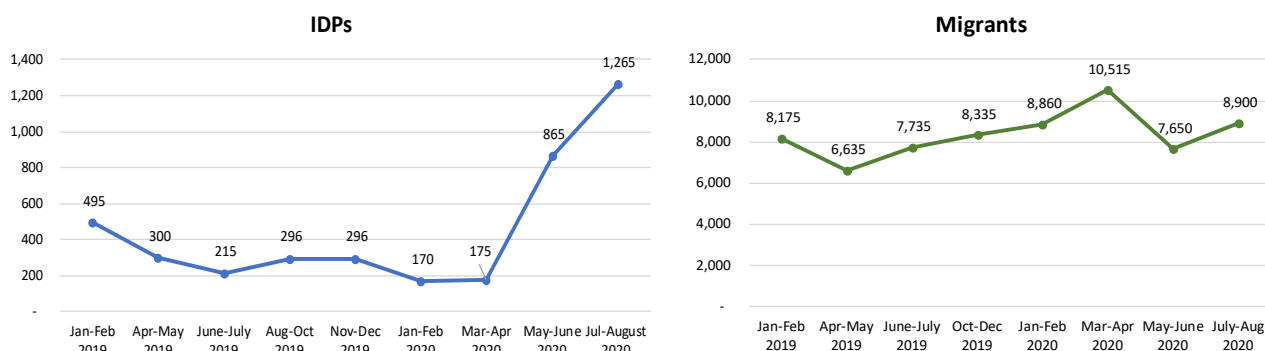

Figure 23: IDPs and Migrants in Al-Marj between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[508]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

The June 2020 report by the Dutch Ministry pf Foreign Affairs mentioned that 'judges, public prosecutors and other judicial staff faced significant risks, particularly in the LNA controlled eastern region of the country [...] they ran the risk of being arrested and detained if they expressed negative sentiments regarding the LNA or Khalifa Haftar.' On 7 March 2020 the 'legal consultant Salah Beltamer was arrested by LNA units' in Al-Marj town as he presumably criticized 'the detention of judiciary staff by the LNA.'[509] On 8 March 2020, according to ACLED, judges demonstrated in Al Marj denouncing 'the abduction of one of their colleagues in Garabulli.'[510]

According to ACLED, on 25 April 2020, a protest staged by LNA supporters took place with slogans against the 'GNA and its presidency council.'[511]

UNFPA operates in Libya with a strong focus on western Libya. In their January-September 2019 update, the UN agency did not explicitly mention Al-Marj.[512] Similarly, a report on Libya by the UN Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General from 2 September 2020 did not indicate allegations of human rights violations explicitly in Al-Marj.[513]

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[506] UNHCR, Libya Response in 2018-19, 25 January 2019, url; EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[507] IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[508] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[509] Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 49
[510] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[511] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[512] UNFPA, Libya Gender-Based violence AOR, September 2019, url
[513] UN, UNSMIL, Briefing of Acting SRSG Stephanie Williams to the Security Council on the situation in Libya, 2 September 2020, url

3.13 Al-Jabal al-Akhdar

Main armed groups

According to the BBC, Al-Jabal al-Akhdar lies within the territory controlled by Gen Haftar's LNA.[514]

Security incidents

The province of Al-Jabal al-Akhdar is strategically relevant since Al-Baydā, the capital of Al-Jabal al-Akhdar province, hosts the 'Interim Government', which is allied with Hiftar'.[515] Until recently, the interim government was headed by Abdullah al-Thinni (also spelled 'al-Thani') [516].[517] The Libya Observer reported on 14 September 2020 on his resignation indicating that 'The HoR [House of Representatives] confirmed the resignation [which] will be presented to the parliament for consideration, but did not specify a date.'[518] Al Jazeera reported that 'HoR lawmakers would review the resignation of al-Thani's government […] in their next meeting. No date has been set for the session.'[519]

According to ACLED data, most of the security incidents (14 out of 16) that occurred in Al-Jabal al-Akhdar district during the reference period were related to demonstrations. People demonstrated, among others, against worsening living conditions, delayed payment of salaries, the arbitrary arrest of an elderly lady allegedly abducted by LNA-affiliated militia, the arrest of the HoR chief, the abduction of a judge, and the Turkey's involvement in the conflict while expressing LNA-support (4 July 2019, 13 November 2019, 11 February 2020). To this regard, other demonstrations denounced the 'agreement demarcating the maritime border between the Tripoli-based GNA and Turkey and statements by Turkish president Erdogan on intervening militarily in Libya'.[520]

Impact of security incidents on civilians

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) describes security related events and provides an overview of incidents for Al-Jabal al-Akhdar within the reference period between 1 January 2019 - 30 September 2020. In summary, ACLED reported on 16 security incidents for Al-Jabal al-Akhdar, out of which 14 were related to protests, one incident was related to the abduction of a civilian and one incident was related to a vehicle carrying mines being seized by security forces.[521] ACLED indicates that one incident in 2019 included violence against civilians; no civilian fatalities were reported.[522] Similarly, Airwars did not provide information for incidents causing civilian fatalities in Al-Jabal al-Akhdar within the reference period of this query.[523]

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[514] BBC News, Khalifa Haftar's rival Libya government resigns after Benghazi protests, 14 September 2020, url
[515] Human Rights Watch, Libya: Threat of Tripoli Fighting Raises Atrocity Concerns, 6 April 2019, url
[516] Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 7
[517] Al Jazeera, Libya's eastern-based government resigns amid protests, 14 September 2020, url
[518] The Libya Observer, Al-Thani's government resigns as public anger mounts in the eastern region, 14 September 2020, url
[519] Al Jazeera, Libya's eastern-based government resigns amid protests, Libya's eastern-based government resigns amid protests, 14 September 2020, url
[520] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[521] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url
[522] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
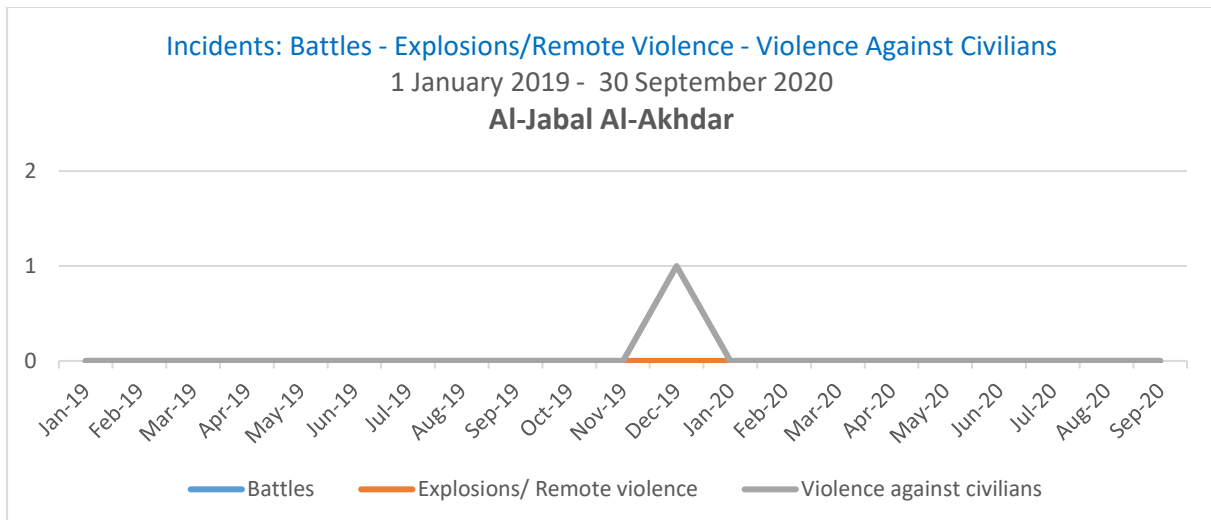[523] Airwars, Conflict, All Belligerents in Libya, n.d., url

Figure 24: Evolution of security incidents in Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[524]

Protests. As mentioned above, numerous protests were reported during the reference period in Al-Jabal al-Akhdar province, out of which many were related to worsening living and work conditions. In mid-September (on 10, 11, 12 and 13 September 2020), protestors demonstrated several days in a row, mainly in the city of al-Baydā. In the aftermath of these events the interim government resigned on 13 September 2020.[525]

During one of these protests, security forces 'fired in the air to disperse the demonstrators'.[526] On 5 October 2020, Swissinfo.ch reported that pro-Haftar militias injured five people during the protests taking place in Benghazi, Baydā and Marj.[527]

Remnants of War. In a report from 5 May 2020, the UNSC reports that 'in the eastern region, there were continued reports of criminal activity and incidents related to explosive remnants of war.[528] No additional information on remnants of war in the area of Al-Marj could be found among the sources consulted by EASO within time constraints and for the reference period of this query.

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

Compared to all of Libya, the numbers for Al-Jabal al-Akhdar province are on the lower end with regards to IDPs. Between April 2019 and May 2019, the IOM DTM indicated that 12 067 returnees were recorded.[529] In July 2020 leading up to August 2020 the numbers of IDPs increased significantly to 3 535.[530] While at the end of 2019 and at the beginning of 2020 demonstrations were mainly against delayed or unpaid salaries, it was not until mid-September 2020, when demonstrations started to take place days in a row against worsening living conditions. In January 2019, IOM reported that the number of IDPs reported in Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar reduced to 310 households; that is by -33% compared to the previous reporting cycle.[531]

The IOM DTM for Libya provides the following statistics regarding IDPs and migrants:

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[524] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url
[525] DW, Libya's eastern government resigns amid protests, 13 September 2020, url
[526] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[527] Swissinfo.ch, Swiss call for probe into violent crackdown on Libya protests, 5 October 2020, url
[528] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 2020, , para. 30
[528] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa (7 November 2020), url
[529] IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[530] IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[531] IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
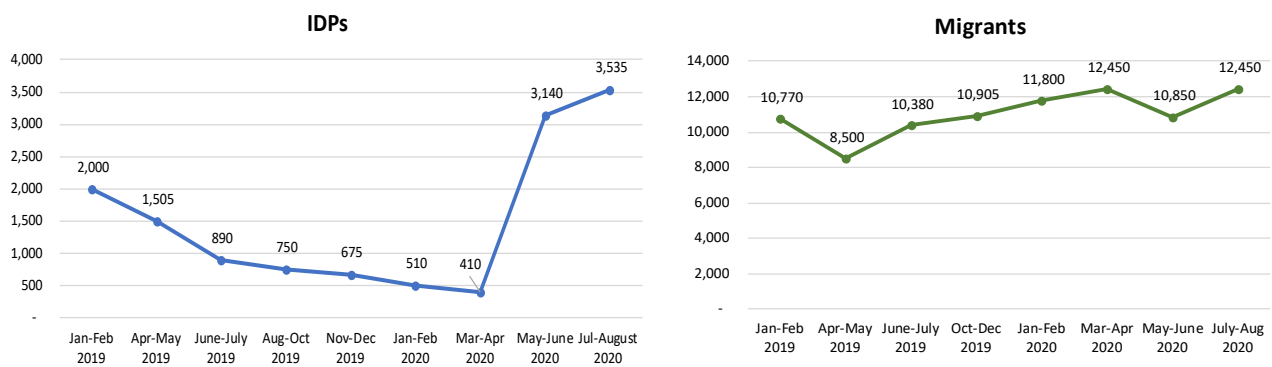
IDPs

Migrants

Figure 25: IDPs and migrants in Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[532]

Other Acts/ Forms of Violence Against Civilians

UNSMIL, quoted by AA, reported that '[w]e have been informed of [4] death sentences issued […] by al-Baydā Court, in potential violation of Libya's intl. human rights law obligations. 'Defendants haven't been permitted to present their case or have evidence against them examined & that following trials, sentences have been handed down secretly w/o written, reasoned judgements provided to defendants or lawyers'.'[533]

A number of events have taken place reportedly as a consequence of political opposition or voiced concern over Haftar and LNA coalition's conduct:
- In al-Baydā, on 9 March 2020, judges demonstrated 'to denounce the abduction of one of their colleagues.'[534]
- In al-Baydā a civilian was abducted by LNA's security services on 19 December 2019.[535]
- On 10 July 2020, Shahhat residents protested 'to demand the release of a seventy-year old women allegedly abducted by an LNA-affiliated militia in October 2019.'[536]

A report by the UN Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General from 2 September 2020 does not indicate allegations of human rights violations with regards to the province of Al-Jabal al-Akhdar.[537]

3.14 Derna

Main armed groups

Derna is a coastal city in northeastern Libya. Emily Estelle, research manager for the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute, described it in 2017 as 'a historic hub for Salafi-jihadi activity' in Libya.[538] The PGN stated that in May 2020, Derna was under the control of the LNA and their allies,[539] and sources suggest that this has remained the case until the end of the reference

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[532] IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[533] AA, Libya: Haftar use Daesh/ISIS tactic while withdrawing, 23 May 2020, url
[534] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[535] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[536] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[537] UN, UNSMIL, Briefing of Acting SRSG Stephanie Williams to the Security Council on the situation in Libya, 2 September 2020, url
[538] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, In: AEI, url, p. 12
[539] PGN, Libyan civil war map and timeline May 2020, 29 May 2020, url

period.[540]

Derna was controlled by ISIS between September 2014 and April 2016, which was followed by offensives by the LNA and competing armed groups.[541] LNAs long term stated goal was to 'battle ISIS and other radical Islamists.'[542] In May 2018, the LNA attacked the city[543], announcing victory in June 2018 despite reports on continuing clashes and seizure of civilian houses for military use.[544] Some sources suggest that LNA won control over the city in February 2019.[545] Airwars wrote that in 2019 'the city was still in recovery from ISIS occupation three years prior.'[546]

Main armed groups in Derna, including those no-longer active at the end of the reference period, are:

- ISIS in Libya: ISIS had some 3 000-4 000 members across Libya in 2018,[547] mostly in central and southern parts of the country.[548] According to the CIA World Factbook, ISIS was still active in Libya in 2019, having less than 100 fighters.[549] No information on the activities of the ISIS in the reference period in Derna could be found amongst consulted sources.
- Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade (ASMB): the most powerful militia in Derna before the emergence of ISIS in 2014.[550] It refused to submit itself to ISIS.[551] ASMB joined another Islamist groups and created Derna Mujahedeen Shura Council (DMSC) in December 2014, eventually changing the name to Derna Protection Forces (DPF) in 2018.[552] A 2018 paper stated that the ASMB 'maintains considerable influence in Derna, engaging in smuggling activities'.[553] Two sources suggest that it is still active in 2020.[554]
- DMSC[555]: an actor consisting of several Islamist armed groups[556] that was opposing both, ISIS and the LNA.[557] An article by the Libya Review states that six DMSC fighters were killed in 21 April 2020 near Tripoli, suggesting that the groups may be still active.[558] Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by EASO within the time constraints.
- DPF: an Islamist coalition that was against ISIS and 'fighting against Libyan government forces.'[559] RULAC described it as 'an anti-LNA moderate group'.[560] According to one source, remaining 46 DPF fighters surrendered to the LNA on 12 February 2019.[561] Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by EASO within the time constraints.

[540] Africa Center for Strategic Studies (The), Shifts in the Libyan Civil War, 16 June 2020, url; Al Jazeera, Libya: Mapping areas of military control, 27 July 2020, url; Liveuamap, Libya, n.d., url

[541] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, In: AEI, url, pp. 72, 81; USIP, Libya's Next Elections, United States Institute of Peace, August 2018, url, p. 12

[542] New America and Airwars, The Conflicts in Libya from 2011-2020, May 2020, url, p. 21

[543] Pack, J., Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, In: ISPI, url, p. 12

[544] Africa Times, Libya: Concern over humanitarian crisis as Derna fight continues, 12 January 2019, url

[545] USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 - Libya, 11 March 2020, url, p. 11; Pack, J., Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, In: ISPI, url, p. 12

[546] New America and Airwars, The Conflicts in Libya from 2011-2020, May 2020, url, p. 21

[547] RULAC, Non-international armed conflicts in Libya, 22 January 2020, url

[548] CIA World Factbook, Libya, 4 November 2020, url; UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 7 January 2019, url, para. 18

[549] CIA World Factbook, Libya, 4 November 2020, url

[550] Wilson Centre, Libya's Islamists: Who They Are - And What They Want, 8 August 2017, url

[551] CEP, Libya: Extremism & Counter-Extremism, n.d., url

[552] CEP, Libya: Extremism & Counter-Extremism, n.d., url

[553] Watanabe, L., Islamist Actors: Libya and Tunisia, June 2018, in: CSS, ETH Zurich, url, p. 13

[554] Libya Review, 10 GNA Fighters Killed South of Tripoli, 21 April 2020, url; TRAC, Abu Slim Martyrs Brigade, n.d., url

[555] Also known as the Shura Council of Mujahedeen, or SCMD. See: Pack, J., Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Gaddafi Succession, 31 May 2019, In: ISPI, url, p. 12

[556] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, url, pp. 96; RULAC, Non-international armed conflicts in Libya, 22 January 2020, url

[557] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, url, pp. 96

[558] Libya Review, 10 GNA Fighters Killed South of Tripoli, 21 April 2020, url

[559] CEP, Libya: Extremism & Counter-Extremism, n.d., url

[560] BS, BTI 2020 Country Report Libya, 29 April 2020, url, p. 31

[561] Jihadology, Eyo on jihadis in Libya Weekly Update: February 12, 13 February 2019, url

- Ansar Al-Sharia: a Salafi group accused of links to Al-Qaeda that was part of the DMSC[562]; it officially dissolved after fights in Benghazi in May 2017.[563] However, its presence was reported in November 2017[564] and according to the CIA World Factbook, Ansar Al-Sharia is still active in Derna, without claiming any attack in 2019.[565]
- Tariq Ibn Ziyad brigade: operating under the LNA, described as a Madhkali-dominated, fought in the battle of Derna until February 2019.[566]
- Majlis Shura Shabab al-Islam (MSSI): a Derna based Islamist group that in June 2014 pledged its allegiance to the ISIS.[567] More recent information about this group could not be found among the sources consulted by EASO within time constraints.

Security incidents

The conflict in Derna has been described as 'multi-dimensional', with a military confrontation between the LNA and the DMSC, a tribal conflict between the tribes supporting the LNA and the local tribes from Derna, and a religious conflict between the Madhkali Salafists supporting the LNA and the DMSC, accused of connection to Al-Qaeda.[568] According to the Libyan researcher Bashir al-Zawawi, the Madkhalis have increased their control of mosques across Libya and opened some in late 2018 in Derna, imposing their interpretation of Islam.[569] Reports suggested that the Madkhalis have been able to take over the local mosques[570] and in late 2018, they took control over the local *awqaf* office (for more details about Madkhalis see [Misrata](), [Sirte and oil crescent](), and [Government of National Accord (GNA) aligned forces]()).[571]

Describing the period of January-August 2019, the UN Security Council found the situation in eastern Libya to be 'relatively calm, although there were reports of kidnappings, forced disappearances and assassinations.' The LNA won control over the city on 12 February 2019 after defeating last remnants of the DPF.[572] January 2020 UNOCHA report described Derna as 'heavily contaminated' with explosives.[573]

Impact of violence on civilians

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) provides the following statistics regarding incidents of battles, Explosions/ Remote violence, and violence against civilians in Derna between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020[574]:

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[562] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, In: AEI, url, pp. 78, 93
[563] Al Jazeera, Libya's Ansar al-Sharia announces dissolution, 28 May 2017, url; BS, BTI 2020 Country Report Libya, 29 April 2020, url, p. 31; CEP, Libya: Extremism & Counter-Extremism, n.d., url
[564] Estelle, E., A Strategy for Success in Libya, November 2017, In: AEI, url, p. 12
[565] CIA World Factbook, Libya, 4 November 2020, url
[566] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url, p. 13
[567] CEP, Libya: Extremism & Counter-Extremism, n.d., url
[568] Salem, al-Z., The War in Derna: What's Happening Now, and What's Next, June 2018, In: RSC, url, p. 2
[569] MEE, Saudi-influenced Salafis playing both sides of Libya's civil war, 11 December 2018, url
[570] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url, p. 13; MEE, Saudi-influenced Salafis playing both sides of Libya's civil war, 11 December 2018, url
[571] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url, p. 24
[572] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 25
[573] UNOCHA, Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, January 2020, url, p. 20
[574] ACLED, Conflict Data for Libya, 1 January 2019 -30 September 2020, 4 November 2020, url
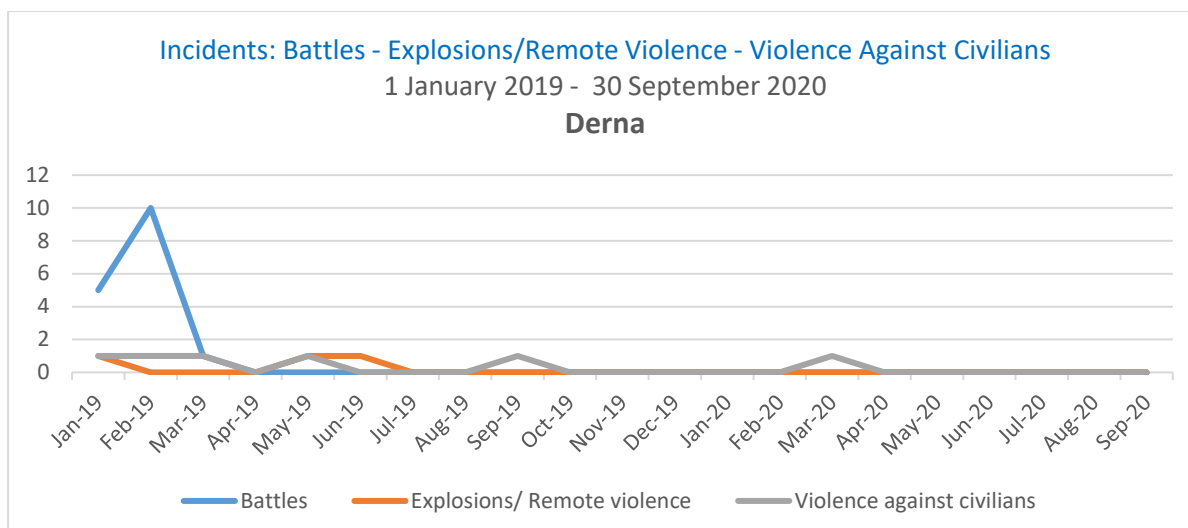
Figure 26: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Derna between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[575]

The New America and Airwars report listed one strike in Derna in the reference period, namely by the LNA on 23 January 2019.[576] Airwars interactive map of all belligerents in Libya does not provide information on any incidents and casualties in the reference period.[577]

The HRS report on the casualties of armed clashes in Libya in the period of January - June 2020 did not mention Derna.[578] In 2019, Derna was listed as 6th most affected city or region with 195 casualties.[579] UNHRC reported on 16 deaths and 85 injured civilians in eastern Libya in 2019, without specifying the exact locations (compared to 171 deaths and 96 injuries in Western Libya).[580]

On 11 January 2019, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, while referring to the LNA/ISIS confrontation over the town, wrote that that he is 'deeply concerned by the escalation of hostilities in the eastern city of Derna and the consequent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in parts of the city.'[581] Over 100 bodies were found in Derna following the fighting in early 2019.[582] In March 2019, the Libyan Red Crescent reported on 70 bodies discovered so far that year in Derna.[583] An unspecified number of civilian casualties was reported by the UN Security Council in April 2019 in Derna because of the 'the reckless use of weapons in residential areas.'[584]

During the LNA siege of Derna, pro-LNA groups targeted anti-LNA tribes and families from Derna, accusing them of 'harbouring extremists'.[585] Describing the period of January-August 2019, the UN Security Council reported on summary executions of civilian detainees and targeting of the families and perceived members of the DPF in 'a broad intimidation campaign'. Civilians continued to be

[575] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url
[576] New America and Airwars, The Conflicts in Libya from 2011-2020, May 2020, url, pp. 45-99
[577] Airwars, All Belligerents in Libya, n.d., url
[578] HRS, Casualties of Armed Clashes in Libya (January – June 2020), 19 July 2020, url
[579] HRS, Libya: Crimes of Abductions and Assassinations in 2019, 16 January 2020, url
[580] UNHRC, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Libya and the effectiveness of technical assistance and capacity-building measures received by the Government of Libya, 23 January 2020, url
[581] UNOCHA, Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Maria Ribeiro, on the Humanitarian Situation in Derna, 11 January 2019, url
[582] USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 - Libya, 11 March 2020, url, p. 11; UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 25
[583] Libya Observer (The), Red Crescent recovers three bodies from Derna, 11 March 2019, url
[584] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 40
[585] Badi, E., Exploring Armed Groups in Libya: Perspectives on Security Sector Reform in a Hybrid Environment, November 2020, url, p. 32

arbitrarily arrested and forcibly displaced.[586] The UN Security Council reported in January 2019 that abductions of boys between 13 and 15 for a purpose of recruitment by armed groups had been increasingly common in Derna.[587]

Examples of security incidents in the reference period in Derna include:

- On 2 January 2019, at least 15 people were wounded after two car bombs exploded in Derna.[588]
- On 7 February 2019, clashes were reported in the old town of Derna, with a local hospital receiving four killed and 11 wounded persons.[589]
- On 2 June 2019, ISIS claimed a car bomb attack in Derna that wounded 11 people.[590]
- On 4 June 2019, it was reported that ISIS had claimed two 'bomb blasts' and that at least 18 people were wounded.[591]

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

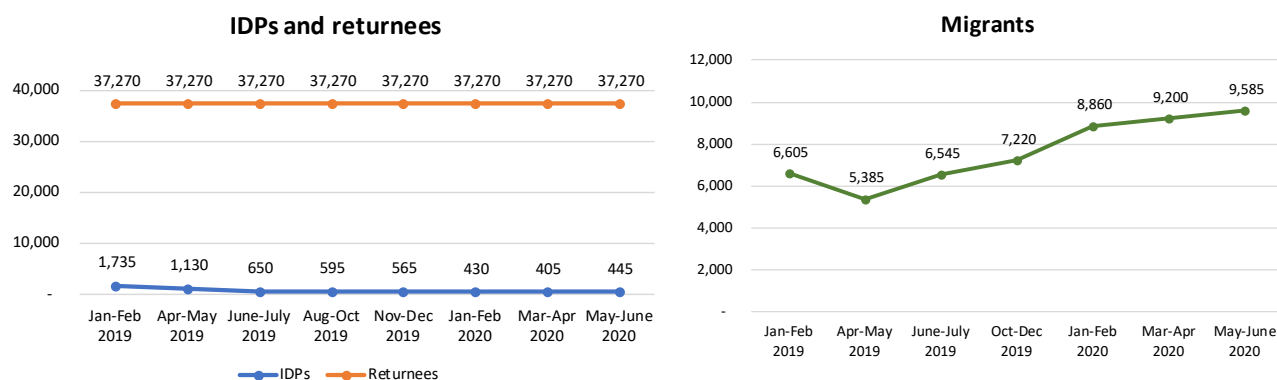The IOM DTM for Libya provides the following statistics regarding IDPs, returnees, and migrants:

Figure 27: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Derna between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[592]

Following the LNA/ISIS military confrontation over the control of Derna, in May 2018 over 35 000 persons were displaced from the city, mostly to the surrounding areas. After the gradual improvement of the security situation, some 6 985 families have returned until end of the year.[593]

According to a March 2019 article, the IDPs returning to Derna face 'infrastructure problems as well as contamination from landmines and explosive remnants of war.'[594] According to a January 2020 UNOCHA report, IDPs in Derna reported 'being displaced due to their political affiliation and remain unable to return home. These groups also report protection challenges during displacement, including denial of access of basic services, harassment, detention, loss of civil documentation, and threat of eviction.'[595] The 2020 report of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs found that '[t]he improved

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[586] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 46

[587] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 7 January 2019, url, para. 37

[588] The Libya Observer, Two explosions rock eastern city of Derna, 2 January 2019, url

[589] The Libya Observer, Four Dignity Operation fighters dead, dozens wounded in fresh clashes in Derna, 7 February 2019, url

[590] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 16; Euromed Human Rights Monitor, Escalating hell. Tripoli civilians under indiscriminate attacks, January 2020, url, p. 7

[591] The National, ISIS claims car bomb attacks against Haftar's forces in Libya's Derna, 4 June 2019, url

[592] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url

[593] IOM, Derna Returnee Rapid Assessment, 13 January 2019, url, p. 1

[594] The Libya Observer, REACH voices concern over Libya's Derna returnees, 31 March 2019, url

[595] UNOCHA, Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, January 2020, url, p. 19

security situation in Cyrenaica made it possible for thousands of displaced persons to return to their homes.'[596]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

During the fighting in early 2019, cases of destruction of civilian infrastructure and destruction and looting of homes were reported, including of persons accused of being against the LNA or originating from western Libya. This included forced evictions by the armed forces.[597]

Several cases of abductions of civilians were reported in the reference period. According to the Libya Observer, Haftar's militias have been abducting 'mothers, sisters and wives of Derna Protection Force fighters' since June 2018, bringing the total number of reported cases to 27 in August 2019.[598] Other cases of abductions of civilians by the LNA-associated militias were reported in May 2019[599], and in August 2019[600]. The Victims Organization for Human Rights spoke of 'the abductions, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearance of women from the city of Derna.[601] In March 2019, a religious scholar from the Maliki schoool was kidnapped by unknown gunman near Derna[602] and in May and October 2019, respectively, two members of High State Council were kidnapped.[603] The HRS did not report on any victims of abductions and assassinations in Derna in the period of January - June 2020.[604]

An inmate died in Gernada Prison in Derna on 18 March 2020 following his deteriorating health condition. 'The systematic use of torture in Gernada Prison has been alleged several times.'[605]

Impact on health facilities/personnel

In January 2019, the UN Security Council reported that medical professionals in Derna 'continued to be detained incommunicado for months' by the LNA.[606] On 31 December 2018, the LNA forces closed a health centre in Derna.[607] On 2 March 2019, the director of a hospital in Derna was abducted by gunmen affiliated with the LNA.[608] On 25 August 2019, doctors at the Al-Wahda Teaching Hospital in Derna announced its closure because of the insecurity.[609] In the period of January-March 2020, UNSMIL recorded a case of arbitrary arrest of a medical official by the LNA in Derna.[610]

On 31 January 2019, The Independent reported on possible war crimes committed by the LNA during the siege of Derna, including 'shooting unarmed civilians, stringing up mutilated bodies and indiscriminately shelling residential areas.'[611]

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[596] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 60

[597] The Global Protection Cluster, Protection Sector Update on the Protection of Civilian Situation in Libya, 24 August 2019, url, p. 4

[598] The Libya Observer, Militia groups kidnap seven women in Derna, 3 October 2019, url

[599] The Libya Observer, Haftar's forces kidnap women in Derna, eastern Libya, 27 May 2019, url; USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 - Libya, 11 March 2020, url, p. 12

[600] The Libya Observer, Human rights group deplores human violations in Derna, 28 August 2019, url

[601] The Libya Observer, Human rights group deplores human violations in Derna, 28 August 2019, url

[602] The Libya Observer, Leading Maliki scholar kidnapped by unknown gunmen in Derna, 23 March 2019, url

[603] USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 - Libya, 11 March 2020, url, p. 12

[604] HRS, Libya: Crimes of Abductions and Assassinations, (January – June 2020), 21 July 2020, url

[605] CIHRS, Libya: Human Rights Briefing (January – May 2020), 10 June 2020, url

[606] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-Genera, 7 January 2019, url, para. 29

[607] MEMO, Haftar's militants shut major health centre in Libya's Derna, 31 December 2018, url

[608] CIHRS, Libya: Human Rights Briefing (January – May 2020), 10 June 2020, url; Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 46

[609] The Libya Observer, Suspension of work at Derna hospital due to repeated attacks on staff, 25 August 2020, url

[610] UNSMIL, Civilian Casualties Report 1 January- 31 March 2020, 30 April 2020, url

[611] The Independent, Libyan Commander Courted by European Countries Accused of War Crimes, 31 January 2019, url

3.15 Al-Butnan (Tobruk)

Main armed groups

According to the PGN, in May 2020, Tobruk was under the control of the LNA and their allies.[612] This remained the case until the end of the reference period (for the whole Cyrenaica[613]).[614] Additional information about the LNA can be found in the introduction of the query response.

Tobruk is a seat of the parliament body called the House of Representatives (HoR), formed after the June 2014 parliamentary elections.[615] During the reference period, the HoR was divided between its members in Tripoli and Tobruk.[616] On 13 May 2019, a group of members of the HoR supporting the LNA met in Tobruk to criminalise the Muslim Brotherhood in Libya.[617] A leader of an eastern Madkhali group called Salafi Brigade is known to have been regularly received by the HoR authorities in Tobruk, as reported by the International Crisis Group.[618]

A March 2020 Chatham House report suggested that LNA members engage in 'illicit or illegal activities', such as people and goods smuggling, in various eastern cities including Tobruk.[619] Tobruk has been used for smuggling of hashish and cannabis.[620]

The Tobruk Security Directorate is a body responsible for the provision of local security.[621] It has been traditionally headed by members of the al-Ubaidat (Obeidat) tribe,[622] which has been dominant in local political and security life.[623] This tribe, largest in eastern Libya, controls the Tobruk port.[624] Tribal relationships in Tobruk are crucial for 'smooth illicit flows of drugs and other goods'.[625] The LNA has built alliances with local armed groups and established a monopoly over the control of weapons in eastern Libya. Together with the Security Directorate they closed shops selling military weapons and uniforms illegally.[626]

In July 2020, Tobruk-based parliament authorized Egypt to intervene militarily in the country.[627] Protests over sewage system living conditions were reported on 6-7 September 2020 in Tobruk[628], with the Tobruk-based government resigning on 14 September 2020.[629]

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[612] PGN, Libyan civil war map and timeline May 2020, 29 May 2020, url
[613] Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, pp. 22-23
[614] Africa Center for Strategic Studies (The), Shifts in the Libyan Civil War, 16 June 2020, url; Al Jazeera, Libya: Mapping areas of military control, 27 July 2020, url; Liveuamap, Libya, n.d., url
[615] New America and Airwars, The Conflicts in Libya from 2011-2020, May 2020, url, p. 10; USIP, Libya's Next Elections, United States Institute of Peace, August 2018, url, p. 10
[616] Lacher, W., Who Is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? In: SANA Briefing Paper August 2019, url, p. 16; Netherlands (The), Country of origin information report on Libya, June 2020, url, p. 7
[617] UN Security Council, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 August 2019, url, para. 6
[618] International Crisis Group, Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali-Salafis, 25 April 2019, url, pp. 12, 13
[619] Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014 Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 34
[620] EMCDDA, Shifting sands — Libya's changing drug trafficking dynamics on the coastal and desert borders, 2019, url, p. 20; USIP, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Use in Libya: Highs and Lows, May 2020, url, p. 8
[621] Alwasat, Tobruk Security Directorate increases patrols in preparation for Eid, 3 June 2019, url
[622] USIP, Tribe, security, justice, and peace in Libya today, 2016, url
[623] USIP, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Use in Libya: Highs and Lows, May 2020, url, p. 24
[624] EMCDDA, Shifting sands — Libya's changing drug trafficking dynamics on the coastal and desert borders, 2019, url, p. 21
[625] USIP, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Use in Libya: Highs and Lows, May 2020, url, p. 24
[626] 218TV English, Campaign launched to close shops selling military uniforms in Tobruk, 5 February 2019, url; Chatham House, The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014 Community Dynamics and Economic Interests, March 2020, url, p. 54
[627] Daily Sabah, Libya slams Egypt parliament's authorization of military intervention, 22 July 2020, url
[628] Garda, Libya: Service-delivery protest reported in Tobruk September 6, 7 September 2020, url; Libya Observer (The), Protesters block roadways in Tobruk due to sewage overflow swamping, 6 September 2020, url
[629] Al Jazeera, Libya's eastern-based government resigns amid protests, 14 September 2020, url; BBC News, Khalifa Haftar's rival Libya government resigns after Benghazi protests, 14 September 2020, url

Security incidents

Information was scarce among the sources consulted by EASO within time constraints.

Impact of security incidents on civilians

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) provides the following statistics regarding incidents of battles, Explosions/ Remote violence, and violence against civilians in Tobruk between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020:
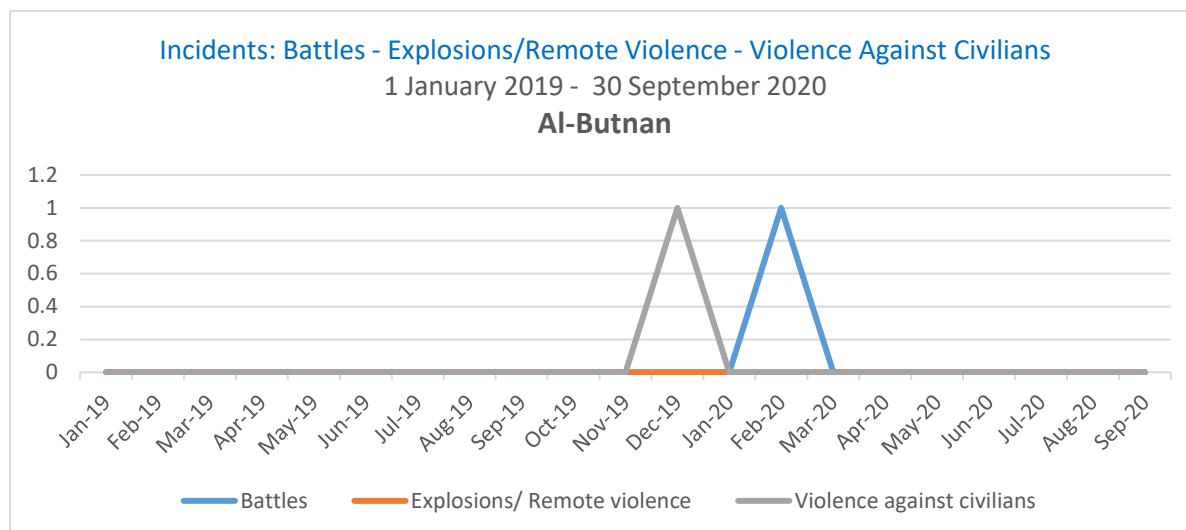

Figure 28: Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Al-Butnan between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on ACLED data[630]

The New America and Airwars report did not list any strikes in Tobruk in the reference period.[631] Airwars interactive map of all belligerents in Libya did not provide info on any incidents and casualties in Tobruk in the reference period.[632]

The HRS report on the casualties of armed clashes in Libya did not report any in 2019[633], nor in the period of January - June 2020.[634]

Internally Displaced People, Returnees and Migrant population

The IOM DTM for Libya provides the following statistics regarding IDPs and migrants:

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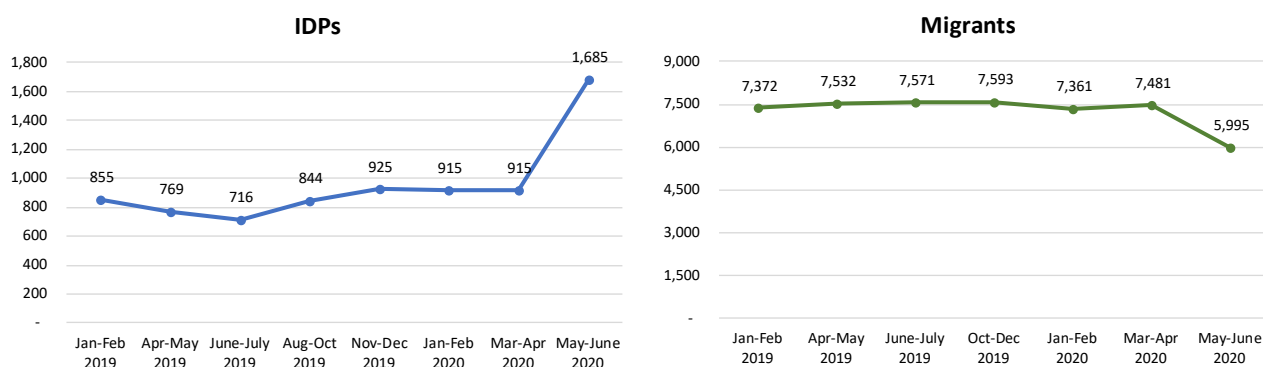
[630] EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa/Libya (7 November 2020), url
[631] New America and Airwars, The Conflicts in Libya from 2011-2020, May 2020, url, pp. 45-99
[632] Airwars, All Belligerents in Libya, n.d., url
[633] HRS, Libya: Crimes of Abductions and Assassinations in 2019, url
[634] HRS, Casualties of Armed Clashes in Libya (January – June 2020), 19 July 2020, url

Figure 29: IDPs, returnees and migrants in Al-Butnan between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020, based on IOM DTM[635]

'Smuggling warehouses' exploiting irregular migrants reportedly operated in Tobruk with the knowledge of the Tobruk Security Directorate during the reference period.[636] The border between Libya and Egypt was reportedly closed on 20 March 2020.[637]

Other Acts/Forms of Violence Against Civilians

The HRS report on the casualties of armed clashes in Libya in the period of January - June 2020 listing ten cities and regions with the highest numbers of casualties did not mention Tobruk.[638] Similarly, the HRS report on the abductions and assassinations in Libya in the period of January - June 2020 that listed cities and regions in Libya with more than 10 victims, reported no victims in Tobruk.[639]

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[635] EASO analysis based on publicly available IOM data. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), n.d., url
[636] CIHRS, Libya: Human Rights Briefing (January – May 2020), 10 June 2020, url
[637] MMC, Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: North Africa, 2020, url, p. 9
[638] HRS, Casualties of Armed Clashes in Libya (January – June 2020), 19 July 2020, url
[639] HRS, Libya: Crimes of Abductions and Assassinations, (January – June 2020), 21 July 2020, url

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