

# Weekly Security Brief



## Libya Weekly Insights

11–17 August 2025

## Contact

+218954080909

Souq Al Jumaa, Tripoli

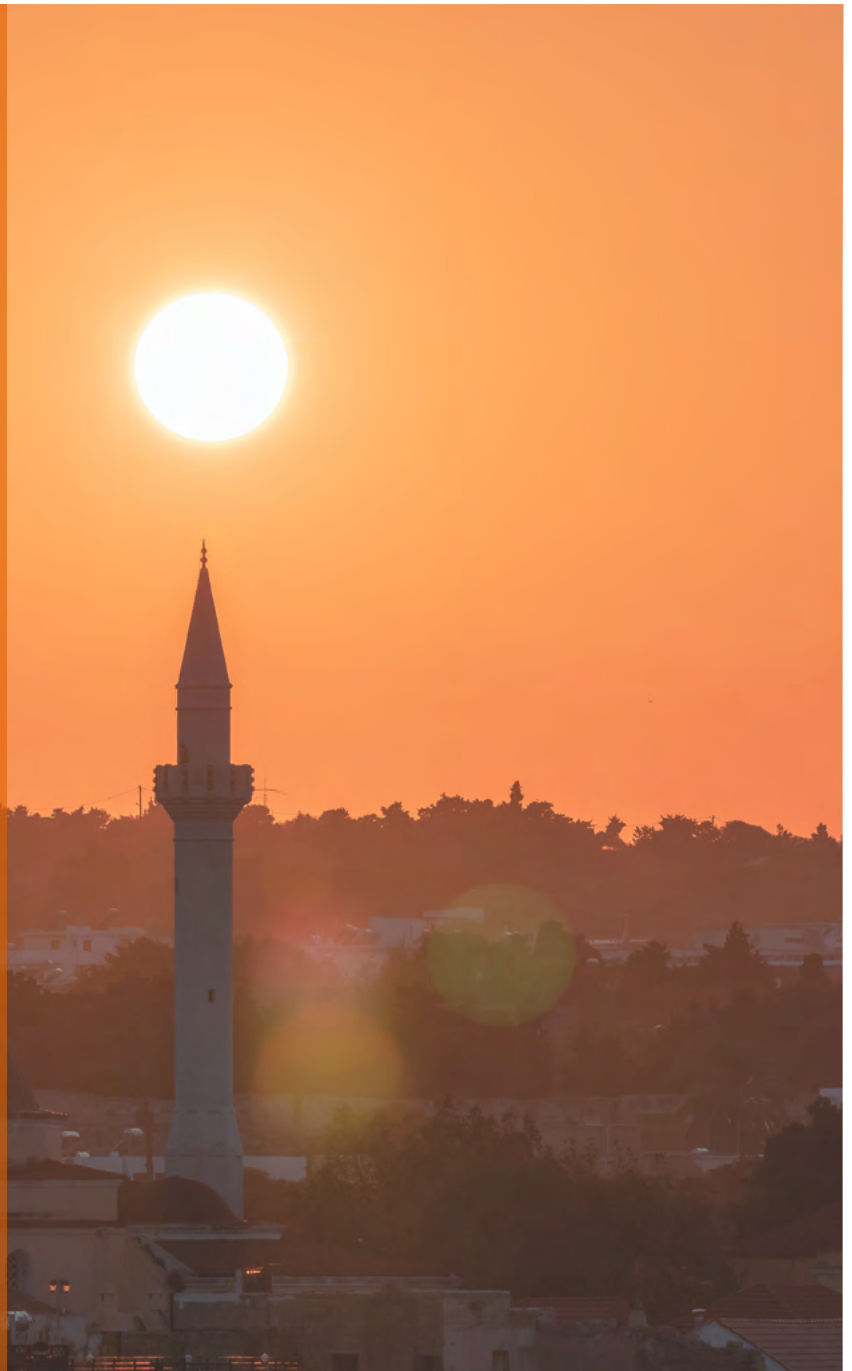
[enquiries@ribatinternational.com](mailto:enquiries@ribatinternational.com)

[www.ribat-international.com](http://www.ribat-international.com)

### Introduction

Ribat International provides analysis-led security, strategic risk management, and robust compliance solutions tailored for Libya's complex operating environment.

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# Libya Update

## Security Overview: 4–11 August 2025

Libya’s security conditions during 11–17 August were relatively static, with an uneasy calm holding in the aftermath of recent turmoil. In the capital Tripoli, no major clashes erupted this week as rival militias observed an informal truce following the heavy fighting in May. However, the situation remains tense – armed groups still control key neighborhoods and minor skirmishes or standoffs continue to be one trigger away. Elsewhere in the country, operational risk is moderate: there were no significant new combat operations between east and west, but criminal violence and localized conflicts (especially in the west) persist at a low level. Political uncertainty and militia fragmentation continue to shape the risk environment, leaving Libya’s overall stability fragile and subject to sudden shifts.

Posture: **Volatile**

## Key Drivers This Week:

- **Post-Clash Power Balance in Tripoli:** The fallout from the May militia clashes in Tripoli (which were the worst in years) remains a key driver of the security posture. The death of warlord Abdulghani “Ghaniwa” al-Kikli and disbandment of some of his SSA forces have altered Tripoli’s militia equilibrium. This week saw continued nervous quiet as surviving armed groups like the Stabilization Support Apparatus (SSA) and 444 Brigade avoided open conflict, but tensions are high. Any perceived provocation – e.g. an arrest of a militia leader or an attempt by the government to reshuffle security positions – could reignite fighting. The GNU’s Defense Ministry is deploying units to maintain order in former clash zones (Abu Salim, Salahaddin), yet the underlying rivalry among Tripoli’s militias remains a destabilizing factor.
- **Public Dissent and Protest Momentum:** Public discontent is an equally important driver. In the wake of the May violence, there have been ongoing weekly protests in western Libya demanding the ouster of all current political bodies and swift elections. During this week, smaller-scale demonstrations continued in Tripoli’s Martyrs’ Square and cities like Misrata, fueled by frustration at the stalemate in governance. Protesters are specifically angered by Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah’s refusal to step aside and the militia-fueled insecurity; their chants of “No East, No West, Libya is one” and calls to end militia domination reflect a broad rejection of the status quo. So far protests have remained mostly peaceful (security forces have refrained from heavy-handed crackdowns), but the persistence of public unrest keeps pressure on all factions. Any incident of protester fatalities or harsh repression could escalate unrest dramatically.

- **Continued Localized Conflicts and Crime:** Across Libya, ongoing localized violence serves as a driver of operational risk. In the western coastal city of Zawiya, rival militias involved in fuel smuggling and organized crime have sporadically clashed (outside this week’s window, but an enduring trend). In the south (Fezzan), tribal conflicts between Tebu and Arab communities (e.g. around Murzuq) and the presence of foreign mercenaries pose intermittent security issues. This week was largely quiet on these fronts, but reports of smuggling convoys and the occasional gunfight underscore that lawlessness in peripheral regions remains unresolved. Additionally, the potential resurgence of ISIS or Al-Qaeda cells in Libya’s vast south is a lingering concern – no high-profile attacks occurred this week, but security forces in Sabha and Kufra have maintained a heightened alert after recent counter-terror raids earlier in the summer. In summary, while no single local conflict dominated this week’s headlines, the sum of these smoldering issues contributes to an overall volatile environment that can impact operations with little warning.

## Tactical Incident Overview

- **Aug 16 – Tripoli (Hay al-Andalus):** A municipal election in the Hay al-Andalus district was marred by militia interference. On Saturday morning, voters discovered that two major electoral lists had been struck off polling station registers by armed men. According to witnesses and activist posts on social media, members of the so-called “Public Security” militia – linked to the brother of GNU Interior Minister Imad Trabelsi – entered multiple polling centers and falsified the voter lists, falsely claiming certain opposition lists were disqualified. The militia’s action, apparently to benefit its own affiliated candidates, sparked outrage among voters and candidates. While the incident did not escalate to violence, it prompted urgent appeals to Libya’s High National Elections Commission and UN mission to intervene. This blatant attempt to manipulate a democratic process highlights the ongoing power that militias wield over civil affairs in Tripoli. Authorities later announced an investigation, but no arrests were reported by week’s end.
- **Aug 14 – Tripoli:** Security sources report that a group of armed men briefly surrounded the Intelligence Directorate office in Tripoli’s Furnaj area on the night of 14 August. The standoff occurred after an intelligence officer allegedly detained a relative of a militia commander. No shots were fired; negotiations led the armed group to withdraw, and

the detainee was released. This minor incident illustrates the continued friction between official security institutions and militia elements, even as Tripoli remained generally calm.

- **Aug 12 – Sabha (South):** Local authorities in Sabha city discovered an arms cache and arrested two suspects believed to be tied to cross-border smugglers. The cache included RPGs and assault rifles, likely destined for Sudan or Chad conflict zones. The operation, while low-profile, underscores the prevalence of arms trafficking in Libya’s south and the potential for such weapons to fuel violence regionally. No resistance was encountered during the raid, and the suspects are in custody under the 116th Brigade’s watch.

*(No large-scale battles or high-casualty incidents were recorded in Libya during the week of 11–17 August, reflecting a tentative stability.)*





# Political & Militia Landscape

**Libya’s political landscape remains split and dominated by armed factions**, though notable developments emerged in both camps this week. In Tripoli (West), Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah and his GNU face mounting disillusionment after three weeks of street protests demanding his resignation and elections. On 12 August, he announced a “three-track plan” to strengthen the army, dissolve militias, and prepare for polls. Critics see this as stalling; militias still operate freely, as shown by the Hay al-Andalus incident. After May’s clashes, the 444 Brigade grew stronger while the SSA (Ghaniwa’s faction) was weakened. Other actors like the Rada Force remain powerful, controlling Mitiga airport. Rivalries continue: one study counted 64 armed group clashes in Tripoli since 2021, a figure likely to rise if integration falters.

**In the East**, Haftar and the LNA maintain control with backing from the HoR and a rival prime minister, Osama Hammad, though the latter lacks recognition. On 10 August, Italian media reported Haftar allegedly offered to resettle up to one million Palestinians in Libya in exchange for support and oil control – unconfirmed, but reflective of his efforts to build leverage. The LNA projects stability in the south, conducting anti-terror operations and guarding oilfields, and again demanded reform of oil revenue management in UN talks.

**UN mediation is stalled:** Special Envoy Bathily is pressing for a roadmap to elections, **warning Libya risks “another wave of violence” if the vacuum persists**. International actors (Italy, France, U.S., Egypt) remain divided in their support, worsening the deadlock.

**Militias remain the true power brokers.** Misrata’s brigades (Halbous, Mahjoub) stayed out of the May Tripoli clashes but could intervene. On the northwest coast (Zawiya–Sabratha), smuggling-linked militias still dominate despite a June GNU crackdown with drone strikes. In the southwest, Tebu, Tuareg, and Arab groups coexist under fragile truces brokered by the LNA; renewed violence is possible if attention lapses.

Libya’s oil sector remains stable: the NOC reports output around 1.37m bpd, with exports secure. Both sides avoid disrupting oil, but blockades remain a latent risk.

**In summary, Libya is locked in a fragile balance: two rival governments without mandate, propped by militias.** Dbeibah holds Tripoli’s finances but is weakened by protests and militia distrust; Haftar controls territory and military power but lacks legitimacy. Without a breakthrough, this tense equilibrium endures, with the security outlook tied to how political leaders manage or unleash their allied forces.

# 7–10 Day Forecast by Region

- **North (Tripoli, Misrata, Zawiya):** Northwestern Libya is likely to see fragile stability with latent hazards. Tripoli should stay under GNU control, with no major flare-ups expected unless a trigger such as a militia leader’s arrest occurs. Security forces, backed by a recent “major security operation,” will keep an assertive presence around government sites and Friday protests. **Another large protest in Martyrs’ Square is likely**, with road closures and possible internet slowdowns. The risk of militia clashes is moderate; tensions between the Rada and 444 Brigade could reignite violence if provoked. **Misrata should remain calm, with its brigades aligned to the GNU**, though solidarity rallies may echo Tripoli’s demands. Zawiya is a wildcard: anti-smuggling operations or vendettas could spark clashes, potentially near oil facilities. The Tripoli–Tunisian border road is generally open, but checkpoints may increase around Zawiya and Sorman. **In summary, expect a tense quiet, with forces on alert to pre-empt violence while managing unrest.**
- **Central (Sirte, Jufra, Waddan):** Central Libya – the East-West interface – **is expected to remain in stalemate**. The ceasefire line around Sirte and Jufra holds; neither GNU-aligned forces nor Haftar’s LNA appear intent on hostilities. Sirte (under LNA) is quiet, with fortification south of the city. Jufra airbase, a key LNA asset, may still host Wagner personnel. **No direct clashes are anticipated**, though accidents such as friendly fire or depot blasts are possible. The Sirte Oil Basin could see labor protests or brief shutdowns, but oil is likely to keep flowing. If political talks resume, they may convene in Sirte, prompting heightened security and no-go zones. Otherwise, central Libya will remain a militarised buffer: **superficially stable** but marked by mistrust across the Sirte-Jufra line.
- **South (Sabha, Murzuq, Ghat):** The south (Fezzan) will **likely see continued low-level instability**. No large offensives are expected, but risks remain: tribal clashes, smuggling violence, and terrorism. Sabha should stay calm under LNA oversight, though robberies and kidnappings threaten outskirts and highways. In Murzuq, disputes between Tebu and Arab groups could reignite, especially if arms circulate. Near Ghat, arms and drug trafficking may rise as routes shift from Niger, risking clashes with border guards. Along the Chad frontier, **mercenary and RSF movements are likely, though not expected to spark conflict inside Libya**. ISIS and AQIM remain weakened but could mount a small-scale attack on a checkpoint or convoy. Overall, the south will stay a law enforcement challenge rather than a war zone, **with incidents localised but unpredictable – requiring strict vigilance for movements**.

# Security Advisory

**Recommended Posture**  
**A heightened security posture is advised**, adjusted by region. In Tripoli and western cities, adopt a Guarded stance for routine operations, escalating to Restricted if clashes or unrest occur. Limit night movements in militia-heavy districts (Abu Salim, Tajoura) and **avoid solo travel**. In central and eastern areas under LNA, a **Moderate posture is sufficient in Benghazi or Sirte**, though crime and political uncertainty persist. **In the south, use Restricted – only essential travel with security escort and strong comms**. Across Libya, maintain contingency plans and ensure staff register with UNDSS or embassies. Approach should be “eyes open, movements minimal” until stability improves.

**Operational Impact:**  
**Expect sudden disruptions. In Tripoli, militia maneuvers can cause roadblocks** (Airport Road, Salahaddin, Ain Zara) – have alternates ready. Mitiga Airport was closed 48 hours during May clashes; similar closures are possible, so keep evacuation options flexible, including overland to Tunisia. **Weekly protests may slow services**, with ministries closing early; prior unrest led to GNU minister resignations, and further resignations could cause delays. Communications risk persists: militias may enforce blackouts or internet cuts to curb protest organization. **Field operations, especially in the south, face fuel and logistics constraints – maintain reserves and use armored high-clearance vehicles. UXO hazards remain near old frontlines (Sirte, Tripoli’s outskirts); personnel should undergo UXO training. Medical evacuation still requires planning via Tunisia or Egypt.**

**Caution Areas:**  
**Tripoli militia hotspots require maximum caution.** Avoid non-essential visits to Abu Salim, Souq al-Jumaa, and Ain Zara – all remain armed enclaves. Avoid militia convoys; if technicals gather, withdraw immediately. Zawiya and the western coastal road to Tunisia remain high risk for clashes and crime; **use armored transport and delay if tensions rise**. In Benghazi, avoid Ganfouda and Sabri unless accompanied by trusted locals; sporadic explosives still surface. Derna is under LNA control but reconstruction zones remain off-limits. **In the south, Murzuq, Qatrun, and border areas are no-go without LNA liaison due to banditry and tribal violence**. Confirm security at Sharara and El Feel oilfields before travel – both have a history of protests. Off the western coast, maintain distance: waters near Zawiya and Tripoli remain risky, with prior drone strikes on smuggler vessels. Domestic flights should be daylight only, as delays from air defense alerts occur. **In summary, avoid flash-point areas, disengage from armed groups, and monitor UNSMIL and local partners daily. Rigorous planning and strict security discipline are key to mitigating risks.**

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