



# POLICING LIBYA

## FORM AND FUNCTION OF POLICING SINCE THE 2011 REVOLUTION

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## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report tracks diverging modes of policing in Libya that have developed in response to the 2011 revolution and subsequent state collapse. Supported by the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau of the U.S. Department of State, the study is part of a portfolio of rule of law work carried out by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Libya. Report findings are based on qualitative field research and a nationally representative survey carried out by USIP in partnership with Altai Consulting. A companion report examines the renewed role of tribes as guarantors of social stability and providers of security and justice services in postrevolution Libya.

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Cover photo: Libyan policemen of the General Administration of the Central Security parade to mark the start of a security plan put forth by the Tripoli-based government to increase security in the Libyan capital, on February 9, 2015, in Tripoli's Martyrs' Square. (Mahmud Turkia/AFP/Getty Images)

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[Each of Libya's successive transitional governments has enacted a set of competing and overlapping security sector reforms.]



## Summary

- Libya's security sector has changed significantly since the 2011 revolution and continues to change as actors compete for influence and power.
- Before the revolution, policing functions were housed in specialized departments answering to the Ministry of Interior. Domestic intelligence answered to the Internal Security Organization.
- After the revolution, which caused a wholesale collapse of policing institutions across the country, reforms empowered fundamentalists and neighborhood armed groups by legitimizing them.
- Fragmented integration efforts by the Ministry of Interior have largely failed.
- Each of Libya's successive transitional governments has enacted a set of competing and overlapping security sector reforms.
- How the interaction between national developments and local realities have played out in the cities of Tobruk and Sabha is representative of the country.
- Political and tribal divides, combined with weak institutions, have effectively created different policing power dynamics across all of Libya's towns and cities.
- Civilian policing functions are split politically and structurally across a range of entities and allocation of responsibilities is neither well differentiated nor delineated.
- Policing strategy and priorities are in part dictated by domestic intelligence or defense entities.
- Localism is a key feature of Libyan policing and likely to remain so as long as the legitimacy of state institutions is questioned.
- Legitimacy is a loaded term with military, religious, communal, legal, and political implications. Almost no institution in Libya is regarded as legitimate on all of those counts.
- Any policing solution for Libya, whether national or local, will need to take the varying perceptions and aspects of institutional legitimacy into account if it is to be effective.
- Likewise, any unity government will need to take decisive action on policing structures if it is to transform Libya's chaotic security scene and establish sound state security institutions.



## Introduction

Libya's security sector has changed significantly since the 2011 revolution and continues to change as various actors compete for influence and power on both local and national levels. This competition (revolutionary versus old guard, Islamist versus institutionalist) has muddied the waters of the sector and made it difficult for the casual observer to understand the realities. Arguably, the biggest challenge for reform is to find a way for these actors to gradually evolve into a coherent framework, without which any internationally led capacity-building efforts will at best be wasted or at worst exacerbate the ongoing civil conflict.

This report seeks to enhance understanding of policing in Libya, and in particular to explain how policing fits within the domestic security landscape and has been transformed since 2011. Through a detailed mapping of policing actors in two Libyan cities, Tobruk and Sabha, the report examines how policing functions have been effectively assumed by a plethora of competing and overlapping groups, and traces the social and political inclinations of those groups. Acknowledging that local variation prevents countrywide generalization, the report seeks to identify features and tendencies of the Libyan policing landscape that are relevant to future reform.

Localism and fragmentation within the policing and security sectors are persistent realities in Libya, unlikely to be resolved in the short term, even if the ongoing dialogue led by the United Nations (UN) leads to a satisfactory agreement. They should be borne in mind when considering reform programs and the future of policing in the country.

To best address the complexity of the current situation, this report is presented in two parts. The first provides an overview of key policing developments before and after the revolution at the national level, highlighting emerging fault lines and flashpoints. The second examines local policing realities and how they are influential (and vice versa) by taking an in-depth look at policing in two contrasting cities, Tobruk and Sabha. Report findings are based on qualitative field research that includes key informant interviews, media monitoring, and public opinion sampling (for more detail, see appendix A). Unless otherwise cited, statements and conclusions in this report are drawn from fieldwork interviews and survey data.

## Policing Actors

### Box 1. Key Takeaways

Before 2011, policing functions were housed in specialized departments within the General Security Directorate, answering to the Ministry of Interior; domestic intelligence was controlled by the Internal Security Organization.

After the revolution, policing reforms under the National Transitional Council and General National Congress (GNC) empowered Salafists and neighborhood armed groups by legitimizing them as Supreme Security Committees (SSCs).

After 2013, the SSCs fragmented integration efforts by the Ministry of Interior largely failed. The GNC accelerated the empowerment of Salafist and politically aligned armed groups; the House of Representatives administration in Tobruk tried to legislate for the roll back of all post-2011 policing reforms, but its efforts had limited practical effect.

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Key developments in policing during the Sanusi (1951–69), Gadhafi (1969–2011), and post-revolutionary (2011–present) eras set the scene for an in-depth discussion of policing actors in Tobruk and Sabha.

### *Before the Revolution*

Policing institutions are among Libya's oldest and most enduring institutions and have their roots in the Libyan Arab Force, which was created with British support and fought under Libya's first and only king, Idris al-Sanusi, against the Italian occupation in 1940 and 1941. When Idris became ruler of independent Libya in 1951, he converted the Libyan Arab Force into the Cyrenaica Defense Force (CDF), a policing unit manned by eastern Bedouin loyal to the king, and a national defense force, a prototypical army primarily active in the eastern part of the country.<sup>1</sup> In 1952, the CDF was merged with its western counterpart, the Tripolitania Defense Force, to form the Libyan National Police, which, in a shift away from the CDF's military origins, was tasked with providing civilian security.<sup>2</sup>

Gadhafi's ascent to power did not initially provoke significant changes in the National Police. By the late 1970s, however, Gadhafi had begun to marginalize the force in favor of newly created security services and revolutionary committees directly under his control. Legislation governing the police, along with other security functions, was updated in 1992 with Security and Police Law No. 10, which tasked the General People's Committee for Public Security (Ministry of Interior, or MOI) and its forces with maintaining public order and state security.

Alongside the National Police, a number of other institutions influenced or carried out policing functions. Domestic intelligence, for example, was housed in the Jamahiriya Security Organization, legislated by Law No. 75 (1976). This organization covered both domestic and foreign intelligence, but in 2005 General People's Committee Law No. 19 split them up, creating the Internal Security Organization (ISO) and the External Security Organization (ESO).<sup>3</sup> These nominally reported to the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, respectively, but in practice directly to Gadhafi. The Judicial Police was in charge of guarding prisons, prisoner transfers, and court security. Its officers were trained within the MOI's police academies, but from 2004 were detached and housed under the Ministry of Justice and its General Directorate of Judicial Police.<sup>4</sup> Gadhafi also cultivated an Information Office, based in Bab al-Aziziyah, which served as a link between Gadhafi and the heads of extralegal security brigades formed outside the state security architecture and both tightly controlled by and loyal to the regime.<sup>5</sup> Over the course of the Gadhafi era, interviews with MOI and directorate officials reveal, these brigades were preferred over the Libyan National Police, which was gradually purged and marginalized, first by the revolutionary committees and ISO, and later by the security brigades or the Information Office.

Following a model typical in much of the Arab world, the MOI's policing departments are housed within directorates: the General Security Directorate (Mudiriyyat al-Amn al-Am)—equivalent to National Police headquarters—and town-specific security directorates running local branches of policing departments. Local security directorates in Tobruk and Sabha answered directly to the MOI and held operations rooms to deploy ministry resources on the ground, heads of those directorates explained in interviews.

The minister of interior from 2006 until February 2011 was General Abd al-Fattah Yunis of the eastern al-Ubaidat tribe, who had been historically dominant in the security sector. Yunis conducted reforms in 2006 that led to many MOI functions being divided into specialized departments.<sup>6</sup>

Core policing departments present in most local security directorates included criminal investigations (CID), police special forces (which supported counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and other frontline units when necessary), riot police, counternarcotics, and counterterrorism,<sup>7</sup>

and essential services such as local policing and traffic police. The more specialized departments, such as diplomatic security and aviation and coastal security, had local branches that depended on geography and local policing needs.<sup>8</sup> Policing duties were carried out by salaried police officers, noncommissioned officers, and policemen in addition to a group of part-time volunteers known as the People’s Security Service who were drafted in to “contribute to maintaining security and public order and carry out any other security duties” and were authorized to carry the “necessary weapons and equipment” to perform their functions.<sup>9</sup>

Gadhafi’s ISO, though outside the authority and structure of the MOI, also maintained a presence within security directorates and was very influential in law enforcement activities before the 2011 revolution. It liaised closely with the core policing departments, counter immigration and counternarcotics, and ISO officers were sometimes transferred to or posted within these services.

Toward the end of the Gadhafi era, Libyan policing and domestic security institutions saw their greatest challenge as the growth of political Islamist and extremist networks, which opposed the regime and attempted to attack state institutions.<sup>10</sup> The police, however, proved ill equipped to deal with such challenges, which generated significant internal pressure to reform and increase technical expertise. Following a number of poorly handled security incidents, Gadhafi and Minister of Interior Yunis opened the country to receiving international assistance, core to this being specialized police training to strengthen the CID, counterterrorism, and riot police units.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, in spite of training support and growing international engagement, by the outbreak of the revolution, the Libyan National Police were a weak and submissive institution, overshadowed in their functions by intelligence and extralegal security brigade counterparts more closely controlled by the regime.

### *After the Revolution*

The 2011 revolution caused a wholesale collapse in policing institutions across the country. In the absence of any central direction or management, directorates were affected differently according to their geographic location and how the revolution affected their communities, as the case studies of Tobruk and Sabha make clear.

As the revolution unfolded, armed police special forces and riot police were among the first responders to popular demonstrations calling for revolution. Their response caused many civilian injuries, particularly in Benghazi and Tripoli. In both cities, according to interviewee participants, officers fired live ammunition on crowds, and sometimes—according to some eyewitnesses—appeared uncertain how to respond. A key event in the revolution followed. Minister of Interior Yunis first reportedly ordered police units to stand down and then defected to the rebel side on February 22, his security adviser revealed in an interview.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, as the revolution progressed, policing institutions across much of the country were overrun by protestors, set on fire, and ransacked for weapons and vehicles.

Following the fall of the Gadhafi regime, the National Transitional Council (NTC)—which had formed in Benghazi as a de facto government in opposition during the revolution—governed for ten months until Libya held its first democratic elections. In August 2012, these elections brought to power the General National Congress (GNC), which served as Libya’s national legislative authority until its mandate expired in 2014. Amid deteriorating security conditions, fresh national elections held in June 2014 ushered in a new legislative authority—the House of Representatives (HoR). Elections, however, were marred by low turnout and violence that prevented polling in some areas.

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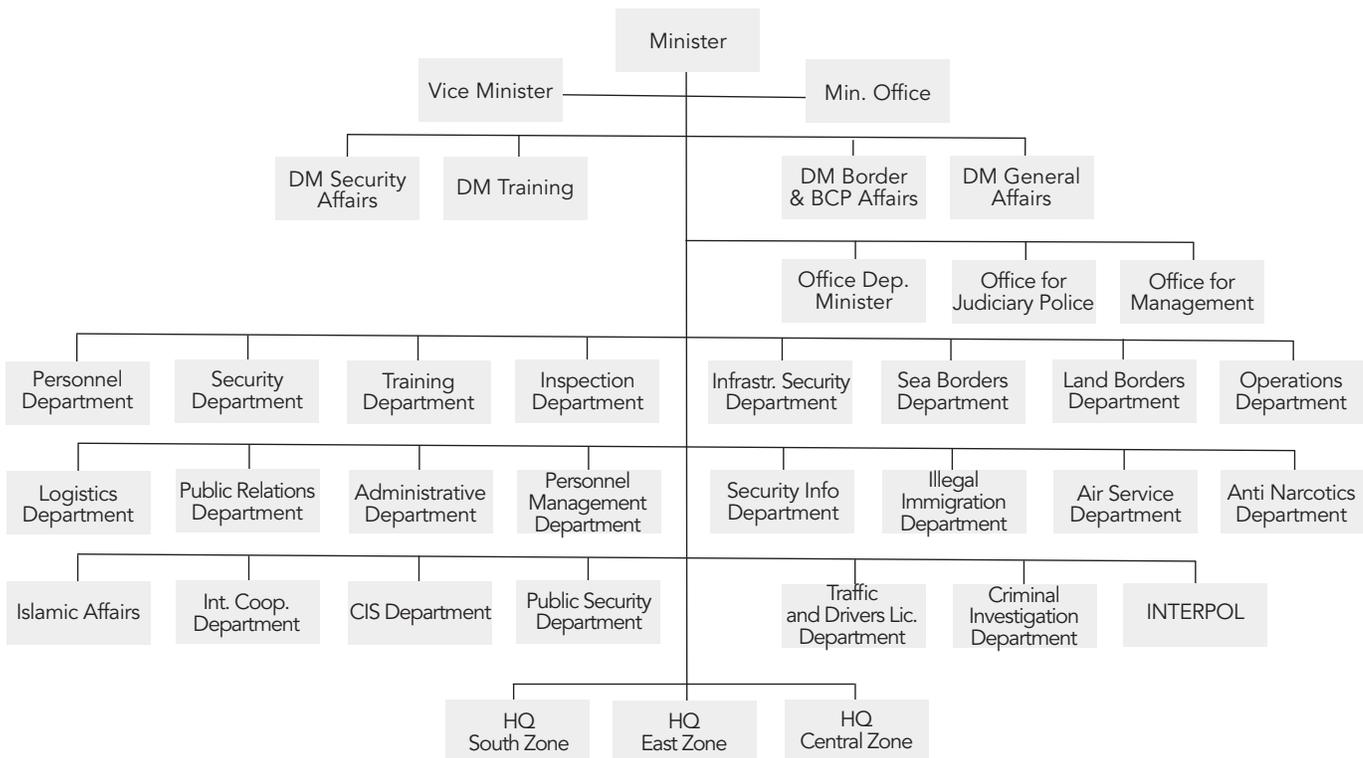
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Political factions and armed groups had become polarized into two loose camps—political Islamist parties and institutionalists and others who opposed them.<sup>13</sup> Some within Islamist and jihadist circles, together with hard-core revolutionary politicians and armed group leaders from Misrata, rejected the newly formed HoR. By July 2014, these political divisions sparked renewed conflict and the beginnings of Libya’s ongoing civil war. During this period, civil conflict and political and ideological cleavages have led to the emergence of two separate rival legislative bodies—both claiming legitimacy—the HoR, which fled insecurity in Tripoli and based itself in Tobruk, broadly governing Libya’s east along with the western mountain city of Zintan, and a holdout reconfiguration of the GNC in Tripoli, which claims legislative authority over much of the west.

Each of Libya’s successive transitional governments—the NTC, GNC, and HoR—has enacted a set of competing and overlapping security sector reforms. Decisions have been taken in the absence of any overarching vision for security and justice reform, often at the behest of political pressure groups, creating significant legal ambiguity over the status and nature of policing and some police departments.

In 2012, for example, NTC Decision No. 145 was introduced, setting out that security directorates would subdivide policing activities into twenty-five departments. Little state-level action was ever taken to ensure practical implementation of this decree, thus it generated primarily confusion among policing actors. Police officers interviewed for this report, for instance, were not clear which policing departments were mandated by legislation, and many officers were not even sure how many policing departments were active in their areas.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 1. NTC Reform Dividing MOI into Twenty-Five Departments**



In May 2013, the passage of the Political Isolation Law provoked further confusion and disruption to policing (along with many other state institutions). Passed by the GNC under threat of violence from armed groups, it was in essence a lustration law aimed at preventing members of the former Gadhafi regime from holding public office during the country's transition. The law decreed the removal of individuals who had held senior positions under Gadhafi from state institutions but provided little guidance on what ranks qualified as a senior position and on how to remove individuals from office.<sup>15</sup> Significantly, it did not take into account the role played by numerous officials who had defected during the revolution, including senior police who brought their knowledge and security training to bear in ousting the regime. Some of these officials had briefly been able to use their revolutionary standing to extend legitimacy to local police departments but the Political Isolation Law undermined this, field interviews reveal, painting with the same brush everyone who had occupied a government post under Gadhafi. In a country where the government had been the largest employer for decades, finger-pointing and even trigger-pulling became commonplace.<sup>16</sup>

In February 2015, further confusion was generated by the HoR's decision to abolish nearly all postrevolutionary security reforms, including the Political Isolation Law.<sup>17</sup> Inspired by both political considerations and recognition of the damage caused by many of these reforms, the HoR legislation leaves doubts over what legislative framework remains valid. Additionally, given the existence of the rival GNC, these reversal measures are only applicable in HoR areas (mostly in the east).

## Creating New Policing Entities

The NTC and subsequent authorities also created new policing institutions to fill the security gap that had emerged where the Libyan National Police and control of local security directorates had crumbled. The largest and most notorious was the Supreme Security Committee (SSC), which first emerged from armed groups in Tripoli.<sup>18</sup> In December 2011, the SSC officially became a new state security institution overseen by the MOI, acquiring police-like functions, salaries, and in theory coming under the leadership of then minister Fawzi Abd al-Al, a Misratan prosecutor and politician.<sup>19</sup> Despite its standing, the MOI struggled to gain any level of command authority over the SSC. Nonetheless, the SSC was granted nationwide authority; the intention was to develop more than fifty regional branches but to retain the bulk of its force in Tripoli.

The SSC was originally a mix of former policemen and youth groups who were supposed to rein in and isolate the Tripoli military councils; on being funded, however, it swiftly mushroomed to include large numbers of members of Salafist armed groups and criminal gangs.<sup>20</sup> The SSC used the legal standing bestowed on it by the MOI and redirected the funding for salaries to create new policing institutions that mirrored existing security directorate structures, which the new institutions first shadowed and then sought to encompass and supersede.<sup>21</sup>

The SSC was composed of many armed group brigades. Those that became the most powerful emerged from existing revolutionary armed groups, particularly those with Salafist ideologies, reticent to demobilize and keen to solidify the positions they had gained after the revolution. For example, the Elite Force led by Hashim Bishr—a Salafist armed group leader—and made up of his former Tripoli Revolutionaries' Battalion (TRB). A significant part of this group took on roles akin to police special forces and intelligence. Bishr's former TRB colleague, Haitham al-Tajuri, who also had Salafist leanings, created the First Support Unit, again with special forces-style functions, which ran operations and its own prisons from its base near Mi'tiqa airport.<sup>22</sup>

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A number of other new security institutions formed in parallel to the SSC, again developing from armed group brigades, and gaining legal standing and salaries from the MOI. For example, the Anti-Crime Unit (ACU), known as Countering Crime Committees in some reporting, was created in May 2012.<sup>23</sup> The ACU shadowed the combined functions of classic criminal investigations policing and counternarcotics and alcohol work. Composed primarily of Salafist-leaning revolutionaries who followed Saudi religious currents, the ACU developed branches countrywide, much like the SSC; in interviews conducted in 2013, ACU members described their role as “ridding the country of the scourge of drugs and alcohol.”

Salafists were also heavily represented in another subdivision of the SSC that became known as Support Branches, which replicated local neighborhood policing activities. The Support Branches were headed by Abd al-Ra’uf Kara, a Salafist-leaning armed group leader from Tripoli’s Suq al-Jum’a neighborhood. Kara also created the separate Special Deterrence Force, which acted as a type of self-appointed religious and moral police. Abd al-Latif Qadur—also a Salafist from the Suq al-Jum’a neighborhood—became the overall head of the SSC, he explained in a March 2013 interview, and through that position was able to route weapons, fuel, and vehicles to armed groups falling under the SSC umbrella and a series of other groups in Tripoli’s armed group landscape that were aligned with his interests.

The rise of Salafists within Libyan policing structures was enabled by differences of opinion and political divisions within the MOI. Successive ministers were technocratic, establishment figures drawn from the former ranks security sector, such as Fawzi Abd al-Al, a Misratan lawyer; Ashur Shwail, the former head of the Traffic Police; and Muhammad Shaikh, a former head of the Criminal Investigations Department in Tripoli. Meanwhile, some MOI deputy ministers were drawn from revolutionary and political Islamist camps. For example, the deputy minister for border security and immigration from 2012 to 2014 was Ahmad Dromba, a military revolutionary figure from Zintan, and the deputy minister for security from 2011 to 2013 was Umar al-Khadrawi, a revolutionary figure linked to the political Islamist Muslim Brotherhood party.<sup>24</sup>

In October 2012, the Ministry of Interior decided to dissolve the SSC—which was recognized as having grown beyond control and purpose—and to integrate its ranks into other MOI institutions such as the National Police.<sup>25</sup> Divisions between established MOI figures, Salafist groups, and other political Islamist networks, frustrated these efforts. Salafist figures involved in the SSC and associated groups—such as Bishr, Kara, and Qadur—initially professed to want some form of integration and craved a role in formal state policing and intelligence structures. Bishr, for example, as he explained in a 2012 interview, sat on the committee overseeing SSC dissolution and integration. In addition, Bishr and Kara briefly joined the MOI in 2013.<sup>26</sup> But their ideology put them at odds with their technocratic counterparts in the ministry, many of whom had participated in anti-Islamist, counterterrorism initiatives conducted toward the end of the Gadhafi era and found it disquieting to work alongside individuals they had once pursued.

Although Bishr remained committed to his new role in dissolving the SSC, other Salafist-leaning armed group leaders, particularly Qadur and Kara, began to oppose the initiative.<sup>27</sup> In January 2013, the government threatened to cut off SSC salaries by month’s end. SSC elements responded by holding violent protests in front of the GNC and managed to override MOI plans.

What happened next across Libya is well illustrated by the two case studies in this report—Tobruk and Sabha. Essentially, SSC regional branches either complied with or resisted dissolution and integration depending on local political leanings, tribal, and conflict dynamics. In Tobruk, the head of the local security directorate explained, the SSC rapidly dissolved and

integrated into the local security directorate, both staffed by a relatively homogenous mix of al-Ubaidat and client tribes. Similar developments were reported in other eastern towns, such as Marj and Baida, and in some ethnically homogenous southern towns, such as Birak, Ghat, and Qutrun. In Benghazi, payment irregularities and insecurity in the city prompted seven thousand of the twelve thousand members in the SSC to join the police; around three thousand joined Ministry of Defense–linked Libya Shield units (which operated much like a shadow military) to combat the growing Islamist presence in the city; and the remaining two thousand seem to have simply discontinued their participation in any form of policing.<sup>28</sup> In all these towns, there were strong continuities and tribal connections between the local SSC branch and the local security directorates; many SSC personnel had been on the staff of the security directorates, and simply moved back from the SSC to the security directorate.

This pattern was not repeated in Tripoli, however. Moreover, what happened in Tripoli had a dramatic effect on some other towns, particularly Sabha, the politics of which were in some respects connected to Tripoli's. In Tripoli, powerful and mobile Salafist and Islamist units, which had their own political connections within the MOI, their own esprit de corps, and their own self-declared moral agendas, mostly resisted integration.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the ministry resisted integrating them, because of a lack of political will and distrust between pre- and post-revolutionary MOI stakeholders.

It quickly became evident that, in spite of their efforts, the MOI could not integrate the SSC, given its diverse and unwieldy structure and sheer numbers. No fewer than 162,000 SSC fighters were registered nationwide. Of those, sixty-one thousand did not even respond to a survey conducted by the MOI's integration committees, and thirty thousand either failed ministry-set vetting criteria for enrollment or refused to integrate.<sup>30</sup> Only one-tenth of the fifty-one thousand SSC respondents in Tripoli were integrated by January 2014.<sup>31</sup>

As a result, the policing in Libya fragmented rapidly and confusingly. Tripoli's Salafist armed groups involved themselves in policing activities but kept one foot in and one foot out of the MOI. In January 2013, Kara created the Special Deterrence Force, aimed at countering narcotics and immigration, out of his SSC units in Tripoli. Yet again, the MOI legitimized the force by bringing it under nominal MOI authority, and Kara joined the MOI as a first lieutenant—but he kept this force active, mobilized, and loyal to him rather than to the state. Likewise, Tajuri joined the MOI as a police captain, but kept his First Support Unit active and mobilized. Other Salafist-leaning units, such as those under Salah al-Burki and Abd al-Ghani al-Kikli, similarly kept their armed groups separate from the police, and a bloc that controlled Tripoli's port left the Tripoli SSC to join the forces under Qadur. Nonetheless, though remaining apart, these armed groups still worked on behalf of and under authorization of the MOI. Pro-government elements in the SSCs, meanwhile, competed with the Salafists by joining the Rapid Intervention Force, created in 2013 by Minister of Interior Ashur Shwail (Decision No. 978), and the Joint Intervention and Deterrence Force.<sup>32</sup> Both forces, Bishr said in an interview, competed with Salafist units to carry out counternarcotics, counter immigration, counterterrorism, and Special Forces functions.

An additional dynamic affecting policing across Libya is the blurring of lines between civilian and military security actors. Military contingents have become more and more involved in internal security provision, both for reasons of insecurity and for political-military positioning. This trend has been accompanied by the growth of highly militarized armed group units, which also frequently play roles formerly performed by police departments. This dynamic is evident in both Tobruk and Sabha.

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The emergence of civil war in 2014 and 2015 drew a clear and stark line in the loyalties of the General Security Directorate and various local security directorates of the Libyan National Police and affiliated nonstate entities. Consequently, as the two case studies show, the policing infrastructure is perhaps more deeply polarized now than at any previous point.

## A Tale of Two Cities

### Box 2. Key Takeaways

In Tobruk, policing institutions are dominated by and politically aligned with the al-Ubaidat tribe. They support Khalifa Haftar's Operation Dignity and seek to roll back any post-2011 security sector reform.

In Sabha, an external security actor, Misrata's Third Force, was brought in to pacify tribal conflict. Tribes self-police, but both the MOI and Misrata have also empowered a Salafist policing actor in the city.

This section examines, based on 2015 interviews, how the interaction between national developments and local realities has played out in the cities of Tobruk and Sabha, and provides a succinct actor mapping for both cities (for detail, see the appendix).

Tobruk and Sabha illustrate how Libya's policing institutions have moved in opposite directions during the current crisis. The divergence is such that local branches of the same institutions in both towns have opposing cultures and strategic priorities, and respond to different political incentives. Policing and security institutions in Tobruk are loyal to the eastern-based government and the HoR, whereas those in Sabha are allied with and mandated by the western-based government in Tripoli and the revived GNC.

In Tobruk, a strong tribal order survived the revolution. Since 2011, one tribe, the al-Ubaidat, has remained firmly in charge and stayed independent from the central government in Tripoli, which is generally distrusted and opposed by people in Tobruk. The al-Ubaidat, which supported the rebellion against Gadhafi and 2014's Operation Dignity, and which has aligned itself with the HoR in the ongoing civil war, has used its influence to ensure that local institutions, including the police, echo the tribe's political stance. The town's local security and tribal leaders remain preoccupied with the perceived threat of political Islamist and jihadist networks.

Whereas in Tobruk an old tribal order survived the revolution, in Sabha the historical tribal order and hierarchies were upended. The previously small but dominant Qadhadhfa—Gadhafi's tribe—suddenly found themselves on the wrong side of history. The Awlad Sulaiman, a larger tribe that had formerly dominated the southern region of Fezzan but had been rendered submissive to the Qadhadhfa during Gadhafi's reign, seized the opportunity after the revolution to reassert dominance over Sabha's political and security institutions. Given Sabha's positioning as a key trafficking hub for southern Libya, this reassertion of control also affected the use of these institutions to control narcotics flows and illegal trade routes. This disruption to the political and economic order has provoked repeated waves of communal conflict among Sabha's Tebu, Awlad Sulaiman, Warfalla, and Tuareg tribes, leaving hundreds dead, and has reduced the Sabha Security Directorate to being little more than a bystander in the town's social unrest. Tripoli authorities have sought to provide assistance, most significantly using Misrata's Third Force as a pacifying element. Reflecting policing dynamics in Tripoli, Salafist groups have

also become involved in policing Sabha. As a result of these alliances with Misrata and Tripoli, Sabha and its political and security institutions have become broadly aligned with Libya's western government, the GNC Libya Dawn—a loose Islamist coalition—in Libya's ongoing civil war.

### *Postrevolution Policing in Tobruk*

In the opening days of the revolution, the al-Ubaidat tribe decided to defect from the Gadhafi regime along with the other major eastern tribes surrounding its territories, such as the Hasa, Bara'sa, and Qut'an. The momentum was sealed with the defection of the two most senior officials from the al-Ubaidat tribe, who held significant roles in Gadhafi's policing and security apparatus. On February 20, 2011, Colonel Sulaiman Mahmud al-Ubaidi, who controlled the Tobruk port and Marsa al-Hriqa oil terminal, defected from the regime. Two days later, Interior Minister Yunis also defected. As a consequence, Gadhafi lost control over eastern Libya in less than six days.<sup>33</sup> The mass defection of local policing and security personnel enabled revolutionary protests in the region to continue unchecked. Tobruk saw no opposition between revolutionaries and policing institutions.<sup>34</sup>

Tobruk's policing and security institutions survived the revolution almost intact and did not fall under the control of armed groups. The al-Ubaidat tribe sought to preserve its status as part of the military and policy elite in the new political order by having tribal members serve in key positions at the national level as well as the local. A wave of postrevolution insecurity, however, shook the tribe's control over the security establishment. Yunis, a member of the al-Ubaidat, was assassinated on July 28, 2011. The al-Ubaidat accused NTC Chairman Mustafa Abd al-Jalil of the neighboring Bara'sa tribe in Baida—according to his security adviser in a May 2013 interview—of ordering the assassination, reawakening an old tribal rift between the al-Ubaidat and the Bara'sa.<sup>35</sup> In January 2012, the al-Ubaidat tribe was hit by a second blow when its member Sulaiman Mahmud al-Ubaidi failed in his attempt to succeed Yunis as chief of staff of the NTC's armed forces. Yunis's position and that of the new interior minister both went to Misratans.

Amid this rising instability, Tobruk also found its boundaries threatened. To the northwest, Derna fell under the control of the Abu Salim Martyr's Brigade—an Islamist armed group headed by Salim Dirby—soon after the revolution. Derna was long considered an Islamist stronghold under Gadhafi and was believed to harbor a variety of Islamist groups, some reportedly more extreme than the Abu Salim Martyr's Brigade.<sup>36</sup>

To the south, the Benghazi-based, Islamist-influenced Libya Shield 1 entered Kufra city in 2012 and secured positions at Tazerbu and the Egyptian border, cutting off army units in Tobruk from the south. In neighboring Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidential election in June 2012. Before the revolution, Tobruk policing and security institutions had been focused on countering Islamist networks. Tobruk's sense of insecurity was compounded by an assassination campaign against former Gadhafi intelligence agents that disproportionately targeted Tobruk-based officers and tribes. In response, the town's institutions developed an almost siege-like mentality.

As the country attempted to introduce a series of security sector reforms, Tobruk's institutions remained in siege mode, resisting all postrevolutionary government policing and security reforms. Not only was there no incentive in Tobruk to implement reforms, but the postrevolutionary governments had neither the incentive nor the ability to compel Tobruk to change. Tobruk thus quietly disobeyed the spirit of NTC Decision No. 17 (2011), which disbanded Gadhafi's notorious ISO and ESO. The town simply removed the organizations' former names

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***Tobruk's policing and security institutions survived the revolution almost intact and did not fall under the control of armed groups.***

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and insignia, but allowed the personnel and organizational structure to continue functioning in the city as before. The ISO, for example, was initially reconstituted under the name Information Office (Sha'bat al-Ma'lumat).

As the transition from the NTC to the GNC administration progressed, Tobruk found itself in a deepening confrontation with various political Islamist interests in the government that wanted to push through political and security reforms. Tobruk became embroiled in increasingly hostile relations with the Ministry of Defense. Then deputy minister Siddiq Mabrouk al-Ghaithi al-Ubaidi, a Salafist, sought to extend Libya Shield Forces' reach into Tobruk and surrounding areas, ostensibly to create a new border guards force and bring the Egyptian border east of Tobruk under his control.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, Tobruk's relations with Minister of Interior Ashur Shwail were outwardly cooperative, but somewhat superficial in reality. When Shwail ordered the dissolution of the SSC, Tobruk was the first city to comply, albeit doing so by simply folding its one-thousand-strong SSC back into the Tobruk Security Directorate.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, when the state introduced new domestic and foreign intelligence institutions, Tobruk's intelligence personnel, who had never disbanded, simply continued their roles under the new names.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, MOI legislation establishing other new policing institutions, such as the ACU and the Special Deterrence Force, were ignored. The controversial Political Isolation Law was also disregarded in Tobruk.

In mid-2013, the al-Ubaidat and Tobruk's policing actors' resistance to what they viewed as the predation of political Islamists strengthened, but they began to see tides shifting to align with their view. The removal of Muhammad Morsi and ascension of Abd al-Fattah Sisi to the presidency in neighboring Egypt was a significant morale boost. Additionally, in June 2013, when Libya's Army Chief of Staff Yusuf al-Manqush resigned, Jadallah al-Ubaidi—a stalwart of the Tobruk military establishment—was appointed his successor.<sup>40</sup>

In May 2014, General Khalifa Haftar launched Operation Dignity (or Karama), a military campaign aimed at eliminating perceived radical Islamist armed groups in Benghazi. Although initially focused on Benghazi, Operation Dignity soon broadened into a factionalized fight against an "Islamist-leaning" alliance of armed groups known as Libya Dawn (or Fajr Libya), which sprang into opposition in western Libya. Tobruk's al-Ubaidat tribe and policing actors strongly supported General Haftar's actions.<sup>41</sup> Shortly after Operation Dignity began, the Tobruk Security Directorate posted a letter supporting General Haftar on its Facebook page, individual departments of the directorate then following suit.<sup>42</sup>

Amid a growing battle between Dignity and Dawn in Tripoli, Libya's newly elected parliament fled the capital and took refuge in Tobruk on the basis of the town's security relative to Libya's major cities. Tobruk policing and security authorities and the al-Ubaidat tribe have thus been able to increase their influence over the government-in-exile. Aqila Saleh, a key tribal figure in Tobruk, was elected as speaker of the HoR.<sup>43</sup> Saleh then decided to create a "presidential guard—to protect the HoR and its personnel," and appointed as its head his al-Ubaidat cousin and the head of the Tobruk department of the General Inspections Apparatus, Colonel Rafi. Rafi consolidated Tobruk's influence by appointing local youths from a Tobruk suburb as guardsmen in the new force.<sup>44</sup> Separately, the local Tobruk General Inspections Apparatus has interpreted its mandate the collection of information on the HoR itself.

Under Aqila Saleh's stewardship, the HoR introduced and passed legislation reinforcing the interests of the Tobruk security establishment and in February 2015 repealed the Political Isolation Law.<sup>45</sup> It also officially disbanded all postrevolutionary security actors and, in March

2015, officially recognized Khalifa Haftar as supreme commander of the Libyan National Army.<sup>46</sup> These laws are all respected and upheld by Tobruk to a degree unmatched by almost any other significant Libyan city.<sup>47</sup>

It appears inevitable that any government of national unity and any brokered political agreement over the future of the policing and security sector will result in diminishing the influence of Tobruk policing and security institutions from its current high. But the institutional, cultural, and tribal rigidity of their practices and views, and the fact that Tobruk now adheres to an entirely new set of laws that may be repealed by a future unity government, make it hard to see how Tobruk would readily embrace outside influence or change.

### *Tobruk: Policing Actor Mapping*

As elsewhere in Libya, policing functions have now spread across a variety of policing and military security entities. Policing entities that report to the Ministry of Interior include the General Security Directorate and its subsidiaries and the recently created Presidential Guard. In reality, the Tobruk Security Directorate exercises little real local policing function because the majority of criminal incidences are “resolved” directly by local tribes.

Other security entities in Tobruk that involve themselves in policing functions include the General Inspections Apparatus, which deals with internal security; the General Intelligence Apparatus, which deals with external security; and Military Intelligence. All cover counterterrorism, which they define broadly to include most strands of Islamism in Libya, and counterintelligence (for a detailed description of these actors, see appendix B).

### *Postrevolution Policing in Sabha*

Policing and security institutions in Sabha have taken a path more or less diametrically opposed to those in Tobruk. Tobruk’s institutions have been marked by almost total continuity in the local political order, Sabha’s by an almost total upending of it. Tobruk’s institutions are built on and benefit from a stable social and tribal base, Sabha’s have been radically shaped and reshaped by successive waves of intertribal conflict since 2011.

Under Gadhafi, policing and security functions were partially assumed by the paramilitary security brigades that bypassed the police and army and reported directly to Gadhafi. Libya’s southern Fezzan region was designated a special military zone under a military governor. Much of the crime in the city was connected to illicit trafficking and trade routes through the surrounding desert.<sup>48</sup> According to interviews with members of the Libya Shield unit in Sabha and the military governor of the south’s office (Libyan Armed Forces), the security brigades were better suited than the police to take on desert patrolling and frontline policing duties simply because they possessed weapons and off-road vehicles and the police did not. To the east of the city, the Faris brigade—a Gadhafi-era southern military unit recruited mainly from the Qadhadhfa, Warfalla, Awlad Sulaiman, and Tebu tribes—controlled key approaches to the town from the south and east from the town’s only high ground, the Sabha Fortress, the adjoining Military Engineering Base, and the Tamanhint military airport.<sup>49</sup> Security of approaches from the west and south of Sabha appear to have been coordinated through private farms and storage units owned by the Qadhadhfa, with at least some coordination with another security brigade, Tariq bin Ziyad, based in the nearby town of Awbari and dominated by the Qadhadhfa and Awlad Sulaiman tribes. In central Sabha, domestic security was handled by Gadhafi’s domestic intelligence apparatus, the ISO, with technical support from the Sabha Security Directorate.

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***Policing and security institutions in Sabha have taken a path more or less diametrically opposed to those in Tobruk. Tobruk’s institutions have been marked by almost total continuity in the local political order, Sabha’s by an almost total upending of it.***

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These policing and security institutions rested on a tribal hierarchy. Gadhafi appointed Qadhadhfa tribe members to head the extralegal—Tariq bin Ziyad and Faris—extralegal security brigades. The vast desert of Libya's south was also overseen by a military governor for the south, Colonel Ahmad Mas'ud, who was also drawn from the Qadhadhfa tribe. The Qadhadhfa were able to control lucrative illicit trade routes that converged on Sabha, and reaped significant economic benefits from their support for Gadhafi. The ISO was dominated by Magharha, the tribe of Gadhafi's intelligence chief and brother-in-law Abdullah Senussi, which was particularly strong in the south. Under Qadhadhfa leadership, the Sabha Security Directorate was staffed by a mixture of supportive Arab tribes, particularly the Warfalla and Awlad Sulaiman. Smaller numbers of Tebu tribe members were also recruited across these brigades, whereas Tuareg tribe members were directed into separate security brigades based in Awbari.<sup>50</sup>

With extralegal security brigades taking on many policing functions, the Sabha Security Directorate was much neglected. Serious felonies such as murder and petty crimes such as car theft, when not trafficking-related, were often intertribal and left to be resolved by intertribal mediation involving a third, neutral tribe (often the Warfalla or one of the smaller tribes from Fezzan). The Sabha Security Directorate was also hamstrung by coordination issues that kept it intentionally ineffective in handling the strategic policing issues of counternarcotics, immigration, and counterterrorism, all of which are key to securing the south.

The revolution significantly altered this balance of power in policing and security. Because protection was no longer afforded by the state, many key Qadhadhfa, Magharha, and regime figures were forced to flee the country, disappearing south and west into the Sahel. Those who stayed endured the trauma of seeing their former subservient tribal allies seizing their farms and properties.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, most members of the Warfalla tribe settled in Sabha moved north to Bani Walid, which remained a stronghold of the regime and a safe haven for Gadhafi loyalists. This left a power vacuum to be filled by the Qadhadhfa's former Arab client tribes—mainly the Awlad Sulaiman, but also the Hasawna of Birak, the Mahamid, and, for a time, armed groups from Zintan.

Following the revolution, the Awlad Sulaiman tribe swiftly stepped into this vacuum, setting up a military council and affiliated revolutionary armed group battalion, the Ahrar Fezzan. Ahmad Zarruq, a schoolteacher from the Awlad Sulaiman, took charge of a newly formed local council handling local governance issues. Other local tribes and Islamist groups in Sabha rejected the Awlad Sulaiman's sudden reassertion of dominance. From that point onward, policing and security institutions were to be reshaped by the eruption of major rounds of intertribal fighting. Ministry of Interior institutions, which had not been strong or well equipped under Gadhafi, could not cope with the new levels of armed conflict in the city, and policing services were gradually taken over by armed group actors.

For example, the military council and affiliated Ahrar Fezzan brigade was led by three former military officers from the Awlad Sulaiman tribe: Bahr al-Din al-Rifi, Muhammad Bu Saif, and Ahmad al-Utaibi. They tried to take on core policing tasks in the Sabha, including investigating crimes and—supposedly—performing countertrafficking functions. In reality, their assumption of policing duties simply paved the way for the Awlad Sulaiman to assert dominance over illicit economic activities that were mushrooming in the climate of insecurity and political instability. But this involvement in trafficking brought the Awlad Sulaiman into direct conflict with other tribes, Islamist networks, and armed groups.

By March 2012, the Ahrar Fezzan and the military council had begun seizing convoys controlled by the Tebu tribe; the Ahrar Fezzan and the military council claimed to be combating narcotics trafficking, but the Tebu was convinced that the action was just an attempt to increase the Awlad Sulaiman's share of the illegal trade. Tensions finally exploded when a member of the Tebu tribe allegedly stole a car belonging to an Awlad Sulaiman family member in central Sabha. The Awlad Sulaiman, in their policing capacity, intervened to detain the alleged thief, but in the process disrupted tribal mediation and reconciliation talks between Tebu and Awlad Sulaiman tribal leaders aimed at resolving tensions resulting from the incident. Those discussions degenerated into a firefight and five days of intense conflict. Sabha residents converged on and shelled Tebu shantytowns; at least 147 people died and approximately five hundred were wounded.<sup>52</sup> Today, this turning point in Sabha is referred to as the al-Qa'a events.

The al-Qa'a events prompted the first major postrevolutionary shift in Sabha policing structures. Communal fighting became so serious that the Libyan National Army Special Forces (Saiqa) were deployed in Sabha from April 2012. Bahr al-Din al-Rifi, a military leader from the Awlad Sulaiman who had controlled the Ahrar Fezzan's policing activities and was believed to have been the chief instigator of the fighting, fled Sabha.

The second shift came in 2013. In February, the Special Forces withdrew from Sabha and were replaced by a new army division, the Sixth Infantry Brigade, formed and supported by Army Chief of Staff Manqush. It was formed mostly from the local military council, was controlled by the Awlad Sulaiman, and was headed by Ahmad al-Utaibi. Its creation put the Awlad Sulaiman back in a position of dominance, this time with significant backing from the national government.

During this period, Salafists within the Awlad Sulaiman also began to take on a significant role within the local security apparatus in Sabha. When a Sabha branch of the SSC was formed, several hundred members of the Awlad Sulaiman tribe of Salafi orientation enrolled and began to work closely with the Sabha Security Directorate on policing. By 2013, the Sabha SSC had also developed a close relationship with Salafist-leaning SSC elements in Tripoli. For example, in January 2013, while Minister of Interior Shwail was dissolving the SSC, the Tripoli Salafist armed group leader, Abd al-Ra'uf Kara, protected the Sabha SSC branch from disbanding. Kara supported a process through which Sabha's SSC branch was instead renamed the Special Deterrence Force, linking with Kara's organization of the same name in Tripoli. The Sabha Special Deterrence Force has gradually sought to assume control over counternarcotics policing, taking these functions away from the military council and the Sixth Infantry Brigade.

By 2014, the Awlad Sulaiman had thus reconsolidated its power but appeared to have learned few lessons from the al-Qa'a events of 2012 and brewing unresolved intercommunal resentments. In January 2014, the Awlad Sulaiman commander Mansur al-Aswad, deputy to the military governor of the south, was killed by Tebu elements who sought vengeance for his alleged role in the massacre of a number of Tebu tribal leaders during the al-Qa'a events.<sup>53</sup> His death triggered another wave of violence, and revenge killings that rocked Sabha for two months. For example, the Sixth Infantry Brigade and other Awlad Sulaiman armed groups attacked a Tebu neighborhood in Sabha, al-Tayuri, reportedly killing eight. Tebu armed groups responded by sweeping into Sabha, led by Barka Wardaqu and Sharaf al-Din al-Tabawi, and besieged the Sixth Infantry Brigade in Sabha Fortress. In central Sabha, the al-Nasria, al-Manshiya, al-Tuyuri, and al-Mahdiya neighborhoods were venues for violent confrontations leading to the deaths of more than thirty people and wounding of sixty-five.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, a mixed armed group composed of Tebu and unknown gunmen forced the Sixth Infantry Brigade out of its headquarters.

Amid the violence, a new dynamic emerged—Gadhafi loyalist tribes and families, principally composed of the Qadhadhfa and Magharha tribes, capitalized on insecurity to launch their own surprise attacks on the Awlad Sulaiman. By January 18, the Qadhadhfa had managed to take over Tamanhint airbase and besieged Sabha Fortress. Pro-Qadhadhfa and Warfalla media channels called on Sabha to rise up and stoked rumors that pro-Gadhafi armed groups were arriving from Niger.<sup>55</sup>

The third shift in Sabha's policing came in response to this violence and growing fears of a counterrevolution by pro-Gadhafi forces. In early 2014, to quell the violence in Sabha, the Tripoli government deployed the Misratan Third Force—a military unit formed after the revolution in the powerful city of Misrata—purportedly to serve as a neutral pacifying force.<sup>56</sup> The Third Force has tried to restrict itself to military activities and to stay out of policing activities. Instead, it has formed alliances with tribal actors—but most of those alliances have been, once again, reliant on Awlad Sulaiman armed groups. In the absence of any functioning policing institutions, the Third Force has intervened in policing activities on occasion, a Third Force commander said in an interview, but has done so on a discretionary basis.

### *Sabha: Policing Actor Mapping*

As in Tobruk and, indeed, the rest of Libya, policing functions in Sabha are spread across an array of police and military security entities. Mandates are unclear and overlapping. The official policing entity is the town's security directorate. However, it is substantially less powerful than its Tobruk counterpart. It allows a Salafist armed group, the Special Deterrence Force (which is mandated by the MOI in Tripoli), to carry out a range of policing functions.

Other armed groups and military security entities focus on enforcing immigration rules, countering the narcotics trade, protecting key infrastructure, and maintaining public order (including imposing ceasefires on warring tribes). These include the Misratan Third Force and the allied Sixth Infantry Brigade.

Each of these official units, forces, and groups at times investigate crimes, carry out arrests, and organize pretrial detention on an ad hoc basis. Such actions, however, cannot be undertaken without first reaching understandings with tribal leaders on a case-by-case basis. The Third Force prefers to abstain from policing functions. Other armed groups, such as the Ahrar Fezzan, focus on local policing and self-protection, albeit without a clear mandate (for detail on the various actors, see appendix C).

## **Conclusion**

The two case studies of regional policing and security institutions presented in this report illustrate how Libya's political and tribal divides, together with weak institutions, have created different policing power dynamics across Libya's towns and cities.

Policing institutions in Tobruk are noteworthy because they have survived essentially intact and unreformed from the Gadhafi era. Policing activities have thus been insulated from much of the major structural and tribal upheaval experienced elsewhere in Libya, thanks to Tobruk's relatively homogenous system of tribal controls over all state institutions, including the police, and well-timed strategic political decisions and associations.

Unlike in Tobruk, in Sabha traditional state policing institutions are now virtually powerless and have been replaced by revolutionary Misratan military actors and Salafist armed groups. In Sabha, prerevolution tribal order was upended and competition over policing pow-

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***The two case studies of regional policing and security institutions presented in this report illustrate how Libya's political and tribal divides, together with weak institutions, have created different policing power dynamics across Libya's towns and cities.***

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ers remains unresolved. Repeated waves of communal unrest led Tripoli authorities to deploy the Misratan Third Force to keep the peace. An alliance of Misratan and Salafist armed groups mostly from the Awlad Sulaiman tribe now controls policing and security in the town.

### **Key Trends**

Despite differences between the policing institutions in Tobruk and Sabha, some common trends can be identified—trends that are persistent features of the Libyan policing scene and must be taken into account when considering future policing models.

Localism is a key feature of Libyan policing and likely to remain so. It extends not only to staffing and to aspects of community policing, but goes so far as to include religiosity, political alignment, strategic priorities, the division of policing tasks between entities, vetting, and training.

Civilian policing functions are split both politically and structurally across a range of entities. Policing is divided politically according to which of Libya's two rival governments local political and policing actors adhere to, and structurally across the Ministries of Interior and Defense. Some units have multiple legal documents indicating their association with more than one ministry or government. Although opportunism, central government collapse, and power struggles clearly are major factors contributing to the existence of multiple groups, resistance to centralization also plays its part.

Policing responsibilities allocated between entities are not well differentiated or delineated. In Sabha in particular, nearly all groups—whether mandated by the Ministry of Defense, the chief of staff, or the Ministry of Interior—claimed to be carrying out some form of counter-narcotics, counterterrorism, counter immigration, patrol, and policing Special Forces activities. Likewise, in Tobruk, most institutions claimed to be involved in counterterrorism or anti-Islamist work.

Reliance on Salafists to perform policing duties is increasing. Interestingly, this reliance crosses the political divide. A representative of Tobruk's domestic intelligence unit noted, for example, that quietist (or *madkhali*) Salafists were not viewed as targets or enemies, and that discrete relationships of cooperation had been formed between them and official policing units. Moreover, some Salafist armed groups are fighting alongside Khalifa Haftar's Operation Dignity in Benghazi. In Tripoli, Salafists have been joining and supporting the MOI, albeit on their own terms. In Sabha, Salafists within the Awlad Sulaiman tribe displaced more self-interested members of that tribe and emerged as the predominant policing actor. It appears likely that future Libyan policing institutions will incorporate some form of religious vetting and a moral and religious policing component due to the influence of these commanders. However, a further key trend to be balanced against this observed reliance on Salafist groups is a renewed emphasis on the authority of tribes, local councils, and community leaders.

Policing strategy and priorities are in part dictated by domestic intelligence or defense entities. The tendency of security directorates to receive orders from domestic intelligence and paramilitaries is an inheritance of the Gadhafi era. In Tobruk, this is now seen in the close relationship and influence of the General Investigations Apparatus—an institution still staffed entirely by Gadhafi-era intelligence agents and simply renamed after the revolution—over the Tobruk Security Directorate, but it is also evident in the security directorate's overt support for Haftar's Operation Dignity. In Sabha, what remains of the security directorate has a very close working relationship with the Special Deterrence Force, and relies on the Misratan Third Force and allied armed groups to carry out policing duties. In all cases, the role of the security

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***Reliance on Salafists to perform policing duties is increasing. Interestingly, this reliance crosses the political divide.***

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directorates is limited to providing technical support to criminal investigations, patrolling, and performing symbolic public order functions, such as policing traffic.

### **Key Indicators**

In a country as fragmented as Libya has become, *legitimacy* is a loaded term with military, religious, communal, legal, and political implications. Almost no institution in Libya is regarded as legitimate from all of these perspectives.

Public surveying for this report did not gather enough data among Tobruk and Sabha residents to allow statistically sound conclusions on perceptions of legitimacy for specific policing entities. However, in the context of key informant interviews, participants frequently used language expressing unambiguous value judgments on legitimacy issues (see appendix). Interestingly, the same language and value system were evident on both sides of the political divide. The following key indicators of legitimacy were expressed. Each indicator, depending on context, may be viewed positively or negatively. More systematic public surveying around these indicators is recommended.

#### **Military: Ability to Keep the Peace**

In addition to flourishing illicit trafficking, internal displacement, and other causes of social unrest, Libya is currently experiencing civil conflict at both national and local levels. In this context, interviewees often indicated readiness to accept the presence of any armed groups that could keep the peace. This acceptance, however, was not unqualified, and often depended on the interviewee's tribal or political interests. Nonetheless, interviewees were prepared to overlook a group's lack of an official mandate if that group could bolster local security and stability. For example, in Sabha, the population has largely accepted Misratan peacekeeping despite the Third Force's questionable legal basis and lack of historical precedent in peacekeeping activities. The support in Tobruk and Benghazi for Operation Dignity is based on similar reasoning.

Just as a group's ability to enhance stability can also enhance its legitimacy, a group that is seen to be undermining stability can lose legitimacy. In Sabha in 2012, the Ahrar Fezzan all but lost its perception of legitimacy through misjudged stoking of communal conflicts. By contrast, Misratan Third Force officers, despite the overwhelming firepower at their disposal, prefer to delegate policing services that, if performed by Misratans, would likely embroil them in tribal politics.

An entity that has legal standing but is essentially impotent when it comes to keeping the peace quickly loses some or all of its legitimacy. For instance, security directorates have a solid legal basis for their activities, but where they are powerless to perform their duties, their legitimacy is substantially eroded.

#### **Religion: Reputation for Discipline**

A reputation for moral and other forms of discipline among a group's members can have a positive impact on perceptions of that group's legitimacy as a policing institution. This has been the case for some Salafist and other Islamist groups, which have been able both to attract recruits because of this reputation and to marginalize policing institutions perceived as corrupt. For example, political Islamist armed groups such as the Libya Shields and Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi see themselves as disciplined (*multazimin*), and credit this with their ability to attract youth fighters. Similarly, in Sabha and even more so in Tripoli, Salafist armed groups have

superseded military councils and army-affiliated armed groups, and exercise considerable control over community and judicial policing, including specialized police units such as counter-narcotics. In part, this control comes from the Salafist groups' purported resistance to greed and corruption, and their willingness to police trafficking networks. Residents do not have to share the groups' religious views to see value in those groups' policing activities. For example, some residents of Sabha have voluntarily referred troublemakers to Salafist religious armed groups.

Adherence to religious codes of personal conduct can have negative as well as positive connotations for legitimacy, however. A person who supports a political or religious agenda opposed by, say, a particular Salafist armed group may well disregard the group's personal discipline when assessing the group's legitimacy as a policing entity.

### Community: A Tribal Identity that Resonates

Tribal representation in policing services can have both positive and negative connotations for legitimacy. In places such as Tobruk, where social cohesion is strong and one tribe is dominant, tribal representation in policing services generally improves police community relations or acceptance at a basic level. In places such as Sabha, where social cohesion is weak and intra-tribal conflict present, tribalized policing structures generate resentment and skepticism.

All interviewees in Tobruk agreed that Tobruk was very safe, and most credited this to local tribes policing themselves rather than to state policing institutions. Formal policing institutions are largely acknowledged to be inefficient in resolving criminal cases and other aspects of local policing compared with tribal authorities, in part because policing services cannot intervene unless they first receive permission from tribal authorities. The policing services' legitimacy instead relied almost exclusively on countering external threats described as "terrorist movements," which tribal self-policing could not handle. (The companion to this report, "Tribe, Security, Justice, and Peace in Libya Today," explores integration between tribe and state policing structures in depth.)

### Law: The Enduring Value of Legal Authority

Despite power struggles and turmoil in Libya, most armed groups accord strong psychological importance to legal and institutional legitimacy provided by the state. Although since the revolution many policing actors consist of armed groups under little state command and control, most have sought to legitimize themselves by at least nominally coming under the authority of the security and justice ministries, which gives them legal legitimacy as well as salaries.

### Politics: A Shared Outlook

In Tobruk, but not Sabha, field observations and data from key informant interviews indicated strongly that both the General Intelligence Apparatus and the General Inspections Apparatus have gained significant popular support and leverage among tribal authorities and decision makers due to their explicit focus on countering political Islamist networks. Unanimously, interlocutors referred to external dangers to Tobruk—specifically, the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda, and the powerful coastal town of Misrata—and praised the role of the policing and security institutions in countering them. The widespread nature of such perceptions within Tobruk suggests the existence of a shared worldview (reinforced by common tribal connections) not only among the community but also between the public and Tobruk's security institutions. Similar levels of agreement on fundamental issues—such as potentially existential

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***Despite power struggles and turmoil in Libya, most armed groups accord strong psychological importance to legal and institutional legitimacy provided by the state.***

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threats—are to be found in other Libyan towns with a relatively stable or homogenous social and political fabric, such as Misrata, Zintan, and Nalut. The same dynamic is not evident in Sabha, where severe communal conflicts have reflected and accentuated different attitudes and outlooks among the town's tribes.

All these indicators of legitimacy clearly matter to some degree in Libyan policing and security provision. Further surveying work around these indicators is highly recommended. Nonetheless, the knowledge of Libya's policing landscape provided by these studies indicates that any policing solution for Libya, national or local, should take into account the varying perceptions and aspects of legitimacy described.

### *Toward a Model?*

Policing arrangements in Libya are diverging ever faster and will become increasingly difficult to reconcile, particularly if no political framework for governing Libya appears. In such an uncertain political context, it would be premature to envisage detailed policing solutions. Nonetheless, fundamental elements would have to be taken into account when developing such a model. Finally, should new political frameworks for governing be agreed on, crafting a clear security and justice vision for Libya will be of paramount importance. Any new unity government will need to take decisive action on the future of pre- and postrevolution policing structures if it is to transform Libya's chaotic security scene and establish a set of state civilian security institutions with clearly defined and differentiated roles, powers, and responsibilities. Libya deserves a policing system fit for the free and democratic state that the revolution promised to deliver.

## **Appendix A. Research Methodology**

The methodology for this project, a collaboration between USIP and Altai Consulting, involved a combination of key informant interviews, public opinion sampling drawn from national survey results, and a thorough review of literature and open source media data in English, Arabic, and French. Where relevant, targeted media monitoring and analysis were also included. Qualitative data was gathered through an iterative process of collection followed by review and analysis, leveraging Altai's network of key informants, researchers, and experts.

### **Interviews**

Key informant interviews (or elite interviews, in social sciences terminology) are those selected on the basis of their knowledge who normally but not always have decision-making power or were or are participants in events. Altai Consulting has local coordinators in Libya who enable research to be supplemented by an extensive network of key informants:

- government officials,
- heads of state security and justice institutions,
- armed group leaders,
- leaders of women's organizations,
- heads of municipal councils,
- heads of tribal entities,
- heads of reconciliation committees,

- civil society actors,
- Libyan and international media,
- private-sector actors,
- independent experts and academics, and
- officials and experts within the international community.

Key informant interviewing has methodological limitations: sample sets are highly limited; interviews are generally semi-structured or unstructured; interviewers must accommodate interviewees' wishes on topics of discussion; interview time is limited; and interviewees sometimes cannot be reached to confirm or clarify points. Above all, information provided is not necessarily objective and may omit key facts.

To address these issues, it is critical to triangulate between categories of key informant interviews with people of different gender and from different ideological and professional backgrounds. A report focused on the impact of conflict on women, for instance, would triangulate between key informant interviews with heads of women's rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); women's associations; local councils; international personnel working on gender issues in Libya, including in the UN; and foreign embassies and NGOs. Key informant interviews help confirm conclusions drawn from other research that are unsupported elsewhere, give necessary additional insights into the interpretation of data, and ensure that a wider range of views and opinions are consulted.

Key informant interviews are carried out in person where the situation allows (such as in Tunis or Tripoli), or by telephone or Skype. Interviewees are not bound to objectivity, but are aware of the purposes of research and agree to be interviewed on that basis and with the understanding that information given will not be made public outside the context of the report. Given the cultural and political context, the confidentiality involved, and personal nature of key informant interviews, the use of written or signed agreements or statements of purpose has not been required so far.

### Media Monitoring and Literature

Monitoring and analysis of Libyan media relevant to the topic or geographical focus are conducted by the media monitoring team to provide the lead researcher with an additional source of information.

Extensive review of secondary literature of relevance to the topic or geographical focus, including news reports and academic literature, is conducted during the preparatory research phase to complement primary information collection.

### Public Opinion Sampling

To supplement findings from the key informant interviews, surveys, and media monitoring, public opinion sampling was also conducted. Sampling entails conducting in-depth interviews with ordinary Libyans through Altai's Libyan partner Istishari. The approach to these in-depth interviews depends heavily on the topic, aims, and geographical focus of the specific report. Emphasis is usually placed on sampling from a wide representation of gender, ethnic-tribal, ideological, and professional backgrounds.

Respondent recruitment for in-depth interviews draws on two methods:

- *Street intercepts*. In locations with a relatively permissive security environment, local (Libyan) Altai fieldwork coordinators locate themselves in a public space (such as a

shopping mall, park, or square), and ask random members of the public if they would be prepared to participate in an in-depth interview. The fieldwork coordinators then ask the respondent a predefined series of open-ended questions, either recording the responses using a Dictaphone or smartphone, or noting them on paper.

- *Snowball approach.* Snowballing identifies a promising starting point for recruiting in-depth interview respondents, and from there secures permission for in-depth interviews through a process of introductions and referrals. Such interviews are conducted in person by a local (Libyan) Altai fieldwork coordinator, or by phone, depending on the situation.

## Appendix B. Policing Actors in Tobruk

### Tobruk Security Directorate

Headed by Colonel Ahmad Sa'd Shu'aib (al-Ubaidat), the Tobruk Security Directorate reports to the Ministry of Interior. Its legal basis is Decree No. 288 (2006) on the reorganization of the administrative apparatus of the General People's Committee for Public Security. It is the lead policing entity operating a number of policing departments, the most significant and active of which follow:

- *Criminal Investigations Department (CID).* Headed by Colonel Ramadan al-Mazini, the CID is the largest and most active policing department in Tobruk, responsible for carrying out investigations and handling the file for all criminal cases opened by the security directorate. Interviews with CID personnel revealed that they view their role as intervening only in cases where the identity of the criminal "cannot be ascertained by investigations done by the tribes." In practice, the CID is very rarely called to intervene in criminal cases. In the vast majority of cases, where tribes believe they have identified an alleged perpetrator of a crime, they will handle the case outside the formal criminal justice system, settling the incident between families and tribes. By March 2015, the CID had carried out only two investigations into criminal cases since the 2011 revolution. These cases involved foreigners; one was the murder of an Egyptian worker by one of his compatriots. In these cases involving community outsiders, the CID can maneuver more freely, without the need to take into account tribal considerations.
- *Immigration Enforcement Department.* This department is highly active in deportations, particularly of Egyptian migrants, whom it deports by the dozens or hundreds.
- *Traffic Police Department.* Traffic police are present on almost every roundabout in Tobruk.
- *Support Units.* Civilian volunteers to the police force primarily staff police support units. Today, they are visibly operating primarily as support to the Traffic Police Department.

Outside traditional Ministry of Interior policing structures, four additional actors play roles in the policing of postrevolution Tobruk: the General Inspections Apparatus, the General Intelligence Apparatus, the Presidential Guard, and Military Intelligence.

### General Inspections Apparatus

Headed by Colonel Rafi' and (in Tobruk) Ammar al-Aswad, the General Inspections Apparatus reports to the prime minister. Its legal basis is Government Decision No. 325 (2013).

The General Inspections Apparatus was created by the Zeidan administration to replace the ISO, Gadhafi's domestic intelligence apparatus. However, as with other security institutions in Tobruk, the former ISO preserved its staffing and structure and changed only its name.

The General Inspections Apparatus concerns itself with collecting domestic intelligence and considers itself a "political police." Its activities include surveillance of members of the HoR. It also concerns itself with surveillance of "Islamist" movements. Such surveillance operates on the basis of lists, which have been safeguarded and preserved since the prerevolutionary era. These lists are "mostly the same" and have been maintained regarding political Islamist movements—particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, which the General Inspections Apparatus considers a significant state adversary. The General Inspections Apparatus has made some limited concessions to the postrevolutionary era; for example, it has removed some of Gadhafi's "political opponents" from the list. The General Inspections Apparatus has also removed the *qi-yat al-salafi*, a strain of moderate Salafists, whose influence is increasing in Cyrenaica. The main criterion for addition to monitoring lists is suspicion of belonging to Ansar al-Sharia (Muslim Brotherhood).<sup>57</sup>

### General Intelligence Apparatus

Headed by Mustafa al-Mu'arfan (HoR appointee), the General Intelligence Apparatus reports to Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni. Its legal basis is Law No. 7 (2012), which was amended by Law No. 27 (2012).

The General Intelligence Apparatus was created in 2013 to replace the ESO, Gadhafi's foreign intelligence apparatus. It reports to the head of state and presently recognizes Abdullah al-Thinni in that role.

Its scope of activities focuses primarily on threats posed by jihadist movements internally and overseas, monitors the presence of foreigners in Tobruk, and performs counterintelligence functions within Tobruk and the HoR. To this extent, it overlaps or complements the work of the General Inspections Apparatus and the security directorate.

### Presidential Guard

Headed by Colonel Rafi', the Presidential Guard reports to the speaker of the HoR. It does not appear in legal databases but was created by Aqila Saleh in his position as HoR speaker in late 2014.

The Presidential Guard was created to provide security and protection to the HoR and its executive branch. Saleh appointed Colonel Rafi', the head of the General Inspections Apparatus, to head the Presidential Guard. Its personnel are mostly from Tobruk. Originally, Rafi' appointed members of the General Inspections Apparatus to the Presidential Guard, along with some youth from the neighborhood next to the Dar al-Salam Hotel, where the HoR was first housed. After a car bomb exploded outside the hotel on December 30, 2014, the HoR was moved to Tobruk Naval Base, where serving military personnel protect parliamentary sittings.<sup>58</sup> Most of the rank-and-file members of the Presidential Guard are untrained in VIP protection, and lack many other competencies except loyalty.

In part because it is a new entity, the Presidential Guard has few cars, uniforms, or weapons; in March 2015, it had only a few small arms such as Kalashnikovs, and some armored and unarmored vehicles. It depends almost entirely on donations from personnel and allied armed group commanders and VIPs; for example, Issa Abd al-Majid, a Tebu armed group commander and adviser to Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni, supplied youth and weapons to the Presidential Guard when he took his advisory role.

The Presidential Guard has to some extent assumed the role of the Libyan National Police in providing security to key personnel and infrastructure in Tobruk. Its role has diminished since the HoR moved to the Tobruk Naval Base, however.

### Military Intelligence

The national head of Military Intelligence is Shu'ail al-Sabir (al-Ubaidat, based in Tobruk). The head of the Tobruk branch is Rashid Isma'il. Military Intelligence reports to the chief of staff of the Libyan Armed Forces (Abd al-Razzaq Nad'uri) and then to the supreme commander (Khalifa Haftar).

The military intelligence branch of the Libyan National Army is a component of the Libyan Armed Forces and predates the revolution. It works closely with other parts of the intelligence apparatus to collect information and support military units in counterterrorism operations. It also concerns itself with counterterrorism policing concerns, and has similar intelligence priorities to the General Inspections Apparatus, focusing on the Muslim Brotherhood, Ansar al-Sharia, and political Islamic networks. However, in an interview, a member of Military Intelligence gave the impression that it was more powerful and confident than the General Inspections Apparatus. The building housing the headquarters of the Tobruk Military Intelligence was damaged by a car bomb on April 14, 2015.<sup>59</sup> The branch supports Haftar's Operation Dignity, and in an interview an officer talked of Haftar in very positive terms.

## Appendix C. Policing Actors in Sabha

### Sabha Security Directorate

Headed by Muhammad Ali Bishr (previously Sanusi Saleh), the Sabha Security Directorate reports to the MOI.

Ali Bishr was selected in 2015 to reinforce and reinvigorate the police force. According to the mayor of Sabha al-Khayali, who estimated that the regular police force had two thousand officers, "The main problem is not that the police is absent but that there is no efficient leadership to put pressure on the police to work. We chose Bishr to reinvigorate the police because they are weak." The weakness of police was cited by interviewees to be their lack of capacity, their image as former regime apparatchiks, and the proliferation of weapons in Sabha. "Police are so scared of criminals they don't even want to patrol as undercover agents in civilian clothes," al-Khayali explained.

The security directorate oversees regular police forces in Sabha and coordinates activities between all security forces affiliated with the MOI. Out of necessity, it has tended to work closely with the Special Deterrence Force, to which it has delegated the policing of Sabha prison, and the Ahrar Fezzan, with which it coordinates police patrols. This cooperation has extended so far that during the month of Ramadan 2015, due to the high crime rate, the Sabha Security Directorate formed a special operations room for the short-term enrollment of security forces. With a budget provided by the Sabha Municipal Council, the directorate hired about three hundred men for one month.

### Military Governor of the South

Headed by Imhammad Salim Salih al-Dhahabi, the military governor of the south reports to the prime minister.

Partly to stem the influence of local commanders and forces, the GNC declared southern Libya a military zone in January 2013 and dispatched a military governor, Ramadan al-Barasi, to Sabha. After only four months, in May 2013, Barasi was replaced by Imhammad Salim Salih al-Dhahabi. The creation of the military zone did not produce any significant changes on the ground. Al-Dhahabi is a member of the Awlad Sulaiman tribe, but also is part of a lineage within several Libyan tribes whose members claim to trace their antecedents back to the Prophet Muhammad. His appointment in May 2013 was influenced by then prime minister Ali Zeidan. Zeidan's family, which is of the same lineage, has been historically tied to the Awlad Sulaiman tribe, and in 2013 and 2014 took numerous decisions aimed at shoring up the position of the Awlad Sulaiman in the south. In January 2014, Tebu activists tried but failed to assassinate al-Dhahabi.

### The Third Force

Headed by Jamal al-Traiki and Chief of Operations Muhammad al-Darrat, the Third Force reports to the chief of staff of the Armed Forces (Tripoli) and, via the chief of staff, to Nuri Bu Sahmain as supreme commander of the Armed Forces. Its legal basis is Presidential Decree No. 2/2014, issued by the supreme commander of the Armed Forces (GNC President Nuri Bu Sahmain), and Presidential Decision No. 37 (January 22, 2014).

The Third Force began life as the Central Division of the Libya Shield in March 2012. It originally comprised seventy-five Misratan revolutionary battalions and fighters from Zlitan, Bani Walid, al-Khums, Sirte, and Hun. As the Libya Shield Forces became increasingly fragmented and politicized over 2013, the commander of the Libya Shield Central Division renamed the unit the Third Force. On January 24, 2014, Nuri Bu Sahmain, self-appointed supreme commander of the Armed Forces, designated the Third Force as a military force with a mandate to “secure the south” and “eliminate rogue elements undermining state sovereignty.” Decree No. 2 (2014) stipulated that it be formed by merging standing army units with “legitimate” local revolutionary formations; in Sabha, this entailed merger with the Sixth Infantry Brigade. The Third Force sees itself as a military force but some ambiguity remains about the scope of its military responsibilities, which include some policing functions.

The Third Force was deployed to Sabha in January 2014 to pacify tribal fighting but has spread its might and influence throughout the southwest. In February 2014, it used a cease-fire agreement with Tebu and Awlad Sulaiman tribes to justify securing strategic positions surrounding the north and east of the city. Next it deployed to Wadi al-Ajal—the area to the south of Sabha between Murzuq and Awbari. In August 2014, when fighting broke out between Tuareg and Ahali communities, the Third Force set up a permanent presence in the town of Germa with established checkpoints. Since then, the Third Force has maintained its positions and Sabha's military security is now almost exclusively Misratan-dominated. The Third Force has tended to refrain from taking on policing duties, preferring to delegate these tasks to tribal actors, but it has sometimes intervened on a discretionary basis in investigating and resolving civil and criminal disputes.

### Sixth Infantry Brigade

Headed by Ahmad al-Utaibi (Awlad Sulaiman), the Sixth Infantry Brigade reports to the chief of staff of the Libyan Armed Forces. Its legal basis is Chief of Staff Decision No. 204 (May 2013).

Following the revolution, Bahr al-Din al-Rifi from the Awlad Sulaiman tribe became head of the local military council and, in April 2012, staged an unsuccessful attempt to seize arms and narcotics trading routes controlled by the Tebu. After this and his subsequent loss of control of the military council, the Awlad Sulaiman tribe found itself opposed by a pact between the Tebu and Tuareg. In response, Awlad Sulaiman forces under the leadership of the Ahmad al-Utaibi family took over the Sabha Fortress, the adjoining Engineering Base, and Tamanhint military airport. In 2013, this force enrolled itself into the Libyan Armed Forces, renaming itself the Sixth Infantry Brigade. The deployment of the Sixth Infantry Brigade into Sabha in December 2013 prompted communal clashes that led to the deployment of the Misratan Third Force, which took over many of the key infrastructure. The Sixth Infantry Brigade remains headquartered in these locations, but has effectively ceded control over its operations, equipment, and facilities to the Third Force.

The Sixth Infantry Brigade is involved in policing functions to the same extent as the Third Force, to which it is allied and with which it integrated. Most Third Force deployments in the region are joint deployments, with a minority of vehicles and personnel belonging to the Sixth Infantry Brigade. The brigade's commanders remain substantially underequipped compared with their Misratan counterparts, and operational decisions appear to be made exclusively by the Third Force.

### Ahrar Fezzan/Quwwat al-Istikhbarat (The Freeman of Fezzan)

Headed by Bahr al-Din al-Rifi (Awlad Sulaiman), the Freeman of Fezzan reports to the chief of staff of the Armed Forces (Tripoli) and coordinates with the military governor of Sabha. Formed on a chief of staff decision, no other legal basis is known.

Bahr al-Din al-Rifi formed the Sabha military council and the Ahrar Fezzan in August 2011, after the fall of Tripoli to rebel forces working with the Tebu field commander Sharaf al-Din al-Tabawi and other rebel commanders. Bahr al-Din al-Rifi came to be viewed as a warlord and a profiteer in the illegal trafficking flowing through Sabha, and his men were widely believed in Sabha to have prompted the al-Qa'a civil unrest incident of April 2012. After April 2012, Bahr al-Din al-Rifi lost control of the military council and temporarily fled the city. However, his men later resurfaced in September 2013, attacking a Hasawna unit stationed at the Sabha Fortress. Later, Bahr al-Din al-Rifi renamed the Ahrar Fezzan as the Quwwat al-Istikhbarat. Throughout, Bahr al-Din al-Rifi has developed and retained a strategic relationship with Misrata; his troops receive training in Misrata.

During an interview, Bahr al-Din al-Rifi was reluctant to specify or divulge his group's activities, and so the full scope of activities of the Ahrar Fezzan/Quwwat al-Istikhbarat remains unclear. At present, the main role of the force appears to be conducting raids and armed policing support to the Sabha Security Directorate, despite the fact that the Ahrar Fezzan is technically a military entity. The Ahrar Fezzan has on occasion involved itself in counternarcotics raids: "Drugs have become a normal sight. . . . Recently we stopped a car full of hashish, cocaine, heroin, and pills," Bahr al-Din al-Rifi claimed in an interview. The Ahrar Fezzan has appeared to lose ground in the counternarcotics space to the Special Deterrence Force and the Third Force, both of which control strategic approaches to Sabha, while the Ahrar Fezzan is based inside the

city. The Ahrar Fezzan is most likely also engaged in gathering and supplying intelligence to the Third Force and the Sabha Security Directorate.

### Special Deterrence Force

Headed by Ibrahim Imbarak Muhammad (Awlad Sulaiman), the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) reports to the MOI, the Sabha Security Directorate (official), and the Tripoli Special Deterrence Force (unofficial). Its legal basis is Interior Ministry Decision No. 106 (2012), GNC Decision No. 27 (2013), and MOI Decision No. 144 (2013).

The SDF was formed in January 2013 as the “Security Backup Force for the Southern Region,” its 137 members all drawn from the ranks of professional soldiers or police. It was created by the head of the Tripoli organization of the same name, Abd al-Ra’uf Kara, formed from a selection of Salafi-inclined groups. Although integrated into the MOI, interviews reveal, the force receives weapons and funding from Misratan sources. This has made the SDF effectively a satellite of Misratan influence and an ally of Libya Dawn. Officially, it reports directly to the security chief of the MOI, but the Sabha Security Directorate authorizes its operational decisions. In practice, Kara has significant influence on the shape and direction of the force. As of July 2015, it had 540 registered members; most are from the Awlad Sulaiman tribe but members of other tribes are allowed to join if their moral and religious stance aligns with Imbarak’s. According to Imbarak, because the MOI has failed to pay some of the force’s wages, only 250 members are in active service, while the rest stay home or have returned to their prerevolution jobs.

The SDF carries out policing activities on behalf of the Sabha Security Directorate. It also directly controls security at Sabha prison, where it has established a religious library and Quranic education activities. It also reportedly controls a secret prison facility with similar characteristics at the Third Force base in Sabha Fortress. From its headquarters in a residential building on the outskirts of Sabha that used to belong to the Gadhafi family, the SDF is also the primary force responsible for interdicting narcotics trafficking routes entering Sabha from the south and west of Sabha, while the Third Force patrols territory to the south and east.

### Notes

- 1 A Tripolitania Defense Force was also created, but the CDF was significantly favored. See, for example, Dirk Vanderwalle, *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 67–72, 79. See also John Oakes, *Libya: The History of Gaddafi’s Pariah State* (The Stroud, UK: History Press, 2011), 97.
- 2 Vanderwalle, *History of Modern Libya*, 66.
- 3 All citations of legal documents in this report are sourced directly from the documents, which were kindly provided by Thibault Gallea at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), via DCAF’s security sector legislation database for Libya ([www.security-legislation.ly](http://www.security-legislation.ly)).
- 4 DCAF.
- 5 See Hanspeter Mattes, “Challenges to Security Sector Governance in the Middle East: The Libyan Case” (paper presented at the Challenges of Security Sector Governance in the Middle East workshop, Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Geneva, July 12–13, 2004), 11–12. In this paper, the relevant office is translated as Intelligence Bureau.
- 6 See Joe Walker-Cousins, “Background Paper on Libya” (presented at the Security Sector Transformation in Arab Transitions: Working for Change conference, Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut, Lebanon, December 17–18, 2012), 7.
- 7 Set up in the 1992 reforms to counter threats from Islamist groups; received significant training from the west in the later years of the Gadhafi regime.
- 8 The details of the security directorate substructures are sourced from Decree No. 288 (2006) on the reorganization of the administrative apparatus of the General People’s Committee for Public Security, DCAF. Research for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya from November 2012 to May 2013 confirmed this organization.

- 9 See Article 6, Law No. (10) of 1992 on security and police, DCAF.
- 10 Libya's political Islamist networks ranged from the Muslim Brotherhood, to Salafists, to the more militant Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). For further discussion, see Mary Fitzgerald, "Finding Their Place: Libya's Islamists During and After the 2011 Uprising" in *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*, ed. Peter Cole and Brian McQuinn (London: Hurst, 2015), 177–204.
- 11 Yunis ramped up training for the Criminal Investigations Department, the Public Order Department, and Counterterrorism Department, opening new training facilities in Tripoli, Sirte, and Benghazi to train both cadets and officers. English-language training began in 2006, law and criminology courses were established in Egypt, riot control and specialized prison guard training was provided by the United Kingdom, and trade courses at KSA University in Saudi Arabia sought to reform training. See Joe Walker-Cousins, "Background Paper on Libya," 9.
- 12 See Peter Cole and Umar Khan, "The Fall of Tripoli: Part 1," in *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*, ed. Peter Cole and Brian McQuinn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 58.
- 13 For a description of the development of these camps and definitions, see Naji Abou Khalil and Laurence Hargreaves, "Perceptions of Security in Libya: Institutional and Revolutionary Actors," Peaceworks No. 108 (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2015). See also Wolfram Lacher, "Fault Lines of the Revolution: Political Actors, Camps and Conflicts in the New Libya," SWP Research Paper, May 2013, [www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research\\_papers/2013\\_RP04\\_lac.pdf](http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2013_RP04_lac.pdf).
- 14 A police colonel interviewed in Tobruk in March 2015, for example, asserted that there were twenty-two departments within the National Police.
- 15 On the political isolation law, see Roman David and Houda Mzioudet, "Personnel Change or Personal Change? Rethinking Libya's Political Isolation Law," Project on Arab Transitions Paper No. 4 (Washington, DC: Brookings Doha Center / Stanford University Center on Democracy Development & the Rule of Law, March 2014); see also Lacher, "Fault Lines," 13.
- 16 Assassination of security officials has been a steady occurrence since the revolution, particularly in Benghazi. See Hanan Salah, "Counting the Dead in Benghazi," *Foreign Policy*, June 6, 2014; *BBC Africa*, "Libya Crisis: Head of Tripoli Police Assassinated," August 12, 2014.
- 17 "HOR Shelves Political Isolation Law," *Libya Herald*, February 2, 2015, [www.libyaherald.com/2015/02/02/hor-repeals-political-isolation-law/](http://www.libyaherald.com/2015/02/02/hor-repeals-political-isolation-law/).
- 18 The SSC was created by Prime Ministerial Decision No. 41 in September 2011. See Peter Cole and Umar Khan, "The Fall of Tripoli: Part 2," *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 100–4.
- 19 MOI Decision No. 388 (2011), DCAF.
- 20 UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), "Mapping of Armed Groups in Libya," internal document, May 2013.
- 21 See Wolfram Lacher and Peter Cole, "Politics by Other Means: Conflicting Interests in Libya's Security Sector," Working Paper No. 20 (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, October 2014), 30–32.
- 22 UNSMIL "Mapping of Armed Groups in Libya."
- 23 The ACU was created by MOI Decision No. 1331 (2012).
- 24 Lacher and Cole, "Politics by Other Means," 76.
- 25 "Supreme Security Committee to be dissolved by end of this year, says Tripoli security chief," *Libya Herald*, October 17, 2012, [www.libyaherald.com/2012/10/17/supreme-security-committee-to-be-dissolved-by-end-of-the-year/](http://www.libyaherald.com/2012/10/17/supreme-security-committee-to-be-dissolved-by-end-of-the-year/).
- 26 Lacher and Cole, "Politics by Other Means," 79.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 37.
- 28 Lacher and Cole, "Politics by Other Means," 37. The Shield units referred to, particularly Libya Shield 2, are not to be confused with the other Benghazi-based Libya Shield units, 1 and 7, which were Islamist-dominated. The Ministry of Defense and anti-Islamist federalist groups sponsored other divisions in the Libya Shield, such as Shield 2, to counter Islamist influence in the unit.
- 29 Lacher and Cole, "Politics by Other Means," 37–38.
- 30 UNSMIL, "Mapping of Armed Groups in Libya."
- 31 Lacher and Cole, "Politics by Other Means," 36.
- 32 UNSMIL, "Mapping of Armed Groups in Libya"; see also Lacher and Cole, "Politics by Other Means," 38.
- 33 Cole and Khan, "Fall of Tripoli: Part I," 58.
- 34 A nonstate revolutionary *ketiba* called Lions of the Desert existed in Tobruk during the revolution; however, a security official explained in an interview, it was manned by Tobruk military personnel and civilian volunteers and, following the Declaration of Liberation in November 2011, these men swiftly merged back into their former units.
- 35 For examples of statements to the media indicating such tensions, see, for example, "Slain Libyan leader's son demands justice," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 4, 2011, <http://english.aawsat.com/2011/08/article55245559/slain-libyan-leaders-son-demands-justice>.

- 36 See Mary Fitzgerald, “Finding Their Place,” in *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 201–2.
- 37 Former LIFG member and Tobruk resident of Misratan origin, Siddiq Mabrouk al-Ghaithi al-Ubaidi’s Salafist networks, inspired by Saudi religious and political currents, were so strong that the chief mufti, Sadiq al-Ghariani (who was of the same currents) intervened personally to ensure Ubaidi had an autonomous budget within the Defense Ministry. See Wolfram Lacher, “Fault Lines,” 15. Ubaidi used this budget to try and create a Border Guards force from commanders also formerly associated with the LIFG and, in one case, indirectly to al-Qaeda; as part of this effort, in Tobruk Ubaidi created a Tobruk Shield that attempted to move into border policing. Ubaidi refused to place his border guards under the command of the army chief of staff, and when then defense minister Muhammad al-Barghati tried to overturn this decision, Ubaidi’s Tobruk Shield attacked Barghati’s convoy at the Tobruk air base in January 2013 in an apparent attempt to assassinate him.
- 38 UNSMIL, “Mapping of Armed Groups in Libya.”
- 39 Government Decision No. 325 (2013), DCAF.
- 40 See “Al-Barlaman al-Libi Yu’ayyin al-Aqid Jad Allah al-Ubaidi Ra’isan Jadidan li-Arkan al-Jaish al-Libi,” *Al Quds*, July 30, 2013, [www.alquds.co.uk/?p=67893](http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=67893).
- 41 For a timeline of key events in Operation Dignity, see Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr, “Dignity and Dawn: Libya’s Escalating Civil War” (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism Research Paper, The Hague, February 2015), 4.
- 42 Nonetheless, small pockets of opposition exist in Tobruk, questioning Haftar’s future and small protests and criticism in the local media have grown since 2014. See “Tobruk Group Asks for Military Council Headed by Haftar to Lead, Libya,” *Barwabat al-Wasat*, August 10, 2015, <http://en.alwasat.ly/en/news/libya/997/Tobruk-group-asks-for-Military-Council-headed-by-a-to-lead-Libya-after-HOR-mandate-ends.htm>. Videos of the counterprotests were posted on Facebook by, among others, the We Will Not Lose Our Revolution Facebook group on August 26, 2015, <https://video-lhr3-1.xx.fbcdn.net/hvideo-xtp1/v/t42.1790->.
- 43 “Intikhab Aqila Saleh Issa Ra’isan lil-Barlaman,” *Al-Arabiyya*, August 5, 2014, [www.alarabiya.net/ar/north-africa/libya/2014/08/05/Intikhab-Aqila-Saleh-Issa-Ra-is-an-lil-Barlaman](http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/north-africa/libya/2014/08/05/Intikhab-Aqila-Saleh-Issa-Ra-is-an-lil-Barlaman).html.
- 44 Occasionally influential armed group commanders were able to bring in their own men under the umbrella of the Presidential Guard; for example, Issa Abd al-Majid, now an adviser to Abdullah al-Thinni, brought his fighters into the unit. However, most soldiers are Tobruk residents.
- 45 “HOR repeals political isolation law,” *Libya Herald*, February 2, 2015, [www.libyaherald.com/2015/02/02/hor-repeals-political-isolation-law/](http://www.libyaherald.com/2015/02/02/hor-repeals-political-isolation-law/).
- 46 See Reuters, “Libya Recalls General Haftar for Army Duty,” March 21, 2015, [www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/19/libya-general-haftar\\_n\\_6501844.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/19/libya-general-haftar_n_6501844.html).
- 47 For example, Zintani authorities respect the repeal of the Political Isolation Law, but have since distanced themselves from supporting Haftar.
- 48 See Peter Cole, “Borderline Chaos? Securing Libya’s Periphery” (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 18, 2012); Mark Shaw and Fiona Mangan, “Illicit Trafficking and Libya’s Transition: Profits and Losses,” *Peaceworks* No. 96 (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2014).
- 49 On the Faris brigade, see Peter Cole, “Bani Walid: Loyalism in a Time of Revolution” in *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 291.
- 50 Peter Cole, “Bani Walid,” in *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 291.
- 51 Specifically, Ahmad Zarruq revealed in a March 2013 interview, it was Zintani forces who raided some villas belonging to the Qadhadhfa.
- 52 “Libyan tribal clashes kill at least 147 people,” *Guardian*, March 31, 2012, [www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/31/libya-tribal-clashes-sabha-deaths](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/31/libya-tribal-clashes-sabha-deaths).
- 53 Having crossed into Tebu territory to attend a military graduation, interviews revealed, al-Aswad was captured by Tebu forces and executed in a nearby military base.
- 54 “Clashes strain health services in Libya’s south,” IRIN, January 21, 2014, [www.irinnews.org/report/99508/clashes-strain-health-services-libya%E2%80%99s-south](http://www.irinnews.org/report/99508/clashes-strain-health-services-libya%E2%80%99s-south). See also Wolfram Lacher, “Libya’s Fractious South and Regional Instability,” *Dispatch* No. 4 (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, February 2014), 4.
- 55 “Al-Ayat yuakkid insihab al-musallihin min qaidat Tamanhant w tahrir al-hakim al-askari li-Sabha,” *Wikalat Anba’ al-Tadamon*, January 18, 2014, [www.presssolidarity.net/news/ONENEWS/46023-ahab-sal-yi-raksh-ala-m-lahala-yi-jat-w-tanzim-adaq-nm-nih-lasm-la-bah-sana-play-ala](http://www.presssolidarity.net/news/ONENEWS/46023-ahab-sal-yi-raksh-ala-m-lahala-yi-jat-w-tanzim-adaq-nm-nih-lasm-la-bah-sana-play-ala). See also “Tamanhint airbase remains under Qaddafi loyalist control as Sebha clashes continue,” *Libya Herald*, January 23, 2014.
- 56 “Tripoli declares state of emergency in Libya’s south,” *Financial Times*, January 19, 2014, [www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0c672536-8102-11e3-b3d5-00144feab7de.html#axzz40QuIDrZG](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0c672536-8102-11e3-b3d5-00144feab7de.html#axzz40QuIDrZG); “Misratan-led forces take control of military barracks and airport in Sebha,” *Libya Herald*, April 10, 2014, [www.libyaherald.com/2014/04/11/misratan-led-forces-take-control-of-military-barracks-and-airport-in-sebha/](http://www.libyaherald.com/2014/04/11/misratan-led-forces-take-control-of-military-barracks-and-airport-in-sebha/).

- 57 Although it is hard to know how to interpret this observation, the officer interviewed did not emphasize the threat posed by, or the resources allocated to combating, Islamic State.
- 58 See “Car Bomb Explodes at Libyan Parliament Building in Tobruk,” *International Business Times*, December 30, 2014, [www.ibtimes.co.uk/car-bomb-explodes-libyan-parliament-building-tobruk-1481345](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/car-bomb-explodes-libyan-parliament-building-tobruk-1481345).
- 59 See “Tafasil Infijjar Siyara Mufakhakha Amam al-Istikhbarat al-Askariyya bi-Madinat Tobruk al-Libia,” *al-Masrawy*, April 14, 2015.



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Policing institutions are among Libya's oldest and most enduring institutions. In the wake of the 2011 revolution, however, they are in disarray across the country and headed in opposite directions. The biggest challenge for policing and security reform is to find a way for the many actors—revolutionary versus old guard, Islamist versus institutionalist—to evolve into a coherent policing and security framework. This report, supported by the U.S. Department of State, tracks how political currents since the fall of Muammar Gadhafi have shaped policing and security actors on the ground. Taken together with a companion report on tribalism in Libya, it suggests that political currents and divisions alternately coopt and reinforce historic and social divisions, and vice versa.

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