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Primer Paper

Libya: Dealing with the Militias and Advancing Security Sector Reform
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Introduction: Libya's Transition to Peace and Security

The death of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi on October 20, 2011 marked the end of a tumultuous chapter in Libya's history, the 42-year dictatorship in Libya (Salem and Kadlec, 2012: 1). Sparked by political unrest in Tunisia and Egypt, the revolution to which the Gaddafi regime would succumb began with protests in Benghazi and quickly spread to Tripoli after the Libyan army was ordered to fire on protesters (Black, 2011). Parts of the army defected and civilians became increasingly alarmed with the atrocities committed by the government and armed forces (Gillete and Gamel, 2011). Gaddafi responded with further violence - the national army was ordered to stop the unrest at all costs, resulting in mass human rights violations (Gillete and Gamel, 2011).

These repressive tactics led to more defections, as members of the government, military and tribal leadership joined the opposition, which went on to create an interim government - the National Transitional Council [NTC] (Human Rights Watch, 2013: 580). The conflict also led to the proliferation of revolutionary brigades and military councils that banded together to protect and defend individual communities. The death of Gaddafi and the victory of the NTC ended one era of tumult; however, the security and political situation in Libya remains fragile and uncertain.

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The Security Situation at Present

It is generally acknowledged that national security and justice institutions under Gaddafi were underdeveloped (Wood, 2012: 12). The post-Gaddafi Libyan administration has largely been unable to strengthen these institutions enough to assume full responsibility for security in the country or assert a monopoly over the use of force (Human Rights Watch, 2013: 11). This has created a security vacuum, resulting in the further proliferation of non-state and semi-official armed groups that first emerged during the revolution (International Crisis Group: 2012). While some armed groups operate with a security mandate from the government, the state exercises little oversight of the activities of the militias, which have independent command and control structures (Human Rights Watch, 2013: 581). These militias are estimated to comprise approximately 250,000 armed members (Chatham House, 2012: 10). The country's lack of success in demobilizing armed groups has contributed to escalating violence, lawlessness and political instability.

Security incidents have been documented in the Nafusa Mountains in the northwest of the country and in the towns of Sirte and Bani Walid in southeastern Libya (Human Rights Watch, 2013: 582). The national military was deployed in southern Libya following tribal clashes over issues such as "border control, land rights, and trafficking routes" among Libyan Arab tribes and the African Tabu tribes (Human Rights Watch, 2013: 582). Most recently, the Libyan Prime Minister's October 10 kidnapping and subsequent release by a local militia made international headlines. The militia was initially hired by the government to provide security in Tripoli (Shennib and Laessing, 2013). The kidnapping of Prime Minister Ali Zeiden and militia attacks on government ministries by groups tenuously aligned with the General National Congress (GNC)—such as the attack on the Libyan Foreign Ministry building on September 11, 2013—demonstrates the need to reign in militias and for further security sector reforms (Mohamed and Michael, 2013).

Libya's Security Landscape

Security in Libya today is primarily overseen and delivered locally at the community level by a variety of actors, including: tribal elders, military councils, municipal councils, ketibas , and police.

The Small Arms Survey (2012) differentiates between four types of armed groups: revolutionary brigades, unregulated brigades, post-revolutionary brigades, and militias (2).

Revolutionary Brigades formed during the early stages of the revolution to defend and liberate their own communities. Characteristics of revolutionary brigades include cohesiveness, strong allegiance to their leaders, consensus-oriented decision-making, and significant combat experience (Small Arms Survey, 2012: 2; McQuinn, 2012: 17). Toward the end of the revolution the armed groups began to form "local coordinating structures," including military councils and unions of revolutionaries (Small Arms Survey, 2012: 2).

In contrast, Unregulated Brigades distanced themselves from local military councils, and other forms of coordination, during the latter stages of the revolution. Nonetheless, they exhibit a cohesive organizational structure and military capacity similar to the revolutionary brigades. These brigades operate outside any jurisdiction and conform to social expectations attached to their community of origin. According to Human Rights Watch (2011/2012), these brigades are responsible for a high number of cases of human rights abuses (Small Arms Survey, 2012: 2).

Post-revolutionary brigades emerged to fill the security vacuum after Gaddafi's defeat and are increasing in number. Because these brigades emerged so quickly, their military practices are less effective and cohesive. However, they have been gaining experience through fighting in various communal conflicts (McQuinn, 2012: 29). They are found in both pro-government and pro-Gaddafi neighbourhoods, as well as in cities and towns less affected by the conflict (Small Arms Survey, 2012: 2).

Unlike the brigades, the Militias formed mostly independent of the revolution, and are primarily criminal or interest-based groups (Wood, 2012: 13). These militias constitute only a small fraction of the armed groups active in Libya (Small Arms Survey, 2012). However, the sophistication and severity of the attacks carried out by militias has been increasing since the end of the revolution (Small Arms Survey, 2012: 2).

National armed groups include the National Army, National Shield, National Guard, the Preventative Security Apparatus, the Supreme Security Committees, and the Libyan General Purpose Force.

The National Army is mainly comprised of individuals who joined the National Liberation Army when the NTC was formed. The army is still under construction and the Warriors Affairs Committee plans to integrate 50,000 fighters through its program (Wood, 2012: 15). The National Army lacks legitimacy due to structural residues of the Gaddafi regime (Small Arms Survey, 2012: 2).

The National Shield/'Daraa', under the Ministry of Defence, was established by revolutionary brigades who view themselves as "guardians of the revolution" and distrust the National Army (Small Arms Survey, 2012: 2). The National Shield is comprised of a national network of revolutionary brigades to be deployed to areas that suffer from "inter-communal tension or violence" (Wood, 2012: 15).

The National Guard was created as an alternative to local armed groups and was to be deployed to sensitive areas by the Ministry of Defence (Wood, 2013: 15). According to Wood (2013), some believe that the National Guard "is a front for the Tripoli Military Council" with an underlying Islamist agenda (15). Information on the actual tasks of the National Guard is sparse.

The Preventive Security Apparatus is a counterintelligence force under the chief of staff of the border guard (including a sub-organization in charge of guarding vital installations).

The Supreme Security Committee (SCC) is a "a quasi-official body of former anti-Gaddafi fighters" that collaborates with the Ministry of Interior (Human Rights Watch, 2013: 581). The SCC is an alternative to local armed groups and has been used to challenge the authority of the military councils (Wood, 2012: 15). According to Wehrey (2012: 19), the SSC carries potential problems due to the lack of clarity in their sizes, ranging from 90,000 to 100,000 members; the force being composed of revolutionary fighters and; the fact that the local police force is ridiculed as being a Gaddafi-era holdout, with accusations of torture, kidnapping, murder.

Talks regarding a Libyan General Purpose Force remain vague but would involve the training of a military force, potentially comprised of 20,000 Libyans (Nickels, 2013). The plan comes at the request of Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan, who has asked his international partners, including the G8, to train military units comprised of "foot soldiers, junior officers, and senior noncommissioned officers" (Nickels, 2013). It is not yet clear where these units would be deployed.

Sources of Tension Between Local and National Actors

Although tentative steps towards the security sector's reform and formalization have been taken, progress is slow (Chatham House, 2012: 6). A key challenge facing the Libyan government is the consolidation and demobilization of the country's multitude of non-state armed groups—followed by their reintegration into civilian society— and their replacement with effective state security forces capable of providing security and safeguarding the rule of law in an accountable, equitable and rights-respecting manner (Wood, 2012: 12).

The establishment of "local coordinating structures" was a response to the security vacuum created during and after the revolution (Arms Survey, 2012: 1). Small independent units emerged across Libya with the mandate to provide protection and supplies to civilians (Lacher, 2013: 17). These groups later developed into local and regional revolutionary brigades and military councils. The dynamics of these "local coordinating structures" are region-specific. Although the decentralized nature of these groups poses a security challenge, they provide a channel of communication between community interests and the central government (Lacher, 2013: 18).

Thus far, the Ministry of Defence has not been able to establish control over the vast array of armed groups in the country (Wood, 2012: 16). According to Wood (2012), one reason for this is the ministry's lack of alignment with local military councils (16). However, greater engagement with the councils may have a limited practical benefit, as they are often more responsive to local elected and traditional leaders than the central government (Wood, 2012: 16). Military councils and powerful tribal groups have competed for influence over national security actors and the state more broadly (Wood, 2012: 17). This growing influence over the state by powerful councils and tribes has eroded the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of some communities and armed groups (Human Rights

1 *Keitbas* are local, neighborhood or town/city-based milita units that fought in the revolution. They are composed of *thuwar*, individual militiamen who fought in the revolution, many of whom demobilized after the revolution.

Watch, 2013: 581).

A stable, democratic, and prosperous Libya is seen as an important part of regional stability as well as "the future progress of the Arab Spring" (Wood, 2012: 18). At present, security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs are administered in a security vacuum that is filled by a multitude of security actors, both state and non-state (Wood, 2012: 16).

Formalizing the Security Sector

In Libya, state-building and democratization is taking place in the context of absent pre-existing institutions, a weak security sector, political inexperience, and competing ideological perspectives (Ashour, 2012: 1). From these factors, and the continuing influence of militias, a hybrid security arrangement has emerged. However, recent security incidents have shown that this arrangement is likely unsustainable in the medium to long-term, placing the national army and police's development and strengthening as a high priority (Salem and Kadlec, 2012: 9).

Security Sector Reform Programs

The Libyan government has created a security sector reform plan, which includes: "recruitment, rehabilitation, training, and equipment with the assistance and collaboration of friendly governments, such as Jordan, Qatar, and Turkey" (Salem and Kadlec, 2012: 9). The NTC was part of the initial security sector reform process with a mandate to govern Libya during and after the 2011 conflict (Human Rights Watch, 2013: 580). The NTC ceased to exist on July 7, 2012 with the election of the General National Congress (GNC) (Human Rights Watch, 2013: 580). The GNC's "mandate for territorial unity," has been overshadowed by regional hostilities and weaknesses in the security sector (Wehrey, 2012: 21).

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

Establishing a sustainable DDR process requires dealing with more than 150 armed groups, each with

International Actors and Non-Governmental Organizations in SSR

The following international programs/institutions and non-government organizations have played an important role in facilitating and advancing SSR:

NATO: In the summer of 2013, the Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan put forward a request asking NATO for its assistance in promoting peace and security in Libya (Zeidan, 2013). NATO responded by advising Libya on defence institution building, which will take place in close coordination with "other international organisations and bilateral efforts by allies" (Rasmussen, 2013).

United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL): UNSMIL has been advising and assisting Libya with developing its security sector. On July 1, 2012 UNSMIL set up the Security Sector Advisory and Coordination Division to assist Libyan authorities with security sector policy advice and the coordination of international efforts. UNSMIL provides support in the following areas: national security architecture; arms and ammunition management; police; defence; border security; and DDR (UNSMIL, 2011).

European External Action Service: Some of the European Union's (EU) immediate objectives in Libya are to contribute to achieving stability and "peaceful and credible elections of a Constitutional Council" (EU, 2013). To date, €95 million has been contributed in funding and projects, including for development of the security sector (EU, 2013).On May 22, 2013 the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) was approved by the European Council under the EU's Common Security Defense Policy. EUBAM's purpose is to assist local authorities in securing the country's borders.

USAID: The US$ 5million Libya Transition Initiative is a USAID-funded program that focuses on helping Libya through the "transition process, strengthen reconciliation, and encourage productive linkages between citizens and their government" (USAID, 2012). The project "Supporting the Justice and Security Sector through Property Rights in Libya" (SJSSPR) is funded by USAID and is a premilinary initiative that focuses on the drivers of social and political instability in Libya. Attention is placed on how property rights can help to deliver justice and security throughout Libya, as property rights are a continuous source of conflict (USAID, 2013)

International non-government organizations who focus demining in Libya include: DanChurch Aid, Danish Demining Group, DEMIRA, Information Management and Mine Action Programs, Norwegian People's Aid, and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (Docherty, et al., 2012: 16).

diverse leadership structures, ideologies, regional identities, and political ambitions (Ashour, 2012: 7). The following are examples of DDR initiatives operating in Libya:

Disarmament

On February 26, 2011, UN Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011) placed an arms embargo on Libya, calling upon all member states to actively participate in the prevention of the supply, sale, and transfer of Libyan weapons (3). Despite the arms embargo, the trafficking and smuggling of unaccounted weapons and military equipment from the Gaddafi-era across the Libyan border and the Sahel region still constitutes a substantial security threat (Basar, 2012: 1). Particularly alarming "are loose or missing surface-to-air heat-seeking missiles known as MANPADS (Man-

Portable Air Defense Systems)" that went missing during the revolution (Salem and Kadlec, 2012: 10). Although Libya is responsible for managing its weapon stockpiles, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and international NGOs have performed most of the work to date (Docherty, et al., 2012: 2).

The Libyan Mine Action Center (LMAC) was established in May 2011 by volunteer freedom fighters "to clear mines and the explosive remnants of war in liberated areas" (Ministry of Defence, 2012). UNMAS assists Libyan authorities with building institutions in the areas of "ammunition management, arms control, and humanitarian mine action" (UNMAS, 2013). Since March 2011, 768,642 mines and enhanced radiation weapons have been cleared and destroyed (UNMAS, 2013).

Demobilization and Reintegration

One of the government's main tasks is to reintegrate revolutionary fighters into society. The government-appointed Warrior Affairs Commission (WAC) was created to integrate militias into society via rehabilitation, training, education, human resource development, and capacity building (WAC, 2013). In December 2012 the Zeidan government, in partnership with the WAC, committed to providing LD 500,000,000 to assist 5,000 former fighters to establish their own enterprises (Grant, 2012). In early 2013, prior to Zeidan's election, the WAC was allocated US$8 billion in funding by the Libyan government but a member of the WAC who was interviewed by the Crisis Group stated that only US$1.8 billion of the funds were received (International Crisis Group, 2012: 11; McQuinn 2012:11).

Although DDR is a high priority for the Libyan govern-

Warriors Affairs Commission: At a Glance

Warrior Integration through the WAC (Gaub, 2013:3):

- 6,000 men want to be integrated into the armed forces
- 2,200 men want to join the border police
- 11,000 men want to join the oil guards
- 44,000 men want to become civil servants
- 78,000 men want to open their own business

According to Grant (2012), other plans include:

- 5,000 fighters to be send overseas for study
- 10,000 places for fighters to pursue vocational and academic courses
- 20,000 warriors to be assisted with post traumatic stress via a Psychiatric & Social Support project
- 2,000 warriors to be prepared for public office through leadership programmes in public management, economics and social matters.

Please see the WAC website for further information: http://www.wac.gov.ly/armod/

ment, progress has been slow. According to a 2013 report by the UN Secretary-General a main problem is uncertainty regarding the status of programs that are being implemented (Asylum Research Consultancy, 2013: 97).

Accomplishments, Future Outlook, and Challenges

There is wide consensus that one of the keys to Libya's stability will be the development of the country's security and judicial institutions. While this process of SSR is already underway, it has largely progressed haphazardly, centered at the local rather than national level (Wehrey, 2012: 21). Analysts and observers have tended to advise that the Libyan government take advantage of this bottom-up approach, since a top-down strategy would be reminiscent of Gaddafi's centralized system (Wehrey, 2012: 21).

In terms of international engagement, Salem and Kadlec (2012) argue that the international community can do little to support Libya (23), a view shared by the Libya Working Group. Libya is a wealthy country and does not require "traditional forms of development aid" (Chatham House, 2012: 11). State-building therefore should be clearly Libyan-owned and led, with the international community providing only background support (Chatham House, 2012: 11). Areas where international donors could serve in a prominent role, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, include strategic planning of the ministries of defence and interior, police training, and support for the integration of young fighters, as done through the WAC (Wehrey, 2012: 21).

A Peaceful Change Initiative report describes local perspectives on national security, justice, decentralisation, and civilian life across nine different areas in Libya. Common security fears include "risk of violence against individuals and their property", an inability to access administrative services, gun ownership, and a sense of entitlement by certain individuals/groups (Peaceful Change Initiative, 2012). On a positive note, participants in Tripoli stated that the working relation between armed groups had improved and that the

armed groups had begun to collect weapons from the community and detain wanted persons (Peaceful Change initiative, 2012: 19). The armed groups felt that their role in the transition is to encourage people "to re-evaluate the perceptions of the Gaddafi regime and the new Libya, and to promote Islamic values in the community" (Peaceful Change Initiative, 2012: 19).

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