

MEMO

DATE: April 15, 2020

SUBJECT: Libya Weekly Update

Below is a summary of the latest top headlines of the week surrounding the news in Libya. Key highlights include:

- As the one-year anniversary of Haftar's offensive is marked, key policy fellows recognize Haftar is not suited for a political peace negotiation, and one should not be sought with him. As ceasefires have been negotiated time and time again, Haftar has continuously ignored or violated these attempts, and as the COVID-19 pandemic spreads in Libya he has escalated his fighting efforts.
- Haftar's forces were dealt a large blow by the GNA as they liberated the cities of Surman, Sabratah, Ajaylat, Regdalin, ZLiten, and Jumayl from the LNA militias. This territory gain has secured over 3,250 square kilometers for the GNA. The GNA successfully seized tanks, ammunition, and weapons from the militias upon retreat.
- Haftar's LNA launched attacks on Tripoli, striking a Tripoli hospital which was treating patients for COVID-19. As the GNA looks to address the pandemic, LNA forces continue their assault on Tripoli's civilian areas and health facilities, contributing to the spread of the pandemic.
- The GNA successfully neutralized an LNA cargo plane carrying ammunition. This latest interception highlights how outside influencers like the UAE continue to provide supplies to the LNA for Haftar's offensive.
- The United States should play a larger role in filling the UN Special Envoy to Libya position in an attempt to move Libya closer to the negotiating table.

Bloomberg (4/13): [Libya's Haftar Dealt Setback in Fighting West of Tripoli](#)

- The Government of National Accord succeeded in liberating the cities of Surman, Sabratah, Ajaylat, Regdalin, Zliten, and Jumayl from armed groups and militias aligned with warlord Khalifa Haftar.
- The territorial gains secured by the GNA forces spanned over a significant area of 3250 square kilometers.
- GNA forces seized tanks, ammunition, and weapons from retreating militias.

New York Times (4/13): ['Which Death Is Going to Be Worse?' Coronavirus Invades a Conflict Zone](#)

- Everyone in Libya is thinking about their lives amid the bombing and airstrikes that have been ongoing. To add to this, Libya now faces the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Life in the conflict zone has gotten significantly worse in a matter of weeks. The conflict should stop to better address the pandemic. Residents must now weigh the options of staying home and facing LNA shelling, or fleeing and potentially catching the virus.

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- The LNA is exploiting the pandemic, making it easier for the virus to spread. They are inflicting maximum terror on civilians by shelling areas where people are trapped at home due to curfew, and attacking hospitals that are already overwhelmed.

Twitter (4/12): [Wolfram Lacher, SWP Berlin](#)

- "Haftar judged that the #COVID19 pandemic is a good moment to shell hospitals, deprive Tripoli of water & sabotage the power grid. He has enjoyed total impunity anyway; now, there would be even less international attention; borders are closed, no access for media. It's working."

Twitter (4/13): [OCHA Libya](#)

- "This is unacceptable. Yesterday, an air strike hit an ambulance near Misrata, killing a paramedic. This is the 8th attack on health facilities this year. At a time when healthcare+health workers are vital in our fight against #COVID19, we repeat: The fighting must end."

Associated Press (4/7): [Eastern Libyan forces attack Tripoli hospital for second day](#)

- Haftar's forces continued their strikes on Tripoli, launching a heavy bombardment which resulted in a strike on one of Tripoli's largest hospitals.
- Grad rockets struck the hospital, where more than 300 patients were seeking treatment, including two COVID-19 patients.

Reuters (4/8): [In Libya, water cuts add to misery of conflict and coronavirus](#)

- Civilians in Tripoli face even worse conditions as the spread of COVID-19 hits Libya as water and power supplies were cut in the capital.
- The warfare continues to surge, with Haftar's side continuing attacks as the GNA attempt to address the global pandemic.
- Haftar's forces launched an attack on a hospital, prompting the UN to denounce it as a violation of international humanitarian law.

Reuters (4/5): [Tripoli forces hit eastern Libyan cargo plane near capital](#)

- The GNA successfully neutralized a military plane carrying cargo just south of Tripoli.
- The UAE has been supplying Haftar's forces with Chinese-made Wing Loong drones which have further escalated the fighting on the ground.

Associated Press (4/3): [UN chief: Cease-fire appeal backed by parties in 11 nations](#)

- The UN Secretary General stated that 11 countries with conflicts have responded to his appeal for a global ceasefire to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In Libya, sides agreed to welcome a stop to the fighting, yet Haftar's forces continue to escalate attacks on Tripoli. These attacks have obstructed efforts to address the pandemic as it spreads in Libya.

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