

There has been a lot of activity over the past two weeks in Libya and I wanted to send a fairly lengthy email walking through some of the most recent highlights. Even as the Government of Libya is working tirelessly to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Tripoli and across Libya, they have also put warlord Khalifa Haftar and his militias firmly on their [backfoot](#) and for the first time since the start of his offensive appear to be tipping the scale. It is a key moment in the conflict, and one that clearly depicts a new, growing reality: the Government of Libya is winning, and is more than capable of driving out Haftar's offensive.

With key military victories in six cities, and GNA forces at the footsteps of Tarhouna, a key outpost for Haftar's military transport, the Government of Libya is showing decisive momentum. Launched on March 26th, Operation Peace Storm was an [undeniable success](#), and displayed the Government's ability to bring the fight to Haftar.

These major military victories against Haftar's insurgents and mercenaries was highlighted by a [reversal of control at Al-Watiya airbase](#), which sits southwest of the capital. Once a refuge for Haftar's ammunition and weapons for the offensive, Government forces have now destroyed its runway, pushed out militias into a humiliating retreat, and completely surrounded its remaining gangs.

Amidst these losses, Haftar's calls for support have increased, yet, tribes and militias have begun to defect from Haftar and the LNA. Tribes in the west of Libya were unresponsive to his calls for support, and those in the Zintan province, located in the east, have [begun rejecting these calls](#). These developments are a major blow to the morale of Haftar's forces. Contrary to developments of militias leaving Haftar's side, Haftar himself has [claimed to have a "mandate"](#) from the people to govern the country. Haftar's latest illegitimate claims and calls for a formal coup highlight his inability as a leader, as well as his utter instability.

While the Government continues to advance, international bad actors continue to try to thumb the scale for warlord Haftar. As a recent Financial Times [article](#) notes, the UAE continues to take a leading role in breaking the UN arms embargo and arming strongman Haftar. Compounding this news are [further allegations](#) that Russia's private military arm, the Wagner Group, has carried out chemical attacks near Tripoli. The Wagner Group has been responsible for providing Haftar with mercenaries, weaponry and other support.

While the Government of Libya seeks to [contain the spread](#) of the COVID-19 pandemic, Haftar and his troops lob indiscriminate attacks on civilian infrastructure, [resulting in civilian casualties](#). These civilian attacks include [bombings of hospitals](#), as well as a [shutdown of critical water infrastructure](#) to civilians. These acts, reprehensible under normal circumstances, are even further irresponsible as Libya tries to address preventing the spread of COVID-19.

He has shown no sign of being a capable, responsible leader, and the U.S. allies who are continuing efforts to propel him to power by force should cease.

If you have any questions regarding this or would like to discuss it, please just give me a call (202-907-7184) or email me. Thanks so much and stay healthy!

Deirdre

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