

# Election Issue: Militants in Libyan Politics

## A Militant Leadership Monitor Special Report

*Recovering From Several Decades of Gaddafi's Rule*

QUARTERLY SPECIAL REPORT ♦ JULY 2012

### A FOCUS ON THE ROLE OF MILITANTS IN LIBYAN POLITICS

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### Introduction

In the aftermath of the revolution and the overthrow of Moammar Gaddafi, Libya is undergoing tremendous changes. On July 7, the oil-rich North African country held its first national election in over four decades, however the emergence of regionally based militias continue to pose a threat to Libya's stability. While the Libyan people are united by their hunger for legitimacy, the country is rife with militant groups, each defending their own specific interests while some groups espouse militant views of the West.

This special supplement to Militant Leadership Monitor known as the Quarterly Special Report (QSR) assesses the changing role of jihadists and militants in Libya as the country experiences its first ever democratic elections. It also looks ahead at some of the key actors shaping the internal struggle for authority and legitimacy in post- Gaddafi Libya. Jamestown analysts – Dario Cristiani, Michael Ryan, and Camille Tawil – highlight some of the efforts and security challenges involved in the creation of a new political system in Libya and the ideological factors influencing Libyan militant groups and the former fighters now turned politicians vying for power as a result of the recent elections.

Militant Leadership Monitor's special QSR on Libya begins with Dario Cristiani's analysis of the political and security landscape in Libya, and the fragmented society that has historically inhibited the effectiveness of a national government. Then Camille Tawil provides biographies of emerging leaders Abdel Hakim Belhadj, leader of al-Watan; Sami Al-Saadi, the leader of al-Umma; and Abdul Wahhab Qaid, a former leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). He analyzes their various political platforms and the consequences of if they gain seats in the new Libyan parliament, as well as his attitude. Mr. Tawil focuses on the significance of jihadists entering the political scene – it is revolutionary that the militants are seeking political means rather than violence to effect the change they want to see. Following this analysis, Michael Ryan provides an up close look at Omar Abdel Rahman, "The Blind Sheik" currently incarcerated in the United States, whose ideological influence is inspiring a new generation of militant jihadists in Libya. Next Dario Cristiani analyzes the rise of militant groups in post- Gaddafi Libya with a portrait of the Zintan militia, and a biographical sketch of one of its key leaders, Osama al-Juwali, who currently serves as Libyan Defense Minister. The QSR concludes with a summary of key events that have transpired in Libya since the uprising began, leading up to the nation's first elections.



Belhadj: one of many militant leaders who participated in the Libyan elections

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This Special Report includes articles from Terrorism Monitor, Jamestown's Global Terrorism Analysis publication.



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