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IN THIS ISSUE:

BRIEFS 1

TARGETING CIVILIANS AT THE CORE OF BOKO HARAM’S NEW STRATEGY
By Jacob Zenn 4

CAN THE SINAI’S BEDOUIN BECOME A COUNTERTERRORIST FORCE?
By Nicholas A. Heras 5

AUTONOMY CAMPAIGN IN CYRENAICA BRINGS LIBYA’S OIL INDUSTRY
TO A HALT
By Andrew McGregor 7



Lebanese army was deployed Monday after a week of battles in which 17 people were killed (Source Reuters)

LOW EXPECTATIONS SURROUND LEBANESE MILITARY DEPLOYMENT IN TRIPOLI

Andrew McGregor

The latest intervention of the Lebanese Army into the coastal city of Tripoli to force an end to armed clashes between the impoverished Sunni Bab al-Tebbaneh and the Alawite Jabal Muhsin districts of Tripoli has not been accompanied by high expectations. The military is making its 18th intervention in Tripoli since May, 2008, with none of the earlier operations so far having had any significant impact on the sectarian conflict between the two neighborhoods. The Army is already overstretched in dealing with security disturbances across Lebanon, including cross-border shelling by both sides in the Syrian conflict, engagements with Sunni gunmen in southern Lebanon and a wave of car bombings. Tripoli, a city of roughly 200,000 people, is 80 percent Sunni with Christian and Alawite minorities making up the difference.

The latest round of violence began on October 21 following a televised speech by Syrian president Bashar al-Assad in which the Syrian leader appeared to say Jabal Muhsin was part of Syria, forcing the Lebanese Army to return to the city to restore order (al-Manar TV [Beirut], October 23; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 29). Sniper fire from both sides greeted the arrival of the troops, who acting Prime Minister Najib Mikati said would “be strict and impartial” in dealing with the ongoing violence (al-Jazeera, October 28). Seventeen people have been killed and more than 100 wounded in fighting that has derailed a forthcoming disarmament campaign in the city (al-Jazeera, October 28). Intense at times, the conflict has seen the use of rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and mortars.

Lebanese troops moved further into the conflict zone on October 29. After a short and relative calm, fighting broke out again on the evening of October 30 after Al-Hizb al-Arabi al-Dimuqrati (HAD - Arab Democratic Party) founder Ali Eid (father of HAD secretary-general and effective current leader Rifaat al-Eid) was called in for questioning by the Internal Security Forces’ (ISF) Information Branch in connection

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1111 16th St. NW, Suite #320
Washington, DC • 20036
Tel: (202) 483-8888
Fax: (202) 483-8337

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with the bombings. The HAD declared that the call was nothing less than the declaration of “a new war against Jabal Muhsen” (*Daily Star* [Beirut], October 31).

In the 1980s, Syrian support allowed the HAD and its armed wing of the time, al-Fursan al-Hammur al-Arabi, to develop Jabal Muhsin as a strategic stronghold overlooking the city of Tripoli, giving the small Alawite community an enormous advantage over the more numerous Sunnis. While the ongoing civil war in Syria has inflamed tensions in Tripoli, it is not solely responsible for inter-communal clashes that have practically become a way of life in parts of Tripoli over nearly four decades.

Preliminary investigations into the twin car bombings of Tripoli’s Sunni al-Salam and al-Taqwa mosques that killed 47 people on August 23 indicated the bombings had been carried out by elements from Jabal Muhsin with the support of Syrian intelligence services. The summons for Ali al-Eid came after Ahmad Muhammad Ali, a personal guard and driver for HAD leader Rifaat Eid, confessed to army intelligence that, working under Rifaat Eid’s orders, he had helped Ahmad Merhi flee to Syria from Jabal Muhsin (*Daily Star* [Beirut], October 30). Merhi has been identified as the driver who planted the car bomb outside the Taqwa mosque. Rifaat Eid, meanwhile, has suggested that the charges were prompted by Saudi demands as a means of taking revenge for Hezbollah participation in the Syrian conflict (*al-Safir* [Beirut], October 18).

Seven suspects in the bombings were charged by a military prosecutor on October 14, though four of the suspects remain at large. One of the detainees, HAD associate Yusuf Diab, is reported to have confessed to driving the car bomb that exploded outside al-Salam mosque (*Daily Star* [Beirut], October 14). Ziad Allouki, a leading Sunni militia leader in Bab al-Tebbaneh, has warned of intensified clashes if the Army does not arrest Rifaat al-Eid in connection with the August mosque bombings (*Daily Star* [Beirut], October 28).

Former Prime Minister and Future Movement head Sa’ad Hariri has been especially critical of government efforts to restore order in Tripoli as well as Syria’s “dirty war” in the city:

Is it acceptable for the Lebanese Army with its elite units to become a false witness in the war against Tripoli? Is it right for security agencies and local officials to monitor the situation and announce their inability to confront the dangers in the city? ... As for us, we will not be silent toward the injustice in Tripoli ... we hold the state with all its official, security and military agencies fully responsible for abandoning the city and its residents and leaving it an

arena for such armed chaos (*Daily Star* [Beirut], October 28).

Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah weighed in on the conflict on October 28, proclaiming his support for the military intervention, but expressing the hope that the residents of Tripoli would cooperate with the security forces rather than call for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Jabhat al-Nusra to enter from Syria and interfere, “as that complicates the situation and does not resolve it.” Nasrallah said that the state “knows a lot about the cells whose aim is to inflame the situation in Lebanon” but had taken no action against them.

Druze leader and Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) leader Walid al-Jumblatt has expressed astonishment at the futility of the endless political violence and the belief of some that “clashes between Bab al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Muhsin will change the course of bloody developments in Syria or will alter the existing dynamics in this conflict (*Daily Star* [Beirut], October 28).

The fighting in Tripoli appears to be closely connected to the launch of the long-delayed Qalamun offensive by the Syrian Army, which is designed to drive rebel groups from Syria’s east Lebanon (or “Anti-Lebanon”) mountains, in particular the Saudi-backed Liwa al-Islam of Zahran Alloush, which fields over 3,000 fighters and 23 T-72 tanks (*al-Safir* [Beirut], October 18). Once the campaign begins in earnest, Tripoli will become important as both a supply point and place of refuge if things turn bad for Sunni rebels operating in the Anti-Lebanon.

The situation in Tripoli may soon be further complicated by the entry of the Ahrar Tripoli, a new Sunni militia being formed by former ISF director Ashraf Rifi. The project is reported to have Saudi funding under the direct supervision of Saudi intelligence chief Bandar bin Sultan (*al-Akhbar* [Beirut], October 29).

Lebanon has been ruled by a caretaker government since March that appears to not have the will, the ability or the mandate to restore security and stability to an ever more volatile situation. Tripoli’s mayor, Nadir Ghazal, has complained that Tripoli was “dying” from the continuous outbreaks of fighting in the city (*Daily Star* [Beirut], October 30).

UNILATERAL REFERENDUM IN CONTESTED OIL-PRODUCING ABYEI REGION OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOR OF JOINING SOUTH SUDAN

Andrew McGregor

Ngok Dinka residents of the oil-rich but disputed border territory of Abyei have voted by a margin of more than 99 percent to join the Bahr al-Ghazal region of South Sudan rather than the South Kordofan region of Sudan in a three-day vote (October 27-29) that defied many predictions by being carried out peacefully and without major disturbances despite being boycotted by the other main ethnic group in the region, the Arab Missiriya tribe. Only 12 voters were reported to have cast a vote to join Sudan in a process to which foreign media were granted full access in order to verify transparency, though no international observers were present (Sudan Tribune, October 31).

Many Ngok Dinka displaced by attacks by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in May 2008 and May 2011 were reported to have returned home to take part in the vote (Reuters, October 31). The borders of Abyei were redrawn by an international arbitration tribunal in 2009 to neither side's satisfaction, though the most productive oil fields (the Heglig zone) were separated from a diminished Abyei and attached to Sudan's South Kordofan province (RFI, July 22, 2009).

The semi-nomadic Missiriya spend much of the year in the Sudanese province of South Kordofan, but rely on the 10,000 square kilometer region of Abyei for dry-season grazing for their herds as part of a centuries-old migratory pattern. The Missiriya include a core of well-armed and experienced fighters who are determined not to allow new borders to interfere with their traditional way of life. Missiriya tribal leader Mukhtar Babo Nimr described the vote as "an illegal process," adding that "We in the Missiriya tribe are committed to the official position of the Sudanese government...Abyei is a northern land that belongs to Sudan and we are on it and will continue to live there because it is our land" (Reuters, October 31). The Missiriya have promised to hold their own referendum in response to the vote by the Ngok Dinka (Sudan Tribune, October 31). Missiriya militias known as Murahileen have been armed and sponsored by Khartoum since the 1970s, initially as a means of applying pressure on South Sudanese separatists by attacking agricultural communities along the north-south border.

The vote was not supported by either Khartoum or Juba, nor was it recognized by any element of the international community. The vote was initially backed by the African

Union, which later withdrew its support over complaints of "obstruction" by Khartoum, which opposed the vote (Reuters, October 29). The referendum was intended to replace a scheduled 2011 vote on Abyei's future allegiance meant to be coincidental to South Sudan's vote on independence that was cancelled due to unrest in the region, questions over who would be allowed to vote and tensions between Juba and Khartoum. 65,000 Ngok Dinka were registered for the vote, which was non-binding. The vote was carried out by the Abyei Referendum High Committee.

Abyei's location in the Muglad Basin once made it one of Sudan's most productive regions for high-quality oil production, but reserves are now in decline due to intensive production in the 1990s. The dispute over Abyei's status dates to 1905, when the Anglo-Egyptian administration of Sudan transferred the "area of the nine Ngok Dinka chieftains" from the southern Bahr al-Ghazal province to the northern province of South Kordofan. Relations between the Ngok Dinka and the Missiriya were amicable until the outbreak of the 1956-1972 North-South civil war, when the Ngok Dinka sided largely with the southern Anyanya separatist movement. When the conflict resumed in 1983, the Ngok Dinka again sided with the Southern opposition, this time in the form of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M).

Security in Abyei is currently provided by the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNIFSA), a mostly Ethiopian contingent of over 5,300 troops commanded by Ethiopian Major General Yohannes Gebremeskel Tesfamariam. [1] The force was established by UN Security Council resolution 1990 on June 27, 2011 in response to widespread violence in the region.

Though the results of the unilateral referendum are entirely symbolic, they may help provide the impetus necessary to attract the interest of the UN Security Council in working out a final solution for the disputed territory.

Note

1. For UNIFSA, see <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unisfa/>.

Targeting Civilians at the Core of Boko Haram's New Strategy

Jacob Zenn

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan declared a State of Emergency in May in the three states of north-eastern Nigeria where Boko Haram is most active—Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. In the following weeks, a military offensive deploying 8,000 troops with air support forced Boko Haram to abandon many of its camps in Borno's Sambisa Forest and in areas near Nigeria's borders with Niger, Chad and Cameroon (*Vanguard* [Lagos], August 18). President Jonathan achieved his stated goal of eliminating Boko Haram safe havens, but Boko Haram lived to fight another day. As it did after a government crackdown in July 2009, Boko Haram and its leaders retreated to bases in neighboring countries (*Leadership* [Abuja], October 9). The fighters who stayed in Borno began to employ new tactics to evade the security forces, including wearing burkas, hiding weapons in caskets and dressing in Nigerian army fatigues (*Premium Times* [Abuja], August 23; Reuters, June 10). Since August, Boko Haram has raised its violence to the highest levels since the movement's first attack in September 2010.

Boko Haram's strategy since the State of Emergency is aimed at deterring the civilian population from forming militias (such as the "Civilian JTF") to support the Nigerian military's Joint Task Force (JTF). In previous years, Boko Haram tolerated dozens, if not hundreds, of Muslim civilian deaths as collateral damage, but it did not specifically target civilians on a mass-scale. Now, however, Boko Haram is carrying out massacres of the lightly-armed Civilian JTF and civilians who come from villages where the Civilian JTF is active. Boko Haram's massacres in Borno since August resulted in the deaths of more than 300 civilians and 50 Civilian JTF members in more than 15 attacks on different villages. One of Boko Haram's most common tactics is to dress as the Nigerian military and set up fake checkpoints to kill travelers (often by beheading) along the roadway.

One explanation for the massacres of civilians who have little or no connection to the Civilian JTF is that Boko Haram has become psychologically acculturated to violence after four years of insurgency and more than 4,000 people killed. Mass beheadings, forced conscription of youths and forced marriages of local women to Boko Haram members are now more commonplace than at any time since 2009 (*This Day* [Lagos], July 16). Another possibility is that Boko Haram's tactics are a way of "integrating" local communities into the movement. This is similar to what Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) did in Uganda and the Congo (*The Guardian*, May 15). Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau's statement that the 12 wives and children of government officials that Boko Haram kidnapped from Bama on May 7

could become his "servants" reflects Kony-like methods. [1] Like the LRA, Boko Haram fighters in Borno may now be focused more on their own survival and re-establishing safe havens in the border region to carry out criminal activities, such as kidnapping and weapons smuggling, than garnering support from the local population it once sought to represent in its war on the Nigerian government, traditional Muslim leaders and Christians.

Despite Boko Haram's violence, most of its recent attacks in Borno did not attract significant media attention because they took place in remote areas and became increasingly routine—and therefore not "newsworthy." However, two attacks that gained national and international attention occurred at Mamudo Secondary School and Gujba College of Education in Yobe State in July and September respectively (see *Terrorism Monitor*, July 25). Both attacks saw more than 40 students burned alive, beheaded, shot or slashed to death and resembled the attack that killed 40 students at Mubi Federal Polytechnic in Adamawa State on October 1, 2012 (*Punch* [Lagos], October 2). The attackers in Yobe were likely part of a Boko Haram group operating from bases in the forests between Benisheikh, Borno and Potiskum, Yobe that is geographically and operationally separate from the Shekau-led Boko Haram cells in Borno. [2]

Nonetheless, even if the Yobe attackers were not under the control of Shekau, they are likely following his commands. Before Boko Haram launched its insurgency in 2009, Shekau preached that Western education "imposes the white man's philosophy that is not of Allah" and that "secular symbols like the pledge of allegiance shift loyalty from Allah to country." [3] The attacks in Yobe, which Shekau said he "fully supported" but implied that he did not order, represent the operationalization of long-standing Boko Haram ideology (*Vanguard* [Lagos], July 13).

Shekau's support of the attacks in Yobe and his claims of responsibility for the massacres of civilians in Benisheikh, Monguno and Bama since August may serve his purposes by instilling fear in the local population, but undermine his efforts to reach out to al-Qaeda, as he has done in several of his statements since 2010. Other African jihadist groups, such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Shabaab, have tried to diminish al-Qaeda's image as killers of Muslims. Al-Shabaab, for example, allowed Muslims to leave Westgate Mall in Nairobi before its militants killed more than 50 foreigners there in September 2013. AQIM's Abu Mundhir al-Shinqiti said during an online interview on July 18, 2013 that:

Targeting schools to kill young students is impermissible, since they have not joined the ranks of the apostate military yet... This will give the enemies of the religion and Western media the opportunity to exploit these scenes to prove to Muslims that the mujahideen are far from Islam... These schools can be combated by warning

people against enrolling in them, punishing the families who send their sons to them, and by destroying them when they are empty of the students. [4]

The Boko Haram breakaway faction Ansaru, which rejects Shekau's killing of Muslims, will likely remain AQIM's preferred affiliate in Nigeria. Most of Ansaru's leaders trained in Algeria and the Sahel with former AQIM commanders such as Mokhtar Belmokhtar and the late Abu Zeid (Agence Nouakchott d'Information, March 10, 2012; AFP, June 21). Members of Ansaru—not Boko Haram—took part in the Belmokhtar-led suicide operations in Arlit and Agadez, Niger in May. [5] Ansaru's kidnappings of foreigners in northern Nigeria, including Frenchman Françoise Collomp, who appeared in an Ansaru proof-of-life video in October 2013, are more consistent with AQIM's modus operandi and al-Qaeda's "public relations strategy" than Boko Haram's attacks on civilians (*Leadership* [Abuja], October 1). AQIM's overall leader and key strategist, Abd al-Malik Droukdel, has shown no support for Shekau or Boko Haram since he issued "condolences" for Boko Haram founder Muhammad Yusuf in July 2009 and declared his support of Nigerian Muslims after the election violence of April 2011.

Boko Haram will likely remain outside of al-Qaeda's network and its area of operations will be concentrated in Borno's border regions and Yobe, where Boko Haram attacked hospitals and police stations on October 20 to steal supplies to reinvigorate the insurgency in Yobe (*Vanguard*, October 25). Boko Haram, however, will continue to lose appeal amongst the same population that was attracted to Boko Haram's ideology before Boko Haram became a jihadist group and started victimizing the population. This trajectory is similar to the LRA, which in the 1990s had some support from the northern Ugandan Acholis who Kony claimed to represent, but the LRA lost this support once the government improved education, trade and transportation in Acholi areas and drove Kony from his bases in northern Uganda.

Even if Boko Haram's operations do not expand from northeast Nigeria, its impact may nonetheless be felt in areas far from there. "Boko Haram" is now a brand that inspires young unemployed and disenfranchised African Muslims who do not suffer directly from Boko Haram's wrath but gain inspiration from its claims of victories over a more powerful Nigerian army, which Shekau labels a "puppet" of foreign Christian forces. This mystique is furthered by social media users who spread Boko Haram, al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda statements among jihadist aspirants. The movement has even begun to enter West African popular culture; a movie called "Boko Haram" released in September by Ghanaian-Nigerian filmmaker Pascal Amanfo, for example, shows Boko Haram carrying out a mass bombing in Lagos—even though Boko Haram has never carried out a major operation south of Abuja (*Vanguard* [Lagos], October 10).

As a result, combating Boko Haram must take place on the

battlefield and in cyberspace by showing that Boko Haram's brutality represents no tribe, ethnic group or religion. So far, however, the Nigerian army's most effective tactic may have been to force Boko Haram to become a jihadist group whose anti-government message, which used to be popular in Borno, is now overshadowed by violence that locals in Borno and northern Nigeria do not support.

Jacob Zenn is an analyst of African Affairs for The Jamestown Foundation, consultant on countering violent extremism and policy adviser for the Nigerian-American Leadership Council. He speaks Arabic, French and Swahili and has a degree in law from Georgetown University. He authored "Northern Nigeria's Boko Haram: The Prize in Al-Qaeda's Africa Strategy," which was based on his research in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad and published by The Jamestown Foundation.

Notes

1. Boko Haram released the women on May 14 after the Nigerian government released 100 Boko Haram suspects from prison, including the wives of several Boko Haram members.
2. Author's discussion with Yobe State resident familiar with Boko Haram's activities.
3. See Bayani Akan Tauhedi, available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxW9P1rZs8>.
4. See, for example, at 30:30 of Belmokhtar's Brigades claiming responsibility for the Arlit and Agadez attacks, where an Ansaru member admits taking part in the group: "New video message from Katibat al-Mulathamun: 'Epic Battles of the Fathers: The Battle of Shaykh Abd al-Hamid Abu Zayd.'" September 9, 2013, <http://ansar1.info/showthread.php?t=46905>.
5. Minbar al-Tawid wa'l-Jihad presents a new Fatwa from Shaykh Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti: "Is it Permissible For Us to Target Regime Sponsored Schools to Recruit Students for Entry to Its Military After They Finish their Studies?" July 17, 2013, <http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/pr?qid=7618>.

Can the Sinai's Bedouin Become a Counterterrorist Force?

Nicholas A. Heras

Egypt's North Sinai region is becoming an increasingly fierce site of conflict between the Egyptian military and local and Gaza-based militant Salafist organizations. The area's most powerful Bedouin tribes, al-Tarabin, al-Sawarka and al-Tiyaha, form a majority of North Sinai's population and are vital participants in the fighting. Egyptian security forces and Bedouin leaders have discussed, but not consummated,

a framework through which Bedouin tribal forces could be mobilized and supported by the Egyptian state to confront the rise of militant Salafism amongst Bedouin tribal youth (Associated Press, October 8, 2012).

Sinai's Bedouin population maintains several social, economic and political grievances against the Egyptian state (for more information and analysis on insecurity caused by these grievances see Terrorism Monitor, May 18, 2012). One of the drivers of these grievances is the Egyptian state's reported unwillingness to allow Sinai Bedouin to study in police and military colleges or become members of the Egyptian military (IRIN, June 16, 2011). As a result, there is not a significant local Bedouin presence in the Egyptian security forces that are posted in the Sinai, further emphasizing the divide between Egyptian security and military forces and the local population in issues pertaining to Sinai's security (Ahram Online [Cairo], May 13).

In spite of this state policy, the Egyptian state has consistently sought to enlist the support of local Bedouin tribes to provide security in the post-Mubarak period. Bedouin in North Sinai supplemented Egyptian Ministry of the Interior forces in protecting 75 polling stations during the 2012 Egyptian presidential election cycle (McClatchy, May 20, 2012). After the launch of the August 2012 Operation Eagle campaign, North Sinai politicians called for then President Mursi and Defense Minister General Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi to approve the organization of a 500-person tribal militia under the supervision of the Interior Ministry, to protect roadways and government buildings (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], November 5, 2012; see Terrorism Monitor, September 27, 2012).

As a result of insecurity in North Sinai following the abdication of President Mubarak, al-Sawarka and al-Tarabin, tribal shaykhs agreed to resolve their inter-tribal disputes and begin to work together to provide security in the region (*al-Masrawy* [Cairo], February 19, 2012). Al-Sawarka shaykhs announced that they would mobilize "Popular Committee" militias composed of al-Sawarka tribesmen to patrol the Egypt-Gaza border as well as in the area in and around al-Arish to prevent the movement of HAMAS fighters from Gaza into Sinai (*al-Dustur* [Cairo], June 28).

One particular Bedouin leader, al-Sawarka Shaykh Ibrahim al-Manei, one of the most powerful leaders of the Sawarka Bedouin, has been a particularly vocal advocate for cooperation between the Egyptian military and Sinai Bedouin (*al-Ahram* [Cairo], May 29). Citing the example of Iraqi Kurdish *peshmerga* (armed Kurdish fighters) militias, Shaykh Ibrahim has called for the formation of a 1,000 fighter North Sinai inter-tribal defense force. This Bedouin

security force would be mobilized under the command of Sinai tribal leaders and would be authorized by the Egyptian Interior Ministry to patrol public places and border areas, man checkpoints on roadways and keep the peace among feuding Bedouin tribesmen (Ahram Online [Cairo], May 13; AP, October 8, 2012).

Egyptian authorities in the Mubarak era sought to subvert the local authority of Sinai Bedouin shaykhs by attempting to co-opt them as active participants in intelligence gathering against their fellow tribesmen. Local Bedouin assert that 150-200 Bedouin shaykhs throughout Sinai, particularly in North Sinai, were co-opted by state security services, reportedly contributing to intra-tribal tension (Associated Press, October 8, 2012). Following President Mubarak's abdication in February 2011, inter-tribal North Sinai Bedouin youth created a popular civil society organization, the "Youth Revolution Council in Sinai," which petitioned and failed to convince Egyptian President Muhammad Mursi and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) to implement as state policy the direct election of Sinai Bedouin tribal shaykhs (*al-Akhbar* [Beirut], August 21, 2012).

The shaykhs of North Sinai have also become the targets of threats and violence directed against them by disgruntled fellow tribesmen and militant Salafist fighters, a number of whom are believed to be members of local Bedouin tribes. It is reported that eight North Sinai Bedouin shaykhs have been assassinated in the post-Mubarak era. These shaykhs are believed to have had strong ties to Egyptian state security or to have been vocal advocates of tribal mobilization against militant Salafist fighters based in the Sinai (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], September 5, 2013).

North Sinai Bedouin leaders are also constrained in their cooperation with the Egyptian state due to the membership of their tribesmen in local militant Salafist organizations and by popular anger against the state due to the more aggressive military operations launched by Egyptian security forces against militant Salafist groups in North Sinai since President Mursi was deposed on July 3 (see Terrorism Monitor, September 19, 2013; September 6, 2013). The recent Egyptian military offensive in North Sinai is reported to have caused a large amount of destruction of civilian property, the deaths of 52 Bedouin civilians, and the deaths of over 100 members of Egyptian security forces (Slate, October 7; Reuters, September 30).

Shaykh Ibrahim al-Manei, referring to the military's campaign, told Egyptian freelance journalist Nadine Marroushi that:

The Bedouin have never forgotten the random wars waged by [Egyptian Viceroy] Muhammad Ali against us over 100 years ago. Then came President Gamal Abd al-Nasser and President Hosni Mubarak's arrests and torture. Now al-Sisi has come to complete this scenario. There is a loss of trust that won't be regained for hundreds of years due to these barbaric acts. If we have to defend ourselves, we will (*Slate*, October 7).

Salafist militant fighters in North Sinai have directly challenged the authority of Bedouin leadership by openly calling for the imposition of Islamic law and the abolishment of the practice of Bedouin customary law (*al-Ahram* [Cairo], April 29, 2012). Two of the most powerful militant Salafist groups in the Sinai, Salafiya Jihadiya (Salafist Jihad) and Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (Partisans of Jerusalem), are reported to be composed primarily of radicalized Bedouin youth who are given protection by their fellow tribesmen as a result of blood ties. The protection is reportedly provided under Bedouin customary law to the extent that militant Salafist Bedouin fighters do not attack their own kinsmen and instead target "outsiders," which usually refers to the Egyptian state security forces (*al-Akhbar* [Beirut], August 21, 2012; see *Terrorism Monitor*, February 22, 2013). Further threatening the position of those North Sinai shaykhs interested in cooperating with the Egyptian state, Salafiya Jihadiya recently issued a statement in which it threatened to execute Bedouin leaders or tribesmen that provided support to the Egyptian military (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], October 4).

The Egyptian military and North Sinai Bedouin tribes have not built sufficient trust in each other to organize a popularly-supported, cohesive and officially empowered local security force. Although there has been evidence of limited cooperation between the Egyptian military and North Sinai Bedouin tribes, core drivers of distrust between the Egyptian state and the tribes have yet to be resolved. This distrust appears to be made worse by the Egyptian military's more aggressive and destructive posture towards Bedouin communities since the military deposed President Mursi. Due to the lack of a local Bedouin presence in state security forces posted in the Sinai, the history of Sinai Bedouin disenfranchisement by the Egyptian state, current pan-tribal disunity, tenuous intra-tribal leadership and militant Salafist threats against Bedouin who cooperate with local security forces, a "Sinai Sahwa" is unlikely to develop in the foreseeable future.

Nicholas A. Heras is an independent analyst and consultant on Middle East issues and a former David L. Boren Fellow.

Autonomy Campaign in Cyrenaica Brings Libya's Oil Industry to a Halt

Andrew McGregor

Even as Libya descended into post-revolution political chaos, its vital oil industry made a rapid and surprising recovery, aided partly by the reluctance of both sides in the revolutionary struggle to damage or destroy the nation's energy infrastructure. Today, however, Libya's oil industry is largely paralyzed as it falls prey to post-revolution political maneuvering, especially in Libya's eastern region of Cyrenaica. In September, production fell to 300,000 barrels per day, the lowest output since the 2011 anti-Qaddafi revolution.

A strike by armed guards in the oil fields that began in July developed into a general blockade of large parts of Libya's oil production facilities that was joined by other armed groups and individuals as the rest of the country was forced to import enough fuel to meet its own needs. In Cyrenaica, the original economic causes of the strikes have been joined by new demands for an autonomous Cyrenaica within a federal Libya. Libya's capital, Tripoli, located in western Libya, has experienced power blackouts and water cuts (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 7).

A New Government for Cyrenaica

There has been talk of establishing an autonomous Cyrenaica since the overthrow of former president Mu'ammar Qaddafi, with much of the discussion revolving around the role of the tribally-based Cyrenaica Transitional Council (CTC) and its titular leader, Ahmad Zubayr al-Sanusi, a great-nephew of King Idris al-Sanusi who served 31 years in the regime's worst prisons after failing to overthrow the young Colonel Qaddafi in a 1970 plot. Official neglect of Cyrenaica dates from the early years of Mu'ammar Qaddafi's rule, when he survived several plots organized by royalists and other factions from Cyrenaica.

The first major step in establishing Cyrenaica's autonomy was the declaration of self-governance for the region by the Cyrenaica National Council within a (non-existent) federal Libya on June 1 (all questions regarding the nature of the future Libyan state have yet to be decided by a constitutional committee). However, al-Sanusi's faction of the CTC was displaced by a younger group of secessionists who rallied around former militia commander Ibrahim al-Jadhran, a former rebel commander who became leader of a newly

formed Political Bureau designed to advocate for Cyrenaican autonomy on August 17.

The newly declared autonomous state, to be known by its Arabic name, Barqa, corresponds to the old state of Cyrenaica, constituting the eastern half of Libya at the time of its independence in 1951. North-western Tripolitania and the south-western desert state of Fezzan formed the rest of Libya. In 1963, the three states were re-divided into ten new provinces, bringing an end, administratively at least, to Cyrenaica. The secessionists do not recognize any inconvenient changes to the original 1951 constitution. The revived region will be divided administratively into four provinces, Benghazi, Tobruk, Ajdabiya and Jebel Akhdar, each being run by a ten-person management team (Libya Herald, October 25).

Ibrahim al-Jadhran, a 33-year-old who makes his headquarters in Ajdabiya, is reported to have spent seven years in Qaddafi's notorious Abu Salim prison before becoming a successful battalion commander in Cyrenaica during the revolution. Al-Jadhran's reward was to be appointed chief of the Petroleum Facilities Guards (PFG) in eastern Libya, a powerful and potentially lucrative post. The PFG is overseen by Libya's Defense Ministry but funded by the Oil Ministry.

Al-Jadhran has since been dismissed from the PFG and an arrest warrant issued for insubordination in August (Bloomberg, October 1). In a recent interview, Jadhran described the ongoing political process as unavoidable:

We have already declared our independence financially... After being ignored and neglected by the current government, we need to be free to create our own administration and to be in charge of our own budgets. Autonomy is the only way to get our proper rights and cast off this oppression (Petroleum Economist, October 8).

On October 2, the secessionists announced the appointment of Abd Rabo Abd al-Hamid al-Barasi as the head of the executive bureau, to be located in al-Bayda, as well as the appointment of Colonel Najib Sulayman al-Hasi as commander-in-chief of a projected 20,000-man Barqa defense force (drawn largely from the 17,000 petroleum guards and militia members that have joined them), based in the town of Brega. The force will be tasked with the protection of Cyrenaican oil facilities and securing the cities of Derna and Benghazi in order to halt the ongoing bombing and assassination campaigns. The appointees were viewed as being the choices of Ibrahim Jadhran.

Officials of the self-proclaimed government have maintained that the move to establish a new administration in Cyrenaica is not an effort to take sole control of the majority of Libya's oil resources. According to Abd Rabo al-Barasi: "We only want Barqa's share according to the 1951 constitution" (Libya Herald, October 25). Elsewhere, al-Barasi has said: "The aim of the regional government is to share resources in a better fashion, and to end the centralized system adopted by the authorities in Tripoli" (Arab News, October 25). After security has been restored in the cities of Derna and Benghazi, where over 80 people, including prominent members of the security forces, have been assassinated in the last year alone, the new administration has promised it will focus on attracting new investment to the region.

There is a tribal dimension to the dispute between al-Jadhran and the GNC; al-Jadhran and his brother Salim are both members of the Magharba tribe, a large and influential group that occupies the most productive oil fields in Cyrenaica. The GNC worries about alienating the entire tribe if it takes firm measures with al-Jadhran (Bloomberg, October 1). PFG commander Bukhamada also cites a challenge to national unity inherent in any attempt to dislodge the rebellious guard leader: "On a purely military level, of course the Ministry of Defence could easily defeat Jathran's men, but politically the situation is very difficult. If troops are sent in from the west, that would only help to further unite the tribes of the east against the government" (Petroleum Economist, October 8). In some cases, secessionists and other Cyrenaican opponents of the central government in Tripoli have exploited the fear of civil war to warn against government-sponsored military operations to reclaim the oil fields of the east. Al-Jadhran and others also like to characterize the Tripoli government as being controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood to discredit their efforts to regain control of the east (Reuters, October 27; Petroleum Economist, October 8). Local Islamists in Benghazi, in turn, regard al-Jadhran as a tribalist who is pulling Libya backwards in order to strengthen the Magharba (Reuters, October 27).

A spokesman for the GNC said that the declaration of a "so-called Cyrenaica Region" was illegal (Libya Herald, October 25). While criticizing central authorities for "incompetence and corruption," al-Barasi, with little explanation, maintains the new government in Cyrenaica represents "not a secession movement, but a movement for Libya... Cyrenaica is the start and the aim is Libya" (Libya Herald, October 25).

Independence for the Fezzan?

The desire for autonomy within Libya has also spread to

Libya's sparsely inhabited south-western region, the Fezzan, a land of remorseless desert punctuated with a few oases and several vital trade routes into the African interior.

In late September, Fezzani elders from Sabha, Waddan, Wadi al-Shatti, Jufra and Obari met in Obari to discuss "the inability of the government to meet public requirements, especially in the Fezzan region," according to a statement issued by the gathering (Libya Herald, September 27). The statement went on to say that a new, autonomous administration would be headed by a military governor. The Fezzani autonomy movement seems to be dominated by Arabs at present, with little support from Tuareg and Tubu residents of the region. Support is far from universal even within Fezzan's Arab community, especially within Sabha, the regional capital and home to a major military base during the Qaddafi-era.

Libyan reports carried throughout the Middle East claimed that delegates declared Fezzan to be an autonomous federal province of Libya with Nuri Muhammad al-Qouizi as its president (al-Arabiya, September 26). The Sabha Local Council said it did not recognize the decision as the members of the elders' council that made the decision had not consulted with the people or institutions of the region (Libya Herald, September 28).

Shutting Down the Oil Industry

Jadhran's followers now control approximately 60 percent of the nation's oil wealth. Among the closed terminals are Libya's two most important, al-Sider and Ras-Lanuf, both located in the Libyan east (UPI, September 27). Protests at the terminals that began in August over pay issues eventually merged with demands for Libyan federalism (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 7). The head of the Libyan parliament's energy committee, Naji Mokhtar, has admitted to paying \$2 million of his own funds to an unnamed leading member of the PFG to help open the oil terminals, though he characterized it as a mediation effort rather than a bribe: "Exceptional times call for exceptional measures... I went to them thinking they would have a sense of patriotism" (Bloomberg, September 24).

In Tobruk, where local leaders favor national unity over Cyrenaican autonomy (while still insisting on certain political concessions), Prime Minister Ali Zeidan was able to announce the reopening of the Marsa Hariga terminal on October 28 (Libya Herald, October 28). On the same day, however, Tuareg protesters demanding national ID numbers (to clarify their Libyan citizenship) and official recognition for their language seized and shut down the Sharara oilfield in Obari (Fezzan) and a closure of the Mellitah terminal (run

jointly by Eni and Libya's National Oil Corporation – NOC) entered a second day after roughly 80 Berber gunmen from the north-western port city of Zuwara seized the terminal by means of an amphibious assault to press their demands for greater representation in the constitutional committee (Libya Herald, October 28). Embarrassingly, Zuwara is the hometown of Nuri Abu Sahmain, the chairman of the GNC (see Terrorism Monitor Brief, July 11). The Sharara oilfield had only just resumed pumping operations on September 16 after the Sharara, al-Fil and Hamada pipelines were shut down by the Zintan militia (Libya Herald, September 16). A September 4 announcement of a 20 percent hike in public sector salaries, including oil facility guards, failed to have any significant impact on the strikes (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 7).

Reported attempts by the strikers and petroleum guards to sell oil on the black market led Prime Minister Ali Zeidan to warn in mid-August that: "Any vessel not under contract to the National Oil Company that approaches the terminals will be bombed from the air and sea" (Tripoli Post, August 17). Al-Jadhran does not express concern with these threats, saying: "We've got access to boats and we're ready to offer tankers military escorts to help protect them from government forces" (Petroleum Economist, October 8).

It is a measure of the weakness of the GNC that it only decided this month to stop paying striking guards of the 21,000 man PFG who were blockading outbound flows of oil and gas. Such measures have had some success: in central Libya, PFG commander Brigadier Idris Bukhamada ordered all PFG members to re-enlist and accept government authority or forfeit their salaries—some 2,000 of the 3,000 guards quickly complied (Bloomberg, October 1). In the east, however, there are other factors at work, including political motivations and the possibility of alternate sources of income, either through illegal petroleum sales or "donations" from various interested parties in the oil industry, such as shippers, traders or rival oil companies.

ExxonMobil, a minor player in Libya with offshore operations, announced on September 17 that security concerns were forcing it to reduce staff and operations in Libya. Italian oil firm Eni and American Marathon have both suffered losses during the disruptions that have cost Libya an estimated \$5 billion so far this year. Marathon has indicated its interest in selling its 16.3 percent stake in Waha Oil, Libya's largest foreign partnership (Reuters, September 17; Libya Herald, October 3).

Italy's Eni, which runs the largest energy operations in Libya, has suffered from a month-long and ongoing shutdown of its

Wafa field in western Libya, near the Algerian border. In this case, Wafa, which supplies gas to Italy through two trans-Mediterranean pipelines, was shut down by strikers seeking financial rather than political aims and who saw the ongoing turmoil in energy fields elsewhere in Libya as an opportune time to take action (*Gulf Times*, October 25; *Libya Herald*, September 29).

Conclusion

The turmoil in the oil fields has forced the GNC to dip into Libya's financial reserves to maintain the most basic government services, with fears that the government may soon be unable to pay government employees if the situation is not reversed soon. There are reports that many mid-level officials and administrators have already decided to resign and leave the country (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 23). There are also an estimated 225,000 militia members receiving government salaries in return for their "loyalty" to the GNC. Their commitment to the GNC, already fairly shallow (and in some cases non-existent), will be severely challenged by any interference with their paychecks.

Libya's central government has made almost no progress in building a national defense structure that would allow it to enforce its writ without the cooperation (at a price) of Libya's militias. Without a national security force of any significance, Libya's ruling GNC simply does not have the means of dealing with powerful militia leaders who decide to impose their own direction on the nation. However, the GNC and Libya's oil ministry are not entirely blameless in this affair—dubious practices such as loading oil tankers without the use of meters to measure the size of the shipment and awarding export contracts without going through proper channels have been cited by oil facilities guards as cause for their takeover of major oil terminals (*Tripoli Post*, August 17). Dr. Abd al-Bari Ali al-Arousi, Libya's Minister of Oil and Gas, is frequently cited by the strikers as a corrupt influence in the Ministry. Prime Minister Zeidan is also widely viewed as having failed to address security concerns in Libya or make any progress in reining in Libya's militias and rebellious petroleum guards, leading to the August 18 resignation of Interior Minister Muhammad al-Shaykh, who cited lack of support from the prime minister during his three months on the job (*al-Jazeera*, August 18).

Questions regarding the legality of oil sales by the PFG and its allies independent of the Libyan Oil Ministry would normally be clearly defined by law and practice, but the prior assistance provided by Qatar and NATO in allowing rebel oil sales to help self-finance the Libyan revolution has muddied the waters by setting a precedent for oil sales

independent of the Tripoli government. Strong demand for Libya's high-quality oil may encourage independent deals with the new Cyrenaican administration, which is currently the only body capable of delivering the product from the vast eastern oil fields.

Popular support for the declaration of autonomy is difficult to gauge in Cyrenaica, where no clear consensus has yet emerged despite the declarations of more ambitious members of the political community. Nonetheless, the possibility of a local move to take control of the majority of Libya's resource wealth or even the perception of such a move could trigger a new conflict within Libya and even a new round of external intervention focused on securing Libya's oil wealth.

Andrew McGregor is the Senior Editor of Global Terrorism Analysis and the Director of Aberfoyle International Security, a Toronto-based agency specializing in security issues related to the Islamic world.

Note

1. Andrew McKillop, "Who Controls Libyan Oil?" October 17, 2013, <http://www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article42720.html>.