



Update

A geopolitical reading of the situation of the armed formations of the two conflict parties in Libya (broken bones policy)

Libya still witnesses difficult times at all levels, politically and economically, especially at the security level, in light of a state of fragmentation in the political and social framework. This state continues due to the developments occurred to the armed formations which Libya inherited from 2011 uprising. These armed formations play a pivotal role in the management the Libyan crisis, in addition to the process of development occur to these armed formations from year to year. In this research, we try to complete what we started two years ago through our previous publication entitled «[Libya: A geopolitical reading in the armed formations of the two conflict parties](#),»

In Libya, the military front changes rapidly and it is usually linked to the political situation, and the regional and international interventions, as the later are considered the main motivator of the formation of the military scene in Libya during the past days since the last war in Libya which lasted from April 4, 2019 to June 2022. The armed formations are in a relative stability in terms of military influence and geographical distribution. Rather, it was clearly noticeable that the military capabilities increased in a very large scale. This is normal in terms of the fact that military supplies were abundantly and extensively available from multiple sides, especially in West Libya which was able to stop the advance of General Haftar's forces which were trying to control the Libyan West, and subject everyone to them, however, they failed due to the armed formations present in the Libyan West. In addition to the fall of the (Al-Kaniyat) forces loyal to General Khalifa Haftar, which were controlling on the Tarhouna area and its neighborhoods, up to the area of (Qasr Bin Ghashir), the southern suburb of the capital, Tripoli. This void was covered by an armed formation that entered the scene after the war namely (Brigade 444) whose human and military power have recently increased and now covers a very large geographical area.

The state of calmness in the western region did not last much after General Haftar's war on Tripoli in 2019, which is considered normal, as most of the armed formations now possess a larger arsenal of weapons, which is the matter through which they are trying to expand their sphere of influence. The military situation worsened due to division that took place in the executive authority, as the (honeymoon) between the Libyan parliament and the government of Dababa ended early. That happened especially in light of the great moves made by Mr. Fathi Bashagha, as he was able to create a kind of agreement between some armed formations in the west of Libya and in the forefront of them, a large part of the forces of Misurata with the forces of General Khalifa Haftar in East Libya, which resulted in the advancement of Fathi Bashagha to the position of prime minister. Besides, he was able to gain the confidence of the parliament (Tobruk) after the latter withdrew confidence from the Dabaiba government in Tripoli.



Tripoli war August 2021

The preliminary toll of the victims of the Tripoli war, August 2021



109 dead



202 wounded

In August 2021, clashes broke out between militias allied with Dabiba's government and militias allied with Bashagha, who was at that time, the Interior Minister in the Government of National Accord. The clashes began after a dispute over control of a government building in the capital. The fighting resulted in deaths, injuries, and forced residents to flee their homes.

However, the exact causes of the August 2021 clashes in Tripoli are complicated and multifaceted. However, it is believed that these clashes are linked to the ongoing power struggles and tensions between the various armed groups and political factions in Libya, particularly those allied with the Government of National Unity and those allied with the Presidential Council.

At that time, there were reports of disagreements and disputes over the allocation of key government positions, as well as concerns about corruption and mismanagement. Besides, there were some armed groups competing for control of various parts of the city to expand their influence, including key infrastructure and government buildings.

In addition, tensions arose between the Special Deterrence Force and other armed groups in the city,



particularly those allied with Fathi Bashagha, the Minister of the Interior at that time, who was working to integrate the various armed groups into a unified security force. However, his efforts were met with resistance by some groups. All of these factors, along with the history of political and social divisions in Libya, likely contributed to the outbreak of violence in Tripoli in August 2021.

The situation was eventually brought under control by a ceasefire agreement mediated by the United Nations and local authorities. The agreement called for the withdrawal of all armed groups from the city and the establishment of joint security forces.

Those clashes had major repercussions for both individuals (Al-Dabiba and Bashagha). At the time of the clashes, Al-Dabiba had just assumed the position of Prime Minister of Libya, and the violence raised concerns about his ability to maintain stability and security in the country. The clashes also highlighted the challenges facing him. For Bashagha, the clashes were a major setback in his political life. He was seen as a leading candidate for the presidency in the upcoming elections, but the violence in Tripoli and his perceived inability to control the security situation in the city damaged his reputation and weakened his political standing.

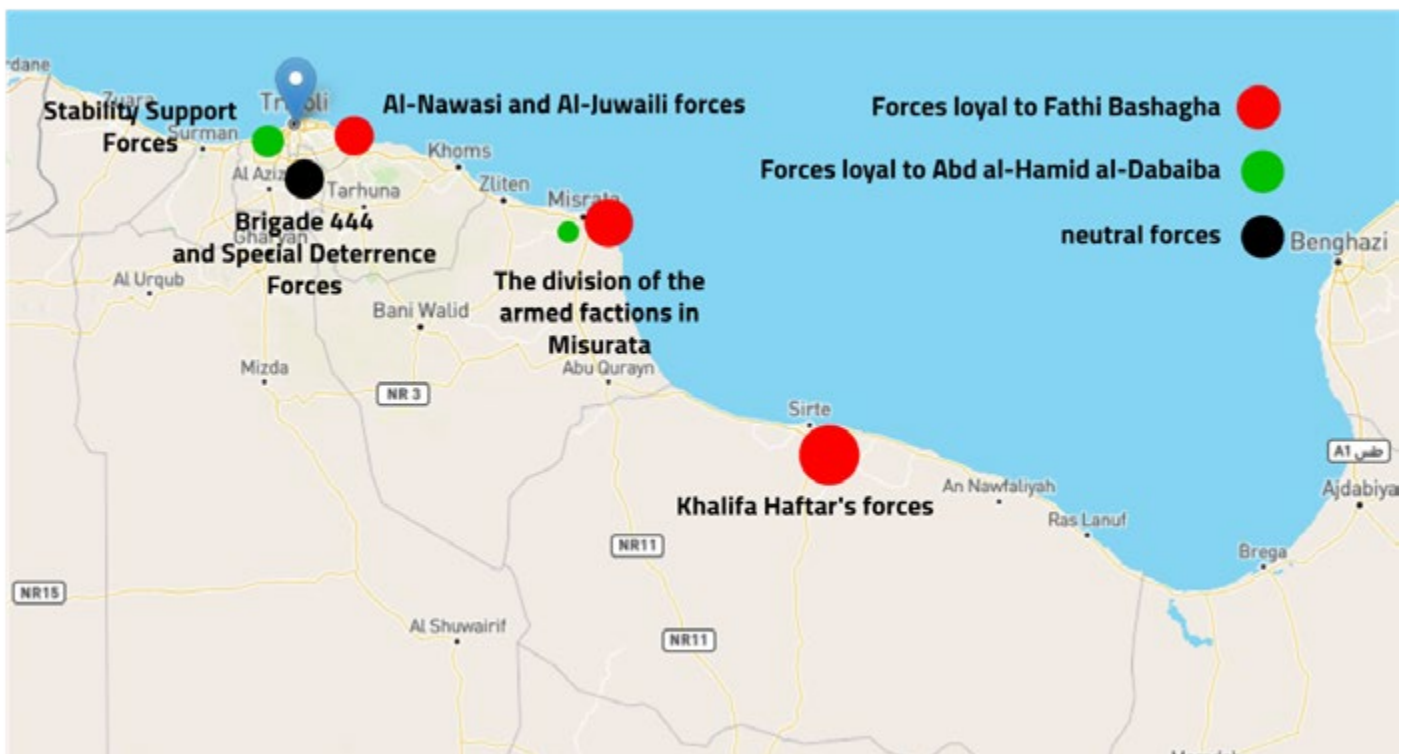
In the aftermath of the clashes, both Dabaiba and Bashagha called for calmness and stressed the need for national unity and reconciliation. A ceasefire agreement mediated by the UN and local authorities helped ease tensions, but the incident highlighted the ongoing challenges facing the country in its transition to a stable and democratic government with the call at the time for elections by December 2021.

The exact number of casualties resulted in these clashes is not clear, and it may be difficult to determine an exact number. However, according to multiple reports, at least 109 people were killed and 202 injured during the fighting. These numbers may not be the total numbers and may be subject to change once more information becomes available and appears.

Redeployment of militias in western Libya (broken bones)

It is not accurate to describe the clashes that took place in Tripoli in August 2021 between militias supporting Abdel Hamid Al-Dabaiba and Fathi Bashagha as a war of victor and vanquished. Violence and conflict in Libya are not a zero-sum game, and the suffering and damage caused by such clashes have a wide range of negative effects for all concerned parties, as well as for the population in general. The August 2021 clashes in Tripoli were a setback for the political and security situation in Libya. The fighting has resulted in the displacement of thousands of people and caused extensive damage to infrastructure and public buildings. Also, The clashes have had wider implications for the ongoing political process in Libya, highlighting divisions and ongoing power struggles between various armed groups and political factions.

These clashes have eroded the credibility of the Government of National Unity and increased public frustration with the political process. They have also highlighted persistent divisions and power struggles between various armed groups and political factions, making it more difficult to achieve the consensus and cooperation necessary for tangible progress towards a stable and democratic government. The situation remains fragile, with security challenges and political uncertainties still to come.



All indications were that Libya was on the verge of a real war, especially in the West of Libya, where we find that Haftar's forces controlling the east and south of Libya have decided to line up with the government of Fathi Bashagha, their new ally, who provided a great service to them when he managed to create two lines in the city of Misurata. In the West of Libya, the matter is more complicated, as for the first time in the last ten years, a dispute occurs in Misurata (the city of war and peace), and it is partially divided between Dabaiba and Bashagha. However, recently, all indications show that the latter has been able to persuade most of the armed factions in the city to line up with him. He was also able to convince other armed factions surrounding the center of the capital, Tripoli, such as (Al-Nawasi, Al-Juwaili forces), and he was also able to neutralize strong factions such as (Brigade 444, and the Special Deterrence Force).

Only the Misrata Joint Force and the Tripoli Stability Support Apparatus remain with the Dbeiba government. This allied force does not constitute a weight equal to the forces aligned with the Bashagha government, which clearly warns that the military clash is only a matter of time.

As soon as the expected clash took place, the (Stability Support Apparatus) was able to control the center of Tripoli after a fierce battle with the forces of (Brigade 777) affiliated to Haitham al-Tajouri, the former commander of the well-known Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade.) from its headquarters and the arrest of most of its members after its commander, Mustafa Kaddour, fled, and the forces (Brigade 444) did not move one inch, as they usually do when supporting them during any clashes.

The clashes did not last long this time, but their results on the ground were decisive, as both the Stability Support Agency and the Special Deterrence Force managed to control all the geographical area that expresses the city of Tripoli in its expanded form, from the Friday Market (Souq Al Goma'a) to the Al-Andalus neighborhood, and from the sea to the southern suburb of Tripoli (Qasr Bin Ghashir). The entire area has come under their control and influence is divided between them in light of the relative increase of the (Special Deterrence Force), and Imad Trabelsi (General Security Force) maintained its presence in Al-Andalus neighborhood and what Behind it. Also, the Brigade 111 maintained positions around Tripoli International Airport and the area adjacent to it.

Its noteworthy that all the previous names we mentioned before in our previous paper entitled [Libya: Who stands with whom and why?](#). However, the latest update on the level of armed formations is related to (Brigade 444).

What is the Brigade 444?! Who is Mahmoud Hamza?



The Brigade 444 led by Mahmoud Hamza, which was established in Tripoli in 2019, completed an alliance with the Government of National Accord and played an important role in the battle for Tripoli against the forces of General Khalifa Haftar, who was trying to control the city, and the group played a key role in pushing Haftar's forces back and securing the capital. the Government of National Accord.

Mahmoud Hamza is the second man in the Special Deterrence Force, which is a security force affiliated with the Ministry of Interior in the Government of National Accord. Also, he is the current commander of (Brigade 444). We believe that there is no one in western Tripoli does not know this name. His name has been associated with Division (20). It is one of the teams (the Special Deterrence Force), and it is considered one of the elites within the apparatus. Mahmoud Hamza decided to separate from the Special Deterrence Force, and there have been several analyzes regarding the reasons for this separation. However, what is certain is that Mahmoud Hamza, after a short period of time, established a military force under the name (Brigade 444). It belongs to the Ministry of Defense, and this force was able to control a large area from the outskirts of Tripoli to the city of Tarhuna and Bani Walid to Jabal Nafusa in the West, and the borders of the city of Al-Shwerf in the south. This vast area made the force positioned in an excellent way on the military scene in Libya, and recently it was able to Expand inside Tripoli more after the last war, as the force (Brigade 444) did not fully participate in the war, and relatively adopted a neutral policy made it take its share of the possibility of more movement in the center of Tripoli.

It should be noted that there are analytical readings by some of those familiar with the Libyan affairs, saying that (Brigade 444) is only another face of the (Special Deterrence Apparatus), and that

the attempt to show the Brigade as being at odds with the (Deterrence Apparatus), which is essentially a branch of it, is only a camouflage operation intended only to delude the Libyans in order to achieve their interests under different names.

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Conclusion

We can't put an accurate and final summary of the situation of the armed formations in Libya, especially in West Libya, as the state of fluidity in the political situation and the radical changes that occur from time to time make us unable to anticipate which path the armed formations will take, or who will be the last victim in the series of the downfall of the armed formations on the map of politics in Libya. However, what we believe that there are armed formations will continue on the scene in the coming years, and others that may be waiting for their turn to fall in any change that may occur during the coming period of time.