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Overview: In 2014, Libya's democratic transition was disrupted by the outbreak of violence between armed factions affiliated with rival tribes, cities, and political actors. The resulting collapse of government authority and fragmentation of the country's security forces greatly impeded Libya's ability to counter violent extremist groups active in its territory. Although all sides in the conflict claimed to reject terrorism, there were signs that violent extremist groups in the region sought to take advantage of the security vacuum to expand their foothold in Libya. Libya's porous borders, vast uncontrolled weapons stockpiles, and critically weak law enforcement institutions continued to make it a permissive environment for terrorist groups, including Ansar al-Shari'a (AAS) in Benghazi and in Darnah as well as elements of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Murabitun. In November, Darnah-based extremist groups pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), although the extent of operational and tactical linkages to ISIL's leadership in Iraq and Syria was unclear. There were reports of infighting between ISIL and other Libyan violent extremist groups. Libya continued to serve as a key source and transit hub for foreign fighters traveling to Syria and Iraq.

The Libyan government's inability to prevent or punish terrorist violence, including a campaign of assassinations targeting activists and security officials in Benghazi, prompted others to take action outside of the state's writ. In May, retired General Khalifa Hefatar launched "Operation Dignity" against violent extremist groups in Benghazi as well as political rivals in other parts of the country. Following the outbreak of nation-wide violence in July, the internationally recognized government in Tobruk endorsed Hefatar's campaign and took some steps to bring it under the authority of the state. However, Hefatar's role within the Libyan military was unclear and he remained a controversial actor for many Libyans. Ansar al-Shari'a elements joined other militias in opposing Operation Dignity in the east of the country. Fighting in Benghazi continued throughout the year, with a spike in violence late in the year.

Violent Islamist extremists remained in control of the eastern city of Darnah, which has lacked virtually any state presence since the 2011 revolution. In 2014, violent extremist groups in Darnah reportedly employed summary executions and public floggings to enforce a strict form of sharia law, and carried out assassinations and beheadings of civil society activists, judges, and security officials.

In May, Ahmed Abu Khattalah, a senior leader within Ansar al-Shari'a-Benghazi, was captured by U.S. forces and was facing trial in the United States at year's end. Abdal Basset Azzouz, a Libyan al-Qa'ida leader, was reportedly arrested in Turkey in December.

2014 Terrorist incidents: The following list of terrorist incidents is designed to highlight major attacks believed to be perpetrated by violent extremist groups against western, diplomatic, Libyan government, and civil society targets. It is not exhaustive and does not encompass the numerous acts of violence perpetrated by the parties to the current political conflict, who have each accused their opponents of conducting terrorist acts including kidnappings, assassinations, and attacks on civilian infrastructure such as airports and seaports. The list of incidents in Benghazi and Darnah also should not be considered comprehensive; according to Human Rights Watch, more than 250 politically motivated killings occurred in these cities in 2014. Frequently, there were no claims of responsibility for assassinations or other attacks.

- On January 2, two British and New Zealand nationals were murdered by unknown assailants near the coastal city of Sabratha.
- On February 24, seven Egyptian Coptic Christians were killed near Benghazi, apparently because of their faith.
- On March 2, a French engineer working in Benghazi was killed by unknown assailants.
- On March 17, a car bombing targeted a graduation ceremony for military academy cadets in Benghazi, killing 11 and injuring 20.
- On March 21 and April 17, in separate incidents, two Tunisian diplomats were abducted in Tripoli.
- On April 15, the Jordanian ambassador to Libya was kidnapped in Tripoli. He was released in May, reportedly in exchange for the release of Mohamed Dersi, a Libyan national who was serving a life sentence in Jordan for his role in an airport bomb plot.
- On June 4, a Swiss staff member of the International Committee of the Red Cross was assassinated in Sirte.
- On June 25, civil society activist Salwa Bugaighis was murdered in Benghazi by unknown assailants.
- On August 12, Tripoli's police chief was assassinated in the capital by unknown gunmen.
- From September 18-20, fourteen people, including a cleric and two teenage activists, were assassinated by unknown gunmen in Benghazi, in an event that became known as "Black Friday."
- On November 9, a car bomb was detonated in the eastern city of Shahat near a location where Prime Minister al-Thinni was meeting with UN officials, following an earlier explosion that appeared to target al-Thinni's government offices in Beyda.
- On November 11, three Libyan youth activists were beheaded in Darnah; they had been kidnapped after posting anti-extremist comments on social media. A fourth individual, a member of the Libyan security forces, was beheaded several days later. The killings were filmed and posted on social media.
- On November 12, more than 20 people were wounded in separate car bombings in the eastern cities of Tobruk and Beyda. Both attacks, in cities that previously experienced few

security incidents, appeared to target the internationally recognized government and parliament.

- On November 13, car bombs detonated near the UAE and Egyptian embassies in Tripoli. The embassies were unoccupied and no one was injured.
- On December 27, a car bomb targeted Libya's diplomatic security headquarters in Tripoli. No casualties were reported. An online outlet associated with ISIL's Libya branch claimed responsibility.
- On December 30, parliamentary offices in Tobruk were targeted in a car bombing.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Libya lacks a comprehensive counterterrorism law, although the Libyan penal code (under Title 2, Section 1, Chapter 1, Article 170 and Title 2, Chapter 2, Article 207) criminalizes offenses prejudicial to state security, including terrorism, the promotion of terrorist acts, and the handling of money in support of such acts. In 2013, the General National Congress (GNC) adopted laws no. 27 and 53 outlining a plan to disband non-state militias and integrate them into state security forces; however, neither law has been implemented. Libya has ratified the AU's Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which requires states to criminalize terrorist acts under their national laws.

In March, the interim government of Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni released a statement, known as the Ghat Declaration, pledging government, military, and security action against terrorism and requesting international counterterrorism assistance. The statement marked a significant escalation in the government's counterterrorism rhetoric, asserting that there would be "no place for terrorism in Libya" and pledging the government to do "whatever is required to restore security and peace." It placed particular emphasis on ongoing violence in Benghazi, Darnah, and Sirte. A number of GNC members affiliated with Islamist-leaning parties, who were reportedly not consulted on the content of the declaration, opposed the characterization of the security crisis in eastern Libya as terrorism.

Even prior to the outbreak of large-scale violence in July, Libyan law enforcement personnel lacked the capacity to detect, deter, respond to, or investigate terrorist incidents. There were no reported terrorism-related prosecutions in 2014. In many parts of Libya, security and law enforcement functions are provided by armed militias rather than state institutions. National police and security forces are fragmented, inadequately trained and equipped, and lack clear reporting chains and coordination mechanisms. Dozens of security and law enforcement officials, including prosecutors and judges, have been targeted in kidnappings and assassinations, resulting in the suspension of court operations in Benghazi and Derna. There has been no police presence in Darnah since 2011. Libya's military is similarly weak, with units often breaking down along local, tribal, or factional lines. Formal security structures are often overmatched by non-state armed groups. Counterterrorism operations conducted by Libyan Special Operations Forces have so far failed to significantly reduce the level of terrorist violence, bombings, assassinations, or kidnappings in Benghazi.

The Libyan government lacks a comprehensive border management strategy and has struggled to secure the country's thousands of miles of land and maritime borders, enabling the illicit flow of goods, weapons, migrants, and foreign fighters that pose serious security challenges to the region. Libyan border security forces were generally poorly trained and underequipped, and frequently participated in illicit cross-border trade. Border security infrastructure that was damaged and looted during the 2011 revolution had not been repaired or replaced, and the recent conflict has affected border security infrastructure along Libya's border with Tunisia. Security at Libya's airports is minimal, with limited document screening and no utilization of passenger name record systems or biometric technology. Libya also lacks the resources, manpower, and training to

conduct sufficient maritime patrols to interdict or dissuade illicit maritime trafficking and irregular migration. According to Italian officials, more than 50,000 migrants arrived in Italy in the first half of 2014, many from Libyan ports. Existing legislation outlining the responsibilities of various government agencies in the area of border management is vague and often contradictory, resulting in ad hoc and poorly coordinated efforts.

At the March 2014 Rome Conference, the United States and other international partners committed to help Libya address its border challenges through the coordinated provision of expertise, training, and equipment. Libya has also sought to engage its neighbors and regional partners on border security issues. In 2013, Libya signed the Rabat Declaration, which foresees expanded cooperation, training, and information exchanges with countries in the region as well as the establishment of a regional secretariat in Tripoli. Under former Prime Minister Zeidan, the Libyan government also established a Border Management Working Group (BMWG) comprised of seven ministries involved in border security, including Defense, Interior, Finance (which oversees the Customs Authority), and Transportation. Envisioned as the government's lead body for coordinating border security policy and assistance, the BMWG suffered from leadership turnover, poor internal communications, and weak capacity. Border security efforts led by the EU Border Assistance Mission to Libya (EUBAM) faced repeated delays and were largely placed on hold following the outbreak of fighting in Tripoli in July, which forced the evacuation of EUBAM staff from Libya to Tunisia and a considerable reduction in personnel.

Libya has cooperated in the investigation of terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens and interests, including the September 2012 killing of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans at U.S. government facilities in Benghazi. However, Libyan support to these investigations has been limited given overall weak capacity in Libya's law enforcement institutions. Although its political leadership has pledged to do everything possible to arrest and bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorist acts against U.S. citizens, Libyan officials publicly condemned the capture by U.S. forces of Abu Anas al-Libi and Ahmed Abu Khattalah, both of whom have been charged under U.S. terrorism laws. In 2013, the Libyan Ministry of Justice signed a Declaration of Intent to facilitate law enforcement cooperation with the United States on investigations, including that of the 1988 Pan Am Flight 103 bombing.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Libya is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body, and has taken steps to implement a national identification database system to improve transparency in government salary payments. Although there is little reliable data on Libya's anti-money laundering (AML) and counterterrorist financing efforts, Libyan government and financial institutions generally lacked the ability to identify and interdict illicit financial flows. The Libyan Central Bank has requested IMF technical and capacity building assistance in AML and other areas. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2014 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume 2, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>.

Regional and International Cooperation: Libya has participated in the Global Counterterrorism Forum and supported counterterrorism initiatives by the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and the AU. In 2014, Libya participated in three foreign minister-level meetings with neighboring countries, hosted respectively by Tunisia, Egypt, and Spain, aimed at addressing Libya's security challenges. Although the Libyan interim government under Prime Ministers Ali Zeidan and Abdullah al-Thinni has expressed interest in international counterterrorism cooperation, most efforts have failed to gain traction given the challenging security and political environment. Since 2011, the United States, UN, and a number of European countries have developed programs to help rebuild Libya's law enforcement, security, and defense institutions through technical assistance and training. At the Libyan government's request, the United States, UK, Turkey, and

Italy committed to train a General Purpose Force (GPF) to help protect government institutions and maintain law and order. However, the GPF training program, as well as EU-led efforts to build Libyan border security capacity faced repeated delays in implementation. A number of these programs have been on hold since the outbreak of large-scale violence in July.

Countering Radicalization to Violence and Violent Extremism: The Libyan government has not adopted a comprehensive strategy for countering violent extremism. Under the previous interim government, the Ministries of Interior, Culture, and Youth and Sports launched educational and public messaging campaigns to counter extremist ideology. Like many other government programs, these efforts are on hold in light of the current political and security situation. Libya has participated in the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute regional workshops on the rehabilitation of violent extremist offenders. While many Libyan political and religious leaders condemn terrorism, others have implicitly endorsed extremist views. In November, Omar al-Hassi, the then-nominal prime minister of the unrecognized Tripoli-based administration, called Ansar al-Shari'a a "beautiful idea" and advocated engaging the group in dialogue. While disparate civic groups have carried out campaigns, including via social media, to speak out against extremism, the increase in online threats, kidnappings, and assassinations of activists who speak out against extremists contributes to a culture of intimidation and self-censorship.

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