

USDOS – US Department of State

Country Report on Terrorism 2020 - Chapter 1 - Libya

Overview: Libyan government officials continued to work with U.S. counterparts to combat terrorism, although civil conflict and fractured security institutions limited direct cooperation. Following the failure of the self-styled Libyan National Army's (LNA's) military assault on western Libya, military officials from the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the eastern-based LNA signed a ceasefire agreement October 23. Despite the ceasefire, the volatility of Libya's security and political dynamics allowed room for terrorist groups such as ISIS and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) to regroup. While ISIS-Libya controls no territory in Libya and is significantly degraded in terms of numbers and capacity, it remains a threat. The GNA was a reliable and willing U.S. counterterrorism partner, although its capacity to eliminate terrorist safe havens, counter terrorist financing, deter the flow of foreign fighters, or ensure effective counter proliferation efforts across Libya's territory was limited. The LNA countered terrorism in the East and South of the country, but its counterterrorism gains were limited to areas under its direct control. At the end of 2020, UN-facilitated talks were underway to select a new, unified interim executive authority.

2020 Terrorist Incidents: Significant terrorist incidents included the following:

- In May, ISIS-Libya claimed responsibility for a VBIED attack against a security checkpoint in Taraghin, 600 miles south of Tripoli, marking the first attack by ISIS-Libya in more than a year.
- From May through June, ISIS-Libya claimed eight attacks in southern Libya targeting the LNA and civilians, including an apparent rocket attack on a local airbase. The claims were published in the Islamic State's weekly newsletter.
- In September an unknown group conducted a suicide bomb attack in western Tripoli, reportedly causing no casualties. No group claimed responsibility.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In November, GNA Prime Minister Sarraj endorsed the CT strategy compiled by his national CT coordinator. In practice, however, coordination between relevant authorities still largely occurs on an ad hoc basis, and an implementation plan for the new strategy has yet to be promulgated. Following its defeat in Tripoli, the LNA undertook a series of realignments in its security forces, several of which were involved in CT operations.

Libya did not pass or implement any counterterrorism legislation in 2020. 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 that may threaten national security, including terrorism, the promotion of terrorist acts, and the handling of money in support of such acts. 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. The GNA and LNA continued to seek international support to combat ISIS-Libya and AQIM.

Despite Libya's disjointed security institutions and ongoing civil conflict during part of 2020, Libyan authorities in the GNA undertook operations to disrupt terrorist groups. So did the LNA. In July the GNA announced the arrest of suspected ISIS members in Misrata and Zawiya. In September, LNA forces killed ISIS-Libya head Abu Muadh al-Iraqi and in November detained several individuals associated with AQIM in the vicinity of Ubari.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Libya is a member of MENAFATF. Libya is also a member of the Defeat-ISIS CIGF.

In August the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, as chairman of the National Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Commission (AML/CFT), signed a letter of cooperation with the Ministry of Interior to reduce corruption and investigate crimes involving money laundering and

terrorist financing. In November the Ministry of Interior contracted with K2 Integrity — a risk, compliance, investigations, and monitoring firm — to strengthen its AML/CFT framework to meet international standards.

Countering Violent Extremism: There were no changes in 2020.

International and Regional Cooperation: The European Union and the UK continued working to support the development of the Libyan National CT Strategy under the CT Coordinator. Libya is a member of the United Nations, the AU, the Organization of Islamic Coordination (OIC), and the Arab League.

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