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Overview: Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA) proved a reliable counterterrorism partner in 2017, and worked closely with the United States to counter the spread of terrorist groups such as ISIS-Libya and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). While Libya has made considerable progress against ISIS, including dislodging ISIS fighters from its stronghold of Sirte in 2016, terrorist groups have taken advantage of political instability and limited government presence in other parts of the country. Through coordination with the GNA, the United States conducted periodic precision airstrikes on ISIS-Libya desert camps and AQIM cells, degrading their numbers and displacing remaining elements to other areas both inside and outside Libya. Toward the end of 2017, ISIS elements were in a position to carry out only local-level operations. The GNA has also cooperated with the United States on the investigation of suspected terrorists.

While Sirte had previously served as ISIS-Libya's center of governance in Libya, ISIS-Libya cells also existed in other areas of the country, including the eastern Libyan cities of Benghazi and Darnah. The eastern Libya-based "Libyan National Army" (LNA) drove groups of ISIS and other extremist fighters out of Benghazi as part of its campaign to gain control of Benghazi. The LNA, led by General Khalifa Haftar and not aligned with the GNA, has expressed the desire to rid Libya of terrorist groups.

Other terrorist organizations, including AQIM, maintained a presence in Libya. These groups continued to take advantage of the political instability throughout the country, but efforts by GNA-aligned forces, international partners, and the LNA have degraded terrorist capabilities in some areas. AQIM has sought to establish a longer-term presence in Libya.

2017 Terrorist Incidents: ISIS-Libya and al-Qa'ida-aligned terrorists carried out dozens of attacks throughout 2017. Methods included suicide bombers, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED), ambushes, kidnappings, and targeted assassinations. The following list details only a small fraction of the terrorist incidents that occurred.

- On August 23 in al-Jufra, ISIS fighters killed 11 individuals and injured one during an attack on a road checkpoint. The victims were either shot or beheaded.
- On October 4 in Misrata, two suicide bombers detonated explosives inside the Misrata Courthouse killing four civilians and injuring dozens. Authorities discovered an unexploded VBIED. ISIS claimed responsibility.

- On October 25 in Ajdabiya, two LNA soldiers were killed and four injured at a roadside checkpoint. One victim was burned in his car and the other beheaded. ISIS claimed responsibility.

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 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 African Union's (AU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which requires states to criminalize terrorist acts under their national laws.

The GNA has continued to support and seek international cooperation to combat ISIS. Neither the GNA, nor factions in the east associated with the House of Representatives in Tobruk, has produced a strategy to combat the terrorist threat. The GNA conducted internal consultations to develop a counterterrorism strategy, but had not passed any legislation as of December 31, 2017. In November 2017, the Presidency Council appointed a new counterterrorism coordinator, who sits in the office of the prime minister, to coordinate among Libyan counterterrorism stakeholders and with the international community.

A multitude of organizations under the GNA claimed counterterrorism responsibilities, such as the Counterterrorism Unit, the Presidential Guard, the Central Investigations Division, General Investigations Division, and the Libyan Intelligence Service. Due to the limited reach of these organizations, however, they were not effective in deterring or reducing terrorist activities beyond their localized areas of control. Libyan law enforcement personnel lacked clear mandates and the capacity to detect, deter, respond to, or investigate terrorist incidents due to continued political and security force fragmentation.

There were no reported terrorism-related prosecutions in 2017. In many parts of Libya, security and law enforcement functions, including detention of terrorist elements, are provided by armed groups rather than state institutions. National police and security forces are fragmented, inadequately trained and equipped, and lack clear reporting chains and coordination mechanisms. Security and law enforcement officials, including prosecutors and judges, have been targeted in kidnappings and assassinations. Libya's military forces are similarly weak and fragmented. Formal security structures are often overmatched by non-state armed groups.

The Libyan government lacked a comprehensive border management strategy and was unable to secure the country's thousands of miles of land and maritime borders, enabling the illicit flow of fuel, goods, weapons, antiquities, narcotics, migrants, and foreign terrorist fighters that pose serious security challenges to the region. Libyan border security forces were generally poorly trained and underequipped, and participated in illicit cross-border trade. Border security infrastructure has not been repaired or replaced in nearly a decade. Ongoing conflicts since 2011 have affected border security infrastructure along Libya's border with Tunisia.

Security at Libya's airports is minimal, with limited document screening, use of Passenger Name Record systems, or biometric technology. Existing legislation outlining the responsibilities of various government agencies in border management is vague and often contradictory, resulting in ad hoc and poorly coordinated efforts. In November 2017, the International Organization for Migration estimated there were more than 700,000 migrants in Libya.

Libya lacked the resources, manpower, and training to conduct sufficient maritime patrols to interdict or dissuade illicit maritime trafficking and irregular migration, although Italy and the European Union (EU) began training members of the Libyan Naval Coastguard to increase the effectiveness of the organization.

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. The GNA 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.

The Department of State provided training in securing airports against the threat of terrorism, which included preventive security measures consisting of access control, passenger and cabin baggage screening, hold baggage screening, and air and mail cargo handling.

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. Libya is also a member of the Counter-ISIS Finance Group, a working group of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Libya adopted an Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism Decree-Law on October 24 and a regulation to implement UN Security Council resolutions related to Terrorism and the Financing of Terrorism on November 1. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the [2018 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report \(INCSR\), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes](#).

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): There were no significant changes since 2016.

Regional and International Cooperation: Many international organizations and diplomatic missions are reestablishing a presence in Tripoli after nearly all evacuated in 2014. Many other countries and organizations maintain a permanent presence in Tunis, Tunisia, to conduct diplomacy and outreach to Libya. The political conflict and limitations on the international presence in Libya hindered counterterrorism cooperation. International assistance increased in 2017, including U.S. government-provided training on airport security and land border management. Other border security initiatives, through the EU Border Assistance Mission, the UN Development Program, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime focused on improving policing and criminal justice functions, and counterterrorism legislation and legal frameworks. Libya is an active member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League.

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