



# Conflict-Sensitive Assistance to Libya Forum

## Summary of Discussions | 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting

18 October 2018, Acropole Hotel, Tunis

The Conflict-Sensitive Assistance in Libya (CSA) forum, convened by the Embassy of Switzerland to Libya and facilitated by the Peaceful Change Initiative (PCi), met for its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting (CSA 27) on 18 October 2018 at the Acropole Hotel in Tunis.

The meeting covered:

- Presentation of a refreshed conflict analysis framework for the CSA forum.
- Updating the joint conflict analysis of the CSA process and considering the conflict sensitivity implications of the last two months.

### Overview of the CSA process

A short presentation reviewed the different components of the CSA process, including:

- The background and role of the CSA forum; and
- A brief refresher presentation on conflict sensitivity.

### Presentation of new conflict analysis

PCi presented a new Libya-wide context analysis to be used as the basis for ongoing CSA updates. The new analysis refreshes the analysis that has been used as part of the CSA process since January 2016. It takes into account changes in the context since then, as well as some lessons learned about continually updating a conflict analysis in this format.

Participants provided feedback to the analysis and, as much as possible, this has subsequently been incorporated into the overall framework. Based on this feedback, a full analysis report will be prepared and released in November 2018.

The new analysis identifies 28 factors which are instrumental in influencing peace and conflict within Libya. Factors are characterised based on broad sectors (political, security and justice, economic and social). Sectors are identified for convenience, though factors may often cross such distinctions. Conceptually, factors are also divided between 'proximate' and 'structural' factors. Proximate factors are visible manifestations of violent conflict or explicit attempts to promote peace and often directly impact the level of day-to-day violence. Structural factors are deeply embedded, root causes of conflict or drivers of peace. They may not be directly visible as motivators for violence, but they serve to create the environment that allows for violent conflict to occur.

From a peacebuilding or conflict prevention perspective, managing proximate factors is important to contribute to a reduction in violence. However, addressing the structural factors will be necessary to foster an environment of sustainable peace.

From a conflict sensitivity perspective, assistance providers should consider the impact of their programming on each of these factors whenever they are undertaking their work, assessing how they can minimise risks that they might worsen factors and maximise opportunities to positively affect them.

The 28 factors presented in the new analysis, with brief descriptions of their interaction with conflict, are identified below.

### Political Factors

Factor Title	Brief Description
Divided government (Proximate)	Governmental authority in Libya is divided among several authorities, each of which claims legitimacy and refuses to accept the legitimacy of others.
Transitional process (Proximate)	Libya has remained in a state of 'transition', without a formal constitution, since 2011. Libya's transitional status sustains political uncertainty by leaving Libya's overall political structure unclear and contestable.
International peacemaking efforts (Proximate)	The international community has played a central role in trying to find a political solution to Libya's crisis since 2014. The primary effort has been UNSMIL's political mediation and dialogue processes, which have not yet managed to find a political solution to Libya's problems. Parallel efforts by other international actors are framed in support of UNSMIL's efforts, but may contribute to the fragmentation of the international peacemaking process.
Competing international interests (Proximate)	Differing, and in some cases competing, agendas of regional and international actors in Libya weaken overall efforts to support peace in Libya. Libyan political and armed actors are able to exploit divisions among regional and international actors in order to gain political or material support to pursue their interests.
Decentralisation (Proximate)	The weakness of national state institutions and an uncertain framework for decentralisation has enabled local governance structures, such as some municipalities, to pursue their interests at the expense of overall state cohesion.
Structure of political economy (Structural)	The structure of the political economy in Libya provides incentives for transactional, patronage-based relationships in which actors seek to maximise benefits for themselves, using the threat of force or the value of their own political support as leverage.
Contested political visions for Libya (Structural)	Various Libyan political and armed actors hold incompatible visions of Libya's political future. So long as such actors feel that they have the capacity to pursue their particular ideas of what Libya should be, there will be limited common space around which political agreements can be established.

### Security and Justice Factors

Factor Title	Brief Description
Political violence and armed groups (Proximate)	There is an acceptance of the use of force as a way to pursue political objectives. If political or armed actors are unable to secure their own interests through non-violent means, they are willing to use violence to spoil the process.
Irregular migration (Proximate)	Libya is part of a prominent route for irregular migration to Europe, motivating European intervention in Libya. Aside from the human cost of irregular migration, migration-related activities, either facilitating or responding to it, have become sources of revenue for Libyan criminal and conflict actors.
Violent extremist groups (Proximate)	The presence of transnational violent extremist groups in Libya, while unlikely to pose an existential threat to the country as a whole, complicate the security situation and motivate international military involvement. Their links to local groups also enables particular political narratives aimed at delegitimising other actors.
Crime and rule of law (Proximate)	Libyans experience significant levels of crime, including kidnapping, extortion and corruption. The lack of rule of law undermines trust in state institutions, empowers local responses to security and is often a source of revenue for conflict actors.
Human rights (Structural)	There is a lack of respect for human rights norms in Libya and human rights abuses by conflict actors are regularly reported. In addition to the impact on victims, human rights abuses worsen the social legacy of conflict and provides fuel for divisive political and social narratives.
Entrenchment of armed groups (Structural)	Armed groups have become so entrenched in the political and institutional framework of Libya that they are able to significantly influence decision making, undermining rule of law. When armed groups pursue their own interests over national ones, they also undermine the political and transitional processes.

### Economic Factors

Factor Title	Brief Description
Control of public finances (Proximate)	Competition over control of public finances is the economic element to the question of who controls Libya. Competition plays out politically regarding who has authority over key financial institutions and physically over control of key oil infrastructure.
Competition over local resources (Proximate)	Competition over local sources of economic activity, such as smuggling routes or businesses, has fuelled violence between armed groups. Some armed groups also seek to take control of key infrastructure, such as oil fields or pipelines, in order to extort money from government institutions.

Basic services and humanitarian needs (Proximate)	Poor delivery of basic services and humanitarian need have been exacerbated by conflict. In addition to the immediate human cost, the lack of basic services fuels protest and undermines the credibility of governmental authorities. In areas where basic services are perceived to be delivered differently based on communal affiliation, this has contributed to inter-communal tensions and local conflict.
Currency crisis (Proximate)	Problems with access to cash for Libyans, and the divergence between the official and black-market exchange rates, undermine Libyans' resilience, encourage corruption and enable exploitation by criminal and armed groups.
Smuggling and illicit trade (Proximate)	Smuggling and illicit trade around fuel, goods and food-stuffs has been a lucrative source of revenue for communities and criminal groups in Libya. With the involvement of armed groups, smuggling can empowers those groups and their participation in broader conflict.
Economic inequalities (Structural)	Perceived or actual economic inequalities, along both geographic and communal lines, contribute to resentment among sections of Libyan society.
Structure of the economy (Structural)	Structural aspects of the economy provide incentives to engage in conflict related economic activity. The economy has transformed further towards conflict-based economic activity since 2011, creating further challenges for sustainable peace.

### **Social Factors**

<b>Factor Title</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Inter-communal tensions (Proximate)	A deficit in trust between communities, worsened by Libya's experience of conflict since 2011, means that inter-communal violence is more likely when disputes occur.
Divisive narratives (Proximate)	Negative characterisations and hate speech are frequently used to undermine the credibility of others and their aspirations, reducing trust and social capital between groups and communities.
Community response mechanisms (Proximate)	Communities demonstrate resilient responses to conflict through strong traditions of informal conflict management processes, such as inter-communal mediation processes or the use of social pressure to deescalate tensions.
Civil society (Structural)	Weak civil society, particularly in the areas of human rights, political culture and accountability, undermines the central role these institutions play in promoting democratic culture and fostering sustainable peace.
Status of women (Structural)	Women in Libya face structural obstacles to being able to pursue their political, social and economic rights or to play an active part in peace promotion.

Youth (Structural)	Disenfranchisement of youth in Libya, who find it difficult to meet their aspirations, drives resentment and undermines their ability to contribute to sustainable peace.
Social exclusion (Structural)	Some social groups and communities in Libya feel their social and cultural rights are denied, including fair recognition of their place in society.
Social legacy of conflict (Structural)	Seven years of conflict have affected Libyans at both an individual and a sociological level. Individually, psychosocial impacts include a normalisation of violence and trauma. Sociologically, there is a hardening of communal identity and a deficit of trust between groups.

### Summary update of analysis

In the second session of the forum meeting, PCi presented updates to the context analysis based on the new factors presented in the previous session. The updates covered the period since the last CSA meeting on 9 August.

Working in groups based on sectors, participants reviewed the updates, identifying issues that had been missed and discussing the conflict sensitivity implications of events over the last two months. The updates, incorporating participants' comments, are included below.

### Political

Politically, the holding of a constitutional referendum and elections remain the focus of the overall political dialogue and international peacemaking process in Libya. However, the prospect of holding elections in December has become almost impossible. Throughout August, efforts to review and pass a bill for holding the constitutional referendum faced ongoing delays in the House of Representatives (HoR). On 25 September, there were reports that the HoR had passed the law and amendments to the 2011 Constitutional Declaration which were necessary to pre-empt potential legal challenges. The law was expected to be submitted to the High National Electoral Commission (HNEC) within a week. However, in mid-October, the HNEC claimed that it had not formally received the law from the HoR and would be unable to hold elections by December. In fact, no one outside the HoR is reported to have seen the law at all. Statements from international actors, including the SRSG, also indicated that elections were unlikely to be held in December.

International attitudes towards the elections and the overall political process appear to have become less cohesive during the reporting period. In particular, Italian and French disagreements, including over how they feel the country's transition should proceed, have become more pronounced. Italy has called for a meeting of Libya's political actors in Palermo from 11 – 12 November to discuss the political process.

Parallel to the push for elections, the HoR and High State Council (HSC) have demonstrated willingness to review the structure of the Presidency Council (PC). In late September, the HoR authorised representatives to engage with the HSC on reforming the PC to a 3-member structure, with a separate Prime Minister. The two bodies have been considering each other's demands but have, in principle, agreed that the PC would be reformed. While it is unclear whether both sides would be able to overcome key differences and eventually agree on who should fill a new PC, the development highlights the lack of confidence of the current PC and the GNA.

At the municipal level, two additional municipal elections were held in late September, in Bani Walid and Darj, with turnouts of 32 and 40 percent respectively. The Libyan Central Committee for Municipal

Elections said that they plan to organise an additional 66 elections before the end of the year, in areas where the municipal terms had run out. It is unlikely that will happen from a logistical standpoint while the prospect of municipal elections is complicated in the East. Reportedly, authorities in the East of the country have said they will refuse to hold elections for municipalities and have proposed replacing municipal councils with appointed bodies instead.

- Forum participants made the following observations concerning the interaction between their work and the changing political context:
  - The path of Libya's political transition, and the role of the international community in supporting that, has become less clear over the last months. This affects planning and prioritisation of programming.
  - As elections are delayed further, there is a risk that alternative political mechanisms may be found that do not resolve the key questions around Libya's transition. Moves to renegotiate the formulation of the PC may be linked to this.

## **Security**

In terms of security, the update period saw significant fighting in Tripoli in August and September. At the end of August, the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade, an armed group from Tarhuna, launched an attack in the South of Tripoli, sparking major clashes. The 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade stated that its intention was to eject all militias from Tripoli. The violence saw the major Tripoli militias respond, with major clashes and the indiscriminate use of heavy weapons, including in civilian areas. After a week of fighting, and several failed truces, UNSMIL was able to mediate a ceasefire agreement in early September. On 19 September, fighting broke out again when Salah Badi's Somoud formation, which had not been included in the earlier ceasefire, launched an attack on Ghneiwa forces in Tripoli. After several days, Ghneiwa reportedly managed to push Somoud out of the city. Overall, the violence over August and September was reported to have resulted in 120 dead, 400 injured and approximately 20,000 displaced from violence, though the majority of displaced persons were able to return home.

The fighting in Tripoli increased willingness to attempt structural changes to reduce the role of armed groups within Tripoli, which had previously been envisaged within the framework of the LPA. The GNA announced several reforms aimed at establishing a new Security Arrangements Committee which would take control of key areas from armed groups and require that they remove heavy weapons from the city. The GNA established a new Joint Force for Conflict Resolution and Security Imposition which would contain armed groups and provide security. By early October, it had been announced that both the airport and the port had been handed over the direct GNA control.

Outside Tripoli, limited clashes occurred in Derna, where Haftar affiliated LNA forces continued to work to consolidate their control of the town.

In the South West, October saw clashes between LNA affiliated forces and what have been described as Chadian criminal groups. The presence of Chadian armed opposition groups in the South of Libya follows an increased tension in that country. Several incidents of violence and crime against local populations by such groups have been reported, raising tensions with local communities.

Several incidents of attacks claimed by violent extremist groups occurred over the update period but remained fairly limited. Incidents included attacks on checkpoints in both the East and the West.

- Forum participants made the following observations concerning the interaction between their work and the changing security context:
  - The violence in Tripoli highlighted the importance of coordinated contingency and emergency planning that addresses the various uncertainties within Libya's context.

- The violence in Tripoli over the update period has also strengthened recognition of the need to address the role of armed groups in the capital. There is greater awareness that Libya's successful political transition will depend on this issue being addressed.
- The Tripoli violence also appears to have opened opportunities, both nationally and internationally to attempt to substantively addressing the issue of armed groups in Tripoli. It remains to be seen whether those opportunities are genuine.

### **Economic**

Economically, the update period saw some progress on the implementation of economic reforms, promised in June. Initial steps agreed included the levy of a 180% tax on foreign currency sales in Libya, which would see the effective official exchange rate increase to 3.6 LYD to the USD. Other measures included a reform of fuel subsidies and compensation mechanisms. By mid-October, the foreign currency levy had still not been fully imposed, reportedly due to delays by commercial banks in implementing the policy.

The announcement of economic reforms saw an increase in the value of the currency on the black market, with the dinar dropping to below 6 dinars to the dollar, from a high of over 7 before the reforms. The improvement in the currency cost has reportedly already seen improvements in the costs of goods.

Oil production over the reporting period improved, with average production reaching over a million barrels per day in September. This was due in large part to the lack of violence in areas key to oil production and processing. Nevertheless, in the South West, armed guards reportedly attempted to stop production at El Fil and Al Wafa oil fields in order to demand payments from oil production companies, though these stoppages were quickly resolved.

### **Social**

Socially, there have been continued concerns over the freedom of media to operate after new rules were established on 3 August, requiring workers for foreign media entities to go through additional administrative steps. The steps are seen as part of a broader crackdown by the GNA on media space and reporting.

The update period saw continued use of divisive narratives and attitudes aimed at delegitimising communal groups and political actors, including particularly during the Tripoli violence. In early August, a speech by Saif al Qaddafi was reported on social media in which he accused Tuaregs of treason to Libya and being in league with foreign agents. In late October, the LNA commander of Ghirnada prison in Shahat, where many fighters from Benghazi are detained, declared that all visitors, such as family members, to the prison should also be arrested and called for implementation of a policy that would confiscate property belonging to the families of those accused of terrorism by the LNA.

In early August, the United Nations launched a media campaign called 'Reconciliation is Good', aimed at raising awareness of the importance of dialogue, reconciliation agreements and social cohesion for peace in the country. It would see radio and television programmes broadcasting messages for peace.

*A complete overview of the updated analysis can be found by logging into the OPSECA online platform at: <https://opseca.humanidev.tech/opseca#?p=dashboard?a=6>. To register a profile and use of the platform, please contact [tim.molesworth@peacefulchange.org](mailto:tim.molesworth@peacefulchange.org) or [anthony.foreman@peacefulchange.org](mailto:anthony.foreman@peacefulchange.org). Only organisations participating in the forum have access to the online platform (one login profile per organisation).*