



Destroyed military vehicles in a field near Benghazi, Libya. Source: Wikicommons

BACKGROUND ON LIBYAN CIVIL WAR

- The Arab Spring began in 2011 amid massive anti-government protests and social uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa. The Arab Spring spread from Tunisia and Egypt to neighboring countries like Libya, Yemen, and Syria.
- The popular uprising in Libya eventually led to the death and deposition of President Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.
- The United Nations Mission Support in Libya (UNSMIL) started in 2011, previously led by Ghassan Salame, till 2020. Stephanie T. Williams is now the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya. In 2021, Secretary General Antonio Guterres appointed Jan Kubis as Special Envoy of the Secretary General on Libya and head of mission for UNSMIL.
- The civil war in Libya began in 2014 when rival governments began fighting for control of the country. The two warring sides are the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA).
- In 2015, GNA backed Fayeza al-Sarraj was appointed prime minister of Libya, with the UN recognizing him as the legitimate leader.
- In 2019, General Khalifa Haftar and the LNA launched a military campaign against the GNA and its supporters. LNA combatants consist of a wide variety of militias fighting to take control of Western Libya.

	Key Actors	Key Allies
Western Libya	Tripoli Administration: Government of National Accord (GNA), U.N. backed Libyan administration under Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj.	Italy, Qatar, Turkey, U.N., U.K. and the U.S.
Eastern Libya	Libyan National Army led by General Khalifa Haftar.	Egypt, France, Russia, Saudi Arabia and UAE.

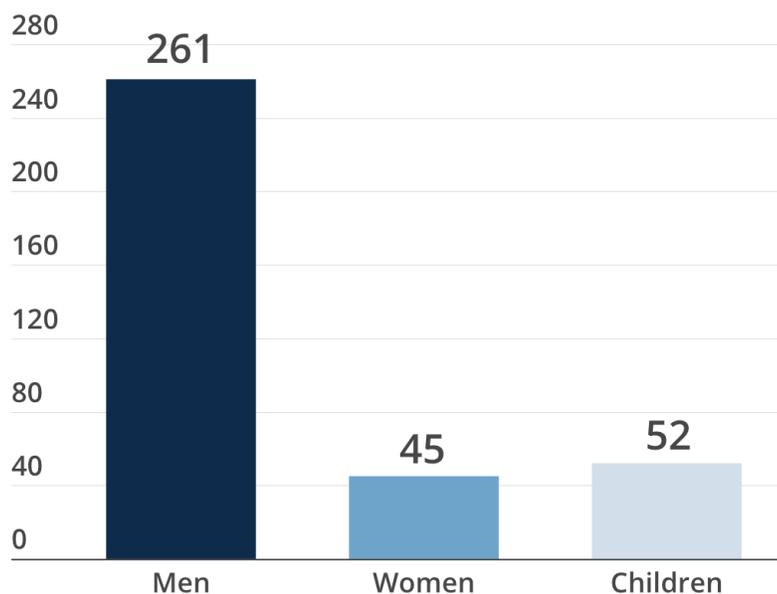
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

2020

In 2020, the Libyan conflict continued with international interference despite the Berlin Conference. General Haftar maintained air superiority in Libya throughout 2019 but lost control in 2020 due to Turkey's military push back in support of the GNA. Meanwhile, Russia also delivered 14 MiG29 and Su-24 fighter jets to the LNA. The GNA successfully recaptured key cities in Western Libya and fully secured western Libya in June of 2020. As the GNA regained cities, the number of displaced persons began to slow with refugees returning home.

Following diplomatic pressure from the U.S., Germany, and other countries, in October of 2020, Libya's two main parties agreed to a formal ceasefire, officially ending the conflict that began in April of 2019. A series of talks were held in Tunisia in November of 2020 to discuss a new transitional government, with 75 delegates selected by the U.N., ranging from representatives of political parties to regional and local figures. Delegates agreed to set elections for December 24, 2021, which is Libyan Independence Day.

Civilian Casualties 2020



2021

In February, delegates convened in Geneva to vote for an interim three-member Presidential Council that would replace the GNA. Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, a businessman, was appointed Libya's interim Prime Minister, and Mohammad Younes Menfi was appointed head of the Presidential Council. Menfi previously served as former ambassador to Greece. A month later, Libya's parliament approved the first Government of National Unity since 2011 to lead the country elections. The transitional government will oversee preparations for the upcoming election alongside the challenge of tackling an economic crisis, political and military reform, and the coronavirus outbreak.

The AU, U.S., and Italy, Germany and France among other countries have welcomed the interim government, while France also reopened its embassy in Tripoli. On the ground, civilians still face significant hardships, and the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated living conditions and impacted its fragile healthcare system.

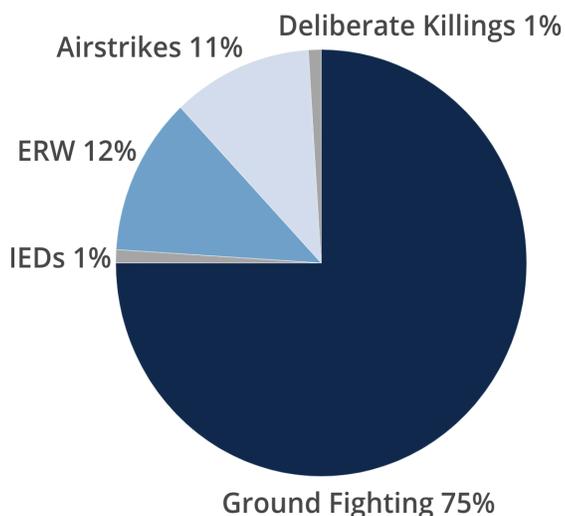
REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Berlin International Conference on Libya

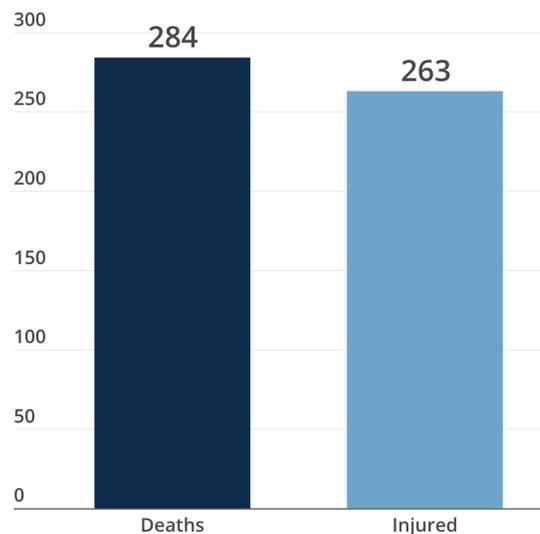
The Berlin International Conference on Libya took place on January 19, 2020. This conference included the governments of Algeria, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, the Republic of Congo, UAE, the U.K., the U.S. and the High Representative of the U.N. The conference's objective was to reach a consensus among members involved in the conflict as well as concerned states and to pave the way to intra-Libyan discussion. One of the drawbacks of this conference was its exclusion of Libyan participation, including the UN-backed GNA government. The conference ended with the adoption of a 55-point roadmap to peace in Libya. The U.N. plan received a vote at the conference, with 14 countries voting in favor with Russia being the only member to abstain. The resolution calls for a ceasefire and an arms embargo that limits the use of mercenaries in Libya. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres detailed that those who gave their commitments in Berlin have repeatedly violated the resolution with continued arms sales despite the resolution going into effect.

Violence and Humanitarian Concerns

Civilian Casualties
2019 by Cause



Civilian Casualties 2019
by Type

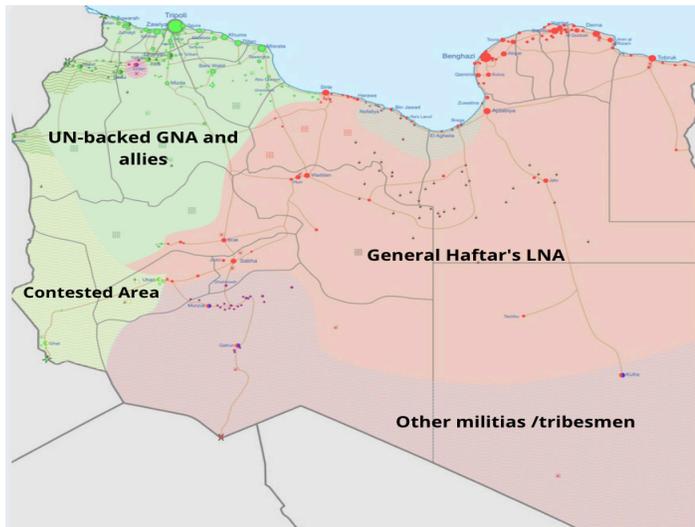


LOOKING AHEAD

Jan Kubis, Special Envoy of the U.N. Secretary-General and Head of the UNSMIL, is working with the AU to improve UN-AU coordination in support of Libya. The U.N. Secretary-General is also working with the AU, the League of Arab States, and the E.U. to support the ceasefire implementation. They have also demanded the immediate withdrawal of foreign forces in Libya. The Biden administration announced the appointment of Richard Norland as U.S. Special Envoy for Libya. In April of 2021, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed a resolution for the deployment of a 60 member U.N. team to monitor October's ceasefire agreement.

On April 25, 2021, Prime Minister Dbeibah's first visit to Benghazi in the eastern region of Libya was postponed after militias blocked the airport. Prime Minister Dbeibah had planned on holding cabinet meetings across the country. With the formation of the new interim government, underlying tensions remain as armed militias took over a hotel that serves as the headquarters of the interim government in May of 2021. Jan Kubis recently met with General Haftar in Benghazi and discussed ways to support the political process and elections.

On June 20, 2021, The Presidential Council banned all military movements without its sanctioned approval after military forces loyal to General Haftar took over a border crossing near Algeria in the southern Essen region. These military forces declared the area a military zone in which movement is forbidden. This military takeover is the first military conflict connected to Haftar since the military leader signed the ceasefire deal. With general stability in Libya since the ceasefire went into effect, this move by Haftar looks to put peace in jeopardy.



Map of Libya with conflict zones labeled. Source: Wikicommons

The Berlin International Conference on Libya reconvened on June 23, 2021. At the top of the agenda for this conference is the development of elections that are scheduled to take place in December of 2021, and the withdrawal of foreign fighters in Libya. Representatives from Algeria, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, the Republic of Congo, UAE, the UK, the U.S. the UN, the AU, and the Arab League attended the conference in Germany. Prime Minister Dbeibah

was also in attend the conference representing the interim GNA government of Libya. The conference resulted in renewed commitments regarding Libya's political transition and the promotion of peace in the region.