



A peacebuilding agenda for Libya

Libyan society is undergoing significant change as a result of the revolution / conflict in 2011. This is evident in the development of a new governance and political system, bringing with it the opportunity for greater participation in decision-making, and increased opportunities to express opinion and engage in debate. It is also evident in the security sector, where moves to replace the armed groups that proliferated during the revolution / conflict with new national security services provide an entry point for increased professionalism and accountability.

At the same time, the revolution / conflict has weakened relationships between some communities in Libya, as well as exposing longer term inter-communal conflicts. Many Libyans are consequently concerned that the new political system will not meet their needs and feel unwilling to relinquish their weapons and armed groups, as they are believed essential for protecting local rights and interests. As such, development of an inclusive political system and of accountable security services depends on a comprehensive peacebuilding approach that assists communities to share perspectives, overcome grievances and map out a common future.

This briefing outlines an agenda for how to address the peacebuilding challenges facing Libya. It does this by drawing on community perspectives as identified in research conducted by AFAQ Libya and the Peaceful Change initiative.

The term 'armed group' is used throughout the briefing rather than 'brigade' or 'militia' unless these terms were specifically used by interlocutors. Similarly, the term 'fighter' is used rather than 'revolutionary'. 'Revolutionary communities' refer to those areas that played a leading role in promoting the revolution.

Initial research was conducted in March-May 2012. Full findings from this research are captured in the report – *Understanding the relationships between communities and armed groups: as a contribution to peaceful change* (PCI / AFAQ Libya, May 2012). The research comprised focus groups and individual interviews in Zuwarah / Al Jamel, Zintan, Tripoli (Suq al Juma / Abu Selim), Bani Walid, Misrata, Sirte, Ajdabjiya, Benghazi (including Tawurgha IDPs) and Derna. The research results were subsequently tested in June-July 2012 in a range of consultations with authority representatives and civil society, as well as with community representatives in Sabha in the South. The research was funded through the United Kingdom's Conflict Pool.



Inclusive politics

1. Grievances from the fighting in 2011

Accusations of human rights abuses and crimes committed during the revolution / conflict continue to drive communities apart. For example, people in Misrata and Zuwarah (key revolutionary communities) argue that they are struggling to return to daily life in the absence of punishment for crimes committed by pro-Qaddafi forces during the fighting. While grievances are most vocally expressed in revolutionary communities, they are also felt in some areas that are considered to have opposed the revolution. For example, people in Bani Walid complain that the town suffered from looting at the hands of revolutionary armed groups following its surrender to them.

A basic framework for transitional justice and reconciliation has been in place since February 2012, in the form of agreement to a National Reconciliation and Transitional Justice Law and to a Fact Finding and Reconciliation Committee. However, these mechanisms have been underutilised and are not seen to have delivered a sense of justice or assisted reconciliation. This is largely because 'justice' and 'reconciliation' are sensitive questions in Libya, on which it is difficult to achieve societal agreement given the diverse experiences and perspectives across communities.

Many Libyans believe that justice must precede any discussion about reconciliation, with the latter being equated to an acceptance of abuses and crimes in the absence of justice – an impossible request to simply forgive, forget and move on. There are also mixed views on which actions should be included in transitional justice processes and which excluded. In Misrata, for example, international criticism over the treatment of persons detained by Misrata's armed groups is thought to be unjust given Misrata's suffering during the fighting. Others, however, focus on the need for reconciliation, especially through equal opportunities to participate in politics.

2. Dealing with the past

Many communities also feel that they were treated unjustly during the Qaddafi period, either because they suffered from human rights abuses, or because their political and economic opportunities were restricted. As a result, decisions on how to address these grievances, including punishments, reparations (e.g. on property rights) and potential restrictions on those

associated with the former regime from holding elected and official posts, are also key justice issues.

Revolutionary communities are on the whole unhappy at what is felt to be an overly generous attitude towards those associated with the previous regime, in that many have continued in their jobs. In areas such as Benghazi and Derna, Qaddafi-era officials are thought to pose a threat to the transition because of the economic and political influence they are believed to wield. In Misrata some attribute low levels of trust in the new state institutions to the continued presence of 'Qaddafi's people', especially in security and foreign affairs. At the same time, other communities (such as in Sirte) believe that Libya's new democracy will be more robust if public roles are allowed to those affiliated with the previous regime – thus demonstrating that the New Libya is inclusive.

3. New grievances, longer-term conflicts

In some cases, the revolution / conflict in 2011 has catalysed longer-term inter-communal conflict, either because new grievances were created during the fighting or because new opportunities emerged for communities to leverage advantage in pre-existing disputes. Such conflicts may originate from the Qaddafi period or pre-date it (there is also evidence the Qaddafi regime manipulated and consequently deepened existing disputes in order to maintain power).

For example, the ongoing conflict between Zuwarah and Al Jamel / Raqqdalin relates not only to the accusations of human rights abuses by Al Jamel / Raqqdalin's fighters in Zuwarah in 2011. It also relates to pre-existing tensions over access to local jobs and land, as well as lucrative trade / trafficking opportunities across the border with Tunisia. Importantly, inter-communal conflict occurs not only between different towns but also within towns. The violence between local Tabu and Arab communities in Sabha in early 2012, while triggered by the revolution / conflict, is also felt to relate to: (1) attempts to control the local council, and hence obtain local authority; (2) Arab fears of local demographic change due to immigration into the area by sub-Saharan Tabu; (3) Tabu (and Tuareg) concerns over local political rights and access to citizenship; and (4) competition over control of trade / trafficking routes.

Importantly, some communities attribute their present grievances to longer term ethnic prejudice. Some in Zuwarah believe that the town has not received sufficient support from

the transitional authorities in its dispute with Al Jamel / Raqdalín because the local population is ethnically Amazigh rather than Arab. Tawurgha IDPs feel that Libyan society has allowed Misrata's armed groups to undertake punitive actions against Tawurgha's residents because they are Black Africans. Similarly, some Tabu and Tuareg in Sabha also believe that they are discriminated against because they are not Arabs.

“ The former regime still has its people everywhere. They are still in the administration. They have money and try to control the country using that money”

Civilian – Benghazi

4. Informal pursuit of justice deepens divisions

Due to the limited impact of national justice and reconciliation processes to deal with these three layers of grievances (from the fighting, from the Qaddafi period and longer-term), communities often pursue justice informally. This is most evident in the actions of revolutionary armed groups to arrest and detain those accused of having 'blood on their hands'. It is also evident in the escalation of what appear to be assassinations of former Qaddafi officials in the first half of 2012.

Such actions are, however, creating a new round of grievances, making reconciliation more distant. For example, people from Bani Walid, Al Jamel / Raqdalín, Sirte and Tawurgha (widely considered anti-revolution areas) feel that their communities are suffering from extra-judicial punitive actions, and that their own perceived injustices are not being taken into account.

Importantly, these actions reinforce a fear of revolutionary armed groups engendered by the Qaddafi regime's media during the fighting. They also lead to 'tit-for-tat' measures by targeted communities, as seen in the detention of journalists from Misrata by Bani Walid during the July elections for the General National Congress, as well as of people from Zuwarah by Al Jamel / Raqdalín's fighters on several occasions. Indeed, communities are becoming reliant on punitive actions to manage grievances and inter-communal disputes.

5. Access to political and economic opportunities

Achieving a sense of 'justice' means not only reaching agreement on how to deal with past grievances, but also on what deserves reward in the future, including how political and economic opportunities will be allocated. However, both revolutionary communities, and those widely considered to be anti-revolution, believe that they are not being given a fair voice in post-revolution / conflict politics.

For example, some in Bani Walid complain that the town's voice has been purposefully weakened at the national level, through a small allocation of seats in the General National Congress, and at the local level, through refusal to license local elections. At the same time, in Zintan there are concerns that the allocation of seats given to their community and other key revolutionary areas could allow them to be outvoted on significant decisions by 'pro-Qaddafi' areas. Further, those in Benghazi who support a more federal arrangement of government complain that the allocation of more seats to Western Libya than to Eastern Libya will result in a political imbalance between East and West.

There is also concern over how economic wealth is being distributed. Transparency on government expenditure is a cause of special concern (for example) in Benghazi, where inequitable distribution of wealth during the Qaddafi period is described as one of the driving forces behind local revolutionary action. In addition, attempts to control cross-border trade and trafficking routes have in a number of cases worsened confrontations between communities; as demonstrated in the violence between Al Jamel / Raqdalín and Zuwarah, and in Sabha between local Arabs and Tabu (and to a lesser extent Tuareg).

6. Some communities feel marginalised

For some communities widely considered to be against the revolution, such as Al Jamel / Raqdalín, Sirte, Bani Walid and Sabha, concerns about equal access to political and economic opportunities reflect a feeling that they will be marginalised because of association with the Qaddafi regime. Many people in Sirte, for example, feel that the rest of the country is 'against them' and that they are being deliberately excluded from the New Libya, arguing that this is demonstrated by the slow pace of reconstruction in the city and ongoing detentions of Sirte's residents.

Importantly, some in these communities feel that accusations made against them of being 'anti-revolution': (1) are made to leverage external support in inter-community disputes unrelated to the revolution / conflict; and (2) do not recognise that communities may have had many reasons for not joining in open revolt in 2011. Indeed, some argue that revolutionary communities are looking to dominate Libya's political and economic landscape in the future; and that future governments will as a result not work in the interests of all Libyans.

7. Others are concerned about the direction of the revolution

By contrast, concern in revolutionary communities over political and economic opportunities reflects nervousness about the future direction of the revolution – that the aspirations that led to their involvement will not be achieved. For exam-

ple, many in Derna believe that the city is being ostracised because it is perceived to be a 'hot-bed' of militant Islamism, and that this is a continuation of the prejudice experienced under the Qaddafi regime. Some in Zintan feel that the national media is being manipulated to discredit and hence isolate the town's armed groups. In Benghazi, there is a widespread feeling that bias towards Tripoli and Western Libya has continued after the revolution. In Misrata, people are angered by the perceived failure of the transitional authorities to assist the city to rehabilitate, with some attributing this 'failure' to the presence of Qaddafi-era officials in key authority posts.

Finally, revolutionary communities are angered by the continued existence of perceived 'anti-revolution enclaves'. There is a feeling that some communities consented to the authority of the National Transitional Council on paper, and hence escaped military confrontation; but that they do not support the revolution in practice and even represent a threat to it.

8. Local accountability and fear of fragmentation

Concerns about future political and economic opportunities have led to a desire in communities for greater decision making at the local level. Indeed, many perceive the fundamental problem of the Qaddafi regime to have been arbitrary decision making at the central level. For example, people in both Derna and Bani Walid state that they have "had enough of control from the outside". Indeed, some in Benghazi are in favour of a more federalist arrangement of government to counter perceived bias towards Tripoli and Western Libya.

At the same time, there is confusion as to what 'devolution', 'decentralisation' and 'federalism' mean, and how these concepts could be applied in Libya. This has led to concern over the potential for fragmentation in society, and to confrontation between those who support greater decentralisation and those who oppose it. Importantly, a number of communities presently have *de facto* autonomy (e.g. Misrata and Bani Walid), having established separate governance and military capacity, as well as their own social programmes. Such asymmetrical development may undermine the ability of the transitional authorities to develop national legitimacy, as well as deepening divisions within society.

9. Low understanding of others' rights and interests

Apart from in the major urban areas, Libya's communities are quite isolated from each other geographically and socially. This means that each community has had separate collective experiences of the fighting, the Qaddafi period and inter-communal conflict, with people less aware of the experiences and contexts in other areas. As a result, communities often give greater legitimacy to their rights and interests over those of other communities.

Low mutual understanding stimulates perceptions of marginalisation and concerns over the direction of the revolution, and reduces the ability of Libyan society to reach consensus on past and future justice issues. Further, some community interlocutors (e.g. in Tripoli and Sirte) feel that mutual understanding has not been helped by the focus of the media and transitional authorities on revolutionary events, rather than on articulating a vision of how the New Libya will be inclusive of all communities. As such, successful political transition entails engendering greater understanding between communities as the basis for a shared vision for the country, including how political and economic opportunities are distributed.

“ There is a need to educate both sides; those of the 17th of February and those supporting Qaddafi. Qaddafi's supporters should accept that they lost and the media should lessen its focus on the guilt of the other side ”

Military commander – Tripoli

10. The need for constructive discussion

Greater understanding between communities involves challenging discussions on recent events and the grievances that they hold, as well as on the relationship between international norms (e.g. in democracy, human rights and gender equality) and accepted cultural, social and religious values.

For example, some communities (such as Derna and Benghazi) are trying to better understand the role of Islam in the democratic society that they aspire to; seeing political Islam as a potential antidote to corruption, but also worried by the negative influence of austere Islamic groups. Many (such as in Zintan) are worried about the potential for foreign influence – both from the West and from other Islamic countries – to corrupt local values. While tribes are thought to play an important local role (e.g. in Ajdabjiya, Sirte and Sabha) there is concern that an over-reliance on tribal systems will hinder democratic accountability. Finally, people in Benghazi and Ajdabjiya question moves to limit women's participation in politics, especially given the significant role that women played during the revolution / conflict.

Importantly, local interlocutors express concern about the capacity of communities to engage in open and constructive debate on these sensitive topics. It is felt that without better skills in listening to and valuing others' opinions there is potential for discussion to increase tensions between communities, and for communities to continue to resort to punitive actions to promote their rights and interests.



Accountable security

1. Reliance on informal responses

Libyans feel that publically accountable security and justice institutions (such as the police and courts) are not as yet able to provide an effective service where they live. As a result, they have developed informal responses to fill this 'security gap'. The objectives of these responses are diverse, including: (1) provision of physical security at the community level; (2) protection of communities' rights and interests, including justice for grievances; (3) management of inter-communal conflict; (4) national security; and (5) protecting the revolution.

The armed groups that emerged during and after the 2011 revolution / conflict are at the forefront of these responses. The scale of their operations range from small community specific interventions, to those that encompass a number of communities, or that entail significant coordination between armed groups from different communities (for example, the 'Libya Shield' forces, which comprise a range of revolutionary armed groups). Communities have also reverted to informal mediation formats – and the use of tribal or social leaders in particular – to manage inter-communal violence.

Though informal responses play an important interim role, both revolutionary communities and those perceived to be anti-revolution would ultimately like to see national and impartial services in their stead. When asked what 'security' meant to them, most communities respond that it entails establishment of a functioning rule of law, activation of the police and courts, and creation of a trusted national army. To properly plan for transition to such state services, it is important to understand the impact of present informal responses, their legitimacy and their accountability at the local level.

2. People are physically secure and inter-communal violence is restricted

Most people (e.g. in Suq al Juma in Tripoli, Zuwarah, Bani Walid and Derna) feel physically secure in their community due to a 'protective cordon' provided by local armed groups. Within this cordon, communities describe a situation in which: (1) the major violence that characterised the revolution / civil conflict period has ended; (2) they feel protected from external threats; and (3) they experience relatively low levels of crime. As such, it is clear that many Libyans have benefited from the actions of armed groups at the community level.

On the whole, communities are also grateful for the contribution of revolutionary armed groups (more recently under Libya Shield auspices) and tribal / social leaders to managing inter-communal conflict. While revolutionary armed groups are deployed as peacekeepers to transitional authority-designated 'conflict zones', delegations of tribal / social leaders (often called 'national reconciliation committees') from third-party communities visit the leaders of the parties to the conflict to facilitate negotiation of a solution. These informal responses, partially mandated by the transitional authorities, have managed to stop inter-communal violence on a number of occasions (e.g. between Zuwarah and Al Jamel / Raqdalín, and in Sabha).

“ The town is being held hostage in a fight for control between two sets of councils and brigades. As a result, the ordinary person is suffering from limited accountability over safety & security”

Civilian – Bani Walid

3. Armed groups increase the vulnerability of some Libyans

Armed groups have, however, increased some Libyans' sense of vulnerability. Indeed, armed groups are uniformly described as the main physical security threat facing people in Libya. This perceived threat stems from their role in extra-judicial punitive actions. While the majority of such actions comprise arrest and detentions, they can also entail larger scale discrimination and violence (e.g. between armed groups from Zintan and from the El Mashasha).

People are most concerned with other communities' armed groups. For example, people in Zuwarah feel threatened by the armed groups in Al Jamel, while people in Al Jamel say the same for the armed groups from Zuwarah. In some cases, however, people are equally concerned by the potential for extra-judicial punitive actions at the hands of armed groups from their own community. For example, some in Bani Walid attribute the expulsion from the town of a local revolutionary armed group in January 2012 to community-wide resentment at its 'punitive actions'.

The resulting sense of vulnerability has important consequences. Firstly, it deepens inter-communal grievances. Secondly, many people (especially from areas widely considered anti-revolution) feel unable to safely travel outside their communities or to interact with people from other communities. In effect, there are significant restrictions on freedom of movement and interaction in Libya, which make reconciliation a more distant prospect and ultimately hinders the transition process.

4. Informal responses do not prevent violence or build sustainable peace

National reconciliation committees of tribal / social elders, while effective for stopping violence, have proved to be insufficient for preventing violence and improving relations between communities in a sustainable manner. Similarly, Libya Shield forces have not proved able to keep conflicting parties apart over the long-term. Indeed, violence has re-erupted on a number of occasions following agreements facilitated by national reconciliation committees, even in the presence of Libya Shield forces (for example between Zuwarah and Al Jamel / Raqdalín and in Sabha).

Some community interlocutors attribute the inability of informal responses to prevent violence to the fact that: (1) national reconciliation committees work by applying social pressure on the leaders of the conflicting parties, rather than facilitating genuine agreement on the issues that have caused conflict; and (2) agreements are not necessarily accountable or inclusive, and hence are not always respected by the wider community, including its armed groups. Importantly, it seems that these informal responses do not have the purpose of strengthening relations between conflicting parties so as to build peace, but are rather seen as an emergency tool for deployment in the event of violence.

As a result, Libyans continue to rely on local armed groups to manage inter-communal conflict through punitive actions, often escalating the scale of the conflict. Indeed, the post-revolution / conflict period has seen a number of inter-community grievances deteriorate into violent conflict between the respective communities' armed groups – for example, in Sabha, in Kufra, between Zuwarah and Al Jamel / Raqdalín, between Zintan and the El Mashasha, and between Zawiyah and the Worshefena.

5. Militarisation of society is entrenching

The revolution / conflict saw a dramatic militarisation of society, as communities acquired weapons and formed armed groups. This has resulted in high levels of weapon ownership and many Libyan men obtaining first-hand experience of fighting. People in Ajdabjiya report that most families own some form of weapon, while those in Zuwarah suggest that every house has three or four guns. At the same time, people

in Zintan and Misrata describe a situation in which most young men have been sent on deployments across Libya.

Militarisation of society has entrenched following the revolution / conflict, as communities have continued to rely on informal security responses. This is a source of concern for many despite the relatively low levels of gun-related injuries within communities. In Zintan and Misrata, for example, it is felt that young men now view a militarised life as normal and that this is impacting on the psychology of the wider community, making it harder to return to daily life. In areas such as Tripoli, Al Jamel / Raqdalín and Sirte, people are concerned that guns on the street are a source of tension between groups that already have fragile relations, and could mean that small disagreements escalate quickly to the use of violence.

“Most of the revolutionaries are young men from high school and their mentality has changed. They see themselves as military people and see books as part of the past. They want to talk about guns and bullets”

Civilian – Zintan

6. Many armed groups have local legitimacy as they are 'part of the community'

The role of informal responses in society is, therefore, complex – especially in relation to armed groups. Armed groups can help provide a sense of security locally in lieu of state actors, but can also contribute significantly to a sense of vulnerability. Further, the militarisation of society, compounded by the absence of alternative methods for managing grievances, mean that violence and punitive measures are becoming the norm.

Nevertheless, many armed groups across both revolutionary communities and those widely considered anti-revolution have significant local legitimacy for the actions they undertake. This is because most local armed groups are comprised of community members. Indeed, many Libyans do not think that a distinction between 'armed groups' and 'communities' is useful as it misunderstands the relationships between fighters and other local residents, in that they are already well integrated. Some revolutionary communities (e.g. Misrata) also feel that such a distinction undervalues the contribution made by unarmed civilians during the revolution / conflict.

Given this local legitimacy and the ongoing weaknesses of national security services, most communities want to see their local armed groups better coordinated with, and accountable to, the transitional authorities, rather than for them to be

disbanded immediately. In addition, most people are more supportive of initiatives that help the whole of their community to return to normal life, rather than those that exclusively target the reintegration of fighters into society through individual benefits. This is because: (1) most fighters are already thought to be well integrated; (2) of the sense that their communities as a whole are suffering from militarisation, rather than any particular demographic; and (3) of the belief that individual benefit programmes incentivise young men to become fighters. That said, revolutionary communities do want the sacrifices of their fighters to be properly recognised and for their medical needs to be met as a priority.

7. Some armed groups' legitimacy is weaker

The nature of some armed groups' legitimacy is, however, less clear. Firstly, it is felt that the transition has enabled some armed individuals and groups to pursue their own personal enrichment. Community interlocutors, especially in Tripoli, Sirte and Sabha, describe armed groups' involvement in: (1) criminal acts, such as seizing property and involvement in trafficking; (2) attempts to leverage political and economic influence in their community; and (3) actions to demand payment and other benefits from the transitional authorities.

Those armed groups that promote an austere version of Islam are also the source of concern for some, especially in Benghazi, Derna and Sirte. Indeed, July-September 2012 saw an increase in actions by austere Islamic armed groups (often described as 'Salafists'), including attacks on Sufi shrines in Zlitan, Misrata, Tripoli and Rajma (Benghazi outskirts), as well as on the US consulate in Benghazi. These groups seem to have weaker ties to the communities where they operate, as evidenced by the public protests in Derna and Benghazi to remove those austere Islamic armed groups that were felt to be a threat, as well as the use of force by an armed group from Rajma in an attempt to stop the destruction of a Sufi shrine.

8. Balancing revolutionary and local legitimacy

The proliferation of armed individuals and groups that refer to themselves as 'revolutionary' causes consternation in those communities that were at the forefront of the revolution (e.g. Zuwarah, Derna, Suq al Juma and Misrata). They question the right of groups that were not actively involved in fighting on the revolutionary side to hold weapons and conduct operations. Indeed, some groups are considered a direct threat to the New Libya. In addition, there is anger that 'false revolutionaries' have benefited from assistance (e.g. retraining and medical assistance) aimed at revolutionary fighters.

While an armed group may be widely considered to lack revolutionary legitimacy, it can still have legitimacy in the eyes of its host community because of the protection (either physical or of rights and interests) it is thought to provide. Similarly, revo-

lutionary armed groups may not have local legitimacy in areas where they operate, because they are viewed as a threat or to be unaccountable locally (e.g. in Al Jamel, Bani Walid and Sabha). For example, Libya Shield forces have not been well received in all the conflict contexts where they have intervened.

Table: Broad categorisation of armed groups

Category	History and legitimacy
Revolutionary	Formed during the revolution / conflict by revolutionaries to defend (e.g. Aj-dabjiya) and 'liberate' (e.g. Tripoli groups trained in Zintan) their communities. Presently also focused on defending national security. Can operate in more than one community and co-operate with each other (e.g. Libya Shield). Have revolutionary legitimacy, but can lack local legitimacy in host communities.
Protection	Formed during or after the revolution / conflict to physically protect a specific community, or to promote its rights and interests. Includes both revolutionary groups and groups from areas considered anti-revolution (e.g. Sirte or Al Jamel). Have local legitimacy, but can be viewed as illegitimate in revolutionary communities.
Personal benefit	Groups of armed individuals that gather together for personal enrichment. Such groups are often associated with crime, leveraging local political and economic opportunities or pressuring the transitional authorities for payments and other benefits. Generally have less local legitimacy, but can also have revolutionary legitimacy.
Austere Islamic	Formed during or after the revolution / conflict. Promotion of an austere understanding of Islam may be their singular goal, although they may have been involved in the revolution or provide local security. Often have difficult relations with communities, but can also have revolutionary legitimacy.
'Militia'	Many Libyans use the label 'militia' as a derogatory term to identify: (1) personal benefit, austere Islamic and protection armed groups; (2) groups not operating under the auspices of the transitional authorities; or (3) groups formed after the fall of Tripoli.

Indeed, Libya is confronted with a number of conflicts, in which each side claims that its armed groups are legitimate, while denouncing the other side's groups as illegitimate.

Proper understanding of the legitimacy of armed groups on a community-by-community basis is essential for planning the transition to state services. This task is made more difficult as the nature of armed groups and their relations with communities is also dynamic. For example, an armed group promoting austere Islam or its own benefit may have some revolutionary legitimacy due to participation in the revolution / conflict, or local legitimacy due to the provision of protection services. The broad categories of groups identified by community interlocutors, and the levels of legitimacy ascribed to them, is summarised in the table overleaf.

9. Reliance on informal accountability undermines rule of law

For the most part, Libyans feel that they can hold local armed groups to account through informal channels, such as the family or tribe. This reliance on informal channels undermines rule of law in a number of ways. It means that the ability to access security services depends on knowing the right person. Further, while such informal channels function within a community, there appear to be few mechanisms for holding other communities' armed groups to account, as they cannot as easily be accessed through family or tribal links. Indeed, some Libyans, most evidently in revolutionary areas, do not support the idea that their armed groups should be accountable to all other communities. Similarly, informal channels cannot always be used to control groups that promote austere Islam or their own personal benefit. Fear of unaccountable groups led, for example, to Suq al Juma's armed groups taking preventive action to ensure that only known groups enter the community.

The result is that many Libyans feel vulnerable when outside their communities as, even if they are unlikely to be targeted for punishment or violence, there is still concern about becoming the victim of arbitrary actions. In addition, the present use of family and tribal channels deepens reliance on unprofessional and unaccountable ways of solving problems. Such reliance may negate investments in institutional reform of Libya's security services at the central level.

10. Formal accountability bodies are developing, but face challenges

More formal bodies for accountability over armed groups are also in place or being developed. Community interlocutors identified the following bodies as relevant for local accountability: (1) local councils; (2) military councils, either directly or via local councils; and (3) Supreme Security Committees (SSCs) affiliated with the Ministry of Interior. The ability of these bodies to effectively coordinate local armed groups varies

from community to community, dependent on local history before, during and after the revolution.

For example, the Misratan and Zintani military councils, which were established early on in the revolution / conflict, are described as having a high level of local legitimacy and to be able to control most of their respective town's armed groups. In Zuwarah, while the local military council is given legitimacy by an elected local mayor, it has proved unable to control local armed groups in their confrontation with those from Al Jamel / Zuwarah. In Derna, the SSC has become the main vehicle for coordinating armed groups because of a lack of trust in the local military council. In Sirte, none of these bodies have proved fully able to coordinate local armed groups because they mostly align with tribal groups.

Some community interlocutors feel that these nascent formal channels are undermined by: (1) unclear roles; (2) competition between them; and (3) varying degrees of accountability to the transitional authorities. Indeed, local interlocutors point out that alignment of an armed group with a formal accountability body does not necessarily mean that it will change how it operates, or that it will become more accountable. The net result is that communities still do not know who they should turn to for help with security and safety concerns, or what standards they should expect.

“ The lack of trust makes everyone hold onto weapons, as we are afraid of a return to another dictatorship. The solution is not taking away weapons, but taking the reason why he [an armed group member] holds the weapons”

Civilian – Derna

11. Armed groups protect rights and interests

Community interlocutors argue that persuading people to give up their weapons and agree to the disbandment of armed groups will be difficult, even when national security institutions prove themselves to be effective. This is because, as well as providing physical security, many people see local armed groups as essential for protection of the rights and interests of their community. This need stems from concerns in many communities that they are being purposefully marginalised or that the revolution is going in the wrong direction.

Successful transition from informal security responses to state services consequently depends not only on creating effective institutions. It also entails challenging people's perceptions and increasing understanding between communities. Without such measures, people will continue to rely upon informal mechanisms to defend their rights and interests.

3

A peacebuilding agenda

Two consistent and striking themes emerge when engaging with local communities on political and security development in the country. The first is that, in almost all communities, there is a desire for greater dialogue with the groups that they are in conflict with. The second is that, despite the lack of trust in state institutions and general misgivings about the potential for marginalisation and the direction of the revolution, interlocutors expressed a desire for the state to be reinforced as the main security provider.

In other words, at a deep level there is a desire in all communities to create a peaceful and unified society. However, for such a society to be realised, it is essential that Libyans adopt a comprehensive peacebuilding approach to political and security development.

Key messages

- Successful political transition in Libya entails agreement within society on how political and economic opportunities are distributed in the future, and the values that society adheres to. However, this can only be achieved if all groups in society are supported to overcome grievances, and to engage in open and constructive discussion.
- Technical security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and arms control programmes will not by themselves prove effective for ensuring transition to state provision of security. This is because armed groups' legitimacy is rooted in local conflict dynamics, including perceptions of marginalisation and concerns over the direction of the revolution. As such, programmes in this field should be part of a more comprehensive peacebuilding approach that looks to address the attitudes and behaviours that drive conflict.
- The way that security reform, demobilisation and arms control programmes are implemented can make a substantial contribution to confidence-building within and between communities. This entails development of accountability formats for identifying and managing security concerns, in which community members, officials and armed group members are encouraged to work together.
- Perhaps most importantly, actions to rebuild political and security systems in Libya should be sensitive to the different contexts and needs in communities across the country. This may entail significant tailoring of approach for specific communities.

“In order to be successful, we need to understand that each community has gone through different situations. Officials should understand that we have not gone through the same experience”

Armed group commander - Misrata

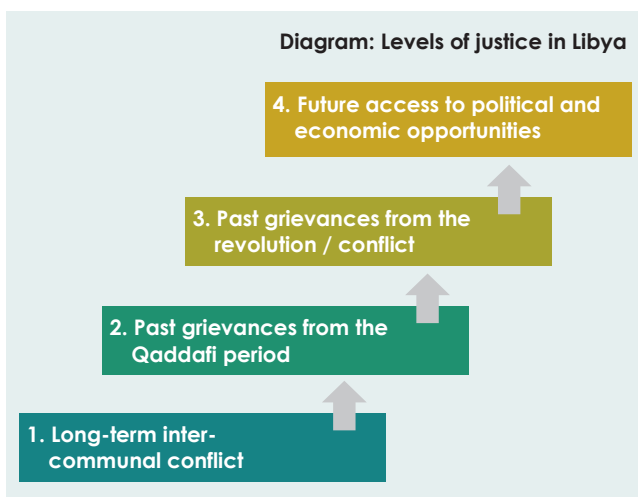
Recommendations for political inclusion

1. Enhance the capacity of, and provide opportunities for, the different communities in Libya to: (1) better understand each other's experiences and aspirations; and (2) develop a common vision for the future, including on a just distribution of political and economic opportunities (justice level 4 – see diagram overleaf):
 - a. Provide capacity support for communities – including local armed group members – in analysis and dialogue skills, so that they are better able to articulate their perspectives. International best practice has demonstrated that such skills should be increased before engaging in inter-community dialogue.
 - b. Ensure that government and international support for civil society development is provided equally to all communities in Libya – including those widely considered to be anti-revolution – and encourages cross-community interaction. Civil society, if properly empowered, can provide a catalyst to inter-community dialogue.
 - c. Initiatives to increase interaction between communities should balance discussion of values (e.g. democratic and Islamic), with discussion on practical local needs. This ensures that dialogue processes maintain community interest and deliver 'tangible' results, while still assisting thinking on more complex issues.

2. Reinvigorate national initiatives focused on transitional justice and reconciliation for past grievance from the revolution / conflict (justice level 3) and from the Qaddafi period (justice level 2) through nationwide consultations. Such consultation is necessary to encourage acceptance by all groups in society of national policies, and hence to reduce the risk that they will spark violence in the future:
 - a. Consultations should include awareness-raising on transitional justice and reconciliation, as well as lessons learnt on these issues from other contexts.
 - b. Consultations should include discussion not only of punishments and restrictions, but also appropriate ways of approaching reconciliation in different contexts across Libya.
3. Develop the capacity of those involved in political processes to contribute not only to the management of grievances from the revolution / conflict and from the Qaddafi period, but also to the management of longer term conflict dynamics, including perceived prejudice (justice level 1):
 - a. Reinforce the capacity of government officials and civil society to undertake analysis of deeper conflict issues, so that they are better able to develop and promote policies that are more effective for managing conflict, as well as to increase social awareness.
 - b. Provide training in 'do no harm' and 'conflict sensitivity' to government officials and civil society, so that they do not unwittingly worsen conflict dynamics through initiatives to support the transition, and are also able to identify potential peacebuilding opportunities.
 - c. Actively promote inclusion of Libya's minority groups (e.g. Amazigh / Berbers, Tabu and Tuareg) in the development and delivery of the dialogue projects outlined in recommendation 1.
4. The new National Government should prioritise development of an effective model of local accountability that fits the Libyan context. A sense of effective local accountability is essential for combatting concerns about marginalisation and the direction of the revolution, and for encouraging acceptance of state security actors:
 - a. Pilot models of local accountability. Such pilots should develop skills in partnership and collaboration between local authority and community representatives, with lessons learnt from the pilots being made available across Libyan society.
 - b. Raise awareness of models of local accountability, including 'decentralisation', 'devolution' and 'federalism', at the outset of further policy development in this area.

Recommendations for accountable security

5. Develop separate approaches for those armed groups that: (1) have greater local legitimacy; and (2) have less legitimacy and create insecurity in the communities where they operate. Develop standard accountability mechanisms for the former, so as to ensure that they play a positive interim role. For the latter, look to facilitate dialogue with community groups. If there is a lack of willingness to engage in such dialogue, more prohibitive measures should then be considered:
 - a. Develop a standard formal accountability hub for armed groups in all communities, to replace the range of councils and committees that presently exist and cause confusion.
 - b. These hubs should provide the basis for local interim security planning ('proactive accountability' – see recommendation 8). They should also allow for communities to seek information and redress for actions taken by armed groups, including those from other communities ('reactive accountability').
 - c. Dialogue with less legitimate armed groups should be context-specific and respond to the objectives of the groups in question. For example, engagement with groups that promote an austere understanding of Islam could be facilitated by respected local religious leaders.
6. Ensure that demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration programmes provide community rather than individual benefits. In most cases an exclusive focus on fighters (through registration, remunerations and other incentives), misunderstands the nature of community-armed groups' relations, incentivises the status of being a fighter and creates conflict over who can be considered a 'revolutionary':





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- a. Provide rehabilitation support to fighters at a decentralised level, with a focus on medical and psychological assistance. Such support would demonstrate that their contribution and sacrifice has been valued.
 - b. Deliver localised community development programmes (e.g. vocational training) that provide benefit to the whole community. Such programmes should be conceived and managed locally, so as to increase ownership, local skills and civic awareness.
7. Develop societal capacity to manage weapons in a safer manner. While the conditions are not right at the present time for weapon collection programmes, given feelings of marginalisation and concerns over the direction of the revolution, it is essential to build community confidence vis-à-vis weapons proliferation:
- a. Develop a nationwide weapons safety programme, including safe use and storage. Such a programme should include both public outreach events and 'on demand' assistance (for example, through a helpline).
 - b. Pilot weapon registration programmes in a number of communities, so as to test which incentives encourage people to formalise weapons ownership. Such registration would allow for more effective weapons collection in the future.
8. Deliver programmes that help manage intra- and inter-community security issues in a manner that develops a more professional and accountable culture of security. It will take time for the benefits of institutional development in the security sector to be felt, during which time people may already be over-reliant on unprofessional and unaccountable ways of managing security threats:
- a. Establish proactive accountability initiatives inside communities using a 'community security' approach. This approach would bring ordinary people, officials and fighters together under the auspices of accountability hubs to develop and deliver plans that respond to local needs.
 - b. Such initiatives should focus on 'soft' security needs that do not need a fully functional criminal justice system (e.g. road safety or unexploded ordnance). These initiatives will provide experience of, and hence preparedness for, formal accountability processes, and may also help deal with fractured local relationships.
 - c. On the basis of need, extend such initiatives across communities that have a difficult relationship, so as to create more accessible and accountable formats for managing conflicts. These initiatives would complement and reinforce the important work of tribal / social elders through a focus on prevention and improved relations between divided communities.

“ The security situation needs some time. People who used to support Qaddafi ask ‘what will the government bring’. The government must help build local council and civic institutions, so that people know that the new regime is better than the other”

Civilian – Sirte

Conflict in change explained

Change happens in every society every day, as demographics alter, economies develop, new technology influences how people live, each generation develops its own expectations and political systems evolve. Change in a society brings into play different interests, aspirations and perspectives in relation to what is the 'right' or 'good' way to organise society – including what deserves punishment and what deserves reward. As a result, change almost inevitably leads to conflict.

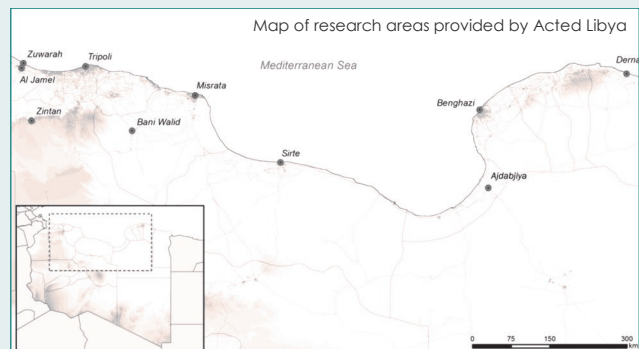
Conflict, in turn, is when people have, or think they have, different ideas on the 'right' or 'good' way to organise society. Conflict is a natural part of being human and living in a society with other humans. However, societies vary in their capacity to manage the conflicts inherent in change. This means that societies may not always have sufficiently robust mechanisms and working practices for resolving differences of opinion on what is 'right' or 'good' in a manner acceptable to all groups. Inadequate change management processes within a society can lead to people abandoning peaceful means of pursuing their goals and resorting, instead, to violence or coercion.

This briefing outlines an agenda for ensuring that Libyan society has the capacity to manage the change inherent in its transition in a peaceful manner.

The briefing was compiled by David Wood, Abdelmenam Asadi, Fleur Just and Adam Darby.

Key messages for the transition in Libya

- Successful political transition can only be achieved if all groups in society are supported to overcome grievances, and to engage in open and constructive discussion of their perspectives.
- Technical security reform, demobilisation and arms control programmes will not by themselves prove effective for ensuring transition to state provision of security. Programmes in this field should be part of a more comprehensive peacebuilding approach that looks to address the attitudes and behaviours that drive conflict.
- The way that such programmes are implemented can make a substantial contribution to confidence-building within and between communities. This entails development of accountability formats for identifying and managing security threats, in which community members, officials and armed group members are encouraged to work together.
- Actions to rebuild political and security systems in Libya should be sensitive to the different contexts and needs in communities across the country. This may entail significant tailoring of approach for specific communities.



Contact information



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The **New Libya Horizons Association** is a Libyan civil society organisation that looks to support development in Libya and the role of the youth.

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