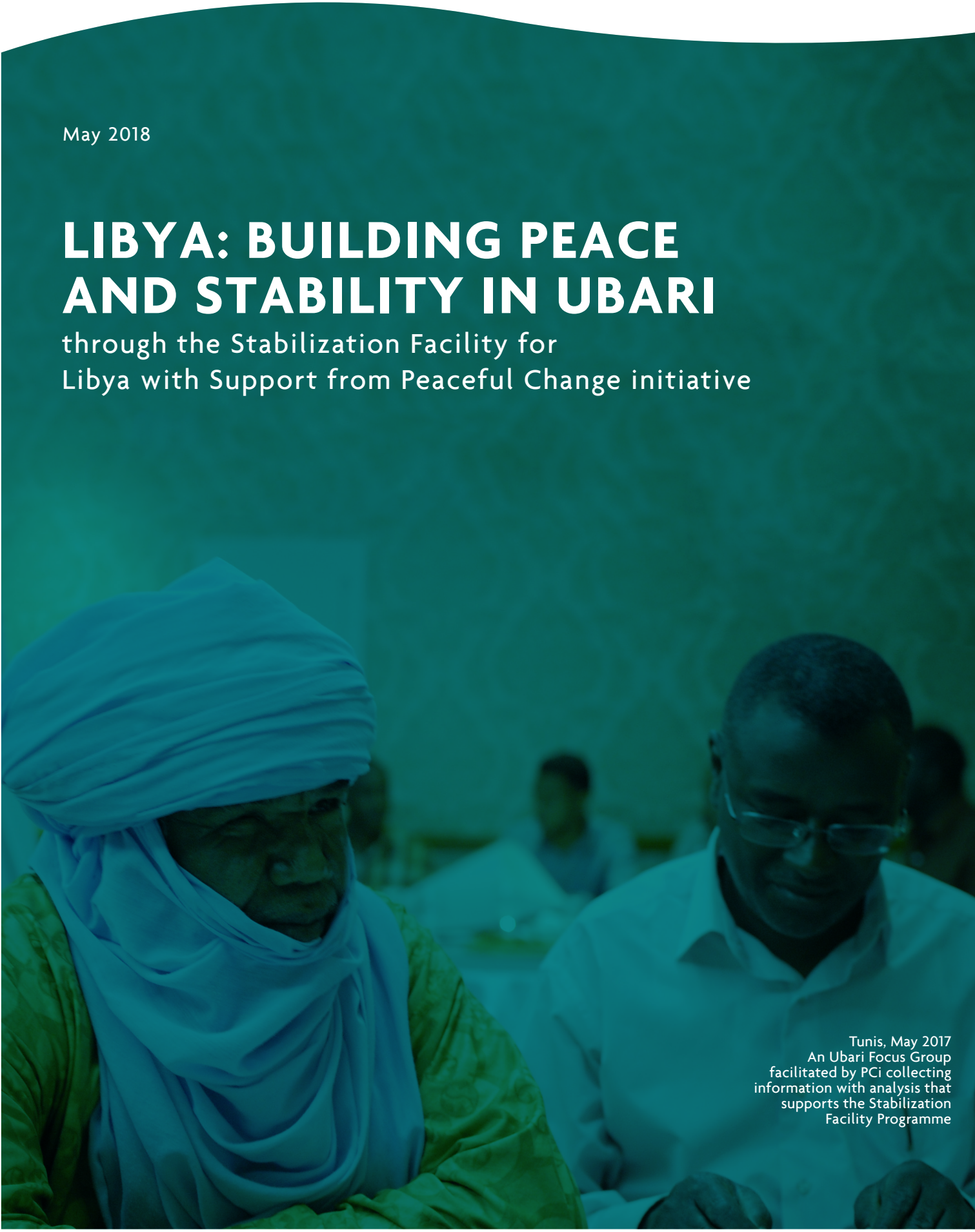


May 2018

# LIBYA: BUILDING PEACE AND STABILITY IN UBARI

through the Stabilization Facility for  
Libya with Support from Peaceful Change initiative

The background of the cover is a photograph of a focus group session in Ubari, Libya, from May 2017. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter. In the foreground, a woman wearing a white headscarf and a yellow garment is looking towards the right. Next to her, a man wearing glasses and a white shirt is looking down, possibly at a document or a device. Other people are visible in the background, slightly out of focus.

Tunis, May 2017  
An Ubari Focus Group  
facilitated by PCi collecting  
information with analysis that  
supports the Stabilization  
Facility Programme

In 2015, Peaceful Change initiative known as “PCI” supported the establishment of a conflict sensitive mechanism known as the Social Peace Partnership in Ubari, following successful delivery of a Social Peace and Local Development Programme in 2014. 20 Social Peace Partnerships are now established across Libya.

Social Peace refers to a situation where people have strong two-way relationships with their government and with other community groups in their area and when they trust that decisions made by the government are made fairly.

In 2016, PCI formed a partnership with the Stabilization Facility for Libya to work with the Social Peace Partnership to ensure that the implementation of the rehabilitation and reconstruction work in Ubari could be done in a conflict sensitive manner, given the highly complex conflict context there.

## THE STABILIZATION FACILITY FOR LIBYA

**The Stabilization Facility was launched in 2016 to help the state to demonstrate its value to the country’s citizens by providing visible and tangible results for the population at the local level.**

**Support aims at rehabilitating critical infrastructure; boosting the capacity of local authorities to address the needs of the population - and enhancing local mediation and conflict resolution capacities. Both components have a role to play in lasting peace. The Stabilization Facility is funded by the international community and implemented by UNDP.**

## UBARI CONFLICT CONTEXT



Ubari, Libya Photo Credit: The Libya Observer

Ubari is an oasis town situated in a hot area of southwest Libya, inhabited by an estimated 30,000 people. Following the 2011 revolution, the intricately structured relationships of patronage and power that had kept the area firmly under central government control, came to an end. The Tebu, Arab and Tuareg communities became involved in violent conflict, creating a volatile environment, which has devastated the local economy, damaged local infrastructure and led to a sharp decline in the provision of local services. At the local level, the key drivers of conflict include resources and ethnicity. Several ceasefires and peace agreements were brokered but proved too fragile to contain tensions. Since 2016, however, a ceasefire has held in Ubari, creating a more stable environment.

A stable and peaceful Ubari is strategically important because:

- Improved security and a reduction in people killed through violent incidents has the potential to influence conflict dynamics and particularly between the Tebu and Tuareg in the region;
- Increased stability may make it easier to disrupt human trade routes that run through some of Libya’s porous borders and which include human trafficking, weapons smuggling and migratory routes to Europe.

In this environment, great care had to be taken by the Stabilization Facility to ensure that infrastructure selected for rehabilitation would benefit the three tribal communities in Ubari, without privileging one group over the other and upsetting the fragile security balances in the town.

## UBARI SOCIAL PEACE PARTNERSHIP

In 2013, the Libyan Ministry of Local Government and PCi collaborated to develop and deploy a methodology; where PCi worked to convene a Social Peace Partnership in Ubari, based on a joint mapping of key stakeholder groups in the community. This process was open and transparent, to ensure it was perceived as legitimate amongst members and the wider community. In Ubari, where the context is extremely challenging, the process set a precedent for inclusion.

Community members who had an influence or interest in peace and security, were mobilized and engaged, with representatives coming from the municipal authority, social councils (representing the authority that preside over each of the three tribes), business community, religious leaders, civil society organizations etc. The cooperation of the Mayor was also secured, the senior political authority in the town. The partnership developed links with representatives from the security sector as well.

The Social Peace Partnership provides a platform for the three communities to identify local issues that may adversely impact community relations and respond accordingly. In doing so it provides a neutral venue where members can meet and communicate, which otherwise would be unlikely to happen. This approach has increased understanding around sensitive issues. It also provides an entry point for social peace and stability within the three communities through:

- Identifying concerns and needs that are common across the three communities;
- Supporting the delivery of joint projects to promote peace and stability;
- Creating the conditions for communities to respond collaboratively to any challenges that arise.

PCi supports the coordination of stakeholders in Ubari, through the Social Peace Partnership, which plans and hosts meetings, ensuring all relevant community groups and authorities are invited and attend.



TOP: Ubari, February 2018, PCi delivers training on conflict management skills to the Social Peace Partnership;  
Ubari, October 2017, PCi implements transformational leadership training;  
BOTTOM: Ubari, April 2018 PCi provides mentoring on communication skills to the Social Peace Partnership



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**An Arab female member of the Ubari Social Peace Partnership commented in 2017: “After being physically abused for expressing sympathy towards a Tebu colleague who had died, it almost looks surreal to me to see all the three tribes sitting around the same table in Ubari, working together for our community. My dream is to encourage and normalise coexistence and social peace within Ubari.”**

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In addition, the Social Peace Partnership is an important social accountability mechanism for members representing their constituents, as discussions take place on whether projects are appropriate; meet the needs and priorities of communities; as well as provide a channel of feedback from within the communities and local authorities on issues that arise through project implementation.

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**“Conflict sensitivity is acting with the understanding that any initiative conducted in a conflict affected environment will interact with that conflict and that such interaction will have consequences that may have positive or negative effects. It is a deliberate and systematic approach to ensuring we understand and minimise these negative effects (risks) and maximise positive effects of our actions (opportunities).”**  
**UK Government Stabilization Unit**

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In this way, the Social Peace Partnership has contributed to the sustainability of both the Stabilization Facility programme and its projects through providing a forum for the Stabilization Facility to meet and interact with communities and local authorities to support conflict sensitive project implementation.



Ubari, 2016: PCi project team monitoring Stabilization Facility projects

## THE IMPACT OF STRENGTHENED CONFLICT SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS AND MONITORING IN UBARI

PCi provides training and mentoring to members of the Social Peace Partnership on use of customized conflict sensitivity analysis tools, as well as conflict sensitivity monitoring. Through engagement and participation, members are better able to understand what issues trigger conflict; they also acquire the skills to be better able to forecast, resolve and mediate tensions and conflicts.

Development projects that do not include conflict sensitivity can have a negative impact and may reinforce or create grievances, divert resources to particular groups and/or reinforce corruption etc.

The training has led to the establishment of a tension monitoring mechanism with the Social Peace Partnership taking ownership; positively impacting both social peace and long term development. In addition, a Crisis Management Group has been established composed of representatives from the three communities and the municipality with individuals who were willing to understand a range of perspectives. The Crisis Management Group was put to the test in 2017 in Ubari when it was highlighted there were conflict sensitive lessons to be learned during the process of project implementation (through the Stabilization Facility), in the area of decision making related to the procurement process. See Case Study on Page 4.

PCi supports conflict sensitivity analysis and monitoring in four other towns through the Stabilization Facility for Libya.

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## **CASE STUDY: ACTIVE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL PEACE PARTNERSHIP REDUCES THE TENSIONS AND PREVENTS THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENT CONFLICT IN UBARI**

On May 24 2017, four Tebu youth broke into the Al Markaziea school site where a Stabilization Facility rehabilitation project was underway. They attempted to dismantle scaffolding and told the guards to inform the contractor not to return to the site.

The Social Peace Partnership identified that the youth had associations to The Youth Coalition, a group of fighters that had participated in Ubari's 2014 war between the Tebu and Tuareg. The Youth Coalition influences youth opinion in Ubari and had expressed anger about perceived unfairness in UNDP procurement and decision-making processes.

The Social Peace Partnership recognized The Youth Coalition had fallen outside the scope of the social stakeholders that were originally identified to be included in the Stabilization Facility for decision-making processes. The Partnership convened the Crisis Management Group that included representatives from the municipality and social councils to resolve the issue.

The UNDP engineer contacted the municipality and was requested to delay the rehabilitation works, while a comprehensive analysis was carried out by the Partnership's Crisis Management Group, supported by PCi. An initial analysis and outreach within the community unveiled a perception among the Tebu community that they have been disadvantaged in relation to the Stabilization Facility during the procurement process and contracting of firms.

Contractors are mainly perceived as being Tuareg and staff (e.g. UNDP engineer) Arab. An assumption that was widely held in Ubari and specifically by the Tebu, is that the Tuareg community have benefitted from UNDP contracts, whereas the Tebu have not.

The Crisis Management Group reached two main conclusions:

- Social Peace Partnership must cooperate and engage with the Tebu youth group in order to ensure sustainability of the project;
- The tendering process must be explained and contractors must engage the local community in the development works in order to increase social accountability;

To coordinate efforts to tackle the issue, meetings were held between the Social Peace Partnership and official entities in Ubari. Ubari's UNDP engineer was also briefed and engaged in measures of crisis management response:

- 29 May 2017, Social Peace Partnership members and the social councils' representatives met to be briefed on the origins and solutions to the problem;
- 30 May 2017, a meeting held with the municipality to complete the analysis and finalize solutions to the problem.

The Social Peace Partnership championed the principles of good tension management. It recognized that a solution must be comprehensive but a) it should not compromise the credibility of the Partnership in Ubari or b) create incentives for future disruptive acts by other groups. Moreover, it was important to ensure solutions would not reflect favouritism of any group and that long-term relationships between community groups would not be jeopardized in favour of short-term improvements.

On the 6 June, a meeting was arranged between the Social Peace Partnership in Ubari, the Youth Coalition, the perpetrators of the incident, representatives of the Tebu social council and municipality members. In this meeting, the Social Peace Partnership, together with the Youth Coalition, explained the rationale behind the Stabilization Facility and the tendering process to help the young people understand that the process was transparent.

Another meeting was scheduled with the different contractors in Ubari where the Social Peace Partnership briefed them on the reasons for the incident. It was suggested that contractors should focus on hiring local labour from all communities in Ubari in order to gain the youth's support and increase social accountability, which the contractors committed to doing.

This comprehensive solution process was successful in terms of not only restarting the works, but also improving social peace in Ubari.

During Eid prayer post-Ramadan, the Social Peace Partnership reported that it was the first time all ethnic groups within Ubari gathered in a public space to pray together, which they associated with the improved relations that have been built through the cooperation of the social councils over the course of the Stabilization Facility for Libya implementation.

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## IMPACT OF SOCIAL PEACE PARTNERSHIP IN UBARI

Beyond strengthened capacity in conflict sensitivity analysis and monitoring; achievements of the Ubari Social Peace Partnership, within the framework of the Stabilization Facility include:

- Increased ownership of Stabilization Facility projects by the three communities, through the creation of opportunities for engagement and participation in local development;
- Opened the lines of communication between the three community groups, local authorities, municipality and higher authorities;
- Circumvented tensions and opened lines of communication via social councils, who now meet regularly in a neutral space which did not occur before 2015;
- Supported improved coordination between local authorities, social councils and the municipality, improving trust in local institutions and establishing vertical communication mechanisms fostering more transparent communication with higher authorities;
- Supported an inclusive environment that led to the appointment of a deputy mayor from the Tuareg community; the first time a Tuareg representative has been included in the local governance structure;
- Identified ways to scale the impact of Stabilization Facility projects in an inclusive way. For example, following the rehabilitation of the women's centre, the Social Peace Partnership identified an opportunity to collaborate with the women and seek their cooperation on local development initiatives. In a conservative town, this strategy has the potential to improve women's participation, visibility and engagement. The creation of a space for women where all three communities can meet also improves the social accountability of local and higher authorities, simultaneously strengthening the ownership of the women's centre itself.

## CONCLUSION

Although the Ubari context remains fragile, the communities have developed capacity to engage and dialogue, in potentially sensitive situations, in order to avoid violence and conflict. The Social Peace Partnership has provided support to instigate the engagement and dialogue process. The communities have demonstrated that they are able to address challenges related to other issues that have arisen through Stabilization Facility project implementation. For example, in 2017, members of one community broke into a hospital undergoing rehabilitation; they perceived the recruitment process for the rehabilitation works to be unfair. The situation was recognized as volatile and the communities and affected parties were mobilized for consultations. Through dialogue, the original grievance was addressed and this resulted in an outcome that was satisfactory to all parties involved. The rehabilitation of the hospital and other works continued without incident.

As the situation with the Tebu Youth Coalition demonstrated, the communities have worked through challenging scenarios, with support provided by the Social Peace Partnership, which has been visibly replicated in other sensitive situations in Ubari. For example, in 2017 an individual was shot and seriously injured by another individual, (from a different tribe), at an Ubari petrol station. In the past, this kind of incident may have triggered violence between two communities. However, through engagement, consultation and dialogue, the tribes came to an understanding that the act was perpetrated by an individual. The issue was subsequently dealt with through the criminal justice system and there was no further violence.

