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Addressing Libya's multiple crises: When violent politics, extremism and crime meet

Libya is in chaos: the country's transition out of Qadhafi's dictatorship is plagued by an extreme polarization in politics and an ongoing military conflict. Added to that are other pressing issues such as the current migrant-smuggling crisis and the proliferation of jihadism. This policy brief explains how Libya's multiple crises in the fields of politics, the military, crime and extremism are interlinked through the interests and actions of influential (armed) actors. It also offers a critical reflection on current and future international engagement in the country.[1]

Introduction

The tragic chain of disasters involving migrant-smuggling boats departing from Libya has again turned the world's attention to the war-torn country. In view of the latest series of tragedies in April and May of this year, finding a way to cooperate with Libya in combating human trafficking and dealing with the expansion and actions of the Islamic State (IS) have become a pressing issue for the international community. However, since the toppling of President Muammar Qadhafi in 2011, Libya has fallen into chaos,

lawlessness and violence which the country has been unable to address. At present, there are two rival administrations and no functioning central government, and real power is in the hands of armed brigades and militias.

Libya is suffering from many 'sub-crises' – in the fields of politics, the military, extremism and crime – which are connected through the diverse interests of influential actors. After the 2011 revolution, a wave of interest groups emerged, engaging in alliances in order to acquire political and military dominance and to exclude opponents from positions of influence. The atomization in Libya's polity following the ousting of Qadhafi preceded an intense polarization and militarization in the subsequent years, as two powerful and broad political-military power blocs emerged. A closer examination of actors within the opposing camps, however, reveals that their interests are manifold, fluid, localized and often based on ideological, tribal and social connections. These actors' connections

and strategies often go beyond their political-military coalition, meaning that other linkages have been formed in addition to existing alliances. Many powerful Libyan players can also be linked to jihadi groups and criminal networks.

This state of affairs presents significant challenges for policy-making. Despite the launch in 2014 of a United Nations (UN) initiative designed to bring together the warring parties in a dialogue, current dynamics on the ground should prompt a critical reassessment of the international aim of supporting the creation of a central government. Likewise, the EU's plans to target the human trafficking networks routes through Libya prompts questions on the roles of Libyan political and military factions in these networks.

The militarization of politics

Libya's current dichotomization is rooted in the immediate post-revolutionary period, when the sudden opening up of political space led to a power game in which patronage and exclusion resurfaced. With no existing state structure in place, the unity of the Libyan state was challenged by a plethora of interest groups and their constituencies based on tribes, cities, regions and various Islamist tendencies. An intense power struggle emerged in which everyone wanted a piece of the post-Qadhafi cake and attempted to secure access to Libya's resources at the expense of others. The unified effort that characterized the revolution (*thawra*) quickly turned into a zero-sum struggle over resources (*tharwa*) in which alliance-building became the key to political power. Since 2011, the marginalization of political enemies through the forging of pragmatic and often unexpected alliances has been a widely adopted survival strategy.

In 2012, elections generated two political blocs in parliament (the General National Congress, GNC): the national-centrists of the National Forces Alliance (NFA) on the one hand, and the Muslim Brotherhood-associated Justice and Construction Party (JCP) and other Islamist factions on the other. Beyond secular-versus-Islamist stereotyping, the rivalry between the two blocs essentially comes down to a division between new and old elites: on the one hand there are those who consider themselves the true revolutionaries and who want a definitive break with the past by purging all Qadhafi remnants, while on the other hand there are those who are marked by their (alleged) participation in the Qadhafi regime, and who are more receptive to an institutional continuity between the 'old' and the 'new' Libya. Deep-rooted reciprocal mistrust over this issue was aggravated by the presence of huge numbers of armed groups and militias that did not demobilize after the toppling of Qadhafi but allied themselves with political actors to acquire more territorial control and resources. And in a country with no functioning national army and where guns are everywhere, political actors reached out to armed groups for their own protection and to further their agendas. Most notably, the hardline revolutionary brigade from the city of Misrata, one of the revolutionary strongholds during the uprising, sided with the JCP coalition. Brigades from the city of Zintan[2] and some tribal armed groups linked themselves to the NFA and their political affiliates.

Characteristic of the post-Qaddafi era is the urge by all political factions to be part of the ruling establishment, as being out of power is considered to be politically overpowered by others. This might sound obvious in a healthy political climate, however in a country devoid of a constitution and a functional state apparatus and in which no democratic political culture exists exclusion is equal to political extinction. When faced with the threat of exclusion, all political faction did not recoil from relying on armed politics to further their political agendas. Exclusionary politics reached a climax in 2013, when the JCP-led bloc managed to push through parliament the Political Isolation Law, a law designed to

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2   Under Qadhafi, the city of Zintan was closely linked to the Warfalla and the Qadhadhfa tribes, which were allies of the regime. Zintan was long perceived as a 'regime stronghold', even though the Zintani fought alongside the Misratans in the uprising against Qadhafi. After the ousting of the regime, animosity between the two cities quickly resurfaced.

ban all former Qadhafi officials from public life. The passage of the law was a turning point in Libya's transition, not only because it provided the Islamist bloc in the GNC with a legal instrument to target its political rivals represented by the NFA, but also because it happened at gunpoint and thereby illustrated the level of militarization of Libyan politics.

A response to this law came in early 2014, when former Qadhafi general Khalifa Haftar, in a televised speech, vowed to "rescue" Libya from the "terrorist [Islamist] threat". He subsequently launched a military campaign, dubbed Operation Dignity (*Karama*)[3], that rallied various armed groups against the dominance of the Islamists in the GNC and the power of the Misrata brigades. Operation Dignity is a loose alliance and this is what makes it successful: it grants disadvantaged groups the opportunity to pursue factional interests while at the same time battling the Islamists' dominance – despite differing views within the alliance regarding the transition and post-Qadhafi Libya. It was not long before brigades from Misrata and Islamist armed groups responded in turn by initiating a military campaign of their own, Operation Libya Dawn (*Fajr Libia*)[4] with the aim of bringing down the Dignity camp.

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3   Operation Dignity consists of a patchwork of actors notably in the East, but also in the West and the South. Prominent members include former army units such as the Sa'eqa Special Forces Unit and the federalist-linked Barqa Military Council. In the West, it is supported by the Zintan armed groups and the Tribal Army (consisting mainly of the Warshafana tribe). In the South, it receives support from the Tebu tribe.

4   Operation Dawn consists of a number of armed groups from the western cities of Misrata, Zawiya and Tripoli, including a number of Islamist-leaning militias. In the east it relies on the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council, which consists of Ansar al-Shari'a, Libyan Shield One, the Raffalah al-Sahati Brigade and the 17 February Brigade. Several Amazigh units and militias from the Nafusa Mountains have also joined Operation Dawn. See for instance: Daveed Gartenstein–Ross and Nathaniel Barr, *Dignity and Dawn: Libya's escalating war*, ICCT Research Paper, February 2015. Operation Dawn has the support of powerful political and societal figures, including GNC chairman Nuri Abu Sahmain and the Grand Mufti Sadiq Ghariani.

In an effort to consolidate and legitimize their power, Libya's political actors participated in the June 2014 general elections which took place amidst the Dignity–Dawn confrontation. Voter turnout was low (18%), but NFA-affiliated politicians managed to win a majority that significantly altered the power balance in parliament at the expense of the JCP and affiliated parties. However, as the Islamist–Misratan brigades were powerful enough to take over Tripoli and because of the deteriorating security situation in Benghazi where the new parliament was ought to settle, the newly elected parliament (House of Representatives, HoR) was forced to move to the eastern city of Tobruk. In one of its first sessions, the HoR branded those involved in Operation Dawn as "terrorists". Unsurprisingly, the former members of the GNC rejected the elections result, repudiated the administration in Tobruk, and instead established a rival government in Tripoli. The political divide was deepened when the Islamist-controlled Supreme Court, which is based in Tripoli, ruled that the election of the Tobruk-based government was unconstitutional.

The far-reaching polarization in Libyan politics has led to a remarkable situation: the country now hosts two rival governments that both claim to be the legitimate power holder and that reside in two political capitals: Tripoli and Tobruk[5]. The connection of the parallel governments with, respectively, Operation Dawn and Operation Dignity, moreover signals a shift in the relational balance between political and military forces in Libya. Whereas political actors have relied on the protection and support of armed groups since the uprising, military actors are now overtaking their political counterparts in terms of territorial control and leverage. Today, political parties essentially act as covers for the military

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5   In April and May, the Libyan Dawn camp splintered after the announcement that armed groups linked to Misrata declared their willingness to lay down arms and engage in the pending political dialogue. Other Dawn military leaders such as Salah Badi and Abu Obeida al-Zway are still committed to continue their military struggle and to boycott the current political efforts to reach a political deal.

Box 1

In September 2014 a statement was released by the Authority for the Correction of the Path to the Revolution (formed by Operation Dawn), saying that "… our military effort should not be considered to be in support of any political party … In return, no movement should negotiate for us or should claim to speak in our name. Our allegiance is and will remain to God and to our home country."[6] Another influential commander of Operation Dawn, Salah Badi, stated that he did not "… agree with the philosophy of a religiously inspired political party, such as [that of] the Muslim Brotherhood". He declared that Libyan Dawn had no political agenda and he described the Tripoli government as "weak" and that it included "unnationalistic figures".[7] Indeed, the former prime minister of the Tripoli government, Omar al-Hassi, confessed that the government had no control over the forces of Operation Dawn.[8] Similar tensions between the political and military leaderships can be discovered in the HoR–Operation Dignity bloc. For instance, in reference to discontent with the functioning of the HoR, Air Force Chief Saqr al-Jarushi declared that he could not guarantee that the Tobruk government would not send army pilots to attack its headquarters.[9]

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campaigns and are unable to implement any meaningful policies without the consent of their armed allies.

In fact, statements by military leaders reflect the fact that their support for a particular political leadership is based on pragmatism and convenience rather than commitment to any consistent, national political agenda (See box 1). The internal dynamics in the opposing blocs exposes two important aspects of political–military relations in Libya: that the coalitions suffer from fragmentation and a lack of coherency, and that the militarization of Libyan politics has reached new heights. To the military leadership on both sides, local, personal and ideological interests seem to take priority over national unity, fueling continuation of the conflict.

The fractious and polarized power struggle between Libya's power centers has broadened to include financial state institutions that for long have aimed to pursue a policy of neutrality. Case in point is the Libyan Central Bank in Tripoli which is the repository of oil revenues, and which is responsible for providing the necessary funds for the Libyan government to fulfill its financial duties. Fearing the influence of the GNC and Operation Dawn on the policies of the Central Bank, the Tobruk government has made several attempts to seize control of this important institution either by replacing its chairman with an allied official or by announcing the establishment of new headquarters in Eastern city of Bayada. Despite these attempts, the Central Bank continues to pay for fuel and food subsidies. More importantly, it continues to channel funds towards both rival governments in order for them to pay salaries and to maintain a minimalist state with minimal capacity for service delivery. These payments have kept the country afloat despite plummeting oil revenues, which have led to the gradual depletion of the Central Bank's reserves.

The intersection between politics, the military, extremism and crime

The existence of two rival political–military blocs is an important characteristic of Libya's crisis, but does not suffice to explain it.

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6   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRio3W53d4Q, accessed on 19 May 2014.
7   http://www.alwasat.ly/ar/news/libya/53565/, accessed on 25 May 2014.
8   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1h1MIi72FM&spfreload=10, accessed on 29 April 2015.
9   http://islammemo.cc/akhbar/Africa-we-Europe/2015/02/23/232544.html, accessed on 25 April 2015.

Box 2

ASL's connection to the Tripoli government is reflected, for instance, in its participation in the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council (BRSC), a coalition of local Islamist-leaning armed groups that receives financial support through the GNC.[10] The link between ASL and Operation Dawn, on the other hand, is reflected, for example, in statements by the leaders of GNC-linked brigades such as Libya Shield One and Rafallah al-Sahati. Much of their rhetoric mirrors ASL's ideological views, particularly concerning the implementation of shari'a (tahkim al-Shari'a). ASL leader Mohammed Al-Zahawi even appeared in a video together with BRSC leader Wisam Bin Hamid, both using the same discourse concerning Islamic law.[11] The friendly relations between the Dawn leadership and local jihadi groups are further reflected in public statements surrounding the death of prominent leaders on both sides.

There is another factor underpinning the country's current state of destabilization. Over the course of Libya's transition, state-linked actors – both armed groups and political factions – have developed a stake in jihadism and crime. The fluidity and pragmatism in these actors' interests caused them to connect with extremist groups and criminal networks and use these relationships as tools to acquire more influence and resources. As a result, various actors in Operation Dawn are now close to jihadi discourse and principles thanks to their connection with local jihadi groups, especially in East Libya. Also, there are strong indications that the brigades of Operation Dawn and Operation Dignity are involved in illicit activities – notably human trafficking and illegal arms transfer, respectively. These multiple connections and shared interests have blurred the boundaries between Libya's political, military, criminal and extremist spheres and produced a new rationale for instability – after all, those who benefit from the existence of illicit networks and extremist groups are unlikely to support measures that will threaten their hard-won

share of resources and power. The myriad of often conflicting interests of military-political actors in Libya are potential spoiling factors towards efforts to establish a functioning central government.

Tripoli and its connection to extremism

Many leading figures in the Operation Dawn campaign and the GNC maintain close relations with each other either through their membership in the Muslim Brotherhood or the former Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). More worrying are the triangular relationships between the military leaders in Operation Dawn, the GNC, and the jihadists of Ansar al-Shari'a.

Established in 2012, Ansar al-Shari'a in Libya (ASL) promotes the ideology of Al-Qa'ida, adheres to the salafi-jihadi agenda of implementing Islamic law, and is branded a terrorist organization by the UN. Since most of its founding members participated in the struggle against Qadhafi, ASL has revolutionary credentials and shares resentment of the former regime with all other factions in Operation Dawn and the GNC. Despite its rejection of the concept of the state and democracy, ASL shows little hesitancy in cooperating with government-linked parties and political institutions in pursuit of its aims (see box 2).

However, it would be too simplistic to dismiss the close ties between ASL, the GNC and Dawn brigades as purely tactical

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10 According to prominent military figures linked to BRSC, such as Jalal al-Makhzoum. The details of the support provided are unclear: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0d1xt_F-IN0, accessed on 24 April 2014.
11 Bin Hamid's example was followed by other GNC-linked brigade leaders of the 17 February Brigade and Rafallah al-Sahati. 30 July 2014: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V45NWMYSzhI.

in the face of a common enemy. Shari'a, or elements thereof, receives wide-spread support in Libya, but various actors in the Dawn camp, especially in Benghazi, seem to favour ASL's more radical interpretation of Islamic law. In a recent move, the GNC issued a rule saying that a committee should be established for the purpose of checking whether GNC legislation complies with Shari'a. Some interpret this as an effort by the GNC to regain religious legitimacy, in light of the ideological proximity between Dawn-linked brigades in Benghazi and ASL and in response to the Islamic State (IS) accusations of the Dawn coalition being 'apostates'. Another reasonable explanation is that the GNC feels pressurized by its Islamist military allies to adopt a more 'Islamic' face.

Military actors' involvement in crime

The removal of Qadhafi's grip on the security sector and the economy unleashed intense competition among numerous localized (armed) groups for control over strategic sites and control of the flow and distribution of illicit goods. Libya's vast terrain, permeable borders and the absence of effective state control have created an ideal environment for criminals to manoeuvre in and for criminal networks and illicit markets to flourish. Illicit trade has provided groups in the warring camps with the necessary revenues and equipment to continue their fighting. In many ways, the expansion of criminal activity in Libya is both a symptom and a cause of the prevailing instability.

It is highly likely that armed actors involved in both of Libya's political–military coalitions are also involved in different types of criminal activity, although hard evidence on their role is extremely difficult to find, and verifying existing accounts can be problematic.[12]

After the toppling of Qadhafi, Libya quickly turned into the region's principal arms market. Given the local power of state-linked armed groups and their dependence

on weapons to continue their fight, it is widely assumed that they are involved in illegal arms transfers that take place within territory under their control. The airports in the east (Tobruk and Al-Ubrok airports) and the west (Mitiga and Misrata) serve as lifelines through which the warring parties receive military support from their regional allies. But control over such strategic sites is also crucial for exploiting the smuggling networks that run through them and for seizing shipments of desirable goods.[13] Unsurprisingly, the post-Qadhafi period has seen fierce fighting over airports and harbours, and local armed groups have continued to consolidate their control over these sites.

But probably the most disturbing type of illicit activity in Libya concerns human trafficking. Of the nearly 170,000 migrants rescued in the Mediterranean in 2014, 85% had set off from the Libyan coast. In the first five months of 2015, more than 60,000 illegal migrants have reached the Italian shore through Libya, with a number of fatalities that exceeds 1,800. A humanitarian disaster is unfolding, as the market for migrant-smuggling through Libya continues to grow. Given the territorial control that armed groups have over Libya's coastal areas, it is extremely likely that state-linked military groups have a stake in this type of activity. Boats frequently depart from the coastal cities between Misrata and Zuwara, an area in which Operation Dawn-affiliated brigades and militias are present and where they operate protection rackets. In a similar way, the passage of migrants through the south and east of Libya on their way to the western coastal cities requires the cooperation of local armed groups, and which in turn requires the consent and/or cooperation of Operation

12 See, for example, UN Panel of Experts on Libya Report, February 2015.

13 For example, in 2014, Zintani militias allegedly seized a shipment of weapons intended for the government in Tripoli, loading the weapons directly on to their own trucks. Gartenstein-Ross and Barr, *op. cit.*, p. 25. Former Deputy Minister of Defence Khaled al-Sharif also reported how military equipment shipped through Ubrok airport has fallen into the hands armed groups of Operation Dignity (25 August 2014): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJvZz7_XIwU.

Dignity forces in the areas controlled by them. In fact, access to a human trafficking route creates a comparative advantage for local brigades, especially in times when the funding capacity of the governments on both sides is limited. Controlling roads used for smuggling is a highly lucrative business as the armed groups provide their cooperation and protection in return for sizeable payments. The UN has reported how members of international trafficking networks are positioned within the ranks of Libyan armed groups in order to facilitate smuggling operations.[14] Moreover, access to migrant-smuggling routes provides local armed groups with an influx of manpower, as many illegal migrants find their way into – or are forced into – the rank and file of these groups.[15]

Reflections on international action

The UN and EU in action

Libya's descent into war did not go unnoticed by the international community. Alarmed by the impasse in Libyan politics and the ongoing violence, in 2014 the UN launched peace negotiations between representatives of the rival government in Tripoli and Tobruk with the ultimate objective of establishing a transitional government of national unity. In addition to these negotiations, second-track negotiations were launched between political parties, tribal leaders, local councils and representatives of civil society on both sides. But in view of the extreme militarization of Libya, it is hardly surprising that engaging the opposing blocs in Tripoli and Tobruk in the search for a political solution to the crises is an arduous process.

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14 UN Panel of Experts Report, p. 65.

15 For example, a prominent leader of the Libyan Tuareq tribe claimed that the groups currently fighting against his community in Ubari were recruited by the rival Tebu tribe from among illegal migrants passing through Libya: http://www.3galgerien.com/vod/watch. php?vid=9a6ce7095, accessed on 05 May 2015.

Despite such uncertainties, in March 2015 UN Special Representative Bernardino León announced that negotiations were making "very important progress" and in June 2015 a fifth draft proposal for a political solution was presented, which is currently under review by both sides. This draft proposal specifies the set-up as well as the mandate of the national unity government. One of the contentious issues is the mandate of and the relation between the HoR, which will be the only legislative power, and the State Council, in which GNC members will probably constitute the majority. The executive power will be concentrated at the level of the Council of Ministers who will be appointed by the Presidency Council which is composed of the Prime Minister, his two deputies and two ministers.

At any rate, this supposed progress in the negotiation process stands in stark contrast to the grim security situation in Libya. Around the same time that the rounds of peace talks opened between April and June 2015, heavy fighting was taking place in Tripoli's suburbs between Dignity and Dawn for control over the city, as well as two IS attacks on foreign targets. Aside from this ongoing turmoil, the aim of building a national unity government seems ambitious against the background of the analysis offered in this brief. Even if both rival groups agree on the content of the proposed peace plan, it remains the question as to whether the implementation of the plan is achievable and sustainable.

First, as has been observed with regard to peace processes elsewhere, it is questionable whether participants in the talks can persuade their military allies back home to lay down their arms, particularly because Libya's most powerful armed actors are currently not present at the talks since for them there is little motivation for stopping the fighting and committing themselves to a new government. The varied interests, incoherency and lack of command and control within Libya's political–military coalitions make any unified action on a peace deal doubtful. Moreover, the numerous other active militias that are not part of any coalition will not abide by a settlement that may not best serve their interests.

Second, the talks are supposedly designed to bring together moderate elements from both of Libya's governments, but it is unclear what the actual balance is between 'moderates' and 'hardliners' at the negotiation table and whether a resolution will be sufficiently responsive to the interests of 'hardline' forces. At the same time, there is a perceived risk of 'hardline' forces in government using the newly established administration as yet another tool for political manipulation and exclusion of political opponents, as has happened previously in Libya's transition.

Should negotiations turn out to be successful, though, the ongoing human trafficking crisis in Libya makes it painfully clear that the situation is spiraling out of control and that a future central authority will have tremendous challenges ahead. In addition to the UN-led peace process, the EU has recently launched a three-phase operation to combat human traffickers by targeting the vessels used by traffickers. The first phase of this mission will be an intelligence-gathering mission through sea patrols in international waters. Broadening the mission to include Libyan waters as well as proceeding with the next two phases will require a mandate from the UN Security Council.[16] Consent is also required from the Libyan authorities to operate in the Libyan territorial waters. The EU mission has been criticized by the government in Tobruk because of the possibility of collateral damage to civilians and boats used for fishing. European countries were further warned by the air force commander of the Tobruk government that any vessels that will enter the Libyan territorial waters without permission would be targeted from the air.

Uncomfortable realities for international engagement

Even if the caveats surrounding the UN and EU initiatives to address Libya's crises are removed in the process, then a fundamental issue remains untouched: that Libya's crises are interlocked and

they need to be understood as such. Mitigating the crises through separate policy responses is unrealistic. As this analysis demonstrates, the multiple and fluid interests of Libya's most powerful actors have linked the sub-crises in Libya: political actors cannot be understood as purely political, military forces can be both state-linked and extremist (even anti-state) in nature, and many of the factions that are linked to the two governments are also involved in illicit activity. Similarly, the political impasse cannot be resolved with the involvement of political actors alone, the smuggling crisis calls for more than a plan to hit trafficking assets – and any future initiatives to curb the proliferation of jihadism in Libya need to take into consideration the links between jihadis and other military actors. Throughout Libya's transition, numerous and sometimes opposite interests have converged, and it is difficult to resolve the crises in Libya without untangling these interests first.

Next, a vision or an action plan is needed according to which the UN will deal with spoilers that are able and willing to disrupt the process of implementation of any political agreement. These actors could be found inside both coalitions in Tobruk and Tripoli as well as outside these coalitions, such as the IS and Ansar al-Shari'a. As the security situation is essential for a stable and controlled transition period and as any new consensual government will be initially toothless given the fragile institutional context and the strained political relations, devising a credible and enforceable plan to deal with disruptive powers is essential. Clarity from the international community on possible ways to deal with this issue, which is not an unlikely scenario, is important and shows commitment to the peace process.

Furthermore, considerable thought should be put in devising the state institutions and the allocation of political positions on the national level in a way that does not exacerbate the inclusion-exclusion dynamic, thereby further fueling rivalry and competition. The current UN proposal seems to suggest that these positions will not be technical, but mainly political. Here lies the risk of a return to the old exclusionary behavior, especially because

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16 http://www.politico.eu/article/migration-naval-mission-new-refugee-in-europe/, accessed on 25 June 2015.

of the trust deficit and fragmentation between Libyan military/political actors as well as the deep-rooted fear for exclusion. While a strong state with mandated national political representatives is easier for the international community to deal with, in the polarized context of Libya this will compromise the impartiality of the state, an impartiality which is essential to stabilize Libya and to prevent exclusionary politics to gain traction.

Mitigating the divisive and impeding influences of the inclusion-exclusion cycle is therefore a priority and could be realized, inter alia, by the devolution of powers to localized constituencies, by acknowledging the local power divisions and supporting an evenhanded approach to establish and

maintain peace on the local level. These local arrangements should be tied together in the framework of a minimalist, technical and impartial state that pays respect to Libya's localities and their respective priorities and needs. The main task of the state on the national level is to allocate resources based on already agreed principles, following the current role of the Libyan Central Bank. In addition, the implementation of any political deal should be ensured via an oversight mechanism in which regional and international powers take part. This is important in order to monitor and assess the proceedings of the transition, including the responsible actors for deviations or obstruction, but also to mitigate the fear of exclusion that will probably still haunt many Libyan political and military factions.

About the Conflict Research Unit

The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' is a think tank and diplomatic academy on international affairs. The Conflict Research Unit (CRU) is a specialized team within the Institute, conducting applied, policy-oriented research and developing practical tools that assist national and multilateral governmental and non-governmental organizations in their engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

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