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# HUMAN TRAFFICKING, SMUGGLING AND GOVERNANCE IN LIBYA: IMPLICATIONS FOR STABILITY AND PROGRAMMING

Prepared under Contract No.: GS-10F-0033M / Order No. 7200AA18M00016, Tasking N016

# DRG LEARNING, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH ACTIVITY II

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING, SMUGGLING AND GOVERNANCE IN LIBYA: IMPLICATIONS FOR STABILITY AND PROGRAMMING

MAY 2020

Prepared under Contract No.: GS-I0F-0033M / Order No. 7200AA18M00016, Tasking N016

**Submitted to:**

Brandy Witthoft, USAID COR

**Submitted by:**

Author: Jean-Louis Romanet Perroux (Senior Evaluation Expert)  
Field Research: The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime

**Contractor:**

NORC at the University of Chicago  
4350 East West Highway, 8th Floor  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
Attention: Renée Hendley  
Telephone: 301-634-9489; E-mail: [Hendley-Renee@norc.org](mailto:Hendley-Renee@norc.org)

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## ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CTIP	Countering Trafficking in Persons
DCIM	Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration
DRG-LER	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance – Learning, Evaluation, and Research Activity
EU	European Union
FRAP	Flexible Research and Analysis Platform
GI	Global Initiative for Combating Transnational Crime
GNA	Government of National Accord
HRW	Human Rights Watch
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIL	Islamic State
LAAF	Libyan Arab Armed Forces
LCG	Libya Coast Guard
LNA	Libya National Army
LYD	Libyan Dinar
MPCA	Multi-purpose Cash Assistance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORC	National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago
ODA	Office of Disaster Assistance
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
R&R	Strengthening Local Capacities for Resilience and Recovery (UNDP program)
SFL	Stabilization for Libya (UNDP program)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Back door** (aka “back way”): Term used by West Africans, particularly Gambians and Senegalese to refer to the irregular journey to Europe (Micallef 2017, 7)

**Circular migration**: “The systematic and regular movement of migrants between their homelands and foreign countries typically seeking work. [...] Circular migration should be differentiated from the one-time emigration or out-migration and the eventual permanent return migration.” (Constant et al. 2012, 4-5)

**Coxeur**: middleman in Libya with whom the migrant is already in contact (applies solely in the Nigerien context).

**Detention facilities**: For the purpose of this research, detention facilities include all types of facilities in which migrants are detained against their will, whether or not they are recognized by the state. In fact, besides state-controlled detention centers (under the Directorate for Combatting Illegal Migration or DCIM), there are tens, if not hundreds of detention facilities across Libya that range from make-shift dormitories in abandoned houses to properly organized detention hangars with surveillance cameras. Some of these detention facilities only host migrants in transit along their route offering them basic services (food and toilets), others are concentration camps where migrants survive in abysmal health and sanitation conditions with barely any food, and are systematically raped and/or tortured. Increasingly, detention facilities are morphing into the latter as a result of the drop in departures and the consequent drop in the earnings coming from fees for the transit and departure of migrants. To offset their losses, human traffickers and smugglers often turn to extortion. These facilities are referred to as “ghetto”, “campo”, “terkina” (mostly for transit centers), “garage” (mostly for torture centers), or “hangars”.

**Gidan bashi**: Credit houses where migrants are sold to groups who specialize in exploiting migrants for money, often through torture and extortion.

**Hawaladar**: Informal financial agent or broker

**Illegal migration’s circular economy**: The concept of circular economy refers to an economic system that minimizes or eliminates the waste of resources throughout the economic cycle. Here the economic system is “illegal” migration in Libya. We put the term illegal in quotation marks because currently all migration in Libya is “illegal”, since authorities do not issue visas to migrants.<sup>1</sup> In this system the resources are illegal migrants, whose direct or indirect exploitation is not “wasted” along their entire journey. The resource is not just labor (willing or forced), it is also the willingness to pay for transportation, food, or other services, and the ability to mobilize resources to prevent torture and death, and to buy freedom. Thus, the resources are migrants themselves. In fact, money is made by smugglers who move migrants across borders along Libya’s migration routes, and through sea routes to Europe. Money is extorted from migrants and their relatives by traffickers who get hold of migrants along their journey. Lastly, money is made by state officials who pocket foreign funds destined to contain migration and to improve the condition of migrants in detention, who sell migrants to traffickers and smugglers, and/or who “rent” detained migrants as forced laborers, and/or extort money in exchange for food or freedom. In this cycle, both state and non-state actors benefit from migration all along its steps, rendering illegal migration in Libya akin to a circular economic system.

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<sup>1</sup> Although Libyan authorities declare that legal procedures to issue work permits and visas to migrants still exist and are valid, they no longer seem to be applied. For further information, see point G.I in Annex B).

**Makhzen:** Warehouses (plural *makhazen*)

**Manadeeb:** (plural of *mandub*) Migrants' agent / representative / broker, also termed *wakil*

**Muhareb:** Smugglers who facilitate the migrants' journey

**Passeurs:** Transporters

**Smuggling:** One individual pays another in order to facilitate his/her illegal travel from one country to another. An essential feature for smuggling is the consent of the migrant to the migration process (Nourhan et al, 2015). UNODC defines human smuggling as “the procurement for financial or other material benefit of illegal entry of a person into a State of which that person is not a national or resident”. It must be noted that unlike trafficking, a case can be made to posit that “human smuggling is morally permissible under some conditions even if it is illegal” (Aloyo and Cusumano 2018). Note that Smuggling turns into trafficking when:

- A smuggler extorts a ransom from a migrant;
- Migrants are sold to other smugglers and lose control of their destiny;
- A smuggler changes the agreement along the way. For instance, a migrant paid to be transported to Tripoli but the smuggler drops him in Sebha.

**Trafficking:** The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (e.g. prostitution, sexual servitude, forced labor, removal of organs, slavery). While smuggling requires the illegal crossing of an international border, trafficking does not necessarily have to be transnational. The most fundamental difference between smuggling and trafficking is the fact that trafficking is classified as a crime against the individual whereas smuggling is a crime against the state (Nourhan et al, 2015).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines trends in smuggling and trafficking in and through Libya, and the extent to which smuggling and trafficking interact with governance and country or regional stability. The collapse of the Libyan regime in 2012 led to a proliferation of loose arms in North Africa and the Sahel, contributing further to the erosion of the rule of law in Libya and in neighboring countries.<sup>2</sup> The region is characterized by various forms of illicit activity – from kidnapping for ransom; trade in weapons, drugs and contraband; to human trafficking – that have only been exacerbated by the prolonged conflict in Libya, which includes uncontrolled flows of irregular migration. Moreover, terrorism in the region and in Libya in particular, is increasingly linked to a range of organized criminal activities, including human trafficking.<sup>3</sup> As part of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Countering Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP) efforts, USAID seeks to deepen its understanding of how patterns of human trafficking enable local conflict, and how trafficking influences governance and overall stability in Libya. To be clear, this report does not seek to analyze the impact of human trafficking and smuggling on a specific conflict, be it national or local. It aims at analyzing the impact on the level of conflict, on proneness to conflict, which will be referred to as “conflictuality”. Drawing from the evidence captured, this report seeks to identify overall implications for USAID strategies and approaches to dealing with governance issues in Libya, and to offer recommendations with respect to current and potential USAID programmatic directions or initiatives.

With these goals in mind, the report examines the following questions:

1. What are the political, economic, social and broader regional factors fueling conflict in Libya?
2. To what extent do human trafficking and smuggling contribute to conflictuality in Libya?
3. To what extent do human trafficking and smuggling tie to other forms of illicit activity in Libya?
4. What do human trafficking and smuggling networks look like – key actors? Involvement of state actors?
5. What interventions exist to combat human trafficking and smuggling? Where are the gaps?

## METHODOLOGY

Due to the limited availability of accurate information on illicit trade given the clandestine nature of the activity and volatile security conditions in Libya and the Sahel, this report draws on grey literature (such as reports, working papers, government documents, white papers and evaluations produced by government agencies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, or academic centers) media and news articles in addition to scholarly journals.

The methodology also draws on targeted data analysis to gather information on the local channels and networks through which migrant smuggling occurs and links to criminal or destabilizing organizations and networks. To facilitate data collection, NORC engaged the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (Global Initiative) to conduct qualitative data gathering within Libya through an informed network approach. Global Initiative is a network of global and regional experts working on human rights, democracy, governance, and development issues that are affected by organized crime. It

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<sup>2</sup> Significant outflows are noted from Mali as well, a country also plagued by internal strife that has exacerbated by instability in Libya.

<sup>3</sup> Joint special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the UN Security Council, “The nexus between international terrorism and organized crime,” 2019, <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Concept-note-final-web.pdf>.



maintain a program of research in Libya and published on the topic of human smuggling.<sup>4</sup> Importantly, Global Initiative has a network of local researchers and contacts located throughout Libya. Global Initiative worked with the NORC research team to develop questions related to human smuggling / trafficking and local governance that were presented to its network of trusted researchers in Libya. Although not a representative sample, the data from the network provides a rare and invaluable in-country perspective that the team analyzed and triangulated against the results of the more traditional evidence review sources described above.

Before conducting network fieldwork, the NORC team conducted a literature review for available evidence and analysis on the topics of research, including any existing documentation developed by Global Initiative. The NORC team then agreed on the most important questions through a validation workshop, and also conducted in-depth interviews with key experts to inform the paper. Data gathering in Libya was carried out by Global Integrity's researchers October 1-December 27, 2019. For more in-depth discussion of the findings, a longer version of this report is also available. Below are key findings from the current report analysis.

## KEY FINDINGS

### THE IMPACTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING ON GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As observed in many countries around the world, large and easily accessible economic resources and weak state institutions can give birth to powerful forms of organized crime, which in turn stifles growth of state institutions and market economy. Organized crime can develop an industry of corruption, extortion, and violence that prevents market competition, effectively distorts democratic governance, and penetrates state institutions

**Illicit trade weakens state governing institutions.** In Libya, human trafficking and smuggling, along with other criminal activities, have offered a large and easily accessible economic resource that constitutes a key factor in the destabilizing growth of organized crime. At a time when the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) are engaged in an existential conflict, both camps officially endorse and legitimize well-armed and established traffickers and smugglers within their ranks. Over time, this “institutionalization” of corruption and organized crime leads to reverse take-over of state institutions by criminal organizations.

**Trafficking undermines the legitimacy of local officials and prevents participatory governance.** When their economic and military strength allows them, human traffickers and smugglers, and other criminal groups impose a governance system whereby local officials are allegiant to them. Furthermore, criminal organizations corrupt or take over justice and security organizations in order to protect their interests, to the detriment of public interest. The towns of Zawya, Garabulli, and Kufra offer three clear examples of this destabilizing mechanism.

**Fueling corruption and shrinking the space for the licit economy.** Human trafficking and smuggling constitute large sources of income in Libya, at a time when Libyans are confronted with protracted economic hardship. Once well organized and powerful, organized criminal networks branch out from their businesses to control all lucrative economic activities through corruption or direct threats. Ultimately, the growth of the illicit economy cripples the already small private sector, and it hampers the development of an open and competitive market economy. Smugglers use their position of strength to rig public tenders and to drive out competitors. Moreover, state-endorsed and foreign-

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, <https://globalinitiative.net/human-trafficking-smuggling-nexus-in-libya/>.

funded armed groups that include the coast guard, counter-migration units, detention center guards and administration – all of whom have ties with human traffickers and smugglers - profit from the “illegal migrants’ circular economy” created by the EU policy towards migration in Libya. The result is an institutionalization of organized crime.

**Disruptions of circular migration patterns that support regional economies.** Libya is not solely a country of transit for migrants. Quite the contrary, Libya is primarily a country of destination, mostly for circular migration. At least it was until 2017, when the EU’s support to state and non-state armed groups to combat migration led to a dramatic drop in departures. One outcome has been the increased extortion of migrants through which human smugglers have tried to offset their losses. In addition to the suffering of migrants in Libya, their families also endure severe psychological and economic hardships because they are increasingly forced to send money to save the life of their migrated family members. This changed “business model” has led to a drop in both the size of circular migration, and on its nature, whereby younger, unskilled migrants have replaced skilled ones. This change is hurting Libya’s economy that heavily relies on migrants, and the economies of several African countries that greatly benefited from the remittances sent by their citizens working in Libya.

## THE IMPACTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING ON PEACE AND SECURITY

**Trafficking provides available, cheap labor that fuels the conflict.** The large presence of young men, some of whom were fighters who had been forcibly recruited, provides Libyan armed groups with a large pool of human resources that they can use to support their war efforts. This support can be direct, through migrants’ enrollment in Libyan armed groups and participation in fighting, or indirect, through their engagement in loading, transporting, and unloading weapons and ammunition.

**Human trafficking and smuggling can fuel local conflict and dampen peace prospects.** The large income suddenly generated by the increase in human trafficking and smuggling and other highly profitable illicit activities since 2011 caused rapid changes in the distribution of power and wealth among tribes, ethnic groups, and towns. During these times marked by economic hardship and lawlessness, these changes often lead to intra- and inter-communal conflicts. In fact, many local conflicts in Libya since 2011 can be attributed at least in part to these dynamics.

**Trafficking and smuggling dislocate communities’ internal cohesion and disrupt social stability.** Human trafficking and smuggling are highly lucrative activities that often disrupt social stability by quickly empowering low-skilled youth and criminals who no longer respect laws and social norms. Typically, successful new traffickers are young men who are willing to break the law and to use violence. Once empowered and enriched, these young men can adopt highly destabilizing behaviors for their own family, tribe or ethnic group, and town.

**Illicit trade and human trafficking create a permissive environment for terrorism.** Violent extremist groups are aided by the well-developed human trafficking and smuggling activities that they can tax in the territories they control, and from which they can buy services, such as the safe transportation across national borders or purchasing weapons. Moreover, violent extremist groups can also recruit or forcibly enroll migrants, although it seems that to do this, they must first assert their control over a territory over time. Lastly, Islamic State (ISIL) fighters can use well-established human smuggling mechanisms to reach Europe.

**Human trafficking fuels racism against black Africans, and degrades relations among Libyans of different ethnicities.** Human trafficking and smuggling seems to be one of the drivers of racism towards black Africans in Libya. In turn, this racism can also degrade inter-ethnic relations

between non-black and black Libyans either as a result of conflating black Libyans and African migrants, or by mimetism, that is replicating attitudes and behaviors observed in others

### THE STABILIZING IMPACT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING

Notwithstanding the many ways in which human trafficking and smuggling destabilize Libya, there are also ways in which these dynamics have a stabilizing effect on the local economy and on conflict. In a country marked by lawlessness and insecurity, any mechanism that can prevent or help resolve conflict, even if it is the result of criminal activity, should probably be preserved until a better one is established, or if we can prevent the adverse consequences that may result from its disruption.

**Trafficking and smuggling support local economies.** The most depressed areas in Libya are small towns far from the coast, which feel regularly neglected by the state. Many of these areas are precisely those through which human trafficking and smuggling networks operate. In these areas, human trafficking and smuggling offer sources of livelihood for the youth, who are largely unemployed. They also offer young men an opportunity to belong to a “business” group, which may prevent them from enrolling in terrorist armed groups, or from fueling conflicts. Also, Libya’s economy heavily relies on migrants, and human smugglers provide the organizational infrastructure through which migrants come in and out of Libya. Lastly, human smugglers also offer an opportunity to young Libyans to migrate abroad in search of a better future, at a time when their country does not offer many promising prospects.

**Trafficking and smuggling regulate interactions among tribes and ethnic groups.** Human trafficking and smuggling can either aggravate or prevent inter-tribal or ethnic conflict. Once well established and coordinated among local groups, human trafficking and smuggling can have a stabilizing effect on local peace and security. In fact, the communities involved in these illicit activities have an interest in carrying them out in a peaceful and orderly fashion to maximize benefits and minimize costs. If they fought each other, they would both create uncertainty about their future earnings, and jeopardize current ones. The type of impact that these illicit activities – and others - may have on security and stability appears to be tied to how well-organized these activities are, and to how much each community respects agreements. The interference of other actors, such as foreign armed groups and national forces can disrupt equilibria among local tribes and ethnic groups, providing exogenous incentives to break agreements and compromise the status quo.

### PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

**Help local Libyan authorities distinguish migrant smuggling from trafficking, and focus on the latter.** The international community should help Libyans fight crime and human rights violations, not migration per se.

**Encourage and support local authorities to provide migrants with work permits.** Official work permits will protect migrants from abuses by Libyan authorities. Moreover, it may help combat and contain the criminal exploitation of foreign labor vs. legally paid migrants and help highlight their positive impact on the Libyan economy.

**Support the development of an effective subnational migration governance structure.** Support the Directorate for Combating Illegal Immigration (DCIM) to develop Libya’s migration management and facilitate coordination between national and subnational DCIM units, and between those units and local authorities. Currently, DCIM plays almost no role in migration management in key migration hubs, such as Bani Walid and most towns in southern Libya.

The following recommendations are consistent with the USAID Libya Program Plan 2018-2020:

**Adopt targeted economic measures for communities who reside on Libyan migration routes.** These might include: 1) providing support to develop livelihood opportunities for youth and training on entrepreneurship and income generation strategies; 2) cash-for-work projects that provide short-term income to local Libyan and migrant workers, while constructing or rehabilitating key local infrastructure, such as schools and healthcare facilities; and 3) providing cash assistance for essential items (e.g. food, water, cooking gas, and transportation) during times of need, using the multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) program created by USAID/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

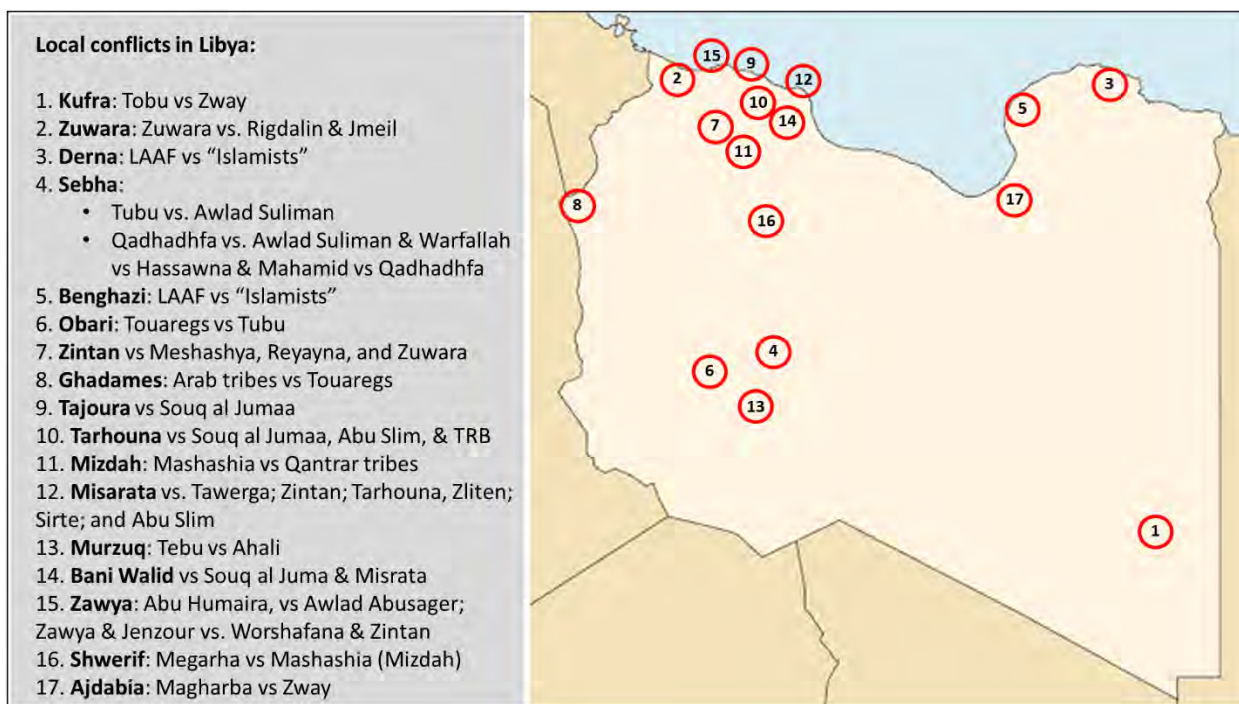
**Develop a specific research and monitoring capacity focused on human trafficking and smuggling.** Given the constantly changing landscape on the ground in Libya, international donors should continue to support the systematic generation of granular, context-specific information and analysis on the interplay between organized crime – particularly human trafficking and smuggling - and governance and stability in Libya. In addition, human trafficking and smuggling and Libya’s context writ large are very fluid and changing. Thus, programs focusing on these activities must be equipped with very strong in-country monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that can provide *ad hoc* context-specific and timely tailoring and close verification of ongoing activities. **Adopt a human rights-based approach.** USAID can explore leveraging its local governance and civil society programs to support civil society monitoring of human trafficking, engaging local academic institutions and researchers to study the impact of human smuggling and trafficking on their communities, and through identification and support of local initiatives providing protection to migrants.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## THE CURRENT LIBYAN CONTEXT

Eight years after the collapse of the Ghaddafi regime, Libya suffers from institutional division and a broken social fabric. Moreover, the country is still mired in a civil war, which turned from a low intensity confrontation to an open conflict on April 4, 2019. On that date, the self-proclaimed Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF, aka LNA) launched an assault on armed groups in Tripoli, which are loosely affiliated with the UN-backed government, the Government of National Accord (GNA). The absence of a unified front toward Libya among foreign actors, and the increasing presence of weapons and foreign mercenaries (Russians, Syrians, Chadians, and Sudanese, *inter alia*) indicate that the prospect of a political solution is nowhere near. In addition to the national-level conflict, dozens of ethnic, tribal, or geographic communities are pitted against each other in localized conflicts mostly driven by economic interests and justified by historical grievances. Map I below provides an overview of most localized conflicts in Libya. Not all of them are active conflicts. However, all of them continue to compromise relationships among the communities involved. The competition among local and national actors and their need for armed support and financial resources to support the cost of fighting push decision-makers to see criminals and their lucrative businesses as assets rather than liabilities.

**Map I: Local conflicts in Libya**



## 2. ORGANIZED CRIME IN LIBYA

### ILLICIT ECONOMY

The illicit economy in Libya includes a range of different but often interconnected profitable activities. To a large extent, the scale and type of illicit activities in the country are a function of geographical location and they vary across time. For instance, the most dominant illicit activity for communities on the human migration route is usually human smuggling and trafficking. Libya's illicit economy seriously threatens state-building efforts and perpetuates conflict. It creates an enabling environment for both state (e.g. corrupt political elites) and non-state actors (e.g. armed groups) to generate substantial revenues.

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING

Because of its geographical location, Libya has always had human trafficking and smuggling activities. As a result of the 2014 political crisis, armed groups gained more power and extended their territorial control. In turn, they facilitated the expansion of "smugglers' logistical capacity and further increased efficiency, opening the Libyan territory to a lot more 'business'" (Micallef 2017, vii). Powerful militias that previously had only secured a safe passage in exchange for a fee actively entered the business of human smuggling and trafficking and seized control of the main migration routes in Libya. The high degree of profitability of human trafficking and smuggling between 2014 and 2017 and the access to foreign currencies that they provided drove several militias to enter these businesses. In turn, these developments led to the emergence of transnational consortia of smuggling networks capable of handling large volumes of migrants across a large territory. It must be noted that, as a result of the European stigmatization of immigration through Libya and the Central Mediterranean Route, Libya is perceived as a country of transit, crossed by migrants whose sole objective is to reach Europe. The historic reality is quite different. Most migrants either aimed to live in Libya, or to work there for a period of time that could range from months to years before returning to their country of origin. This latter phenomenon is called circular migration. However, over the last few years Libya is increasingly becoming a country of transit, due to increasingly common and escalating conflicts, economic hardship, and violence against migrants.

Since mid-2017, the business of human smuggling and trafficking has declined. Principally, the decline was driven by the controversial Italian cash-for-migration-control strategy, which was jointly implemented with the GNA. The strategy financially incentivized the emergence of a counter-human trafficking and smuggling business in Libya. Traffickers and smugglers became state security units supposedly fighting the very activities they had carried out. Additionally, the EU provided substantial technical and material support for the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG), which enabled it to more effectively intercept migrants at sea. Local conflicts between different armed groups across the migration route have also affected human trafficking and smuggling, as will be detailed in the sections analyzing the links between human trafficking and smuggling, governance, and stability. Nonetheless, the recent developments do not mean that the human smuggling and trafficking business has become no longer lucrative. Actually, some suggest that even after the decline it continued to be lucrative as smugglers adapted to the new market climate by charging higher prices than before (Khairallah, authors' interview, 7 Sept. 2019).

Human traffickers and smugglers are also undeterred by the ongoing war in Tripoli, and they have adopted new mechanisms. For instance, at the embarkation points, smugglers have begun to concentrate embarkation activities over a short time – spikes pattern – to overwhelm the LCG and maximize the likelihood of getting some boats safely through (GI monitoring May 2019, 10). Additionally, smugglers have focused their activities in easy-to-access and relatively less risky embarkation points such as Zliten and Al-Khoms, which are easily accessible from Bani Walid, a key migration hub.

### **3. IMPACTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **WEAKENING STATE INSTITUTIONS**

In Libya, along with other criminal activities, human trafficking and smuggling offer a large and easily accessible economic resource, contributing to the destabilizing growth of organized crime. Weak state institutions, and more specifically the associated lawlessness and insecurity, provide the ideal environment for this growth. In addition, national and local conflicts push state authorities – both the GNA and LAAF - to officially endorse and legitimize well-armed and established traffickers and smugglers within their ranks. Confronted with an existential threat, this is often their only choice. Over time, this “institutionalization” of corruption and organized crime leads to reverse take-over of state institutions by criminal organizations. Paradoxically, international organizations often end up reinforcing these actors to contain migration. As militias, traffickers, and smugglers recycle into security forces officially tasked to control migration, paid and supported by the European Union, the rule of law and state institutions continue to erode (Micallef and Reitano 2017, Michael et al 2019).

It must be noted that both the GNA and the LAAF have officially recognized, endorsed, or enrolled traffickers and smugglers. Hence, these actors have penetrated state institutions in both Eastern and Western Libya. . In 2018, a report denounced how “Tripoli’s armed groups are developing into powerful criminal networks that link commanders with politicians, influential businessmen, and the incumbents of key administrative positions” (SAS 2018, 16). An example of smuggler infiltration of migrant management processes is seen in the town of al-Khoms, a center of gravity for human smuggling. Investigations by Global Initiative researchers indicate that a corrupt network operates around the al-Khoms port where migrants are disembarked and released immediately in exchange for money and in collusion with human traffickers and smugglers (for a detailed description of this network, see citation 3.2 in Annex B).

#### **UNDERMINING THE LEGITIMACY OF LOCAL OFFICIALS AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE**

There is also evidence of the destabilizing effect of human trafficking and smuggling on state institutions at the local level. Democratic and participatory local governance rest on popular participation, and on the popular accountability of local elected officials. Human traffickers and smugglers, and other criminal groups, impose a governance system whereby local officials are allegiant to them. Furthermore, criminal organizations corrupt or take over justice and security organizations in order to protect their interests, to the detriment of public interest.

The case of Zawya illustrates particularly well how human traffickers and smugglers distort local governance by disempowering local security and municipal officials. Local politics, economy, and security are largely dominated by the Awlad Buhmeira network, which is involved in fuel and human smuggling, among other activities. Allegedly, this criminal network is headed by Ali Busriba, nominally Professor at Zawya University and member of the House of Representatives. During the 2011 revolution, Ali Busriba joined the revolutionaries as a tank driver. He created the Nasr militia and appointed Mohamed Kashlaf as its commander. Kashlaf allows Busriba to profit from lucrative criminal activities and to control security from behind the scenes, while pursuing his political ambitions undisturbed (for more, see citation 3.4, Annex B).

## GARABULLI

The collusion of powerful militias with human traffickers and smugglers also contributes to insecurity and weak governance in Garabulli. Garabulli is a small town 60 km east of Tripoli whose history as a human-smuggling hub stretches from before 2011 to the present. The town was protected by the Bayou Battalion, a Misrati militia that dominated the town and effectively controlled local governance. In addition to supporting local human traffickers and smugglers, local inhabitants lamented that members of the Bayou Battalion harassed residents.

Importantly, Garabulli's local municipal and law enforcement authorities were unable to counteract the intrusion and the dominance of the Bayou Battalion in the first place. Garabulli and the surrounding area has long been attractive for people smugglers precisely because of its weak governance and rugged terrain, which is difficult to police. The area offers embarkation points that are isolated, mountainous and rugged, which makes it difficult for law enforcement to access. Garabulli is also equidistant between bigger neighboring towns, sitting at the intersection of the areas that they control. The Garabulli case provides an example of how human trafficking and smuggling may result from weak governance while simultaneously causing weak governance

## KUFRA

The growth in strength of armed groups involved in human trafficking and smuggling similarly affected local governance in Kufra, and corrupted security and defense forces. Kufra is a small town in the southeast of Libya, with a population of about 65,000, two-thirds of whom belong to the Arab Zway tribe, and one-third to the Tubu tribe. The Kufra Military Zone is commanded by Belqasim al-Abaaj, a Zway from Kufra who headed the local branch of Libya's Military Intelligence for two decades under Gadhafi. Given the large authority granted to the military governor appointed by the LAAF, there is limited room for participatory governance. Furthermore, the fact that both Kufra's security and defense forces, and the municipal council are dominated by members of the Zway tribe casts serious doubts on their ability and willingness to govern and police the Kufra region impartially. But did al-Abaaj fulfil the main mandate he was given, to curb smuggling and criminality in Kufra?

Belqasim al-Abaaj and the LAAF heavily rely on the Subul al-Salam militia, which is an armed group formed of Zway fighters that became the largest military actor in southeast Libya thanks to the strong support it received from the LAAF. The militia is deeply intertwined with the Zway-controlled Kufra Municipality. The Subul al-Salam accumulated wealth through its direct participation in, and control over human trafficking and smuggling. This control enables the group to play a central role in local governance, distorting the social contract between citizens and local officials. A local contact explained how Subul al-Salam funded the municipal council (see citation 3.6 in Annex B). However, trafficking and smuggling activities have been present for decades, if not centuries. Whether their presence has destabilizing or stabilizing effects, therefore, depends on factors that are exogenous to the illicit trade itself, and have to do with the level of social integration and cooperation. To be sure, when social tensions exist among communities such as in Kufra, human trafficking and smuggling exacerbate conflicts over the control of power.

## CORRUPTION AND THE SHRINKING SPACE FOR A LICIT ECONOMY

Human trafficking and smuggling constitute large sources of income in Libya, at a time when Libyans are confronted with protracted economic hardship. Once well organized and powerful, organized criminal networks branch out from their businesses to control all lucrative economic activities through corruption or direct threats. Ultimately, the growth of the illicit economy cripples the already small



private sector, and it hampers the development of an open and competitive market economy. Smugglers use their position of strength to rig public tenders and to drive out competitors.

Human traffickers and smugglers utilize migrants as cash machines, charging them along their route to Europe. However, following the 2017 dramatic drop in arrivals and departures to and from Libya, traffickers and smugglers had to diversify their business. Given strong international pressures to crack down on migration and the emergence of new economic opportunities provided by foreign entities (notably Italy and the European Union) willing to support counter-migration units, several armed groups turned their coats and re-branded as migration-fighting units. These newly state-endorsed and foreign-funded armed groups profit from the “illegal migrants’ circular economy” in a number of ways:

- Salaries they receive as detention center (DC) guards or simply as members of state security units
- Extorting money from detained migrants in exchange for food or freedom
- Exploiting forced labor, renting migrants’ services (typically for cleaning or construction) to local companies
- Embezzling state funds allocated for providing food to detained migrants
- Embezzling funds allocated to the refurbishment of detention facilities

State actors collude with human smugglers and traffickers to keep migrants in Libya, thereby developing a criminal carousel that links traffickers, the Libyan Coast Guard, and detention center guards. This carousel allows to exploit migrants along all the steps of their migration journey. Migrants embark in boats after paying hefty sums, the Libyan Coast Guard intercepts most of them and brings them back to detention centers or allegedly sells them to other actors. Migrants are extorted or exploited through forced labor until they are able to pay for their release. Those who attempt another departure are typically re-intercepted at sea, and they re-enter this criminal carousel again, fueling a circular economy that does not waste any opportunity to extract financial benefits at every step. Figure 1 in Annex B provides a visual sketch that approximates the carousel just described. However, it does not clearly convey the fact that migrants can be trafficked through multiple cycles of extortion and detention, through criminal and official networks, the boundaries of which are often blurred. The official endorsement of criminal groups involved in human trafficking and smuggling under the auspices of and with the financial support of Italy and the EU effectively institutionalized corrupt and criminal practices, further weakening Libya’s stability and economy. A 2017 report aptly summarizes this phenomenon: “The hyper focus on stemming the flow of migrants via Libya by Italy and the European Union (EU), is encouraging an anti-smuggling business to emerge. Militia leaders, sensing an imminent end to the political status quo, are attempting to launder their reputations by accepting incentives to serve as law enforcement partners of international donors. This co-option creates instability, sabotages the state-building process and further drives the exploitation and abuse of migrants in the country” (Micallef and Reitano 2017). The case study of Zawya vividly shows institutionalization of organized crime around construction and other formal sectors (see Zawya example 3.7 Annex).

## **DISRUPTED CIRCULAR MIGRATION PATTERNS SUPPORTING REGIONAL ECONOMIES**

Unlike the prevalent perception outside of Libya, the country has been a destination before and besides being a country of transit for migrants. This is explained by the better economic conditions that existed in Libya compared to other African countries until 2011. National economic data indicate that Libya always had a much higher GDP per capita compared to its North African neighbors, and the difference is even greater compared to sub-Saharan countries (see Table 1, Annex B). Until 2011, Libya also had the

most favorable indicator in the region of poverty and economic decline. Lastly, Libya has low population density compared to other North African countries (see Table 1, Annex B). These conditions make Libya attractive to African migrants (see 2014 labor market research, citation 3.12, Annex B). Libya's economy heavily relied on migrants, and the economies of several African countries significantly benefited from the remittances sent by their citizens working in Libya. In 2011, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that 2.5 million migrant workers lived in Libya prior to the 2011 revolution, including 1 million Egyptians (IOM 2011, 2). Before the 2011 revolution, studies on migrants in Libya show that most of them were able to send large portions of their earnings to their country of origin (Zampagni et al. 2017, 24-29). Inevitably, this situation changed with the 2011 revolution, and even more with the two national conflicts (2014-2016 and 2019-present) and the number of ongoing local conflicts across the country.

According to the Danish Refugee Council survey of 5,000 migrants in Libya between May 2017 and June 2019, almost 40% of migrants reported in summer 2017 that they intended to stay in Libya, while only 13% sought to reach Europe, and nearly 50% were undecided. Just two years later, 19% said that Libya was their final destination, while 27% were undecided (Mixed Migration Centre 2019, 13). The profile of migrants changed as the conflict intensified. Yet, changes in the smugglers' business model changed the migrant profile, with notable consequences for the Libyan economy. As the dramatic 2017 drop of departures to Europe forced human traffickers to resort to extortion to offset loss of income, indentured labor increased. "...Migrants and asylum seekers became vehicles for reverse-remittance through kidnappings and arbitrary detention by criminals and armed groups" (Micallef 2017, 1). Nowadays, the current scale of this phenomenon is so large that it can be conceived as industrialized extortion. Some observers estimate that in Bani Walid alone, there are between 12 and 15 such migrant detention facilities, each hosting from a few hundred to a few thousand migrants (Former International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) worker, author interview, November 2019).

The first consequence of the increased violence, both in scale and severity, is borne by the migrants themselves who are systematically brutalized. Families of migrants, instead of receiving money, have to pay to keep their family members alive. For years, remittances from African migrants in Libya were strongly supporting economies in countries such as Niger, Chad, Sudan, and Eritrea, while now families in some of these countries are borrowing money to ensure the release of their relatives in Libya.

As a result of poor governance and security, human traffickers and smugglers are able to run criminal detention centers in places like Bani Walid, where migrants are reportedly beaten, tortured, and raped, and are victims of extortion. As a result, circular migrants increasingly stay away from Bani Walid. Skilled workers have become rare, and migrant wages have increased in the city (El Kamouni-Janssen et al. 2019). Similar phenomena and outcomes are evident in Zawiya and Ghat, and as such, Libyans are paying the price for the drop in migrant numbers and the changed nature of migrant profiles.

## **4. DESTABILIZING IMPACTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON PEACE AND SECURITY**

Relevant to the relationship between human trafficking and stability is the extent to which human trafficking and smuggling contribute to conflict, terrorism, and insecurity and how they do so.

### **MIGRANTS AS SOURCES OF CHEAP AND AVAILABLE MANPOWER FOR CONFLICT**

The large presence of young men, some of whom were forcibly recruited fighters, provides Libyan armed groups with a large pool of human resources that they can use to support their war efforts. This support can be the direct enrollment of migrants in Libyan armed groups and their participation in

fighting, or indirect, by loading, transporting, and unloading weapons and ammunition, washing and maintaining weapons, and cleaning and maintaining tanks and armed pick-up trucks (aka “technical”). Typically, the migrants who are most often recruited by Libyan armed groups as either fighters or as logistical support are those coming from Chad, Sudan, and Niger because they usually speak Arabic, which facilitates training and communication, and because many of them were former fighters. Moreover, these migrants are cheaper to employ than Libyan nationals and their family members are unlikely to demand compensation for their deaths.

### INDIRECT SUPPORT

Since 2018, an increasing number of reports have denounced the forcible use of migrants to support fighting in Libya. Time and again, detained migrants are used in an indirect manner to move weapons and ammunition, and/or to maintain military equipment (UNSMIL-OHCHR. 2018; HRW, Jan 2019; HRW, April 2019; and HRW, July 2019). Since mid-2019, this trend has intensified, with migrants regularly reporting that detention centers (DCs) are being used as weapons and ammunition depots with the forced support of migrants (migrants in Tripoli DCs, multiple author interviews, 2019-2020). A researcher who carried out numerous interviews of migrants in Libya in late 2019 reported how forces affiliated to the LAAF recruited migrants in the Gharyan DC (citation 4.1, Annex B). In an interview with the Saudi-owned news outlet Asharq Al-Awsat, Qureisia, the former media official for the anti-ISIS room in Sabratha also indicated how militias exploit migrants (citation 4.2, Annex B). In the same article, a military leader in the Libyan Arab Armed Forces told Asharq Al-Awsat about migrants being sold for labor at slave markets (citation 4.3, Annex B).

Besides statements reported in the news, which are often questionable or one-sided, it is difficult to gather reliable and unequivocal evidence of systematic forcible recruitment of migrants to support war efforts. Nonetheless, several migrants interviewed by GI researchers in Libya and in Malta in 2019 reported several instances of forcible recruitment to support the conflict. A 22-year old Sudanese migrant from Darfur who was held in a detention center at the Salah al-Din DC between May and July 2019 reported that in July 2019 armed men associated with the GNA took about 50 of the 102 detained male migrants from the detention center and forced them to join the war effort. According to one of the migrants, none of them got paid for their services (citation 4.4, Annex B).

A Nigerian migrant interviewed in November 2019 said that migrants were being recruited to support militias at a place called Muhata (which means "station" in Arabic) in the coastal town of Zuwara. Some migrants were promised a daily salary of up to Libyan Dinar (LYD) 500 – well above the average salary for Libyan soldiers. However, the interviewee doubted that this salary would actually be paid out in the end (citation 4.5, Annex B).

### DIRECT SUPPORT

The direct use of foreign fighters in Libya has long been documented (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2018). More recently, research reported the presence of human smugglers among the LAAF's forces attacking Tripoli (Khalil 2019, 2). In the Tajoura DC in Eastern Tripoli, a journalist who interviewed dozens of detained migrants reported at least four directly confirmed cases of refugees registered with UNHCR who had supported the locally-based armed groups (Al-Daman Brigade), one of whom even participated in fighting in return for money, clothes, food, and better living conditions in the DC. In addition, more than a dozen detained migrants from Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia were forced to load weapons in a garage next to the hangar where they were detained and were asked to follow the soldiers outside the detention center to transport weapons (foreign journalist, author interview, April 2019).

Research conducted throughout 2019 by Global Initiative into Sub-Saharan African mercenaries participating in the Libyan conflict revealed that Mahamid Arabs joining militias in Southern Libya are at the center of this phenomenon. Mahamid Arabs stem from Chad, Western Sudan and Eastern Niger. Their recruitment as mercenaries is a transnational trade, connecting Chadian and Sudanese fighters with theatres in Libya, as well as Yemen, where they are recruited by Saudi brokers to fight the Houthis. In addition to the characteristics that make them preferable recruits along with other non-Mahamid Arab Sudanese and Nigeriens, Mahamid Arabs are sought after because their physical traits resemble many Libyans and Yemenis, which means their employment is visually less obvious. Poor communities are targeted where work as mercenaries can offer much needed money: a local contact asserted that these young recruits are paid both an initial down payment of LYD 2000–3000 as well as a monthly salary of LYD 500 (multiple GI interviews in Chad and Libya, 2019).

## **FUELING LOCAL CONFLICT AND DAMPENING PEACE PROSPECTS**

The 2011 revolution allowed ethnic or tribal groups to question the age-old distribution of power and geographical spheres of influence as described in the introductory section on Libya's illicit economy. More specifically, the liberalization of trafficking following Gadhafi's fall allowed several new actors to enter the market of human trafficking and smuggling. The large income suddenly generated by these and other highly profitable illicit activities caused rapid changes in the distribution of power and wealth among tribes, ethnic groups, or towns. During these times marked by economic hardship and lawlessness, these changes often led to intra- and inter-communal conflicts. In fact, many local conflicts in Libya since 2011 can be attributed at least in part to these dynamics.

### **KUFRA**

The Tebu are a semi-nomadic black African group that is present in several countries across the Sahara, notably in southern Libya, Chad, and Niger. The Zway is an ethnically Arab tribe whose members live in Eastern Libya, mostly in Kufra and in Ajdabya. As mentioned in a previous section, the Zway make up around two-thirds of the population of Kufra. The town is largely isolated from the rest of the country, sitting deep in the Southeast of Libya, near the borders of Egypt, Sudan, and Chad. Smuggling is deeply rooted as a source of livelihood and a way of life in Kufra (see citation 4.11, Annex B).

The control over smuggling routes, including of people, are of fundamental importance to the power of the different groups in Kufra, both economically and due to the political leverage that comes from the control of borders and roads (citation 4.12, Annex B). The Zway had been given the upper hand by the Qaddafi regime, favored over the Tebu and allowed a great deal of control over the illicit economy of greater Kufra. The Tebu, on the other hand, retained an edge largely on the basis of their knowledge of the desert and kin connections across the Sahara into Sudan, Chad and Niger. After the revolution, Tebu smugglers started using their new position of strength to try to elbow out Zway competitors on the routes leading north from Kufra, and cut them out completely south of the town. These tensions erupted in 2012, and continued with varying intensities through 2016, leaving a major impact on migratory flows in the region. After 2016, the Zway seized control of Kufra itself and the road leading north from the town. They also gradually squeezed Tebu smugglers from smuggling routes linking north Darfur and northeast Chad to southeast Libya (citation 4.13, Annex B). Lastly, in August 2019, a contact in Kufra described how the control of human trafficking and smuggling by Subul al-Salam, and more broadly by the LAAF, is resulting in discriminatory law enforcement based on tribal identity: "Today only certain smuggler gangs operate. [Since mid-2018] Subul Al-Salam has banned Tebu from smuggling from Sudan to Kufra" (Kufra Tebu contact, GI interview, Aug 2019).

In conclusion, the conflict between Zway and Tebu has historical roots that developed during the Gadhafi regime. In addition, the influx of foreign Tebu from Chad and Niger after 2011, which altered

local demographics, is a large source of tension between them and the Zway (as with other Arab tribes and groups of southern Libya). Competition for the important sources of income and influence granted by human trafficking and smuggling is a large driving factor in the war that broke out in 2011 between the two groups, and in subsequent clashes. As the UN Panel of Experts reported: “[In Kufra] local authorities complained that “irregular migration” fueled chaos in Libya, spurring competition among armed groups over the “easy money” generated through the protection offered to the smugglers’ convoys.” (UNSC/S 812, 2018, 15).

## **MEDIATION AND PEACE**

Connections between human smugglers and Libyan fighting groups can also have a negative impact on the prospects of mediation and peace. The income generated by the smuggling of migrants to fight as mercenaries within the ranks of Libyan armed groups creates a strong incentive for the continuation of fighting. Thus, human traffickers and smugglers have a vested interest in the continuation of the national confrontation as long as it generates an income for them. Moreover, a protracted conflict offers better guarantees for the preservation of human trafficking and smuggling activities and income than a peace deal or even a victory of one of the two coalitions.

## **UNDERMINING COMMUNITY COHESION AND SOCIAL STABILITY**

Human trafficking and smuggling are highly lucrative activities that often disrupt social stability by quickly empowering low-skilled youth and criminals who no longer respect laws and social norms. Typically, successful new traffickers are young men who are willing to break the law and to use violence. Once empowered and enriched, these young men can adopt highly destabilizing behaviors for their own family, tribe or ethnic group, and town. The Tebu-dominated town of Um Al-Aranib, for example, emerged as a major smuggling and human trafficking hub after 2011, in a process that attracted people from all over Africa, including Tebu groups from Chad. As a consequence the town spiraled into instability. Members of the local community rented out housing units to the Tebu and others from across southern Libya and the Sahel, and the area (called the Chinese Company Buildings) devolved into a notorious base for human smugglers and bandits who formed gangs and began to affect Southwest Libya. Human trafficking and smuggling activities flourished, along with kidnapping and other criminal activities. Residents of the Fezzan – Libya’s Southern region, as well as opportunistic leaders in the north, blamed the local Tebu collectively for the disintegration and destabilization of their community.

## **FACILITATING AND SUSTAINING TERRORIST GROUPS**

Although its membership size in July 2019 was reported in the low hundreds – a marked drop compared to the preceding years – ISIL remains present and active in Libya. In addition to ISIL, there are an estimated 100-200 fighters affiliated to Al-Qaida in Libya, reportedly centered around the small town of Awbari in the Southwest (UNSC/S 570, 2019, 9). The conflict between LAAF and GNA creates favorable conditions for the re-emergence of these terrorist groups because Libyan security and defense forces are absorbed by the conflict. Moreover, fighting produces death, destruction, and disenfranchisement that are a fertile ground for the development of violent extremism. Also, foreign patrons, whose aims may be frustrated through conventional warfare could see an interest in funding terrorist groups to wage an asymmetric fight against their opponent, as observed in Syria. In addition to these factors, violent extremist groups are aided by the well-developed human trafficking and smuggling activities, as noted by the UN Security Council (citation 4.21, Annex B). The same mechanisms were pointed out in a more recent article (citation 4.22, Annex B).

It is clear that traffickers and smugglers can provide useful services and goods to terrorists who are willing to pay, as documented by the UN Security Council in relation to an incident in Algeria (citation

4.23, Annex B). It is fair to imagine that foreign terrorist fighters wanting to go to Libya also benefit from the same support from criminal networks. In fact, in 2016, the United Nations Security Council had reported on deals between ISIL and Libyan armed groups in Kufra (citation 4.24, Annex B). The presence of terrorist groups and their links with human traffickers and smugglers are not limited to the south of Libya. A database tracking ISIL-related incidents (i.e. attacks, checkpoints, kidnappings) in Libya between 1 March 2018 - 31 March 2019 shows that they are almost evenly spread between all three regions of Libya (Trauthig, 2019, 9). For instance, in the coastal town of Zawya that we already cited multiple times, the UN Sanctions Committee denounced links between the al-Dabbashi clan - a group of inter-related people headed by the al-Dabbashi family and belonging to the Awlad Abu Humaira tribe - and ISIL (citation 4.25, Annex B). Furthermore, a 2017 article reported an alleged collusion between the Dabbashi clan and ISIL members (citation 4.26, Annex B).

Human trafficking and smuggling can also help ISIL fighters to reach Europe. The defense attaché to Libya of a European country asserted without a doubt that known terrorists had made it to Europe by embarking on boats along with migrants, although the numbers are extremely low (defense attaché, author interview, Aug 2019; and Mullins, 2019). Research that examined previous terror attacks in Europe (i.e. Berlin 2016; Manchester 2017) concluded that terrorists had exploited migration paths between Libya and Europe (Trauthig, 2019, 12).

Lastly, terrorist groups can also benefit from the abundance of desperate migrants, which makes it easier to find willing or forced recruits (for an analysis of jihadist foreign fighters in Libya see Zelin, 2018). A migrant interviewed in Tripoli that we will call Isaak recounted his experience in the hands of the Islamic State. In 2015 he was detained by human smugglers in Shwarif along with dozens of migrants. ISIS raided the camp and brought them near Sirte, where they had set up a camp in the desert. They asked each migrant to state his or her religion, and they killed those who were Christian. Having grown up with Muslims, Isaak was able to recite Qu'ran verses and convince the terrorist that he was Muslim. The terrorists forced several migrants to fight alongside them, choosing Sudanese and Somalis in particular, because they were Muslims and spoke Arabic fluently (migrant in Tripoli, author interview, Feb 2019). Although our researchers were not able to validate these claims, a 2019 Europol report asserted that ISIL had been recruiting migrants in Libya (citation 4.27, Annex B). However, in order to exploit migrants and draw fighters, it seems that terrorist groups must first assert their control over a territory over time. Since the defeat of ISIL in Sirte, local contacts and researchers have not reported incidents of terrorist groups directly exploiting or recruiting migrants, although this topic is particularly difficult to investigate.

### **DEGRADING LIBYAN ARAB - BLACK LIBYAN RELATIONS AND FUELING RACISM**

Human trafficking and smuggling also appear to be a driver of racism towards black Africans in Libya. Such intolerance contributes to the erosion of inter-ethnic relations between Libyans who consider themselves Arabs and those who consider themselves black (notably the Tebu). According to numerous interviews with migrants, it appears that kidnapping, torture for ransom and slave labor are primarily directed at black migrants. A Nigerian migrant who barely escaped death during his journey through Libya in 2019 reported: "In Sabha, every black man is a target. We black [sic] in Libya — we're money to Arabs. The minute they get us, they can sell us" (Mark, 2018). Based on migrant accounts, Arab migrants such as Syrians, Palestinians, and Egyptians are less likely to be exposed to abuse than black Africans, and this is probably linked to racism.

To be clear, racism was already quite prevalent in Libyan society before the 2011 revolution. A 2006 report noted at that point in time that racism was already exacerbated by the illegal status in which migrants inevitably found themselves in Libya due to the legal system that made it virtually impossible for

migrants in Libya to obtain a legal status (citation 4.28 and 4.29, Annex B). As attitudes of racism can be elusive, dynamics are difficult to investigate; thus, it is difficult to establish a link between racism and human trafficking. However, Table 2 in Annex B presents findings of nation-wide surveys conducted in North Africa between 2013 and 2014. Results on questions gauging tolerance towards foreigners are quite telling. The largest differences between Libyans and their North African neighbors is in regards to attitudes towards migrants and towards people of other races in general, which are much more negative among Libyans.

Previous levels of racism notwithstanding, interviews with migrants, Libyans, INGO workers, and researchers over the last two years suggest that racism appears to be increasing among Libyans, particularly towards black Africans (multiple Libyan, migrants, and foreign researchers and INGO workers, author interviews, 2017-2020). A Libya researcher and former INGO worker who has regularly interviewed migrants over the last few years recalls how black African migrants are called by fellow migrants and Libyans alike (citation 4.30, Annex B).

During a visit to DCs in Tripoli, the author observed a different attitude of DC authorities towards black Africans compared to other migrants. In one DC (i.e. Al Sabaa DC), black Africans were detained separately from other migrants. They were crammed up in a “special” detention section with much poorer hygiene conditions and with much lower access to IOM doctors who visited the DC on a weekly basis (Al Sabaa DC, author visit, Feb 2019). Unlike their fellow DC inmates, these migrants were never allowed to come out in the courtyard. As a result, their health and mental conditions were notably worse.

EU and EU member states’ (notably Italy’s) policy to contain migration and the demonization of migrants in many European countries have promoted the idea that migrants are dangerous and a threat to be contained. Moreover, the primacy of national “security” and the containment of migration associated with it trumps the imperatives to help vulnerable human beings and protect their rights. It also promotes moral relativism and the division of human beings into two distinct categories: nationals who must be protected at all costs, and other migrants whose plight is secondary to the safety, security, and economic well-being of the former. These attitudes and behaviors may have spread to Libya, contributing to degrade the perception of migrants in the eyes of authorities..

In addition to the negative impact on migrants themselves, increased racism in Libya can also degrade the relationship between non-black and black Libyans, particularly affecting the Libyan Tebu population, and to some extent other non-Arab minorities (such as Touareg, Ahali, and people from the town of Tawergha). These intolerant and derogatory attitudes can contribute to the degrading of inter-ethnic relations among Libyans themselves. Two mechanisms that can explain the spread of racist attitudes towards migrants to black Libyans are conflation and mimetism. Non-black Libyans could conflate black Libyans and African migrants, adopting derogatory attitudes towards both. Another mechanism is simply mimetism, that is replicating attitudes and behaviors observed in others. In this case, the demonization of migrants by European countries, and the increasingly violent attitudes and inhuman treatment that human traffickers and smugglers reserve to migrants provide very negative examples.

One indication of this trend is the increased use of derogatory statements made by Libyan Arabs in Sebha against Tebu. These appeared on social media during the 2018 conflict between the Arab tribe Awlad Suleiman and the Tebu. Racist attitudes towards black Africans and black Libyans have also been fueled by Haftar public calls for “foreign mercenaries” and Africans writ large to “immediately leave Libyan territory and return to their countries,” as well as the demonization of African foreigners present in Libya (Middle East Monitor, 2018).

## 5. STABILIZING IMPACTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING

Notwithstanding the many ways in which human trafficking and smuggling destabilize Libya, there are also ways in which they have a stabilizing effect on the local economy and on conflict. These stabilizing mechanisms are particularly important in a country whose local economy is severely depressed in most of the territory, and in which the weakness of state authorities cannot guarantee security and justice. In a country marked by lawlessness and insecurity, any mechanism that can prevent or help resolve conflict, even if it results from criminal activities, should probably be preserved until better ones are established.

### SUPPORTING LOCAL ECONOMIES

Ninety-five percent of Libya is composed of semi-arid territory, most of which is poorly connected to the rest of the country and to the rest of Africa. Apart from the major coastal towns where most Libyans live (Table 3 Annex B), Libyans are split into small communities far from each other and survive on very limited economic activities. The population density in Libya, less than four inhabitants per square kilometer, provides an unequivocal indication of Libya's demo-geography. Although reliable figures are not available, 2012 estimates from the World Bank indicated that half of young Libyans were unemployed – a much higher figure than in other North African countries where youth unemployment is already very high. The current level of youth unemployment in Libya is probably much worse. Lastly, Libya's bureaucracy constitutes a potent obstacle to the development of the private sector. The key global indicator used to measure a country's bureaucratic obstacles to business is the time required to start a business. In Libya, the World Bank estimated that in 2012, a new business would need 35 business days to complete all necessary procedures, more than three times the average among North African countries (see Table 3 in Annex B).

The most economically depressed areas in Libya are small towns far from the coast, whose inhabitants feel neglected by the state. Many of these areas are precisely those through which human trafficking and smuggling networks operate (i.e. Bani Walid; Zillah; Shwarif; Brak al Shati; Ghadames; Sebha; Obari; Murzuq; Qatrun; Um el Aranib; Rebiana; Tazirbu; Jaghub and others). In these localities, human trafficking and smuggling offer a rare source of livelihood for the youth, who are largely unemployed, and they are also practices that has deep roots in the history of transnational trade routes on which these communities have survived for millennia, and which they regard as acceptable traditional sources of livelihood. Lastly, many of these isolated areas are also those where violent extremist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIL seek refuge and try to recruit members. Thus, in these economically depressed areas, human traffickers and smugglers offer young men an opportunity to make a living and to belong to a group, which may prevent them from enrolling in terrorist armed groups, or from fueling conflicts (Molenar et al. 2017; Tuniana et al. 2018; and Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2018).

After 2011, Niger-Libya cross-border smuggling opened widely to small players. After 2015, however, the EU cracked down on human trafficking and smuggling, thereby cutting off many of these young players from smuggling activities and destabilizing the local economy (see citation 5.1, Annex B). According to one perspective, in the case of Niger, it seemed that it was smuggling that prevented youth from turning to terrorism, while anti-smuggling policies pushed youth to join terrorist groups (Tubiana, Author interview, Oct 2019). This offers lessons for Libya, whose economy heavily relies on migrants. Human smugglers provide the organizational infrastructure through which migrants enter and leave Libya. Migrant workers are important for business, as supported by a World Bank 2015 enterprise survey. Some Libyan economic sectors rely on migrants (citation 5.3, Annex B). Human smugglers, moreover, offer an opportunity for young Libyans to migrate abroad in search of a better future, at a



time when Libya offers few promising economic prospects. Not surprisingly, since 2011, Libyans are increasingly present among migrants crossing the Mediterranean.

## **REGULATING ETHNO-TRIBAL GROUP INTERACTIONS**

Once well established and coordinated among local groups, human trafficking and smuggling can have a stabilizing effect on local peace and security. In fact, the communities involved in these illicit activities have an interest in carrying them out in a peaceful and orderly fashion to maximize benefits and minimize costs. If they fought each other, they would both create uncertainty about their future earnings, and jeopardize current ones. This is particularly visible in southern Libya, where tribes and ethnic groups who fought each other cooperate for the good functioning of an enterprise in which they each play a necessary but not sufficient role. These dynamics can be observed in the relationship between the communities of Sebratha, Mutrud, and Zawya, between Tebu, Goran, Magarha, and Zaghawa tribes, between Touareg and Tebu in southwestern Libya, and between Magarha and Awlad Suleiman tribes in Sebha. Focusing on illicit activities along the coastal area between Zawya and Sebratha, a researcher explained how militias that are involved in human trafficking and smuggling are drawn into partnership (citation 5.4, Annex B). Conflict between Sebratha and Zawya re-emerged in the following years due to a variety of reasons, which indicates that the stabilizing effect of joint human trafficking and smuggling activities depends on other factors. Similarly in southern Libya, an inhabitant of Kufra explained that armed groups involved in the traffic of migrants avoid fighting each other (citation 5.5, Annex B). One of the reasons that the relationship between Tebu and Touareg had remained peaceful for over a century until their historical peace accord broke down in August 2014 is the cooperation between these two groups in the management of cross-border migration flows, as highlighted by researchers of the Sahel area (citation 5.6, Annex B).

The relationship between the Arab Magarha tribe and the Tebu ethnic group also provides a clear example of the mechanism whereby cooperation on human trafficking and smuggling stabilizes inter-communal relations. The Magarha tribe dominates the desert area stretching from Shwayrif (400 km South of Tripoli) southwards to Brak al-Shati (300 km further south). Movements from the Libyan Desert to the coast of Tripolitania in the West, cross this area. The control over this territory has given the Magarha an important and deeply rooted role in trans-Saharan smuggling networks, including human trafficking and smuggling. A result is the development of strong commercial relations between the Magarha tribe and Tebu communities, who largely control smuggling in the south of the Fezzan. The ties between these two important communities were used to mediate, and in part avoid conflict during the campaign by the LAAF to extend its grip over the Fezzan in February and March 2019. The LAAF encountered stiff resistance that led to open fighting, in part, because it relied on the 116 Brigade that is controlled and managed by Awlad Suleiman with whom the Tebu do not cooperate in human trafficking and smuggling activities. By contrast, when the LAAF relied on the 12th Infantry Brigade, which is dominated by the Magarha tribe and commanded by Mohammed Bin Nayl, they had far more success and fighting was largely avoided.

Thus, human trafficking and smuggling can either aggravate or prevent inter-tribal or ethnic conflict. The type of impact that these illicit activities – and others – can have on security and stability appears to be linked to how well-organized these activities are, and how much each community (i.e. tribe or ethnic group) respects agreements. The interference of other actors, such as foreign armed groups can disrupt peaceful relations between local tribes and ethnic groups, providing exogenous incentives to break agreements and compromise the status quo.

## 6. COMBATTING THE DESTABILIZING EFFECTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING: EXISTING INTERVENTIONS, GAPS AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A sizable portion of the international development and humanitarian support provided to Libya is directed towards migration-related issues. However, very little is done to tackle the businesses of human trafficking and smuggling. To be fair, it is unrealistic to try and curb the business of smuggling for several reasons. Firstly, Libyan state institutions are *de facto* captured by armed groups as explained throughout the report, largely because of the large amount of income that human trafficking and smuggling and other illicit activities generate. Secondly, important segments of Libyan society rely on human trafficking and smuggling, without which many local economies would struggle or collapse. Thirdly, Libya's judicial authority is at a standstill, and national security institutions are either incapable of cracking down on criminal networks, or they are absorbed by the protracted national conflict. Fourthly, Libyans and international actors alike (notably the EU, Italy, and France) are conflating human trafficking with human smuggling, and with migration writ large, often for reasons of political expediency (GI, 2018, 14).<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, counter-trafficking measures end up combating migration rather than combating its criminal exploitation. Lastly, the demonization of migrants, largely manufactured by some European leaders and *de facto* embodied by a European agenda on migration, has permeated Libyan society, fueling and merging with already deep and widespread racism as described above.

In addition to strengthening the capacity of Libyan institutions that contrast human trafficking with supporting vulnerable migrants, international actors can adopt a number of policies and programs.

### PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Help local authorities distinguish migrant smuggling and trafficking, and focus on the latter.** The US government should support a policy that fights human rights violations without criminalizing migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean. The European Union's narrow focus on preventing migrants from crossing to Europe has sent a wrong message to actors involved in human smuggling and trafficking. It has nudged actors to generate profits through exploitation and extortion. International actors should reward Libyan security actors and promote interventions that target criminals who abuse migrants, setting an example for other security actors to follow.<sup>6</sup>
- **Encourage and support local authorities to provide migrants with work permits.** The inclusion of migrants in the labor market through the issuing of official work permits will protect them from abuses by Libyan authorities. Moreover, it may help contrast and contain the criminal exploitation of foreign labor and can help highlight their positive impact on the Libyan economy.<sup>7</sup> Recent Libya political talks in Berlin included this issue, and the latest discussions between international cooperation and development actors and DCIM indicate that Libyan authorities may have become more open to issuing work permits to foreign workers (UNHCR official, author interview, Mar 2020). Moreover, there are several loopholes in the Libyan local governance law (Law 59/2012) that municipal authorities can use to issue work permits to foreign workers. In fact, several mayors already do. Nonetheless, these stop-gap measures should be coordinated with the Ministry of

<sup>5</sup> As Reitano et al. note: "Identifying a situation as one of trafficking helps to strengthen the legitimacy of responses that may otherwise be politically unpalatable." (GI, 2018, 14)

<sup>6</sup> For instance, in January 2018, a group of criminals kidnapped migrants and sent videos showing them being tortured to their families. These videos quickly circled back to Libya, and a Tripoli militia was able to arrest these criminals and free the migrants. (Moore, 2018)

<sup>7</sup> A 2019 research report explains how developing mechanisms to issue work permits to migrants can produce economic gains, while keeping the host-country government in control of the migration flows (Lokshin and Ravallion 2019).

Labor, and must be accompanied by efforts to amend, streamline, or develop the Libyan legal framework regarding foreign workers.

- **Support the development of an effective subnational migration governance structure.** Support DCIM to develop Libya’s migration management and facilitate coordination between national and subnational DCIM units, and between them and local authorities. Currently, DCIM plays almost no role in migration management in several key migration hubs, such as Bani Walid and most towns in southern Libya.

The following recommendations are consistent with the USAID Libya Program Plan 2018-2020 and their Objective I – To improve the accountability of governance institutions and their alignment with citizen interests, as well as their other two Objectives as described below

- **Adopt targeted economic measures for communities who reside on Libyan migration routes.** USAID should help create alternative income and employment opportunities for youth involved in human trafficking and smuggling, and help respond to immediate needs when they arise. These projects should pursue the short-, medium-, and long-term economic support objectives. Projects should be carried out in parallel, apportioning resources and emphasis among them based on a specific assessment of local needs, opportunities and constraints at a given time and place:
  - a) **Targeted training and support to develop livelihood opportunities.** Involve targeted youth in training on entrepreneurship and income generation strategies in exchange for a modest stipend that covers transportation and some of the opportunity cost of dedicating time to the training rather than to other more lucrative but dangerous activities. These projects should provide small entrepreneurship grants and help create a sustainable enabling environment for youth-led enterprises.
  - b) **Cash-for-work** projects that provide short-term income to local workers (Libyans and migrants) while constructing or rehabilitating key local infrastructure, such as schools and healthcare facilities. These projects must be developed in close partnership and coordination with local authorities (i.e. the municipal council, traditional councils, community leaders, NGOs), ensuring the inclusion of all community groups. To this end, UNDP’s SFL approach can serve as an example.<sup>8</sup> This inclusive, deliberative process helps ensure that projects respond to genuine and common needs, and benefit the entire local community, thereby avoiding fueling inter-communal tensions (i.e. follow conflict-sensitivity principles).
  - c) **Cash assistance** for essential items (e.g. food, water, cooking gas, and transportation) in times of need, using the multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) program created by USAID/OFDA. Overall, there are no structural, protracted humanitarian needs among Libyans. However, conflict and national disasters can create immediate humanitarian needs for short periods. The presence of cash assistance programs that can be rapidly scaled up may help reassure isolated communities along the migration routes and signal that they do not need human trafficking and smuggling as a safety net.

These targeted economic measures respond to the second objective of increasing opportunities for licit economic growth and participation laid out in the USAID Libya Program Plan. UNDP has also been carrying out the first and second type of projects in 20 Libyan municipalities along migration routes

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<sup>8</sup> Notably the Social Peace Assessments and the Consultative Workshops.

through the “Strengthening Local Capacities for Resilience and Recovery” (R&R),<sup>9</sup> and in part through the “Stabilization Facility for Libya” (SFL)<sup>10</sup> programs. However, these programs do not target youth actively or potentially involved in human trafficking and smuggling. On a smaller scale, IOM’s community stabilization program also carries out similar activities in the municipalities of Sabha and Al Qatrun. IOM activities include the restoration of basic infrastructure and essential services, support to livelihood opportunities, civil society capacity building, socio-cultural activities, and support to local governance. The Office of Transition Initiative’s Libya program (LTI) also carries out some of the above-mentioned activities to improve stability in strategic areas, increase citizens’ confidence in public institutions, and reduce the influence of extremist groups in strategic areas. One of LTI’s strengths is its ongoing action research and monitoring capacity, which can serve as an example for the research recommendation below.

- **Develop a specific research and monitoring capacity focused on human trafficking and smuggling.** Given the constantly changing landscape on the ground in Libya, international donors should continue to support the systematic generation of granular, context-specific information and analysis on human trafficking and smuggling. Currently, most of the information focuses on migration flows, and human trafficking and smuggling dynamics. More information and analysis should be produced on the interplay between organized crime and governance and stability in Libya. Regular research should build on the conceptual framework and analysis offered by this report. Moreover, the most crucial element in the type of projects highlighted above is the selection of beneficiaries. These projects can only be effective if they target youth who are actively involved in human trafficking and smuggling or who are likely to engage in these activities in the future. Identification of these individuals is difficult and highly context-specific. Hence, it must rely on very strong and accurate localized field research on human trafficking and smuggling and on cooperation from local researchers, informants, and authorities. In addition, human trafficking and smuggling and Libya’s context writ large are very fluid and changing. Thus, programs focusing on these activities must be equipped with very strong in-country monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that can provide *ad hoc* context-specific and timely tailoring and close verification of ongoing activities. The Flexible Research and Analysis Platform (FRAP) adopted under OTI’s LTI3 program constitutes a good example of an action research and monitoring mechanism.
- **Adopt a human rights-based approach.** USAID can explore leveraging its local governance and civil society programs to intervene as follows:
  - (a) **Support civil society organizations that could monitor abuses and raise local awareness of human trafficking and smuggling.** Collaborate with local CSOs to monitor and inform citizens on the prevalence of extortion and exploitation of migrants, focusing primarily on towns along the migration routes (see Map 2, Annex B). Help CSOs inform migrants, citizens, and law enforcement authorities about migrants’ rights and exercise pressure on local security authorities to respect them. Carry out these efforts jointly with local religious leaders, traditional leaders, and local authorities.
  - (b) **Engage local academic institutions and researchers to study the impact of human smuggling and trafficking on their communities.** No information on human trafficking and smuggling can be more granular and timely as that produced locally through the methodological support of international experts. Moreover, the production of information and analysis on

<sup>9</sup> More information on the R&R program is available at <https://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/projects/Strengthening-Local-Capacities-for-Resilience-and-Recovery.html>

<sup>10</sup> More information on the SFL program is available at <https://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/projects/Stabilization-Facility-for-Libya.html>

human trafficking and smuggling by local researchers can greatly help local communities to grasp the impact of these businesses on local governance and peace in their community. Thus, USAID should collaborate with local academic institutions, researchers, and CSOs in the towns along the migration routes to carry out research on local human trafficking and smuggling dynamics.

- (c) **Identify and support local initiatives providing protection to migrants.** A few civil society initiatives have emerged in Libyan towns situated along migration routes to assist migrants. One example is the safe house in Bani Walid, which is a community-run safe place for migrants. These initiatives help take migrants off the streets, thereby providing a counterpoint to human trafficking and crimes against migrants. They also help improve attitudes towards and perceptions of migrants. USAID should identify and support these initiatives, and encourage other communities across the migration route to develop similar ones.

Developing a strong research and monitoring capacity focused on human trafficking and smuggling, and fostering a human rights-based approach with Libyan counterparts (CSOs, academic institutions, authorities) can help USAID achieve its third Libya Program Plan 2018-2020 objective to enhance the ability of communities to address drivers of instability and conflict.

In short, international strategies aimed at combatting human trafficking and smuggling should focus on strengthening Libyan state institutions to protect migrants while safeguarding Libyan institutions. Institutional support should focus on migration management and on the rule of law, through direct assistance and by encouraging and supporting Libyan authorities to combat human rights abuses. In parallel, international actors should help Libyan authorities integrate migrants in the labor market, highlighting their great contribution to Libya's economy. At the programmatic level, international actors should focus on stabilizing Libyan communities, notably through economic development and good governance, while helping to develop alternative livelihood opportunities for human traffickers and smugglers. In order to carry out these programs successfully, international actors must equip themselves with timely and context-specific research and monitoring capacity that focuses specifically on human trafficking and smuggling.

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## **ANNEX A: ASSESSMENT STATEMENT OF WORK**

### **Tasking Request N016: Libya C-TIP/Smuggling/TOC Research**

**Date of Request:** March 25, 2019

#### **Type of Task:**

- Auxiliary Studies

#### **Research Questions:**

- (1) What are the political, economic, social and broader regional factors fueling conflict in Libya?
- (2) To what extent do human trafficking and smuggling contribute to conflictuality in Libya?
- (3) To what extent do human trafficking and smuggling tie to other forms of illicit activity in Libya?
- (4) What do human trafficking and smuggling networks look like – key actors? Involvement of state actors?
- (5) What interventions exist to combat human trafficking and smuggling? Where are the gaps?

We are asking NORC to respond to the research questions with a literature review drawing on information from organizations such as the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

#### **Dates of performance and timeline:**

To be completed by October 1, 2019

#### **Deliverables:**

- Regular calls with USAID's CTIP team
- Draft Literature Review to be reviewed by USAID
- Final Literature Review responding to USAID Feedback
- Present at the October CTIP Evidence Summit

#### **Submission Instructions:**

Please submit a concept note and budget within 2 weeks.

## ANNEX B: CITATIONS, FIGURES, AND TABLES

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

G.1 - In theory, a legal procedure to issue work permits to migrants in Libya does exist. Migrants first have to obtain a work contract, then they ask for a visa. Moreover, according to an IOM labor migration officer (author interview, May 2020), in early 2020 the Libyan Ministry of Labor was negotiating a bilateral agreement with Niger and with other countries to streamline the issuing of permits to these foreign nationals in Libya. In fact, official Libyan authorities declare that legal procedures to issue work permits and visas to migrants still exist and are valid. However, this mechanism no longer seems to be applied. Since 2018, IOM could not provide or recall seeing any evidence that a migrant had obtained official permits. Meanwhile, in Eastern Libya, the Military Investment and Public Works Committee (MIPWC) – a Libyan equivalent of Egypt’s Armed Forces Engineering Authority - facilitated the arrival of foreign workers from Egypt and Bangladesh through Tunisia and Jordan. Each migrant pays \$500 to the MIPWC to obtain the authorization to go to Libya and work. Allegedly, the Bayda-based Thinni government is vehemently opposed to this practice (IOM officer in Libya, author interview, May 2020).

### 3. IMPACTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 - To provide a sense of the income generated by human smuggling activities, in mid-2019, the price for a single place on a rubber boat was approximately LYD2 500 (€440 at the unofficial exchange rate at that time). A local researcher estimated that a boat carrying 100 migrants would create a profit of around LYD175 000–LYD200 000 (€31 000–€35 000) once costs were considered. In a context deeply affected by conflict and economic hardship, it is easy to imagine how criminal groups coopt security forces and corrupt state officials.

3.2 – According to GI researchers, the network of corruption operating around the al-Khoms port comprises:

- The Karawana militia led by Amir Bin Amir (aka Karwana), whose headquarters are near the port;
- Ali Bu Sittin, an experienced criminal who is the linchpin connecting the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG), al-Khoms detention center officials, and the port security;
- “Bolis”, another criminal go-between for the al-Khoms detention center and officials at al-Khoms port.
- Key figures of the Libyan Coast Guard in al-Khoms, including “Sniew”, a powerful Misrati;
- Allegedly Mohamed Burifat, the head of the Investigation and Arrest Unit of the DCIM in al-Khoms

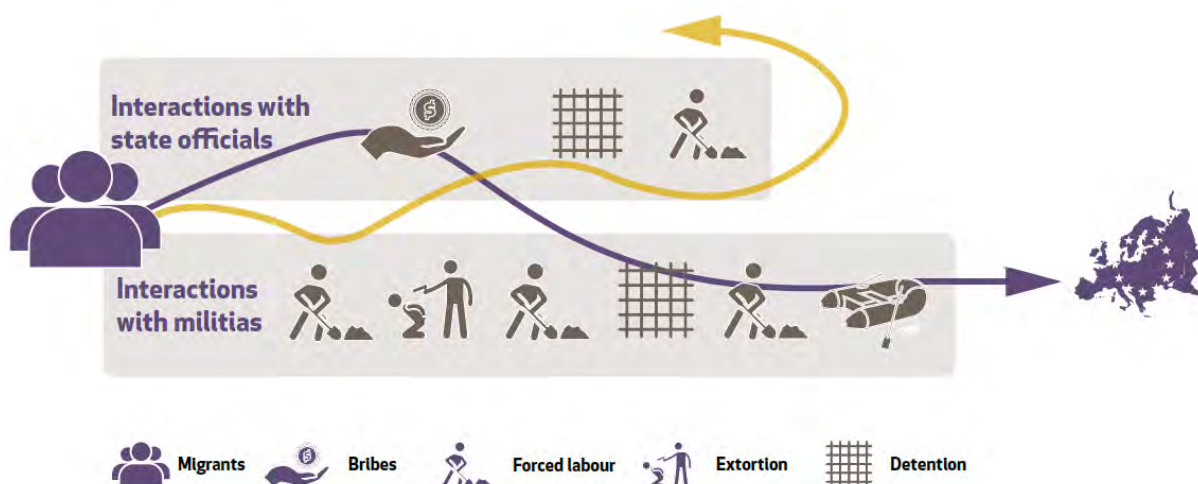
3.3 - *Mohammed Kachlaf is the head of the Shuhada al Nasr brigade in Zawiya, Western Libya. His militia controls the Zawiya refinery, a central hub of migrant smuggling operations. Kachlaf also controls detention centres, including the Nasr detention center – nominally under the control of the DCIM. As documented in various sources, the network of Kachlaf is one of the most dominant in the field of migrant smuggling and the exploitation of migrants in Libya. Kachlaf has extensive links with the head of the local unit of the coast guard of Zawiya, al-Rahman al-Milad, whose unit intercepts boats with migrants, often of rivalling migrant smuggling networks. Migrants are then brought to detention facilities under the control of the Al Nasr militia, where they are reportedly held in critical conditions (UNSC/SC 13371 - LYi.025, 2018).*

3.4 - At first, [the mayor] was honest and hardworking, but when you make allies who are corrupt they corrupt you. Even if you resist they will corrupt you. There is no direct proof, but when he became mayor he gave contracts to Hassan Busriba – the brother of Ali – contracts to clean the city, to rebuild roads. Hassan imported a facility to recycle the rubbish and got an LYD 6 million contract which came to an end in on 4 April. (Zawya informant, GI interview, Oct 2019).

3.5 - At the moment the LNA is unofficially participating in migrant smuggling in the area of Kufra as Subul al-Salam controls the migration routes and some big names in the LNA in Kufra and their sons are well-known to be part of this... (Kufra informant, GI interview, August 2019).

3.6 - The Kufra Municipality has received hardly any funding from the Interim Government. But Subul al-Salam has given it LYD 12 million. When people are in need they forget the morals or principles. The municipality accepted this money and has used it to fund the roads and hospitals, lots of projects. Maybe if the municipality and Kufra Military Zone had a budget and didn't need the money from Subul al-Salam they would have their own ideas about stopping human smuggling and other things like that. (Kufra informant, GI interview, October 2019).

**Figure I: Resource Predation on Migration by Militias and the State**



Source: Global Initiative 2018, 5

3.7 – In Zawya, where the institutionalization of organized crime is particularly developed, the enrichment mechanisms described above are streamlined and systematic. Construction companies come regularly to pick up migrants in detention centers to work for them. They benefit from very low labor cost, detention center guards earn money for it, and migrants may benefit from getting out of detention centers. For example, see allegations made by a migrant detained in Zawya in 2017 reported in citation 3.9, in Annex B.

As explained in a previous section, criminal actors from the Awlad Buhmeira tribe involved in the migration sector (human smuggling and running detention centres) exert political influence and are active in the broader economy, most famously through the control of the Zawya Refinery but also through other lucrative businesses. For instance, members of a powerful network headed by Ali Busriba opened the Nasr Medical Centre in Zawya in October 2019. A local inhabitant interviewed at the time of the opening of the medical center alleged that it also belonged to the Busriba network (citation 3.10, Annex B). The same Awlad Buhmeira network also appears to control Zawya University. Another inhabitant of Zawya who is well informed about university management confirmed these suspicions (citation 3.11, Annex B). The university is a considerable asset to control, with around 40 000 students enrolled. Another lucrative and reliable business is municipal street cleaning. The Awlad Buhmeira network extended its control over that too, using ruthless mafia-like methods, which were described by a local informant (citation 3.12, Annex B).

Lastly, Zawya's new mayor Jamal Bahr who was backed by the Buhmeira network helped the Sicumin oil services company owned by Ali Busriba's business associate and Tunisian Mafioso Shafiq Jaraya secure very large contracts with Zawya's oil refinery. Owing to the Mayor's contacts with the National Oil Corporation in Tripoli, Sicumin was awarded the contracts for building and maintaining infrastructure, and for importing equipment (Zawya informants, GI interviews, October 2019).

While the overlaps between human trafficking and smuggling and other formal sectors of the economy and the institutionalization of crime is clear, it is important to stress that the power of the network around Busriba reaches back to pre-Qaddafi times and was firmly established by the revolution and its aftermath. Although human trafficking and smuggling contributed to strengthening the network, it cannot be considered as the central pillar of the network's strength, nor is it its most lucrative activity. The control of the Zawya refinery is probably the main basis of the network's power and wealth.

3.8 - Al-Shibani is a silent partner in a company called Buwabat al-Najoum, which has been given some LYD 13million in contracts by DCIM in various areas. Al-Shibani is also a partner in a cleaning company called Mirat, which also received some LYD600, 000 in contracts. I visit our DCs regularly, I have never seen any cleaning take place in the centres, only by the migrants themselves. We need a lot of services and there are companies that could deliver them but the money gets diverted into corruption. (DCIM official, GI interview, 2018)

3.9 - The only thing I know is that this center was supported by Italy. Within the center we got new mattresses from the Italian government and they still had the stickers from Italy on. They [the detention center administration] were paid in Euro, they were very well funded. I got this Information from the detention center administration whilst I was working there. An Italian organisation comes and pays for food, drinks, mattresses and everything. We would see a lot of cars full of money coming in and out of the detention center. Sometimes I would be sent to a local shop to buy them stuff. They would open bags and I would see tons of Libyan Dinar inside. (Migrant detained in Zawya, GI interview, Aug 2018)

3.10 - Officially, nobody knows who owns the medical center...but we actually know that it is the same Busriba network behind it, nobody else can get this money together for something like this, and it is in the area they control where nothing can happen without them. But officially it is not known. (Zawya inhabitant, GI interview, October 2019)

3.11 - They [Awlad Buhmeira network] control the Zawiya University. Hamza Kushlaf, who is the brother of Walid Kushlaf [another Awlad Buhmeira bigwig], is the General Registrar of the University. He controls the contracts with maintenance and construction. Hamza Kushlav gives a lot of contracts to Ali Busriba and his family, especially in catering and other things. He also sells the cars and trucks that belong to the university to them. There are Facebook pages in Zawiya that expose all of this. A lot of money has been taken out of the university budget. The new dean, Miftah Mrabit, said that between 2012 and 2017, 400 million LYD have gone missing. Miftah Mrabit was appointed by Walid Kushlav. He talked about the missing money because there is no evidence linking it to Walid Kushlav so it's a way of opening an investigation and controlling it. This way they neutralize the accusations. (Zawya inhabitant, GI interview, October 2019)

3.12 - Hassan Busriba, the brother of Ali Busriba, sent his militiamen to blow up the trucks of the General Cleaning Company. They did this because the General Cleaning Company was still a state-run company. When the trucks were blown up, the contracts were put out to public tender and Hassan got an annual contract for LYD 6 million. (Zawya inhabitant, GI interview, October 2019)

3.13 - Healthy oil revenues have allowed the government to rely on foreign workers filling the skills requirements of the labor market. The total number of foreign workers was estimated at 2 million before the revolution (Abuhadra and Ajaali 2014, 9).

**Table I: Socio-economic Indicators for North African Countries**

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Average (excluding Libya)
GDP per capita (purchasing-power-parity) (1)	5,193	7,305	9,650	12,686	6,474	<b>7,156</b>
Poverty and Economic Decline (2)	6.0	5.2	5.0	4.6	6.5	<b>5.7</b>
Population density (3)	72.9	15.4	68.7	3.6	84.2	<b>60.3</b>

Note (1): Current international dollar. International Monetary Fund (2014)

Note (2): Composite index including economic deficit, government debt, unemployment, youth employment, purchasing power, GDP per capita, GDP growth, inflation. Scale from 1) Most stable; to 10) Most at-risk of collapse and violence. Messner et al. (2011).

Note (3): Midyear population divided by land area in square kilometers. Counts all residents regardless of legal status or citizenship—except for non-permanently settled refugees. World Bank (2015)

3.14 - Given the declining numbers of migrants present in Libya since 2011, organizations employing foreign workers continue to experience labor shortages. This is the case because, with the change in the profile of migrants, the available skill sets have also changed” (El Kamouni-Janssen et al, 2019, 49).

#### 4. THE DESTABILIZING IMPACTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON PEACE AND SECURITY

4.1 - Pro-Haftar forces used to visit [Gharyan’s detention center] and ask migrants to work for them. Yemane said they once abducted 15 men, who were never seen again. [...] On June 26, GNA forces recaptured Gharyan. The next day, they broke the detention center’s locked gate with a car and asked the migrants to fight for them. [...] As fighting in Tripoli is ongoing, militias asked Yemane to enlist with them for \$1,000 a month. “I saw many migrants who were recruited that way and then injured. (Tubiana, 2019)

4.2 - Armed militias are now exploiting immigrants to provide logistical support to warriors, such as transferring equipment from a combat zone to another. [...] The militias are luring some immigrants with money, or promising them to travel to Europe (Asharq Al-Awsat, 2019)

4.3 - The slave market is always operating for immigrants, especially for African nationalities [...] They are cheap labor, and this type of immigrants are exploited by militia in exchange for food and drink. During military operations, we found them working in transporting and unloading military equipment, in welding workshops and armored vehicles maintenance, and in preparing sandbags for the fighters (Asharq Al-Awsat, 2019)

4.4 - They come and forced us. They said: 'either you come with us or we will hurt you or your family'. They took anyone, no matter the nationality. Then they took us to a military camp. [There] they either force you to fight or, if you refuse, they put you to clean weapons or carry stuff. If you refuse any of that, they might send you back to detention. But sometimes those who refuse are killed and they would also kill your brother and then force you to work for them. I refused [to carry a gun] and was forced to clean weapons like Kalashnikovs and sometimes transport them, too. (Sudanese migrant in Libya, GI interview, Nov 2019)

4.5 - They are just talking about a lot of money to convince you to join. They say 'come and see, come and see and you can defend this place against Haftar'. They take in all nationalities as long as you are healthy. I know a Nigerian migrant who went with them. Some people do that. Once you are in Libya for long, you are frustrated. (Nigerian migrant in Libya, GI interview, Nov 2019)

4.6 - Sudanese are being used for the military. This is happening mostly in Khoms and in the territory under its control. This is happening to Sudanese migrants. I don't not know if it is happening to other Africans. This is not

*happening at the disembarkation but once they are in detention centres. (Sudanese migrant in Malta, GI interview, Sept 2019)*

*4.9 - Politically, any tribe or militia that controls smuggling routes can put pressure on the political and military parties (LAAF and GNA). As known, the Libyan conflicting parties who fight for power heavily depend on the Sudanese and Chadian mercenaries. Tribes, towns or militias who control the smuggling routes can bargain the conflicting political parties in exchange for allowing or facilitating the movement of mercenaries through the southern border. Therefore, without tacit agreements or political allegiances, bringing mercenaries becomes more complicated and difficult. (Kufra informant, GI interview, Nov 2019)*

*4.10 - There are many types of weapons e.g RPG, big green rockets and closed boxes. We have also to repair soldiers' cars that have machine guns on top. They give uniforms to the migrants who are working in the military compound in order to identify them (foreign journalist, author interview, April 2019).*

*4.11 - Smuggling is a lifestyle in the border zones. This isn't new, it is an old story. Smuggling is just part of life of people in Kufra, Ghat, Qatrun. These places are isolated and there are no development projects, no entrepreneurs. Left on their own like this, people turn to smuggling. For 42 years, there was no effort to stop smuggling, only if the relationship with the EU was good would they try to do anything...in Zawiya there wasn't big time smuggling, for example, because Gaddafi wouldn't let a smuggling gang get big close to his own base. But in Kufra, peoples' fathers have been doing this, it is their life and they know very well how to do it, how to keep it secret, they are professional (Kufra Tebu contact, GI interview, Nov 2019)*

*4.12 - Control of smuggling routes is very lucrative and greatly reflects on the economic and security situation, no doubt controlling smuggling routes means controlling all types of smuggling and preventing opponents from reaching those areas. Controlling the smuggling routes basically means controlling movement – entry and exit – and imposing taxes on anyone who wants to smuggle [taxes can be up to LYD 500 per car, with up to 100 cars crossing a day]. Also, any tribe or militia which controls smuggling routes can put political pressure on the big authorities like the LNA and the GNA. It's well known that in Libya the fighting parties depend on Sudanese and Chadian mercenaries. Tribes, towns or militias who control the smuggling routes can bargain to allow mercenaries to pass through the southern border in exchange for concessions (Kufra Zway contact, GI interview, Nov 2019)*

*4.13 - The war in Kufra broke out in 2011 after large numbers of Chadian (Tebu and Guraan) smuggling gangs entered to the south of Libya and imposed fees on smugglers. Most of the smugglers during the Qaddafi era were from Zway tribe because the Tebu population at that time was very small. Now, after the outbreak of the Libyan revolution, tens of thousands of Chad and Niger's Tebu entered Libya and managed to control some routes of smuggling, imposing a new reality (Kufra Zway contact, GI interview, Nov 2019).*

*4.14 - I remember a family in which the father was a well-known cardiologist in Tripoli, the daughter married a known smuggler... This was around 20 years ago. It was the talk of town. At the time the general consensus was that this was wrong and that the family had sold their daughter cheap ... eventually, a greater number of people started feeling that this was okay but to this day, there is division on this question (Zuwaran former militia man, GI interview, Dec 2019)*

*4.16 - From 2013 to 2018 Um al-Aranib was the big center for human smuggling and the town was crazy. People from all over Africa were there doing business, from Eritrea, Sudan and West Africa. By 2017 there were only 30 percent of Libyans in town and there was a lot of chaos and crime. It was crazy. The smugglers had money and would come in from the desert to party with music, prostitutes from all over the world, vodka, and drugs. It was a nightmare. But all the people of Um al-Aranib were making money. You could make more from just selling water than a good job anywhere else, so people put up with the chaos. But then the kidnap for ransom business started to get out of hand. You could make so much from just one ransom that people from all*

over were coming to Um al-Aranib and staying there and using it as their base to then kidnap people from all over southern Libya, even as far as Kufra. (Um al-Aranib contact, GI interview, Nov 2019)

4.21 - Although purged from the coastal areas, ISIL fighters remain a significant threat in the subcoastal region, from south of the oil fields in the east to the borders with Algeria in the west. [Its] sources of income include extortion of citizens (protection rackets) and taxation of human trafficking networks. (UNSC/S 570, 2019, 9)

4.22 - [Islamic State militants] have seized trucks carrying fuel and gained other revenue by taxing human traffickers and arms smugglers (Raghavan, 2019)

4.23 - The movement of fighters in small numbers from the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq to Libya and Algeria was detected through the Sudan. Algeria reportedly intercepted and expelled up to 100 Syrians who attempted to enter the country from the south after transiting Turkey and the Sudan using forged passports and assisted by criminal networks. (UNSC/S 570, 2019, 9-10)

4.24 - Foreign ISIL operatives are relatively new to the area and are consequently less connected to local armed groups. Nevertheless, in order to ensure its south-eastern supply line from the Sudan and Egypt to Sirte, ISIL has struck a deal with Arab armed groups around Al Kufra to protect its convoys. (UNSC S/627, 2016, 4)

4.25 - The al-Dabbashi clan, and the connected Anas al-Dabbashi militia have long-standing links with Islamic State in the Levante (ISIL) and its affiliates. Several ISIL operatives have been in their ranks, including Abdallah al-Dabbashi, the ISIL 'caliph' of Sabratha. (UNSC/SC 13371 - LYi.023, 2018)

4.26 - Last year, the mayor of Sabratha publicly accused the Dabbashi clan of having concealed the presence of IS members in the area; also that it ordered the abduction of four Italian workers in 2016. (Mannocchi, 2017)

4.27 - IS in Libya has been upscaling its recruitment efforts regarding migrants of sub-Saharan origin and has seemingly proven successful at it. While fighters from sub-Saharan Africa have been crucial for IS in Libya from the start, especially as foot soldiers, as of 2018, appeals directed at this group to join IS have increased. (Trauthig, 2019, 15).

4.28 - Libyan law criminalizes irregular entry into, stay in or exit from the country with a penalty of imprisonment pending deportation, without any consideration of individual circumstances or protection needs. Foreign nationals in vulnerable situations, including survivors of trafficking and refugees, are among those subjected to mandatory and indefinite arbitrary detention. Libya has no asylum system, has not ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and does not formally recognize the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (UNSMIL & OHCHR, 2018, 5).

4.29 - For sub-Saharan Africans, there are additional difficulties faced from society at large, notably racism. Testimonies of some of the Egyptian respondents, as well as those of sub-Saharan Africans, describe a situation in which sub-Saharan Africans face greater difficulties both from state officials, such as police officers and prison guards, and from ordinary members of society by virtue of the colour of their skin. The difficulties faced, which are compounded by their irregular situation. (Hamood, 2006, 29)

**Table 2: Post-2011 Tolerance Indicators for North African Countries**

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Average (excl. Libya)
Tolerance towards other races (1)	86%	80%	83%	45%	N/A	<b>83%</b>
Tolerance towards immigrants (2)	89%	72%	81%	41%	N/A	<b>81%</b>
Tolerance to other religions (3)	81%	57%	70%	46%	N/A	<b>70%</b>
Openness to other religions (4)	1.53	1.29	1.46	1.20	N/A	<b>1.42</b>

Note (1): "Select groups you would not wish to have as neighbors: People of a different race". 0) Selected; 1) Not selected. Year: 2013. World Values Survey (WVS) (2013)

Note (2): "Select groups you would not wish to have as neighbors: Immigrants/foreign workers". 0) Selected; 1) Not selected. Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (3): "Select groups you would not wish to have as neighbors: People of a different religion". 0) Selected; 1) Not selected. WVS (2013)

Note (4): "The only acceptable religion is my religion". Scale from 1: Strongly agree; to 4: Strongly disagree WVS (2013)

4.30 - Blacks are idiots; they make irrational decisions, such as risking their life in the desert or on ships, or deciding to pay only under torture; they are lazy workers; they fall off trucks that transport them through the desert. (Libya researcher and former INGO worker, author interview, Oct 2019)

4.31 - Joy, who speaks the polished French of an educated woman, says the E.U. directive to curb migrant arrivals not only emboldens corrupt Libyans but also amplifies their deep-seated prejudice against black Africans. "The Libyans understood that if the E.U. doesn't want blacks to come, it means we are not valuable as humans. [...] The E.U. is essentially rewarding these militias for abusing us, for raping us, for killing us and for selling us." (Baker, 2019)

## 5. THE STABILIZING IMPACTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING

**Table 3: 2011\* Socio-economic Indicators for North African Countries**

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Average (w/o Libya)
Total unemployment (% total labor force) (1)	8.9	10.0	18.3	17.7	12.0	<b>12.3</b>
Youth unemployment (% total labor force) (2)	18.6	27.5	37.6	48.7	34.7	<b>29.6</b>
Time required to start a business (days) (3)	12	24	12	35	8	<b>14.0</b>
Urban population (% of total) (4)	58.7	68.9	66.3	78.0	43.0	<b>59.2</b>
Population density (5)	72.9	15.4	68.7	3.6	84.2	<b>60.3</b>

\* Except where indicated otherwise.

Note (1): Share of labor force without work but available for, and seeking employment (modeled ILO estimate). World Bank (2015)

Note (2): Unemployment rate among individuals ages 15-24 (national estimate). Year 2012. World Bank (2015)

Note (3): # of calendar days needed to complete the procedures to legally operate a business. Year: 2012. World Bank (2015)

Note (4): People per sq. km of land area. World Bank (2015)

Note (5): Midyear population divided by land area in square kilometers. Counts all residents regardless of legal status or citizenship—except for non-permanently settled refugees. World Bank (2015)



5.1 - *The criminalisation of both smugglers and migrants was at odds with the fact that transporting migrants was regarded as both a ‘normal’ and ‘licit’ occupation in northern Niger – and one that has contributed to economic development and stability in the region. [...] smugglers now drive on various new or little-used roads [...] that] partly merge with existing drug trafficking routes, reportedly occasioning new ties between drug traffickers and migrant smugglers, since both activities are now seen as similarly criminal (Tubiana et al. 2018, 23)*

5.2 - *My business relies on [the labor of] migrants; they are the only capital that exists in this country in the present dire circumstances (El Kamouni-Janssen et al, 2019, 48).*

5.3 - *Construction, trade and tourism enterprises reported using between 60 and 70% foreign workers, with Libyans only accepting and holding key positions such as managers, accountants and engineers (World Bank 2015, 15).*

5.4 - *Despite the fact that the factionalism is nominally political or ideological, in most cases militias are drawn into partnerships across towns on practical considerations concerning the undermining of common enemies. Joint activity identified during focused monitoring and fieldwork at various points of the reporting period include cooperation on departure operations between networks based in Sabratha, Surman, Mutrud and Zawiya as well as cooperation on disruptive activity masked as law enforcement, both at sea and on land. (Micallef, 2017, 14)*

5.5 - *In general, there aren’t wars about human smuggling, people fight over other things but people-smuggling gangs don’t settle their problems through fighting. They come to agreements to avoid fighting and conflict – even between groups, they don’t care about tribal differences, they just care about profit. (Kufra contact, GI interview, Sept 2019)*

5.6 - *Migration also contributed to the coexistence of Tuareg and Tubu communities, who had to cooperate to cross each other’s territories, in spite of being in conflict within Libya. The new migration policy threatens to upset these fragile balances. (Tubiana et al. 2018, 29)*

5.7 - *Bin Nayl was able to use this relationship to gain access to Tebu areas for the LAAF. There wasn’t any need to fight, they just wanted to go to the area to show it is theirs and Bin Nayl could negotiate that. Doing this, Bin Nayl allowed the LAAF to show that it had entered Qatrun [by 26 February], and then eventually all the southern border areas. (Tebu contact, GI interview, Mar 2019)*

5.8 - *Some people in Sebha want to fight against the Tebu in Murzuq, some individuals among the Awlad Suleiman. But at the tribal level there is no desire. The Magarha have their business interests with the Tebu, so they don’t want a war. (Sebha contact, GI interview, Aug 2019)*

**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW**

**Washington, DC 20523**