

SITUATION REPORT
October 14, 2011
Prepared by: Libya Outreach Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Highlights

State of Security and Stability: Military Factions desecrate religious shrines

[Article1](#) ; [Article2](#) ; [Article3](#) ; [Video-Libya Factions](#) ; [Videoof Damage-SidiBenHamid](#)

Shrines in and around Tripoli have been attacked and desecrated. These shrines are important to Sufi Muslims. It is believed that the Islamic based group called the Salafists are the perpetrators. They believe these shrines should not be worshiped (by Sufi's) and consider the Sufi way of praying at the sites to be against Islamic laws. Eyewitness accounts of one event say the militants burned relics and carried away the remains of Abdul-Rahman al-Masri and Salem Abu Seif, the two religious leaders buried there. The militia who demolished the shrines were armed and wearing military uniforms.

The vandalism has caused extreme alarm in the Sufi community and the majority non-Salafists population, raises the questions as to where this is leading. NTC's Mustafa Abdul-Jalil made a statement demanding an end to the vandalism, and beseeched top Muslim cleric, al-Sadek al-Gheriani to issue a religious ruling (fetwa) urging a stop to the desecration. Libya is trying to move forward and heal from its wounds, not magnify them. According to sources in the Tripoli Council, swift action to stop these attacks was taken. It is still unclear what actions were taken. Although, some militias in Tripoli have tried to stop the desecration saying they want to preserve Libya's rich history, there is no formal policing force in Tripoli right now, which leaves open a political and military vacuum for heavily armed groups.

These actions could be an indication that Islamic hard-liners are taking advantage of the power vacuum. Further, some receive armaments and funding directly from Qatar, giving them even more power. There was no NTC oversight of acquisition of armaments, and many of Libya's manpad rocket launchers (that take down planes) are missing, not to mention the borders are highly porous. In addition, Al Qaeda is calling for fight in Libya; leader Ayman al-Zawahiri recently called on Libyans to follow Islamic law and urged Libyans to resist NATO. The security situation in Libya is becoming dire. The conditions for a hostile, volatile, sectarian, and alarmingly emotional environment are in Libya.

The groups perpetuating crimes against international human rights law are desecrating places of worship belonging to their own fellow Muslims. Their behavior and actions signify complete disregard and respect for diverse practices, tolerance, and inclusivity of their very own religious community. Further, their behavior signifies a complete lack of respect and disregard for other religions. To seek a sectarian divide and enforce it as was done in Iraq is not welcome in Libya. Libyans who fought for their lives, their families, and their future will not stop down and let a new authoritarian regime tell them how to practice their human and civil rights.

The issue of Islam and state has already become a controversial topic among influential Muslim clerics and the NTC. In a recent meeting held to reconcile the different groups in Libya came to an end without resolve. Many in Libya believe there should be a separation of religion and state and others believe Libya should implement a ‘mild’ form of Islamic, Sharia, Law. Many in the country; however, do not want to see politics being used as a political tool to control the population and others see this as the way they can ensure Islam is secured in Libya. Libyans have been Muslims for the last 42 years under the Gaddafi regime, and were able to secure their Islam nonetheless. The threat that Islam will be compromised in the new Libya is recalled by those who want to enforce their own religious belief systems on others. The structure of the state will be decided by the people, and their power to organize and act.

How can Libyans stop those trying to take advantage of the situation? How can we safeguard Libya’s historical and religious assets? How can we preserve Libya until elections can be held? The state of security in Libya continues to remain tenuous. The will, passion and determination still strong in Libyans; who will not let themselves fall under a new authoritarian state regime. Too much was lost and gained to revert to a new authoritarian order.

Additional News

- The whereabouts of Muammar Gaddafi remain unknown, there is an intense research for him Article
- Conflicting reports emerge that Mutassim Gaddafi was caught and sent to Benghazi but no evidence has been presented Article
- The battle for Sirte and Bani Walid continues Article ; Article2
- NTC says any new contracts will have to wait until after first elections Article
- Libyans look forward to future tourism in Libya Article
- China sends aid to Libya Article
- Libyans discover freedom of expression through media and artistic outlets in a way they have not been able to under the rule of Gaddafi Article
- Unsecured arms from Libya continue to flood into Egypt, vastness of Libyan borders make them hard to patrol Article
- Tunisia working with NTC to secure the Libya/Tunisia border Article
- Amnesty International finds evidence of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners held by pro-Democracy fighters Article ; Article2 ; Article3
- Germany pledges to treat 150 Libyan wounded by the conflict Article

Born in the wake of the 17 February Revolution, the Libya Outreach Group is dedicated to raising awareness, facilitating outreach, and providing stabilization and transition support for Libya

Libya Outreach Group has recently changed the format of the Situation Reports. We will provide a highlight of the day's events with a more in-depth comment of the highlight. We will continue

to have hyperlinks of daily events. Thank you for your patience with us during this time. You are valuable to us.