

ILLICIT TRAFFICKING AND LIBYA'S TRANSITION

PROFITS AND LOSSES

Mark Shaw and Fiona Mangan





ABOUT THE REPORT

This report, which draws from more than two hundred interviews across Libya, seeks to improve understanding of the nature of illicit trafficking and smuggling in the country and to identify emerging patterns of organized crime and their impact on state consolidation and stability. Its goal is to help define possible policy options, including ways the international community might support stability and development for the country and the region. The study, which was supported by the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau of the U.S. State Department, is part of a portfolio of rule of law work that the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is carrying out in Libya.

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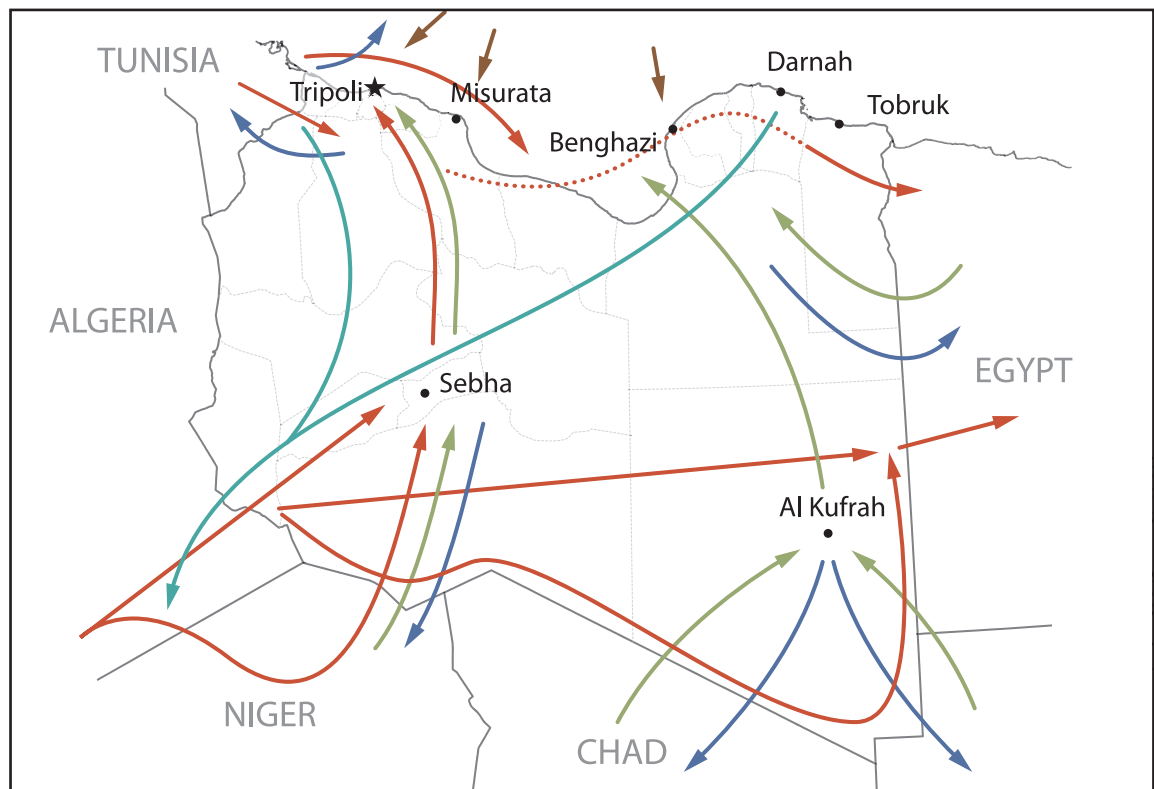
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CONTENTS



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Context . . .	5
An Evolving Illicit Economy . . .	9
Regional Criminal Markets . . .	19
Organized Crime and State Consolidation . . .	35
Conclusion: Crafting a Response . . .	38
Notes . . .	41

[Organized criminal behavior, illicit trafficking and trade, and the armed groups that perpetrate them are harming the transition at a time when consolidating institutions of statehood is critical.]

Summary

- Criminal activities are driving conflict in postrevolutionary Libya and undermining state consolidation.
- The foundation of the illicit economy rests on four interconnected markets: weapons, migrants, drugs, and smuggled goods.
- A widespread prevalence of weapons has completely changed the game in Libya and led to an industry in criminal protection.
- The dynamics of criminal activity and the development of illicit markets have different trajectories in northern coastal cities and inland towns and border areas.
- Many local conflicts are driven by competition over illicit resources, and the capacity to provide or guarantee protection for illicit trade has become a major lever of influence.
- Criminal control is consolidating into fewer hands, and groups with the most resources are best placed to leverage control and political influence.
- Ironically, it is the criminal economy rather than joint and inclusive governance that binds the regions of Libya together.
- Organized criminal behavior, illicit trafficking and trade, and the armed groups that perpetrate them are harming the transition at a time when consolidating institutions of statehood is critical.
- It is imperative to begin an effective response to organized crime now—with interventions in the political, economic, social, and security spheres.
- The international community must be sensitive to Libya's regional and international vulnerabilities.
- An appropriate response may rely less on justice and security interventions and more on carefully calibrated political management coupled with well-deployed development.
- Such a response also must undercut the market for protection and reestablish state control.
- Such an approach would include marginalized groups and border communities in the political process, educate the public about the costs and consequences of illegal activities, reinstate state institutions of security to replace criminal protection arrangements, and transition from cash payouts and commodity subsidies to sustainable economic opportunities.

Context

Illicit trafficking and associated organized crime are always driven by context: a combination of how weak or inefficient the state is, what the state defines as illegal, and the degree to which the state is able to protect both legitimate economic activities and take action against illegal ones.

A combination of weak central authority, strong local interests, and scattered population centers, along with specific economic and social factors—some historical, some the result of the revolution—have provided conditions ripe for a growth in organized criminal activity in Libya. This growth is having a decisive impact on the ability of the government to manage the political transition, consolidate institutions of statehood, and create an environment of stability and security for its citizens.

Not two years have passed since the revolution that removed Muammar Qaddafi from power after more than forty years of autocratic rule. Following what was truly a people's revolution and one of the major victories of the Arab Spring movement, Libya has been making uneven progress toward a modern pluralist democratic state. The international community is committed to supporting the country's political, economic, and social transition, but interventions are greatly constrained by the current security situation.

Considerable challenges therefore remain. For many, the most significant has been the plethora of armed groups, some that emerged during the revolution and some that have emerged since, that continue to threaten both human and state security. Defying attempts to disarm them, a complex network of armed groups and militias swirl around the capital of Tripoli and elsewhere, strong-arming the political process and undermining the prospects for stabilization. In May 2013 in Tripoli, for example, gunmen besieged government buildings and pressured parliament into passing a law to ban former Qaddafi officials from taking office under the new transitional government. This resulted in the removal of Mohammed al-Maqrif, head of the Libyan General National Congress, who had been democratically elected in July 2012 in what was Libya's first free and fair national election in six decades. In late 2013, sustained gun battles in Tripoli between opposing militia groups highlighted once again the degree to which armed groups outside state control were holding the political process hostage. In Benghazi, tensions between the public and armed brigades have alienated ordinary citizens, and assassinating police officials has become a sustained campaign.

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Evolution of Politics and Crime

Observers often focus on the engagement of the militias in the political process. For many of these groups, however, resources from trafficking and smuggling empowers them and undercuts commitment to peaceful, democratic processes. They may at present not have an interest in outright secession, but the funding from illicit activities is a centrifugal force that encourages armed groups to continue to recuse themselves from the central statebuilding process. Several factors, not least of which is Libya's location along some of the oldest trans-Saharan trade and trafficking routes to Europe, have made the fledging political order particularly vulnerable to organized criminal activity. The very logic of trafficking and smuggling, which relies on tenuous controls of the state's periphery, is an incentive for armed groups to maintain a weak state rather than allow a strong one to be rebuilt. Furthermore, the protection of trafficking routes—which entails access to arms and maintenance of militias—not only ensures that these groups are unlikely to be interested in a formal demobilization or disarmament process but also serves to proliferate arms, maintain instability, and promote violence.

The geography of Libya is such that most of the population lives along the northern coastal belt and temperate western highlands, and far fewer people are in the south, where the reach of the state is noticeably weaker, particularly around Sebha in the southwest and Kufrah in the southeast. The coastal belt is divided: On the one hand is the pull of the central state from Tripoli and the urban concentrations in the mountains between Tripoli and the Tunisian border; on the other is the Barqa region to the east with its distinctive political history and culture centered on the city of Benghazi.

As central government control weakened, armed and criminal groups gained legitimacy in the eyes of some communities by providing services the state did not.

Under Qaddafi, the absence of other forms of economic activity meant that illicit trafficking and smuggling were key livelihoods for underserved border communities. To some extent, the regime tolerated this because it permitted those regions to remain largely self-sufficient. At the same time, as central government control weakened, armed and criminal groups gained legitimacy in the eyes of some communities by providing services the state did not. Illicit forms of economic activity thus became entrenched and widely accepted. These dynamics reinforce local identities, which in turn foster local animosities and local conflicts. This situation fractures and constricts the peace process for many if not most communities on the geographic periphery, who largely feel isolated from the current political process in Tripoli.

The political dynamic since the revolution has meant that “the transition . . . [is] led by a loose and fragile coalition of interests, rather than any single political force or institution. Too many local counterweights to central authority, in the form of local councils and revolutionary brigades, developed during the conflict.”¹ This fragmentation has positive implications for democratic development in that it reduces the possibility of a return to dictatorship. It has negative implications as well, however, in that those with resources and weapons have a disproportionate influence.

Many Libyan leaders concede that criminal activity and organized crime are key challenges for the transition, but most argue that they can only be dealt with later, when the state is consolidated and the transitional political process has run its course.² A detailed review of the development of the country’s emerging criminal economy suggests that organized criminal behavior, illicit trafficking and trade, and the armed groups that perpetrate them are shaping the transition—empowering some actors over others, generating conflicts that may be hard to end decisively, and weakening the central state by limiting its reach and corrupting its key institutions—at a time when a key requirement is to consolidate institutions of statehood.

Libya may not be unique in this regard. A growing body of evidence and research suggests that it is precisely during the transition that conflict and postconflict states are particularly susceptible to the growth of illicit trafficking and associated organized crime.³ This is in part because of the weakening or collapse of state structures and the degree to which “criminal organizations use gaps in states’ capacity to create competitive advantage.”⁴ A failure to explicitly address organized crime and illicit trafficking during the transition is to entrench it in the future of a new Libya.

The argument that organized crime is a spoiler to peace and development has become conventional wisdom, but in most peacebuilding or statebuilding exercises, it rarely moves beyond rhetoric. To illustrate, a recent review of UN peacekeeping missions found that mandates of relevant UN interventions usually excluded mention of either illegal trafficking or organized crime.⁵ The issue, as in Libya, is beginning to attract significant attention, but in a context in which policy prescriptions remain relatively underdeveloped, Libya may well prove an important test case.

The strategies required to reduce the influence of criminal groups on the statebuilding process are not inconsistent with the broader political, economic, and social goals of transition. The evidence gathered in this study suggests that an appropriate response to organized crime may rely less on justice and security interventions and more on a carefully calibrated political management strategy coupled with well-deployed development interventions.

Understanding the solutions to illicit trafficking and smuggling requires a nuanced analysis of Libya's emerging illicit economy and its connection to broader regional, economic, social, and political dynamics. This in turn contributes to the definition of possible policy options, including the ways in which external actors might be of assistance.

Illicit Economies and Organized Crime

Neither organized crime nor trafficking in Libya are new, and for many Libyans, the acts described in this report would not even be considered or understood as crimes. One of the challenges in mobilizing a response, therefore, comes simply with the use of terminology.

For this report, *illicit economies* are characterized by transactions and commodities for which production and marketing are legally prohibited unless they comply with relevant regulations and taxation requirements. They differ from ordinary crime in their complexity, their sustainability, and the repeated nature of the transactions.⁶ Organized criminal groups are generally (but not exclusively) the key operators of illicit economies, given the requirement for high levels of organization to facilitate and protect repeated transactions.

The use of the term *organized crime* within the context of illicit economies presents several challenges, most notably a lack of widespread traction in many parts of the Arab and developing world.⁷ Nevertheless, the phenomenon can be defined by a key set of constituent activities: aimed primarily at acquiring profit illegally, carried out over time and in an organized way, conducted by a definable network of connected individuals, and threatening or using either violence or corrupting activities to protect or promote these activities. In almost all contexts, and Libya is not an exception, organized crime groups or networks may cross over with the activities of political, economic, or community groups or elements of the state.⁸

Illicit economies, like their licit counterparts, change over time and depend on political context. As mentioned, Libya's criminal economy is not new. During the Qaddafi period, ownership of portions of the illicit economy was allowed in two circumstances. First, access was provided to tribes, families, and communities close to Qaddafi. Second, providing access was a way of buying off potential political opposition.

More broadly, though, the development of a parallel black market for goods served the needs of the people, a fact that did not escape Qaddafi. In a memorable quote from an address to local revolutionary committees in 1988, he declared,

You may think that black-markets are negative. On the contrary. As far as we are concerned as revolutionaries they show that the people spontaneously take a decision and without government make something which they need: they establish a black market because they need it. . . . What are black-markets? They are people's markets.⁹

What Qaddafi did not say was that although everyone was free to buy smuggled goods, his regime controlled the key trafficking routes and used enforcement to reward some groups over others.¹⁰ The result was a controlled criminal market regulated by the state, ensuring that the state also benefited at a number of levels, primarily by levying bribes and payoffs to senior officials.

Peacebuilding, State Consolidation, and Organized Crime

Although the revolution in Libya is part of the broader process of political change across the Arab world, a number of features specific to Libya have defined the nature of the state-building efforts that have followed.¹¹ These features provide an important context in which Libya's criminal economy must be understood.

First, the momentum for revolution in Libya was brought on by the efforts of ordinary people rather than by a consolidated political or ideological movement. Qaddafi's overthrow, as indicated, gave rise to a fragmentation of players. *Katiba* (brigades), sometimes formed rapidly during the revolution, have in some cases sought to consolidate their military influence into political power. Local leaders, still often mistrustful of the intentions of the nascent central government processes, exert considerable authority in their regions, and those that can combine political strength with military power project wider influence, often independent of the central government's wishes.¹² Ensuring the capacity to finance military strength and resource political power has thus become key criteria for success as the transition has unfolded.

A second important feature is the legacy of weak governance and deliberately hollowed-out state institutions that have little ability or experience in guiding the transition toward a democratic conclusion.¹³ In border control, Qaddafi deliberately maintained a strategy of obfuscation, dividing the responsibility between several ministries and institutions, creating a confusion that has carried over into the postrevolution structure.¹⁴ Furthermore, as in most postauthoritarian transitions, ordinary Libyan citizens deeply mistrust state structures, particularly security and the police. No real law enforcement bodies, specialized or otherwise, have thus been immediately willing or able to respond effectively to the increase in illicit trafficking and smuggling.

Finally, a combination of sanctions avoidance and the policy of smuggling and trafficking as economic reward left a network oriented to exploiting the illegal economy. Moreover, the transfer of resources from illicit smuggling and trafficking has been perceived as "a rightful inheritance" for ordinary people.¹⁵ As a result, few if any social, cultural, or community constraints to engaging in illicit trade exist.¹⁶

These and other factors have created a perfect storm of conditions for organized crime: armed groups in search of resources to sustain themselves and bolster their political position, no legitimate law enforcement or other state structures to respond, and few community controls on the involvement of people in the illicit economy.

In essence, state control over illicit markets has fallen away, and the shift in political control has resulted in localized conflicts over control of illicit resources. Such conflicts are almost always between those who benefited from smuggling or trafficking in the new order and those who now seek to or have entered the market more recently. How these conflicts and alliances consolidate in the transition phase is directly linked to developments in the political and economic sphere. The new order is generating a range of new players to supplement the old, and the country's criminal economy is still consolidating. It is in this period—when control and influence are relatively fluid—that the state may be most able to eradicate the illicit economy. Once interests have been established and power fused with illicit markets, the task will be that much more difficult.

Research Methodology

Gathering information on organized crime and illicit trafficking is a challenging exercise. Those involved in organized crime have strong motivations to keep their activities hidden. Interlocu-

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tors, including those within law enforcement, may be fearful of speaking.¹⁷ This challenge is compounded in conflict-affected or fragile environments where swift retribution is likely.

This situation does not preclude the possibility of conducting research, however. Drawing relevant and reliable conclusions requires identifying and contacting appropriate interlocutors and corroborating the information by speaking with as many people as possible. Despite the sensitive nature of the topic, many people may be willing to talk, and each interviewee is a useful contact for a wider number of possible meetings.¹⁸

Interviews with more than two hundred individuals were conducted over three weeks in April 2013 across Libya. These were selected based on a general overview of trafficking patterns and then adjusted based on access and time constraints. They include interviews in all of the major coastal cities, border towns on the western and eastern borders, and in Sebha in the southwest and Kufrah in the southeast.¹⁹ Interviews conducted in Niger and Mali in the same period for a related study have also been drawn on for a broader understanding of regional dynamics.

A methodology proved effective in other studies of organized crime is the relatively long, unstructured interview. These allow the interviewee to discuss relevant issues in greater detail. In general, discussions began around Libya's economic or political development, only then moving to illicit trafficking and criminal activity.²⁰ In many cases, focusing the discussion around a map was useful: Interviewees often more easily described the position and identified trafficking routes and zones of influence of particular groups.

In general, interviewees could be placed in one of the following umbrella categories: police, prosecutors, members of newly formed crime-fighting units, Libya Shield members involved in border duties, katiba or local military leaders, community leaders, religious leaders, academics, and knowledgeable members of communities, including those with a good sense of or involvement in trafficking.

The research team also visited several prison facilities and immigrant detention centers to conduct interviews, mainly with West Africans who had been smuggled or held for drug-related offenses. These interviews were held without prison staff being present.²¹ Interviewees have not been quoted by name, and, unless otherwise sensitive, the general description of the interviewee, location, and date of interview has been referenced.

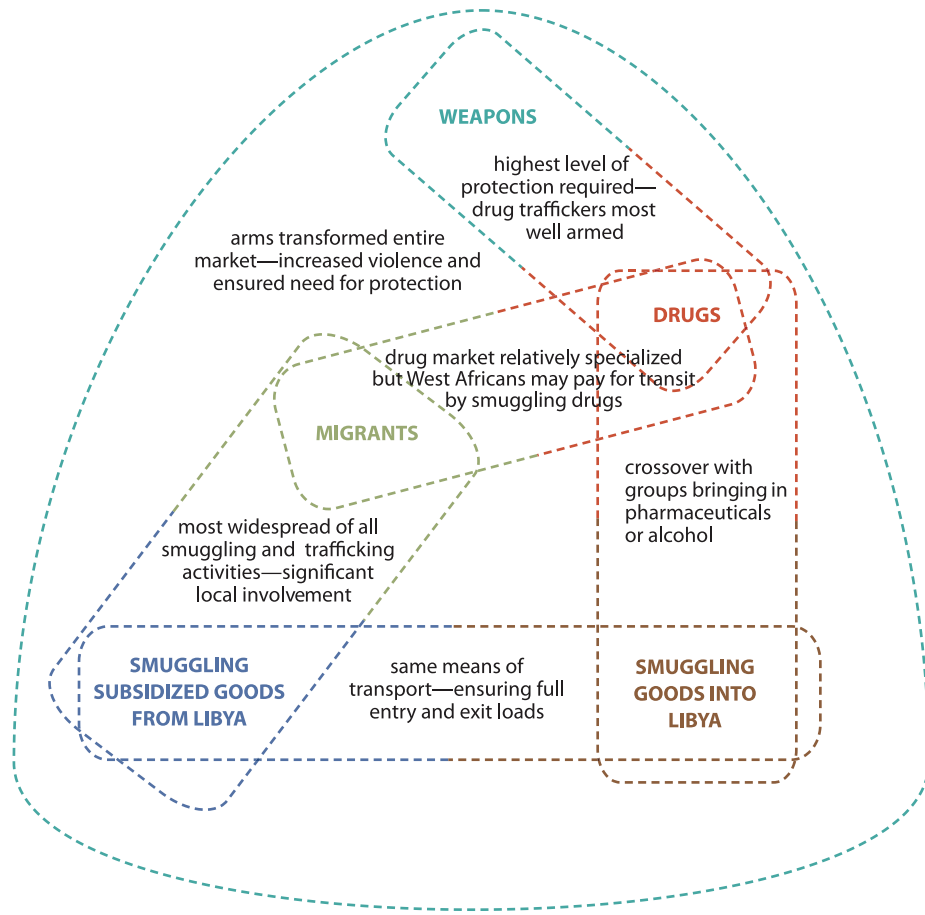
An Evolving Illicit Economy

As mentioned earlier, under the Qaddafi regime, the illicit economy was largely state sponsored, and trafficking and smuggling remained largely in the hands of those favored by the regime. Since the revolution, control over trafficking and smuggling has decentralized. Fundamentally, however, and as shown in figure 1, the emerging illicit economy comprises four interconnected markets: weapons, migrants, drugs, and smuggling. These markets have developed a natural hierarchy in terms of financial return and strategic importance.

At the base of the hierarchy is the smuggling of subsidized goods both out of and into Libya. Both have significant community involvement, particularly in border regions, and the two are often intertwined in that the same form of transport and organization are used, though interviews indicated a degree of specialization by commodity. The smuggling of subsidized goods is closely connected to the illegal movement of people. Again, the same forms of transport may be used, and community involvement is widespread. Migrant smuggling is increasingly connected to drug trafficking—some West Africans pay for their transport by carrying small quantities of drugs, including both heroin and cocaine. However, drug trafficking re-

Migrant smuggling is increasingly connected to drug trafficking—some West Africans pay for their transport by carrying small quantities of drugs, including both heroin and cocaine.

Figure 1. Intersection and Hierarchy of Trafficked Commodities



mains relatively insulated and tightly protected and involves far fewer people than smuggling. At the top of the hierarchy is trafficking of weapons and of associated markets for protection. The widespread availability of guns during and after the revolution transformed the criminal economy in Libya and has fostered a market for protection.

Almost all of these criminal markets were present in similar forms before the revolution, but a combination of national and broader regional dynamics has led to five significant interlocking changes or shifts in their nature in the transition period.

Weapons trafficking has taken on a new prominence because both the political and the economic situations in the country are in flux. As noted, the political landscape is now characterized by a fragile coalition of interests whose ability to consolidate often depends on military strength and the capacity to translate it into political influence. Thus the ability to source, purchase, and control the flow of weapons has thrust some groups into prominence at the expense of others. Weapons have also been critical to buying protection, threatening others, and holding control over the illicit markets required to fund continued military strength and influence.

The political transition in Libya is situated within a broader regional instability. The unrest across the Middle East, the Sahel, and West Africa has increased the flow of migrants across the region from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. Although interview after interview highlighted the degree to which the Qaddafi state controlled the nature of the criminal economy, it

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seems clear too that some forms of trafficking, migrant smuggling in particular, were deliberately left uncontrolled and, by the time the regime fell, had wide involvement by communities across the country.

Migration across the Sahel band is frequently a resilience strategy among the nomadic communities in the borderlands and peripheries, who have long been marginalized by the state. These communities create webs of dependency with their kin in neighboring countries and use arbitrage and smuggling of commodities as a basic livelihood strategy, particularly in periods of instability.²² Libya has always been a destination country for migrants from West Africa and the Sahel seeking favorable economic opportunities. The incoming flow abated somewhat during the revolution but has since—as conflict subsided in Libya and picked up in Mali—resumed. The nature of this migration, however, is much different than in the past and is “a phenomenon that reveals the wider economic and demographic implications of the uprisings.”²³ The long-term implications, including the degree to which Libyan public opinion has hardened against sub-Saharan Africans, may still have important political ramifications in the future.

Although smuggling is at the base of this hierarchy and often considered a relatively harmless way of supplementing livelihoods in poorly served regions, it nonetheless has an important role to play. First, as state services struggle to reassert themselves, and as local power brokers renegotiate alliances, various new players have entered the illicit economy, and the volume of illicit commodities and associated activities has grown. Smuggling and illicit trade have created an institutional basis for higher-profit criminal activities, build the legitimacy and control of local power brokers in the periphery of the state, and are a disincentive for border communities to engage with the central statebuilding process.

Last is the nascent growth of cocaine trafficking in Libya, the fifth post-Qaddafi trend of note. Although the actual extent is difficult to determine, interviews suggest that the transit trade for both cocaine and heroin is increasing. Movement of drugs, particularly cocaine, seems to be tightly insulated from other smuggling and trafficking and is protected by well-armed, well-organized, and violent gangs. The value of the cocaine trade is so great that drug trafficking could easily overwhelm the traditional smuggling trade among professional traffickers. This would corrupt fledgling state institutions and thus has the potential to perpetuate instability and undermine the peacebuilding and state consolidation process.²⁴

These individual markets, their evolution, dynamics, and interdependencies are explored in greater detail in the following section.

Subsidized Goods

Extensive subsidies offered by the Libyan government on a range of consumer goods from fuel to flour, sugar, and other household items have virtually guaranteed smuggling from neighboring states where no subsidies are in place. “Smuggling,” says a community leader from the port town of Zuwarah, “is like a large-scale financial transfer to our neighbours.”²⁵ Smuggling of subsidized goods is extensive between Libya and countries on the western, eastern, and southern land borders, and transport infrastructure has been well established to conduct these activities. Significant quantities of fuel are also smuggled from Libya to Europe.

Unsurprisingly, reforming the system of subsidies has been highly contested. Subsidies ultimately became a way in which the state “attempted to buy off the people—but it became a slippery slope with more and more money fed into the process with the aim of maintaining social calm.”²⁶ The result was that by 2012, after the revolution, about 25 percent of Libya’s GDP

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was being paid out in subsidies or transfers.²⁷ The new government has recently announced that the fuel subsidy will be phased out within the next three years. Discussions are under way on how subsidies can be replaced by a more cost-effective social safety net.²⁸

As in all cases when state decisions will affect illicit economies, such a change is likely to become a point of contention for criminal groups engaged in the trade. It is also possible that these groups will try to disrupt the political process to protect their livelihoods.

Interviews suggest that those involved in smuggling basic commodities are generally not involved in more criminalized activities, though the extent of this crossover differs by region. Some groups have used the capital engaged in smuggling to move into higher profit, more criminalized activities. Even at lower levels, however, the widespread nature and extent of smuggling has a significant corroding influence on state institutions, given the systematic networks of corruption that have evolved to facilitate the trade.

Contraband

Because of the lack of customs and border controls, a sizeable quantity and range of illicit goods are smuggled into Libya. Second-hand cars from Europe arrive in large number at several ports, most prominently Misurata, and are either sold within Libya or driven to markets in sub-Saharan Africa. Few, if any, controls over the auto trade are in place. Although the government at first attempted to stem the flow of vehicles, an exception for their import has now been given because the trade is seen as an economic mainstay in a period when the state cannot provide viable alternatives. Because the trade is uncontrolled, however, second-hand cars, along with electronic goods, are the biggest loss of potential government revenue.²⁹

The black market for alcohol is active across the country, with prices varying depending on the proximity to source: Alcohol is cheaper in the west of the country, given the relatively short distance from neighboring Tunisia, where alcohol consumption is legal and alcohol thus easy to procure and transport. Alcohol is also brewed illegally (and badly) within Libya. According to those engaged in the trade, alcohol smuggling is reportedly highly profitable. Those smuggling subsidized commodities or migrants out of the country often return with a load of alcohol simply to boost their revenues. Substandard or expired alcohol is also smuggled, with some detrimental consequences to health.

The greatest impact from unregulated smuggling into the country, however, is almost certainly prescription medicines. Enormous quantities of painkillers and sleeping tablets are being brought into the country and are widely available on the streets. Some seizures of illegal pharmaceuticals have been significant.³⁰

Prescription medicines appear to be brought in primarily by criminal groups in search of profit, but also by pharmacists, though the profession is reluctant to admit the extent of the problem.³¹ What is clear by all accounts is the extent of addiction, in part because the medicines being distributed are all highly addictive. The main prescription medicines available on the streets are shown in box 1.

Any country that has seen conflict or major social upheaval is likely to experience trauma and stress, which not only exacerbates existing conditions of mental illness or instability but may also trigger post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, or anxiety. Certainly, in an assessment of the prison system undertaken in December 2012, ten of the seventeen prisons visited had inmates with mental health needs.³² This is likely to reflect the broader population.

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Box 1. Prescription Medicine Abuse Summary

Tramadol (tramadol hydrochloride) is a painkiller used to treat moderate to severe pain and is from a class of medicines known as opioid agonists. Tramadol can be habit-forming and monitoring changes in behavior or mood is advised. Brand names include ConZip, Rybix ODT, Ryzolt, and Ultram.

Clonazepam is used to control certain forms of seizure and to alleviate panic attacks. It falls within the benzodiazepine family, which work to decrease abnormal electrical brain activity. Clonazepam can be used to treat restlessness and acute catatonic conditions but can be habit forming. It is marketed, among others, by Roche Pharmaceuticals as Klonopin or Rivotril and is known as Roche in Libya.

Trihexyphenidyl is used to treat tremors and was formerly used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease. It can also be used to counteract the side effects of antipsychotic treatment. The drug can have hallucinogenic or euphoric effects when consumed in high doses. Recreational use by Iraqi soldiers to relieve combat stress has been reported. Brand names include Artane and Tremin. It is referred to as Artane in Libya.

Zolpidem is an insomnia medication, classified as a sedative-hypnotic. It is recommended that it be taken for short periods because, like other sleep medications, it is associated with dependence. Brand names include Ambien, Ambien CR, Edluar, Intermezzo, and Zolpimist.

Propranolol is classified as a beta blocker and is used to treat anxiety, panic attacks, abnormal heart rhythms, hypertension, and heart disease, among other conditions. Propranolol has also been recently used as part of an experimental treatment for PTSD. Brand names include AstraZeneca, Anaprilinum, Bedranol, Ciplar, Inderal, InnoPran, Deralin, and Sumial.

Migrant Smuggling

Libya has been a long-standing and important entrepôt for the migrant smuggling and human trafficking trade from Africa to Europe. Although under Qaddafi the country was an intermittently hostile environment for illegal immigration—maintaining draconian citizenship laws that contravened the majority of international human rights norms and standards—the main control placed on the migrant smuggling trade was along the northern sea border to prevent passage to Europe. The borders to the Sahelian band were left relatively uncontrolled, however, and the seminomadic populations of Tabu and Toureg moved with comparative ease in the border zones. The networks through which migrants from sub-Saharan Africa were smuggled became not only well established but also closely integrated into the local economies of border towns, particularly in the south. Forced labor was often a cost of migrating—migrants having to pay their passage into Libya and then again to Europe. The illegal labor provided by the trade was also used to provide many state services that Libyan nationals preferred not to undertake themselves.

During the 2011 conflict, the tide of migration turned. Waves of Toureg and Tabu turned south, many returning to kin in Mali, Niger, or Chad. Immediately after the revolution, how-

ever, and since, the situation in Libya stabilized, the tide turned north again, and the number of migrants trafficked through Libya increased substantially. Libya is once again perceived as a potential entry point for migrants moving across the Sahel bound for Europe. Most migrants held in detention centers and prisons across Libya speak openly and recount both the reasons for seeking better life, the difficulties on their journey, and the abuse they are often subjected to.

The smuggling trade is characterized by certain features:

- Lack of economic opportunity and political instability are key push factors for migrants, who are often unrealistic about what kind of work they will be able to get in Libya or Europe. Migration in most cases is an act of desperation, and many migrants point out that the push factors in West Africa in particular continue to strengthen.
- The smuggling of migrants is highly organized and, particularly in the south, has the widespread involvement of local Libyans, who connect with smuggling groups in the source countries and act as guides across the Sahara. They also serve as drivers and provide other forms of support. Involvement in the trade is an accepted economic practice in some communities. “These people want to move to Europe, not stay here, and we make good money.”³³
- Migrants often pay for their way northward by working for the traffickers at different locations. Many migrants worked for some time in Sebha before moving on, and almost all spent some time in Tripoli earning money for the next stage of the journey to Europe. Smugglers keep in contact with them during this period, ascertaining how much money they have and negotiating a price.
- Migrants are particularly vulnerable to abuse at several points along the way. If arrested, many are held for months with little prospect of release, the requirement for which is the money to afford a ticket home. A parallel criminal business in extortion has developed alongside that of smuggling, as money is demanded from migrants to buy their freedom.³⁴

Four main smuggling routes characterize the trade. The first route is from the coastal states on the western side of West Africa, mainly the Gambia, Senegal, and Mali. The second is from the more easterly regions, mainly Nigeria. The third is from Sudan, in particular the Darfur region. People moving along this route though also come from as far as Somalia and Eritrea. The final route is for Egyptians moving westward to Libya to escape political and economic instability. Libya is also home to a large number of migrants from South Asia, a significant proportion of whom appeared to have acquired fraudulently issued visas.³⁵

The position of migrant smuggling at the center of the hierarchy of illicit markets and criminal activities in Libya is significant. Migrant smuggling appears to be interlinked with illicit trade and trafficking of numerous other commodities. Networks from Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, and other sub-Saharan states have been found to be active in trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in Libya.³⁶ Particularly in Nigerian networks, the relationship between those smuggling persons and the transit of illicit drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, is a close one. The continuing victimization inherent in many forms of human trafficking provides a relatively durable income stream for transnational criminal groups, and the penalties against human trafficking or smuggling, to the extent that they exist, tend to be far less harsh than those for drug trafficking. Thus, when all else fails, migrant smuggling is a reliable economic pillar.

As figure 2 shows, although the source countries and experiences of trafficked persons vary, the trade is characterized by danger, abuses, and violations of basic human rights. Furthermore, despite the relatively high cost of passage—the majority pay the equivalent of \$800 to \$1,000 for passage into Libya and double that for onward passage to Europe³⁷—the majority of migrants fail to reach their target destination.

Illicit Drugs

Libya is an established market and a transit zone for hashish, a transit point for heroin and cocaine, and—in the larger cities of Tripoli, Misurata, and Benghazi—a nascent market for both heroin and cocaine. Cocaine and heroin are trafficked from the southwest either directly northward from Sebha or along the southern border and northward for onward movement through Egypt. Hashish is transported either from West Africa along the same routes as heroin and cocaine or eastward from Morocco along the Libyan coast to Egypt.

Certain shifts in the control of the drug trade since the revolution have important implications for each of the five regional criminal subeconomies. These are most apparent on the western border but also apply in other parts of the country. The presence of concentrations of West Africans, particularly Nigerians, in many of the coastal cities suggests an emerging correlation between the smuggling of migrants and of drugs. Intriguingly, the few seizures of cocaine or heroin have been made in conjunction with the arrest of West Africans. Evidence also points to the diversification into new drug markets, as Libya has been noted to be a major hub for methamphetamine trafficking from West Africa to East and Southeast Asia.³⁸

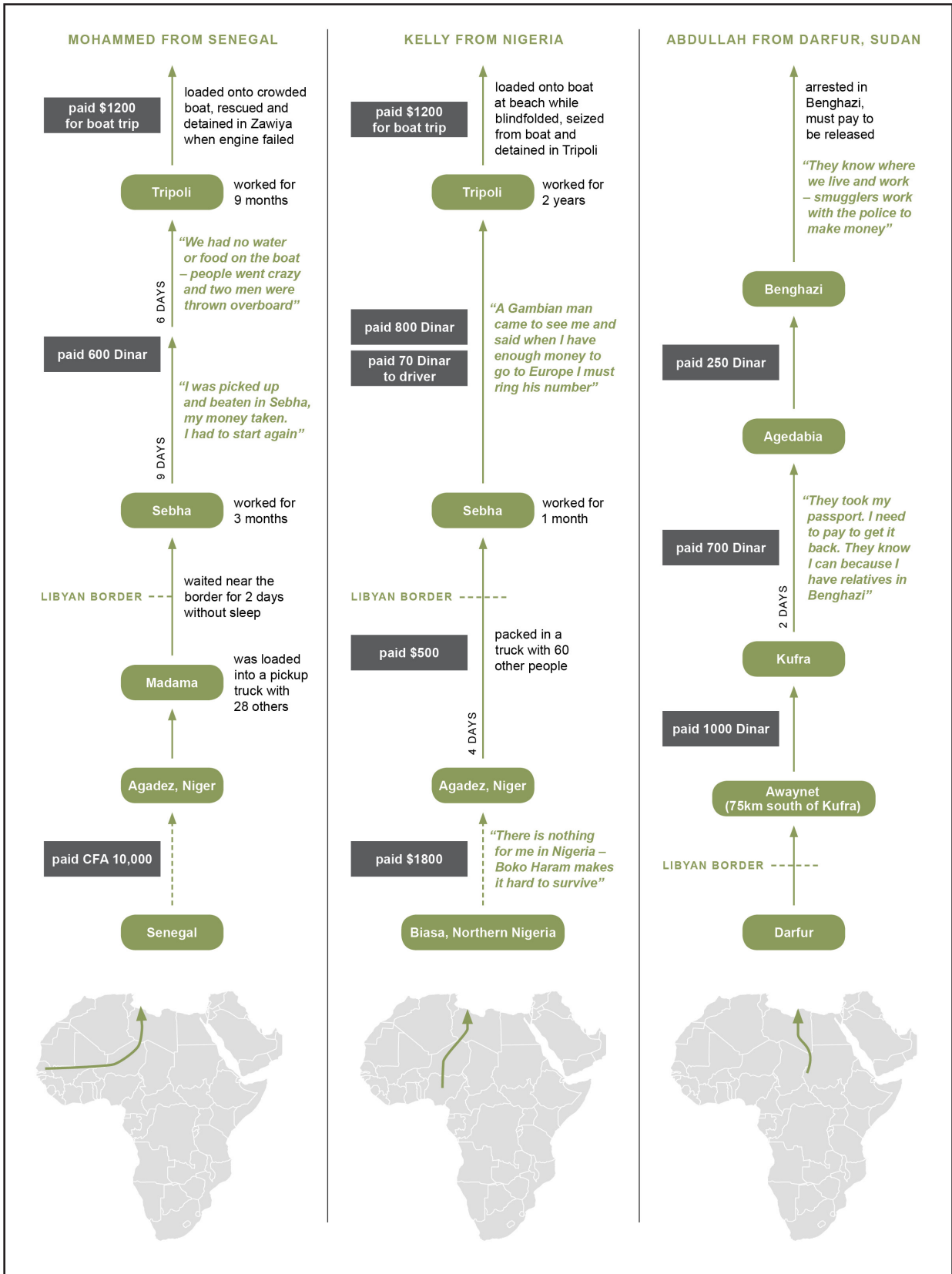
Because of the scale of the profits involved in the trade of illicit drugs, the control of the movement of drugs is likely to have the longest-term consequences for Libya. The cocaine trade in West Africa is valued at upward of \$4 billion annually,³⁹ and thus those involved in its trade have the purchasing power to corrupt state institutions and to warp political processes, should they choose to do so. Although the link with migrant smuggling, particularly in respect to Nigerian groups, appears to be growing, movement of drugs, particularly cocaine, appears to be unlike other commodities in that it is tightly insulated from other forms of trafficking and smuggling and its protection is conducted by well-armed, organized, and violent gangs. Evidence is scant of crossover between those involved in trafficking of hashish to those involved in cocaine or heroin. “Drugs,” a prominent former smuggler observed, “are for the big guys. You can’t get involved, and you will lose your life if you try. The profits are too high, and the people too powerful.”⁴⁰

The extent to which the trans-Saharan overland route is used for extensive cocaine smuggling remains a matter of contention.⁴¹ What is clear, however, is that cocaine is reaching Libya by the overland route. In Libya thus far, little evidence exists that those connected in the trafficking of cocaine are integrating or engaging in the statebuilding process, but the effects of this influence may not be immediately apparent. As in neighboring Mali, drug trafficking contributed to a widespread culture of institutionalized corruption that undermined the fledgling democracy.⁴² Furthermore, as the institutions of the state are strengthened and the reach of criminal justice and law enforcement systems is reasserted, the incentive for transnational organized crime groups to corrupt and distort that process will be increased.

The trafficking of hashish from the southwest, like the smuggling of migrants, seems to result in greater community involvement, such as the use of young men as drivers, than the more specialized trafficking of either cocaine or heroin does. Hashish trafficking from Morocco along the coast is far more organized, and though some quantities of the drug

The trafficking of hashish from the southwest seems to result in greater community involvement, such as the use of young men as drivers, than the more specialized trafficking of either cocaine or heroin does.

Figure 2. Three Stories of Human Smuggling



are off-loaded along the Libyan coast, the majority of shipments move eastward toward Egypt. The use of hashish appears to be widespread in the coastal cities, particularly among young men.

Given the comparative wealth concentrated in Tripoli and the coastal cities, and that cash transfer payments to young men are a key political strategy during the transition, it was suggested in several interviews that Libya is being cultivated by drug traffickers to become a market for additional recreational drugs.⁴³ Evidence is scant, however, of widespread cocaine and heroin use. A growth in drug demand has typically followed the transit routes, however, and caution and close monitoring would be well served in this area.

Market for Protection

Weapons trafficking stands at the apex of the hierarchy of illicit markets in Libya and has become the most pivotal lever in the illicit economy. The main flow comes from the northwest, particularly Benghazi and Tripoli, to the southeast. After the revolution, weapons smuggling out of Libya to Sahelian countries in the south—namely Mali, Niger, and Chad—was heavy. Libyan arms were attributed to having played a critical role in the insurgency and civil war in Mali in 2011 and 2012. This flow has largely been stemmed, in part because fewer weapons are now in circulation but also because the price has gone up because of competing demands elsewhere: An AK-47 available in local markets for around 3,000 dinar in 2012 is now available for 12,000.⁴⁴

The proliferation of illicit arms has transformed all other criminal markets. Discussions with smugglers have highlighted both the degree to which the illicit trade benefits from instability and the importance that weapons and protection have assumed in the smuggling trade in the northeast particularly. “You did not have to be armed in the past,” reported one smuggler who now has a full time bodyguard accompanying him, “but now it is essential to conduct business. There is a great deal of competition in the market.”⁴⁵ This competition, particularly on the northwest border, has triggered fundamental changes to the nature of the smuggling economy in Libya. Protection is now sold as a commodity to smugglers, and what has evolved is a typology of smuggling or trafficking roles. This is illustrated in figure 3.

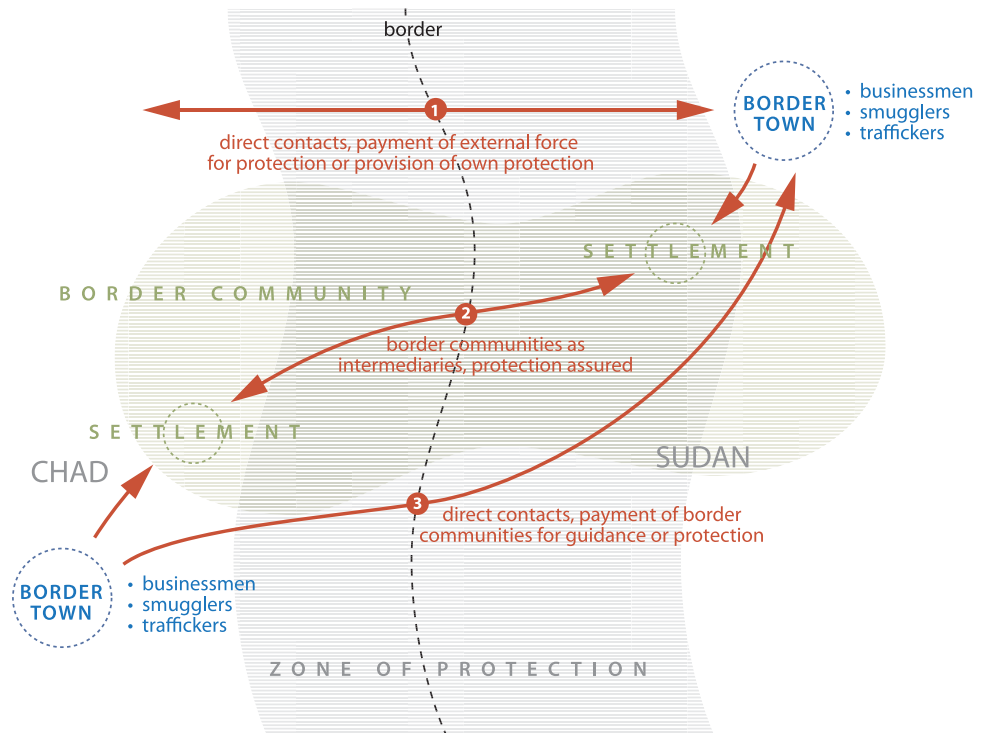
The typologies, rather than being definitive of every case, illustrate the central importance of the transaction around protection, not only to the success of a trafficking or smuggling enterprise but also in their juxtaposition to the security and law institutions of the state. Thus, the defining feature of each typology centers around how and between whom the transaction for protection takes place. There are broadly three possible models:

Typology 1—Transacting for protection with an external force. Traffickers or businessmen arrange the deal directly with their contacts on the other side of the border. They pay an external force for protection—a bodyguard or security unit, for example—although the traffickers themselves will also carry arms. Such a scenario takes place in areas where no single group has clear control over the territory or where there is competition for control.

The clearest example of a type 1 scenario is on the northwest border from the coast to Nalut, where Libya Shield and Libyan Army forces are protecting the border. Because government forces are still not strong enough to end trafficking, traffickers hire to protect their cargo and to fight back if challenged. A second example is where an external force has moved in to provide protection but has itself been compromised by trafficking. Payment for protection is thus made to the force that facilitates the trafficking. The arrangements between Zintani forces and trafficking groups on the western border are an example.

The proliferation of illicit arms has transformed all other criminal markets.

Figure 3. Three Typologies of Smuggling and Trafficking



Typology 2—Granting safe passage. When a community or tribal group has strong control over a territory, traffickers are in a position to broker safe passage for a fee. Indeed, in some cases, the community itself may have facilitated in brokering the transaction. In such cases, armed protection may not be required given that the area is under the control of the community and safe passage has been assured, though a guide and light protection may be provided.

A good example is the movement of goods through Tabu-controlled areas along the southern border south of Kufrah. In this case, traffickers have shifted established trafficking routes expressly to avoid state customs or border posts and to move instead through the zone of protection established by the Tabu. Although a fee is involved, the environment is stable and does not attract the attention of the state. This does not mean that some Tabu don't engage in trafficking, only that they also make some profit from granting safe passage.

Typology 3—Transacting for protection with adjacent communities. Cross-border agreements are relevant for transit through outlying areas of control. Although the community cannot offer as complete a zone of protection as it can for its own territory, it nonetheless does have the specialized knowledge and capacity to offer a transaction for protection and guidance, including provision of security.

Typology 3 is particularly characteristic of the Toureg groups in facilitating trafficking in the area south of Ghat to the border with Niger. As their influence erodes, they have had to fall back to facilitating the transit of illicit trade through areas where their control is reduced but their established networks are still considerable.

A prerequisite for the growth of the protection market has been the absence of adequate state control and institutions of security to provide citizen security and regulate markets and a continued lack of capacity to police borders and respond to criminal acts.

A prerequisite for the growth of the protection market has been the absence of adequate state control and institutions of security.

Immediately after the revolution, the national army and police were decimated: defections, desertions, and detentions leaving them powerless to establish order. The National Transitional Council thus encouraged the largely autonomous revolutionary brigades to formalize themselves into a transitional security force—the Libyan Shield Forces and the Supreme Security Committee.⁴⁶ Although this worked (surprisingly) well for a time, the balance between containing conflict and fuelling it is slowly tipping in the wrong direction. Armed groups both in the capital and in the regions are increasingly using military force to settle long-standing rivalries and geographic or clan differences, to secure political or economic influence, and to control illicit resource flows. As violence increases, so does the criminal market for arms and for protection, perpetuating a cycle that is becoming an entrenched feature of the political debate.

The pervasive presence of weapons has combined with the absence of state control to ensure the growth of the protection market for legitimate trade as well as for illicit activities. Because weapons are available to all groups, the facilitation of movement of any kind of goods with value requires ensuring a transaction either with those who can ensure safety by providing the necessary firepower or with those who control specific areas and can thus ensure safe passage. Providing protection has thus become key to regulating both the criminal market and the broader Libyan economy. That it has done so further favors the political capital of the armed groups providing protection and detracts from the institutions of the state and their ability to project influence into the hinterlands and thus erodes the process of state consolidation.

International Arms Trade

A long-standing arms embargo has not prevented the growth of an export market for Libyan arms. Arms trafficking out of the country, as the most recent Security Council Resolution on Libya noted with concern, is having a negative impact on regional and international peace and security.⁴⁷ The UN Panel of Experts' final report on Libya documents extensively how weapons are being smuggled out to arm a range of insurgent movements across the Middle East and Africa. Specifically, the report notes an extensive arms-smuggling operation from Benghazi:

Egypt is facing an increasing challenge in terms of proliferation from Libya and, while the flows of military materiel in the country present a threat to its internal security, in particular given materiel acquisition by armed groups in the Sinai area, the country also appears to serve as a corridor for further onward proliferation in the region, including into the Gaza Strip.⁴⁸

Trafficking patterns from Libya to Egypt include transfers by land along the northern coastal area but also across its southern borders. Trafficking is operated by boat, primarily from Benghazi and Tobruk, on to Marsa Matruh in Egypt, from which the military material is transported by road to various parts of the country, including the Sinai area.

This overview provides an opening to consider the impact of each of the main markets across different regions in Libya.

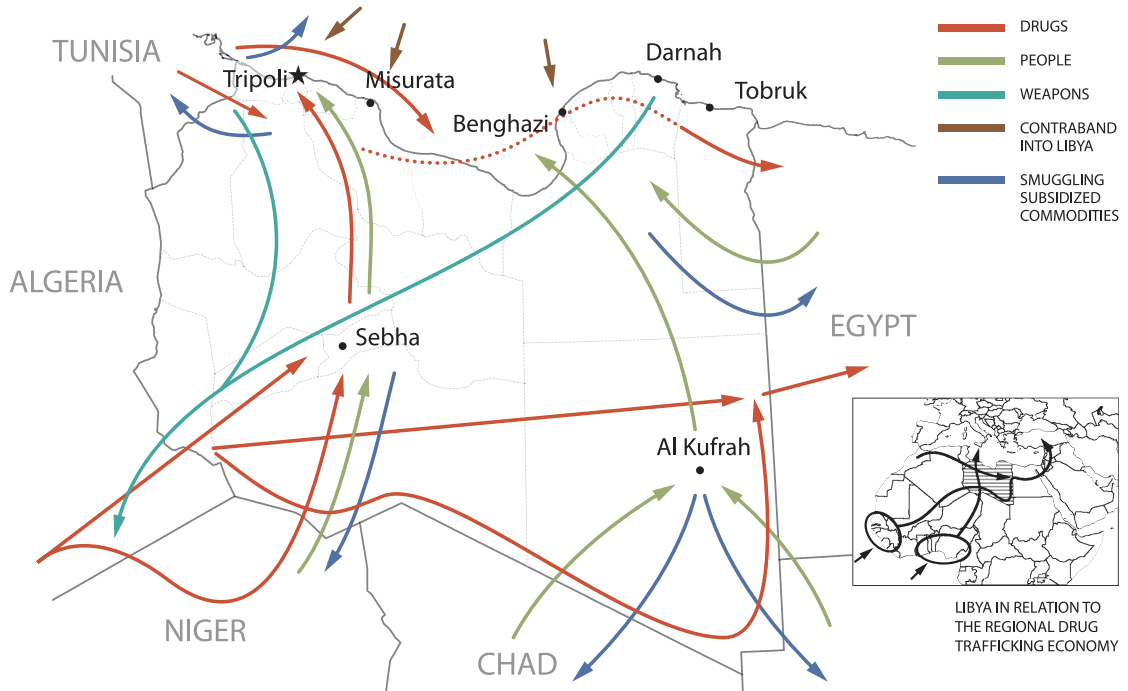
Regional Criminal Markets

An overview of illicit trafficking and smuggling trends for Libya as a whole provides a useful starting point for a discussion on subregional dynamics. Figure 4 presents a consolidated summary of the main trafficking routes across various commodities:

- Cocaine, heroin, and hashish are trafficked from the southwest, skirt the southern border of Libya, or cross directly the poorly governed south to Egypt. From the northwest, hashish from Morocco traverses Tunisia, finds a market in Libya, or moves over the border to Egypt.

Armed groups are increasingly using military force to settle long-standing rivalries and geographic or clan differences, to secure political or economic influence, and to control illicit resource flows.

Figure 4. Main Trafficking Routes



- People are smuggled both from the southwest and the southeast, as well as from across the border in Egypt.
- Smuggling of commodities out of Libya is concentrated in the northwest, the southwest, and the southeast.
- The main weapons flows since the revolution have moved from the coastal population centers to the southwest. A new flow of arms passes over the Egyptian border, bound for the conflict in Syria.
- The main coastal cities are also the destination points for smuggling commodities into the country.

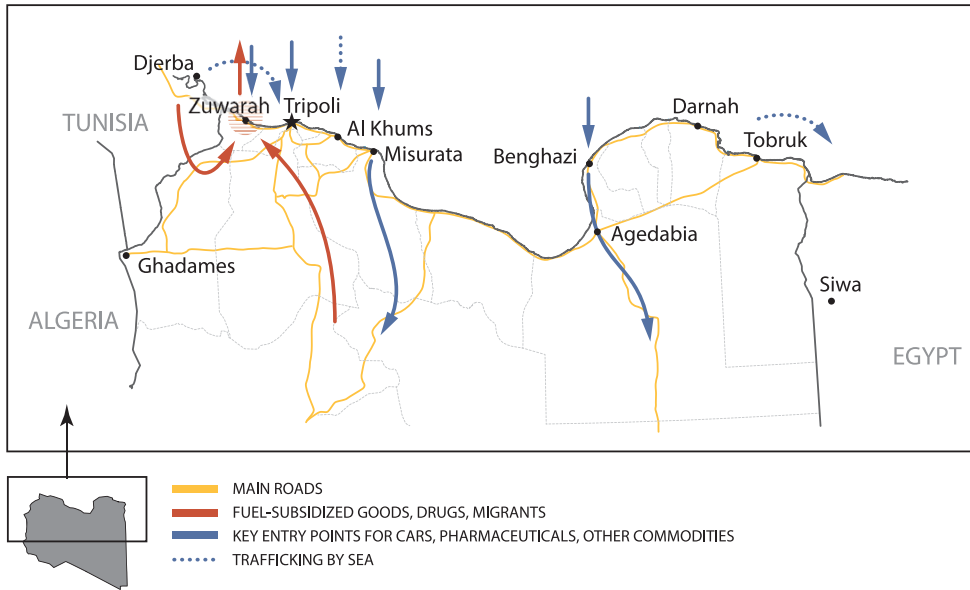
Nationally, despite the distinct characteristics and variety of actors at play regionally, one broad trajectory is shaping the way the illicit economy has developed since the revolution: Illicit markets have become key drivers for conflict.

What has been underplayed is the extent to which the major coastal cities have developed, relatively recently, into new hubs of criminal activity—not only as crucial transit points for trafficking and smuggling but also as substantial illicit markets in their own right (see figure 5). Rather than the rural-urban production linkages based on legitimate economic opportunity and trade that would ideally be fostered in a transition to sustainable and equitable development, if the current trajectory continues, the criminal economy will be the hub of the periphery and the urban centers.

Important distinctions between the various coastal cities and towns aside, a number of common strategic points are significant:

- In all of Libya’s major cities, where formal institutions of law enforcement have broken down, security either has been provided by a loose arrangement of crime fighters and

Figure 5. Dynamics of Libya's Coastal Cities



formal police or is conducted by the militias. In some cases, the militias also have elements involved in criminal activities. Some localized violence between groups can be traced directly back to a struggle to control the criminal market.

- The western side of the coast, and Zuwarah (marked in red, just west of Tripoli) in particular, developed into a significant locus of illicit activity. This is in part a reflection of its location: its proximity to the nearest European territory, situated at the juncture of two trafficking routes from the west and the south.
- The cities are increasingly becoming markets for drug consumption, in part because of the government’s disarmament strategy that has given cash payouts to many in the militia groups. In each of the main cities—Tripoli, Benghazi, and Misurata—drug consumption is seen as a growing threat. Illegal narcotics—mainly hashish, some heroin, and to a limited extent cocaine—are now more prevalent, as discussed earlier, but the city markets appear to have been flooded with prescription pharmaceuticals. Drug use has prompted behavior in Libya’s youth that has challenged prevailing cultural norms and social structures. In some cities, notably Tripoli, communities have reacted, sometimes with violence, against those seen to be fostering local demand for drugs.
- The air and seaports in coastal cities have become important points of control for those seeking profits from trafficking. In almost every case, tensions have arisen between groups seeking to control these facilities.
- Given their strategic locations, population concentrations, transportation infrastructure, and above average income levels, coastal cities have been the sites of the fiercest clashes between armed groups over access to criminal markets. These are repeatedly portrayed as political conflicts, but it is rare that an underlying economic interest cannot be easily identified. Interviews suggest that in many cases what may be under way is consolidation of power and control. Ironically, the least amount of conflict has occurred in Zuwarah, where the port and town are in the hands of a relatively cohesive group. In several urban areas, the transition period for the illicit economy appears to be drawing to an end, and control over criminal

Coastal cities have been the sites of the fiercest clashes between armed groups over access to criminal markets.

markets is consolidating. This has considerable consequences both for those seeking to suppress criminal enterprise in favor of legitimate trade, but also for the central statebuilding process.

Overall, national routes and trends belie the local dynamics of and conflicts over illicit markets. What is universal across illicit markets and regional economies, however, is that criminal control is consolidating into fewer hands. Groups with the most resources are clearly most able to exploit their position for increased control and political influence.

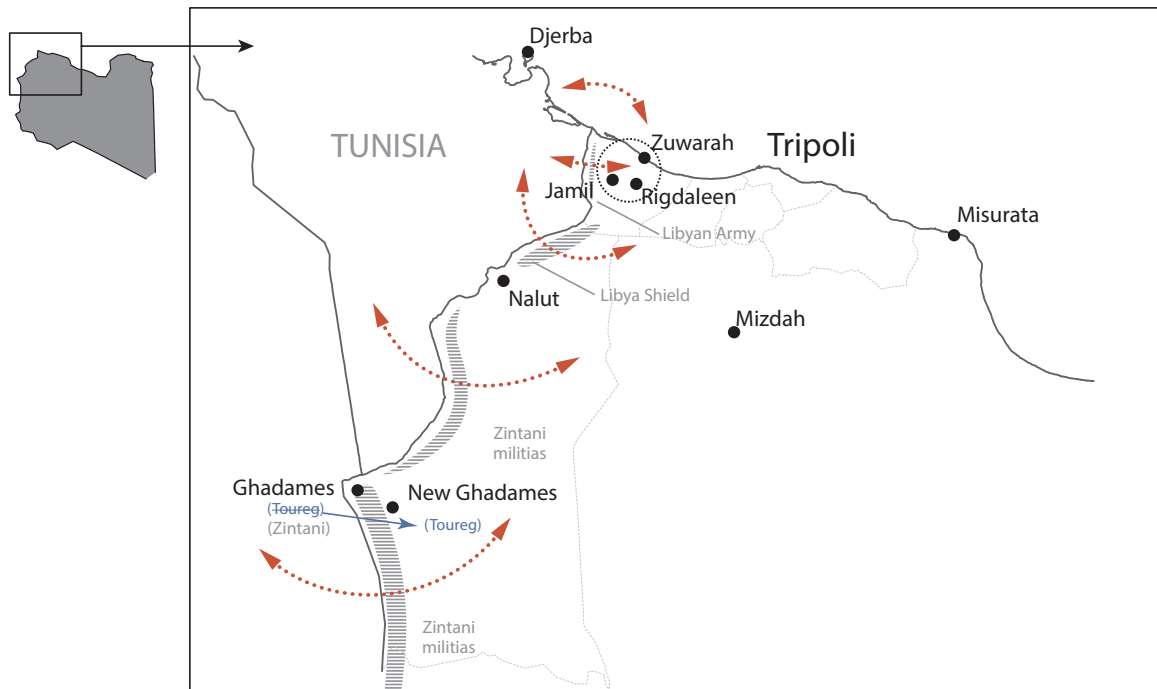
To take only an aggregate national assessment of illicit trafficking in Libya would be to obscure subregional distinctions critical to ensuring that policy responses reduce rather than exacerbate criminal activity and its impact on market dynamics, local communities, national stability, and the security of citizens.

Tripoli and the Northwest

The trafficking dynamics from Tripoli along the west coast and toward the Tunisian border are particularly significant in demonstrating the decisive impact of how the emerging criminal economy and organized criminal behavior are shaping the political transition. As shown in figure 6, a narrow corridor along the Tunisian border from Tripoli and Zuwarah on the coast down to Ghadames at the intersection with the borders of Tunisia and Algeria channels a dynamic two-way illicit economy.

Libya's capital, Tripoli, has become an important hub in the trafficking and smuggling economy. Its sheer size, the higher socioeconomic status of its inhabitants, its hosting of militia groups engaged in the statebuilding process, and that it is now a market for illicit drugs have made it in many ways the driver of the illicit economy. As in other cities, former and current

Figure 6. Trafficking Routes in the Northwest



members of militia groups have formed themselves into aptly named crime fighters or anti-crime units⁴⁹ in response to growing levels of crime, as well to address the perception that drug trafficking is having important social, economic, and governance consequences.

All interviews suggest that the use of drugs in Tripoli grew exponentially after the revolution.⁵⁰ As it did so, the number of related armed clashes also grew. These clashes have occurred between armed groups competing to control the trade and between crime fighters against the militias.⁵¹ In some cases, local communities targeted drug smugglers. In short, evidence indicates that criminal activities and the growing trade in drugs are having important implications for the overall social stability of the city.

The greatest problem—the widespread use of prescription painkillers—remains. An estimated thirty-five million tablets were seized at the airport in May 2013, for example. Hashish also appears to be widespread, and evidence of the availability of heroin and cocaine in Tripoli is accumulating. Two kilograms of cocaine, for example, were seized shortly before the mission arrived in March 2013.⁵²

Illicit drug distribution networks within Tripoli appear to have been built on a set of relationships in place during the Qaddafi era. The market remains in the hands of an estimated fifteen groups led by key individuals who control the majority of distribution. A significant proportion of these groups are West African. What is different now is that these groups can use their resources to recruit protection or to engage in violence. In addition, some elements within militia groups have sought either to tax criminal operations or to engage in the market themselves.⁵³

By contrast, the market for prescription pharmaceuticals has spawned new networks, which overlap militia groups and appear to include legitimate pharmacists. Established groups have an obvious advantage but are now struggling to retain complete control. One of the key smuggling routes into the city, for pharmaceuticals (generally referred to as tablets) in particular, is through the airport. Control over the airport, which is in the hands of Zintani militias, is thus key to the control of trafficking in the city. Attempts to evict the militias from the airport have to date failed, and several interlocutors reported that the airport was now used for bringing in a growing range of contraband goods.⁵⁴

Tripoli has for decades been a key staging point for migrants being smuggled to Europe. As noted earlier, migrants are held in safe houses in the city or work to earn their passage. Once they are able to pay, they are usually transferred by small boats from Garabuli beach, a long sandy piece of the coastline to the east of the city.⁵⁵

Even farther east is Al-Khums, a small coastal town of some two hundred thousand and a relatively well-developed port facility. The port is notable in being the location of one of the biggest seizures of drugs, approximately ten thousand tablets, which were received from a ship arriving from the Netherlands.⁵⁶

By all accounts, the port has been the site of a significant trafficking. After the major seizure in April 2013, the local council took a stronger stance, and the anticrime unit assumed control over the port, reporting that trafficking through it has all but stopped. Recent operations have also yielded several seizures of drugs, mainly hashish and pharmaceuticals but also small quantities of cocaine. The vigorous action by local community leaders does appear to have displaced the problem, but some trafficking reportedly still takes place along the neighboring coastal areas. A recently arrested drug user reported that between fifteen to twenty drug dealers are actively targeting the youth market but that the costs of tablets are on the increase.⁵⁷

With an estimated population of around three hundred thousand, Misurata is the third largest city in Libya after Tripoli and Benghazi and has long been a hub of commerce. In 2006,

One of the key smuggling routes into the city, for pharmaceuticals in particular, is through the airport.

a free trade zone was established in a 539-hectare complex to the south of the port. Now that the government is beginning to stabilize, an effort is being made to use the port as an international trading hub and to attract foreign investment. This strategy has worked reasonably well, according to the Misurata port manager: “We did in the last six months the equivalent of the last several years.”⁵⁸

As is often the case, however, economic growth in an underregulated environment quickly attracts illicit activity. The port processes some eighteen thousand containers a month, of which only a very small proportion are searched. Interviews within the port complex suggest considerable movement of illegal goods disguised as legitimate trade.⁵⁹ For example, a large number of secondhand European vehicles are brought through Misurata—an estimated three hundred thousand in 2012 alone—and these feed the great demand for vehicles in Libya and beyond into sub-Saharan Africa. It is reported that cars have regularly been used as storage places for illicit goods, including weapons and drugs. Furthermore, given the lack of controls and illicit trade, the vehicles being imported are often older than five years and barely roadworthy, constituting a health and safety hazard.⁶⁰

The port management reports that formal state security architecture is inadequate and that businessmen, who are often armed, threaten the management if an attempt is made to search or intervene in the movement of goods. “Nobody has authority, so everybody has authority,” says the manager responsible for security. “Guns are what determine influence in the port now.” Port management has tried to increase levels of security by entering into a specific contract with police and customs agents whereby they would be paid more for delivering a service, but it had little impact, and when it expired in May 2013, it was not renewed.⁶¹

Misurata was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting against Qaddafi forces, and the center of the town still bears the scars of the battle. Local militias remain extremely powerful, and at the time of the mission there were no local police to speak of. Community and religious leaders report that the police in Misurata had been drawn from surrounding rural communities and had little in common with the inhabitants. They have since been largely chased away, or no longer come to work, and the policing profession as a whole is not held in high esteem: “There is a sense now that we are free, that we don’t need police to control us.”⁶² The responsibility for providing local security and law enforcement has been assumed by a group from an anticrime unit formed only in March 2013 and headed by a former police officer who seems to have their trust. The work is being done on a volunteer basis, and no payment has yet been received from the Ministry of Interior, though wealthy business interests in the city have offered some support. Members of the anticrime unit have received little training and admit openly that they do not have a good picture of the emerging criminal economy of the city.

The anticrime unit is particularly concerned about the growth of the local drugs market and, in particular, allegations that elements of the militia are now involved in the trafficking and distribution of drugs within the city. “These people are very hard to tackle, they are well armed and people are scared of them,” reports the former police officer now in the anticrime unit.⁶³ In the month since the anticrime unit began operation, it has made seventeen seizures of drugs, including hashish, heroin, and tablets. Although cocaine was not seized, the unit has been told that it is available in the city. A recent arrest of a militia member in possession of two kilograms of hashish, however, did not lead to prosecution because the individual was freed by his colleagues. Another arrest for what was suspected to be a small bag of cocaine also resulted in a release. Pharmaceuticals, mainly Tramadol, have been seized in “the thousands.” “The tablet,” one former militia member reports, “was widely given out to wounded fighters in the city,

and it is now easily available and used by many.”⁶⁴ The anticrime unit suspects that the illegal pharmaceuticals are being shipped into the city in used cars. It recently received information and searched more than three hundred cars on several ships, seizing tablets stored inside.

The assessment mission tried to explore in greater detail the January 2013 murder of a prominent religious leader and member of the city council, Sheikh Mohamed Ben Othman, who spoke out against the drug trade. Media reports also suggested that the murder was drug related.⁶⁵ Although other religious and community leaders in the city continue to suggest that the killing was committed by those with an interest in the drug trade, both the anticrime unit and the chief prosecutor maintain that the reality is more complex. Whatever the motive, no investigation appears to be under way.

Moving south along the western border with Tunisia, the three cities of Zuwarah, Nalut, and Ghadames serve as storage and staging points, and the crossing points occur between them. As noted, Zuwarah is an important point for transshipment for a range of contraband leaving Libya, including people, drugs, arms, and subsidized goods. This is in part because of its geographic proximity to Malta and Italy and because of its location in the border area with Tunisia.

Since the revolution, several Zuwarahi businessmen have made themselves wealthy through illicit smuggling, of fuel in particular, which is highly profitable and closely controlled. Arms have also reportedly been trafficked to the Italian mafia. Zuwarah and neighboring towns Sabrata and Zawiya are home to a reasonably sized West African community involved in receiving smuggled migrants and trafficking cocaine across the Mediterranean.⁶⁶ In this sense, Zuwarah is a coastal trafficking hub, tightly controlled by local interests with little intervention or with the active collusion of law enforcement authorities.

No significant smuggling takes place through the official border posts but instead flows through established routes across the desert. Smuggling hashish from Morocco through Algeria for distribution both in Libya and in Egypt is particularly virulent in this region. The trade in alcohol from the Tunisian border is also significant. Both community officials and newly deployed Libya Shield Forces suggest that much of what has been seized is in fact expired produce.

Conflict in the northwest has focused on a cluster of towns along the Tunisian border. Close to the coast, this conflict has involved Zuwarah, Jamil, and Rigdaleen (see figure 6). Farther south, the border town of Ghadames has seen significant internal conflict and the ejection of its Toureg inhabitants to New Ghadames, Dirij, and Away, some forty kilometers southeast. The main conflict driver has been a combination of ongoing political conflicts and a competition for control over illicit resources.⁶⁷

One of the most significant developments in the region, however, is the deployment of forces along the border and the impact it is having on the local smuggling economy. Forces from the Libya Shield, the most established militia coalition reporting to the Ministry of Defense, have been deployed along the border with Tunisia as far south as the border town of Nalut. Soldiers and commanders of this force indicate that they are making significant efforts to stem the flow of smuggled goods but that confrontations with smugglers have grown in intensity. In the two hundred kilometers of the border for which they are responsible, the Libya Shield forces estimate that some thirty to forty trucks cross the border every day. Although the unit numbers approximately four hundred men, given the requirement to guard the border twenty-four hours a day, only fifty are deployed on the border at any one time. One officer says that the smugglers “always appear to be aware of our movements” and clearly have an edge over the dedicated but inadequate Libya Shield force.⁶⁸

The militia group that has become progressively more active since the revolution in the smuggling trade heralds from the small town of Zintan. The Zintani played a key role in the overthrow of Qaddafi and since the revolution, thanks to their arms and organization, have retained considerable power. Previously Zintan-based groups had few opportunities to engage in smuggling activities, and only a handful of families were involved, partly because the town lies some distance from the border. As noted, however, in the security vacuum that followed the revolution, the criminal markets became more open, and new opportunities arose. Rather than engage in the smuggling trade directly, Zintan groups created a niche in providing protection for transit. “You cannot move across their section of the border unless you pay, and they protect the route because of the lack of security.”⁶⁹ The evidence suggests that because of the comparative degree of power that Zintan militias exert in the region, their deployment has had a considerable impact on the local trafficking economy. By providing a more secure and stabilized environment, akin to a regulated criminal market, the Zintani have prompted a shift in the trafficking routes from the northern areas where Libya Shield forces are more active to areas farther south where the Zintani militias are present.⁷⁰

Interviews also suggest, however, a degree of disdain as to how the Zintani groups do business. One smuggler sums it up this way: “They are not very sophisticated, and they want profits quickly; they do not see some of the bigger business opportunities.”⁷¹ The Zintani are a force to be reckoned with nonetheless, “and once they have acquired a taste for the profits of smuggling, it will be hard to wean them from it.”⁷²

A relatively neutral assessment would indicate that the Zintani have in fact been quite strategic in their entry into the illicit markets in the region. They moved early to take control of the airport and land border post in Ghadames and have reportedly initiated a divide and conquer strategy between the local Toureg communities. A displaced local Toureg leader explains, “People are convinced that the Zintani caused the conflict to open up space for trafficking.”⁷³ This perspective is consistent with other interviews along the border and elsewhere in the country that the Zintani groups have actively moved to ensure control of the smuggling economy on the western border.

Control over smuggling and trafficking has also been a key source of conflict in a number of other northern towns. Although these conflicts have broadly been portrayed to outsiders as clashes between those who supported Qaddafi and those who did not, they are in fact also strongly motivated by a fight over who controls trafficking routes and the resources they generate. Tensions between the smuggling towns on the Tunisian border stem from Qaddafi’s policy of favoring those perceived to be his supporters and restricting access to others, and this pattern is particularly evident in the triangle of Zuwarah, Jamil, and Rigdaleen.

The Berber town of Zuwarah has become a key hub for smuggling in the northwest region. This is in part on the basis of its geographic location as a port entrepôt for smuggled goods northward or along the coast, as well as across the western border with Tunisia. Given its Berber majority, the town was always viewed with suspicion by Qaddafi, so to dissipate the influence of Berber populations on Libya’s western border, two towns, Jamil and Rigdaleen, were established farther to the west. These towns were populated by people of Arab origin, many of whom had strong ties to communities across the border in Tunisia. An important form of livelihood for the people of these two towns thus became cross-border smuggling, to which the government in Tripoli largely consented.

Living close to the border, possessing local knowledge of the ways through the desert into Tunisia, and operating effectively under the protection of Qaddafi, the economies of the two

Control over smuggling and trafficking has also been a key source of conflict in a number of other northern towns.

towns boomed. Jamil in particular, just forty kilometers from the border and eighty kilometers from the sea, grew rapidly. The economic interests of these towns were closely tied to support for Qaddafi and remained a stronghold throughout the revolution. “The only thing that was not allowed at the time,” says a local community leader, “was for smugglers to carry weapons: But all that has changed.”⁷⁴

Since the revolution, the local smuggling economy has evolved, increased, and become highly contested: “The big difference is that we are all armed and that we buy our protection.”⁷⁵ Government protection has been replaced by a mosaic of negotiated arrangements and what is known as the rule of the gun. Another key difference is the degree to which Zuwarah is now itself a hub for trafficking. Previously excluded from the trade, it now has both the resources and the weaponry to project influence, and trafficking over the border has become an important source of local income. A prominent community leader recounted how several local businessmen in the area have become wealthy since the revolution by smuggling subsidized Libyan oil through the port and onto Malta and Europe. “To be honest, people do not see anything wrong in it. It is like a business. There is an opportunity, and people exploit it.” Access to the sea has become a comparative advantage for Zuwarah because it provides a platform not only for receiving goods from Tunisia and luxury cars from Europe but also for the transfer of subsidized goods (mainly fuel) to the north.⁷⁶ The port and the surrounding coastal area are an active embarkation point for illegal immigrants moving northward.

There have also been several cocaine seizures along the western coast in neighboring Sabrata and Zawiya, which have been found in the possession of West African immigrants either based in these towns for a number of years or moving northwards.⁷⁷ Sabrata, Al Jailat, and Zawiya are each also significant sea crossing points for sub-Saharan Africans and commodity smuggling and transit towns.

The two Arab towns of Jamil and Rigdaleen have become isolated from Zuwarah by a protective ring of roadblocks and sand barriers. Citizens from the former Qaddafi towns “never enter Zuwarah” and are “not welcome.” In short, trafficking and smuggling have continued but without state control and amidst heightened conflict. Interviewees explain that “if you have access to resources and weapons,” it is easy to take a share in the market.⁷⁸

Zintan’s increasing influence and role on the western border is evident in Jamil, where katibas once under the control of the local military council have reportedly been absorbed by the powerful Zintani militia brigade and deployed to man the border. The integrity of the katibas has raised concerns because they are made up of known smugglers, convicts who escaped during Qaddafi’s release of prisoners during the revolution (many also smugglers), and pro-Qaddafi volunteer fighters. “We contained them and integrated them,” notes the local military council leader, but now they’ve been put “in a place that’s not right.”⁷⁹

Sebha and the Southwest

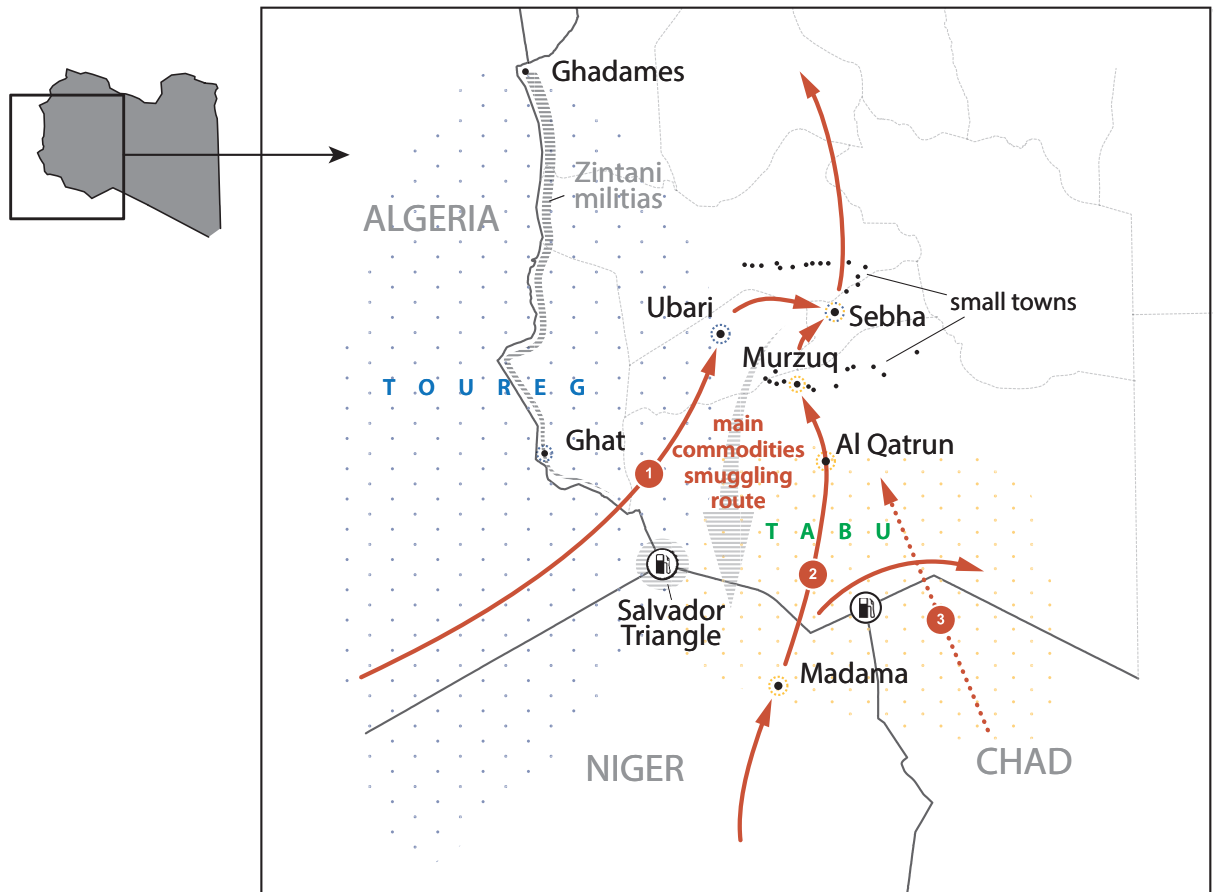
The southwestern quadrant of Libya is a key smuggling and trafficking hub for regional flows across the Sahel and Maghreb. It is here that trafficking routes from neighboring Algeria and Niger converge before illicit goods, including cocaine, move northward or eastward. Because this region is a major gateway to transnational trafficking routes, the flows here are particularly lucrative, and competition is particularly fierce. The main trafficking routes and their relationship to Sebha and the border regions are illustrated in figure 7.

Three key transnational trafficking routes converge on Sebha and the surrounding complex of towns:

Government protection has been replaced by a mosaic of negotiated arrangements and what is known as the rule of the gun.

- The first, originating from the small states on the West African coast, notably Guinea-Bissau, transits Mali and southern Algeria before entering Libya's southwestern border between the border post of Ghat and the so-called Salvador Triangle, where the borders of Algeria, Libya, and Niger converge. Traffickers avoid both the official border post at Ghat and the main road between Ghat and Sebha. Instead, for the route crossing the desert, traffickers use storage facilities in the towns to the southwest of Sebha, notably Ubari. This is also the primary route used for trafficking cocaine northward.
- The second route, which is predominantly for human trafficking and migrant smuggling, runs from across West Africa through a staging post in northern Niger at Madama and then northward to the important trafficking town of Murzuq, south of Sebha, where people and contraband are stored. Almost all criminal groups from across the Sahel and the Maghreb are engaged in trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and this route is critical. It is also used for the northward transit of drugs. Finally, the route hosts an active secondary two-way trade in subsidized and contraband goods, most notably alcohol and cigarettes.
- A third route from Chad through the town of Ghatron to Sebha is also in operation, though this appears to focus mainly on criminal groups transporting stolen cars from western Libya southward.

Figure 7. Trafficking Routes in the Southwest



Sebha is the largest urban area in the region and is often perceived as “the capital of the south for traffickers.”⁸⁰ It stands in fact at the intersection of two constellations of scattered smaller towns running north and south that also affect the political and economic dynamics in the region and facilitate illicit trade. The road from Sebha to the southwest runs to the border town of Ghat through the important wayside town of Ubari (see figure 7). This wider region is a multiethnic mix of tribes and communities in which individual towns are perceived as being owned by different groups.

The southern Algeria route is in the hands of Arab traders in Sebha itself but relies heavily on the knowledge of Toureg tribesmen in the border region who act as guides for smuggling convoys. The traditional geographic area where Toureg tribes have been active stretches from Ghadames in the northern border with Tunisia to the Salvador Triangle, where the borders of Algeria, Libya, and Niger meet. Ghat is a Toureg-controlled town; Ghatron and Murzuq are in the hands of the Tabu.

The southwest subregion is a “whole system tied together . . . developments in each place having an impact across the area.”⁸¹ Insecurity in the hub Sebha—a frequent occurrence—has the ability to trigger wider instability across the region. The surrounding towns provide cover for both the trafficking groups that operated under the previous regime as well as an emerging set of groups that have come into play since the revolution. Although the localized skirmishes in Sebha and the southwest are often attributed to “seemingly political factors,”⁸² local residents and national analysts acknowledge that political justifications often mask an underlying drive to control local trafficking routes.⁸³

Control over the smuggling and trafficking economy of southwestern Libya is tight. Several actors in the region report important shifts in both smuggling patterns and control over routes due to a combination of the conflict in Mali, the political process in Libya, and the heightened attention paid to trafficking through southern Algeria by local security forces. For example, officials in Sebha report that given the pressure brought by the Algerians in the southern region, it is now only viable to cross the border south of Ghat by foot.⁸⁴ One result has been a greater emphasis on the second route through Niger.

Interviews with people involved in or close to trafficking in Mali suggest that the French intervention has made traffickers much more nervous that their goods, primarily illicit drugs, might be seized.⁸⁵ The result is a shift in trafficking patterns through the route crossing the Nigerian border into Libya, which, due to the localized tribal ownership of different territories, has prompted a shift in the established balance of power from the Toureg into the hands of the Tabu, who control the border region from the Salvador Triangle to Sudan.⁸⁶

The Berber Toureg face a number of challenges, including a weakening of their historic control over trafficking routes on the western border, serious obstacles to their political inclusion in the unfolding transitional process in Tripoli, and the failed secessionist efforts in northern Mali. These developments are partly connected, which illustrates again the extent to which illicit economies and emerging patterns of organized crime are intertwined with the peace and state consolidation process in Libya.

Toureg control of drug trafficking in the region has been weakening for some time. The movement of the powerful Zintani militia groups along the border has displaced the Toureg from a traditional stronghold in Ghadames along the western border of Algeria and Tunisia. In northern Mali, the original Toureg control over cocaine and hashish trafficking has been reportedly weakened by Arab involvement in the trade.⁸⁷ These connections in turn have brought the Arab traders active in Sebha to greater prominence.

Local residents and national analysts acknowledge that political justifications often mask an underlying drive to control local trafficking routes.

In interviews, both the Toureg from the region and external observers suggest that the strategy of the Toureg is to bide their time. Zintani militias may exert considerable power along the border, but the Toureg are still essential for guiding convoys across the Sahara because their knowledge of it is unparalleled. Thus, though absolute control of the trafficking routes no longer lie with the Toureg, their traditional skills, deal-making capabilities, and contacts with smugglers on both sides of the border mean that their overall position in the smuggling economy will remain.

The political position of the Toureg has long been controversial because Toureg men from the communities in northern Niger and Mali were an important component of Qaddafi's armed forces and Qaddafi personally intervened as a mediator in some of the Toureg insurrections. True to form, however, Qaddafi's policies were contradictory and, as Toureg leaders are now eager to point out, although the Toureg did form standing brigades in the Libyan armed forces, they were also subjected to a secondary form of citizenship, and for the most part, their support for the regime quickly melted away. Many Toureg crossed the border into Mali, Niger, or Algeria once NATO began to enforce the no-fly zone.

Whatever the case, the sense across Libya is strong that the Toureg played a key role in propping up the regime and that Qaddafi tolerated their involvement in trafficking. Under the new political order, the Toureg are on the "back foot," as one of their leaders described it.⁸⁸ Their access to trafficking has been restricted but cannot be ended because of their decisive role. Because there are few other economic activities available to Toureg communities in the border regions, involvement in trafficking is essential to survival, and the Toureg are likely to fight hard to regain their influence.

The relationship between the Toureg and the Tabu groups is significant. Leaders from both communities highlight that the two groups seldom come into conflict over trafficking because both groups abide by a political agreement signed between the two tribes in 1875 that demarcated Toureg control as to the west of the Salvador Triangle and Tabu control to the east.⁸⁹ This agreement is still quoted by both parties as underpinning their relationship.

Overall, for the long term, the southwest will remain an area of some conflict, in part because the general belief among several observers is that the Zintani have stretched themselves too thin on the border and that eventually greater control of trafficking will revert to the Toureg. The fragmented nature of regional politics means that clear control over trafficking has not yet been achieved. Sebha remains vulnerable to clashes between groups, and the causes of some violence remains difficult even for locals to discern.⁹⁰

Kufrah and the Southeast

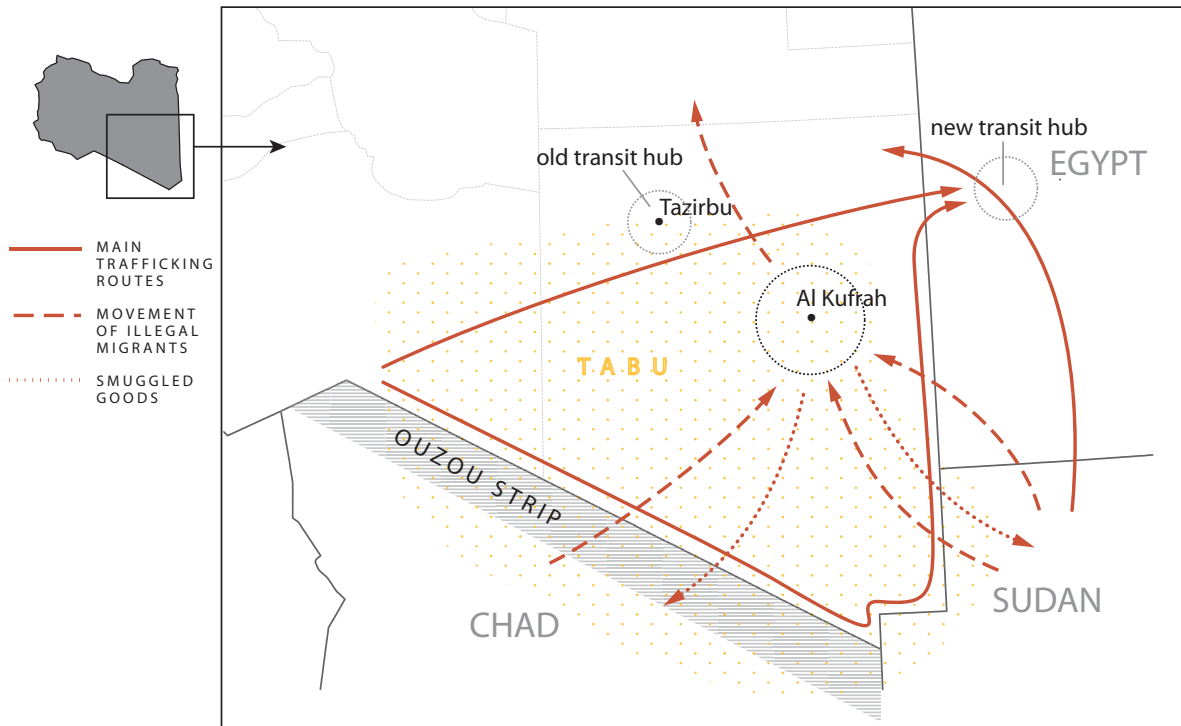
The south and southeastern border of Libya, deep in the Sahara desert bordering Egypt, Sudan, and Chad, is a sparsely populated region. Kufrah is the only significant urban area and thus a clear hub and staging post for all transnational criminal activity in the region (see figure 8).

The southeast is dominated by the Tabu and Zwaye, which have an integral role to play in all of the four major illicit markets in the region: drugs, people, arms, and commodities (particularly fuel). They, like the Toureg, are long-standing Sahel traders and have extensive knowledge of the routes across the desert.

The most significant illicit trade in this region is smuggling illegal migrants from Chad, Sudan, and some of the countries on the West African coast, mainly Ghana and Nigeria, who transit through Chad to the Kufrah area northward. Sudan is also a collection point for illicit movement of people from Somalia and Eritrea who then take this route.⁹¹

Because there are few other economic activities available to Toureg communities in the border regions, involvement in trafficking is essential to survival.

Figure 8. Trafficking Routes in the Southeast



Illicit commodities, particularly fuel, are smuggled southward, countertraffic to the flow of migrants, because, as a local Tabu community leader suggests, “The smuggling of fuel and commodities is not as profitable as transporting drugs and humans.”⁹² The trade in weapons flows south from Darnah and Benghazi through the Kufrah region and then eastward toward Niger and Mali but has slowed to a trickle as both demand and supply have dried up.

The region is also on the illicit drug transit route from West Africa. Reportedly, groups of Tabu guide traffickers along routes either along the southern border and then northward to a transfer point on the Egyptian side of the border or along a more direct route that transits southern Libya, crossing the border to Egypt to the north of Kufrah. From here, different groups take the drugs eastward to the Balkans and Europe.

Although the position of the Tabu is currently stronger than that of the Toureg, they are, through a complex mix of racism—the Tabu, unlike the Berber Toureg, are sub-Saharan Africans⁹³—and historic political exclusion, also engaged in a struggle for the recognition of their rights as Libyans. They maintain significant control over the southern border and the trafficking economy, and thus any effort to reduce or end trafficking and smuggling in the south will without doubt require a more inclusive political arrangement with the Tabu.

The Tabu played a significant part in the revolution despite their contradictory relationship with the Qaddafi state. In the 1970s, Qaddafi supported a Tabu insurgency in Chad in an attempt to secure a territorial claim over a piece of land, the Ouzou Strip, along the Chadian border. This included offers of citizenship to the stateless Tabu in exchange for military support. When the claim was defeated after French intervention in the late 1970s, the Tabu switched sides. In retaliation, Qaddafi encouraged an Arabization of the south. In particular, an Arab tribe, known as the Zwaye—“who had long fought with the Tabu over farmland and water resources”⁹⁴—became the subject of central government patronage. The Tabu fought

back against this marginalization, which included withdrawal of Libyan citizenship. An uprising in Kufrah in 2008 was violently suppressed by the Libyan army, and many Tabu were displaced outside the city. In this period, under government patronage, the Zwaye and other Arab tribes assumed control over the smuggling and trafficking economy of the region. The Zwaye accumulated significant wealth, including a fleet of some three thousand trucks that operated from Kufrah, transporting commodities south and migrants north.⁹⁵

However, as the revolution began and as the tenuous state control of the south weakened, the Tabu militia moved early and gained important ground. In early 2011, Qaddafi offered citizenship to the Tabu in return for support in the revolution and supplied them with weapons. They accepted the offer and then promptly continued their support of the revolution or—taking a less charitable view—set out to reoccupy land they regarded as historically theirs.

Using the Qaddafi weaponry, Tabu militia took control of Kufrah and swept both west and east. They secured the borders with Sudan and Chad pointedly “without any assistance from NATO”⁹⁶ and occupied the important smuggling towns of Qatrun and Murzuq as well as the important oil fields in the east. The consolidation of Tabu control of the south had important implications for the regional smuggling economy. Smuggling routes to the south were blocked, and the Zwaye were cornered into what became an increasingly divided town of Kufrah, with different sections for Arab (Zwaye) and African (Tabu). In the status quo, Kufrah’s role as a trafficking hub seems to have fallen away with the control of the Zwaye, and their trucks park unused within Kufrah itself.⁹⁷ On the outskirts, a Tabu community leader reports that Tabu areas have become an important area for storage and onward trafficking of illicit commodities.⁹⁸

Tabu leaders report that the Qadhahfa tribe based in Sebha, who used to control the southward movement of goods, have been reaching out to the Tabu to establish business relations. As a Tabu civil society leader explains, “People who have been excluded from the trade are very eager to reengage. They have the capital and the business experience. Those are often the things that [the Tabu] lack.” In response to the inevitable questions on Islamic extremists and their connections to illicit trade and drug trafficking, the Tabu leaders are dismissive. They report approaches by al-Qaeda, who seek to benefit from the trade, and little sympathy among the Tabu, who have rebuffed such approaches.⁹⁹

The overall picture in the southeast region is one of greater control of the illicit economy by elements within the Tabu. Ironically, however, this appears to have done little to bolster the Tabu’s position politically. Considerable discontent among Tabu community leaders remains about their marginalization and exclusion from economic and educational opportunities.¹⁰⁰

Tabu leaders justify their involvement in smuggling as being driven by a lack of economic opportunities and an increasing sense of political marginalization.¹⁰¹ They are also eager to emphasize that in some cases Tabu forces have prevented trafficking or arrested suspects. They highlight that the Tabu are not a homogenous group but consist of thirty-six separate but strongly interrelated tribes. The degree to which this is the case is hard to discern, and the evidence provided in interviews is contradictory, but what does appear to be true is that trafficking has continued unabated across southern Libya and that efforts to stem the flow have not proved successful. Traffickers who run the Kufrah-Agedabia route suggest that the flow of goods and people has continued in both directions and that the Tabu are paid for protection and to act as guides as required.¹⁰² As a Tabu leader reports, “The problem is becoming bigger, and as people develop interest, it is getting harder to control.”¹⁰³

Benghazi, Tobruk, and the Northeast

As in each of the other four regions, smuggling and trafficking on the northeastern border is defined by past conflicts and the complex governance arrangements that the Qaddafi regime used to balance tribal interests (see figure 9).

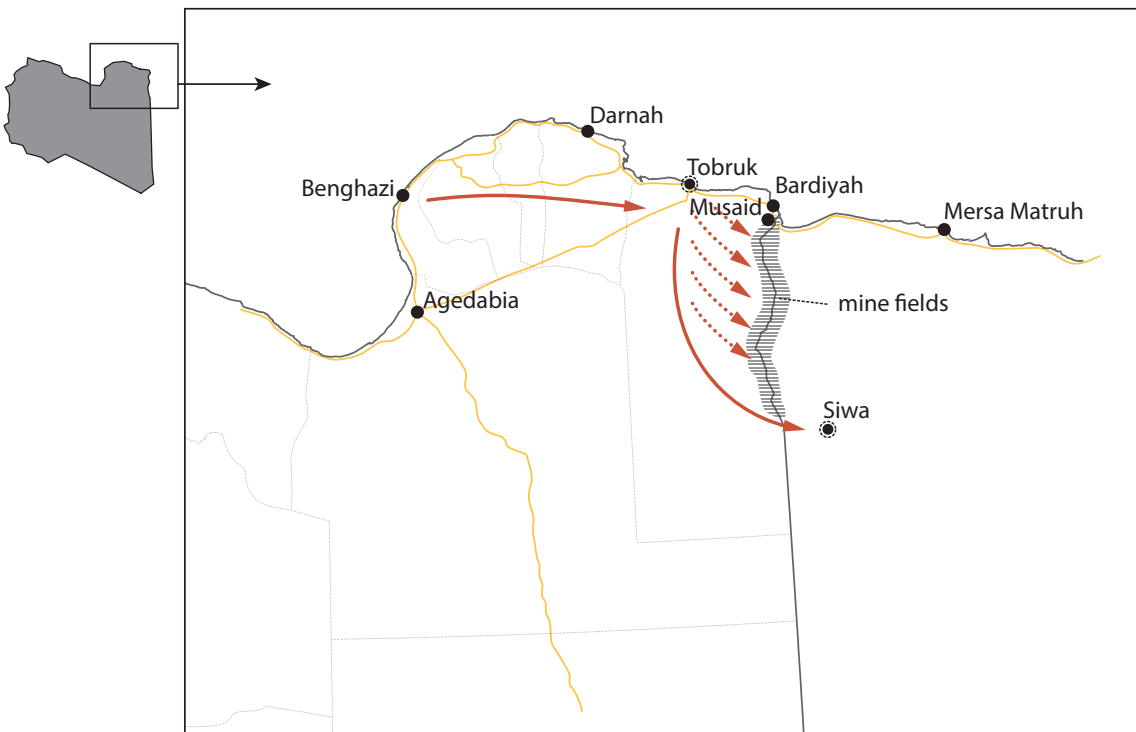
Benghazi, the second largest city in Libya, is an important western hub for illicit trafficking and trade across the Maghreb. Access and control of the ports in Benghazi is key to controlling the criminal economy in the region. Although the volume of goods does not appear to be at the same level as in Misurata, and the overall operation of the port (which was not privatized) is less effective, a significant quantity of containers are reportedly coming in, some of the goods being then driven southward to Kufrah, destined for Chad, and to a lesser extent Sudan. Both legal and illegal goods are brought in through Benghazi ports, and customs duties are not levied.¹⁰⁴

Unlike their counterparts in Misurata and Tripoli in the west, the police in Benghazi have to some extent continued to operate since the revolution, but they are weak and come under sustained attack. A clear pattern of assassinations has targeted mid-level and senior police officers. A senior city prosecutor reports that the criminal justice system remains largely outside the influence of the central government and that several powerful militias continue to exert control. Attacks against the police and the increasing criminalization of some militia groups in the city are an important defining feature of its emerging criminal economy.¹⁰⁵

As an alternative to the more prominent route through Kufrah, migrants from Sudan, particularly Darfur, also use the route from Sudan to Siwa, crossing into Libya and then making their way to Benghazi and the coast. Benghazi remains a key end point for migrants who

The police in Benghazi have to some extent continued to operate since the revolution, but they are weak and come under sustained attack.

Figure 9. Trafficking Routes in the Northeast



have paid their way to move northward from the West African coastal states, Niger, Chad, and Sudan (mainly Darfur). Interviews with arrested migrants in Benghazi's main prison point to the hardships migrants face in the city quite apart from the payment for the journey they have already made.¹⁰⁶

Militias in control of the main center for captured migrants in Benghazi, Ganfuda, appear to run a well-organized extortion racket. Migrants are arrested and on payment of money by their families are released again. The conditions at Ganfuda are also reported by judicial police officers to be some of the worst in the country.¹⁰⁷

Eight militia brigades are reported to operate in the city, and all are active in illicit activities to varying degrees. Militias compete for control of some markets. In several cases, a senior prosecutor reported, militias seized goods from each other at the airport or the seaport. In addition to and in some cases overlapping with the militia groups, gangs are proliferating in the city, and several are involved in the local distribution of tablets, heroin, and hashish.

The criminal market as a whole remains fragmented, and control in some sectors has not yet consolidated. All those now involved in law enforcement indicate that, as in the other large cities, drug use and drug trafficking are now major challenges for Benghazi. A broad analysis of the extent of the problem has not been conducted in the city, but the biggest challenge appears to be the massive increase in prescription drugs, mainly painkillers, hashish, some heroin, and ecstasy—or what are described as hallucinatory tablets. To further illustrate the prevalence of illicit drugs, the anticrime unit reports that without a great deal of effort it seized 500 kilograms of hashish in several days recently. A new anticrime unit has been established within Benghazi, although its leaders report that contact with the militia groups remains a key challenge.¹⁰⁸ The new unit consists of some 280 volunteers, and their operations have been recognized by the Ministry of Interior in Tripoli. However, relations between the police and the unit are reported to be poor, the unit arguing that the police have little legitimacy in the eyes of the community.

The largest town near the Egyptian border is the port city of Tobruk, which lies on the main coastal road some 93 miles (150 kilometers) east of the border post at Musaid. The eastern border with Egypt is also dominated by a long minefield of some 380 kilometers running south from Musaid. The minefield was first laid by Allied forces during World War II but was subsequently strengthened under the Qaddafi regime. It remains the defining physical feature of the border area in this region.

Smuggling along the Egyptian border is dominated by the illicit transfer of four main sets of commodities:

- goods, such as food and fuel but also a range of other items, including animals for slaughter;
- people, though the majority of smuggled migrants travel in a northerly or northwestern direction;
- drugs, particularly cannabis, traverse the long coastal route from Morocco, the main cocaine route being far to the south and having no direct impact on the criminal economy in and around Tobruk; and
- arms transfers over the Egyptian border bound for Sinai and Gaza, involving numerous armed clashes between Egyptian security forces and arms smugglers but few if any arrests, with transfers likely being moved southward through the desert into Egypt or by sea, rather than through the minefields.

The criminal market as a whole remains fragmented, and control in some sectors has not yet consolidated.

Although Tobruk itself cannot be classified as a smuggling town to the degree of Sebha or Kufrah in the south, several smaller towns between it and the border are clearly closely integrated into the smuggling market with Egypt. Senior police officials report that about 75 percent of all those involved in border smuggling have a base within Tobruk, the remaining 25 percent working from Benghazi. Smugglers from Tobruk do not operate only eastward; a limited number of more well-resourced groups and individuals also ply the route south to Kufrah, delivering subsidized goods for onward transfer. On the road to the main border post, 4x4 vehicles are ubiquitous at fuel stops and restaurants. Closer to the official border post, however, they are less of a presence because smugglers take their vehicles southward.

The border post is staffed by just over one hundred special forces from the Libyan Army, with shifts of just over ten men manning the border at any one time. The conditions at the post are poor: offices and equipment, accommodation, kitchen, and sanitary facilities all in a bad state of repair.

Border staff at the main crossing point indicate that smugglers cross far to the south of the border to the Egyptian town of Siwa rather than traverse the mined area. Siwa is considered a regional center for illicit smuggling activities, and efforts on the Egyptian side to contain the trade have had little impact. In interviews, smugglers scoff at the suggestion of border guards that no one can cross the mine field. It saves time and petrol if a more direct route is taken through the fields, and smugglers indicated that five crossing points through the minefields have now been cleared and are well known to a few smugglers.¹⁰⁹

As with other regions, the nature of cross-border trafficking and smuggling is bound up both with communities who straddle the border and the manner in which they were involved in illicit trafficking under the Qaddafi regime.¹¹⁰ On the border with Egypt, those in the border community of Awlad Ali could move freely over the border, having been issued identity cards for that purpose. The new Libyan government has made it mandatory for the Awlad Ali who have family on both sides of the border to have visas to cross it. During the visit of the mission team to the border post at Musaid, the Awlad Ali blockaded the border post on the Egyptian side, preventing the movement of any goods through the official checkpoint. During the Qaddafi era, community leaders in the region reported that smuggling was tightly controlled. The Awlad Ali engaged in low-level transfer of goods. Larger players, particularly from Sirte, Qaddafi's home town, transferred goods freely. "If someone from Sirte came to the border post," one official explained, "we just let them through without asking questions."¹¹¹ The smuggling and trafficking market has changed considerably since then, though Qaddafi's influence in the east had begun to wane before the revolution.¹¹²

Since the revolution, the one big change to the criminal market is that smugglers are now extremely well armed. Local police indicate that policing the border is a key challenge.¹¹³ Local smugglers point out that the pressure to make profits by transporting goods is greater than the efforts to contain the problem.¹¹⁴

Organized Crime and State Consolidation

The study of criminal markets and illicit regional economies in Libya shows that despite different protagonists and distinct characteristics at play at regional levels, a number of common trends clearly have important implications not only for state consolidation but also for Libya's peace and stability. Furthermore, the nature of the transition from autocratic control to democratic governance has, by proxy, created the conditions under which illicit trade and criminal

activity could thrive. If these dynamics are not effectively accounted for and mitigated in the statebuilding process, illicit trafficking and criminal behavior could reverse the positive trajectory of Libya's transition.

Consolidation and Integration

The difference between the emerging dynamics of crime in the cities along the coast and the nature of illicit trafficking in the interior increasingly suggests the emergence of two—albeit interconnected—criminal economies. Illicit networks are providing important links between the two areas, but the solutions in each case may need to be driven by separate political realities.

The first criminal economy is urban, within the three major cities of Tripoli, Misurata, and Benghazi. As noted, these cities are vibrant illicit markets in their own right, house infrastructure critical to both the licit and illicit trade (ports and airports), and are hubs of political activity. What can be seen here is the increasing fusion of crime and governance, a pathway that experience in Africa and the Middle East has shown to be highly detrimental to building a stable democratic state predicated on the rule of law. Given that the illicit resources are increasingly a key source of gain in Libya, they will continue to have an impact on shaping politics, and not for the good. The challenge for analysts of Libya will be to understand more effectively this emerging political economy of conflict, given that some of the resource drivers are based on illicit (and therefore often hidden) activities. As the regional summaries illustrate, this will be far from easy.

For these cities, consolidation of the criminal economy began early in the revolution, and thus now criminal markets are stabilizing as strength in arms, political influence, and purchasing power create exponential advantage for certain groups. Considerable evidence has been presented demonstrating that state and political actors are working less in the interests of the citizenship and of governance and more to protect their own power and influence. The growing community action against drug trafficking and the armed groups perceived to be involved is an important sign that ordinary people feel disenfranchised from being able to influence the governance of their neighborhoods through widely accepted political and institutional channels.

The revolution that overthrew Qaddafi originated in Libya's cities, where most of the population lives. Many young men participated in the conflict, and the use of psychotropic and mind-altering prescription drugs is extensive. No survey of drug use has been undertaken, but interviews with health professionals and young people suggest that the challenge is much greater than assumed. Senior law enforcement officials and at least one trafficker acknowledged that criminal groups have already identified the opportunity to develop a market for hard drugs in Libya.¹¹⁵

The prevalence of weapons also remains extensive despite the outflow from the country and has been a decisive factor in shaping the market or protection of illicit activities. This, combined with the state provision of cash-based financial support (rather than genuine employment) to many young people, is a combustible combination that has considerable capacity to turn skirmishes for economic control of illicit resources into widespread political mobilization, instability, or outright conflict in urban areas.

The second criminal economy centers around communities that straddle Libya's land borders. Here, local power dynamics and illicit trade are still in part a legacy of trafficking under the Qaddafi regime. The revolution brought an opportunity to break down previous monopolies on the criminal markets that are critical sources of livelihood in otherwise resource-poor areas,

The growing community action against drug trafficking and the armed groups perceived to be involved is an important sign that ordinary people feel disenfranchised from being able to influence the governance of their neighborhoods.

prompting localized conflicts between groups. Because the capacity of the central state is too weak to project political influence, economic opportunity, or security into Libya's borderlands, the concept of state service delivery and national identity remains elusive at best. Border communities do not expect that this will change, have no experience of what a more democratic governance structure might look like, and thus have little incentive to engage in a central state.

Furthermore, what has filled the security vacuum is an increasingly comprehensive and effective market for protection in both criminal and noncriminal enterprises. The side industries of protectionism and rent-seeking continue to enhance the status and influence of armed criminal groups at the expense of state institutions and increase the incentive for these groups to recuse themselves rather than contribute to state consolidation. Any effort to suppress criminal activity will therefore also need to address criminal protection. Given the diversity of protagonists involved along any single trafficking route, effective responses will require customized strategies and solutions.

It is too early to say that the power struggles in either of these criminal economies are complete, but it is clear that the transition period for the illicit economy is nearing an end. Greater market control will mean fewer opportunities for new entries. For example, the drug markets are now effectively closed to new entrants.¹¹⁶ This has considerable consequences both for those seeking to suppress criminal enterprise in favor of legitimate trade and for the central statebuilding process.

Transnational Implications

From a transnational perspective, regional and international dynamics will strain Libya's fragile stability. As the maps in figures 6–9 show, Libya occupies a crucial geographic position astride the drug trafficking routes from West Africa and the Sahel and the movement of these drugs eastward through Egypt to the Balkans and Europe. Some evidence suggests that drugs transit the Mediterranean and that smuggling migrants and smuggling drugs, particularly by Nigerian groups, have become interlinked.¹¹⁷

Continued political instability in the Arab world, the recent events in Egypt in particular, will continue to have an impact on Libya's political, economic, and social foundations. In addition, the failure to respond more effectively to drug trafficking in West African coastal states had secondary effects in the Sahel. The continued failure to do so in both West Africa and the Sahel will have long-term implications for Libya and North Africa more generally. These illicit flows, of which cocaine is the most notable, have had important destabilizing effects along the West African coast (Guinea-Bissau) and in the Sahelian band (Mali). Recent events in the region—the focus of international enforcement efforts in West Africa¹¹⁸ and the establishment of peacekeeping forces in Mali—have displaced much of the illicit activity from their current routes. Additionally, the most marked emerging trend is the growth in demand for illicit and recreational drugs in Asia.¹¹⁹ The result is that “the African continent is becoming increasingly vulnerable in terms of the proliferation of trafficking routes.”¹²⁰

The intersection of the changing patterns of global drug demand and growing instability and dynamic markets to the south and east will combine to increase the pressure on Libya as a transit route. Distribution networks, some of which existed under the old regime, are already engaged in the transnational trafficking of prescription pharmaceuticals and hashish and thus are poised to embrace further transnational illicit trafficking and trade. In some cases, they have already begun exploring these possibilities.¹²¹

Any effort to suppress criminal activity will therefore also need to address criminal protection.

If the transit of greater quantities of increasingly lucrative drugs increases, and state consolidation does not occur more rapidly than it now is, the development of Libya as a transit state will have important implications for political stability in the longer term. The speed with which drug trafficking dominated the politics of countries farther to the south is sobering—a context in which many commentators argued that African and Sahelian states had much greater challenges than drug trafficking. Yet organized crime and drug trafficking, in concert with a range of other factors, proved an important driver of instability. The same could happen in North Africa, and Libya, given its geographic position, armed groups engaged in criminal economies, and potential for the development of a local market for drugs, is the most vulnerable state in the region.

Conclusion: Crafting a Response

All these factors suggest that an urgent policy focus is required to respond to the emerging challenge of organized crime in Libya and to reduce the influence of criminal groups on the statebuilding process. At the outset, the dynamics and political economies of criminal behavior in Libya suggest that an appropriate response to organized crime may rely less on justice and security interventions and more on carefully calibrated political management, coupled with well-deployed development approaches. Any durable solution must also undercut the market for protection and reestablish state control.

Crime Control

From a political perspective, there are two requirements. The first is to draw groups that are marginalized from decision making into the political process. Continued failure to do so will simply encourage illicit activities, endangering the long-term stability of the state. The primary targets for these engagements are the Tabu and the Toureg, but marginalized border communities on both the eastern and western borders also must be brought into the fold.

In the case of the Tabu and the Toureg, Libya has the financial resources to craft an agreement that provides political inclusion and economic opportunity in exchange for more effective control of the country's periphery and border regions in conjunction with the central government. Large-scale plans to use technologically advanced or equipment-intensive solutions to reduce or control trafficking along the borders are likely to fail in the absence of a political agreement.

A legitimate counterargument can be made that including the Tabu and Toureg in the political process at the central level would only grant them greater leverage and control over trafficking. After all, Zintani groups, which have good access and influence over the nascent state are, as suggested, deeply involved themselves in illicit business. The difference, however, is that the Zintani groups are using their newfound power to displace other groups and to dominate trafficking; this is as much of a political strategy as the offer by the peripheral groups to partner with the state to prevent it. Both the Tuareg and the Tabu already have control of the illicit economy, though it has been argued that the influence of the Toureg is slipping.

The key point is that controlling the southern borders effectively will be impossible without some form of political dialogue. Sharing the responsibility also means access to some power in Tripoli. Tabu and Toureg leaders see a great deal of symbolism attached to such responsibility and argue that they have shown that they can stamp out trafficking if required. There is no hint of such an approach from the Zintani; politics and the relationship between different groups and the illicit economy therefore require a differently calibrated approach in each case.

Controlling the southern borders effectively will be impossible without some form of political dialogue.

Evidence from interviews suggests that militia groups are increasingly interested in controlling local criminal economies; this is most obvious in the desire of some of these groups to control sea and airports to facilitate trafficking and smuggling.¹²² It is imperative that the central state does not allow the consolidation of criminalized control over its borders and entry and exit points. It should be a key objective to return these facilities to state control wherever possible.

Reversing the Cycle

From an economic perspective, reducing subsidies is the key to decreasing the flow of smuggled commodities to Libya's neighbors. Doing so carries great political risk, however, not least of which is that huge numbers of people in all border areas earn a livelihood smuggling. Disrupting the current arrangements may well lead to greater discontent with the center, from where such policies would emanate, and may also lead to greater competition for the remaining illicit markets.

The long-term solution can only rely on a careful transition from commodity subsidies and cash handouts to creating sustainable and legitimate economic opportunities, particularly for young people, in both border regions and the country's cities. That is a tall order, but not impossible: Libyans are enterprising people who, as in smuggling, have responded to market incentives. As a recent review of the economies of the region in the wake of Arab Spring concludes, "There is no sustainable response to the aspirations of the youth without the private sector playing a leading role and without governments in the region taking needed steps to build confidence in the private sector. That requires a substantial reform agenda, including private sector leaders who focus on production and innovation rather than on seeking rents."¹²³ Central to any such policies must be the development of marketable skills among Libya's young people.¹²⁴

From a social perspective, a much greater effort is required to educate Libyans on the costs and consequences of illegal activities, especially the involvement of many communities in the smuggling of migrants. As has been demonstrated, many families condone the activities of young men who earn good money illegally assisting the movement of people northward. The same applies to pharmaceutical professionals who assist in illegally distributing prescription drugs. As in many postauthoritarian regimes, arbitrary application of the law and brutality of law enforcement have undercut the people's belief in state frameworks for regulation.¹²⁵ Social control has broken down, and local community leaders and family networks will be key conduits to reestablishing acceptable patterns of behavior.

Public Demand for State Protection

Law enforcement institutions in Libya, widely derided by the populace for their association with the Qaddafi regime, have for the most part broken down. Although some evidence suggests that many ordinary people now want the government to establish a reformed system of policing, police and prosecutors alike outlined the challenges of doing so. Most important is the degree to which militia groups in some areas see themselves both as the guardians of the law and the natural inheritors of the economic benefits of illicit markets. The long-term establishment of effective and legitimate systems of law enforcement will be a critical factor in responding to the challenge of organized crime.

Conventional ideas of building strong law enforcement institutions may only be part of the solution. As a recent study highlighted, solutions need to be designed to be specific to the local context and in recognition of vested interests rather than assuming an available blank slate.¹²⁶

Social control has broken down, and local community leaders and family networks will be key conduits to reestablishing acceptable patterns of behavior.

Libya is not a blank slate: Bargains will have to be struck between interest groups and on the exchange of political inclusion for the provision of security. What is required is to break the market for criminal protection, not only by building more effective national institutions of law enforcement but also by ensuring that local sources of power are drawn into the security nexus rather than being left outside it. In many cases, the nascent anticrime units are the building blocks of new law enforcement institutions, but they need to be held to higher levels of accountability to the communities they serve. The bargain between an emerging system of law enforcement and the people themselves is only beginning to be struck, most particularly in the bigger cities: It will have to be promoted, formalized, and reinforced. These local security arrangements offer the greatest chances for long-term success against organized crime. The real dangers include abuse of power and religious extremism. The overall development of local law enforcement is poorly understood, not least by outsiders with little access.

International Community

The international community has a critical role in supporting Libya in its response to the challenge of organized crime. That response, however, should not be driven by an approach that seeks only to prevent illicit flows to developed countries. Such a focus will inevitably rely on establishing a set of standard responses, such as attempts at increasing border control in the south, which under the circumstances are likely to fail or at best only have a limited impact on the problem. An overemphasis on technology-based solutions will not solve the political and social problems that are fostering the illicit trafficking and smuggling. The international community and Libya's emerging political elite must understand that there are no easy answers but that success can be achieved if solutions are developed with care, nuance, and cognizance of the specific local circumstances.

The second critical factor is that many of the trafficking and smuggling routes that enmesh Libya are regional, so a wider focus is required. It has already become clear that a failure to stem cocaine trafficking through the fragile states of West Africa had important secondary effects in Mali, and now arguably in Libya. The problems of West Africa, both the economic and social conditions that drive migrants north and the conditions that have created a transit zone for drugs, must be addressed to staunch their debilitating impact on stability further north.

There is an irony here. Ordinary Libyans now express their desire to be less engaged with the problems of sub-Saharan Africa in reaction against Qaddafi's approach of seeking support and influence in the south. Libya's economy is closely integrated with that of her Sahelian neighbors, which has implications for the coastal cities.

The illicit economy is shaping people's motivations as to how they engage with political processes, and it is strengthening the hand of those who use violence to obtain profit.

Cost of Failure

Making the connection between the country's changing political fortunes and the issue of the illicit economy is sometimes difficult. The rhetoric of political events may obscure the underlying economic interests. That the illicit economy drives events can no longer be overlooked. It is shaping people's motivations as to how they engage with political processes, and as emphasized, it is strengthening the hand of those who use violence to obtain profit—the classic mark of organized crime.

The cost of failing to address these issues in Libya would be severe: the intertwining of a weak and corrupted state that has minimal reach with a series of alternative centers of political and economic power. Organized crime will be unlikely to break the state apart. Ironically, it is establishing new links between economic centers in the north and south. It has an interest in

maintaining the state to ensure rents from the oil economy. All this said, the current pattern weakens the central institutions as it provides livelihoods and thus runs counter to political stability, state consolidation, and sustainable economic growth.

Libya's geographic position along the Mediterranean coast and in a region experiencing great political fragility speaks to the importance of getting the policy mix right. The effects of potential criminal contagion, even if it occurs slowly and insidiously, will reverberate in North Africa, the Sahel, and potentially within Europe itself. The debate as to the implications of organized crime for statebuilding is expanding: Libya is rapidly emerging as a test case, and the cost of failure here is considerable, both for Libya as a democratic state, for her citizens, and for the broader region.

Notes

1. Wolfram Lacher, "Families, Tribes and Cities in the Libyan Revolution," *Middle East Policy* 18, no. 4 (2011): 151.
2. This theme emerged in discussions with Libyan political leaders at several levels. For example, a political leader in Benghazi emphasized that the momentum of the transition was important to maintain and that it would lead to a dispersal of political energies to attack the illicit market. At the same time, he conceded that resources generated illicitly strengthened the hand of those potentially opposed to a political settlement. Interview, political leader, April 21, 2013.
3. See, for example, Colette Rausch (ed.), *Combating Serious Crimes in Postconflict Societies* (Washington DC: USIP Press, 2006); UNODC and USIP, *Criminal Justice Reform in Post-Conflict States: A Guide for Practitioners* (New York: United Nations, 2012); Mark Shaw and Walter Kemp, *Spotting the Spoilers: A Guide to Analyzing Organized Crime in Fragile States* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2012).
4. James Cockayne, "Chasing Shadows: Strategic Responses to Organized Crime in Conflict-Affected Situations," *RUSI Journal* 158, no. 2 (2013): 13.
5. Walter Kemp, Mark Shaw, and Arthur Boutellis, *The Elephant in the Room: How Can Peace Operations Deal with Organized Crime?* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2013).
6. Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Rules and Regulations in Ungoverned Spaces: Illicit Economies, Criminals, and Belligerents," in Anne L. Clunan and Harold A. Trinkunas (eds.), *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 175–176.
7. Mark Shaw and Tuesday Reitano, "The Evolution of Organised Crime in Africa: Towards a New Response," Institute for Security Studies Paper no. 244, April 2013, 8–9. A recent book on global organized crime that contains a set of regional studies does not include any focus on North Africa. See Philip Reichel and Jay Albanese (eds.), *Handbook of Transnational Crime and Justice* (London: Sage, 2013).
8. William Reno has suggested that where such groups "provide security or enforce socially acceptable behavior," terms such as *violent entrepreneur* or *violent organizations* rather than *organized crime* may be more accurate reflections of reality. See Reno, "Understanding Criminality in West-African Conflicts," in James Cockayne and Adam Lupel (eds.), *Peace Operations and Organized Crime: Enemies or Allies?* (London: Routledge, 2011), 75.
9. Quoted in Alison Pargeter, *Libya: The Rise and Fall of Qaddafi* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 151.
10. This information emerged from interviews conducted in all parts of Libya during the assessment. It is well captured in Peter Cole, "Borderline Chaos? Stabilizing Libya's Periphery," in Frederic Wehrey and Anouar Boukhars (eds.), *Perilous Desert: Insecurity in the Sahara* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013), 37–43.
11. This point is made in several recent overviews of the revolution and its aftermath. See Alia Brahim, "Libya's Revolution," *Journal of North African Studies* 16, no. 4 (2011): 605–24; Youssef Mohammad Sawani, "Post-Qadhafi Libya: Interactive Dynamics and the Political Future," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2012): 1–26.
12. Raphael Lefevre, "Commentary on Current Events in North Africa," *Journal of North African Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013): 373–77.
13. See Frederic Wehrey, "Libya's Revolution at Two Years: Perils and Achievements," *Mediterranean Politics* 18, no. 1 (2013): 112–18.
14. Peter Cole, "Borderline Chaos? Stabilizing Libya's Periphery," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2012.
15. Interview, economist, April 11, 2013.

16. For example, interviews in southern Libya showed just how willing young men were to act as drivers to transport illegal migrants northward. Asked whether these activities were condoned by their families, one person with extensive knowledge of trafficking in the south replied that “this is not seen as wrong . . . as long as they are making money, their families are happy.” Interview, April 19, 2013.
17. Mark Shaw, “Assessing Transnational Organized Crime: Results of a Pilot Study of 40 Selected Organized Criminal Groups in 16 Countries,” *Trends in Organized Crime* 6, no. 2 (2000): 53–58.
18. See Shaw and Kemp, *Spotting the Spoilers*.
19. Interviews were conducted in the following locations: Al-Khums; Benghazi; Jamil; Kufrah; Misurata; Musaid; Rigdaleen; Sebha; Shgega; Tripoli and surrounds; Tobruk; Zawiya; Zuwarah; Zintan; and at several roadside locations along major trafficking routes. The assessment team was unable to reach Ghadames and Ubari because of security concerns. Further interviews with relevant interlocutors from those and other relevant areas were held in Tripoli.
20. A useful discussion of conducting interviews when researching organized crime groups is to be found in Federico Varese, *The Russian Mafia: Private Protection in a New Market Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 11–12.
21. Informal discussions were also held with many detainees, in some cases with officials present.
22. Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw, “Check Your Blind Spot: Confronting Criminal Spoilers in the Sahel,” ISS Policy Brief No. 39, March 14, 2013.
23. Hamid Dabashi, *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* (London: Zed, 2012), 175.
24. The point on value was emphasized in particular by a police officer in Sebha. Interview, April 11, 2013.
25. Interview, April 25, 2013.
26. Interview, economist, April 11, 2013.
27. Ralph Chami et al., *Libya Beyond the Revolution: Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2012), p. 12.
28. Nigel Ash, “Oil Minister Says Fuel Subsidies to go by 2016,” *Libya Herald*, May 4, 2013, www.libyaherald.com/2013/05/04/oil-minister-says-fuel-subsidies-to-go-by-2016.
29. Interview, port management and security officials, April 19, 2013.
30. Interview, coast guard officials, April 9, 2013; interview, port management and security officials, April 19, 2013.
31. Interview, pharmacist, April 21, 2013.
32. Ministry of Justice of Libya and the United States Institute of Peace, “A Prison System that Befits a Free and Democratic Libya,” unpublished report, December 2012.
33. Interview, November 2012.
34. More detail is provided on one such case in the discussion on Benghazi.
35. Interviews with prison and immigration officials and South Asian migrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan, April 22–23, 2013.
36. U.S. State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2013* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013).
37. Ibid.
38. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2013* (New York: UNODC), 57.
39. UNODC, *World Drug Report 2010* (Vienna: UNODC), 242.
40. Interview, former smuggler, April 24, 2013.
41. See, for example, Wolfram Lacher, “Challenging the Myth of the Drug-Terror Nexus in the Sahel,” WACD Background Paper no. 4, West Africa Commission on Drugs, August 2013.
42. Reitano and Shaw, “Check Your Blind Spot.”
43. Interview, anticrime unit spokesperson, April 25, 2013.
44. Amounts for the purchase of weapons were provided by several interlocutors. Although they varied, they were consistent in that all interviews suggested that the local price for weapons was increasing.
45. Interview, smuggler, April 16, 2013.
46. International Crisis Group, “Divided We Stand: Libya’s Enduring Conflicts,” Middle East/North Africa Report no. 130, September 14, 2012, www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/130-divided-we-stand-libyas-enduring-conflicts.aspx.
47. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2095 (2013), March 14, 2013, www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2095.pdf.
48. UN Panel of Experts Report on Libya, “Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011) Concerning Libya,” Report no. S/2013/99, March 9, 2013, para. 157, www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_99.pdf.
49. The term was translated in both forms during our research.

50. Interview, nurse, April 26, 2013.
51. In one case, an alleged drug trafficker died after being detained by an anticrime unit, apparently after having been subjected to torture. Interviews, April 19, 2013.
52. Interview, spokesman for anticrime units, April 25, 2013.
53. Interviews with several law enforcement officials and the head of the anticrime units, a consultant, a spokesman, and an active member, April 14–15 and April 25, 2013.
54. Ibid.
55. The assessment team visited the beach. Interviews with migrants suggest that the majority are blindfolded when they reach the beach but in most cases had driven for an hour from Tripoli, which is consistent with Garabuli being used.
56. Interview, April 18, 2013.
57. Interview, recently arrested drug user, April 18, 2013.
58. Interview, April 18, 2013.
59. Ibid.
60. Libya law previously disallowed cars older than five years from being imported, but this has apparently been changed under pressure from importers and given the demand for vehicles.
61. Interview, port, April 18, 2013.
62. Comments from one participant during an interview of a group of religious and community leaders, Misurata, April 18, 2013.
63. Interview, April 18, 2013.
64. Interview, anticrime unit, April 18, 2013.
65. Taher Zarooq, "Misrata Council Member Murdered," *Libya Herald*, January 26, 2013, www.libyaherald.com/2013/01/26/misrata-council-member-murdered.
66. The assessment team spoke with recently arrested Nigerian drug traffickers detained in a prison. Their house had been raided by local authorities, and cocaine was seized. They report that their arrest is part of a dispute with neighbors who wish to have them removed. Interview, April 16, 2013.
67. This point was made in all of the interviews conducted in the towns concerned.
68. Interview, Libya Shield members, April 16, 2013. As a reflection of how violent the struggle between smugglers and Libya Shield have become, one of the brothers of an interviewee had recently been killed in a shoot-out with smugglers.
69. Interview, former smuggler, April 24, 2013.
70. The assessment mission itself tried to conduct interviews within Zintan but were turned back, April 13, 2013.
71. Interview, former smuggler, April 24, 2013. This point was also made by several Toureg, interview, April 14, 2013.
72. Ibid.
73. Interview, Toureg leaders displaced from Ghadames, April 13, 2013.
74. Interview, community leader and Anti Crime Unit, April 17, 2013.
75. Informal discussions, local smugglers, April 17, 2013.
76. Interviews, local businessman and community leader from Zuwarah, April 24 and September 20, 2013.
77. Interview, police, April 16, 2013.
78. Interview, anticrime unit, April 17, 2013.
79. Interview, local military council, June 29, 2013; interview, smugglers/Libya Shield border guards, June 29, 2013; interview, smuggling/farming family, July 1, 2013.
80. This or similar formulations were used by a variety of interviewees.
81. Interview, economist, April 11, 2013.
82. Interview, council member, April 11, 2013.
83. Interviews, prominent lawyer and journalist, April 12, 2013.
84. Interview, military officials, April 11, 2013.
85. Based on interviews in Mali and Niger in April 2012, in association with a study on organized crime and statehood funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (www.ned.org) and the Institute for Security Studies (www.issafrika.org).
86. Interviews with Tabu community leaders, April 14, 25, and 26, 2013.
87. Interviews conducted as part of a National Endowment for Democracy project undertaken for the Institute for Security Studies, Kidal, April 8, 2013.
88. Interview, senior Toureg leader, April 25, 2013.
89. The agreement was mentioned in interviews with both Toureg and Tabu leaders.

90. A good example while the assessment team was in Sebha is a sustained shoot-out between the police and a group attacking their station. Local explanations varied from an attack by Qaddafi supporters to traffickers attempting to get their vehicles back to a revenge attack on the police related to a previous incident.
91. Interviews, Somali and Eritrean detainees, April 25, 2013.
92. Interview, Tabu community leader, April 12, 2013.
93. The commander of a border post along the Egyptian-Libyan frontier expressed a view heard several times by the assessment team: "These people cannot protect the border of Libya; they are black and not Libyans," interview, April 20, 2013.
94. Peter Cole, "Borderline Chaos?" 50.
95. Interview, community leader from Kufrah, April 22, 2013.
96. Interview, Tabu brigade commander, April 14, 2013.
97. Interview, Zwaye community leader regarded as neutral in the conflict, April 22, 2013.
98. Interview, Tabu community leader, April 25, 2013.
99. Ibid.
100. Interview, young Tabu civil society leader, April 26, 2013.
101. A point made by all Tabu who were interviewed.
102. Informal communication, driver engaged in working the smuggling route between Kufrah and the coast, April 23, 2013.
103. Interview, Tabu community leader, April 25, 2013.
104. Interview, member of the legal community from Benghazi, April 21, 2013.
105. Interview, community leader and doctor, April 22, 2013.
106. Interview with detainees, Libyan Prison, April 22, 2013.
107. The assessment team tried without success to access the facility.
108. Interview, anticrime unit, April 22, 2013.
109. Informal communication, driver engaged in smuggling, Agedabia-Tobruk road, April 21, 2013.
110. Interview, police, April 21, 2013.
111. Interview, border officials, April 20, 2013.
112. Interview, community leaders, April 21, 2013.
113. Interview, group of police officers, April 21, 2013. The police compound contained several four-wheel drive vehicles recently confiscated from smugglers.
114. The degree to which smuggling permeates the local community is such that local drivers have a good knowledge of smuggling patterns. In one case, a driver phoned ahead to warn others of the seizure by police of smuggled goods on the main road between Tobruk and the border post.
115. Interview, anticrime unit member, April 15, 2013; interview, former smuggler, April 24, 2013.
116. The point that drugs, given the profits involved and the cohesive nature of the groups involved, were now essentially outside of the reach of other criminal networks was made repeatedly in interviews, most notably with those with some experience in the smuggling economy. Interview, smugglers, April 17, 2013; interview, Tabu community leaders, April 14, 26, 2013.
117. In several cases, for example, Nigerians linked to the smuggling of migrants have been arrested with cocaine. The assessment team interviewed three such individuals on April 15, 2013.
118. Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw, "The End of Impunity? After the Kingpins, What Next for Guinea-Bissau?" Institute for Security Studies Policy Brief no. 44, July 2013.
119. UNODC, *World Drug Report 2013*.
120. Ibid., ix.
121. Interview, individual engaged with community groups in an antidrug campaign, April 14, 2013.
122. Interviews, anticrime unit, April 21, 2013.
123. Magdi Amin et al., *After the Spring: Economic Transitions in the Arab World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 124.
124. This is a point made by almost all the young Libyans with whom the assessment team discussed the issue of illicit economies. "There is often no choice for people but to act illegally." Interview, Sebha economist, April 11, 2013.
125. See, for example, UNODC and USIP, *Criminal Justice Reform*.
126. Antonio Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion* (London: Hurst, 2011), 231.



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As Libya emerges from forty years of autocratic rule, the criminal economy is undermining government efforts at state consolidation. This report maps the flow of weapons, migrants, drugs, and smuggled goods through Libya and details the interactions between armed groups who control illicit markets and local communities. The authors warn that efforts to beef up border control policing will not be sufficient. Combating organized crime in Libya requires a broader approach that will engage marginalized groups in a political process. Failure to do so will affect not only Libya but the region as well.

Related Links

- *Security Sector Transformation in the Arab Awakening* by Donald J. Planty (Special Report, September 2012)
- *Security Sector Transformation in North Africa and the Middle East* by Mark Sedra (Special Report, November 2011)
- *Stakeholders of Libya's February 17 Revolution* by Susanne Tarkowski Tempelhof and Manal Omar (Special Report, December 2011)
- *Extending Libya's Transitional Period: Capitalizing on the Constitutional Moment* by Jason Gluck (Peace Brief, September 2011)

