Post-Qaddafi Libya: What Went Wrong?

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Abstract

February 17, 2017 marked the sixth anniversary of the Libyan uprisings. However, for Libyans there is not much to celebrate considering the fact that the country remains in a state of brutal civil war with a severe power and security vacuum. Even though there have been two general elections in Libya, there are still two governments – UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) and eastern-based House of Representatives (HOR) – refuting each other's legitimacy while the rest of the country remains in a state of turmoil as numerous armed groups control large swaths of land all across Libya. This article explores the reasons why Libya instead of transitioning into a stable and democratic state, fell into turmoil and why it continues to be in such a state. Doing so, this article argues that polarization is the primary cause for the existing turmoil in Libya as distrust and scepticism amongst different societies runs deep. However, polarization itself is simultaneously facilitated by historic grievances, as well as institutional shortcomings, security vacuum and international intervention. These four factors are not mutually exclusive, and hence lead towards exacerbation of polarization in Libya which makes the task of national reconciliation extremely hard to achieve. By highlighting these factors, this article envisages the need for national reconciliation amongst all major groups and actors in Libya, whom are willing to put grievances and feelings of distrust to rest. Moreover, for there to be any prospects of national reconciliation, it is also crucial to attain disarmament in Libya

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which forces all actors to settle their differences in an institutional environment rather on a battlefield.

Key Words

Libya, Qaddafi, North Africa, Middle East, Arab Uprisings

Introduction

It has been over six years since the people of Libya joined in the regional momentum of Arab Uprisings and demanded their autocratic leader Muammar al-Qaddafi to step down. Although it took longer for Libyans to overthrow Qaddafi than it took Tunisians or Egyptians to do the same with Zine Alabidien Ben Ali or Hosni Mubarak respectively, nonetheless eight months after the initial protests in Benghazi they managed to do so. Libya is indeed unique as a case study of the Arab Uprisings and of monarchies that fell to this regional so-called "spring." It is the only country whose incumbent ruler was not only captured by the local armed opposition groups, but also brutally killed. It is the only country where the opposition overthrew the regime with the help of foreign intervention, albeit predominantly airstrikes. It is also the country with the highest per capita gross national income (GNI) by far at the eve of Arab Uprisings among all the other neighbouring countries that went through this brutal transition (The World Bank, 2017a). Thus, nobody was willing to hedge their bets to predict how much time it would take for Libya to transition into a functioning democracy, if at all. Nevertheless, remarkably Libyan opposition managed to hold elections within nine months of Qaddafi's ouster, with a high voter turnout amongst the 2.8 million registered voters out of the roughly 3.5 million who were eligible (BBC, 2012). However, shortly after the election everything began to go downhill. Today, Libya not only continues to be in a brutal state of civil war, but arguably has never been this divided and lawless since its creation in 1951. So, what went wrong? Talking about the immediate neighbours specifically, how was it that Tunisia and Egypt managed to avoid a civil war after ouster of their authoritarian leaders but not Libya? This article seeks to find the answer and justify it through the evidence of available primary and largely secondary research resources.

The research that has been done to bring this article together shows that if there was a one-word answer for the question of "what went wrong?" it would simply be: polarization. However, the ongoing civil war and the fallout from the unsuccessful transition towards a functioning state, let alone democracy, is an extremely complicated conflict. Historically, polarization has existed ever since Libya formally came into existence as a sovereign state in 1951. And as this article argues, the polarization that currently persists in Libya is facilitated by not just historical grievances and differences, but also simultaneously by institutional shortcomings, security vacuum and international intervention.

Prior to Qaddafi getting killed on October, 20 2011, the population of Libya was divided one. At the time however it was mainly divided into either pro- or anti-Qaddafi blocs. Up until Qaddafi's death, all the opposition groups were unified in their goal, which was simply to overthrow his regime. When that goal was achieved, the next item on the agenda was how to govern Libya, and more importantly, who would govern the country of 6 million (The World Bank, 2017b). The National Transitional Council (NTC), which was set up early on during the protests decided to guide the uprisings towards a democratic and free Libya, however it never really enjoyed full support from everyone in Libya. As we shall see in the first section, disagreements arose over who allegedly supported Qaddafi against the uprisings and who sacrificed more for the "revolution." With such strong disagreements without any official process of reconciliation, further historic grievances came to light that intensified the division, and as a result, exacerbated polarization.

Historical grievances and disunity amongst the population was not in itself enough of a factor for the polarization that exists today in Libya, which has obstructed any attempts towards national reconciliation and state-building. This article will shed some light on what it argues are the three of most important factors that have facilitated the polarization and intensified the division of the Libyan society leading to a prolonged and brutal civil war. First of which, are the institutional shortcomings that were brought forward as a result of Qaddafi's existing governance system in place, which served primarily to keep the regime in control of

the country. This meant that when people got free from Qaddafi's rule, they were under the auspices of an inexperienced NTC that did not have any substantial institutions such as legislatures, ministries, or even a constitution at its disposal and hence had quite a bit of work to do. Moreover, the distrust and scepticism by the revolutionaries of people who had served in Qaddafi's regime meant that no one with prior experience of working in a state institution, albeit undemocratic, could participate in the post-Qaddafi state-building process.

Secondly, the need for disarmament in Libya has never been as crucial as during security vacuum that followed the uprisings. By having an intentionally weak military, Qaddafi not only put his own regime under danger of being overpowered by a rigorous NATO airstrike campaign, but it also meant that there was no unified standing army left that could fill in the security vacuum after Qaddafi was gone. Unlike Tunisia and Egypt, Libyan military generals who were on the side of revolutionaries defected very early on during protests and due the the fragile nature of military as an institution, there was nothing left to go back to once Qaddafi was gone. This meant that all the armed groups that helped fight battles within their own towns and cities were now responsible for the safety and security of those exact territories. As a result, there was an upsurge in the number of armed groups and military alliances all across Libya. Over the past six years these armed groups have merged into bigger military alliances that control large parts of Libya while continuing to fight with each other for supremacy. One of the most known ones is the Libyan National Army (LNA) headed by the retired General Khalifa Haftar and backed by the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HOR) which is dominant in the East of the country. In response to Haftar's rise in the summer of 2014, a coalition of militias from mainly Western cities of Libya including Tripoli and Misrata was formed under the name Libya Dawn. Due to differences between the Tripoli and Misrata based militias the Libya Dawn is now disbanded and no longer exists, however armed factions in Tripoli and Misrata still do. As of July 2017, Tripoli's armed groups can be categorized into two factions: one that supports the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) and its Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, and the other that doesn't – both continue to clash with each other. Then there are the

Misrata militias which also can be categorized into two factions – one which supports the UN-backed government, and the other that is headed by a former key figure in the Libya Dawn alliance and a former parliamentarian of the General National Congress (GNC) that was overthrown by the east-based HOR, partly due to the pressure by Haftar and his military campaign (Fitzgerald, 2017). These are just a few of the many armed groups and militias that currently exist in Libya, and so far, no one has been willing to give up its control over the lands it maintains because of the existing environment of distrust and cynicism for anyone other than the people of their own territory. This then adds into the spreading of polarization and makes the Libyan society go afar from any chances of national reconciliation and being unified under one government.

Thirdly, and lastly, we cannot ignore the role of international powers that are based outside of Libya but have the capacity to influence the ground realities in Libya. The international dimension of the Libyan revolution is not just limited to the role played by the NATO intervention. As this article argues, regional powers such as Qatar and Egypt had already intervened long before the UNSC Resolution 1973 was passed on March 17, 2011 (Levinson & Rosenberg, 2011). Qatari military advisers and Egyptian weapons coming into the eastern province of Cyrenaica, also known as Barqa, meant that Libya was one of the top to-do things in their foreign policy list. However, the interference of regional players like Egypt, Qatar, Turkey and UAE since Qaddafi's death is what has worsened the conditions on the ground. The support for different centres of power and major political actors on the ground in Libya has anything but lessened the polarization in Libya. The regional cold war between Qatar and Turkey on one hand and UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt on the other, has reduced Libya to just another geopolitical playfield rather than actually helping the country with post-Qaddafi transition.

Analytical Framework

Given the fact that it has only been a couple of years since the Arab Uprisings, and that the conflict in Libya is still ongoing, there is only a handful amount of literature to fall back on in terms of analytical

framework. Most academic research on the Arab Uprisings is focused on how the regimes of the ousted autocrats fell in the first place, and a majority of them focus on countries like Tunisia, Egypt and Syria – primarily due to the international attention and given the fact that Bashar Al-Assad still clings on to power. Hence this article is an optimistic attempt to analyse and make sense of the ongoing civil war in Libya in the hopes that it will lead to more counter-analysis and arguments put forward, benefiting the academic research on Libya as a whole. As this article goes into review in mid of 2017, realities on the ground in Libya are changing on a daily basis therefore it is hard to predict or find a detailed analysis of why Libya has so far failed to transition into a functioning and stable state, let alone a democratic one. Nonetheless, thanks to some notable Libya experts in the academic community such as Dirk Vandewalle, Ibrahim Fraihat, Jason Pack, Peter Cole, Brian McQuinn and Peter Bartu, there is sufficient literature on Libya's current crisis and thus thier work serves as an analytical framework for this article.

Jason Pack in his edited volume *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future* (2013) presented some useful and logical findings within just two years of the first protests that took place on February 15, 2011. Pack argues that ever since the pre-1951 colonial era, Libyan politics has been dominated by actors that are on the sidelines or peripheries – and this is not likely to change. Whether or not that is true is still yet to be seen, but as we explore in this article, if national reconciliation does take place then the likelihood of decision-making power transitioning into a single government are higher than what Pack might suggest. Pack's argument about the "Jacobins" is similar to the argument that this article makes about security vacuum being a major facilitator of the current civil war. He argues that one of the primary reasons for the fallout in Libya is what he calls "the Jacobin tendency," that is, the ability of local and regional armed militias i.e. "Jacobins" in Libya which hold enough power to coerce political leaders into meeting their demands (Pack, 2013: 3). However, Pack also recognizes that the ability for the so-called Jacobins to marginalize the moderates in the transitional government is due to the existing polarization of the Libyan society in general. Supporting his argument,

he gives a great example of the town Bani Walid where due to small portion of the population being Qaddafi supporters, the NTC and GNC labelled them pro-Qaddafi as a whole which then gave rise to new grievances along with historical ones (Pack, 2013: 3-4). Thus, his analysis is in sync with the arguments of this article, but this article further builds on that hypothesis and argues that the primary reason for the civil war was the magnification of the existing polarization due to factors such as security vacuum, institutional shortcoming as well geopolitics, all of which simultaneously acted as facilitators for the exacerbation of polarization.

Peter Cole and Brain McQuinn in their latest edited book *The Libyan Revolution and its Aftermath* (2015) feature a lot of helpful and constructive analysis on the ongoing conflict in Libya by various academics such as Vandewalle but also UN practitioners like Ian Martin and Marieke Wierda who shed some light on the ground-realities and workings of the NTC and the obstacles they faced. Much like the arguments put forward by Pack, Cole and McQuinn's analysis also features institutional shortcomings, the exacerbation of armed groups but also argue that within Libya the narrative of independent communities is much stronger than a one single unified narrative of Libya that Qaddafi attempted to establish (Cole and McQuinn, 2015). Hence, they both also argue that the Libyan society was disunited even before the civil war and while Qaddafi tried to forge a Libyan identity, however the divisions remained and came to light when Qaddafi was gone. Vandewalle, while contributing within Cole and McQuinn's book, argues that Qaddafi's ideology based on his famous *Green Book* resulted in him bypassing state institutions which led to the weakness of a state in itself. Coupled with polarization amongst population, the institutional shortcomings made sure that the only solution to the competing visions for Libya was a civil war (Vandewalle, 2015: 27).

This article also takes assistance from the examination done by Ibrahim Fraihat in his book *Unfinished Revolutions: Yemen, Libya and Tunisia after the Arab Spring* (2016). Fraihat's work is one of the most recent of all the authors that have published on the post-Qaddafi climate in Libya and includes numerous interviews with relevant stakeholders

including various militia and political leaders in Libya. Fraihat, as this article argues, deems polarization the main cause for the inability of Libya to establish itself as a functioning and peaceful state. Moreover, he argues that unless and until Libyans can achieve inclusive and comprehensive national reconciliation, it is highly unlikely they will ever achieve a state where one government is able to control and govern all of Libya (Fraihat, 2016: 2).

Hence, we see a theme emerging from the literature review that the main reasons for post-Qaddafi Libya to breakdown into continuing civil war is polarization that seemed to be in the making since 1951, together with inheritance of weak state structures and the security vacuum that followed Qaddafi's death. This article thus analyses and builds upon these arguments and adds the dimension of international intervention and how all three factors have simultaneously exacerbated the polarization which at the start of the uprisings may have been not so prominent and decisive at all. Since polarization is the crux of the argument, we shall look at it first before going over the three factors that facilitated it.

Polarization

Qaddafi's ouster opened up a Pandora's Box that revived many historical grievances and feelings of resentment of various tribes towards one another, particularly those based in the West against those based in the East. While living under Qaddafi's regime since 1969, a lot of people in different parts of Libya – but largely in the eastern part of Cyrenaica – faced oppression together with unfair treatment when it came to social and economic benefits due to province's association with the deposed King Idris al-Sanussi (Van Genugten, 2016). Therefore, the removal of Qaddafi also brought forward numerous social conflicts, especially between those who suffered the most under Qaddafi with those who suffered the least or even benefitted from his rule (Fraihat, 2016: 1-3). When Qaddafi was still alive and fighting back to regain control of the lost territories, nearly all opposition groups and parties were unified in their mutual goal of overthrowing his regime. However, none had any idea about what direction the uprising would take as there was no single ideology or a revolutionary leader who predominantly led or unify the uprisings. Hence, when countless number of people got displaced,

injured and killed due to Qaddafi's brutal crackdown in areas especially like Misrata, Zintan and Ajdabiya, any cohesion that was left between opposition groups was slowly fractured as people started to question others and their commitment to the revolution. Taking into account the inability of newly established NTC, and the GNC that succeeded it, to control Libya's territory – these grievances and scepticism within different parts of the Libyan society were amplified, leading to an extreme amount of polarization.

One of the first divisions that the Libyan revolution brought about was between those who were leading or supporting it and the ones who were against it. Since the struggle against Qaddafi was so incredibly challenging and long-time coming, many referred to the diabolical enemy image schema where previous historical knowledge about a particular tribe or town helped them determine whether that town was an enemy or an ally of the 17 February Revolution. People that were in support of the Qaddafi regime tried numerous times to regroup and show their support through counter-protests, mainly in the Western and South-Western regions and cities like Sabha in the province of Fezzan. This then forced almost every other revolutionary group to put their guard up and become highly suspicious of anyone known of supporting or serving the Qaddafi regime – something that was reflected in the political isolation passed by the coerced GNC that banned anyone who served "as an ambassador, secretary at any public office, held the position of a permanent representative of Libya at any International or Regional organization of any (type), (or) held the position of charge d'affairs or consul to anyone known for his/her constant praise and glorification of Qaddafi, his regime and his green book, whether through the media or through public talks" (Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, 2015: 162).

However, much of the continued fracturing of the Libyan society came about due to the suspicion of various groups within the Libyan opposition against each other. This suspicion resulted in a construction of "us" versus "them" as entire towns and tribes were labelled as pro-Qaddafi (*tahaleb/azlam)* or anti-Qaddafi (*thuwar)* (Fraihat, 2016: 4 & 24). These broadly applied generic labels further divided the already fractured Libyan society because the '*thuwar'* were treated with honour

and respect while the '*azlam'* were publicly identified with shame and guilt. Moreover, as explained by the former member of GNC Salem al-Ahmar, the label of '*thuwar'* was only given to small number of towns like Misrata, Zintan or Souq al-Jumma as if the rest of the towns did not contribute to the revolution at all. Whereas the title of '*azlam'* is generalized to include even those who did not play any part in supporting Qaddafi. For example, the Warfalla tribe in which only few dozens of its one million associated members were allied with Qaddafi. Same is the case with the town of Bani Walid, where only a few people fought alongside Qaddafi's forces during 2011 protests however the whole town of 80,000 people is now given the label of '*azlam'*. This is despite the fact that the same town is known for conducting failed coup against Qaddafi in 1993 and paying a huge price for it (Fraihat, 2016: 24-25). Thus, these constructed differences that fed on historical misconceptions and grievances led to an exacerbation of the existing polarization not just between those who had supported Qaddafi in the past, but also within the newly independent opposition.

Judging from the situation that has enfolded for the past six years, unless all Libyan stakeholders and groups collectively decide and manage to put their differences aside and opt for national reconciliation, the polarization and instability is likely to exacerbate. A major indication of this is the conflict between Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) – consisting of different armed fighters and allied groups backed by the House of Representative (HOR) based in the eastern city of Tobruk, and anti-Haftar alliances – also formely known as Libya Dawn – that consists of armed groups primarily based in the Western parts of Libya and backed by the remaining elements of the former GNC (Fraihat, 2016: 5). Although both sides arguably want what is "best" for Libya, years of political uncertainty and power vacuum has unfortunately led them to believe that the best way of achieving their goals is by heading to the battlefield instead of reconciliation through talks. This is the common pattern and strategy we have been witnessing ever since Qaddafi was killed in October 2011, where Libyans have decided to manage their own affairs in their own respective towns without having to rely on the transitioning government because from their point of view the institutions lack any authority due the security vacuum that led these

militias to have such power in the first place. Thus, we see a dilemma currently being faced by everyone in Libya. You have newly formed institutions that are trying to establish a working government, however due to institutional shortcomings and polarization, haven't been able to do so thus far. This leads towards local population losing their faith in the inexperienced institutions and results in further mistrust and scepticism, which then convinces them to hang on to their weapons and support their local armed groups – leading to an exacerbation in polarization altogether.

Although the divisions between opposition groups from the East and the West have been aggravated due to the distrust and polarization, however history also plays its part in this fallout. King Idris of Libya, who Qaddafi ousted in a coup in 1969, belonged to the al-Sanussi tribe which was based in the Eastern region of the Cyrenaica. Naturally Qaddafi, coming from the tribe of Qadhaffa in the Western region of Tripolitania, faced opposition from the Eastern region. As a result, Qaddafi responded by marginalizing the people of Cyrenaica and neglecting it – which obviously bred further grievances within the people of East versus the people of West as they would see them prosper more so in comparison (Joffe, 2011: 522). One of the biggest factors that worsened the feeling of resentment and brewed great amount of disdain and hatred for Qaddafi, and those benefiting from his regime, was the Abu Salim prison massacre. In 1996, on the orders of Qaddafi's security chief, prison guards at the infamous Abu Salim prison killed 1,300 people due to an alleged prison riot that included political prisoners and people who had been abducted predominantly from the province of Cyrenaica (Joffe, 2011: 523). Thus, historic grievances and hatred for Qaddafi was then transferred into an "East" versus "West" construction of divide that became more prominent during the protests and after the revolution. For example, the NTC and the reconstituted National Army although was one of the first to defect and lead the protests in Benghazi, however was seen with scepticism by some in the West as "too eastern-dominated" and blamed "for playing a marginal role in liberating the West" (International Crisis Group, 2011). Similarly, many in the East held deep suspicion towards the NTC as it initially included members that served in the Qaddafi regime, including senior political and military

officials. On the other hand, as we shall witness in the discussion on security vacuum, militias in the Western region of Tripolitania – especially in the cities of Misrata and Zintan – regarded themselves as truly legitimate forces of the opposition due to spearheading the revolution in the West and doing the most to liberate the capital Tripoli while arguably facing the most repression by Qaddafi forces and mercenaries (International Crisis Group, 2011). Thus, we see a great deal of disdain that exists between the opposition groups that have led to a great deal of disagreement when it comes to deciding who will control Libya and which government GNA or HOR is the legitimate one – leading to a deeply polarized Libya.

Institutional Shortcomings

Perhaps, one of the major reasons why the opposition in Libya, unlike Egypt or Tunisia, was unable to establish and maintain a functioning state that had complete control over all its territory is the institutional shortcoming that the opposition had to face after Qaddafi was gone. Libyans soon realised that overthrowing Qaddafi was not the end goal, it was rather the daunting task of shaping the post-authoritarian order in Libya. Unlike Tunisia and Egypt, where the state structures and institutions such as legislatures, opposition parties or a constitution remained intact to some extent, the opposition in Libya had to almost start from scratch as there was no institutionalized opposition or any system of political alliances, economic associations and national organizations (Lisa Anderson, 2011). Considering that it took Tunisia, the only "success story" of the "Arab Spring," almost five years to build democratic institutions worthy of sustaining democracy, despite having a stable state structure, then it is not hard to imagine why state-building efforts in Libya were off to a rough start (Bremer, 2017). While Qaddafi's governance system of *Jamahiriya* may have not allowed much space for opposition or democratic representation, it did however allow him to stay in power with relatively stable environment for over 40 years. His governance model based on his personally developed *Third Universal Theory* may have served him well, however it did not do much good for the post-Qaddafi governance. While the NTC was quick to establish a transitional government and hold elections, even faster than

Tunisia, nonetheless the limitation of the existing state apparatus restricted its reach to have anything more than merely a theoretical authority (Brownlee, Masoud, Reynolds, 2015: 14). The NTC's quick attempt to straightaway dive into democratic state-building, to some extent disregarded the fact that Libya and its people had never been ruled in even a remotely democratic governance system. Thus, it is not a surprise to see Libya still struggling to become a functioning state, let alone a functioning democracy, even after two democratic elections. This article does not argue that a liberal western democratic system is the only governance system that is right for Libya. That is for the people of Libya to decide. However, what it does argue is that not enough time was given to determine what type of a governance system should the post-Qaddafi Libya have. Even within democracies there are multiple forms; parliamentary, presidential, hybrid, constitutional monarchy, and others (Dahl, 1956; Dahl, 1982; Diamond, 2015). Hence, this article argues that due to the institutional shortcomings and inexperience of the NTC as well as GNC, the Libyan people found themselves in a major predicament – how to rule Libya. With almost no experience of state building themselves, the NTC furthermore expelled or side-lined anyone who had any experience in the former regime, which of course did not help the efforts of state-building. This section will thus explore as to how institutional shortcomings have become one of the major reasons why Libya to this day has been unable to successfully transition itself into a functioning state with complete authority on its territory, and how this facilitated the exacerbation in today's polarization.

Since the NTC had the mandate of the people at the time and they decided to move forward with transitioning Libya into a functioning representative democracy, we shall look at what indicates a successful transition to a democracy. Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds in their book argue that for a successful transition to democracy, there are two structural factors that need to exist in a country: strong state structure and a sufficient degree of pluralism within the new state. Strong state is able to channel political competition among different groups into formal democratic institutions rather than towards the battlefield. Pluralism, on the other hand, would entail that the group who ends up with a minority representation in the government is not inclined to take their chances of

getting more power through hostile takeover of the government (Browne, Masoud and Reynolds, 2015: 15). In Libya, we witness there were no substantial state structures that could channel the newly constructed political competition into formal strong democratic institutions. Although significant amount of pluralism did exist after Qaddafi, in the form of numerous newly-formed parties that contested in the first election of 2012, however a large majority of the groups and Libyan people in general became very sceptical of the ability of the new GNC to govern as it couldn't even implement its laws in even a single city, let alone the whole country. However, due to the very reason of security vacuum, blaming everything on institutional shortcomings is also not entirely fair to the existing evidence. Besides the existing polarization that worsened the impact of institutional shortcomings, in the following sections we will also see how a significant rise of armed groups throughout Libya, as well as the involvement of international actors in Libya, contributed towards the failure of Libya to transition into a functioning state, let alone a functioning democracy.

In order to understand how the institutional shortcomings really came about, we need to take a look at the existing institutions, or lack thereof, during Qaddafi's tenure from 1969 to 2011. In Egypt, Tunisia or even Yemen, there were opposition groups bargaining with elites of previous dictatorial regimes over the shape of new political structure and power distributions. However, in Libya it was quite different. Qaddafi, through his self-developed *Third Universal Theory*, attempted to avoid most mechanisms of a liberal western democracy rule and envisaged a vision of "direct rule" where family ties, tribal connections and egalitarianism echoed throughout political atmosphere (Vandewalle, 2012: 3). Qaddafi, although he despised the titles such as King, Ruler or even President, and asked to be known as "Brother Leader," nonetheless ruled like a King (Fraihat, 2016: 3). Even though Libya's official type of government was a direct socialist democracy known as *Jamahiriya* – without any formal institutionalism or political parties and rather solely depending upon local councils or communes – it nonetheless can be classified as a Sultanistic regime as compared to classical authoritarianism. This is because, as compared to a classical authoritarian regime, such as Francisco Franco's Spain between 1936 and 1975,

Sultanistic regimes have low level of formal institutionalisation and rather strong dynastic culture (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 51-56). Qaddafi's Libya fits the description of Linz and Stepan's Sultanistic regime model quite well as it featured a very limited role of the civil society in not just politics, but also economic and social affairs. This led to an endemically weak state and civil society under Qaddafi. Thus, after his ouster, the political competition was largely dominated by regional and tribal cleavages (Brownleed, Masoud and Reynolds, 2015: 155). Therefore, it seems that the NTC, or the GNC that followed it, forgot that any efforts for democratic consolidation requires the establishment of a strong political, economic and civil society adhering to democratic principles.

Qaddafi's personalised governance system also resulted in another major institution being relatively weak: the military. Where the Egyptian and Tunisian militaries were comparatively organised and unified as an institution, the Libyan army was prevented from being too professional or powerful as Qaddafi often reshaped the army and created independent groups consisting of tribal militias and mercenaries from African countries (Vandewalle, 2012: 128). As a result, the army and air force personnel that were stationed near Benghazi and Tobruk deserted almost immediately, whereas large groups of officers based in Misrata, Zawiya and Kufra – areas west of Benghazi – also joined the rebellion (Zoltan Barany, 2011: 34). This was one of the major differences between the Tunisian and Egyptian revolution and what happened in Libya. The absence of a strong unified national army like in Egypt, Tunisia, and to an extent in Syria, meant that alongside a power vacuum there was no institution to enforce law in Libya which meant that largely everyone was responsible for their own protection. As we shall see in the following section, this not only exacerbated the rise of different militias but also bred an atmosphere perfect for terrorist groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda.

Perhaps one of the major reasons why Qaddafi managed to successfully rule for over 40 years without any substantial threat to his rule, was the vast amount of hydrocarbon reserves Libya enjoyed. Much like the Gulf Monarchies, such as Saudi Arabia, he used the rentier-state formula of cashing in rents from hydrocarbon exports to superficially

incorporate people into politics through popular committees without having to worry about them organizing themselves in a collective manner (Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, 2015: 81). Hence the Sultanistic nature of Qaddafi's regime, together with a weak civil society, meant that the newly liberated people of Libya had little resources and experience to inherit from the previous regime (Rex Brynen, 2012: 29).

While Libya's existing political leaders – a mixture of former military commanders, technocrats, tribal leaders, lawyers and civil as well as Islamist activists – came very close to establish a democratic electoral democracy by holding country's first ever democratic elections on July 7, 2012, however they have yet to form functioning institutions that solidify the base of democracy and the state structure in a country which has always been deprived of one (Brownlee, Masoud & Reynolds, 2015: 99). Whether the two main centres of power – HOR and GNA – are able to reach a deal and establish a functioning state is yet to be seen, however as per Linz and Stepan's 1996 framework, the chances of a transition to a functioning democracy still look grim as according to them a functioning state with functioning governing institutions is almost always a prerequisite for any democracy. On a more positive note however, the fact that there was a high voter turnout in the first elections and 2.8 million out of the approximately 3.5 million eligible voters registered to take part, shows that commitment and resolve to make Libya a prosperous and stable state remains (BBC, 2012). Nonetheless, it is the institutional shortcomings coupled with security vacuum and regional geopolitics that have exacerbated the polarization which keeps on facilitating the ongoing civil war.

Ever since Qaddafi was overthrown, Libyans were worried that their revolution might actually hit a dead end or get hijacked by counter-revolutionaries who preferred Qaddafi's rule over any other. This was one of the main reason why there was a great amount of distrust among the opposition groups that got channelled through into the General National Congress (GNC), which then passed the Political Isolation Law (No.13) in June 2013 that banned anyone who served under Qaddafi's regime from September 1, 1969 to October 20, 2011 (Sharqieh, 2013). Not only did this act worsen the polarization amongst the population, but

it also kept anyone with experience of working in a state institution from lending their expertise to the newly established and significantly fragile government. The law isolated the newly established government and basically placed all those people who were forced to praise or glorify Qaddafi for the sake of their livelihood – keeping in mind that any opposition of Qaddafi or his policies was not well received by Qaddafi (Eljarh, 2013). One of first victims of this new law was the GNC chairman Muhammad al-Magarief himself. Even though Magarief had spent 31 years in exile and was the co-founder of the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (another major opposition party which stood up in the first election), he was nonetheless forced to resign his position because he had served as Qaddafi's Ambassador to India for two years before breaking up with the dictator in 1980 (BBC News, 2013). As noted by the then-UN special envoy for Libya, Tarek Mitri, this law and many of the criteria it pertains was arbitrary, vague and likely to violate civil as well as political rights of large number of people (Reuters, 2013). As Jack Goldstone and Jamie Becker argue, swift and effective state-building is only possible,

> "when a state can use a cadre of trained professional civil servants and military officers from the prior regime, when there is no sustained opposition to the new state from powerful autonomous elites, and where the state can secure financial resources to pay its officials and soldiers" (2005: 208).

But unfortunately, as we saw from the evidence discussed in this section, there were no structures in place for democratic institution state-building to develop so the NTC had to start from scratch. When they did finally held the election within a years' time, the newly elected GNC decided to eliminate the possibility of having any team of trained professionals who had any experience of state mechanisms.

Before we move on to the next two factors that have led to an exacerbation in polarization of the Libyan society, we need to take a look at some of the counter arguments that put forward reasons behind why the newly established democratic institutions have not fully worked in Libya.

One such argument is that national identity is necessary and thus a pre-requisite for state-building (Huntington, 1984: 211). Meaning that

like much of the Middle Eastern and African states, Libya was also carved up by colonial powers with its new and rather artificial boundaries (Owen, 2004). While that argument does hold weight, and certainly many political scientists as well as analysts would argue that these artificially constructed identities is what at the end of the day the main cause for turmoil in the Middle East, including Libya, however this article contests that argument. While the history of Libya does tell us that people in the three main provinces (Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan) have largely associated themselves with their respective regional or provincial identities – it was not until under Qaddafi that these differences were exploited and signified. Moreover, it would also be wrong to ignore the constructivist argument that the people of Libya have been living under one Libya ever since 1951 and therefore it is implausible to conclude that most Libyans do not identify themselves as Libyans or do not regard being Libyan as their national identity without any substantial evidence through a national survey or consensus. Hence, as a result, it would also be wrong to conclude that the arbitrary nature of historic borders in Libya is what caused the current exacerbation of polarization and thus inability for the new government to run newly established state institutions.

Secondly, and perhaps argument which is often cited by the media commentators, is that Muslims or Arabs are not accustomed to democracy and thus the fact that Libya is still struggling to transition into a functioning democratic state is testament to that. This view is also shared by a large body of scholars and philosophers like Montesquieu, Elie Kedouri, Samuel Huntington (1996) or Bernard Lewis (1993) (Brownlee, Masoud & Reynolds, 2015: 225). However, it is nonetheless very problematic and does not necessarily give us any substantial evidence as to why an Arab and predominantly Muslim country like Libya is suffering from civil war. The reason being is that we have many examples of non-Arab yet Muslim democracies like Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia as well as Turkey. Of course, there are those who argue that all these democracies are not "real" democracies because they are not "liberal" enough or conform to "western" principles. However, as mentioned before, there are many models of democracies and "western" or "liberal" is just one of them. It can be equally argued that the claim

that unless a democracy is fully adapted to the principals of liberalism is not a democracy just for that mere reason, is faulty in itself. Secondly, classifying "Arabs" as one monolithic group of people is also very problematic. The Arab region or the Middle East region expands from Morocco to Oman, and thus includes different cultures, languages as well as values. Thus, the argument that "Arabs" are not accustomed to democracy is rather binary and unstable construction of an identity. Moreover, the success story of Tunisia being the only Arab democratic country is surely one of the biggest counter-evidence to the arguments put forward by the likes of Lewis, Huntington, Montesquieu or Kedouri.

Hence, we have determined through the evidence examined above that the institutional shortcomings facilitated the exacerbation of polarization that came forward as soon as there was a power vacuum in the absence of Qaddafi's regime. What made things even worse was the security vacuum that was formed due to inability of the transitional government to govern effectively because of the absence of an institutionalised security force or a national army – leading to an upsurge in the amount of powerful armed groups all across Libya.

Security Vacuum

Thus far, we have discussed how lack of institutions and state structure during Qaddafi's regime proved to be detrimental for the newly independent people of Libya as they tried to establish democratic working institutions. We also examined how the newly established nonetheless weak state institutions and government failed to reconcile and ensure unity amongst the population, adding to the already existing polarization all across Libya. One of the biggest repercussions of institutional shortcomings was the absence of the security apparatus which led to exacerbation of armed conflict all across the country and a proliferation in the number of armed groups controlling their respective neighbourhoods, towns and cities (Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, 2016: 17). This is one of the main difference that we see when we compare the Libyan revolution with the ones in Egypt and Tunisia, or even Syria, where we witnessed the military as an institution to remain intact while ensuring that the security of the country was not compromised and that ousting of the existing regime was not followed by civil war. The brutal ongoing civil war that followed Qaddafi ouster

was only possible because of the security and power vacuum that existed simultaneously in Libya where instead of a national army, every community was responsible for their own security and in the midst of this, some armed groups took advantage for their own self-interest while others fought hard to save the February 17 Revolution.

The cleavages that were formed in the absence of a firm government and a strong military was filled with countless militias and armed groups that were responsible for their own survival. In order to make sure that nobody takes advantage of them, almost every militia put its guard up as soon as Qaddafi was killed and became sceptical of everyone else. As the rebel organizer said in an interview, "We didn't know each other when this began. We didn't know who was working for whom. When you don't trust anybody, you stick with the people you know and the families you know." The uncertainty and suspicion then led to an increase in the number of armed groups as "each street would organize its own group, street by street," according to a brigade leader from Misrata (International Crisis Group, 2011). Hence, we see very clearly how the main hypothesis of the article tries to take shape. That is, the existing polarization in Libya leads to an increase of militias, but then the increase of militias was made possible due to a security vacuum that existed because of the intuitional shortcomings of the new transitional government – institutional shortcomings that were possible because of the existing polarization in the first place. All in all, it is safe to say that all three factors while not at all mutually exclusive and actually facilitated the intensification of polarization in the country that exists today and blocks any attempt towards national reconciliation and peace.

Not only NTC and the GNC that followed it were weak and unable to control the proliferation of weapons in Libya, despite a UN arms embargo, but the succeeding HOR and now UN-backed GNA have also yet to come up with a plan to convince the armed groups to disarm. If anything, the conflict between HOR-backed Khalifa Haftar's Operation Dignity and the rival armed groups of Tripoli as well as Misrata, formerly under the umbrella 'Libya Dawn' is aggravating the lawlessness security vacuum that exists in Libya today (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2017). Without one unified national army

or security forces, no government is able to enforce security and order in the country, let alone impose its will. And by having two rival governments allied with armed groups on both sides of the Islamist versus non-Islamist spectrum, does not make this challenge any easier. In that sense, the need for disarmament by various militias and armed groups is necessary for any progressive state-building efforts. However, at the same time, national reconciliation is also crucial because there is no hope for democracy if there are two rival governments established in two parts of the same country with each claiming its legitimacy over the other. Hence both acts have to be taken simultaneously for it to work.

Another major reason why the security vacuum has been really problematic for any progress towards a functioning state is the politics of the militias themselves. For sure we see now that all major armed groups all are involved in some sort of a power struggle, trying to solidify their control over large swaths of lands in order to make themselves as a major player in any talks for ruling Libya, or at least their territory. However, this power struggle on the part of militias is not something new and rather started very early on during the uprisings. The role of militias, for example, in compelling the GNC to vote for the Law no. 13 that isolated anyone having served in the old regime is its evidence (Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, 2015: 163). Another stark reminder of the reality that militias and armed groups control major power in Libya was the attack on US Consulate in Benghazi on September 11, 2012 that killed four Americans including the US Ambassador to Libya (The New York Times, 2013). Moreover, militias and armed groups were also not afraid to kidnap the then-newly elected Prime Minister Ali Zeidan in October 2013 for the sake of pursuing their own political interests (Stephen, 2013). Due to the rise of militias and armed groups all over Libya, the GNC and the public officials were under constant threat of besiegement or kidnappings for political gains (Friahat, 2016: 23). This hence led the GNC, who were supposed to give away power to a newly elected legislature in February 2014, to extend their mandate for another year citing concerns for a power vacuum in Libya (Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, 2015: 163). Which then led the renegade General Khalifa Haftar to announce on TV that the current GNC was suspended and dissolved – a claim that was refuted by the GNC and the Prime Minister

(CBS News, 2014). Although Haftar seemed unwilling to lay a siege on Benghazi and the government institutions at the time, the circumstances did make way to the second general elections that elected the Tobruk-based HOR in August 2014. Shortly after in November however, the Tripoli-based Supreme Court of Libya, while under-pressure from the armed groups that controlled Tripoli, ruled that the HOR was illegally elected and hence not the legitimate government of Libya (Al Jazeera, 2014). The HOR dismissed the rulings arguing that it was politicized and passed under pressure from the militias controlling the capital. Nonetheless, the remainder of the previous GNC members, allied with Islamists and militias in control of the city, reinstated the rival GNC in Tripoli (BBC, 2015). Given the chaos and contested power, a UN-led initiated in late 2013 formed a unity government that came to be known as the Government of National Accord (GNA) which was also backed by the UNSC as the sole representative of Libya (The Guardian, 2015). Although initially accepted by both Tripoli's GNC and Tobruk's HOR, the GNA was rejected as the legitimate government of Libya by the HOR and its ally Khalifa Haftar in the summer of 2016 (Reuters, 2016). While GNC still accepts GNA as the representative government of Libya, there continues to be a stalemate between the HOR and GNA as armed groups loyal to both sides continued to clash with each other. July 25, 2017 saw a potential breakthrough when Haftar and Fayez al-Sarraj of GNA, who's also recognized as the PM of Libya, signed a ceasefire while also agreeing to hold elections in 2018 (The Guardian, 2017). However, the fact that no date was decided upon for the elections makes many analysts pessimistic about the ceasefire and any likelihood of peace between the two parties.

The countless series of events and developments that have taken place in Libya ever since Qaddafi went away, almost make it hard to believe that 'Libya' officially remains a single state, albeit with two different governments. This not only tells us that how hard it is for the current institutions to establish themselves, but also that the real power in Libya as of July 2017, lays into the hands of whoever has the manpower and weapons in a particular area. If we follow Max Weber's definition of a modern state, that is one which "has been successful in seeking to monopolize the legitimate use of physical force as a means of

domination within a territory," then unfortunately Libya is still far from being a functioning state, let alone a democratic one (Weber, 1946). As each day goes by in a Libya which has submerged into a power and security vacuum, the polarization of the Libyan society also aggravates which makes the task of national reconciliation even harder for whoever ends up being the one in charge of that daunting task.

International Intervention

Last but not least, we turn to the international dimension of the Libyan civil war that followed Qaddafi's ouster. Just like in Syria, as argued by Christopher Phillips in his book *The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East* (2016), this article argues that there's more to the Libyan civil war than merely domestic factors or grievances such as institutional shortcomings, distrust amongst people or the security vacuum filled in by countless militias and armed groups. The Libyan revolution, ever since the first group of demonstrators took to the streets of Benghazi in early 2011, was part of regional geopolitical contest for power. This not only helped the protestors get the attention they wanted, but also opened up opportunity for regional actors such as Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and UAE to advance their own interests of maximizing their power in the region. Besides the regional players, the Libyan uprisings also gave an opportunity to the United States, UK, France and Russia to closely monitor the events on the ground and make sure that another Qaddafi does not end up taking the reins for Libya's leadership.

Muammar Qaddafi was perhaps one of the few head of states in his time that never really had too many staunch allies that we could depend upon in tough times. However, he did make a lot of states unhappy by lashing out at them for their foreign policies. Besides his famous policies of confrontation against the Western states, Qaddafi also lashed out multiple times at his fellow Arab Leaders, especially Saudi Arabia, at various regional conferences such as the annual Arab Summit (Al Jazeera, 2008). Hence, it was not a surprise that the Arab League ended up supporting and backing the UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (The Guardian, 2011). Moreover, since Qaddafi was himself sceptical of many countries he did not really have a close ally when it came to

permanent members of the Security Council. Perhaps this was the reason why the resolution UNSC 1973 did not face a veto from either Russia or China, but instead both chose to abstain from the vote due to Qaddafi's infamous threats against the people of Benghazi (UNSC 1973, 2011). Suffice to say, nobody was willing to go out of the way to save Qaddafi because he had no long-lasting alliance with any particular power. Although Qaddafi made attempts to reach out to his diplomatic contacts outside of Libya in order to try to negotiate a deal couple of months before he died, however as we saw, it was already too late because the NATO coalition and allies had already set their geopolitical goal: regime change in Libya (The Telegraph, 2011).

It is widely argued amongst many analysts like Pargeter (2017), Levinson and Rosenberg (2011) who kept a close watch at the events on the ground in Libya, if it wasn't for the rigorous air strike campaign by NATO, Qaddafi would be still in power and would've crushed the rebellion. In that sense, you would think that the Libyans must be extremely grateful for the international intervention. However, much like how the roses in Iraq turned into stones after a couple of months into the US invasion in 2003, the people of Libya today have similar feelings (Ledwidge, 2011). According to the special report by Alison Pargeter, the foreign intervention is perceived negatively in Libya generally. However, it is favoured by those who are likely to use it for their own interests and arguments for winning political arguments. Similarly, on the other hand, it also been used as a negative reference by those whose objectives are not served by the case study of the intervention. Nonetheless, besides political factions, Libyans in general are disappointed and angered by the 2011 intervention because they feel abandoned. "Some also feel angry that this abandonment left the country prey to interventions by regional powers," concludes Pargeter (2017).

Pargeter's conclusion brings us to the less known or publicised aspect of the international involvement in Libya – the regional geopolitics. Long before the NATO intervened, regional powers such as Qatar and Egypt had already intervened in Libya. Egypt for example, with the knowledge of United States had started sending in weapons through Libya's eastern border even before the resolution 1973 was

passed (Levinson & Rosenberg, 2011). While everyone knew that Qatar had played a major role in supporting the NTC and helping them to overthrow Qaddafi, not many knew that Qatar had its ”boots on the ground” in Benghazi alongside rebel forces. “We were among them and the numbers of Qataris on ground were hundreds in every region,” said Qatari chief of staff Major General Hamad bin Ali al-Atiya in October 2011 (Al Arabiya News, 2011). Hence the Libyan revolution took an international and regional shape even before the NATO intervention.

While having Qatari forces on the ground and transfer of weapons through Egypt might be illegal and against the sovereignty of Libya at the time, nonetheless these actions directly did not push the country into turmoil once Qaddafi was gone. Yes, while one could argue that the passage of weapons into Libya might’ve resulted in a proliferation of arms that certainly contributed to the security vacuum after Qaddafi, however that in itself is not enough of an evidence to argue that regional intervention by regional actors actually contributes towards the prolonging civil war in Libya. In order to get enough evidence, nonetheless, we need to examine what role these regional powers played after Qaddafi was gone.

When it came to the question of who would actually be in power in Libya, besides the domestic population being concerned, the regional as well as international actors were on the edge of their seats as well. Not only did their worry about another Qaddafi coming to the top, but everyone had their self-interest at heart. Understandably, this meant that the western powers preferred a government that was not Islamist but secular as well as that which conformed to western liberal ideas. Qatar and Turkey were hedging their bets on Islamists like the Muslim Brotherhood-aligned Justice and Construction Party (Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, 2015: 159). While post-Morsi Egypt, along with Saudi Arabia and UAE are completely on the opposite of the spectrum from Turkey and Qatar – hoping that whoever comes to power is anything but Islamist. As a result of these preferences, today in Libya have two main centres of powers being supported by two regional coalitions: the Tobruk-based HOR and Haftar’s Dignity Coalition heavily supported by Egypt and UAE, while their rivals in Tripoli i.e. the Government of

National Salvation consisting of various members of the previous GNC along with former Libya Dawn coalition supported by Qatar and Turkey (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2017).

If institutional shortcomings, disunity and scepticism amongst the population, and the security vacuum wasn't enough to aggravate the polarization of the Libyan society and keep it from achieving a functioning and stable state, the regional geopolitics being played on the expense of Libyans is not making anything better. A prime example of this is the case of former UN Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya Bernardino Leon who served this position for well over a year before leaving in 2015. While Leon was tasked with facilitating a deal between the GNC at the time and the Egypt as well as UAE-backed HOR at the time, leaked emails show that he was in contact with the UAE officials throughout his tenure which placed his ability to be impartial actor into question (Middle East Eye, 2015). Moreover, as soon as his role with UN ended in November 2015, UAE announced that Leon would be the new director general of their diplomatic academy – a position that paid him £35,000 per month (The Guardian, 2015). Regardless of whether Leon actually did collude with UAE and favour the HOR at the expense of GNC is not yet known. However, this instance would add into the distrust and scepticism of Libyans towards international community – which then facilitates the extreme polarization that exists today in Libya.

Based on the evidence examined above, it is fair to say that the international community which includes powerful regional actors such as UAE, Turkey, Qatar and Egypt – all of which have the ability to influence ground realities in Libya – has done more to facilitate the polarization that exists today in Libya then counter it and help Libyan people move towards national reconciliation and end the civil war.

Conclusion

Libya just like Yemen and Syria remains in a state of brutal civil war. It's a prolonged conflict between the citizens of a same country that just can't seem to land on a common ground when it comes to who will govern over them. As discussed in the article, historical grievances

between tribes and citizens of towns in the East and the West of the country run deep. If they weren't that apparent previously, the Libyan uprisings and the fallout from it has definitely brought them to light. Distrust and scepticism is so strong in Libya that the country remains polarized which is the primary reason for the civil war and inability to national reconcile with another.

Nonetheless, polarization alone cannot explain the breakdown of democratic transition. Neither is polarization in itself enough to keep Libyans from moving towards national reconciliation and putting an end to the vicious conflict that has claimed thousands of lives, ruined many more and resulted in almost complete destruction of entire towns all across the country. Based on the evidence from peer-reviewed academic research to news reports and think tank analysis, this article argues that there are three main factors which exacerbated the polarization that exists today in Libya: institutional shortcomings, the security vacuum, and geopolitics. Not only do these factors facilitate the polarization, but they also go as far as to aggravate it which makes the possibility of a conclusion to a civil war almost impossible.

Shining the spotlight on the institutional shortcomings, we witnessed that the 42 years of Qaddafi's rule did prove to be of much help to the NTC or the GNC in any way. The governance structure that was in place was not ideal for a democratic state, and hence the transition government had to almost start from scratch – unlike Egypt or Tunisia. However, given the existing distrust and scepticism that existed all over the country, coupled with a security vacuum, the NTC and then GNC lost confidence of the Libyan people as they were barely able to pass any laws, let alone see to it that they were implemented. Hence we see that all the three factors while facilitated the polarization, they themselves weren't mutually exclusive. The security vacuum resulted in a surge of numerous armed groups and military alliances across the country that started to fight with each other in order to control strategic locations such as airports, parliament buildings etc. Due to the weak Libyan military during Qaddafi's time, these armed groups faced no opposition at all filling that security vacuum. Moreover, this vacuum proved to be an optimum opportunity for terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS to take

advantage of the lawlessness lands and gain ground – which worsened the already brutal state of the civil war. Lastly, if there was anything missing from the already complicated nature of the Libyan civil war, it was the involvement of the outside actors. Primarily, regional actors such as Qatar, Egypt and UAE have been trying since 2011 to influence the ground realities in Libya in order to fight their own cold war. This has led each bloc to have sway over two competing governments based in the East and the West of the country. By having such involvement and the Libyan people knowing about it only gives both governments to justify their campaigns and conflict against each other. Moreover, it exacerbates the polarization in the country as people start to become more and more sceptical of each other.

It is hard to tell when the Libyan civil war will come to an end. The peace deal between UN-backed GNA and HOR in France on 25 July 2017 seems to be a step in the right direction. However, the terms of the deal have not yet specified the dates of the next elections and also considering the fact that there are numerous other powerful armed groups that don't come under the jurisdiction of any of the two parties, makes many analysts question the effectiveness of the deal. What is certain though is that in order to end the civil war and for Libya to become a functioning state with a unified government – there needs to be a national reconciliation amongst all major actors representing different parts and societies of Libya. That will put to rest the grievances and feelings of distrust amongst the people, reducing the amount of polarization in the country. Simultaneously, disarmament is crucial for any steps to be taken towards an end to the civil war so that the only option people have to settle their differences is on the negotiating table or the parliament, rather than a battlefield.

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