



Conflict-Sensitive Assistance to Libya

CSA Quarterly Review #1 | June – August 2017

'A conflict-sensitive approach involves gaining a sound understanding of the two-way interaction between activities and context, and acting to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of intervention on conflict, within an organisation's given mandate.'

The CSA Quarterly Briefing reviews and summarises the findings and discussions taking place surrounding the application of conflict-sensitive approaches.

CSA Forum – a platform to share analysis and reflect on practice

The last meeting of the Conflict-Sensitive Assistance to Libya (CSA) forum was held in Tunis on 3rd August 2017. 30 people representing 21 different organisations participated in updating a joint context analysis, reflecting on its implications for the international community's assistance in Libya. Participants observed the following key changes in the context to be relevant to the work of international organisations in Libya.

The political process may be strengthening. In mid-July, Government of National Accord (GNA) Prime Minister Serraj outlined a political roadmap which called for presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in March 2018. In addition, a meeting between Serraj and Libyan National Army (LNA) commander Haftar was held in Paris on 25 July under the auspices of the French President. The Libyan parties present adopted a declaration in which they agreed to ten key points, ultimately endorsing the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA).

The constitutional drafting process has advanced. In late July, the Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA), based in al-Beida, voted to approve the latest draft of the Constitution. Differing reports alleged that protesters surrounded and threatened the CDA building to disrupt the vote. There has been concern within Libya regarding the inclusiveness of the drafting process, with the main criticism coming from the Amazigh, Tebu and Tuareg communities. Equally, women and youth may criticize draft clauses which fail to offer clear commitment to their due place in Libyan society.

LNA military-appointed governors are expanding to the south. Khalifa Haftar has now appointed military governors in municipalities throughout the eastern region, including Benghazi, Ajdabiya, Derna, Shahaat, Sahel and Kufra. At the end of June 2017, the new military governor of the southern region, Ramadan Al-Barasi, flew in to Tamenhint to take up his appointment.

Presidential Council adopts similar militarization model. In early June, the executive of the GNA, the Presidential Council (PC), announced it was dividing the country into 7 military zones. Subsequently Major-Generals Usama Juwaili and Mohamed Haddad were appointed as commanders of western and central military areas.

The security situation remains fragile. There was ongoing violence between Haftar-affiliated LNA forces and GNA-affiliated groups, between Haftar-affiliated LNA forces and armed groups in Benghazi, and between GNA-affiliated forces and militias supporting Khalifa Ghwell's National Salvation Government (Fakhr al-Libya) in and around Tripoli.

- In mid-May, Misrata's 13th brigade, together with the Benghazi Defence Brigades, launched an attack on the LNA-held Brak as-Shatti airbase. After capturing the airbase, 141 LNA soldiers were reportedly killed, including allegations of summary executions and human rights abuses. This incident led to subsequent advances by Haftar-affiliated LNA forces in the southwest, around Tamenhint airbase, and towards Jufra airbase - both of which they captured - and raised concerns of a push against Tripoli.
- On 5 July, Haftar declared that the LNA had fully captured Benghazi from the coalition of jihadists including the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council (BRSC), Ansar as-Sharia and Islamic State (IS). LNA

forces claimed to have captured the Ansar as-Sharia leader Alaa Shibshib in al-Fataeh area in Derna, as well as conducting airstrikes against terror groups in Derna gathering in the west of the al-Thuher school.

- In Tripoli, in May, a new militia supportive of Khalifa Ghwell's Fakhir al-Libya launched an attempt to recapture the Rixos hotel in Tripoli, which sparked several days of intense fighting in Tripoli. The Fakhir al-Libya forces were pushed back and out of Tripoli, but tensions have continued between Tripoli and hardline Misratan militias through to July.

Economically, the situation improved, yet challenges remain. Oil output gradually rose from May to July, rising to the highest levels seen since 2013, after two oil fields that make up of a third of Libya's oil output were switched back on and some repairs made.

- The GNA's 30% shortfall in revenue is anticipated to reduce as oil production increases over 2017. Production reached 1 million barrels per day by the end of June, a four-year high.
- Libya's key financial and economic institutions remain divided and suffer from a lack of oversight and cases of misappropriation. Concerns about transparency have been raised in relation to national bodies' financial records with the Central Bank of Libya, with the National Oil Company having reportedly only deposited 78% of its income.
- Libya's cash crisis continues. The liquidity shortfall has been attributed to the oil sector's revenue fluctuations over the last few years and unregulated market activity. Withdrawals from banks remain low and the maximum that can be withdrawn is between 300-400 Libyan Dinars. The liquidity problems hit civilians the hardest. In Benghazi, a gallon of milk is reportedly 10 dinars (\$7). A man in Tripoli committed suicide by setting himself on fire in July, reportedly due to harsh circumstances and his inability to access adequate cash.

The provision of some basic services worsened. Electricity problems have continued. The General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) announced at the end of June that it was going through a critical period, with the ever-rising temperatures in the country.

Libya's institutions governing civil society are divided, with the Civil Society Commission in Tripoli and a separate Commission acting in Benghazi. This division has practical implications for organisations' registration process and could also have social implications, with eastern authorities issuing decrees that will affect how organisations can operate.

Libyan media remains deeply partisan (based on political affiliation, region, city, faction, or tribe), which has a strong effect on the accuracy of reporting, notably by excluding dissenting opinions, lack of constructive discourse, or an exaggerated focus on politics.

Developments had particular impacts for international actors

Basic services provision: The repeated power cuts have not only affected use of critical infrastructure, such hospitals, and increased the price of generators, but have also had political effects. Mayors, for example, have refused to impose proposed black-outs, using populist rhetoric that implies competition with other communities to 'better look after the needs of its own people'.

Public finances: Modalities employed by the international community to contract companies to work in Libya could well be aggravating the currency crisis, as funds disbursed outside of Libya are transferred back into Libya through illegal means, feeding further the black market. The same modalities risk marginalising smaller civil society organisations (CSOs), who may not be able to have bank accounts outside of Libya. These are often the actors that the international community needs to support most in order to achieve social change for the longer term.

Participants derived the following recommendations from the analysis

Effective political processes: With the recent political developments it was recommended that international actors assess what can be done in order to ensure that upcoming political processes - a potential referendum on the constitution text and new elections - are well managed. There may be a need to give support to HNEC (High National Election Committee), in particular.

Conflict-sensitising migration assistance: The period saw a large amount of funding being made available to control migration from or through Libya. Measures taken by these projects include increasing control on the country's southern borders, posing serious challenges to the way of life of some groups. The measures do not always seem to take account of the fact that many sectors of the Libyan economy are still dependent on labour migrants, who, under present conditions, have no possibility of protecting themselves

and formalising their labour status in the country. It was recommended that projects working in the migration sector should take steps to conflict-sensitise their work.

Broadening pool of Libyan partners: Given the currency crisis, there is a preference for partnering with organisations that have bank accounts in Tunisia, with funds deposited into Libya poorly tracked. Such practices may not only show weak accountability, but could also be at the expense of partnering with smaller Libyan CSOs, who do not have the same financial capacity, but whom the international community should be supporting in order to achieve the social change that is necessary in Libya to support the transition. It was recommended that more be done to bring Libyan CSOs into different types of programming, including on political dialogue.

Thematic Sessions: Working with Partners

Previous rounds of the CSA brought attention to challenges faced by the international community in working effectively with Libyan CSOs. In particular, the previous CSA forum, on 27 April 2017, recommended: 'international actors should review the way they engage with CSOs. In particular, they should review formal registration requirements, which may be giving preference to a small number of established and well-connected organisations and reducing opportunities to promote broader civil society activity.'

The Principles for Conflict-Sensitive Assistance to Libya, developed through the CSA process, emphasise the importance of delivering assistance in an inclusive way (Principle One), and ensuring that local partners are helped to build their own capacity to be accountable to the constituencies with which they work (Principle Two), while the Third Principle focuses on strengthening the connection between state institutions and communities by delivering tangible improvements in people's lives. Success in the first two areas depends on successful selection and vetting of organisations, as well as strong partnership practices.

International organisations have employed a range of local mechanisms to strengthen their ties with the communities in which their projects are taking place, for example, by establishing groups with the responsibility of reaching out to communities and ensuring that they are able to contribute to the formulation of priorities. Discussions suggested that more events, activities and trainings should be held inside Libya. They proposed that work could be done to develop a code of ethics on working with partners, which in turn would help to create a constructive yet competitive environment for NGOs to work in.

OPSECA

Peaceful Change initiative (PCi) has enhanced its online platform, [OPSECA](#). As well as containing updated information from each bi-monthly round of CSA fora meetings in Tunis, the platform now has the functionality for users to develop a shared stakeholder mapping, an essential aspect of a conflict analysis. This is critical to a conflict-sensitive approach. Accordingly, PCi encourages users to use this function and to contact PCi for any support.

Reflecting on practice: CSA Peer Review on Local Governance

In June 2017, PCi concluded a voluntary conflict-sensitivity peer review with six organisations working in the sector of local governance. Across the three agreed Principles for Conflict-Sensitive Assistance, the key issues identified and recommendations from the review are:

Principle 1: 'Assistance should be as inclusive as possible'

(1) ISSUE IDENTIFIED: Lack of balance in areas selected for international programming

RECOMMENDATION 1.1. Develop a shared set of selection criteria for municipal level support that balances operational criteria for selecting municipalities with political criteria and inclusivity.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2. Reduce similar assistance provided to the same area.

(2) ISSUE IDENTIFIED: Municipalities distrust the way resources are allocated under local governance assistance

RECOMMENDATION 2.1. Harmonise implementation approaches through a working group to agree on shared implementation processes (e.g. per diem rates and contracting processes).

RECOMMENDATION 2.2. Build in a budget line for communication activities specifically looking to increase communities' understanding of how assistance is provided, as well as of what assistance is provided.

Principle 2: 'Assistance should strengthen the ability of our partners to be equally accountable across communities and constituencies'

(3) ISSUE IDENTIFIED: Political relations required for local government assistance

RECOMMENDATION 3.1. All organisations should agree a shared consultation mechanism with the MoLG GNA.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2. All organisations, as much as possible, should agree to shared communication processes (below the level of consultation) on local government development with relevant parallel authorities in the East.

(4) ISSUE IDENTIFIED: Municipal authorities are often caught up in conflict

RECOMMENDATION 4.1. Develop local relationship maps for each municipal council being provided with support, so that its relationships to each component in society are properly understood.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2. Incorporate cross-divide decision-making bodies into programming in those places where municipal authority is contested.

(5) ISSUE IDENTIFIED: Providers of assistance do not give due recognition of the role of security actors

RECOMMENDATION 5.1. Work with governments/donors to develop guidelines for working with security actors.

Principle 3: 'Assistance should strengthen the connection between state institutions and communities across the country, by delivering tangible improvements.'

(6) ISSUE IDENTIFIED: Questions over legitimacy of international programming towards local government

RECOMMENDATION 6.1. Agencies should develop a shared concept paper on 'legitimacy', which is translated into standard operational practices and communication material.

RECOMMENDATION 6.2. All organisations should agree to a standard model of local contracting that involves the municipality together with a third body (CSO or academic institution).

RECOMMENDATION 6.3. Create safe spaces outside Libya where relevant interlocutors from East, West, and South Libya can come together and contribute to the proposed development of Law 59. This recommendation contributes to the promotion of cross-divide connections (SEE ISSUE 8).

(7) ISSUE IDENTIFIED: Perceptions of biased support by international community

RECOMMENDATION 7.1. Facilitate discussion between local governance delivery organisations and governments/donors as to potential communication activities to shift perceived bias.

(8) ISSUE IDENTIFIED: Need to promote connections across the conflict divide

RECOMMENDATION 8.1. Redevelop municipal fora so that they are better able to bring municipal leaders from across conflict divides into communication and joint collaboration. This should be based on careful preparation of those participating in such activities.

Building skills: Conflict Sensitivity Trainings

On 30 and 31 May 2017 PCI provided trainings for staff from a total of 25 different organisations engaged in delivering assistance in Libya. Participants were able to: understand the principles of Do No Harm (DNH); explore how DNH relates to conflict sensitivity; apply practical tools for conflict sensitive activities; identify conflict sensitive elements to be taken into account when designing, reviewing or monitoring projects.

Applying conflict-sensitivity to programming: The Stabilisation Facility in Obari

UNDP Libya has been implementing the Stabilisation Facility for Libya – a project led by the GNA aimed at reconstructing critical infrastructure in conflict-affected parts of Libya. In each project location, an initial conflict sensitivity assessment was delivered. In one site, Obari, the project was planned to benefit all three main communities – Tuareg, Tebu and Arab. However, the project was opposed by some marginalised Tebu youth who felt that only Tuareg contractors were being employed to implement the work. UNDP responded by meeting with all stakeholders, starting new hiring processes, and promoting a wider awareness of the tender bidding process. By engaging this marginalised group, the SFL has not only been able to continue to deliver services, but also brought a previously excluded group into the civic conversation.

Upcoming events

The next meeting of the CSA forum is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 12 October 2017.