

Report

December 2018



LOST IN TRANS-NATION

Tubu and Other Armed Groups and Smugglers along Libya's Southern Border

Jérôme Tubiana and Claudio Gramizzi



Security Assessment
in North Africa



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Cover photo: Trucks on the Niger–Libya road. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

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The SANA project

The Security Assessment in North Africa (SANA) is a multi-year project of the Small Arms Survey to support those engaged in building a more secure environment in North Africa and the Sahel-Sahara region. The project produces timely, evidence-based research and analysis on the availability and circulation of small arms, the dynamics of conflicts and emerging armed groups, and related insecurity. The research stresses the effects of the recent uprisings and armed conflicts in the region on community safety.

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The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan is a multi-year project administered by the Small Arms Survey. It was developed in cooperation with the Canadian government, the United Nations Mission in Sudan, the United Nations Development Programme, and a wide array of international and Sudanese partners. Through the active generation and dissemination of timely, empirical research, the project supports violence reduction initiatives, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes and incentive schemes for civilian arms collection, as well as security sector reform and arms control interventions across Sudan and South Sudan. The HSBA also offers policy-relevant advice on redressing insecurity.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ANT	Chadian National Army (Armée nationale tchadienne)
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BDB	Benghazi Defence Brigade
CAR	Central African Republic
CCMSR	Council of Military Command for the Salvation of the Republic (Conseil de commandement militaire pour le salut de la république, CCMSR)
CNCCAI	National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (Commission nationale pour la collecte et le contrôle des armes illicites)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FACT	Front for Change and Concord in Chad (Front pour l'alternance et la concorde au Tchad)
FARS	Armed Revolutionary Forces of the Sahara (Forces armées révolutionnaires du Sahara)
FNDJT	Front of the Nation for Democracy and Justice in Chad (Front de la nation pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad)
GNA	Government of National Accord
GSLF	Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces
HoR	House of Representatives
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IS	Islamic State
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
LJM	Liberation and Justice Movement

LNA	Libyan National Army
LYD	Libyan dinar
MDJT	Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad)
MJRN	Movement for Justice and the Rehabilitation of Niger (Mouvement pour la justice et la réhabilitation du Niger)
MNJ	Niger Movement for Justice (Mouvement des Nigériens pour la justice)
MNLA	National Movement of Liberation of Azawad (Mouvement national de libération de l’Azawad)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTC	National Transitional Council
PFG	Petroleum facilities guard
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLA–MM	Sudan Liberation Army–Minni Minawi
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UFDD	Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement)
UFR	Union of Resistance Forces (Union des forces de la résistance)
UN	United Nations
USD	United States dollar
XOF	West African franc

Executive summary

Since Qaddafi's fall in 2011, southern Libya has become synonymous with lawlessness. This frontier zone's cross-border ethnic militias and their allies in northern Libya vie for control of strategic and economic assets, including trade routes. The border itself fails to block trafficking in contraband and people, and external actors regularly interfere in security and migration issues, too often to the detriment of local communities and migrants.

Autonomous, yet fragmented ethnic militias are in control of southern Libya's border, which has prompted northern Libyan forces as well as the governments of neighbouring and European states to pursue alliances with them. For the fragmented Tubu (or Teda) community—whose largest militia comprises about 400 fighters and 100 vehicles—expediency has generally guided allegiances: they seek both national and international recognition as a way to secure legitimacy and funding. Accordingly, they also cast themselves as an effective shield against what they present as the growth of Islamist networks in southern Libya. At the same time, they often argue that only a unified Libyan state can shield Tubu youths from spreading jihadism.

Chad and Sudan are intent on preventing their own rebels from mounting insurgencies in neighbouring Libya. To that end, Chad has concentrated on forging good relations with cross-border Tubu militias. Khartoum has deployed the notorious Rapid Support Forces—paramilitaries associated with people trafficking—to the border to crack down on Darfur rebels and to track the return of hundreds of IS fighters from Sirte to Sudan.

For the region's rebels and migrant youths, who face bleak prospects at home, Libya remains an attractive marketplace, largely because its competing militias offer mercenaries decent pay and loot. Despite Chad's efforts to prevent Libyan forces from recruiting and supporting its rebels, a few thousand Chadian fighters have aligned themselves with N'Djaména's adversaries, including Misrata's Third Force, while some joined opposing forces simultaneously. In 2016–17 an estimated 1,500 Darfur rebels fought alongside Gen. Khalifa Haftar, allegedly with Egyptian support, to the dismay of Khartoum.

Beginning in 2012, the gold rush became another draw to the border region. Insecurity on the gold-mining routes as well as violent conflicts between miners and local communities drove up the local demand for weapons. A lack of governance structures and fatal clashes between armed prospectors, Tubu militias, rogue soldiers, and former rebels-turned-road-bandits have since left many of Chad's and Niger's gold mines in a state of limbo—'closed', except to soldiers and gold miners who work for them. In August 2018, after Chadian rebels attacked the Chadian army in gold-mining areas in northern Chad, tensions increased as N'Djaména proceeded to evacuate the mines and to orchestrate air strikes on Tubu civilian areas. This violent response

aggravated Tubu anger against the Chadian regime, increasing the risk that Tubu youths will join or support armed opposition groups. Indeed, in October–November 2018, as Chadian air and ground forces attacked the Miski area, armed local civilians increasingly shifted from self-defence to rebellion.

On trade routes where state presence is weak, such as the corridors between northern Niger and southern Libya, or between Libya and the Lake Chad region, various government forces and non-state militias extort money from smugglers and traffickers who deal in migrants, cars, arms, and drugs. Convoys also risk attacks by road bandits, who then demand payment for their safe passage.

Since the dissolution of the Libyan state, a growing number of West African and other migrants travelling along these routes have been held for ransom, sold, or forced into debt bondage, slavery, or prostitution. Those who continue the journey also face the risk of being detained or expelled by local militias that seek recognition and financing from European authorities intent on stemming migration flows. Libya, Niger, and Sudan all receive—directly or indirectly—European Union funds to curb migration and build what might be called a Saharan wall.

On the whole, European migration policies in the area have had a host of detrimental effects. They have caused migrant smugglers to engage in more perilous activities, exposed migrants to greater danger, fuelled corruption and tensions, exacerbated economic insecurity, and heightened the risk of insurrection. In mid-2016, under pressure from the EU, Niamey began to enforce a new law criminalizing migrant smuggling. No efforts have been made to provide economic alternatives, even though the activity was the principal livelihood in northern Niger, one on which local communities, public officials, and military authorities—and the fragile social balance between them—depended. Since then, migrant smugglers—mostly Libyan and Nigerien Tubu and Tuareg who are loath to give up their only source of income—have taken migrants on new routes to Libya that are far more treacherous and whose associated ‘taxes’ are twice as extortionate. In the absence of decent income-generating alternatives, smugglers are at risk of turning to banditry, drug trafficking, rebellion, or jihadism.

To date, Western countries have not aligned their policies on migration or security in Libya’s borderlands. While Italy and Germany clearly prioritize the migration issue, France and the United States appear more interested in fighting terrorism. Whatever their positions, external powers are more likely to secure Saharan communities’ support against terrorism if they simultaneously foster adequate economic options for people who lack or are to be deprived of their livelihoods.

Key findings

- Although Libyan Tubu forces played a key role during the 2011 revolution, they have since splintered internally and grown distrustful of former allies in the north, as evidenced by limited and shifting allegiances. Nevertheless, disparate northern powers have continuously sought to secure Tubu support.
- Chad, Niger, and Sudan have all tried to secure their borders with Libya by building ties to southern Libyan militias. Chad and Sudan, in particular, are uneasy about the presence of their respective armed oppositions in southern Libya.
- Some Chadian and Sudanese rebels have joined Libyan militias to secure their support, be it on an ideological or more opportunistic basis, while others have become gold prospectors, road bandits, or drug traffickers.
- In late 2018, as Chadian government forces attacked the Miski gold mining area in Tibesti, local armed Tubu civilians increasingly mutated from self-defence into rebellion.
- By pressuring Niger to criminalize migrant smuggling and block migrants in or on their way to southern Libya, European states have contributed to a series of destabilizing dynamics. Specifically, their policies have:
 - aggravated risks for migrants, as trafficking is now concentrated among fewer, more abusive actors, especially in Libya, where migrants from West Africa and elsewhere are systematically kidnapped for ransom, or forced into debt bondage, labour, or prostitution;
 - caused migrant smugglers to ply more treacherous routes or engage in more dangerous activities, such as drug trafficking, jihadism, and insurgency;
 - fuelled corruption among Nigerien forces and exacerbated tensions between Niger's government and its northern communities, which are largely dependent on migrant smuggling for their livelihoods; and
 - empowered Libyan and Sudanese militias.
- Western powers will not be able to secure Saharan communities' support against terrorism if their anti-migration policies simultaneously deprive them of their livelihoods and fail to offer them alternatives. These communities have an interest in helping the West to combat terrorism, but they view anti-migration policies as hostile and lack the incentive to undermine migrant smuggling.
- Analysis of seized illicit weapons confirms that large-scale transnational flows of military-type equipment from Libya began to decrease in 2014, with only few significant seizures since 2015.
- Trafficking networks remain active in the region, as illicit firearms that were diverted from Libya and, to a lesser extent, from other government stockpiles continue to circulate in the northern areas of Chad and Niger, where demand has grown in response to the local gold rush.

“European policies are not only generating tensions between civilian and military authorities, but also between governments and communities.”

Introduction

Since 2011, southern Libya has witnessed the growth of a patchwork of autonomous ethnic militias. These groups engage in intercommunity fighting, which is often aggravated by rival authorities in the north, which vie for control of southern Libya's fighters, territory, and economic resources. The main militias recruit among cross-border communities such as the Awlad Suleiman, Tubu (also known as Teda),¹ Tuareg, and Zwaya Arabs.

Libya's southern neighbours—Chad, Niger, and Sudan—have all tried to secure their northern borders, sometimes with the help of local militias, chiefly to prevent them from forming or hosting insurgencies. Nevertheless, cross-border networks and community-based groups have managed to take control of Libya's southern border, as well as informal trade and trafficking between Libya and the Sahel (see Map 1). They have left their most conspicuous imprint on the booming business of migrant smuggling, one of the few income-generating activities available to Saharan communities.²

European policies that are designed to curb smuggling operations may inadvertently benefit militia forces and exacerbate conflicts, to the detriment of states in the region. Niger, in particular, has maintained stability thanks to a fragile balance between northern communities, government institutions, and military authorities, as all of them stand to gain from the smuggling, directly or indirectly. By compelling migrant smugglers to consider more dangerous activities, such as drug trafficking or armed insurgencies, European policies are generating tensions not only between civilian and military authorities, but also between governments and communities.

This report explores these developments in greater detail. It builds on *Tubu Trouble: State and Statelessness in the Chad–Sudan–Libya Triangle*, written by the same authors and published by the Small Arms Survey and Conflict Armament Research in June 2017 (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017). It is based on field research carried out in Niger in February–March 2017 and April 2018, as well as interviews conducted in Chad in May–June 2017 and January 2018, and in Europe in 2017–18. The authors also used data collected during previous trips to Chad and Sudan. This report broadens the geographic scope to include the Niger–Libya borderlands, while expanding the thematic approach to consider migrant smuggling. Further research, including in southern Libya, will be required to assess how the highlighted dynamics evolve over time.

The report comprises four main sections. Section I summarizes the role of Tubu militias before and since the fall of the Qaddafi regime, providing background on current leaders and forces, as well as their loyalties and relations with external actors. It also situates the Tubu response to Islamist threats within the broader international political context.

The following section takes a closer look at Libya's southern neighbours and their ways of addressing and stemming insecurity along their porous northern borders. In particular, it discusses Sudan's efforts to establish joint border forces with militias

in southern Libya, its use of Rapid Support Forces, and its treatment of IS returnees. It reviews the activities of Chadian rebels in the region and N'Djaména's uncompromising tactics for maintaining control over its border with Libya, as well as Niger's evolving approach to preventing insecurity along its northern border. This section also assesses the roles and alliances of Chadian and Sudanese combatants in the border area and examines security dynamics related to the recent gold rush in Chad and Niger.

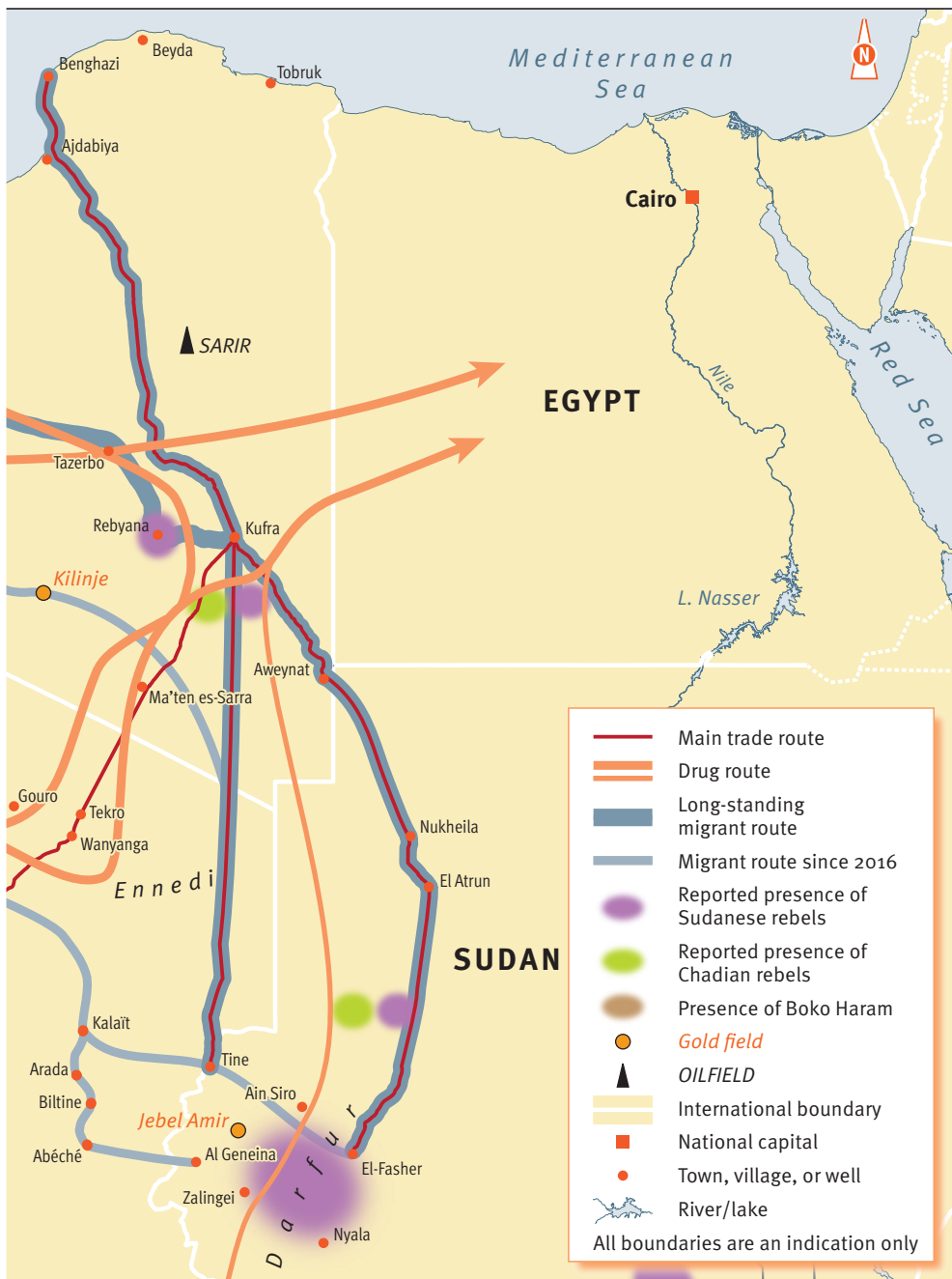
Section III explores the Agadez–Fezzan corridor, placing particular weight on recent changes in migrant smuggling and drug trafficking. It also highlights some unintended consequences of European migration policies.

The fourth section presents data and analysis of regional weapons flows to help support some of the findings discussed in the previous sections, such as conclusions pertaining to the outflow of Libyan stockpiles, movements of materiel with gold miners across Chad, and links between trafficking and jihadist networks in the region. The analysis is based on the physical inspection and documentation of seized weapons and ammunition held by security forces in northern Niger in early 2017.

The conclusion parses some of the rhetoric emerging from and about the region with a view to ensuring that multilateral policies buttress—rather than jeopardize—its fragile economic and security environment. ●

Map 1 Cross-border armed groups and routes across Libya's southern border









In the words of a Tubu leader: ‘We are like a trailer, we follow the North’s truck.’”

I. The Tubu: taking control of southern Libya’s borderlands

Geographic and ethnic context

Southern Libya's ethnic communities typically represent more than a single nationality, reflecting the fact that their territories straddle artificial borders drawn across the Sahara by colonial powers. Groups and individuals have routinely crossed these borders to flee dangers—such as conflicts, invasions, or droughts—to look for economic opportunities, and to secure external support for armed insurgencies.

This border region is home to the non-Arab Tubu, who inhabit northern Chad, site of their main stronghold, the 3,000-metre Tibesti mountains, as well as eastern Nigerien and southern Libyan oases—including those of the Kufra area and the Fezzan. The Ténéré desert marks the Tubu's western border with the Tuareg, who live in southern Algeria, northern Mali, northern Niger, and south-western Libya.

Southern Libya's Arab communities have experienced waves of migration south towards the Sahel. The Awlad Suleiman, in particular, were reshaped by such resettlement: many fled successive Ottoman and then Italian invasions, moved from northern Libya towards the Fezzan, and made their way south to western Chad and eastern Niger in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.³

In pursuing an expansionist policy towards the Sahel, especially Chad and Niger, Col. Muammar Qaddafi sought support from cross-border communities and invited them, in particular the Arabs, to return to their Libyan 'homeland'. He allowed the 'returnees', many of whom had been destitute since the devastating Sahelian droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, to benefit from jobs and services available in Libya. He also granted Libyan citizenship to the Tubu of the disputed Aozou Strip before withdrawing this right in 1996. On the military front, he enlisted Tubu and Tuareg combatants into regular and irregular forces, including his so-called Islamic Legion; he also urged fighters to join Tubu and Tuareg rebel groups, which he supported against successive governments in N'Djaména and Niamey (de Waal, 2013).⁴

Following these developments, many members of cross-border communities began to refer to themselves as having two or more national identities. It was not unusual for the combatants among them to have served as government or opposition fighters of two or more countries—consecutively or even simultaneously. Libya had absorbed a massive influx of Tubu from Chad and Niger; these exiled people had mounted rebellion after rebellion against successive governments in N'Djaména and, to a lesser extent, in Niamey. By the 1980s, the Libyan Tubu, who had survived as an indigenous minority before the influx, had come to account for the majority of the global Tubu population.⁵

In addition to Tubu 'returnees', Dazagada (or Goran) and Beri (Zaghawa and Bideyat) settled in the Kufra area of south-eastern Libya, bordering on Sudan and Chad. In the 1990s and the early years of the following decade, the Beri gained prominence in the smuggling of manufactured goods between Libya and Khartoum's Suq Libya.⁶

Revolutionary trajectories

When the Libyan revolution began, in February 2011, Qaddafi immediately called on the members of Saharan cross-border communities to defend the regime. Since many of them had taken part in rebellions abroad, they had earned a reputation in Libya for being better fighters than the regular national forces. Even the ones who remained largely marginalized in Libya appear to have felt that they owed the government a debt, and Qaddafi now tempted them with promises of greater political and economic power. In addition, some feared that Qaddafi's potential successors would marginalize them even further.

Most of the Tuareg, including former rebels from Mali and Niger, heeded Qaddafi's call to arms.⁷ The Awlad Suleiman initially constituted an important contingent of Qaddafi's forces; as the regime fell, however, they largely switched sides, expressing resentment over having been sidelined in favour of the colonel's own Qadhadhfa tribesmen, with whom they had historically been allied.

The Tubu were more ambivalent, since Qaddafi had, after supporting their rebellions in Chad and Niger, turned against them in order to reconcile with N'Djaména and Niamey. The most restive, or least obedient, Tubu rebel leaders were imprisoned, tortured, and killed. Yet, in February 2011, Qaddafi called for help from two former rebel leaders, both of whom had served as Libyan soldiers and played critical roles in the Tubu rebellion in Niger in the late 1990s (Lacher, 2014).

The first was Barka Wardougou, who was born in northern Niger to a father who made a living smuggling goods, cigarettes, and people between Niger and Libya. Having joined the Libyan army in the 1970s, at the age of 16, Barka Wardougou became a guard of the Chadian rebel leader and former president Goukouni Weddey, after which he turned to smuggling cars and cigarettes between Libya, Niger, and Nigeria. In 1994, in protest against the way the Nigerien forces had treated him and other Tubu, he and a few like-minded men founded the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Sahara (Forces armées révolutionnaires du Sahara, FARS) (Wardougou, n.d.).⁸ He was instrumental in smuggling arms inherited from the Chadian wars to fellow Tuareg rebels in Niger (Wardougou, n.d.).⁹ In 1997, as the majority of FARS combatants acceded to peace talks that were paving the way to the rebel group's disarmament, Barka Wardougou was reluctant to give up the struggle. He transferred equipment, including nine vehicles with heavy weapons, to the newly formed Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad), the Chadian Tubu rebellion led by Youssouf Togoïmi (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 29–58; Wardougou, n.d.).¹⁰ Qaddafi placed Wardougou under house arrest in 2000 and then sent him to prison; he was released in 2010, on the eve of the revolution (Wardougou, n.d.).¹¹ He initially accepted a small number of weapons—about 50 AK rifles—from the loyalists but then turned against the regime.¹²



Photo 1 Trucks on the Niger–Libya road



The second man was Barka Sidimi, a former FARS security chief and no natural ally of Qaddafi either. In 2005, he had attempted to resume armed operations in both Niger and Libya. From his base on the Chadian side of the Chad–Niger–Libya tri-border, he and his 250 men—many of whom were reportedly Tuareg—attacked drug traffickers and also looted vehicles from a Chinese oil project near Zella, in central Libya.¹³ Arrested by Qaddafi, he was sentenced to having a hand and a foot cut off. Nevertheless, in February 2011, Sidimi heeded Qaddafi’s call for help, travelled from Niger to Tripoli, and accepted the colonel’s offer of seven vehicles and money in exchange for protecting Fezzan oilfields. As the regime lost its foothold, however, Sidimi was not able to find support among his kinsmen. He enlisted Tuareg loyalists, but they became reluctant to follow him as tensions grew between the Tuareg and the Tubu, such that he returned to Niger without fighting.¹⁴

In the meantime, in Kufra, Tubu who had unsuccessfully opposed the regime a decade earlier—such as Issa Abdelmajid Mansour and Hassan Keley (aka Hassan Musa), and army defectors such as Ali Ramadan Sida (aka Ali Kuri and Ali ‘Effendi’ (Colonel))—joined the revolution together with Zwaya Arabs with similar backgrounds. In March and April they took control of the Ma’ten es-Sarra military base south of Kufra and the Sarir oilfield north of Kufra, thus acquiring a small number of vehicles. In May 2011, armed with weapons supplied by Sudan, they took control of Kufra (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 109).¹⁵

Over a few days in June 2011, Barka Wardougou’s small group—15 men, mostly drawn from his relatives, and two vehicles—took control of a handful of military checkpoints south of his family’s stronghold of Tajarhi, the most southern oasis of the Fezzan, including the crossing point of Tomou on the Niger border. They then intercepted about ten vehicles coming from Niger and carrying some 300 Tuareg and other pro-Qaddafi fighters.¹⁶ Wardougou also managed to seize the airstrip of El-Wigh, where he was reinforced by other Tubu and Awlad Suleiman combatants, who had received funding from revolutionaries in Benghazi and had then bought vehicles and weapons to supplement arms that Tubu fighters had brought from Sudan.¹⁷

In mid-August, the group took Murzuq and the neighbouring El-Fil oilfield.¹⁸ The following month, they contributed to the fall of Sebha, together with various revolutionary forces, including Awlad Suleiman and Hassawna combatants, and others who had come from the north.¹⁹

Tubu forces in Libya today

Following the revolution, Tubu forces began to fragment. Each attempted to secure control of specific areas, including urban neighbourhoods, checkpoints on commercial routes towards Chad, Niger, and Sudan, and economically strategic assets such as oilfields, agricultural projects, and gold mining areas (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 118–23). Taking their cue from Qaddafi’s former forces, some Tubu groups presented themselves as guards of these areas and sought to obtain payments—in the form either of taxes on traders, gold miners, and travellers, or salaries paid to auxiliary forces by authorities in northern Libya, which are equally fragmented.²⁰

Tubu forces have only united when their community was under threat, typically during interethnic conflicts that pitted the Tubu against other communities for the control of strategic locations, routes, and resources. Since late 2011, Tubu have fought Zwaya Arab forces in Kufra; beginning in March 2012, they confronted Awlad Suleiman Arabs in Sebha; and in 2014–16, they battled the Tuareg in Ubari (ICG, 2017, pp. 11–14; Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 111–18). The latter conflict was put on hold, if not resolved, following local and Qatar-based negotiations, and the truce has since been monitored by a Hassawna peacekeeping force (Murray, 2017, p. 14; UNSC, 2017b, p. 16).²¹ The conflict in Sebha resumed in March 2018. Having united again, Tubu forces managed to take over Sebha’s strategic—and symbolic—fortress from a mostly Awlad Suleiman brigade.²²

The Wardougou family and Cherfeddin Barkay

The main Tubu militias, in particular the forces of Cherfeddin Barkay and Barka Wardougou, mobilized in Sebha and Ubari. Unity remained loose. During these conflicts, the influence of the Murzuq Military Council, which had nominally been charged with the coordination of all forces in the Fezzan, was at best marginal. Indeed, the council exercised only nominal authority beyond the forces of Barka Wardougou, who led the body until his death at the age of 60 in 2016, when he was succeeded by his brother Abay (Rajeb) Wardougou (Wardougou, n.d.).²³

By 2017, Cherfeddin Barkay’s Battalion of the Martyrs of Um-el-Araneb (Katiba Shuhada Um-el-Araneb) was said to be the strongest Tubu militia, with some 400 active men and 40 to 100 vehicles. Next was Abay Wardougou’s Dira’ Sahara (Sahara Shield), numbering 200 active troops and as many vehicles (see Table 1).²⁴

Before the revolution, Cherfeddin Barkay had traded livestock and vehicles between Niger and Libya. His popularity as a militia leader appears to have grown as his kinsman Barka Wardougou lost influence, partly because Wardougou went to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for medical treatment and remained there until his death in July 2016, at the age of 60 (Wardougou, n.d.). While Cherfeddin’s rise may be attributed in part to

his relative youth—Barka Wardougou was roughly 25 years his senior—it is also linked to his forces' greater role in the Sebha and Ubari conflicts, as well as their approach to managing checkpoints and taxation on roads.²⁵ Specifically, they collect about LYD 10–20 (USD 1.70–3.40) per car²⁶—limited and even negotiable sums that they use to clear sand from the road between El-Wigh and Gatrun.²⁷ Barkay's forces are also said to fight against alcohol and drug trafficking, as well as migrant smuggling—which is less popular among the Tubu than road maintenance.²⁸ In some contrast, Barka Wardougou had been accused of double-dealing with competing foreign actors, a practice he had previously carried out as a Libyan soldier and as a rebel in Chad and Niger.

Tubu loyalties and external interference

Libyan Tubu forces and their leaders may appear to maintain ambiguous relations with actors in northern Libya as well as foreign players, but their loyalties follow a certain logic.

One key to understanding Tubu allegiances within Libya is their quest for international recognition. In 2014–15, many Tubu military and political leaders appeared to favour the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR), some of whose members were Tubu. In so doing, they indirectly aligned themselves with Gen. Khalifa Haftar's self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA), which backs the HoR. Tubu support for the body appears to have been motivated by the fact that the Tobruk Parliament benefitted from US and EU recognition. In early 2016, however, international recognition shifted to the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), a body led by Fayeze Seraj and rejected by Haftar. Tubu support soon followed suit, even though the GNA lacked representation in southern Libya (AFP, 2017a). In the words of a Tubu leader: 'We are like a trailer, we follow the North's truck.'²⁹

Another crucial factor shaping Tubu militias' loyalties is their desire to be seen as regular, legitimate forces, for both political and economic reasons, particularly since such recognition can help them obtain salaries from authorities in northern Libya.³⁰ Indeed, a number of forces that were on government payrolls under former prime ministers Ali Zeidan and Khalifa Ghwell—including petroleum facilities guards (PFGs) such as Bokori Sougui's forces and Cherfeddin Barkay's unit at the El-Wigh airstrip—have reportedly remained on the GNA payroll and have continued to receive salaries from the GNA defence ministry.³¹ Tubu PFGs that were active in the oil crescent under militia leader Ibrahim Jadhran—including some of Hassan Keley and Allatchi Mahadi's forces—joined the GNA before or with Jadhran. In the meantime, LNA-affiliated PFGs in Sarir continued to receive salaries from the defence ministry in Tripoli. Prior to the establishment of the GNA, the Ghwell government also paid Tubu PFGs and appears to have maintained links with some forces in the Fezzan, notably Tubu 'policemen' in Murzuq (ICG, 2017, p. 20).

Shifts in Tubu loyalties also reflect interference by northern Libyan and foreign forces in southern Libya's conflicts, as well as the Tubu forces' general distrust of external players. A case in point concerns local youths who control the strategic checkpoint 17 ('Sabatachar') in Sebha. These youths were recruited among Tubu and Arabs—Hassawna, Magarha, and Qadhadhfa—who were hostile to Awlad Suleiman and Misratan forces. In early 2017, they reportedly displayed a Haftar poster at checkpoint 17.³² By early 2018, however, the poster had been removed as conflict had resumed in Sebha and a part of the Awlad Suleiman had aligned with Haftar. In Sebha, Kufra, and elsewhere, Haftar, whose mother is a Zwaya Arab, has been viewed as hostile to the Tubu, a perception that has led some Tubu leaders—including Hassan Keley—to side with the anti-Haftar camp (ICG, 2017, p. 18).³³

Tubu forces have exhibited an increasing distrust of all northern powers. After the LNA's Arabic name was changed to 'Libyan National *Arab* Army', many Tubu shifted away from Haftar and towards the GNA (Temehu, n.d.a; n.d.b).³⁴ In late 2016, Hassan Keley reportedly played a role in persuading Tubu forces—as well as Chadian and Darfur mercenaries and rebels in about 40 vehicles—to abandon Haftar in favour of the newly formed Benghazi Defence Brigade (Tharaya difa' Benghazi, BDB) of Ismail Sallabi. His aim was to challenge Haftar for control of the oil crescent—with the support of Qatar and GNA Defence Minister Mahdi Barghathi, whom Keley, at least on paper, served as adviser.³⁵ Haftar subsequently accused Keley of recruiting mercenaries for his adversaries and issued an arrest warrant against him.³⁶ By May 2018, following the united Tubu attack on Sebha's fortress, some Tubu forces, reportedly mobilized by Hassan Keley together with Chadian and Darfur rebels, and alongside BDB and Qadhadhfa troops, attempted to retake Tamanhant airfield from the LNA. This move divided the Tubu once again, leading some to criticize Keley for involving the community in a conflict that was not tribal but rather national, at the risk of reinforcing Haftar's support for the Awlad Suleiman. Indeed, in reprisals, Haftar's aircraft bombed Tubu positions in Sebha and Um-el-Araneb.³⁷

Tubu allegiances have also been shaped in response to foreign interference. Chad and the UAE provided support to Barka Wardougou, and Chad also backed Allatchi Mahadi and Issa Abdelmajid, which may explain why these leaders initially appeared to favour Haftar rather than his Misratan enemies. Between 2012 and 2015, the UAE allegedly supplied Barka Wardougou and allied Tubu forces with vehicles, arms such as Yugoslav-era M92 rifles, ammunition, uniforms, and food by way of the El-Wigh and Waw airfields (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 120).³⁸ Deliveries appeared to have stopped after a dispute between the forces of Barka Wardougou and those of Ali Mohammed Othman 'Wujij', which controlled Waw el-Kebir. An associate of Wardougou's has claimed that Wujij was manipulated by Haftar, who wanted to stop UAE supplies to Wardougou. This account may explain why Barka Wardougou's brother and successor, Abay, appears to have distanced himself from Haftar. Haftar

had provided Barka Wardougou with further vehicles and arms in 2015, but the supplies seem to have ceased since his brother took over.³⁹

Meanwhile, the Misratan forces and Haftar competed to get the Tubu forces on their side, not only in the disputed oil crescent, but also in the south itself. In fact, they jockeyed for support in the south as a whole, be it through the use of incentives and threats, or by sending in troops. The Misratans deployed their Third Force under Jamal al-Triki. Created by the Ali Zeidan government in January 2014, the militia was presented as a peacekeeping force for Sebha and the Sharara oilfield, but in reality it supported local allies in efforts to control the Fezzan (ICG, 2017, p. 14).

In January 2017, also on the pretext of supporting peace in Sebha, Haftar sent his own force to the Fezzan: Tubu and Arab troops in 20 to 40 vehicles, led by Ali Ramadan Sida, his main Tubu ally and one of the few Tubu leaders who was reliably loyal to the LNA.⁴⁰ Sida's deployment was reportedly coordinated with Mohammed Ben Nayel, a former Qaddafi officer who became one of Haftar's men in the south. Ben Nayel had led the LNA contingent stationed in Wadi al-Shati, north of Sebha, an area abandoned to the LNA by Misrata's Third Force in early 2017 (ICG, 2017, pp. 15–16; *Maghreb Confidential*, 2017).⁴¹ Sida sought to enlist Tubu commanders in the LNA and induce Tubu forces to support Haftar, allegedly in preparation for an attack against Misratan forces in Sebha. In June 2017 LNA forces, including Ben Nayel's contingent, took the Tamanhant and Jufra airbases, north of Sebha, provoking the Third Force's withdrawal from the south (ICG, 2017, pp. 15–16). The Tubu did not welcome Sida with much enthusiasm, however. Most leaders, including Cherfeddin Barkay and Abay Wardougou, warned him of the risk of 'exporting Benghazi's war to the Fezzan'—advice that may have precipitated his return to Benghazi.⁴² In the words of a lieutenant under Cherfeddin Barkay:

Only if Haftar controls both the east and the west, shall we join him. If ever a unified state with one army, one police, and other institutions settles and comes toward us, we will disarm.⁴³

Despite internal divisions, Tubu forces overall remain united in their desire not to let relations with external actors provoke conflicts among themselves.⁴⁴ Distrustful of external agendas and fearing that stronger affiliations would aggravate divisions for only limited benefits, the Tubu have thus retained a certain degree of autonomy. Tubu who challenge this approach by forging links with outsiders risk being rejected by the majority. Such was recently the case with Barka Sidimi, the above-mentioned ex-rebel from Niger.

In mid-2017, Sidimi, who had not been active militarily since 2011, left Agadez for southern Libya. With the stated goal of fighting non-Tubu cross-border road bandits (*coupeurs de route*), he quickly managed to recruit a significant force—including 10–20 vehicles—under the name Sahara Falcons (Saqr Sahara). By September

2017, he had gained popularity among the Tubu for arresting foreign road bandits and car smugglers, including Darfur Beri and Arabs, as well as Chadian Dazagada. He established friendly relations with Libyan Tubu militias, which allegedly supplied him with military equipment. By early 2018, however, his reputation had suffered, not only because he appeared to be collecting taxes on the roads like other militias, but also because he allegedly aligned himself with external players, including Idriss Déby—whom he visited in January 2018—Zintani militias, and Haftar, who reportedly promised Sidimi vehicles. As a result, Sidimi appeared to be falling out of favour with the Tubu community in early 2018.⁴⁵

Rival militias have also worried about Sidimi's activities. In late 2017 Cherfeddin Barkay, Bokori Sougui, Abay Wardougou, and others formed the Murzuq Basin (Hodh Murzuq), a new alliance designed to revive the Murzuq Military Council, replicate Sidimi's anti-banditry operations, and drive out 'foreign' armed groups, including Chadian and Sudanese rebels and bandits, as well as Sidimi's own forces. The coalition's leadership was given to Abbakar Darmun, an Ahali or Fazazna (two names given to the other 'black' indigenous, now Arabized, community of the Fezzan region) who had served as an officer in Qaddafi's army. They deployed forces in Murzuq and Um-el-Araneb, where they reportedly forced Sidimi's Sahara Falcons to evacuate a checkpoint. By April 2018, they were planning to form a joint force based in Um-el-Araneb, with 60–80 vehicles to patrol Libya's southern borders. In view of the conflict in Sebha and other priorities, however, most returned to their original bases. While the Murzuq Basin presents itself as neutral and was recognized by both the GNA and Haftar, it probably has stronger ties to Hassan Keley—who participated in the coalition's creation—and the GNA.⁴⁶ By mid-2018, however, the coalition was reportedly weakening due to a lack of support from the GNA.⁴⁷

Tubu responses to Islamist threats

There has been much speculation about a possible jihadist infiltration in southern Libya, including among the Tubu. In order to secure international support, the Tubu have at times claimed that their Arab and Tuareg adversaries had Islamist agendas, arguing that they were supported by Islamist factions in Tripoli and Misrata and by Sudan. At the same time, the Tubu have presented themselves as a shield against the establishment of Islamists in southern Libya (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 122). Yet, as Tubu leaders themselves have recognized, the picture is more complex. The relationship between Hassan Keley and the Benghazi Defence Brigade, for instance, cannot be characterized as ideological, given that Keley is considered anti-Islamist while the BDB, which includes former members of Ansar al-Sharia, allegedly has ties to al-Qaeda.⁴⁸

Table 1 Main Tubu forces in Libya, mid-2018⁴⁹

Force leaders	Force name or description	Areas of control or presence	Affiliations or loyalties	Force strength and notes
Abay (Rajeb) Wardougou	Sahara Shield (Dira' Sahara)	Tajajahi; Tomou (on the Niger border); Nagaza checkpoint (between Tomou and El-Wigh)	Good relations with UAE, Chad, and Niger. Abay Wardougou also heads the weakened Murzuq Military Council, which presents itself as neutral, although some members, including the Sahara Shield, appear to favour the GNA while others prefer Haftar.	200 fighters; 40–100 vehicles. Barka Wardougou led the force and the Murzuq Military Council until his death in 2016, when his brother took over.
Cherfeddin Barkay	Battalion of the Martyrs of Um-el-Araneb (Katiba Shuhada Um-el-Araneb)	El-Wigh; Jebel as-Sida (between El-Wigh and Kouri Bougoudi gold mine), Waw, and Sidra checkpoint near Zwila	Initially closer to Haftar, the battalion recognized the GNA. It includes a unit paid by the GNA to guard El-Wigh airfield.	400 fighters; 40–100 vehicles. The battalion's initial leader, Ramadan Allatichi, formerly a lieutenant colonel in Qaddafi's army, left the command to his deputy, Cherfeddin Barkay, a young smuggler with connections in Niger, in 2013. The force once controlled the strategic checkpoint 'Sabatachar' (17), south of Sebha, since left to autonomous local youths.
Bokori Sougui	Guard of the petroleum and other installations (Haras al-Munsha'at an-Naftiya)	El-Fil oilfield; Murzuq area	Funded by the GNA's defence ministry.	Reportedly a main force, with up to 100 vehicles and 1,300 elements on payroll.
Allatichi Mahadi	Battalion of the Martyrs of Gatrun (Katiba Shuhada Gatrun) aka Border Guard Battalion 320 (Katiba 320 Haras Hodud)	'Salita' checkpoint (south of Sebha); checkpoints near Chad–Libya border and near the cross-border gold mines of Kouri Bougoudi and Kilimje; formerly oil crescent	Some combatants in the battalion were formerly part of PFG units in the central region under Ibrahim Iadhran, then defected to back Tripoli's General National Congress in 2015. Mahadi was aligned with Chad and Haftar, who recognized his katiba, but he is reportedly getting closer to the GNA.	Mahadi was a sergeant in the Libyan army, deserted in 1988, and joined the Chadian army. He was arrested in Libya in 1996 and imprisoned until 2011. He reportedly befriended future revolutionaries in jail.
Ali Ramadan Sida (aka Ali 'Effendi' (Colonel))	Battalion of the Martyr Ahmed al-Sharif (Katiba Shahid Anmed al-Sharif) or LNA Border Guard Battalion 25 and Petroleum Facilities Guards	Kufra area; Sarir oilfields	Sida is the main Tubu commander in Haftar's LNA. In 2017, he was sent to the Fezzan to support the LNA there.	After co-founding the Battalion of the Martyr Ahmed al-Sharif with Hassan Keley in Sarir oilfield, Sida, who had served as a lieutenant colonel in Qaddafi's army, joined Haftar in Benghazi, where his Tubu forces played an important role. In 2017, Sida's forces fought in Kufra, Benghazi, and the Fezzan.

Hassan Keley (aka Hassan Musa)	Hassan Kaley's followers also continued using the name Battalion of the Martyr Ahmed al-Sharif; Keley is mobilizing Tubu forces on an ad hoc basis	Kufra area; oil crescent; Sebha	Alli Ramadan Sida and Hassan Keley founded the Battalion of the Martyr Ahmed al-Sharif in 2011, initially together with Zwaya revolutionaries. In 2014, Sida joined the LNA with some of the fighters, while others remained loyal to Keley. Keley reportedly is close to various anti-Haftar players (including the GNA, Ibrahim Jadhnan, Misratan brigades, and the Benghazi Defence Brigade) and mobilized forces against Haftar in the oil crescent and Sebha area.	Hassan Keley has Tubu and Dazagada origins.
Goukouni Barkay	Tubu Community Battalion (Katiba al-Umma Tubu)	Kufra area; Rebyana; checkpoints on roads to Chad and Sudan, including in Kilinje; Sebha	Presents itself as independent from northern forces.	More than 50 vehicles. Created in 2013, during the Tubu-Zwaya conflict in Kufra. The battalion deployed forces in Sebha in 2018.
Issa Abdelmajid Mansour and Issa May	Anti-illegal Immigration Battalion of the Martyr Juma' Abdelmajid (Katiba Shahid Juma' Abdelmajid)	Kufra area; checkpoint in Kilinje	Abdelmajid was an adviser to HoR president Aguilu Saleh until 2015, when he lost his position, reportedly at the instigation of Haftar and his Zwaya Arab allies. He is, however, reportedly still close to Haftar.	20 vehicles.
Brahim Suleiman 'Lokol'	Rebyana Border Guard Battalion (Katiba Rebyana Haras Hoduud)	Rebyana; Kilinje	Close to Hassan Keley, affiliated to the GNA.	Not available.
Alli Sida Koseri and Omar Togoimi	Sebha Joint Security Room (Ghorfa Amniya Mushakkala Sebha)	Sebha Nasirya neighbourhood; Mutalata	Reportedly recognized by the GNA.	Not available.
Alli Egrey	Tubu forces (Quwat Tubu)	Ubari	Reportedly close to Cherfeddin Barkay. Previously close to the Zintani brigades and Haftar; now close to the GNA.	Abay Soley headed the group until his death in 2013.
Bedey Mahmay (Mohammed) Makni	Gatrun Security Committee (Lejna Amniya Gatrun)	Gatrun; checkpoint in El-Wigh; Kouri Bougoudi	Bedey Mahmay, an intelligence lieutenant colonel under Qaddafi, is the brother of Taher Makni, a former member of the General National Congress. The committee has been less active since the creation of a more comprehensive Security Directorate affiliated with the GNA and led by Mohamed Ibrahim Ordey.	Not available.
Ali Mohammed Othman 'Wujji'	Waw Battalion (Katibat Waw)	Waw el-Kebir; Um-el-Araneb	Close to both the Battalion of the Martyrs of Um-el-Araneb and the LNA.	Affiliated to the GNA.





Force leaders	Force name or description	Areas of control or presence	Affiliations or loyalties	Force strength and notes
Hassan Musa Sugi	Murzuq Border Guard Battalion (Katibat Murzuq Haras Hodud)	Murzuq	Affiliated to the GNA, close to Hassan Keley.	More than 20 vehicles. Founded in 2017.
Rajeb Eji	Murzuq Security Room (Ghorfa Amniya Murzuq)	Murzuq	Reportedly close to Ali Ramadan Sida, but autonomous from both LNA and GNA.	7 vehicles; composed of pre-2011 army and police members, including Tubu and Ahali.
Dunay Zaid	Border Guard (Haras Hodud)	Gatrun; 'Antena Tamanin' (80) checkpoint (between Gatrun and Um-el-Araneb)	Not available.	4–5 vehicles. Dunay Zaid was imprisoned under Qaddafi and reportedly befriended future revolutionaries in jail.
Barka Sidimi	Sahara Falcons (Saqr Sahara)	Checkpoint south of El-Wigh	Allegedly close to Chad, Haftar, and Zintani militias.	10–20 vehicles. Founded in mid-2017.
Hassan Musa Goney	Border Guard Battalion 17 (Katiba 17 Haras Hodud)	Checkpoints near the Chad–Libya border and near Kouri Bougoudi gold mine	Recognized by the GNA in 2015. Operates jointly with Allatchi Mahadi's katiba in Fawar, between Kouri Bougoudi and Kilinjé. Previously operated alongside elements of Abay Wardougou, Cherfeddin Barkay, and Gatrun Security Committee (Lejna Amniya Gatrun) in Kouri Bougoudi. Sought to establish good relations with Chad.	12 cars. Partly comprised of elements once under Barka Wardougou, this katiba became autonomous after the 2012 conflict in Sebha and grew thanks to taxes on gold miners and transport around Kouri Bougoudi. It reportedly deployed forces in Sebha in 2018.
Yusif Husein Saleh	Khalid Bin Walid Battalion or Battalion 104	Um-el-Araneb	Salafist Madakhilia force. Believed to be affiliated with the LNA. Reportedly fought alongside the Waw Battalion and the Battalion of the Martyrs of Um-el-Araneb.	10 vehicles. Founded in August 2018, this force—composed of both Tubu and members of other communities—mostly aims at improving security. It fought against Chadian Dazagada bandits based in Um-el-Araneb and who were notably involved in kidnappings.

The Fezzan Tubu have repeatedly said that they could form an effective bulwark against any attempt by the non-state armed group Islamic State (IS) to settle in the south, if needed, with the support of international troops such as the French force based in Madama, in north-eastern Niger.⁵⁰ After IS forces were defeated in Sirte in late 2016, some of their combatants reportedly headed towards the Fezzan and possibly the Sahel, while others appear to have been sighted in Sebha, Ubari, Murzuq, Um-el-Araneb, Wadi al-Shati, and the Salvador Pass at the Libya–Niger–Algeria tri-border.⁵¹ In 2018, an IS group that had relocated from Sirte to Haruj el-Aswad mountains in central Libya was said to be responsible for attacks on both El-Fogaha in the north-west and Tazerbo in the south-east. According to French sources, it may be easier to prevent IS combatants from relocating to the Fezzan than to the Kufra area, where they could obtain support from local and Sudanese sympathizers and use migrant- and arms-trafficking routes that lead through the Libya–Sudan–Egypt tri-border and on to the Red Sea (Murray, 2017, p. 9; Tabib, 2013).⁵² In February 2018, outlandish rumours held that IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had moved from the Middle East to the Tibesti mountains in northern Chad or to northern Niger (Acton, 2018).

Tubu leaders have argued that, given the absence of a functional state and security structures in southern Libya, Salafism has begun to contaminate youths in urban neighbourhoods.⁵³ Observers have also pointed to a Salafist presence in Murzuq and Um-el-Araneb (ICG, 2017, p. 11).⁵⁴

The Tubu cite only a few relevant cases, however, including that of a Tubu from Derna known as Ali Dernawi. Dernawi allegedly joined al-Qaeda before fighting with IS forces in Sirte, alongside two of his brothers.⁵⁵ In early 2018, as reports circulated of IS combatants attempting to settle in Um-el-Araneb, Murzuq Basin forces in the town reportedly arrested Dernawi and confiscated his car and gun. An exchange of fire followed, during which Dernawi and Murzuq Basin fighters were reportedly killed, while Dernawi's brothers and other IS combatants or former combatants left town.⁵⁶

Similarly, Nigerian authorities presented the arrest of a Tubu who was carrying 369 cartridges between Agadez and Zinder in February 2017 as—rather thin—evidence that some Tubu groups supply arms from IS forces in Libya to Boko Haram (UNSC, 2017b, p. 189). They also cite the case of Mohamed Darkala, a Tubu migrant smuggler arrested in Niger in 2014 for transporting Boko Haram combatants who were planning to join IS forces in Sirte.⁵⁷ A pro-IS video in Tedaga (the Tubu language) was reportedly circulated by a Libyan Tubu from Sirte known as Abdelsalam 'Daesh', possibly a relative of Darkala.⁵⁸

While these cases represent little more than anecdotal evidence, they have contributed to Tubu fears that Salafism—whether violent or not—might find fertile ground among their youths if state absence and the marginalization of their territories persist.

In August 2018, a new force—adhering to the Salafist Madakhila ideology and composed of fighters from both Tubu and other communities—emerged in the Fezzan, under the name of Khalid Bin Walid Battalion (Adel, 2018). The Madakhila ideology is in opposition to jihadism and the new battalion, with the stated aim of addressing insecurity, including drug and alcohol trafficking, mostly fought (alongside other Tubu forces) against Chadian Dazagada bandits involved in kidnappings. As other Madakhila-inspired groups favour Haftar over the GNA, it appears that the new force rapidly got close to the LNA. ●



Since 2011, Chad, Niger, and Sudan have attempted to control their northern borders, in particular to prevent their rebel movements from finding support in Libya.”

II. Libya’s southern neighbours and cross-border non-state actors

Since 2011, Chad, Niger, and Sudan have attempted to control their northern borders, in particular to prevent their rebel movements from finding support in Libya. In April and May 2018, the three governments, together with Tripoli's GNA, met to discuss border security issues, first in Niamey and then in N'Djaména. The talks reflected some of the parties' like-mindedness—with Sudan and the GNA clearly aligned, and Chad and Niger sharing interests in the western Sahel—but they were also shaped by each party's open pursuit of its own immediate goals. In particular, Chad and Sudan focused on weakening their respective rebels in Libya. In May 2018 in N'Djaména, the four parties signed a cooperation agreement on security, modelled on the 2010 Chad–Sudan deal. The agreement includes a right of pursuit into neighbours' territories (RFI, 2018b). It also calls on the four countries' judicial authorities to sign another agreement to facilitate extraditions, which they did in August 2018 in Khartoum (*Libya Observer*, 2018). This provision was initially requested by Chad to create a legal basis for the extradition of its rebels. A Chadian rebel leader was handed over to N'Djaména by Niger in 2017, and another one by Sudan in 2018.

Sudan

Joint border forces

Sudan and most of its neighbours have a history of supporting each other's rebels. Khartoum reconciled with Ethiopia during the 1998–2000 Ethiopia–Eritrea war, however, and with Eritrea in 2006. In 2010, Khartoum and N'Djaména ended their five-year proxy war with a deal whose main achievement was the establishment of a joint border force. Sudan then tried to replicate this model with other neighbours, including Qaddafi's Libya, but the Khartoum–Tripoli talks faltered due to a mutual lack of trust.⁵⁹

After Qaddafi's fall, Sudan's interest in controlling the border grew, but identifying a Libyan partner for a joint border force had become more difficult. Libya's National Transitional Council entrusted some border control to Tubu militias, which soon found themselves embroiled in a conflict with Kufra's Zwaya Arab community, notably for the control of the road towards Sudan (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 115).

All the while, Khartoum favoured partnering with the Zwaya. The preference was not based on a common ideology: neither the Zwaya nor the Tubu had shown an affinity for Sudan's historical allies in northern Libya, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Rather, Khartoum appears to have backed the Zwaya because it intended to apply the same Arabist approach it had used to enlist Darfur Arabs into 'janjaweed' militias. Moreover, it aimed to exploit the links between Zwaya traders and Darfur Arabs—including known militia leaders who were selling camels to Libya.

Sudan thus viewed some Zwaya militias as potential border monitors. In late 2014, at a time when the HoR-appointed government of Abdullah al-Thinni in Beyda enjoyed international recognition, the Sudanese army began to form a joint border force with Zwaya troops that were on the payroll of al-Thinni's defence ministry. By early 2015, however, tensions between Haftar and Khartoum had brought the cooperation to an end.⁶⁰ Still, Sudan had been able to use the short-lived presence of the 'joint force' to justify sending arms to Kufra.⁶¹ That support may partly explain how the Zwaya militias retook control, during 2015, of the routes between Kufra and Sudan—to the detriment of the Tubu (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 115).⁶²

In mid-2018, the Sudanese government claimed that its intelligence agents had released an Egyptian intelligence patrol in Libya. In so doing, Khartoum acknowledged that Sudanese troops had been on a secret mission in north-eastern Libya (*Mada Masr*, 2018). Rumours held that a Chadian armed group, possibly drug traffickers, had captured the Egyptians, yet other sources indicated that no Chadians were involved and that the Egyptians had been captured by the very Sudanese forces that pretended to be their liberators.⁶³

The Rapid Support Forces and the Border Guards

In 2016, Sudan deployed 400 vehicles of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)—its newest paramilitary force, which recruited largely among Darfur Arabs—to the border with Libya. It claimed the move was designed to support the European Union's policy of blocking migrants from the Horn of Africa, including from Sudan. In reality, the deployment was a way to crack down on Darfur rebels who were moving between northern Darfur and southern Libya, as evidenced by RSF activities in May–June 2017 (*Sudan Tribune*, 2017b; Tubiana, 2017a, p. 11). A few months earlier, in late 2016, the RSF had clashed with Tubu militias south of Kufra and had unsuccessfully attempted to exchange Tubu prisoners for Darfur rebels who were allegedly hosted by the Tubu.⁶⁴

The RSF is also allegedly involved in human trafficking; arms trafficking—providing Libya with arms Khartoum had delivered to the RSF; and drug trafficking—supplying Libya with hashish from the tri-border area between the Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, and Sudan (Tubiana, 2017a, p. 11).⁶⁵ Sudanese government and other sources maintain that RSF trafficking activities—and its militia operations in general—largely escape Khartoum's control (UNSC, 2017c, p. 38).⁶⁶

Khartoum has also failed to stop Libyan armed groups from recruiting current and former members of Sudanese militias as mercenaries. Arab combatants from the Chad–Sudan border, including former rebels from Chad, appear to have moved back and forth between the RSF in Sudan and the LNA in Libya, in spite of Sudan's hostility towards Haftar. The LNA reportedly offered USD 3,000 to any 'janjaweed' for joining; meanwhile, a representative of the anti-Haftar side in Khartoum reportedly sought to

recruit several thousand combatants by offering militia leader Musa Hilal a similar amount per fighter (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 138).⁶⁷ Ibrahim Jadhan was also said to recruit among Darfur Arabs, including Musa Hilal's followers.

In August 2017, the RSF arrested seven Mahamid Arab tribesmen associated with Musa Hilal as they arrived from Libya.⁶⁸ Sudan's vice president, Hassabo Abderahman, claimed that they had been recruiting fighters for Haftar, but observers suggest they were ordinary traffickers, migrant smugglers, and gold miners (*Sudan Tribune*, 2017c). Hassabo also accused Hilal of planning to send 1,000 combatants to Libya in exchange for logistical support against Khartoum—a charge that government officials have since rejected.⁶⁹

The arrest and the subsequent allegations were made in the context of growing tensions between Musa Hilal and Khartoum, as well as between Hilal and his rival Mohammed Hamdan Dagolo 'Hemmeti', whose rise as RSF leader since 2013 has been strongly supported by his Mahariya Arab kinsman Hassabo. In mid-2017, the government announced its intention to integrate Hilal's Border Guards into the RSF—thereby placing them under Hemmeti's control—and to disarm other 'irregular' forces and civilians. The disarmament campaign was also designed to confiscate or regularize vehicles that had been smuggled into Darfur, notably from Libya, where many were reportedly stolen (Baldo, 2017, pp. 1–4).

Hilal and his partisans understood Khartoum's decisions as direct attacks on their authority. To show opposition to this agenda and his aides' arrest, Hilal gathered thousands of loyal militiamen in his Misteriha stronghold in North Darfur on 12 August 2017 (Baldo, 2017, p. 7). The protest spread to Libya when another Hilal aide, Zakaria Musa 'Ad-Dush', posted on social media an offer of USD 1,000 for any RSF member who would defect to join him in Libya. In what was certainly an overstatement, he claimed that half of the RSF troops had already joined him.⁷⁰

Like Hemmeti, Ad-Dush had been a camel smuggler between Darfur and Libya before war erupted in Darfur; in 2003, he had become a commander of Musa Hilal's Border Guard. Yet while Hemmeti had only been a rebel for a few months before returning to the government fold in 2008, Ad-Dush had defected to the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in 2009 and stated he was ready to testify against Hilal before the International Criminal Court (Tubiana, 2011a). In 2011, he was in Libya at the same time as JEM chairman Khalil Ibrahim but appears to have acted autonomously. Like other former 'janjaweed', he may have fought on Qaddafi's side and may thus have been able to acquire arms. He is known to have telephoned from Tripoli to inform his associates in the Kabkabiya region of North Darfur that he had obtained weapons stockpiles and was seeking ways to bring them back to Darfur (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 23–24). As Hilal increasingly distanced himself from the government, Ad-Dush appears to have rejoined his former boss. He reportedly made money by trafficking between Libya and Sudan and by aligning himself with Haftar; as a result, his



Photo 2 Government militia members in a North Darfur market. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2011

declarations of support for Hilal may inadvertently have substantiated the accusation of collusion between Hilal and Haftar.⁷¹

In September 2017, the RSF again intercepted a group of Hilal's associates who were returning from Libya, this time killing 17 of them. Hilal's associates said they were just 'traders' and gold miners, while the RSF accused them of being 'human traffickers'; a government official later indicated that they were 'migrant smugglers, cars and arms traffickers' (Dabanga, 2017; UNSC, 2017c, p. 11).⁷² Finally, in November 2017, Hilal himself, together with many men, was arrested by the RSF in Misteriha, after which Hemmeti accused him of involvement 'in a foreign conspiracy against Sudan' (*Sudan Tribune*, 2017d). Since then, Musa Hilal's followers have moved to Libya, reportedly to establish an Arab rebel movement against Khartoum under Ad-Dush—with the support of Haftar and Egypt. In February 2018, some of them, this time on their way to Libya, reportedly fought against the RSF in North Darfur.⁷³

IS returnees

Another crucial issue for Khartoum at the Libyan border is monitoring the return of up to several hundred Sudanese IS combatants who fled Sirte in 2016 (Radio Tamazuj, 2017). Khartoum reportedly deflated their numbers, arguing that 'only seventy individuals [...] have travelled or attempted to travel to Libya and Syria combined'; Libyan

sources indicate that at least 100 Sudanese travelled to Libya alone (Zelin, 2018, p. 2). Meanwhile, a Sudanese official indicated that more than 400 had returned to Sudan.⁷⁴

According to a reformed jihadi, Sudanese members of jihadist groups in Libya and Mali belong to three distinct categories:

- former ‘janjaweed’, who may be more interested in looting than religion;
- former members of *mujahideen* (holy warrior) paramilitary forces formed by the Sudanese security apparatus to fight in South Sudan, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan, who may still be loyal—or at least not hostile—to Khartoum (Tubiana, 2017a, pp. 3–4); and
- ordinary Salafists, who see the Khartoum regime as having betrayed its original Islamist ideology (Zelin, 2018, pp. 10–11).⁷⁵

The two latter categories largely comprise educated young men from the Sudanese capital, from the middle and even upper classes, including sons of religious leaders and regime dignitaries (Zelin, 2018, pp. 10–11, 13). Given their backgrounds, these returnees are not treated like Darfur rebels, many of whom who are executed in the field. Instead, former IS members are reportedly imprisoned in Khartoum and required to undergo a deradicalization programme.⁷⁶

Chad

N’Djaména’s main preoccupation in southern Libya, much like Khartoum’s, has been the presence of its own rebels. Idriss Déby had been eager to maintain good relations with the Tubu, so as to prevent new insurgencies. In mid-2018, however, a first rebel raid on the Chadian side of the Kouri Bougoudi area in Tibesti prompted N’Djaména to target the Tubu, including via aerial bombings on civilian areas in Tibesti, rather than the (non-Tubu) rebels, whom Chadian troops had merely chased across the border following the incident.

Chad is also worried about possible links between jihadist groups in southern Libya and Boko Haram. Jihadis in southern Libya allegedly supported Boko Haram’s attacks in N’Djaména in February 2015.⁷⁷ In January 2017, Chad officially closed its border with Libya, alleging a risk of infiltration by terrorist groups (*Le Monde*, 2017).

With respect to the current conflict in Libya, N’Djaména has professed a preference for Haftar, whose links to Chad date back four decades. The Libyan general had been in charge of Qaddafi’s occupying forces in Chad until 1987, when the Chadian army captured him and overran the Libyan base of Wadi Doum in Ennedi. Haftar’s captors treated him well, and he soon took command of the Libyan rebels in Chad—with

US support (Marchal, 2016, p. 16). In 1990, when Déby ousted and replaced Chad's president, Hissène Habré, with Libyan support, the CIA rescued Haftar to prevent him from being handed over to Qaddafi (Kirchgaessner and Michaelson, 2017). Haftar has maintained links with veterans of the Habré regime who had hosted him in N'Djaména; some of them are still in rebellion against the Chadian government (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 147).

Tubu tactics

Many Chadian Tubu have lived in exile in Libya since Qaddafi's various interventions in Chad. The Libyan leader had begun to send troops to occupy the Aozou Strip—the northernmost part of Chad, which runs along the Libyan border—in 1973; he expanded the occupation throughout Chad's northern half during the 1980s; and he backed successive rebel movements in the Tibesti region.

The most recent Tubu rebellion took the form of the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (MDJT), which lasted from 1997 to 2010 (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 29–58). When the Libyan revolution began in 2011, a number of MDJT veterans and supporters in Libya joined revolutionary battalions and, subsequently, Tubu militias that were fighting Arab and Tuareg forces. Since then, some former MDJT fighters—including Omar Togoïmi, a brother of the late MDJT leader, Youssouf Togoïmi—have become commanders of Tubu forces in Sebha.⁷⁸ A former MDJT faction leader, Gihinni Gendey, joined Allatchi Mahadi's katiba and was charged with controlling a checkpoint in the cross-border gold-mining area of Kouri Bougoudi.

Border blandishments

In view of a potential resurgence of insurrectionary activity, the Chadian government has sought to forge alliances with Tubu forces in Libya, including former Chadian rebels. In 2016, for instance, N'Djaména invited ex-MDJT leader Gendey back to Chad and appointed him head of the mobile brigade of the Borkou region, a role that involves monitoring the border. His appointment was undoubtedly an attempt to stop him from joining or supporting a new rebel movement.⁷⁹

Déby has also attempted to co-opt and unite Libyan Tubu leaders. Shortly after Qaddafi's fall, he reportedly invited Issa Abdelmajid, Allatchi Mahadi, and Barka Wardougou to N'Djaména, gave them money, and promised to supply them with vehicles if they succeeded in forming a joint force, which they did not.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Déby has since provided financial—if not military—support for other Libyan Tubu leaders, including Barka Wardougou's successor, Abay Wardougou.⁸¹

Déby also wooed Tubu leader Barka Sidimi, shortly after he took up arms and claimed to be fighting foreign bandits in southern Libya. In late 2017, together with



Photo 3 The military garrison in Zoumri, Tlbesti, northern Niger. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2015

his cousin Cherfeddin Barkay, Sidimi had attempted to disarm Chadian Dazagada rebels who were stationed in Um-el-Araneb, triggering tensions between Tubu and Dazagada communities.⁸² Shortly thereafter, in January 2018, Sidimi met with Déby in N'Djaména, allegedly to receive money in exchange for siding with the Chadian regime—a move that damaged his reputation, as noted above.⁸³ In September 2018, Chadian rebels in Libya claimed to have intercepted and disarmed some 30 to 60 Chadian Tubu and Arab combatants led by Sidimi, accusing them of having obtained weapons from the Chadian National Army (Armée nationale tchadienne, ANT) in Wour and of being Déby's subordinates (*Al Wihda*, 2018a).⁸⁴

Meanwhile, on either side of the border, the ANT and Hassan Musa Goney's Tubu Katiba 17 have reportedly established good relations, particularly in the Kouri Bougoudi cross-border gold-mining area.⁸⁵

In mid-2018, however, relations between N'Djaména and the Tubu cooled down considerably. On 11 August, a Libya-based Chadian rebel group, the Council of Military Command for the Salvation of the Republic (Conseil de commandement militaire pour le salut de la république, CCMSR), successfully attacked an ANT unit based on the Chadian side of Kouri Bougoudi area.⁸⁶ The rebels claimed to have killed 73 ANT soldiers and captured 45, and to have destroyed 53 ANT vehicles, seized 47 others, and captured more than 200 light weapons.⁸⁷ Although these figures may be

exaggerated, the attack—the first serious raid on Chadian territory since 2009—was a serious blow to N’Djaména. The Chadian army withdrew from Kouri Bougoudi to their usual garrisons of Wour and Tanoua.⁸⁸

The CCMSR is not composed of Tubu fighters, nor does it appear to have benefitted from Tubu complicity. On the contrary, at least one Tubu ANT soldier was reportedly killed in the attack, and the raid was condemned by several Tubu leaders. Nevertheless, as noted above, the Chadian government’s considered retaliation appears to have been directed at the Tubu rather than at the rebels. N’Djaména reportedly ordered two strafing runs on the Miski area, deep in the Tibesti, where no rebel attack had taken place. First, in August, a jet bombed the area, killing only livestock; in early September, however, Soviet-type S-5 57 mm air-to-ground rockets fired from a Mi-24 attack helicopter wounded three Tubu.⁸⁹ In the meantime, the government abolished three Tubu *cantons* (traditional chieftaincies) of the Yebi-Bou area (to which Miski belongs) that were known for their criticism of government policies in the area.⁹⁰ Then, in October-November, ANT ground forces, backed by helicopters, attacked a group of armed Tubu in the Miksi area. The attacked group had taken the name of ‘Miski Self-Defence Committee’ and was led by ex-MDJT commanders Jime Chaha, Omar Wuche (aka ‘Omri Boma’) and Orozi Loso. The clash resulted in casualties on both sides (RFI, 2018d). The Self-Defence Committee had initially taken up arms to expel gold miners from Miski and fought the ANT in December 2017, accusing the military of digging for gold. Though the group refrained from declaring themselves ‘rebels’, the Chadian regime described them as, among other things: ‘CCMSR rebels, mercenaries, terrorists, drug and human traffickers, and highwaymen’ (RFI, 2018d; *Al Wihda*, 2018b). Interior Minister Ahmat Bachir even notably declared: ‘They are slavers, they are terrorists, they are mercenaries, they are bandits, they are anything else’ (*Al Wihda*, 2018c). As a result, the ‘Miski Self-Defence Committee’ appears increasingly as if it will turn into a new Tubu rebellion.

ANT incursions into Libya and the Wour contingent

There have been a number of (mostly unconfirmed) reports of ANT operations in Libya, none of which appear to have been backed by Libyan Tubu militias. In 2013 Chadian troops looking for Chadian rebels were accused of penetrating into the Kufra area, 100 km north of the border (*Libya Herald*, 2013). In August 2015, during the Chadian army’s intervention in Kouri Bougoudi following clashes between the Tubu and gold miners, Tubu sources claimed that Chadian troops had entered the Libyan part of the gold-mining area.⁹¹ Two months later, the authorities in Tripoli also accused Chadian troops of having penetrated into Libyan territory, although they did not specify where (*Tchadactuel*, 2015). The Chadian authorities have denied this allegation.⁹²

In late 2015 and early 2016 the ANT reportedly sent more troops to the Libyan border. One of their objectives was allegedly to enter Libyan territory to fight Chadian rebels,

but there is no indication that these troops crossed the border.⁹³ In fact, one ANT convoy allegedly refused to cross the border because they had not been paid.⁹⁴

In late 2016, however, an ANT unit from Wour, in north-western Tibesti, entered a market on the Libyan side of Kouri Bougoudi, immediately north of the border. The soldiers reportedly searched for and disarmed gold miners, as well as some Tubu fighters of Abay Wardougou's battalion. The ANT unit seized a car mounted with a 12.7 mm machine-gun from the Tubu militia, only to return it later.⁹⁵ Then, in August and September 2018, after the above-mentioned CCMSR raid on the Chadian side of Kouri Bougoudi, the ANT reportedly chased the rebels into Libyan territory and N'Djaména's aircraft carried out two strafing runs on the Libyan side of Kouri Bougoudi—this time arguably within the legal framework of the recently signed border security agreement between the GNA, Chad, Niger, and Sudan.⁹⁶

Various, less transparent incidents involving Chadian forces that crossed the border into Libya and Niger have been attributed to the Wour-based unit, which has long controlled the border—and cracked down on drug traffickers—with a considerable degree of autonomy. In late 2016, Libyan forces alleged that the Wour troops had pursued drug traffickers up to the Salvador Pass, in the Libya–Niger–Algeria tri-border area.⁹⁷

The Wour contingent has long drawn attention for ethically ambiguous behaviour regarding drug trafficking. One of the Wour commanders, MDJT veteran Allatchi 'Koukoula', was discharged from the army for allegedly reselling seized drugs—or possibly for failing to share the spoils with his superiors (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 132). The Wour soldiers also reportedly bought arms from Libyan Tubu forces, possibly in an attempt to prevent them from reselling the weapons to rebels or jihadist groups.⁹⁸ Other reports hold that ANT soldiers or defectors, some of whom were originally based in the Wour garrison, were operating in north-eastern Niger, where they took part in gold mining and road banditry as recently as early 2018.⁹⁹

In spite of this record, Wour was chosen to host the future headquarters of the eastern zone of the regional G5 Sahel force—gathering troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—with command over Chadian troops in Wour and Nigerien forces in Madama. In August 2018, shortly after the rebel attack on Kouri Bougoudi, the French military announced the transfer of these headquarters from N'Djaména to Wour, with support from France and the European Union. In Chad, the statement raised fears that the government was trying to exploit French and European anti-terrorist efforts to counter future rebel raids (Zone Militaire, 2018).

Niger

Since Qaddafi's fall, the cross-border links between southern Libya and northern Niger seem to have become more prominent than those between Libya and Chad. Tubu war chiefs in Libya, such as the Wardougou brothers and Cherfeddin Barkay, as well as a large part of their forces, are originally from, or have connections with,

Niger.¹⁰⁰ While many Chadian Tubu were already in Libya before the revolution, numerous Nigerien Tubu—along with Tuareg ex-rebels and some Awlad Suleiman—went to fight in Libya in 2011.

Unlike the Tuareg—who fought for Qaddafi until his fall appeared unavoidable—Nigerien Tubu initially fought on both sides. Many, including former FARS elements, joined the revolutionary forces of Barka Wardougou and Cherfeddin Barkay.¹⁰¹ Additional Nigerien Tubu and Tuareg joined their Libyan kinsmen during the tribal conflicts that followed the revolution.¹⁰² Nigerien Tubu who had joined Barka Wardougou in 2011 were entrusted with checkpoints in the border area, but as some of them became autonomous from their Libyan kinsmen, they increasingly turned to activities such as abusive taxation, carjacking, and kidnappings.

In November 2015, the Gatrún Security Committee and other Libyan Tubu forces closed the irregular checkpoints and arrested some Nigerien Tubu road bandits. A group of the latter, led by Wardaga Goukouni, attempted to release the prisoners by force. The ensuing clashes resulted in ten deaths, three on the committee's side and seven on that of the bandits. The conflict was eventually resolved through mediation, led by a *derde* (Tubu spiritual head) from Tibesti (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 69–70, 130).

Niger's north-east and Mohamed Bazoum

In comparison to Chad, the Nigerien government has been far less interventionist in border affairs. Nigerien officials, Tubu actors, and observers attribute the diverging approaches to the distinct tribal ties of each country's leadership. Idriss Déby and most of his army hail from Saharan communities, in particular the Beri; in contrast, Niger's president, Mahamadou Issoufou, and the Niger Armed Forces (Forces armées nigériennes) are from southern communities, with little knowledge of and some hostility towards the remote north-east.¹⁰³

As a consequence, the communities of Niger's north-east have long struggled against political under-representation and marginalization. Since 2016, when their region was declared a military zone, they have commonly described the Niger Armed Forces as an 'army of occupation' whose main activity is to impose illegal taxation on local communities, smugglers, and migrants.¹⁰⁴ Their grievances have outlived their rebellions, to a greater degree than those of the Tuareg of northern and north-western Niger, who were able to secure government representation through successive rebellions.¹⁰⁵

Interior Minister Mohamed Bazoum, a strongman of the ruling party and a possible successor to Issoufou, hails from eastern Niger but enjoys only limited support among Tubu–Daza sections of his home region. As one of the very few Nigerien officials with some knowledge of both eastern Niger and southern Libya, Bazoum is Niamey's main decision-maker regarding those regions. His efforts, however, have been limited. One obstacle is that most of his colleagues lack interest in the north-east, another is



Photo 4 A military vehicle leading the weekly convoy between Agadez and Dirkou, norther Niger.
Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

the competition among Niger’s three powers: 1) the ruling party, 2) the official opposition—which has a following in north-eastern Niger, and 3) the armed forces, which appear to be acting without government oversight in the north-east.¹⁰⁶

Bazoum, who has Awlad Suleiman origins, has been accused of siding with his kinsmen in their conflict with the Tubu in Sebha, which may have cost him further support among Niger’s Tubu. Yet he had apparently been active in preventing the spread of southern Libya’s tribal conflicts into Niger. In 2013, during the first episode of the Tubu–Awlad Suleiman conflict in Sebha, he organized a peace meeting between Nigerien representatives of the two communities and also involved the Tuareg. The same year, he supported reconciliation efforts after tribal violence spilled over into eastern Niger, where an Awlad Suleiman killed two Tubu.¹⁰⁷ In Agadez, another peace committee headed by the sultan of Air and Mohamed Anacko, president of the Agadez regional council and a Tuareg ex-rebel, prevented the Tuareg–Tubu conflict in Ubari from spreading to Niger.¹⁰⁸

A possible mediator?

When it comes to Libya’s conflict, Niamey seems to see the LNA as the likely core of a future Libyan army, but it is less convinced than N’Djaména that Haftar is the strongman the country needs.¹⁰⁹ Unlike Chad, Niger has not expressed a preference

for any belligerent party in Libya or provided support to Tubu factions in the southern part of the country.

Niger's approach to the mediation of southern Libya's conflicts appears to be evolving, however. In 2017, when Chad attempted to play an active role in mediating, Niger remained in the sidelines. The reasoning was twofold: few Nigerien officials evinced interest in their northern border, and heavier international players, such as Qatar, were already presenting themselves as mediators, rendering Niger's involvement superfluous.¹¹⁰ Yet, by April 2018, Niamey had hosted a meeting with the GNA, Chad, and Sudan to discuss border management. Soon thereafter, the same month, it also hosted talks between Awlad Suleiman, Libyan Tubu, and Tuareg representatives, which were facilitated by the French non-governmental organization Promediation. The discussions focused on the conflict between Tubu and Awlad Suleiman in Sebha, which had resumed in March.

Preventing insurrections

In addition, both the Niger government and its forces in the border area have long had contacts with Libyan Tubu leaders. While border security appears to be the main objective of this interaction, Niamey has also been seeking to prevent the formation of a new Tubu rebel movement.¹¹¹ Particular weight was placed on communication with the late Barka Wardougou, who repeatedly visited Niger between 2012 and 2016, and with his successor, Abay Wardougou, who visited Niamey in 2016. Both met with President Issoufou, but, unlike in Chad, they did not receive money.¹¹² In 2011–12, Barka Wardougou reportedly intended to revive a rebellion against Niger, but tribal conflicts in Libya forced him to change his plans.¹¹³

Since then, the Libyan Tubu militia leaders themselves have played a role in preventing similar attempts at insurrection. In early 2017, Achur (Tchagam) Mohammed, a Nigerien–Libyan Tubu, former FARS member, and current associate of Abay Wardougou, facilitated talks between Niamey and would-be rebels led by Chadian Tubu Adam Tcheke.¹¹⁴ A former rebel and FARS member, Tcheke had joined the revolution in Libya in 2011, after which he fought the Awlad Suleiman in Sebha and non-Tubu gold miners in Tibesti.¹¹⁵ Beginning in 2014, he attempted to revive the FARS in southern Libya.¹¹⁶ In 2016, he announced the launch of the Movement for Justice and the Rehabilitation of Niger (Mouvement pour la justice et la réhabilitation du Niger, MJRN) on YouTube (Ibanakal Imuhar TV, n.d.). He reportedly borrowed a small number of weapons—which he exhibited online—and a larger number of vehicles from both Libyan Tubu forces and Chadian rebels based in Libya.¹¹⁷ Before the small group had even shot a bullet, President Issoufou received Abay Wardougou in Niamey to 'remind him of Barka's commitments'¹¹⁸ and, together with Tubu government minister Barkay Yusuf, sent delegations of Tubu traditional chiefs to conciliate Tcheke. With Libyan Tubu support, the chiefs managed to bring Tcheke to Niamey in

March 2017.¹¹⁹ He allegedly obtained XOF 70 million (USD 128,000) in exchange for ending his rebellion.¹²⁰

By paying off Tcheke, Niamey may unwittingly have encouraged would-be rebels to pursue similar rewards.¹²¹ Indeed, some MJRN dissidents in Libya have repeatedly proposed to negotiate with Niamey, which has categorically rejected the offers so as to discourage copycats. In mid-2017, shortly after Tcheke abandoned his insurgency, another former FARS leader, Barka Sidimi, took up arms. In 2014, during his time as a civilian, Sidimi had been appointed adviser to Niger's prime minister. Three years later, he left Agadez to form an armed group in southern Libya, in the same region where Tcheke had laid the foundations of his would-be rebellion. Niamey may have worried that history was repeating itself. As of October 2018, however, Sidimi's forces did not appear to have a rebel agenda against any country.

Chadian and Sudanese armed groups

Libya has a history of welcoming foreign fighters. Qaddafi recruited fighters internationally for forces such as the so-called Islamic Legion. When he needed combatants to fight on his behalf in Chad, he recruited primarily Tubu—from Chad but also Libya and Niger—and Arabs. He also supported rebels from various countries, especially Chad and Sudan. Between the early 1970s and the late 1980s, the main beneficiaries of Libyan support included Tubu rebels under Goukouni Weddey and Arab rebels under Acyl Ahmat Aghbash and Acheikh Ibn Omar Said (de Waal, 2013). Although the Chadian rebels were relatively autonomous, some of them eventually became members of Libyan forces and even Libyan citizens.

Libyan support for Sudanese rebels was more limited, although Qaddafi did back some of the Darfur rebels beginning in 2003 and hosted splinter groups of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) between 2006 and 2010, as well as a small nucleus of the leadership of the Justice and Equality Movement as of 2010 (HSBA, 2012). Some Darfur rebels briefly fought for Qaddafi in 2011.¹²²

During his rule, Qaddafi relied on Chadian fighters not only because they allowed him to intervene in Chad as discreetly as possible, but also because they had proven to be good desert fighters—better than Libyan soldiers. Since his fall, Libyan parties—especially Haftar—have sought Chadian (and Sudanese) fighters in Libya due to a shortage of mobile ground forces that can easily be deployed away from their base areas. Darfur rebels who fought on Haftar's side in the oilfields in early 2017 said they deployed more than 200 cars while the LNA deployed only 50, alongside aircraft.¹²³ The UN argues that another reason Libyan factions have used foreign fighters is that while Libyan tribes systematically ask for compensation for their kinsmen killed in battle, families of foreigners are unable to do so (UNSC, 2017c, p. 42). Chadians and Darfurians dispute this explanation, and it seems that Darfur rebels have also begun to ask for money for killed combatants.¹²⁴

By early 2018, young men from Chad and Darfur were still heading to Libya in the hopes of joining rebel movements or being recruited as mercenaries, in particular on the LNA side. According to a former Chadian mercenary who fought in Haftar's ranks against IS forces, regular salaries are less attractive than plunder, which is shared among the combatants. In his words:

If you kill an enemy, you receive the enemy's personal belongings, for instance his gun, money, phone, and even his car. I once killed an IS leader and was given his car, his iPhone, and USD 5,000.¹²⁵

For both N'Djaména and Khartoum, the presence of combatants and armed groups from their own countries in Libya has been a preoccupation. The main Chadian and Sudanese (especially Darfur) rebel movements remain largely motivated by their political agendas at home. Since most were unable to maintain a presence and fight in their countries after 2011, they went to Libya to find rear bases as well as financial, military, and political support. To obtain this support, they often fought or were ready to pick up arms for Libyan factions; from time to time, they were paid in vehicles and weapons rather than money (UNSC, 2017c, pp. 42–43).

Some Chadian and Darfur rebels have moved between insurgency and mercenary work.¹²⁶ In this context, it is useful to keep in mind that these combatants and armed groups are often called 'foreign mercenaries' in Libya, regardless of their backgrounds or agendas. Since the 2011 revolution, northern Libyan forces have recruited fighters among Chadians and Darfurians, as well as Libyan Tubu. As a result, northern Libyans, who generally used to equate dark skin with non-Libyan origins, now tend to refer to all black combatants as 'foreign mercenaries', even if the fighters in question are Libyan or are pursuing their own political agenda—rather than working as guns for hire. Ironically, some actual foreign mercenaries who happen to be lighter-skinned, such as some of the Darfur Arabs in Libya, have managed to avoid the label.

Revealing a nuanced understanding of the current Libyan mindset, certain Chadian and Darfur rebels have presented themselves as 'mercenaries' to obtain support from Libyan backers, who may have perceived them as dangerous if they had presented themselves as rebels. Those who have been inclined to engage in actual mercenary activities appear to fall into two main categories: combatants whose political leaders are absent from the field and thus exert only loose control over them, and former rebels from movements whose leaders signed peace agreements, thereby effectively abandoning their forces.¹²⁷

Chadian combatants

Some of the Tubu who have been fighting in Libya since 2011 may be more Chadian than they are Libyan, but it is very difficult for anyone to distinguish between them and Libyan Tubu. As mentioned above, Tubu fighters in Libya include members of former Chadian rebel movements, as well as former members of the Chadian army.

Many are fighting to support their kin, rather than as mercenaries, although they may also be looking for booty, including cars and weapons. Tubu have fought not only in southern, but also in northern Libya, notably in the oilfields, mostly for Ibrahim Jadhra and more recently against Haftar. Those who fought for northern forces could be considered mercenaries—even by some Tubu leaders—but they are not necessarily foreigners (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 112–15).¹²⁸

Other, non-Tubu Chadian combatants in Libya today include men who fought as part of Chadian rebel movements that were active in Darfur and supported by Sudan between 2005 and 2009—even if they have since fragmented further and changed names. The UN estimates the rebels' strength at 2,000–3,500 men in 2017, while the GNA suggests they numbered up to 5,000—undoubtedly an exaggeration (*Al Wihda*, 2017; UNSC, 2018a, p. 9). They are divided along ethnicities—such as Arab, Beri, Dazagada—or subgroups, which include the Anakazza, Daza, and Kreda among the Dazagada (see Table 2). Many of these fighters have a cause and extensive rebel experience. One of their main leaders, Mahamat Mahadi Ali 'Goran', for instance, first joined a rebel movement in 1978, when he was 14.¹²⁹

As discussed above, combatants' alliances tend to shift in line with their priorities. Chadian fighters in Libya are willing to help anyone who hosts them, supplies them with cars and weapons, or backs them politically—such that they might pursue their Chadian agenda. In 2016 and 2017, their main ally in southern Libya was Misrata's Third Force, which had been trying to attract Chadian combatants and support Chadian rebels since 2014 (UNSC, 2017b, p. 116). One reason the Chadian fighters aligned themselves with the Misratans appears to be Chad's close rapport with Haftar. N'Djaména reportedly asked him, beginning in 2015, to refrain from recruiting Chadians. The Misratan aim, however, was not to get the Chadians to fight on their side or to support the rebel cause in Chad; instead, the Third Force sought to withdraw the combatants from their enemies' ranks, including Haftar's forces, Zintani militias, and Tubu fighting in Ubari. Such circumstantial alliances reduce the chances of reconstituting a Chadian rebellion in Libya, rendering a successful insurgency less likely than it once was in Sudan.¹³⁰

Both sides have continued to court Chadian combatants. Haftar has reportedly recruited them in spite of N'Djaména's warnings, although he has aimed to select straight mercenaries rather than members of opposition movements—not an easy task given that those categories overlap.¹³¹ Between mid-2016 and early 2017, several Chadian factions played a double game: first, they joined Haftar, but then they aligned themselves with the Third Force and the BDB in the oil crescent (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 146).¹³² This duplicity reportedly provoked tensions between Haftar and Chad. Specifically, in June 2016, splinters from Mahamat Mahadi's forces which took shape as the CCMR under Mahamat Bulmay received equipment from Haftar, including 40 vehicles, but then refused to fight for him and reportedly handed over parts of the oil crescent to Misratan forces.¹³³

In exchange for changing sides, Bulmay's CCMSR reportedly received more vehicles and money from the BDB. According to one account, they fought alongside the BDB and the Third Force against the LNA in Brak al-Shati and Tamanhant airbases in April–May 2017 (UNSC, 2018a, p. 81).¹³⁴ Another version holds that only individual combatants among Bulmay's forces actually fought alongside the BDB, and that other Chadian rebels—mostly individual combatants from Mahamat Nouri's Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement, UFDD)—took part in the murderous Brak al-Shati attack (ICG, 2017, pp. 15–16).¹³⁵ Unconfirmed reports allege that some of Mahamat Mahadi's forces also fought alongside the BDB in the oil crescent in March 2017 (UNSC, 2017b, p. 18). Mahadi has denied these charges, claiming that his forces had merely been ready to join Libyan battalions that were engaging IS units in Sirte, but that they did not actually fight because they were not provided with the equipment they had requested.¹³⁶

In December 2016, Haftar's aircraft reportedly bombed Mahamat Mahadi's forces twice in the Jufra area, causing one death (FACT, 2016).¹³⁷ Haftar also repeatedly bombed CCMSR forces in their bases near Sebha and Um-el-Araneb, including in April 2016; April 2017; and March, May, and June 2018 (CCMSR, 2018; UNSC, 2017b, p. 116). In June 2017, they were also attacked in Sebha by pro-Haftar ground forces.¹³⁸

As the LNA gained ground in the northern Fezzan, some of the Chadian groups opportunistically attempted a rapprochement with Haftar. As early as May 2017, Mahadi reportedly began to distance himself from the Misratans.¹³⁹ In June 2017, the Third Force turned the Jufra area over to the LNA (ICG, 2017, pp. 15–16). Mahadi's forces remained there under a tacit non-aggression pact with the LNA.¹⁴⁰ When Haftar asked them to join his ranks, Mahadi claimed he wished to remain neutral, limiting his forces' role to securing roads against bandits and fighting terrorist groups. In late 2017, after IS attackers killed one of his men, who had been posted on an LNA checkpoint, Mahadi's forces intervened to repel the assault.¹⁴¹ In August 2018, IS fighters directly targeted the Chadian rebels at a checkpoint in El-Fogaha, in the Jufra area; one Chadian combatant and two jihadis were reportedly killed.¹⁴² In October, as IS attacked El-Foqaha, the same Chadian rebel group claimed its camp, 60 km from El-Foqaha, was also attacked, and another Chadian fighter killed before the Chadian rebels took part in repelling the jihadis.

UFDD fighters who had withdrawn to the southern Fezzan also managed to regain Haftar's support, even though the LNA exerted little control over this part of Libya; as a result of the alliance, Haftar did not bomb UFDD forces.¹⁴³

In southern Libya, Chadian current and former rebels have good relations with some local Tubu forces, largely thanks to ethnic and family links between the Tubu and Dazagada. Some Chadians fought alongside the Tubu in Ubari and Kufra.¹⁴⁴ Among Tubu war chiefs, Hassan Keley reportedly played a key role in recruiting both Tubu and Chadian combatants from other ethnic groups, including members of rebel groups; one of his aims was to extract them from Haftar's side (UNSC, 2018b, p. 9).¹⁴⁵

Table 2 Main Chadian current and former rebels in Libya, mid-2018

Force leaders	Force names or description	Main ethnicity	Areas of presence	Affiliations or loyalties	Force strength and notes
Mahamat Nouri	Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement, UFDD)	Anakazza and other Dazagada subgroups	Um-el-Araneb area	Initially LNA; then Misrata's Third Force and Benghazi Defence Brigade (BDB) (2016–17); then LNA again.	Reduced since Mahamat Mahadi and his followers split off in April 2016, after which some elements joined N'Djaména and others dispersed. Fighters who remained in Libya are relatively autonomous. Former elements are involved in gold mining, drug trafficking, and staging attacks on drug traffickers. UFDD was formerly active in Jufra province and Ubari.
Mahamat Mahadi Ali 'Goran'	Front for Change and Concord in Chad (Front pour l'alternance et la concorde au Tchad, FACT)	Daza	Jebel as-Sawda (Jufra province)	Initially Third Force, then tacit entente with LNA (following the Misratians' departure from the Jufra area).	Several hundred men. Splintered from UFDD in April 2016. Bombed by Haftar in December 2016.
Mahamat Hassani Bulmay (until his arrest in Niger in October 2017), then Abbakar Cherif Issami	Council of Military Command for the Salvation of the Republic (Conseil de commandement militaire pour le salut de la république, CCMSR)	Kreda (Dazagada subgroup)	Um-el-Araneb area	Initially LNA, then Third Force and BDB.	Several hundred men. Splintered from Mahamat Mahadi's FACT in June 2016. Repeatedly bombed by Haftar in 2016–18. Formerly active in Jufra province, oil crescent, and Sebha (the latter after the LNA took Jufra).

Timan Erdimi (chairman) and Ayoub Abdelkarim (chief of staff)	Union of Resistance Forces (Union des forces de la résistance, UFR)	Beri and other groups from eastern Chad	Kufra area, Jufra, Zella, oil crescent, Sebha, Um-el-Araneb, Waw el-Kebir, Kilinje gold field, North Darfur	Initially LNA (2015–16) and Qadhafha Arabs in Sebha, then Third Force and BDB (2017) and Ibrahim Jadhra (2018). Good relations with Darfur rebels.	350–500 men and 70–80 cars. Involved in attacks on drug traffickers. Ayoub Abdelkarim is a Tama and the brother of Mahamat Nour Abdelkarim, ex-leader of the now-disbanded United Front for Change (Front uni pour le changement). Ayoub replaced Gerdi Abdallah, who died in mid-2017.
Issa Mahamat ‘al-Rahib’	Former UFDD-Fondamentale	Misseriya and other Arabs	Oil crescent	Haftar, although some elements move back and forth between Haftar and the RSF in Sudan.	Not available.
Ismail Moussa	Front for the Salvation of the Republic (Front pour le salut de la république)	Arab	Sebha	Local Arab groups.	Not available.
Makaïla Atyl, Allatchi ‘Koukoura’, Adam Tchaemae	Front of the Nation for Democracy and Justice in Chad (Front de la nation pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad, FNDJT)	Tubu, Kreda, Kanembu, Beri, Arab	Murzuq	Not available.	Strength not available. The group gathers former MDJT Tubu faction leaders, Beri rebels, and Dazagada and Kanembu dissidents from the CCMSR and FACT.

Sources: Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, pp. 144–51); author interviews with Chadian officials, by telephone and in N’Djaména, Chad, June 2016 and June 2017; with Chadian rebel leaders, including Mahamat Mahadi and Mahamat Bulmay, locations withheld, January 2017–January 2018; and with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017⁹⁵

Yet, on a few occasions, tensions did rise between Chadian rebels and the forces of Cherfeddin Barkay, Barka Sidimi, Abay Wardougou, and other Tubu leaders, who allegedly blocked the Chadians' movements, prevented them from accessing a well near the border with Chad, dislodged them from a checkpoint near Sebha, searched them and confiscated their vehicles, and attempted to disarm them, most recently in Um-el-Araneb in late 2017.¹⁴⁶ N'Djaména may have instigated these incidents. Tensions appear to have decreased since the resumption of the Tubu–Awlad Suleiman conflict in Sebha in March 2018, possibly because Tubu forces hoped to obtain support from the Chadian rebels. In mid-2018, however, Abay Wardougou reportedly attacked a group of Chadian Dazagada bandits in the Tajarhi area, killing one and arresting seven of them. In September and October 2018, the newly formed (and partly Tubu) Khalid Bin Walid Battalion, alongside other Tubu forces, fought Chadian Dazagada bandits (including possibly former rebels) accused of kidnappings

N'Djaména appears to have been mostly successful at limiting Chadian and Libyan Tubu support for rebel groups, as well as at preventing Tubu from joining those groups or forming their own rebel movements. In late 2017, however, after incidents between Tubu and the ANT in the Tibesti gold mines, some Chadian and Tubu leaders declared themselves rebels. Among them were several former MDJT commanders, including Allatchi 'Koukoula', as well as Ahmat Hokay, a self-proclaimed sultan whose ambitions had suffered as a result of the Chadian authorities' loyalty to the official Tubu *derde*, Erzey Barkay (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 67–70, 90–91).

The new rebels established contacts with Chadian rebel factions in Libya. In July 2018, Koukoula and another ex-MDJT faction leader, Adam Tchaemae, coalesced with Chadian rebels from other groups and announced the formation of a new Chadian rebel movement, the Front of the Nation for Democracy and Justice in Chad (Front de la nation pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad, FNDJT). Beyond ex-MDJT leaders, the group reportedly includes Beri combatants, Kreda members of Bulmay's faction, Kanembu dissidents of Mahadi's faction, and Arab leader Makaila Acyl, son of late Acyl Ahmat Aghbash, a main Arab figure of the Chadian rebellion.¹⁴⁷ In a meeting in Murzuq, they announced that they had chosen a leader, namely former UFDD secretary-general Abbakar Tollimi, a Beri from the Borogot subgroup who comes from a Teda clan in Wour (like Koukoula). By September 2018, however, Tollimi, who has been leading an unarmed opposition movement in exile in France, said he was not ready to lead another rebel group.¹⁴⁸

Thanks to the presence of former MDJT commanders in its ranks, the FNDJT may be able to recruit additional disgruntled MDJT veterans, many of whom were dismissed from military and civil service jobs they had obtained in exchange for giving up fighting. They may also join forces with Tubu *wangada* ('protector' or 'guardian') militias formed to expel the gold miners.¹⁴⁹ The Chadian government's hard-line reaction to the August 2018 CCSR raid on Kouri Bougoudi, including the subsequent October–November attack in Miski, may also encourage Tubu combatants to join or support

the FNDJT. The FNDJT reportedly sent troops to Miski to support the local self-defence committee. The CCMSR also claimed to have troops fighting alongside the Tubu, a claim the latter denied. This claim provoked tensions between the Tubu and the Kreda rebels (RFI, 2018d). Some Chadian ex-rebels have abandoned their political agendas altogether and are active as mercenaries, be it in small groups or as individual combatants. In Libya they seem to be fighting mostly on Haftar's side. They include Arabs from the Chad–Darfur border, some of whom have regularly joined the ranks of Sudanese paramilitary forces and militias. Indeed, Chadians fighters who are motivated by salaries and looting account for a sizeable contingent of Khartoum's irregular forces (Tubiana, 2017a, pp. 10–11).

Chadian fighters have also pursued alternative livelihoods, such as digging for gold in the cross-border Kouri Bougoudi mines and in Niger, or transporting gold miners and smuggling migrants from Chad, Niger, and Sudan to Libya. Some of these men were or still are members of the UFDD—a rebel movement that was weakened when Mahamat Mahadi splintered from it to form his own group in April 2016.¹⁵⁰

Still other Chadian rebels or former rebels have become involved in drug trafficking, particularly from Niger and from the CAR–Darfur borderlands to Libya, or in attacking drug traffickers in southern Libya.¹⁵¹ In comparison to earnings from gold mining, which are typically limited to sustaining individuals, drug-related profits can be shared among individual combatants and rebel groups, which may supply vehicles and heavy machine guns in exchange for a share of the proceeds. Individuals who escort drug traffickers reportedly earn between USD 1,700 and USD 5,000 for one expedition, while car owners—including rebel groups—make between USD 4,000 and USD 15,000 for providing vehicles. A single attack on a drug convoy reportedly yields USD 20,000–30,000 per individual, and four times that amount for car owners. By renting out their cars for such activities, some Chadian rebel groups have apparently been able to acquire dozens of new vehicles.¹⁵²

Sudanese combatants

Sudanese combatants have travelled to Libya to fight since 2011. They have included members of militias backed by Khartoum, but the majority of them are Darfur rebels or ex-rebels from the Beri tribe. They are affiliated with various movements, from main factions to splinter groups, largely along clan lines (see Table 3).

Most Darfur combatants are aligned with Haftar because Khartoum is opposed to him (UNSC, 2018b, p. 9). According to Sudanese government sources, about 1,500 Darfur rebels fought alongside Haftar in 2016–17.¹⁵³ In official LNA documents, the main Darfur rebel group in Libya, the Sudan Liberation Army faction led by Minni Minawi (SLA–MM), is referred to as *quwat al-sadiqa* (friendly forces).¹⁵⁴ According to the UN, the SLA–MM played a 'key role in the capture and protection of oil installations by the LNA' in 2016 as well as 'a major role in the LNA offensive in Jufra in June



Photo 5 Traders coming from Libya to a rebel-controlled market in the Malha area of North Darfur, Sudan.
Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2007

2017, which allowed LNA to take control of the area' (UNSC, 2017b, p. 115; 2017c, pp. 14–15). At least 118 of Minawi's men were reportedly killed in the oil crescent in mid-2017 (UNSC, 2018b, pp. 83–84).

Despite this cooperation, relations with Haftar were occasionally tense. In February–March 2015, the LNA's aircraft allegedly strafed Darfur rebels who had fought with Haftar in Benghazi, but who had subsequently travelled to the Kufra area to assist the Tubu against the Zwaya Arabs, who enjoyed Haftar's support.¹⁵⁶ In October 2016, 13 Darfur rebels were reportedly killed near Jaghboub in clashes with the LNA-affiliated Zwaya Ways of Peace Battalion (Katiba Subul al-Salam) (*Libya Herald*, 2018).

Darfur rebels also associated with Tubu militias. An SLA–MM combatant who was captured in Libya and interviewed by his captors mentioned two Tubu leaders as the group's key interlocutors in Libya, including Ali Ramadan Sida.¹⁵⁷ Darfur rebels fought on the side of the Tubu in Ubari in 2014 and in Kufra in 2015.¹⁵⁸

Rebels from the main Darfur movements first headed to Libya after Chad expelled them, following N'Djaména's rapprochement with Khartoum in 2010 (Tubiana, 2011b). Libya had initially served as a secondary rear base, whereas South Sudan was the primary one. Dynamics changed in December 2013, when a new civil war in South Sudan threatened the safety of Darfur rebels in the borderlands between Sudan and South Sudan. Khartoum also ramped up its efforts to prevent the rebels

from holding territory in Darfur. As of 2015, Libya thus grew increasingly attractive as a rear base, and more rebels moved north. On Libyan soil, they have been trying to regain strength, with a focus on obtaining cars, weapons, money, and political support. They have shown a willingness to fight for Libyan parties—essentially Haftar’s LNA—to secure such support. Yet, as the war in Sudan drags on, more of them may become mercenaries.¹⁵⁹

Since 2015, SLA–MM has been the main Darfur rebel movement in Libya (UNSC, 2017a, p. 12).¹⁶⁰ The group was able to rearm by fighting alongside Haftar in the oil crescent and, by May 2017, it attempted a return to Darfur, together with allies of the SLA–Transitional Council, most of whom drove up from South Sudan (UNSC, 2017c, p. 8). A rebel convoy of 160–200 vehicles left Libya for Darfur, while another 60–80 vehicles entered Darfur from Western Bahr el Ghazal state in South Sudan. The northern column first fought the Sudanese army and allied RSF in the area of Bir Merge, one of the oases at the extreme north of Darfur, then in Wadi Mogreb farther south, and later in the Ain Siro mountains. SLA–MM suffered major losses, including the capture and deaths of some commanders. Although the group was not able to re-establish a significant presence in Darfur, it swiftly managed to rearm and reconstitute its strength in Libya.¹⁶¹

A less documented subset of Darfur rebels comprises current and former members of groups whose leaders signed peace agreements with Khartoum, obtained positions in the Sudanese government, and abandoned their troops without any perspective of integration.¹⁶² These combatants are interested in mercenary work and looting.

Many Sudanese combatants, like their Chadian counterparts, may not have felt the need to make their way to Libya if they had had better prospects at home. Yet Sudan is at war, and it does not offer combatants the possibility of disarming, securing gainful employment, or pursuing an education. In the words of a veteran Darfur fighter who interrupted his medical studies to join the rebellion after the destruction of his village in 2003:

We have fought many battles [...] but we no longer believe that anything can give us back what the war in Darfur took away. Our families are still living in refugee camps. No government either in Sudan or Chad allows us to build our future or fulfil our dreams.¹⁶³

This situation leaves fighters with few options but to become itinerant fighters, hawking their military skills elsewhere. Ever since the 1970s, the Chad–Libya–Sudan conflict system has served as a regional marketplace for combatants from Darfur and eastern Chad.¹⁶⁴ At present, the region’s most attractive marketplace for such combatants is Libya—currently the least stable country in that conflict system.

Like their Chadian peers, many Sudanese rebels—along with Darfur civilians—moved to gold-mining areas to engage in prospecting and trade in Algeria, Chad, Libya, and Niger. These rebels are largely affiliated with small splinter factions, including ones

Table 3 Main Darfur combatants in Libya, mid-2018

Force leaders	Force names or description	Main ethnicity	Areas of presence	Affiliations or loyalties	Force strength and notes
Minni Minawi	Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM)	Beri	Zella, oil crescent, Sarir oilfield, Jufra, Benghazi, Rebyana, the Fezzan	Tubu forces, then Haftar.	800–1,000 men and 200–250 vehicles, although 160–200 cars were sent on a mostly failed raid to Darfur in May 2017. Main Darfur rebel group in Libya.
Jibril Ibrahim	Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)	Beri	Kufra area, Sebha, Waw el-Kebir, Kouri Bougoudi gold mine	Shifting loyalties between Haftar and Benghazi Defence Brigade (BDB). Close to Chadian UFR rebels and Tubu forces.	40 vehicles. The group's core remained in South Sudan.
Taher Hajer, Abdallah Janna, Abdallah Yahya, and Mahjoub al-Aghbash	Gathering of Sudan Liberation Forces (GSLF)	Beri	Oil crescent, Tripoli area, Rebyana	Haftar, Qaddafists. Reportedly in discussions about coordinating or uniting with SLA-MM.	150–200 vehicles. Formed in mid-2017 as a coalition of SLA-Justice, SLA-Unity, and Abdallah Janna's group.
Taher Hajer	SLA-Justice	Beri	Zella area	Haftar.	60–75 vehicles. GSLF component.
Abdallah Yahya	SLA-Unity	Beri	Oil crescent, Tripoli area	Haftar, Qaddafists.	GSLF component.
Abdallah Janna	Splinters from JEM-Bashar/Dabajo	Beri	Rebyana, Chad-Libya border, Zella, oil crescent	Haftar.	70 vehicles. GSLF component. Signed a peace accord with Khartoum in 2016.

Nimir Mohammed Abderahman and Mohammed Adam Abdelsalam 'Tarrada', respectively replaced by Al-Hadi Idris Yahya and Saleh 'Jebel Si'	SLA–Transitional Council	Fur	Zella, oil crescent	Haftar, SLA–MM.	15 vehicles. Dissidents of Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur's SLA faction. Tarrada was reportedly killed and Nimir captured as the group returned from South Sudan to Darfur alongside SLA–MM in May–June 2017.
Yusif Ahmad Yusif 'Karijakola'	SLA–Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur (SLA–AW) autonomous elements	Fur	Oil crescent, Sarir oilfield	Haftar.	2–4 cars. The group has been moving back and forth between Darfur and Libya.
Salah Jok 'Bob'	SLA–MM splinters	Beri	Not available	Not available.	1 car.
Abdallah Banda and Jibril Abdelkarim Bari 'Tek'	Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM)/United Resistance Front	Beri	Jufra and Kufra areas, Kouri Bougoudi and Kilinje gold mines	Haftar, SLA–MM, Chadian UFR rebels, local Tubu forces.	Signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur with Khartoum in 2011. Involved in gold mining, smuggling of cars, banditry, attacks on drug traffickers, and escorting of drug traffickers.

Sources: Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, pp. 139–44); UNSC (2017b, p. 115; 2017c, p. 8); author interviews with Darfur rebels, locations withheld, January–December 2017; with a Darfur refugee, location withheld, March 2017; with Sudanese officials, by telephone and in undisclosed locations, April and December 2017; and with Chadian rebels, locations withheld, December 2017–January 2018

that signed peace agreements with Khartoum.¹⁶⁵ Some Darfur rebels, such as SLA-MM, actively recruited combatants among Beri gold miners in Tibesti.¹⁶⁶

Other Darfur combatants have engaged in illicit activities. Some have smuggled fuel and cars from Libya to Chad, Niger, and Sudan, as well as migrants from Sudan to Libya (UNSC, 2017c, pp. 37–38, 43).¹⁶⁷ Beri rebels and Arab militias have cooperated to smuggle arms, supplied by Khartoum to its militias, towards Libya (p. 43). Certain Darfur combatants who have ties to local Tubu forces and to Chadian rebels have become road bandits; having erected irregular checkpoints in Libya, they have attacked drug traffickers and escorted them between Niger and Libya.¹⁶⁸

The Sudanese government has an interest in describing all Darfur rebels as mercenaries, and in seeing them turn into real mercenaries or bandits, so that it can refuse negotiations with them.¹⁶⁹

A web of alliances

Chadian and Sudanese combatants in Libya formed alliances that, on the whole, were initially predictable. Exceptions fell into two categories: fighters who have jettisoned—or never had—a rebel agenda, and Darfur rebels abandoned by leaders who joined the Sudanese government. Other Chadian and Sudanese rebels initially tended to build enemy-of-my-enemy-is-my-friend alliances. Thus, since N'Djaména favours Haftar and has asked him not to recruit Chadian combatants, most Chadian rebels have aligned themselves with Misrata and the BDB. Likewise, Darfur rebels have sought Haftar's support in view of Khartoum's ties to Misrata (UNSC, 2018b, p. 9).¹⁷⁰

According to Sudanese government sources, former Qaddafi army and intelligence officers have been instrumental in forging links between Haftar and Darfur rebels. Under Qaddafi, these men had been responsible for channelling the regime's support to Darfur rebels; they subsequently joined Haftar, although some went on to become members of autonomous Qaddafist groups (UNSC, 2017c, p. 14). Khartoum has identified two men in particular. The first, Mohammed Ahmed Garsala, was an officer in charge of the Darfur file under Qaddafi's intelligence chief, Abdallah Senoussi (HSBA, 2012). The second is former Qaddafi army officer Mabrouk Hanish, who served as an intermediary between Darfur rebels and the LNA, but later left Haftar to form an autonomous Qaddafist group. In October 2017, Hanish was arrested alongside an SLA–Unity commander in Zawiyah; he had attempted to operate in the Tripoli area, alongside Darfur rebels (UNSC, 2017c, p. 15; 2018a, p. 10).¹⁷¹ Nasser Ben Jerid, who is also known for having cultivated relationships with Darfur rebels as an officer under Qaddafi, stands accused of having recruited Chadian combatants successively for Haftar, Hanish, and Jadhran (UNSC, 2018b, pp. 9, 78).

A web of related alliances appears to extend to neighbouring states and beyond. Khartoum has accused Egypt of facilitating connections between Haftar and Darfur rebels and of supplying equipment directly to Darfur rebels.¹⁷² In fact, some Darfur rebels have publicly acknowledged Egypt's facilitating role. While there is no evidence that Cairo delivered weapons, it is possible that Haftar supplied Egyptian arms to Darfur rebels.¹⁷³ As Egypt and Sudan play out their hostility by backing opposing forces in Libya and South Sudan's civil wars, however, Cairo may decide to provide direct support to Sudanese rebels in both war-torn states. In late 2017, Egypt reportedly asked Chad to resume support for Darfur rebels—a move that may have increased tensions between Chad and Sudan, even if N'Djaména refused to comply.¹⁷⁴

Similar proxy alliances could be established by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which may decide to befriend Darfur rebels in order to persuade Sudan to back them more forcefully in the Gulf crisis. Meanwhile, Qatar already engaged with some Chadian rebels, suggesting they ally themselves with Misratan brigades.¹⁷⁵ In August 2017, Chad accused Qatar of financing its rebels after N'Djaména broke off relations with Doha and reinforced its ties with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE in the context of the Gulf crisis (Tubiana and Debos, 2017, p. 22).¹⁷⁶

Notwithstanding these high-level alliances and estrangements, Darfur Beri rebels have maintained strong ties with a small group of Chadian rebels from the same tribe, the Union of Resistance Forces (Union des forces de la résistance, UFR). This connection has been in place since the Chad–Sudan rapprochement of 2010, when Idriss Déby became the common enemy of JEM and the UFR (Tubiana, 2011b). The UFR repeatedly asked JEM to help topple Déby before turning against Khartoum, but JEM refused to prioritize goals other than its main objective.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, between 2012 and 2014, JEM reportedly failed to convince UFR members to fight on their side in Darfur and South Sudan, and thus refused to arm the UFR.¹⁷⁸

Strong links between JEM and the UFR have endured in both Darfur and Libya, reflecting the fact that UFR leaders in Libya are from the Kobe subgroup of the Beri, the main constituent of the JEM leadership. In addition, Gerdi Abdallah, who served as the UFR's chief of staff in Libya until his death in a car accident in 2017, was JEM's first deputy chief of staff in 2003 (UNSC, 2017c, p. 9). As JEM's presence in Libya was limited, the group decided to ally with Gerdi. Both parties used this double identity opportunistically, presenting themselves as Sudanese rebels when seeking Haftar's help, and as Chadian rebels to secure support from Haftar's enemies.¹⁷⁹ In the meantime, some Kobe activists in the diaspora are known to support both rebel groups simultaneously.¹⁸⁰ Given their diverging objectives and alliances in Libya, however, JEM and the UFR also compete to bring floating Kobe elements under their command.¹⁸¹

In 2016, joint JEM and UFR units fought against IS forces on one or two occasions in the Kufra area, after which they reportedly received ten vehicles from the LNA.

Early the next year, however, Gerdi Abdallah betrayed Haftar and joined the BDB. Some JEM elements, along with factions and individual combatants from other Darfur groups, apparently followed suit.¹⁸² While the BDB and other Libyan armed actors may simply have strategized to extract these combatants from Haftar's ranks, some observers argue that the shift was orchestrated by Qatar. The Gulf state reportedly swayed UFR chairman Timan Erdimi, a virtual prisoner in Doha since 2011.¹⁸³ This external interference may eventually wear away at the JEM–UFR alliance, particularly since Qatar never hid its hostility towards JEM—not even during the peace talks between Khartoum and JEM in Doha in 2010–11.¹⁸⁴

Qatar's aversion can be traced back to JEM's origins. The group emerged following divisions that shook the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood in 1999. Since then, the Muslim Brothers and their supporters outside Sudan—including in Egypt, Libya, and Qatar—have favoured Khartoum over the Brotherhood's former Sudanese leader, Hassan El-Tourabi, and over JEM. If the Libyan Muslim Brothers and allies were to support JEM, they would risk losing Sudan and Qatar's support (UNSC, 2018a, p. 81).

In 2018, having wavered between Haftar and his adversaries, JEM appeared to be focusing on reinforcing its links with Tubu forces in southern Libya.¹⁸⁵ Given that some JEM leaders are of Tubu ancestry, ethnic links may complement political ones. JEM argues that the Libyan Tubu are at risk of suffering under a policy of 'Arab supremacism' such as the one Khartoum enforced in Darfur, and that this policy in Libya is also supported by Sudan. This message has resonated among some Tubu leaders, especially those who have fought the Zwaya, an Arab tribe connected to both Haftar and Khartoum.¹⁸⁶

In addition to its alliance with JEM, the UFR initially had good relations with SLA–MM, in particular in Darfur, where Minawi's forces had offered asylum and protection to the weakened UFR since 2011 (UNSC, 2017c, p. 9). In Libya, SLA–MM fighters who were guarding the oil crescent on behalf of the LNA did not prevent the BDB or allied Chadian troops from briefly retaking the Sidra and Ras Lanuf terminals in March 2017, perhaps because they wanted to avoid fighting Beri kinsmen.¹⁸⁷ By June 2017, however, the UFR and SLA–MM were fighting on different sides; this time, allied forces of the LNA and SLA–MM chased UFR combatants from the Jufra area, with limited fighting.¹⁸⁸ While these events appear to corroborate the theory that, in Darfur as in Libya, Darfur and Chadian Beri rebels generally avoid direct confrontation when fighting on different sides, exceptions can occur.¹⁸⁹ In June 2018, after Tubu leader Hassan Keley mobilized JEM and UFR combatants to fight on Ibrahim Jadhran's side against Haftar in the oil crescent, they reportedly clashed with SLA–MM Beri forces on Haftar's side (UNSC, 2018b, p. 9).¹⁹⁰

In Libya, the UFR has also participated in joint operations with Beri elements of the Liberation and Justice Movement/United Resistance Front faction, the main group among the disgruntled Darfur rebels who signed a peace agreement with Khartoum—

even though they are theoretically part of the Sudanese government. The two groups jointly controlled a checkpoint in the Kufra area, where they were accused of abuses against Zwaya civilians, including rapes. These charges led to their expulsion from the checkpoint by the Zwaya Ways of Peace Battalion in 2016 (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 149).

Since 2011, Chadian and Darfur Beri rebels have had an additional reason to cooperate: since then, both N'Djaména and Khartoum have turned up the heat on JEM and the UFR. In 2015, a UFR leader moved his unit from Darfur to Libya largely because of Khartoum and RSF pressure.¹⁹¹ In March 2016, the UFR chief of staff, Daud Ali Boyenno, was arrested after his return to Darfur (RFI, 2016).¹⁹² In June 2017, the RSF chased four UFR vehicles that had returned to Darfur, accusing the rebels of having joined the May 2017 SLA–MM raid from Libya into Darfur—a charge both movements denied (*Sudan Tribune*, 2017a).¹⁹³

Non-Beri Chadian rebels have more complicated relations with Darfur rebels. In 2017, Dazagada rebels from Chad reportedly captured several combatants from both JEM and Abdallah Janna's group. While the JEM fighters were released in exchange for a ransom, the Chadian rebels tried to hand over Janna's men to the Sudanese government. Khartoum reportedly refused as such contact with Chadian rebels was likely to upset N'Djaména.¹⁹⁴ Subsequently, in mid-2018, Chadian ex-rebels captured 50 Eritrean migrants and a Darfuri member of Janna's group, who was guarding the smuggled migrants. Janna reportedly paid a ransom to secure his combatant's release.¹⁹⁵

Chadian rebels also have persistent links with Darfur Arab militias. In 2015 and 2017, militia leader Musa Hilal sheltered the UFR, exacerbating tensions between him and rival RSF commander Hemmeti (UNSC, 2017c, p. 9).¹⁹⁶ Both Chadian and Darfur Beri rebels enjoy good relations with Hilal, who is of mixed Arab and Beri descent. While gradually distancing himself from Khartoum, Hilal has long maintained an entente—and a double game—with both Déby and the UFR (Tubiana, 2017a, pp. 5–7).¹⁹⁷ In December 2017 in Sebha, when UFR defectors assassinated UFR commander Abdelqader Fodul, they also killed a close relative of Musa Hilal, who had reportedly been looking for support with which to fight Khartoum in Libya.¹⁹⁸

An event that took place in August 2017 also demonstrated that Chadian rebels and Sudanese militias have maintained close ties. At that time, a seven-vehicle convoy was returning from Libya to Darfur with food supplies that may have been destined for Musa Hilal or the UFR. The convoy was led by Bachir Fayiq, a Chadian Arab rebel commander who had reportedly been a 'janjaweed' member before travelling to Libya with the UFR. The vehicles were cutting across Chadian territory when they happened upon ANT elements in Tekro, 150 km south of the Libyan border. Twelve Chadian soldiers were killed in the ensuing shootout.¹⁹⁹ Bulmay claimed a victory for the Chadian rebels. Regardless of how he spun it, the event was the first fight with

rebels in Chadian territory since 2009, while the first intentional rebel raid was the August 2018 attack on Kouri Bougoudi (Tubiana and Debos, 2017, p. 21).

After the gold rush

Starting in 2012, an unexpected chain of gold rushes took place across the Sahara, beginning in Sudan's North Darfur and spreading to northern Chad, southern Libya, northern Niger, and southern Algeria (Tubiana, 2014). The impact on the cross-border Tubu homeland was significant, as major discoveries took place in the Tibesti mountains in 2012, including in Enneri Miski (Miski valley) and in the Kouri Bougoudi area straddling the Chad–Libya border.²⁰⁰ In April 2014, gold miners who had worked in Tibesti discovered gold in the Djado mountains of north-eastern Niger (Kader, 2015).²⁰¹ A few months later, new discoveries took place in the area now known as Tchibarakaten, in Tuareg land that straddles the Niger–Algeria border (Pellerin, 2017, p. 4).

The Tchibarakaten site was reportedly found by a group of former Tuareg rebels who had turned to smuggling. On the basis of old rumours, they had picked up some metal detectors and rushed directly to Tchingaa, a *wadi* (valley) 100 km from the well of Tchibarakaten and a few kilometres from the Algerian border. They knew this area well as it had long been a trafficking hub and a staging post for smugglers between Niger and Algeria (Kohl, 2015, pp. 68–69).²⁰²

The story of one of the ex-rebels—Saleh Ibrahim aka 'Boss', who had previously earned notoriety as the most famous drug trafficker in Niger—exemplifies some of the positive aspects of the gold discoveries (Pellerin, 2017, pp. 9, 11; Tubiana, 2017d).²⁰³ As he was immediately successful in finding gold, Boss hired workers. By 2017, 300 miners were working for him in 100 gold wells, some 60 metres deep.²⁰⁴ He invested his earnings in various machines, including crushers and generators that he rented to other miners. He also dug water wells, opened a health service, was appointed adviser to the local (Tuareg-only) gold management committee, and, in early 2017, became the chief of the new boom village of Tchibarakaten. In addition, the new gold baron reportedly abandoned his trafficking activities and invested in his home oasis of Timia, where he planted 3,300 orange trees, thus fulfilling a promise he had made to his mother. As Saleh Boss recalled:

My mum didn't want me to get involved in rebellions or trafficking. So, shortly before she died in 2013, I sent her on a pilgrimage to Mecca and promised her to stop doing stupid things. Gold is a gift from God. Now, I have given my whole life to gold. I may be the best gold miner in Agadez [region]. Better to be crushing stones than trafficking. I don't even remember those other activities.²⁰⁵

Sudanese—especially Darfurians—and then Chadians account for the bulk of the gold miners in Sudan, as well as in Chad, Libya, and Niger, largely because some of



Photos 6–7 Gold miners in northern Niger. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

them had acquired considerable experience in older, semi-mechanized Sudanese mines, as well as in the 2012 gold rush in Jebel Amir in North Darfur (Tubiana, 2014). Many of these miners belong to the Beri ethnic group and gained fighting experience in the Chadian or Darfur rebellions.²⁰⁶ Others are former soldiers, including defectors.²⁰⁷ The Djado site in particular has drawn Chadian soldiers who reportedly defected in Chad, Mali, or Niger, where units had been deployed to fight Boko Haram.²⁰⁸

North of Djado, not far from the Salvador Pass and the Algeria–Libya–Niger tri-border area, a group of Chadian soldiers or rebels allegedly appropriated a remote gold field. Equipped with a number of vehicles mounted with 12.7 mm machine guns, they reportedly attacked drug traffickers who were travelling through the corridor.²⁰⁹

Chad reacted swiftly, concerned about potential collusion between its army defectors and rebels. N'Djaména reportedly requested that Niger expel foreign miners—who were mostly Chadian and Sudanese, and whom the Chadian authorities described as drug traffickers and terrorists.²¹⁰ Niamey obliged in July 2014, temporarily closing the Djado gold mines to carry out the expulsion.

In August 2014, the expulsion triggered a conflict between Beri gold miners, including former Darfur rebels, who were returning to Chad from Djado, and Tubu residents of the Tibesti area. Tubu road bandits assailed departing gold miners, prompting Beri prospectors to attack Ogi village, where they faced Tubu resistance and 14 Beri lost their lives. In mid-2015, new deadly incidents took place in the two main Tibesti gold fields: Miski and Kouri Bougoudi, which straddles the Chad–Libya border. By August of the same year, newly formed Tubu wangada militias attacked Kouri Bougoudi in retaliation for the killing of three Tubu; 67 gold miners reportedly lost their lives in the assault (Tubiana, 2016; Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 89–96). Chadian authorities responded by evacuating the site.

Eventually, however, the Tibesti gold fields reopened and the miners—including ex-rebels, soldiers, and defectors—gradually returned. Djado had also reopened, and miners returned there, too, in September 2014.²¹¹ In turn, government attempts to retake control of the mines increased, based on both security and economic grounds.

Less obviously, the gold crises in both Chad and Niger have prevented Tubu and Beri gold miners from forging links with one another. In Chad, they have remained at odds even though the Beri rebels and ex-rebels appear as dissatisfied with N'Djaména as the Tubu.

Gold in Niger: Djado and Tchibarakaten

In Niger, the presence of Chadian and Sudanese armed miners, including ANT members or ex-members, has continued to generate tensions with the Tubu in the Djado area. At some point in late 2015 or early 2016, a lieutenant defected from the Chadian



Photo 8 A truck carrying miners in the Djado region arrives at the Agadez checkpoint after the closure of the mines in early 2017. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

forces deployed in Niger against Boko Haram to look for gold in Djado.²¹² When more ANT defectors followed, N'Djaména asked Niamey to arrest them, and soon Nigerien forces handed them over to Chad (de Tessières, 2018, p. 102, n. 50). Separately, an ANT colonel in civilian clothes was reportedly shot in an incident with Nigerien forces.²¹³ In late 2016 or early 2017, a small Chadian army contingent allegedly entered Niger, penetrating up to the Dirkou and Agadez areas, to chase ANT soldiers who had defected from Lake Chad operations to work as gold miners.²¹⁴

Soon both N'Djaména and Algiers were reportedly pressuring Niamey to act. Algeria, in particular, allegedly worried that jihadis could be hiding among the gold miners, although rumours held that Algiers sought to secure oil exploration rights for an Algerian company.²¹⁵ The Nigerien authorities also expressed concerns about the mines, alleging that Boko Haram combatants were among the prospectors.²¹⁶ By March 2017, the Niger Armed Forces were evacuating all gold miners—an estimated 25,000–50,000 men—from Djado.²¹⁷ Expelled Chadian and Sudanese gold miners made their way to the Kouri Bougoudi gold field, while some Nigeriens headed to Tchibarakaten.²¹⁸

Nigerien authorities informed the prospectors and the local population that the Djado site would be closed temporarily, possibly for three months.²¹⁹ The authorities claimed that the closure would provide the time needed for an upgrade of the

exploitation process, which would combine industrial methods with the semi-mechanized techniques used up to that point. In addition, it would allow for the implementation of an official system of permits, taxes, and gold trading posts designed to ensure that the Nigerien state would reap some benefits from the resource.²²⁰ Attempts to install such a system after the first evacuation of the site, from September 2014 until April 2016, had failed; armed forces and local authorities had mostly levied abusive taxations.²²¹

In early 2018, Djado's status was nebulous. While the mine had not officially reopened, some miners had returned illegally. The Nigerien security forces were reportedly burning the vehicles of clandestine miners, while simultaneously allowing some of them, including Chadians and Sudanese, to work—in exchange for bribes. The security forces also appeared to have hired miners and to be prospecting themselves.²²²

Officials, local civilians, and gold miners themselves have all expressed concern that expelled prospectors may turn to banditry, form new rebellions, become mercenaries in Libya, or join jihadist groups in the region.²²³ As Saleh Boss has stressed, 'without the gold discoveries, many youths would even have joined the terrorists in Mali'.²²⁴ Rumours that Niamey was planning to close other gold sites in addition to Djado, in particular Tchibarakaten, raised fears among Boss and other gold miners.²²⁵ As a former prospector noted, 'Insecurity increased since Djado was closed, but closing Tchibarakaten is impossible. God has made the bandits busy with gold, but if you close....'²²⁶

Government officials have acknowledged that Niamey considered closing and retaking control of all gold mines, but that Prime Minister Brigi Rafini, a Tuareg himself, and other Tuareg officials were opposed to shutting down Tchibarakaten, arguing that 'gold was a gift of God that avoided a major destabilization'.²²⁷ Rumours suggested that government officials, in particular Tuareg, had invested in Tchibarakaten.²²⁸ Tubu frustrations grew as policies regarding Djado and Tchibarakaten reflected preferential treatment of the Tuareg in Niamey.²²⁹

Gold in Chad: Kouri Bougoudi and Miski

With respect to the Chadian Tubu, the crisis in the Tibesti gold fields has exacerbated two main sets of tension. First, friction between the Tubu and the Beri gold miners has repeatedly erupted into conflict. Second, government mismanagement of the gold rush has aggravated Tubu distrust of Chadian national authorities, prompting them to criticize and occasionally obtain the dismissal of local officials.

Beginning in 2015, after the ANT had failed to prevent mining in the Miski area, the Tubu established wangada committees to confront the Beri and other non-Tubu gold miners. The move was hostile to Tibesti governor Taher Barkay, as were committee

leaders' fruitless requests for his resignation.²³⁰ When wangada militias attacked Kouri Bougoudi in 2015, Barkay declared the committees illegal and demanded that they disband. Similarly, the Yebi-Bou sub-prefect tried to exert control over the powerful Miski committee, ordering that the group be reduced to five unarmed men (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 95).

In 2016, in a striking reversal, Barkay agreed to appoint some 30 wangada as guides for ANT surveillance operations in the Miski area. While this concession formalized arrangements that had previously been implemented informally, it did not entirely appease the Tubu, who were wary because local authorities threatened to allow industrial exploitation in the Miski gold fields.²³¹ Tubu support for collaborative operations finally waned in early 2017, when an ANT–wangada joint patrol killed clandestine Dazagada miners in Miski area. The previous year, Dazagada miners—notably from the Dōza subgroup, whose territory lies south of Miski—had returned to the gold field clandestinely. The killings in 2017 sparked a conflict between the Tubu and their Dōza neighbours, as well as between the Tubu and the soldiers, who blamed each other for the killings.²³²

A few months later, in May–June 2017, ANT troops evacuated Kouri Bougoudi once again—this time more brutally. They suddenly cleared out up to 40,000 miners even though they had been collecting taxes from them and allegedly had some prospectors working for them.²³³ The decision was partly a response to the presence of Chadian rebels among the miners.²³⁴ A number of the expelled workers who had no vehicles—and thus tried to reach Libya on foot—lost their lives in the desert.²³⁵ The ANT arrested other expelled miners, including Chadian and Sudanese Beri who were on their way to the Chad–Sudan border, and confiscated their cars and gold.²³⁶ Shortly afterwards, however, the gold miners returned to Kouri Bougoudi.²³⁷

Violence broke out again in the Kouri Bougoudi area, although this time it did not appear related to the Tubu–Beri tensions. Most recently, in December 2017, a battle pitted Dazagada and Beri gold miners against one another. After Beri miners had killed three or four Dazagada who had stolen a car, the Dazagada attacked a Beri camp, killing 15 to 20 miners.²³⁸

Two months earlier, in October 2017, near Bardaï, the conflict between Tubu and Beri gold miners resumed when Beri miners killed three Tubu and fled with their victims' vehicle. Both communities gathered forces, and a Tubu retaliatory raid killed at least seven Beri.²³⁹ Following the incident, the authorities declared that the mining prohibition remained in place. In Miski, enforcing the ban had become even more difficult. One reason was that army officers stationed in Tibesti had reportedly smuggled in their own workers to mine for them. Another reason was that the Tubu, including some wangada, were also flouting the moratorium in spite of their initial commitment to it; they were digging in what they considered their land, including in order to finance the Miski wangada committee.²⁴⁰ After the prohibition's renewal, however, the

wangada agreed to evacuate their workers; meanwhile, the soldiers were reluctant to withdraw their own miners.²⁴¹

December 2017 saw more fatalities. An exchange of fire in Miski between the ANT and a wangada surveillance team killed some 15 soldiers and gold miners who were allegedly working for the military.²⁴² The army deployed reinforcements, including armoured vehicles, which remained in place until Tubu notables, including former president Goukouni Weddey, negotiated their withdrawal. Following the incident, the governor and the Tibesti region ANT commander were replaced.²⁴³

Tensions continued to escalate, however. The wangada had withdrawn to the mountains, prompting the Chadian security forces to accuse them of being rebels. Most of the Tubu argued that they only took up arms in self-defence, a position the community had espoused since the beginning of the gold rush.²⁴⁴ But the line between self-defence and rebellion is thin, as a former MDJT fighter had cautioned back in 2015:

We remain in a defensive posture. The gold miners come as civilians, but in fact they are soldiers. If it continues, we will take up weapons. One becomes a rebel when one is compelled to do so.²⁴⁵

By 2017, Tubu discontent had indeed encouraged former MDJT members led by Allatchi 'Koukoula' to declare themselves rebels from Libya. Koukoula had already mobilized armed Tubu against the gold miners in 2015; by 2017, he may have been using persistent Tubu grievances as a pretext for a renewed revolt (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 91).

Such pretexts—along with political ambiguities and conflicting allegiances—appear to drive the ongoing conflict dynamics in Chad's gold fields. In March 2018, the state of affairs remained precarious, as summarized by a Beri ANT soldier who had served in both Kouri Bougoudi and Miski:

Today, everyone, even the highest Chadian authority, knows the gold mines are not closed. The government has tried several times to dislodge the miners. We chased all of them and seized their mining equipment. But the miners evacuated from Chad went to Libya and kept moving back and forth across the border, bringing sand from Chad to mills in Libyan territory. The border is officially closed but people cross anyway in both directions. Also, the soldiers sent to evacuate the miners became complicit with them or mined themselves thanks to detectors seized from the miners. In Miski, because our commander was Beri and had close relatives among miners who were ambushed by the Tubu, he once led us to intervene without orders from his superiors. It's very difficult to be objective in those circumstances. On one side, as members of the national army, we must be neutral, but on the other we have the duty of assisting our relatives or clansmen. Soldiers who abandoned their positions to fight the Tubu alongside their relatives were dismissed from the ANT.²⁴⁶

Tensions around the gold mines increased considerably after the August 2018 rebel raid on Kouri Bougoudi, but this time they were not between the Tubu and the gold miners. As noted above, N'Djaména responded to the raid by targeting both the Tubu and the gold miners, although neither group appeared to have supported the rebels. On 15 August, Interior Minister Ahmat Bachir ordered yet another evacuation of the gold mines, again within 24 hours, not only in Kouri Bougoudi, but also in Miski.²⁴⁷ Following the deadline, Bachir ordered the security forces to arrest the miners and destroy the shops, trucks, tankers, and mining equipment. In addition to the above-mentioned air strikes in Miski, on several occasions in August and September 2018, Mi-24 helicopters shot S-5 57 mm and S-8 80 mm rockets on the Libyan side of Kouri Bougoudi, reportedly killing two Dōza traders and possibly several gold miners.²⁴⁸

The government also specifically targeted Tubu who had previously mobilized against the gold miners, including Tubu leaders who had supported them. In particular, N'Djaména dismissed three *chefs de canton*, including Kellā Goukouni, who had been instrumental in the formation of the wangada.²⁴⁹

Not long before, on 7 August, an administrative reform had transferred the sub-prefecture of Yebi-Bou, which has since become a department called Emi-Koussi, from the Tibesti to the Borkou region (Chad, 2018). The transfer effectively separated the Miski gold mines from the Tubu region. A new *canton* called Miski was then created in the new department for a Dōza village chief south of Miski, with the risk of triggering new tensions between Tubu and Dōza neighbours.²⁵⁰ The Tubu viewed all these changes as renewed government efforts to destabilize both the civilian and the traditional administrations of their region, while taking control of the gold mines.²⁵¹ Then, in October-November, the ANT attacked a wangada group led by ex-MDJT commanders Jime Chaha, Omar Wuche, and Orozi Loso in Miski area. The wangada, rebranded the 'Miski Self-Defence Committee', were joined by local youths as well as by the sous-préfet of Yebi-Bou, Molli Sougui. The sous-préfet had already opposed the government's management of the gold conflicts and supported the wangada in 2015, and in November 2018 resigned his post to become the Committee's spokesperson. The Committee accused the government of using landmines and claimed to have seized more than a hundred such which had been transported or buried by the ANT.



Photo 9 Chief Kellā Goukouni, one of the leaders of the newly formed Teda wangada militias who fought against foreign gold miners in the Tibesti. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2015

Tubu combatants also reportedly used recycled Qaddafi-era landmines, causing casualties among the ANT. As the authors previously warned was likely, the wangada and other local armed Tubu gradually mutated from self-defence into a new rebellion (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017). ●

“Saharan border communities are often seen as marginal due to their remoteness, yet their control of borders is precisely what makes them central.”

III. The Agadez–Fezzan route

The corridor between the Sahel and Libya

Pre-colonial trans-Saharan trading routes between the Sahel and Libya are still in use. Some types of trade—in Sahelian camels, subsidized Libyan food, cars, and manufactured goods and fuel—have continued nearly unhindered, partly because states have encouraged and benefitted from them. Others—such as trafficking in arms and, during the 1990s and into the next decade, cigarettes—flourished despite being illegal.²⁵² Migrant smuggling and drug trafficking also remain big business, as discussed in the following sections.

The trading routes are largely controlled by local communities—Arabs, Beri, Tubu, Tuareg—essentially according to traditional territories. In some areas where state control is weak or absent, as in southern Libya and Darfur, the communities have formed armed groups and collect taxes from traders who ply the trading routes. In so doing, they not only assert a continuity of a control by or on behalf of a particular community, but they also prevent external actors—including states, foreign armies, rival armed groups, and bandits—from controlling the routes.

Saharan border communities are often seen as marginal due to their remoteness, yet their control of borders is precisely what makes them central. In this sense, communities that are divided by a border can use their division as an advantage. The Beri are a case in point. Their community—which straddles the Chad–Sudan border at one end of a main route between the Sahel and Libya—has used its location as an economic and security asset. The Beri became successful traders between Libya and Sudan and managed to take power in Chad in 1990, before becoming a main ethnic component of the Darfur rebellion (Tubiana, 2008).²⁵³

Among post-colonial routes, the most important is the corridor between Agadez in central Niger and Sebha in southern Libya, part of which follows the pre-colonial route linking the Fezzan to the kingdom of Kanem-Bornu around Lake Chad (Tubiana, 2017c). Prior to 2011, the lot of the corridor varied depending on Qaddafi's policies and his relations with successive Nigerien governments.²⁵⁴ Between 1992 and 2000, while the UN was enforcing an air traffic embargo on Libya, Qaddafi fostered smuggling across his southern borders, while Niger and other Sahelian governments encouraged their citizens to work in Libya and send back remittances.

In the early 1990s, the oasis of Dirkou, midway between Agadez and the Libyan border, became a hub for contraband cigarettes from Benin. They arrived in cargo planes on the Dirkou airfield, were transferred from Agadez in trucks, and were then transported by Libyan smugglers.²⁵⁵ The 'Marlboro' era played a key role in the development of Dirkou and of the Agadez–Sebha corridor.²⁵⁶ Libyan and Nigerien officials, as well as Nigerien Tuareg and Tubu rebels, including Barka Wardougou's family, were involved in the operation.²⁵⁷ Tubu participated as intermediaries in Niger and as guides along the road, while Qadhahfha Arabs, who were close to the Libyan regime,



Photo 10 Agadez, Niger is one of the main hubs on the route between West Africa and Libya.
Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

controlled most of the contraband.²⁵⁸ Tubu and Tuareg drivers and intermediaries in this trade report that, starting around 2000, drugs were increasingly inserted into the cigarettes loads without their knowledge; when they realized that drugs had become part of the trade, they asked for and obtained a wage increase.²⁵⁹

Starting in 2007, a newly formed Tuareg rebel group, the Niger Movement for Justice (Mouvement des Nigériens pour la justice, MNJ), attacked and ransomed drug convoys crossing its territory in the Aïr mountains.²⁶⁰ The traffickers eventually reached a modus vivendi with the rebels, mainly by agreeing to pay them fees and enlist them as escorts and drivers. This arrangement continued even after the end of the MNJ rebellion in 2009.²⁶¹

Since the 2011 Libyan revolution, Tubu forces have been able to take control of most of Libya's border with Chad and Niger; they also managed to hold part of the border with Sudan, albeit for a shorter period of time (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 123–33). It is in this context that a wave of young Tubu men, including from Niger, gained prominence as drivers in various trades—from the smuggling of vehicles and fuel from Libya, to migrant smuggling and drug trafficking. Nicknamed *sawag NATO* (NATO drivers), these men replaced their older heavy trucks with newly acquired cars from Libya, on which they transport both goods and passengers. The drivers have



Photo 11 Migrants on the Niger–Libya road. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

even transported loads from east of Agadez, in Tuareg territory, to Libya, thus boosting the importance of the Agadez–Dirkou–Libya corridor.²⁶²

By encroaching on Tuareg land, however, the young Tubu drivers entered into competition with older Nigerien Tuareg, as well as Libyan Awlad Suleiman and Qadhahfa smugglers. As the corridor came under Tubu control, it became increasingly dangerous for all other groups.²⁶³ To a certain extent, this competition fuelled the conflicts between Tubu and Tuareg in Ubari, and between Tubu and Awlad Suleiman in Sebha, which only increased the Tubu monopoly on the Dirkou artery. In turn, the border areas became more dangerous for the Awlad Suleiman, and Tuareg smuggling became limited to the older Niger–Algeria routes and the Agadez–Ubari route, following the Niger–Algeria border until the Salvador Pass. By then, road bandits and operations by the Algerian, Nigerien, and French armies had rendered the crossing of the pass itself perilous.²⁶⁴ Partly in retaliation, Tuareg road bandits intensified their attacks on the westernmost section of the Dirkou artery, between Agadez and Puits Espoir—the border between Tuareg and Tubu territories.²⁶⁵

To the east, Beri ex-rebels who had become road bandits in the Kufra area faced Zwaya Arabs' attacks and gradually moved to the Fezzan and north-eastern Niger. There, they linked with Beri gold miners and engaged in banditry along the roads between Puits Espoir, Séguédine, Djado, and the Libyan border.²⁶⁶ In 2017, Barka

Sidimi cited this new form of banditry as one reason for his decision to leave Agadez to form an armed group in the Niger–Libya–Chad tri-border area. More recently, road bandits, possibly Beri, were reportedly operating as far west as the Aïr mountains, in Tuareg territory. In June 2018, they clashed with the Nigerien army, killing two soldiers in the Ténéré desert.

Farther east, along the Kufra corridor, Zwaya Arab militias prevented the Tubu from exerting full control over the roads between Sudan and Libya (UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting, 2017, p. 115). This particular conflict displaced the various trade routes between Libya and Chad. For instance, before Qaddafi's fall, the Gouro area and eastern Tibesti (Gezendu, Omu, and Yebi-Bou) traded with Kufra rather than the Fezzan. As a result of the conflict between the Tubu and the Zwaya and the Zwaya blockade of Kufra, however, the Tubu of eastern Tibesti were obliged to trade with the less dangerous Fezzan. This shift entailed the opening of direct routes through hitherto neglected areas of the desert, which increased transportation costs.

On both the Kufra and the Fezzan routes to the Sahel, the car trade has been booming, especially with respect to vehicles stolen in Libya. This relatively new activity has drawn former rebels from Darfur and Chad. According to a car smuggler who works between Libya and the Chad–Sudan border, the price of a car depends on the ability of the original owner to have it returned. The most expensive are cars that were not stolen and 'cold cars', the term used to describe stolen vehicles whose original owners are either from remote, northern Libya or from unarmed Chadian and Sudanese communities that are considered too weak to organize their return. The cheapest vehicles are called 'hot cars'; these have been stolen from Tubu or Beri owners, or from smugglers themselves, or the carjacking involved the owner's murder.²⁶⁷

Targeting migration

Qaddafi's Libya was not only a staging post for sub-Saharan migrants, but also a destination. Instead of making their way to Europe, most of them found work in Libya, typically on farms and in construction. Both Libya, which needed workers, and sub-Saharan governments, which had no jobs to offer and benefitted from remittances, encouraged this migration. At times, however, Qaddafi allowed his forces and the population to turn against migrants and smugglers (Tubiana, 2001).

During the revolution, some sub-Saharan migrants fought as mercenaries on Qaddafi's side. Partly for this reason, Libyan civilians and forces that were established during the revolution have targeted migrants since Qaddafi's fall. Nevertheless, an increasing number of militias and civilians have facilitated travel for migrants. Libyan and Nigerien Tubu and Tuareg smugglers, as well as Sudanese smugglers and militias on the Kufra side, play a crucial role in transporting migrants across Libya's porous



Photo 12 Libyan militia group Katiba 17 intercepts migrants in Kouri Bougoudi, on the Chad–Libya border, early 2018. Source: Y. Rozzi, 2018

southern border. Since 2011, a growing number of migrants have been crossing the border, but insecurity in Libya has led sub-Saharan foreigners—who are particularly vulnerable—to travel on to Europe.

Since the dissolution of the Libyan state, a growing number of migrants have been sold to traffickers who then hold them for ransom until relatives abroad transfer a payment for their release (Tubiana, 2017b).²⁶⁸ Men are commonly forced, for months, to work on farms and in construction, or sometimes in gold mines, and women are forced into prostitution (Taub, 2017). Migrants also face the risk of being detained or expelled by militia members, who pretend to act as official border guards, including in southern Libya, and look for recognition and money from authorities in Tripoli or Europe (Tubiana, 2017c). In 2012–13, the Battalion of the Martyrs of Um-el-Araneb, for one, arrested migrants and expelled them to Niger, an activity for which they received money from the Ali Zeidan government in Tripoli until late 2013. According to one of the katiba’s leaders, it expelled 18,000 migrants during this period.²⁶⁹ Both the katiba and the Gatrun Security Committee still have a reputation for impeding movement, particularly of non-Tubu migrant smugglers, whom they prevent from passing through El-Wigh, which both forces control. Similarly, in early 2018, Battalion 17—which controls the Libyan side of the Chad–Libya border in the Kouri Bougoudi area—intercepted non-Tubu water trucks carrying 40 to 50 mostly Sudanese migrants, who were sent back to Chad (Tubiana, Warin, and Saeneen, 2018, pp. 62–63).

Europe's dream of a Saharan wall

Through their migration policies, European countries have increasingly sought to block migrants in transit countries, well before they reach Europe—be it through deals with relevant governments, or through arrangements with local forces on the migration routes.

In this context, Italy may not always have been forthright about its aims. In April 2017, Rome hosted negotiations between representatives of the Tubu and Awlad Suleiman communities, which signed a 'reconciliation agreement' regarding their conflict in Sebha (Ibrahim, 2017).²⁷⁰ Under the agreement, Italy agreed to pay monetary reparations (or *diya*, blood money) for the deaths on each side, yet Rome never complied with its commitment, thus threatening the prospects of reconciliation on the ground (ICG, 2017, p. 13). Rome's true motivation for holding the negotiations, according to some participants, was the possibility of securing another deal—one through which tribes along the migration routes would agree to help stem the flow of migrants.

Indeed, Tuareg representatives, who had been invited as witnesses, and Tubu and Awlad Suleiman representatives did make such a commitment. Specifically, they agreed to create a joint border guard of 600 men that would ostensibly be financed, equipped, and trained by Italy and for which 200 men would be recruited in each of the three communities (ICG, 2017, pp. 23–24; *Maghreb Confidential*, 2017).

During the negotiations, Marco Minniti, Italy's interior minister, had spelled out Rome's position: 'To close Libya's southern border is to close Europe's southern border' (Longo, 2017). One of the Tubu participants said he was under the impression that 'the Italian government wants to reduce the number of migrants before the [Italian] elections [scheduled for March 2018], and they can't do it without our help'.²⁷¹

Most tribal representatives appear sceptical about the prospects of the anti-migration deal. Even if some of southern Libya's leaders expressed interest in receiving Italian or European funding for arresting migrants—or to compensate migrant smugglers for losses suffered if they stopped their activities—most of them predict that the smugglers will not give up their livelihoods.²⁷² Moreover, Tubu leaders appear keen to avoid potential violence between anti-migrant forces and smugglers, or militias that are involved in smuggling.²⁷³ If such a border guard or anti-smuggling police were to be formed, conflicts would be likely to erupt, possibly pitting Tubu pro- and anti-smuggling forces against each other. Moreover, it is unclear whether the Tubu would receive direct payments, particularly since the GNA, Chad, and Niger allegedly advised Italy to avoid funding Tubu militias, arguing that these might prove hostile to any of them.²⁷⁴

In 2017, however, Italy was rumoured to have begun funding the training of Tubu border guards in Sebha, under the supervision of a former Qaddafi officer.²⁷⁵ In September, Rome announced it was ready to send 100 troops to train Libyan border

guards on the Libya–Niger border, thanks to EU funding (Akkerman, 2018, p. 49). In July 2018, Italy signed an agreement with the GNA that theoretically allows the presence of Italian troops in southern Libya (RFI, 2018c).

Meanwhile, the EU’s migration policy has mirrored the March 2016 EU–Turkey agreement, in that it directly or indirectly funds transit countries that agree to block migrant flows. In addition to working with partners in a divided Libya, the EU aims to cooperate with governments that either are responsible for massive civilian displacements, such as Khartoum, or have encouraged and benefitted from migration, such as Niamey.

With respect to Libya, the EU has adjusted its migration policy over time. In February 2017, it endorsed a memorandum of understanding between Rome and Tripoli’s GNA, whose aim is to ensure migrants stay in Libya (Toaldo, 2017). The GNA has little control over Libya’s land and maritime borders, however, such that this agreement would necessarily rely on risky engagements with militias that proclaim themselves coast guards or border guards. In July 2017, the EU announced an additional plan to support Italian efforts to curb migration, with EUR 136 million (USD 160 million) earmarked for Libya (Travère, 2017). The following month, Haftar suggested that blocking migrants at Libya’s southern border would cost the EU USD 1 billion per year over 20 to 25 years. In an effort to avoid being sidelined, he asked France, his closest



Photo 13 A smuggler’s truck, 2017. Smugglers prefer light, fast vehicles that can easily escape patrols.
Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

ally in Europe, to provide him with military equipment, such as helicopters, drones, armoured vehicles, and night-vision goggles (AFP, 2017b).

Since 2016, the EU has also entered into bilateral agreements with Sudan and Niger. It earmarked EUR 160 million (USD 200 million) for Sudan-based programmes designed to curb migration from the Horn of Africa towards Libya. The EU has repeatedly asserted that its funds are not channelled through the Sudanese government but managed by ministries and agencies of EU member states. Nevertheless, EU officials have acknowledged a series of risks. As one official noted in referring to a main regional migration management programme implemented by the German Agency for International Cooperation in Khartoum:

By early 2017, we didn't sufficiently know what was happening with the money, but now we have full access to the information. We want to have an eye on the projects' management.²⁷⁶

Various observers characterize the plan and its implementation to date as incoherent, for two main reasons. First, its focus on Sudan as a transit country for migrants from the Horn of Africa seems to overlook the fact that it is also a main country of origin for refugees and asylum seekers, largely because of the continuous wars between Khartoum and rebel movements in the peripheries (Shah, 2017). The 40,000



Photo 14 A break during the convoy between Agadez and Dirkou. Nigerien soldiers sometimes close their eyes to the presence of migrants in the convoy travelling to Libya. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

migrants who cross from Sudan into Libya every year are largely refugees from wars and authoritarian regimes—Eritreans and Somalis, but also Sudanese.

Second, Khartoum appears to have fulfilled its part of the bargain by deploying its RSF militias to the Libyan border. That choice is incongruous, given that RSF leader Hemmeti—a former camel trader and smuggler between Darfur and Libya—and his fellow commanders have reportedly remained involved in smuggling activities, including migrant smuggling and human trafficking (Tubiana, Warin, and Saeneen, 2018, pp. 42–52).²⁷⁷ Among other accounts, that of a Darfur man who crossed from Sudan into Libya in mid-2016 corroborates these allegations. He recounts that RSF members sent him into debt bondage in North Darfur’s capital, El-Fasher, after which he travelled with other migrants in a convoy of two camouflaged RSF vehicles, one of which was also carrying ammunition boxes. He says that once they had arrived at the Libyan border, the drivers of both vehicles—armed men in uniform—sold the load of migrants to Libyan intermediaries.²⁷⁸ Similar reports hold that, at the Sudan–Libya border, RSF members hand over migrants to Zwaya traffickers, who are protected by Zwaya militias, or to those militias themselves (Tubiana, Warin, and Saeneen, 2018, pp. 49–52; UNSC, 2018a, pp. 26–27).²⁷⁹

Niger, the main transit country to Libya, received EUR 140 million (USD 164 million) from the European Union in 2016. That year, an estimated 400,000 people—a record number of mostly economic migrants hailing from West African nations—flowed from Agadez to Libya and, to a lesser extent, Algeria (Molenaar et al., 2017, p. 10; UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting, 2017, p. 98). Niger, already the largest per capita recipient of European aid, with EUR 600 million (USD 700 million) earmarked for 2016–20, indicated to Europe that it would need EUR 1 billion (USD 1.2 billion) to curb migration (Reuters, 2016; Siegfried, 2017).

Niger: reimagining migrant smuggling as a crime

Beginning in the 1990s, successive Nigerien governments encouraged Tuareg and, to a lesser extent, Tubu rebels who had signed peace agreements to become migrant smugglers. This strategy was designed to prevent them from turning to banditry or drug trafficking, as they gradually lost hope in the authorities’ promises to integrate them into the armed forces (Tubiana, 2017c).²⁸⁰ The rebel movements distributed vehicles, which they had previously seized from government forces, to small groups of ex-combatants. The state cleared the vehicles through customs at half the normal fee, issued driver’s licences, and authorized drivers to pick up migrants at the bus station of Agadez—as though they were employed by a bus company.²⁸¹

Every Monday until mid-2016, about 100–200 vehicles—mostly pick-up trucks with around 30 migrants in the back—left Agadez for Dirkou. They rode alongside a weekly military convoy so that they might avoid road bandits operating on the first stretch

of the journey.²⁸² They often parted ways with the convoy at Puits Espoir (Well of Hope), the well dug midway between Agadez and Dirkou, to head directly towards Séguédine and then Libya.²⁸³ Along the way, the smugglers and their passengers paid legal and illegal taxes to various Nigerien security forces; once in Libya, they paid the Tubu militias.²⁸⁴

Niamey's anti-corruption agency defended the bribes, arguing that the security forces needed them to operate and to ensure the supply of fuel and food to the country's north (Flynn, 2015). In contrast, field data indicates that the payments were shared as perks among troops and officers on the ground and their chain of command in Agadez and Niamey. Indeed, these bribes reportedly made being stationed in northern Niger very popular among security forces (HALCIA, 2013).

In view of the fact that both the Nigerien authorities and the smugglers were treating migrant smuggling like a legal activity, the EU began to pressure Niamey for change, with promises of funding. In May 2015, Niger's parliament acquiesced: it adopted a law that equates the provision of assistance to foreigners in illegally entering or exiting Niger with 'illegal trafficking of migrants', punishable by a 5–10-year prison sentence and a fine of XOF 1–5 million (USD 1,800–9,000) (Niger, 2015). The new law is incompatible with Niger's membership in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which allows the 350 million nationals of the 15 member states to travel freely within the community. Most of the migrants travelling between Agadez and Libya are from ECOWAS countries (Molenaar et al., 2017, p. 14).²⁸⁵

In mid-2016, Niger began to enforce the law, reportedly arresting more than 282 drivers, car owners, and 'coaxers' (intermediaries) (Molenaar, Ursu, and Tinni, 2017, p. 21).²⁸⁶ By April 2018, 300–350 cars had been confiscated.²⁸⁷ As early as November 2016, the EU congratulated itself on a spectacular drop in migrant flows from Niger to Libya, but its calculations were based on an incorrect figure erroneously provided by the International Organization for Migration (Siegfried, 2017).

It remains unclear to what extent migrant numbers fell. Some smugglers and coaxers in Niger have acknowledged a decrease in the flows, while others say they are simply taking other, less visible roads. Cars are picking up passengers farther south, even as far as the Niger–Nigeria border. They avoid the main Agadez–Libya road, the military convoy, and the checkpoints, instead following minor roads along the Niger–Algeria border or the Niger–Chad border—corridors that had previously been the domain of drug traffickers and road bandits (UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting, 2017, p. 100).²⁸⁸ More migrants are travelling from Niger and Mali to Algeria, and from Algeria or Mauritania to Morocco and Spain, or sometimes from Algeria to Libya.²⁸⁹ In August 2018, Niger's interior minister told the *New York Times*, 'The fight against clandestine migration is not winnable' (Penney, 2018b).

The new itineraries are more perilous for both the drivers and the passengers. Some drivers get lost; some vehicles break down, run out of fuel or water, or are attacked



Photos 15–16 Puits Espoir ('Hope's Well'), mid-way between Agadez and Dirkou, is one of the main stageposts for travellers from Niger to Libya. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

by bandits. Drivers who are chased by bandits or security forces tend to abandon their passengers to escape more rapidly (Anacko, 2017).²⁹⁰ With time, the number of cars and drivers involved decreased, as some gave up migrant smuggling and only the most seasoned continued. Consequently, the ‘sector’ has reportedly professionalized and shrunk.²⁹¹ As risks increased, so did the fees—rising from around USD 250 per passenger between Agadez and Libya before the ban, to USD 400 or more since.²⁹² The illegal taxes collected by various Nigerien security forces have doubled as well (HALCIA, 2013; Taub, 2017).²⁹³

EU policy implications in Niger: more insecurity, more risk

The EU’s migration policy has had a range of adverse effects on Niger—from increasing dangers to migrants and encouraging corruption, to aggravating insecurity and heightening the risk of new insurgencies in the north of the country.

In recent years, the north’s stability had largely relied on a fragile balance among civilian authorities, the military, and Tubu and Tuareg communities, including many former rebels. Migration was perhaps the only activity that benefitted all three as a key source of income. Different estimates indicate that more than 6,000 Agadez residents relied on migration for their livelihood (Molenaar, Ursu, and Tinni, 2017, p. 24).²⁹⁴

The migration ban exacerbated tensions between the Nigerien authorities and the Tubu and Tuareg communities, in part because it came at a time of increased economic insecurity. In late 2014, the French nuclear giant Areva had decided to abandon a uranium mine project that would have employed 3,000–5,000 local youths, including many former rebels, at Imouraren, 160 km north of Agadez.²⁹⁵ Not long after the migration ban came into force, the above-mentioned closure of the Djado gold mine also generated a loss of income for northern communities, including former migrant smugglers who had been looking for gold.²⁹⁶ Since the ban has criminalized the principal livelihood in the area, unemployed Tubu and Tuareg youths, including former rebels, are at far greater risk of engaging in work they consider truly illegal, including banditry and drug trafficking, or of forming new rebel movements, becoming mercenaries in Libya, or joining jihadist groups.²⁹⁷

The EU’s migration policy in Niger may be contributing to the formation of new armed groups, particularly among the Tubu. In 2016, Adam Tcheke—the leader of the still-born MJRN rebellion—had demanded the release of the arrested migrant drivers, perhaps as a way to gain popularity. In stark contrast, Barka Sidimi took up arms in 2017 with the stated agenda of controlling the Niger–Libya border, against both foreign bandits and migrant smugglers. His anti-migration stance was partly rooted in his hopes for European funding; some rumours even suggest that Sidimi received Italian money through a northern Libyan faction or through N’Djaména.²⁹⁸ Nigerien security

officials alleged that France had funded Sidimi via its base in Madama—a claim the French military denied (Penney, 2018b).

Sidimi's anti-migration campaign represents no less than an about-face. As late as 2009–10, he was reportedly smuggling migrants from Niger into Libya, sometimes making a detour via Wour in Tibesti.²⁹⁹ Until he took up arms in mid-2017, he presided over an elders' committee in Agadez whose main objective was to facilitate the cross-border trade.³⁰⁰ Sidimi's new Sahara Falcons militia was initially popular among the Tubu because it targeted non-Tubu road bandits, but his stated anti-migrant smuggling agenda and his efforts to control contraband were met with resistance.³⁰¹

After the ban came into effect, Niamey also looked for potential allies in Libya, specifically by asking a Libyan Tubu militia to help block migrants at the border. The leadership refused to do so unless migrant smugglers could be provided with alternative work.³⁰² This position seems to be widely held among Tubu forces at Libya's southern border; any other militias Niger may have approached would thus have been likely to decline for the same reason.

In the absence of alternative livelihood options, former migrant smugglers have resorted to illegal activities in and beyond Niger. According to an Agadez coxer interviewed in March 2017, some migrant drivers became bandits and others left for Mali to become drivers for drug traffickers.³⁰³ By early 2018, Nigerien officials acknowledged that the new migration law had indirectly provoked an increase in banditry. They also recognized, as did international observers and others, that transporting synthetic drugs such as the opioid Tramadol had become a main alternative activity for former migrant smugglers. The key Tramadol route—which goes from Nigeria to Libya along the old Kawar trail, and across eastern Niger—also serves as an alternative corridor for migrants. Other migrant smugglers have joined armed groups as mercenaries in Libya, including reportedly more than 100 Tuareg, most of whom are fighting with Tuareg militias or Haftar's forces. Some Tubu smugglers reportedly joined Barka Sidimi. And several dozen Tuareg smugglers allegedly joined armed groups in Mali.³⁰⁴

Long before migrant smuggling was criminalized, Nigerien and other regional and international officials regularly lumped together migrant smugglers, drug traffickers, arms traffickers, and 'terrorists' (Scheele, 2013; UNSC, 2017b, pp. 51, 63). In November 2017, at the joint summit of the EU and the African Union in Abidjan, French president Emmanuel Macron declared: 'These human traffickers are deeply linked to the networks of arms traffickers, drug traffickers and to the terrorist movements operating in the whole region' (Anadolu Agency, 2017). Evidence of such networks is limited, however. One oft-cited example is the above-mentioned case of the Boko Haram members who travelled as migrants with the aim of joining IS forces in Sirte.³⁰⁵ Libyan sources also indicate that some West Africans (Nigeriens and Senegalese)

were among foreign IS fighters in Sirte; they had travelled to Libya via the Agadez–Ghat route across southern Algeria, rather than on the main Agadez–Fezzan migrant route (Zelin, 2018, p. 14).

In the Saharan cross-border region, drivers who transport migrants certainly qualify as smugglers, but very few among them are human traffickers, nor do they see themselves as such, notwithstanding international institutions' indiscriminate use of the label to describe them. Smuggling is associated with particular routes rather than specific merchandise, meaning that some smugglers will carry any type of cargo, potentially without asking any questions. As a Tubu elder observed, 'For some, transporting migrants, drugs, alcohol, or arms is the same: merchandise.'³⁰⁶ In practice, however, personal ethics tend to play a role in what a driver is willing to carry. While drivers and Niger's northern communities refer to transporting migrants as 'legal', some explain they would not transport arms—except a few for their personal security. Others claim they would refuse to carry drugs or alcohol, the latter mostly for religious reasons; one migrant smuggler highlighted the need for money that is *halal* (permitted under Islamic law).³⁰⁷ The more people feel marginalized by the rules of external actors—such as the EU's migration policies—the more they are likely to violate their own codes of ethics; for migrant smugglers, that translates into taking on more dangerous activities.

By conflating diverse cross-border activities, Western rhetoric can also mask variations in individual countries' priorities. While Italy and Germany clearly prioritize the migration issue in the region, France and the United States—which is set to begin flying drones from a new Agadez base in late 2018—appear more interested in fighting terrorism (Penney, 2018a). The French forces in Madama, for instance, are reportedly focusing on arms trafficking but showing little interest in migrant smuggling.³⁰⁸ Such inconsistencies among Western states may indicate that their security and migration policies are similarly at odds. Yet external actors—be they Western or regional powers—will not be able to secure Saharan communities' support against terrorism if they simultaneously deprive them of their current livelihoods. Put another way, these communities may have an interest in helping the West to combat terrorism, but they lack any incentive to undermine smuggling in migrants or even drugs.

International actors have not yet developed an integrated policy that could obtain the approval of all relevant parties. In May 2017, possibly after realizing that neither the new Nigerien law nor the French soldiers in Niger would be enough to curb the flows, Germany and Italy suggested the EU send another force to the Niger–Libya border to turn back migrants (Winter, 2017). In December 2017, Italy announced its intention to send 470 troops to northern Niger, but Niamey subsequently rebuffed the plan (RFI, 2018a).



Photo 17 Passengers whose vehicles have broken down decide to risk their life walking in the hope for a lift or a place with water and shade



Drug routes

According to Tuareg and Tubu drivers with experience transporting drugs, hashish trafficking between the Sahel and Libya emerged around the year 2000. The new operations initially trailed the trafficking in cigarettes, then merged with it, and eventually supplanted it.³⁰⁹ The merchandise, much of which appears to be Moroccan cannabis resin, skirts round Algeria's southern border, passing through Mali, Niger, and then Libya, from where it is largely exported towards the Egyptian and European markets (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 131–32). Cocaine, which is reportedly moved from the West African coast to Niger and Libya, is said to account for a smaller portion of the regional drug trafficking business.³¹⁰ More recently, synthetic drugs such as Tramadol have been transported from Nigeria to the Libyan market (Murray, 2017, p. 17, n. 63). Tramadol, which is considered less risky to carry than older, more familiar drugs, is consumed in both Niger and Libya, and can reportedly be sold or exchanged for gold in southern Libya.³¹¹

Drug traffickers appear to use Niger as a hub on the way to Libya, although they avoid the main Agadez–Fezzan road in favour of alternative routes along the Algerian and Chadian borders. They also pass through northern Chad, including via difficult roads to the west, south, and east of the Tibesti mountains, and farther east towards the Chad–Sudan–Libya tri-border area. In 2010, when Libya reinforced its surveillance of its border with Niger, drivers deliberately passed through Chad and Sudan.³¹² Another distinct hashish route reportedly leads from production areas in the poorly controlled borderlands between CAR, South Sudan, and Sudan, through Darfur, and on to Libya.³¹³

Tacit government support

The Chadian government has been accused of turning a blind eye to some Chadian Tubu and Dazagada traffickers—including former rebels from the MDJT and other movements. Authorities may view their involvement in the drug trade as a stabilizing factor along the northern border, one that will prevent them from engaging in insurgent activities.³¹⁴ On occasion, N'Djaména has even rewarded known traffickers. A well-known case is the appointment of trafficker Chidi Kallemay as a *chef de canton* (traditional leader) in 2014 (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 65).

N'Djaména made another unlikely appointment in June 2016, when it selected one of Kallemay's Dōza cousins, Gihinni Gendey, to head the Borkou region's mobile brigade, which was ostensibly tasked with combating narcotrafficking.³¹⁵ After the MDJT's dissolution, Gendey had left for Libya, formed a group of road bandits, and joined the battalion of Allatchi Mahadi, who put him in charge of a checkpoint at the Chad–Libya border. Like other Chadian armed groups in Libya, and sometimes with them, Gendey's unit would attack traffickers, seize their drugs, and then resell



Photo 18 Once known as a drug trafficker, Chidi Kallemay, from Ogi in Tibesti, became an official *chef de canton* or customary chief. Source: Jérôme Tubiana, 2017

them—occasionally back to the very traffickers they had robbed. In 2012, using a vehicle borrowed from Chadian rebels, Gendey found a cache of cannabis worth an estimated USD 150,000 in the Salvador area, where traffickers had hidden it. This windfall reportedly encouraged Chadian rebels and ex-rebels in Libya to begin chasing drug traffickers.³¹⁶

Niger has also extended honorary positions to known drug traffickers. The prime example is the appointment of Saleh Boss, who served as adviser to the prime minister in 2012.³¹⁷

Protection vs. attacks

Within the regional drug trafficking networks, members of Saharan communities—such as the Beri, Dazagada, Tubu, and Tuareg—and Arabs from the Chad–Darfur borderlands have been limited to driving, guiding vehicles, and providing protection, fuel, and food supplies.³¹⁸ In Arabic the practice of guiding and protecting drugs or migrants between one transfer point and the next is generally known as *taslim* ('delivery') and sometimes as *himaya* ('protection').³¹⁹

Many of the individuals involved in providing *taslim* appear to be former rebels. Nigerien Tuareg ex-members of the MNJ are perhaps the most seasoned among them.

Until the group disbanded in 2009, their strategy had been to attack drug convoys to fund their movement and buy weapons.³²⁰ After some successful attacks, traffickers offered to pay them rights of passage and then started hiring them as escorts and drivers for *taslim* from Mali to the Libya–Egypt border.³²¹ Older traffickers have reportedly joined the MNJ in order to benefit from the rebels’ protection.³²²

The Beri, Dazagada, and Tubu appear to have replicated the Tuareg rebels’ transition from attacking traffickers to providing them with *taslim*.³²³ One example relates to a group of Chadian Dazagada rebels and ex-rebels who attacked a drug convoy in 2013. Within a single week of the incident, the traffickers offered the rebels a *taslim* deal.³²⁴ The Tubu’s role in providing *taslim* has grown since 2008, especially since Qaddafi’s fall. Tubu drivers have gradually replaced the Tuareg on the Niger–Libya border east of the Salvador Pass; since 2012, competition between them has extended into Tuareg territory, as far west as Agadez.³²⁵ Dazagada ex-rebels have even driven *taslim* convoys, from Mali to the Chad–Libya–Sudan tri-border area.³²⁶

Despite the growth of *taslim* deals, the number of attacks has been on the rise since 2011. The more recent increase in incidents is reportedly linked to the death in 2016 of Cherif Abidin—the Arab ‘godfather’ and baron of the ruling party in Agadez—who had regulated trafficking in the region.³²⁷ As particular groups and families have come to monopolize *taslim* activities, disgruntled competitors, members of rival communities, and armed opposition groups have begun to carry out attacks against their drug convoys; such incidents have included Tubu-on-Tuareg attacks.³²⁸

Together with Libyan Tubu forces, Chadian and Darfur current and former rebels who settled in Libya have been attacking drug convoys in the Kufra and Fezzan areas, up to the Salvador Pass, as well as in northern Niger, up to Tuareg territory north of Aïr, since 2011.³²⁹ Having suffered attacks from Zwaya militias in Kufra area, some Beri members of the Liberation and Justice Movement headed up to the Libya–Niger border, where they were asked to escort *taslim* convoys from the west of Agadez up to Libya. In 2016, a few years after the Tubu and Dazagada had entered in competition with the Tuareg on the Agadez–Fezzan route, Darfurians also began operating in this corridor.³³⁰ ●



The Libyan stockpile itself no longer represents a major security risk, largely because many of the reserves that had been available in 2011 have since evaporated, the bulk absorbed by Libyan factions.”

IV. Weapons flows

This section presents data and analysis on regional flows of weapons and ammunition. The aim of the section is twofold. First, it provides an evidentiary basis for findings discussed in the previous sections, such as conclusions relating to the outflow of Libyan stockpiles, movements of weapons with gold miners across Chad, and links between trafficking and jihadist networks in the region. Second, it represents an effort to refine previously published data and thus contribute to the literature in the field, including recent studies released by Conflict Armament Research, the Small Arms Survey, and other relevant international observers.³³¹

The authors collected the data that is analysed in this section in northern Niger in February–March 2017. Overall, they physically inspected and documented a sample of 169 weapons, 52 lots of ammunition—which account for 2,335 rounds of different calibres—and 1 anti-tank mine, all of which were seized between 2013 and 2017 and manufactured in 19 different countries. During the inspection, the materiel was in the custody of the Nigerien authorities: the gendarmerie of Agadez, the Bilma courthouse, the command of military zone number 8 in Dirkou, and the anti-terrorist central service in Niamey.

The sample offers insight into the provenance and types of materiel circulating in the border regions between Niger and Libya (see Tables 4 and 5).³³² The weapons seized in southern Niger, in particular, are in all probability of Libyan origin.

Table 4 Type, number, and country of manufacture of weapons documented in northern Niger in February–March 2017

Type of weapon	Quantity	Countries of manufacture
AK-pattern rifle	84	Algeria (2), Bulgaria (4), China (16), Czechoslovakia (1), East Germany (5), Egypt (4), Hungary (1), Iraq (2), Poland (10), Romania (4), Russian Federation (24), Yugoslavia (1), unconfirmed origin (10)
Blank pistol (9 × 22 mm)	62	Turkey (48), unconfirmed origin (14)
7.62 × 51 mm assault rifle	10	Belgium (6), France (4)
Rocket-propelled grenade launcher	5	Bulgaria (5)
Semi-automatic pistol	3	Brazil (1), Czechoslovakia (1), France (1)
5.56 × 45 mm assault rifle	2	Israel (2)
Pump-action shotgun	2	Turkey (2)
Sniper rifle	1	Romania (1)

Table 5 Type, number, and country of manufacture of ammunition documented in northern Niger in February–March 2017

Calibre	Quantity (rounds)	Countries of manufacture
23 × 152 mm	9	Bulgaria (3), Russian Federation (6)
7.62 × 39 mm	108	China (1), Czechoslovakia (20), Romania (67), Russian Federation (19), and Sudan (1)
7.62 × 51 mm	78	China (78)
7.62 × 54R mm	1,881	Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Hungary, Romania, and Russian Federation
9 × 22 mm (blank)	250	Turkey (250)
PG-type rockets	9	Bulgaria (2), China (2), Poland (4), Russian Federation (1)

The study has a few limitations. Due to poor data collection standards among Nigerien security agencies, it is not possible to establish the context of each individual seizure, nor can the data be disaggregated by date and location of seizure. The records suggest, however, that a significant number of the items were seized separately, or in small batches, particularly materiel confiscated from gold miners, including from Nigerien Tuareg; Tubu from Chad, Libya, and Niger; and Beri from Chad and Sudan.³³³

Another limitation is the small sample size, which precludes an accurate determination of the representativeness of the findings and an inference of broader proliferation dynamics. Nonetheless, the empirical evidence presented in this section reveals patterns that are consistent with previously identified trends. Each documented weapon was compared with those already profiled by Conflict Armament Research and the Small Arms Survey, including in Burkina Faso, CAR, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, and Niger, to determine possible correlations.³³⁴

Documented weapons

With respect to the seized weapons, the investigation identified 17 countries of manufacture. Formal trace requests were addressed to 24 governments or manufacturers, to confirm the origin of the materiel and obtain further information regarding its chain of custody. The authors received detailed answers from the authorities of Brazil,³³⁵ the Czech Republic,³³⁶ Slovakia,³³⁷ Switzerland,³³⁸ and Romania,³³⁹ as well as from the Turkish private companies Aksa Arms³⁴⁰ and Hedef Arms.³⁴¹

Weapons from Libyan stockpiles

Some of the weapons seized in northern Niger revealed correlations with items previously traced back to Libyan stockpiles, suggesting similar diversion schemes. This applies in particular to:

- 10 KBk-AKMS rifles manufactured in Poland (between 1976 and 1978), all with a distinctive rear sight marked with Arabic characters;³⁴²
- 5 AK 103-2 assault rifles manufactured in the Russian Federation;³⁴³
- 2 AKMS-type rifles manufactured in Egypt;³⁴⁴
- 2 FN FAL assault rifles manufactured in Belgium;³⁴⁵
- 1 FPK/PSL sniper rifle manufactured in Romania in 1978;³⁴⁶ and
- 1 Vz. 58 P assault rifle manufactured in Czechoslovakia.³⁴⁷

Some of the AK-pattern rifles documented in Dirkou feature mobile parts that correspond with components mounted on previously documented weapons that had been diverted from the Libyan stockpile, suggesting that a large amount of the Dirkou sample's weapons were similarly diverted in Libya before being transferred to Niger. The previously documented weapons had been seized in April 2012 on the *Letfallah II*, off the Lebanese coast, en route from Libya to Syria. Among several examples of the weapons documented in Dirkou is an AKMS rifle of Soviet manufacture.³⁴⁸ The rifle features a bolt carrier with markings that suggest it was originally a component of an MPI-KM/KMS produced in East Germany, with the serial number 82 KR 2617. A MPI-KMS-type rifle that was also manufactured in East Germany and later seized on the *Letfallah II* bears a close serial number—82 KR 1640.

These findings suggest that most of the weapons seized in the Agadez region between 2013 and 2017 were diverted from Libyan stockpiles. Components from different lots might have been detached from their original weapons and mounted on others, depending on identified needs. Some of these weapons may have been among the ones distributed during the revolution in 2011, for instance. As Libyan Tubu traders have confirmed, Qaddafi's security apparatus handed out AK-pattern assault rifles to civilians in the Fezzan, in a desperate move to mobilize them on the regime's side.³⁴⁹

The Libyan stockpile itself no longer represents a major security risk, largely because many of the reserves that had been available in 2011 have since evaporated, the bulk absorbed by Libyan factions. Between 2012 and 2015, international actors—in particular the French and US armies, with support from the militaries of Chad, Mali, and Niger³⁵⁰—made efforts to intercept and neutralize Libyan arms and ammunition. During the same period, the volume of materiel diverted from Libya decreased as the demand for weapons grew among different Libyan factions that had become embroiled in intercommunity conflicts. Nevertheless, small-scale trafficking networks

still contribute to the region's militarization by supplying illicit weapons from Libya—in particular pistols and rifles—to the northern areas of Chad and Niger, where demand had grown in response to the gold rush (UNSC, 2018b, p. 34).

The data reveals a direct correlation between weapons of Libyan origin that were seized in northern Niger and the ones seized in the southern part of the country. Some of the items documented in Agadez—AKM/AKMS-type rifles that are probably of Libyan origin—have serial numbers that are almost sequential with those of five similar rifles that were seized in Zinder, in southern Niger, in July 2015, during operations against Boko Haram. The serial numbers of the Zinder rifles fall within the range of the Agadez serial numbers—1983 NH 2172 to 1984 NX 9473—and, in two cases, the serial numbers of individual rifles from the two batches are very close, with a gap of only 324 and 817 units. The Romanian authorities confirmed that three of the rifles documented in Dirkou were manufactured by Romanian producers (Uzina Mecanič Cugir and Uzina Mecanič Sadu) in 1984,³⁵¹ yet the origin of those produced in 1983 remains to be determined.³⁵² This evidence suggests that the rifles seized near Niger's northern and southern borders were all exported as part of a single consignment and may share the same point of diversion.³⁵³ It also indicates that Libyan arsenals supplied trafficking routes between Libya and the Lake Chad region, which conceivably linked logistical networks of jihadist groups in Libya and Boko Haram.

Weapons from Chadian stockpiles

Not all the materiel that was seized in Dirkou and Agadez originated in Libya. It was particularly difficult to establish the provenance of two AKM-type rifles that were produced in Algeria and two Galil 5.56 mm assault rifles that were manufactured in Israel.

Efforts to trace the two AKM-type rifles produced inconsistent information.³⁵⁴ By October 2018, however, it had become clear that the two Galil³⁵⁵ rifles had most probably been transferred to Niger after having been diverted from the Chadian national stockpile.³⁵⁶ This preliminary conclusion³⁵⁷ is supported by the fact that Israel authorized the export of Galil Model 365 rifles to Chad in 2010, particularly as these bore serial numbers consistent with the format of the weapons documented in Niger (200XXXX, where X stands for a figure between 0 and 9).³⁵⁸

The inference that these Galil rifles originated in Chad is also corroborated by the fact that the gold rush in Djado attracted armed gold miners from Chad, including former ANT members and defectors. These miners reportedly came equipped with metal detectors, generators, appropriate working tools, and individual weapons that they had procured in Chad.³⁵⁹

Weapons of recent manufacture

The documented sample contains mainly military-type weapons that were manufactured decades ago—predominantly during the 1970s and 1980s. Exceptions include a few rifles, such as the above-mentioned AK 103-2s, which were manufactured in the Russian Federation and authorized for export to Libya well before 2011, and, more surprisingly, two Type 56-1 rifles that were manufactured in China in 2011 (serial number 56047966) and 2014 (59020947).

The rifle that was produced in 2011 belongs to a batch of weapons that were used in 2015–16 in a series of terrorist attacks across West Africa claimed by Al-Mourabitoun, which officially merged into al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in December 2015. The rifles were used in attacks in Sévaré, Mali, in August 2015; Bamako, Mali, in November 2015; Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in January 2016; Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, in March 2016; and in a failed attack in Bamako, also in March 2016. The



Photos 19–21 Close-ups of the markings on the rear-sight block and on the receiver of the Type 56-1 rifle with the serial number 56047966, documented on 2 March 2017, in Dirkou, Niger. The bottom of the Factory 26 logo (the number 26 inside a triangle) and of 'CN' (the abbreviation for China) are visible on the rear-sight block.

Source: Claudio Gramizzi/CAR, 2017

markings on all of these rifles—including the one documented in Dirkou—indicate that China’s State Factory 26 manufactured them in 2011, with serial numbers of the format 560XXXXX.³⁶⁰ The rifle documented in Dirkou also has features that are similar to those found on most of the rifles used in the attacks, including the technique used to conceal the markings on the left profile of the rear-sight block. These similarities suggest that the rifle was initially diverted together with the ones that were subsequently used by Al-Mourabitoun (Anders, 2018; Conflict Armament Research, 2016, pp. 39–41; see Photos 19–21).

The presence of the Type 56-1 rifle among those seized at the Libyan border is a further indication that Al-Mourabitoun, AQIM, and related armed groups were able to rely on a supply network that was directly connected with Libya (de Tessières, 2018, pp. 31–32). It also demonstrates that rifles of the 560 series were disseminated throughout the wider region, and it points to the possibility that some of the diverted rifles were transferred to Libya in violation of the UN arms embargo.³⁶¹ As of November 2018, the authors had not yet identified the first consignee in the transfer chain of the 560 series.³⁶²



Photos 22–24 Close-up of the markings on the rear-sight block and on the receiver of the Type 56-1 rifle with the serial number 59020947, documented on 2 March 2017, in Dirkou, Niger. The bottom of the inscription ‘56-1’, of Factory 26 logo (26 inside a triangle), and of the inscription ‘14-CN’ remain visible despite abrasion marks.

Source: Claudio Gramizzi/CAR, 2017

On the Type 56-1 rifle that was manufactured in 2014, the left side of the rear-sight block had been abraded to obscure engraved markings. The inscriptions remain partially readable, however. They reveal the identity of the manufacturer (through the Factory 26 logo), the model designation (56-1), and the year and country of manufacture (14-CN) (see Photos 22–24). The databases of Conflict Armament Research and the Small Arms Survey do not contain previous records of rifles of the same manufacturing lot and, as of November 2018, the first consignee of the rifle remained unknown.³⁶³

The growing popularity of blank pistols

The stockpile documented in the Agadez region between February and March 2017 includes 62 blank pistols of calibre 9 × 22 mm,³⁶⁴ designed as replicas of common 9 mm pistols (such as the Beretta, Glock, or Makarov). Turkish companies manufactured more than three-quarters of these pistols (48 of 62).³⁶⁵ The significant presence of blank pistols among seized weapons appears to be a recent but pervasive trend, not only in the Sahel–Sahara region.³⁶⁶ The proportion of blank pistols began to grow in 2011; nearly 80 per cent (49 of 62) of the ones documented in Niger were manufactured after 2012.

In northern Niger, the trend is linked to a growing demand for weapons for personal protection, particularly in connection with the gold rush in the border areas with Chad and Libya. It also calls attention to the thriving blank-pistol market in Libya—a point already raised by the UN Panel of Experts on Libya (UNSC, 2015, para. 153, annex 21). Since these pistols cannot fire real ammunition, acquiring them is associated with less risk than obtaining real handguns, and buyers are aware that they can be converted into proper firearms with limited technical effort.

The authors documented 36 blank pistols in Bilma and Dirkou, including 11 model 622K pistols manufactured by Aral Arms³⁶⁷ and 10 others manufactured by Retay Arms.³⁶⁸ These weapons exhibit a relative homogeneity, one that reflects not only the short delay between their manufacture and their delivery in the region, but also the proximity of their serial numbers. That homogeneity also indicates that the distribution networks operating between Libya and neighbouring countries are organized enough to guarantee rapid delivery across the border.

Nigerien government data confirms that the demand for blank pistols among individuals associated with the gold mines is substantial. It also shows that supply networks are poised to deliver large consignments without much delay, as evidenced by a lot of 41 Retay Falcon pistols that were manufactured in Turkey in 2014 and seized in the Djado region in October of the same year.³⁶⁹ UN Panels' reports and previous Small Arms Survey publications have also documented a growing presence of Turkish-manufactured blank pistols and firearms in Libya and its neighbours, as well as in other regions.³⁷⁰

Documented ammunition

The authors documented 52 different lots of ammunition that contained 2,335 rounds of six different calibres (see Table 5).³⁷¹ Most rounds are almost certainly of Libyan origin, especially the military-type calibres. The 1,881 rounds of 7.62 × 54R mm ammunition documented belong to 31 different lots of production, three of which were manufactured in 2011 and 2012 (see Table 6 and Photo 25). Transfers of the rounds produced in 2011 constitute possible violations of the February 2011 UN arms embargo on Libya; deliveries of the ones manufactured in 2012 represent flagrant violations.



Photo 25 Chinese-produced 7.62 × 54R mm ammunition with the headstamp 945_12, documented on 2 March 2017, in Dirkou, Niger. Source: Claudio Gramizzi/CAR, 2017

Table 6 Rounds of 7.62 × 54R mm ammunition produced after 2010 and documented in Dirkou, Niger, in March 2017

Headstamp	Country of manufacture	Year of manufacture	Number of documented rounds	Countries in which identical rounds have been documented
10-11	Bulgaria	2011	2	Iraq, Mali, and Syria
945_11	China	2011	1	CAR, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Niger, South Sudan, Sudan, and Syria
945_12	China	2012	1	CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, South Sudan, and Sudan

Landmines

Only one landmine was documented during the field research conducted in the Agadez region: a PRB-M3A1-type anti-tank mine manufactured in 1960, probably in Belgium.

The presence of landmines in the Chad–Niger–Libya triangle has long been of concern to local communities and state authorities (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 40–41).³⁷² Niger invested considerable resources in a programme designed to buy back landmines used by the rebel movements in the 1990s and early 2000s. By 2010,

tens of thousands of mines³⁷³ had been collected and more than 1,800 anti-personnel mines had been destroyed (Monitor, 2009). As recognized by Niamey, however, the demining programme unintentionally encouraged Tubu ex-rebels and civilians to acquire mines from stockpiles (or open-air minefields), particularly in Chad's Tibesti region, to sell them to the Nigerien authorities.³⁷⁴

From 2010 to 2013, while the Nigerien disarmament authority³⁷⁵ and the UN Development Programme were jointly implementing the demining programme in Aïr, about 2,150 landmines (anti-personnel and anti-tank) were located and neutralized. Between 2014 and 2016, the programme neutralized an additional 1,075 mines in the Kowar region (Mine Action Review, 2016). As it had before, the programme temporarily created an informal market for illicit landmines, yet because these items did not meet the personal security needs associated with the gold rush, the influx of Libyan landmines appears to have been limited—despite the turmoil in Libya. Nigerien government data confirms that trafficking in landmines was minimal: between 2012 and 2015, authorities seized only three anti-tank landmines.³⁷⁶ ●



The deteriorating situation in Libya has drawn some attention to its southern borderlands, albeit with a nearly exclusive focus on security and migration—two complex issues that are often conflated or otherwise distorted in political rhetoric and media coverage.”

Conclusion

Libya's southern borderlands disappeared off the international radar in the 1990s, once Tripoli appeared to have given up expansionist attempts in the Sahel and terrorist activities against the West. Western players soon entrusted Qaddafi with monitoring his southern border, preventing terrorist infiltrations from southern Algeria, and managing migration flows. When the West dropped the Libyan dictator in 2011, it also relinquished the balance it had fostered in the region.

Since then, the deteriorating situation in Libya has drawn some attention to its southern borderlands, albeit with a nearly exclusive focus on security and migration—two complex issues that are often conflated or otherwise distorted in political rhetoric and media coverage. Such misrepresentations insinuate that migrant smugglers facilitate Boko Haram movements; that gold prospectors are jihadis, arms dealers, or drug traffickers; that Darfur rebels are migrant smugglers; and that Chadian rebels are jihadis and human traffickers (Galtier, 2015; UNSC, 2017c, p. 37). Four recent events showcased the latter form of vilification in particular: first, the French government used its anti-terrorist legislation to sanction two main Chadian rebel leaders (Tubiana and Debos, 2017, p. 18); second, the Chadian government launched a criminal investigation into terrorist activities in response to the August 2018 rebel attack on Kouri Bougoudi (Corey-Boulet, 2018; *Jeune Afrique*, 2018); three, after the subsequent October ANT attack against the Miski Self-Defence Committee, then Interior Minister Ahmat Bachir accused the Tubu of not only being ‘mercenaries, terrorists, drug traffickers, rebels and highwaymen’ but also ‘slavers perched on the mountains like monkeys’, who are ‘violating the international convention on trafficking of human beings’. The Minister also claimed to have liberated ‘more than one thousand people enslaved by the wild slavers in Tibesti’, thus weaponizing, in a timely fashion, international concerns about human trafficking and slavery in the region (*Al Wihda*, 2018c); four, in early December, the government used its anti-terrorist legislation to accuse the media reporting on the war in Tibesti of promoting terrorism and to discourage further coverage (*Al Wihda*, 2018d).

Khartoum, N’Djaména, and Niamey have employed such discourse with an eye to securing international backing for their own policies—ones designed to enhance control over Saharan cross-border communities and to minimize the strength or likelihood of insurgencies. Describing rebels as mercenaries, bandits, traffickers, and terrorists is an easy way to justify military responses to them while continuing to disregard local constituencies’ deep-seated grievances vis-à-vis their governments.

Representatives of those very communities have also fed the confusion, describing rival groups as mercenaries, traffickers, Islamists, and terrorists in order to obtain foreign support. In southern Libya, the weaponization of confusion among the Tubu and the Tuareg has hampered their ability to address shared concerns.

Research in the region has found scant evidence to support repeated allegations that southern Libya is a hub for jihadist groups, or that cross-border smuggling communities host and transport jihadis. Reports that IS fighters are operating in southern Libya and that they have links to Boko Haram through smuggling networks are similarly based on limited information.

It is in this context that Saharan communities informed the West that they were ready to help tackle the jihadist presence, armed insurgencies, and migrant smuggling. These communities suffer from deep internal divisions, however, and belligerents in northern Libya are exacerbating this fragmentation by jockeying for control of the southern borderlands and their economic assets. Given this discord, community representatives, local militias, and war chiefs are highly unlikely to be able to convince significant segments of their respective communities to abandon hitherto lucrative activities, such as migrant smuggling.

Divisions aside, the communities will not give up their livelihoods without compensation—both economic, in the form of local development, and political, in the form of international recognition. In Libya and elsewhere, such incentives may trigger further conflicts, particularly between the communities and the pretenders to government office, unless swift, tangible progress is made in state building. In Chad and Niger, officials have tried to benefit from Europe's desperate efforts to enhance security and block migration, but they also worry that such cooperation could further alienate communities that have long been distrustful of their governments. Some fear, for instance, that growing Tubu claims to underground resources such as gold and oil in the three countries they inhabit could give rise to a secessionist movement, which might subsequently spread to other regions, such as southern Chad.³⁷⁷

Indications that Italy and other European states may be ready to work with southern Libyan militias to curb migration flows are setting a dangerous precedent. In addition to empowering abusive armed forces, European policies on migration in Libya, but also in Niger and Sudan, may lead to further conflicts among and within communities, while deepening the rift between the communities and authorities. As a result, Tubu and Tuareg smugglers may increasingly turn to even more perilous activities, including banditry, drug trafficking, rebellion, and jihadism. In Niger, tensions between the state and northern communities, as well as local criticism that the Nigerien government is serving the West's interests rather than those of the population, may render northern Niger more fertile for jihadi infiltration. Anti-migration policies would thus be endangering the very state-building efforts that international players are ostensibly supporting in Libya and its southern neighbours. ●

Endnotes

- 1 'Tubu' and 'Teda' are generally used interchangeably, except in Niger, where 'Tubu' is also used to refer to Dazagada people, who are commonly called Goran in Chad.
- 2 On the difference between 'smuggling' and 'trafficking', see HRW (2015).
- 3 Author interview with a Libyan Awlad Suleiman intellectual, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.
- 4 Author interview with a Tuareg former rebel, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 5 In the 1950s it was estimated that around 90 per cent of the Tubu lived in Chad, 5 per cent in Niger, and 5 per cent in Libya (Chapelle, 1982, p. 394). Today most Tubu—up to 50,000 people—reside in Libya. In addition, some 20,000 Tubu still inhabit the Tibesti region and fewer than 20,000 live in north-eastern Niger, one of the few parts of Niger where the population is said to be decreasing. Author interview with Kiari Kellawi Abari, Bilma traditional leader (*chef de canton*), and Mamadou Madigou, secretary-general of Bilma prefecture, Bilma, Niger, March 2017. See Murray (2017, p. 5); Stocker (2014, p. 3); Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, p. 32).
- 6 On Suq Libya's importance, see Chevrillon-Guibert (2013).
- 7 Author interviews with Tuareg ex-rebels and a Tuareg official, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 8 Author interviews with former FARS member Barka Sidimi, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with other FARS veterans, Niamey, Niger, and an undisclosed location, February and June 2017; and with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 9 Author interviews with Tubu traffickers, location withheld, March 2017 and with former rebels, Niamey, Niger, and an undisclosed location, February and June 2017.
- 10 Author interview with Barka Sidimi, Agadez, Niger, March 2017, and other FARS veterans, Niamey, Niger, and undisclosed location, February and June 2017.
- 11 Author interviews with associates of Barka Wardougou, locations withheld, February and June 2017.
- 12 Author interviews with members of Libyan Tubu militias, locations withheld, February–June 2017.
- 13 Author interviews with Barka Sidimi, Agadez, Niger; with a Tubu smuggler and a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017.

- 14 Author interviews with Barka Sidimi, Agadez, Niger; with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017.
- 15 Author interviews with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou and a Libyan Tubu, locations withheld, June 2017; with a Libyan Tubu militia leader and a Zwaya intellectual, location withheld, April 2018; and with Hassan Keley, location withheld, September 2018.
- 16 Author interview with Libyan Tubu militia members, locations withheld, February and June 2017.
- 17 Author interviews with members of Libyan Tubu militias, locations withheld, February–June 2017, and with Hassan Keley and Ali Galma, former Tubu representative in the National Transitional Council, location withheld, September 2018.
- 18 Author interviews with members of Libyan Tubu militias, locations withheld, February–March 2017.
- 19 Author interviews with Libyan Awlad Suleiman, Niamey, Niger, March 2017, and with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017.
- 20 Author interviews with Tubu militia leaders, locations withheld, April 2018.
- 21 Author interviews with Tubu representatives at peace talks, locations withheld, January–February 2017.
- 22 Author interviews with Tubu, Awlad Suleiman, and Tuareg representatives at peace talks, locations withheld, April–May 2018.
- 23 In 2011–12, the National Transitional Council recognized Barka Wardougou as the Murzuq Military Council’s leader. After his death in July 2016, the Murzuq Military Council elected Abay Wardougou as its head and Allatchi Mahadi as deputy. Author interviews with Libyan Tubu militia leaders, locations withheld, March and June 2017, and with a Chadian Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2018.
- 24 Author interviews with Libyan Tubu militia leaders, locations withheld, March and June 2017; with an intellectual, location withheld, April 2017; and with a Chadian Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2018.
- 25 Barka Wardougou also reportedly attempted to play a mediating role in Ubari, which was not popular with the Tubu forces involved. Author interviews with Tubu representatives at peace talks, locations withheld, February and June 2017; with an intellectual, location withheld, February 2017; with Ubari youths, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with a politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017.
- 26 This report uses the early 2017 black market rate of LYD 1 to USD 0.17. Taxes on trucks can reportedly reach LYD 250 (USD 43). Author interview with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017.
- 27 The Gatrun Security Committee, who also enjoy a high degree of legitimacy compared to other militias, took a similar approach to taxation. Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, location withheld, and with Tubu traders and smugglers, Dirkou, Niger, and an undisclosed location, March 2017.
- 28 Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, location withheld, March 2017; with a Tubu trafficker, location withheld, March 2017; and with an intellectual, location withheld, February 2017.

- 29 Author interview with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, location withheld, March 2017.
- 30 Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu militia leader and a Libyan Tubu trader, locations withheld, March 2017.
- 31 Author interviews with Bokori Sougui, location withheld, November 2016; with other Libyan Tubu militia leaders, locations withheld, February–June 2017; and with an international observer, location withheld, April 2017.
- 32 Author interview with a Libyan Tubu trader, location withheld, March 2017.
- 33 Author interviews with a Tubu intellectual, location withheld, February 2017; with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017; with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, January 2018; and with Hassan Keley, location withheld, September 2018.
- 34 The promotion of local, tribal interests over ideological affiliations is by no means specific to the Tubu. In Kufra and Sebha, for instance, Arab forces that had split into GNA and LNA affiliates were able to unite against the Tubu. Author interviews with Libyan Tubu militia leaders, locations withheld, June 2017 and April 2018.
- 35 Author interviews with Libyan Tubu, multiple locations, November 2016; with international observers, locations withheld, March–April 2017; and with a Chadian rebel leader, by telephone, February 2018.
- 36 Author interviews with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017; with other Libyan Tubu, location withheld, June 2017; and with Hassan Keley, location withheld, September 2018.
- 37 Author interviews with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, May 2018, and with other Libyan and Chadian Tubu, locations withheld, May 2018.
- 38 Author interviews with Libyan and Chadian Tubu, location withheld, March 2017.
- 39 Author interviews with Libyan and Chadian Tubu, Tibesti, Chad, November–December 2015, and other locations, February–June 2017, and with international observers, locations withheld, March–April 2017. Author interview with a Libyan Tubu trader, location withheld, March 2017.
- 40 Author interviews with a Tubu intellectual, location withheld, February 2017, and with an international observer, location withheld, April 2017.
- 41 Author interviews with a Tubu intellectual, location withheld, February 2017, and with an international observer, location withheld, April 2017.
- 42 Author interviews with Libyan Tubu militia members, locations withheld, February and June 2017, and with a Libyan Tubu trader, location withheld, March 2017.
- 43 Author interview with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, location withheld, March 2017.
- 44 Author interview with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, location withheld, March 2017.
- 45 Author interviews with Chadian Tubu politicians, locations withheld, January 2018.
- 46 Author interviews with Chadian Tubu politicians, locations withheld, January 2018.
- 47 Author interview with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, location withheld, September 2018.
- 48 Author interviews with various Tubu leaders, multiple locations, 2015–17, and with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, January 2018.

- 49 Forces are listed first according to their area of operations, beginning with those in the Fezzan and then the Kufra area. Within each of those two areas, they are listed according to their relative importance.
- 50 Author interviews with various Tubu leaders, multiple locations, 2015–17.
- 51 Author interviews with Libyan Tubu politicians and an international observer, locations withheld, January and June 2017.
- 52 Author interviews with French officials, Paris, 2016–17.
- 53 Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2017, and with an international observer, location withheld, March 2017.
- 54 Author interviews with a Chadian Tubu politician and an international observer, locations withheld, January 2018.
- 55 Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2017, and with an international observer, location withheld, March 2017.
- 56 Author interview with a Tubu militia leader, location withheld, June 2018.
- 57 Author interviews with a Nigerien official, location withheld, April 2017, and with an international observer, location withheld, March 2017. See Galtier (2015).
- 58 Author interview with an international observer, location withheld, March 2017. ‘Daesh’ is the Arabic equivalent of IS.
- 59 See Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, p. 21).
- 60 Author interview with a Zwaya intellectual, location withheld, April 2018.
- 61 Author interview with an international observer, location withheld, July 2017.
- 62 Not all Zwaya militias are thought to be close to Sudan. Formed during the revolution, the Kufra Revolutionaries Battalion (Katiba Thuwar Kufra), led by Adil Shueshin, reportedly has ties to both the GNA and Sudan. In contrast, the Ways of Peace Battalion (Katiba Subul al-Salam), formed in October 2015 and led by Abderrahman Hashim, is affiliated with both the Salafist Madakhila ideology and the LNA, and has no known ties to Sudan. Author interviews with an international observer, location withheld, July 2017, and with a Zwaya intellectual and Tubu militia leader, location withheld, April 2018.
- 63 Author telephone interviews with Sudanese, Chadian, and Libyan sources, August 2018.
- 64 Author interview with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017.
- 65 Author interviews with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017, and with a Darfur rebel leader and an international observer, location withheld, May 2017.
- 66 Author interviews with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017, and with a Darfur rebel leader and an international observer, location withheld, May 2017.
- 67 Author interviews with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017, and with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, May 2017.
- 68 In Libya, Darfur and Chadian Arabs are generally called ‘Mahamid’ even if they do not belong to that tribe. The Mahamid constitute one of the main Arab tribes in Darfur and Chad, as well as among the ‘janjaweed’. Musa Hilal is himself a Mahamid tribal leader.
- 69 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel leader and a Chadian rebel leader, locations withheld, November 2017.

- 70 Ad-Dush audio statement, heard by the authors.
- 71 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel leader and an international observer, locations withheld, November 2017.
- 72 Author interview with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, November 2017.
- 73 Author interview with a former RSF member, location withheld, February–March 2018.
- 74 Author interview with a Sudanese official, location withheld, June 2018.
- 75 Author interviews with a reformed jihadi, location withheld, January 2018, and with an international observer, location withheld, November 2017.
- 76 Author interview with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017.
- 77 Author interview with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017.
- 78 Author interviews with a Chadian Tubu intellectual, location withheld, February 2017; with a Libyan Tubu intellectual, location withheld, June 2017; and with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, January 2018.
- 79 Since then, the checkpoint has been controlled by armed Tubu youths from Tibesti. Gendey was dismissed in 2017 and may then have joined other disgruntled MDJT veterans in Libya. Earlier, he had reportedly fought alongside the Tubu against the Awlad Suleiman Arabs in Sebha, like other MDJT veterans and a number of traffickers. In April 2018, not long after returning to Chad, he was murdered by a relative in a family dispute. Author interviews with a Chadian rebel, location withheld, March 2017; with a Libyan Tubu trader, northern Niger, March 2017; and with a Chadian Tubu intellectual, location withheld, January 2018.
- 80 Author interview with a Tubu intellectual, location withheld, February 2017, and with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017.
- 81 Author interview with a Libyan Tubu militia member, location withheld, February 2017.
- 82 Author interview with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, January 2018.
- 83 Author interviews with Chadian Tubu intellectuals, locations withheld, January 2018.
- 84 Author telephone interview with a Chadian rebel in southern Libya, September 2018.
- 85 Author interviews with Katiba 17 leaders, location withheld, April 2018.
- 86 Author telephone interviews with Chadian Tubu leaders, August 2018.
- 87 CCMSR video seen by the authors.
- 88 Author telephone interviews with Chadian Tubu leaders, August 2018.
- 89 Photos seen by the authors.
- 90 Broadcast of government decrees on government Radio Tchad, heard by the authors.
- 91 Author interviews with Chadian Tubu, Tibesti, Chad, November–December 2015. On the Kouri Bougoudi clashes, see Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, pp. 90–92).
- 92 Author interviews with Chadian officials, N’Djaména, Chad, October 2015.
- 93 Author interviews with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, March 2017, and with a former Chadian officer, location withheld, April 2017.
- 94 Some fighters reportedly sabotaged vehicles while others deserted to join the Union of Resistance Forces (Union des forces de la résistance, UFR). Author interview with a former Chadian officer, location withheld, April 2017.

- 95 Following the incident, Abay Wardougou's unit at this market was reportedly replaced with elements of Hassan Musa Goney's Katiba 17, as well as civilian 'judges' of the Gatrun Security Committee. Author interview with a Tubu intellectual, location withheld, February 2017; with a Chadian rebel, location withheld, February 2017; with a Libyan Tubu trader, northern Niger, March 2017; with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017; and with Katiba 17 leaders, location withheld, April 2018.
- 96 Author telephone interview with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, August 2018.
- 97 Author interviews with Chadian rebels, by telephone and in undisclosed locations, March and June 2017.
- 98 Author interview with a Tubu intellectual, location withheld, February 2017.
- 99 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg civilians, traders, and traffickers, northern Niger, February–March 2017. A Tubu ANT colonel was also reportedly among bandits killed in Gatrun during fighting with the town's security committee in November 2015 (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, pp. 69–70, 130).
- 100 Author interviews with Mohamed Bazoum, interior minister of Niger, and with Barkay Yusuf, minister of relations between institutions, Niamey, Niger, February 2017, and with Barka Sidimi, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 101 According to a Nigerien Tuareg ex-rebel who went to fight in Libya on Qaddafi's side in 2011, more than 1,000 Tuareg followed the same path he did. Author interviews with Tuareg and Tubu ex-rebels, Agadez, Niger, March 2017, and with Mohamed Bazoum, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.
- 102 Author interviews with Mohamed Bazoum, Barkay Yusuf, and a Nigerien Tubu intellectual, Niamey, Niger, February 2017, and with a Tuareg ex-rebel, Agadez, Niger, March 2017. The Tubu who fought the Tuareg in Ubari were primarily Nigerien, while Chadian Tubu reportedly mobilized against the Awlad Suleiman in Sebha.
- 103 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Tubu actors, and observers, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.
- 104 Author interviews with a Tubu trader who had been a recent victim of illegal taxation, a traditional chief, and administration officials, Niamey, Bilma, and Dirkou, Niger, February–March 2017.
- 105 The inclusion of Tuareg has extended beyond former rebels, to individuals who had not participated in the insurgencies, such as Prime Minister Brigi Rafini.
- 106 Author interviews with a Tubu trader who had been a recent victim of illegal taxation, a traditional chief, and administration officials, Niamey, Bilma, and Dirkou, Niger, February–March 2017.
- 107 Author interviews with Mohamed Bazoum, Niamey, Niger; with a Nigerien Tubu politician, location withheld, February 2017; and with an intellectual, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 108 Author interviews with the sultan of Aïr and with a Tuareg ex-rebel, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 109 Author interviews with international observers, Niamey, Niger, and an undisclosed location, April 2018.
- 110 Author interview with Mohamed Bazoum, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.

- 111 Author interview with a government official, Niamey, Niger, and with a Libyan Tubu militia member, location withheld, February 2017.
- 112 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, officers, and politicians, Niamey and northern Niger, February–March 2017, and with Libyan Tubu militia leaders and members, locations withheld, February–March 2017.
- 113 Barka Wardougou had allegedly proposed Wardaga Goukouni as a possible rebel leader. Author interviews with Nigerien Tubu intellectuals, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.
- 114 Author observations in Dirkou, Niger, March 2017. Author interviews with Achur Mohamed, Dirkou, March 2017; with Barka Sidimi, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; and with Libyan Tubu militia members, locations withheld, February–March 2017.
- 115 Chadian Tubu repeatedly clashed with gold miners, in particular those from the Beri community, whom they accused of invading Tubu territory and exploiting gold on behalf of the Chadian government. For more information on the conflict with gold miners, see Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, s. V).
- 116 Author interviews with Barkay Yusuf and another Nigerien official, Niamey, Niger, February 2017; with Barka Sidimi, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; and with Tubu intellectuals and politicians, Niamey and Dirkou, Niger, February–March 2017.
- 117 Author interviews with a Tubu politician and a traditional leader, locations withheld, March 2017.
- 118 Author interview with a Nigerien politician, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.
- 119 Author interviews with Mohamed Bazoum and a Nigerien politician, Niamey, Niger, February 2017, and with a member of Tcheke’s group, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 120 Author interview with a member of Tcheke’s group, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 121 Author interviews with a Tubu politician and a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 122 Author interviews with a Nigerien who fought for Qaddafi, Agadez, Niger, March 2017, and with a Darfur rebel, location withheld, January 2018.
- 123 Author interviews with Darfur rebels and a Sudanese official, locations withheld, April 2017.
- 124 Author interviews with Chadian and Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, January 2018. Libyan document seen by the authors.
- 125 Author interview with a Chadian ex-mercenary, location withheld, March 2018.
- 126 Under international humanitarian law, a mercenary is defined as a person who ‘is motivated to take part in [...] hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain’ and ‘is neither a national of a Party to the conflict nor a resident of territory controlled by a Party to the conflict’ (ICRC, 1977, art. 47(2)).
- 127 Author interviews with Chadian ex-mercenaries in Libya and with a Darfur ex-rebel, locations withheld, February–March 2018.
- 128 Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu intellectual, location withheld, June 2017, and with Libyan Tubu militia leaders, locations withheld, February–March 2017.
- 129 Author interview with Mahamat Mahadi, location withheld, March 2016.
- 130 Author telephone interview with a Chadian rebel leader, June 2017.

- 131 Author interviews with Mahamat Bulmay, by telephone, July 2017, and with another Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, November 2017.
- 132 Author interviews with Chadian rebel leaders, by telephone and in undisclosed locations, March and June 2017.
- 133 The Chadian rebels had probably presented themselves as ‘mercenaries’ rather than ‘rebels’ in order to secure Haftar’s support. Author interviews with Mahamat Bulmay, by telephone, July 2017, and with another Chadian rebel leader, locations withheld, February 2018.
- 134 Author interview with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, November 2017, and with a UFDD member, location withheld, April 2018.
- 135 Author telephone interviews with Chadian rebel leaders, January–February 2018.
- 136 Author telephone interview with Mahamat Mahadi, July 2017.
- 137 Author interviews with a Chadian rebel leader, by telephone and in an undisclosed location, March and June 2017.
- 138 Author interviews with Mahamat Bulmay and another Chadian rebel leader, by telephone, June–July 2017, and with a Libyan Tubu intellectual, location withheld, June 2017.
- 139 Author telephone interview with a Chadian rebel leader, February 2018.
- 140 Author telephone interviews with Mahamat Bulmay and another Chadian rebel leader, June–July 2017.
- 141 Author telephone interview with Mahamat Mahadi, July 2017.
- 142 Author telephone interviews with Mahamat Mahadi and a former UFDD member, August 2018.
- 143 Author interview with a UFDD member, location withheld, April 2018.
- 144 Author interviews with a Chadian rebel, location withheld, March 2017, and with a Libyan Tubu trader, northern Niger, March 2017.
- 145 Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu, location withheld, June 2017, and with Chadian rebel leaders, locations withheld, January 2018.
- 146 Author interviews with Chadian rebels, by telephone and in undisclosed locations, March 2017 and January 2018.
- 147 Videos seen by the authors; author telephone interview with a participant in the meeting during which the FNDJT was formed, in Murzuq, August 2018. On Tollimi, see Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, p. 147).
- 148 Author telephone interview with Abbakar Tollimi, September 2018.
- 149 Author interviews with Chadian Tubu politicians and a Chadian rebel leader, locations withheld, January 2018. For details on the role of wangada, see Note 230.
- 150 Author interviews with a gold miner, Agadez, Niger, March 2017, and with Darfur and Chadian rebel leaders, locations withheld, May 2017.
- 151 Author interviews with Chadian rebels, by telephone and in undisclosed locations, March 2017 and January 2018, and with a Libyan Tubu trader, northern Niger, March 2017.
- 152 Author interviews with Chadian rebels, location withheld, April 2018.
- 153 Author interviews with Sudanese officials, locations withheld, April 2017.

- 154 LNA documents seen by the authors.
- 155 See also RFI (2017).
- 156 Author interview with an international observer, location withheld, July 2017.
- 157 Video seen by the authors.
- 158 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel, location withheld, January 2017, and with Libyan Tubu intellectuals, locations withheld, February and June 2017.
- 159 Author interviews with a former rebel leader from Darfur and former mercenaries in Libya, locations withheld, February–March 2018.
- 160 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel, location withheld, January 2017, and with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017.
- 161 Author interviews with Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, January and May 2017, and with a Sudanese observer, location withheld, September 2017.
- 162 Author interview with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017.
- 163 Author interviews with JEM and Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) veterans, Am Djeris, Chad, January 2016. See also Tubiana (2016).
- 164 CAR and South Sudan have also drawn combatants, including Darfur Beri rebels, Chadian rebels, and Arab ‘janjaweed’ militias, be they Chadian or Sudanese (ICG, 2015, pp. 13–19; Tubiana, 2017a, pp. 10–12).
- 165 Author interviews with LJM veterans, Am Djeris, Chad, January 2016, and Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, November 2017 and January 2018.
- 166 Author interview with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, November 2017.
- 167 Author interviews with a Sudanese official and an international observer, locations withheld, November–December 2017.
- 168 Author interviews with Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, January and April 2017, and with a Libyan Tubu trader, northern Niger, March 2017. See UNSC (2017c, p. 43).
- 169 Author interview with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017.
- 170 Author interview with Darfur rebels, locations withheld, January and May 2017, and with a Chadian rebel leader, by telephone, December 2017.
- 171 This information is partly substantiated by a photo seen by the authors.
- 172 Confidential document of the Sudanese government, seen by the authors.
- 173 Author interviews with Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, May 2017–January 2018.
- 174 Author interview with a Chadian rebel, location withheld, January 2018.
- 175 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, July 2017, and with Chadian rebels, locations withheld, May 2017 and January 2018.
- 176 Relations between Chad and Qatar were restored in February 2018.
- 177 Author interviews with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017, and with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, May 2017.
- 178 Author telephone interview with a Chadian rebel leader, December 2017.
- 179 Author interview with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017.

- 180 Author interviews with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017; with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, May 2017; and with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, July 2017.
- 181 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, May 2017, and with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, July 2017.
- 182 Author interviews with Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, January and May 2017; with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017; and with a Chadian rebel leader, by telephone, February 2018.
- 183 Author interview with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017.
- 184 Author observations at peace talks in Doha, 2010–11.
- 185 Author interview with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, May 2017.
- 186 Author interviews with Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, January–June 2017, and with Tubu intellectuals, location withheld, April 2018.
- 187 Author interviews with Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, January–June 2017, and with Tubu intellectuals, locations withheld, April 2018. It is possible that the SLA–MM members were fighting alongside other Darfur groups, and that UFR fighters were among the Chadian combatants.
- 188 Author interviews with Darfur rebel leaders, locations withheld, January and June 2017.
- 189 Author interview with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, January 2018.
- 190 Author interview with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, June 2018.
- 191 Author interview with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, January 2018.
- 192 Daud Ali was handed over to Chad in early 2018. Author interview with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, June 2018.
- 193 Author interviews with an SLA–MM leader, location withheld, December 2017, and with a UFR leader, by telephone, December 2017.
- 194 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel leader and an international observer, location withheld, June 2018.
- 195 Author telephone interview with a Chadian ex-rebel, September 2018.
- 196 Author interviews with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, January 2018, and with an international observer, location withheld, November 2017.
- 197 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, January 2017, and with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, November 2017.
- 198 Author interviews with a Chadian official and a Darfur rebel leader, locations withheld, November–December 2017.
- 199 Author interviews with a Chadian official, a Darfur rebel leader, and a Chadian rebel leader, locations withheld, November–December 2017.
- 200 For further information, see Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, pp. 75–102).
- 201 Author interviews with a regional director of mining, Agadez, Niger, February 2017; with the secretary-general of Bilma prefecture, Djado mayor Sidi Abba Lawal, and deputy mayor Abari Kader, Bilma, March 2017; with gold miners, Fachi, Niger, March 2017; and with a Nigerian Tubu intellectual, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.

- 202 Immediately after the initial rush, Algerian ground and aerial forces penetrated into Niger and searched the gold miners. Author interview with Saleh Ibrahim aka ‘Boss’, location withheld, March 2017. See Pellerin (2017, p. 8).
- 203 See p. 93.
- 204 Author interviews with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; with a gold miner, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 205 Author interview with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017.
- 206 UFDD rebels were also among the miners. Author interviews with a Darfur rebel, location withheld, January 2017; with a Chadian rebel, location withheld, March 2017; with a Beri gold miner, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with the Djado mayor, Bilma, Niger, March 2017.
- 207 Author interviews with a Darfur rebel, location withheld, January 2017, and with Beri gold miners, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017. In Chad, Libya, and Niger, ‘bosses’ typically handle the organization of gold mining, including the provision of transport, equipment, food, and water for prospectors. The bosses tend to benefit from easier access to the mines, as most are either Tubu or soldiers (Beri officers in particular). For more information, see Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, s. V).
- 208 Observers noted the presence of ANT cars, vehicles with official Chadian plates, and service weapons. Author interview with the Djado mayor, Bilma, Niger, March 2017; with other Nigerien officials, Niamey and Agadez, Niger, February–March 2017; with a Tubu traditional leader, location withheld, March 2017; with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with a gold miner, Puits Espoir, Niger, February 2017; and with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, March 2017. See Pellerin (2017, p. 4).
- 209 Author interviews with a Nigerien official, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; with Tubu and Beri gold miners, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, March 2017.
- 210 Author interviews with Nigerien officials and officers, Agadez, Bilma, and Niamey, Niger, February–March 2017; with a Nigerien Tubu intellectual, Niamey, February 2017; and with Beri gold miners expelled from Djado, northern Chad and northern Niger, 2015–17.
- 211 Author interviews with Darfur rebels, locations withheld, January and April 2017; with a Chadian rebel, location withheld, March 2017; with a mining director, Agadez, Niger, February 2017; with the Djado mayor and deputy mayor, Bilma, March 2017; and with gold miners, Fachi, Niger, and undisclosed locations, January–March 2017.
- 212 Author interview with a Nigerien officer, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 213 Author interview with a Nigerien officer, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 214 Author interviews with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017, and with a Tubu intellectual and a Tuareg trafficker, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 215 Author interviews with Tubu gold miners, smugglers, and traffickers, Dirkou, Niger, and an undisclosed location, March 2017.
- 216 Author interview with a Nigerien official, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.
- 217 Figures varied from 30,000 immediately after the discovery in April 2014 to 50,000–60,000 in 2016, with a peak of 100,000 in 2014–15. Author interviews with mining officials, Agadez, Niger, February 2017; with the Djado mayor and deputy mayor, Bilma, Niger, March 2017;

- with other security and mining officials, Niamey, Niger, February 2017; and with a gold miner, Puits Espoir, Niger, February 2017.
- 218 Author interviews with the Djado mayor, March 2017, and with gold miners, Dirkou, Fachi, and Puits Espoir, Niger, February–March 2017.
- 219 Author interview with a mining director, the Bilma prefect and secretary-general, the Djado mayor and deputy mayor, and other officials, Agadez and Bilma, Niger, February–March 2017, and with a gold miner, Puits Espoir, Niger, February 2017.
- 220 Author interviews with Mohamed Bazoum, Niamey, Niger, February 2017; with a mining director, Agadez, Niger, February 2017; and with other officials, Niamey and Agadez, February–March 2017.
- 221 Author interviews with a mining director, Agadez, Niger, February 2017; with the Djado mayor and deputy mayor, Bilma, Niger, March 2017; and with a gold miner, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 222 Author interviews with Nigerien Tubu, location withheld, April 2018.
- 223 Author interviews with a Nigerien official, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; and with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, March 2017.
- 224 Author interview with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017.
- 225 Author interviews with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017, and with a gold miner, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 226 Author interview with a gold miner, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 227 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Niamey, Niger, and an undisclosed location, February–March 2017, and with a Tuareg ex-rebel, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 228 Author interviews with a Tubu intellectual, Niamey, Niger, February 2017, and with a Tubu businessman, location withheld, March 2017.
- 229 Author interview with a Nigerien official, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.
- 230 Traditionally, wangada were men in charge of protecting natural resources. They were often chosen by landowners among their sisters' sons. Since the relation between maternal uncles and their *digishi* (uterine nephews) is particularly important among communities in northern Chad, the selection process reinforced relations between land-owning and landless clans. Unlike the traditional wangada, the new ones are in charge of the gold fields and are often former MDJT rebels. Author interviews with Chadian Tubu politicians, location withheld, January 2018.
- 231 Author interview with a Chadian Tubu gold miner, location withheld, February 2017, and with Chadian Tubu politicians, location withheld, January 2018.
- 232 Author interviews with Chadian Tubu politicians, location withheld, January 2018.
- 233 Author interview with a Chadian Tubu intellectual, location withheld, January 2018.
- 234 Author interview with a Darfur rebel leader, N'Djaména, Chad, May 2017.
- 235 Author interviews with a Beri gold miner, by telephone, May–June 2017; with a Darfur rebel leader, N'Djaména, Chad, May 2017; and with a Chadian Tubu intellectual, location withheld, January 2018.
- 236 Author interviews with a Beri gold miner, by telephone, May–June 2017, and with a Chadian Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2018.

- 237 Author interviews with a Beri gold miner, by telephone, December 2017, and with Chadian Tubu politicians, location withheld, January 2018.
- 238 Author interviews with Youssouf Abassalah, N'Djaména, January 2018, and with a Chadian Tubu intellectual, location withheld, January 2018.
- 239 Author interviews with mining minister Youssouf Abassalah, N'Djaména, Chad, January 2018; with a Chadian Tubu intellectual, location withheld, January 2018; and with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, November 2017.
- 240 Author interviews with Youssouf Abassalah, N'Djaména, Chad, and with Chadian Tubu politicians, locations withheld, January 2018.
- 241 Author interview with a Chadian Tubu intellectual, location withheld, January 2018.
- 242 Author interviews with Youssouf Abassalah, N'Djaména, Chad, and with Chadian Tubu politicians, locations withheld, January 2018.
- 243 Author interviews with Chadian Tubu intellectuals, location withheld, January 2018.
- 244 Author interviews with Chadian Tubu intellectuals and a Chadian rebel leader, locations withheld, January 2018.
- 245 Author interview with an MDJT veteran, Tibesti, Chad, December 2015.
- 246 Author interview with a Beri ANT soldier who served in Kouri Bougoudi and Miski, location withheld, March 2018.
- 247 Author interviews with Tubu intellectuals, locations withheld, September 2018.
- 248 Photos seen by the authors; author interviews with Tubu intellectuals and a Chadian ex-rebel, locations withheld, September 2018.
- 249 On Kellā Goukouni, see Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, p. 93).
- 250 See Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, p. 43).
- 251 On past destabilization attempts, see Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, pp. 59–66).
- 252 Author interview with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 253 For more information, see Chevrillon-Guibert (2013).
- 254 Author interviews with Tubu traders, smugglers, and traffickers, Dirkou, Niger, and an undisclosed location, March 2017.
- 255 Author interviews with Tubu traffickers, locations withheld, March 2017, and a Tuareg smuggler, Agadez, Niger, March 2017. On Dirkou, see Brachet (2011).
- 256 Tuareg drivers from Niger also smuggled cigarettes, either to Libya through the Salvador Pass or to Algeria through Assamaka. Author interviews with Tuareg and Tubu traffickers, Agadez, Niger, and an undisclosed location, March 2017, and with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017.
- 257 Author interviews with Tubu traffickers, location withheld, March 2017; with a Tuareg migrant smuggler (and former Nigerien soldier) and a Tubu migrant smuggler, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; and with an associate of Barka and Abay Wardougou, location withheld, June 2017.
- 258 Author interviews with Tubu intermediaries in the cigarette smuggling network, Agadez, Niger, and an undisclosed location, March 2017; with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, March 2017; and with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017.

- 259 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg traffickers, Agadez, Niger, and undisclosed locations, March 2017, and with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 260 Author interviews with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; with other MNJ veterans, Agadez, March 2017; with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with a Nigerien official, Bilma, Niger, March 2017.
- 261 See p. 93.
- 262 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg smugglers, Dirkou and Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 263 Author interviews with Tuareg migrant smugglers, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 264 Author interviews with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with a Tuareg migrant smuggler, Agadez, March 2017; and with a Nigerien official, Bilma, Niger, March 2017.
- 265 Author interviews with Tubu smugglers, Dirkou and Agadez, Niger, March 2017, and with Nigerien officials, Bilma and Agadez, March 2017.
- 266 Author interview with a Nigerien officer, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 267 Author interview with a car smuggler, location withheld, March 2018.
- 268 Author interviews with a Liberian migrant, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with a Darfur refugee, Paris, March 2017; with a Tuareg migrant smuggler, Agadez, March 2017; with a Tubu coaxer, Agadez, March 2017; and with an official of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Agadez, March 2017.
- 269 Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, location withheld, March 2017; with a Tubu smuggler, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; and with a Libyan Tubu trader, northern Niger, March 2017.
- 270 The Reconciliation Agreement between the Two Tribes of Tebu and Awlad Suleiman was signed in Rome on 29 March 2017.
- 271 Author interview with a Libyan Tubu participant in the Rome-based negotiations, location withheld, June 2017.
- 272 Author interviews with a Tubu militia leader, location withheld, November 2016; a Libyan Tubu trader, northern Niger, February 2017; and with a Libyan Tubu intellectual, location withheld, June 2017.
- 273 Author interviews with a Tubu militia leader, location withheld, November 2016; with a Libyan Tubu trader, northern Niger, February 2017; and with a Chadian Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2018.
- 274 Author interview with a Chadian Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2018.
- 275 Author interview with an international observer, location withheld, November 2017.
- 276 Author interview with an EU official, location withheld, May 2018.
- 277 See also UNSC (2017c, pp. 37–38).
- 278 Author interview with a Darfur asylum seeker, Paris, January 2018.
- 279 Sudan armed some of the Zwaya militias in 2011–12. Author interviews with a Libyan Tubu and an international observer, locations withheld, June–July 2017.
- 280 Author interviews with Mohamed Anacko, president of the Agadez regional council, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; and with other Tuareg and Tubu ex-rebels, Agadez, March 2017.

- 281 Author interviews with Mohamed Anacko, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; with Tuareg migrant smugglers, Agadez, and an undisclosed location, March 2017; and with a Tubu coaxer, Agadez, March 2017.
- 282 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg migrant smugglers, Agadez and Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, March 2017; and with Liberian and Gambian migrants, Agadez, March 2017.
- 283 Author interviews with a Tuareg migrant smuggler, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with a Tubu coaxer, Agadez, March 2017; and with an IOM official, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 284 Author interview with Tubu smugglers, northern Niger, March 2017.
- 285 Government officials provide diverse justifications regarding the legality of the new law and subsequent arrests, including a 2008 anti-immigration agreement between Niger and Qaddafi's Libya, which they argue remains in effect. They also claim that migrant smugglers were not officially registered as transport companies, unlike Rimbo, Niger's main bus company. The 2015 law does not prevent bus companies, whose owners are said to be close to power, from transporting migrants from the south to Agadez. Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Agadez, Niger, and undisclosed locations, March–April 2017, and with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 286 'Coaxer' (sometimes written 'coxeur') is the regional term for all intermediaries on the human-smuggling routes across West Africa. Author interviews with a Tubu migrant smuggler who had just been released from prison, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017, and with other Tubu and Tuareg smugglers, Dirkou and Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 287 Author interview with a government official, Niamey, Niger, April 2018.
- 288 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg migrant smugglers, Agadez and Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; with a Nigerien officer, Dirkou, March 2017; and with an IOM official, Dirkou, March 2017.
- 289 Author interviews with West African migrants, France, June–August 2018.
- 290 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg smugglers, Agadez and Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with a Gambian migrant who had been attacked, Agadez, March 2017; and with IOM officials, Agadez and Dirkou, March 2017.
- 291 Author interview with Mohamed Anacko, Dakar, Senegal, November 2017.
- 292 Author interviews with Tuareg and Tubu migrant smugglers, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; with Liberian and Gambian migrants, Agadez, March 2017; and with an IOM official, Agadez, March 2017. On fees, see also UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting (2017, p. 85).
- 293 Author interview with Tubu and Tuareg smugglers, Agadez and Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, March 2017; and with a Liberian migrant, Agadez, March 2017.
- 294 Author interview with Mohamed Anacko, Agadez, March 2017.
- 295 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg migrant smugglers, and with a former Imouraren employee who became a gold miner, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 296 Some expelled gold miners may have become migrants themselves. Other migrants were reportedly looking for gold in Djado in order to fund their passage to Europe. Author interviews

- with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with Beri gold miners, Dirkou, and an undisclosed location, January and March 2017; and a Nigerien official, Niamey, Niger, February 2017.
- 297 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg smugglers, Dirkou and Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, March 2017; and with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017.
- 298 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, location withheld, November 2017, and with a Chadian Tubu intellectual, location withheld, January 2018.
- 299 Author interview with a Chadian Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2018.
- 300 Author interviews with Barka Sidimi and other members of the elders' committee, Agadez, Niger, February–March 2017.
- 301 Author interviews with Mohamed Anacko, Dakar, Senegal, November 2017, and with Chadian Tubu politicians, location withheld, January 2018.
- 302 Author interview with a Libyan Tubu militia leader, location withheld, June 2017.
- 303 Author interviews with a Tubu coxer, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with a Tubu official, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with an IOM official, Agadez, March 2017.
- 304 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Niamey, Niger, April 2018.
- 305 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Niamey, Niger, February 2017, and with Tuareg and Tubu migrant smugglers, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 306 Author interview with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 307 Author interviews with Tuareg and Tubu migrant smugglers, and with a drug trafficker, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 308 Author interviews with a Chadian Dazagada trafficker, northern Chad, November 2015, and with a Nigerien official, location withheld, November 2017.
- 309 Author interviews with Tubu and Tuareg traffickers, Agadez, Niger, and undisclosed locations, March 2017; with Tuareg and Tubu migrant smugglers, Agadez, March 2017; and with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017.
- 310 Author interviews with a Tubu cigarette trafficker, location withheld, March 2017; with a Tuareg migrant smuggler, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; and with a Tubu traditional leader, location withheld, March 2017.
- 311 Author interviews with Nigerien officials and a former migrant smuggler, Niamey, Niger, and an undisclosed location, April 2018.
- 312 Author interview with a Tuareg drug trafficker, location withheld, March 2017.
- 313 Author interviews with a Sudanese official, location withheld, April 2017; with a Darfur rebel leader, location withheld, May 2017; and with an international observer, location withheld, May 2017.
- 314 Author interview with international observers, undisclosed locations, 2015–17, and with a Tuareg migrant smuggler, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 315 Gendey was among the last MDJT rebels to surrender in 2010. A negotiator of the demobilizing process claimed that he was 'the most difficult to convince'. Author interview with a Chadian official involved in the process, Tibesti, Chad, November 2015. See also p. 43.

- 316 Author interview with a former Chadian rebel who once escorted drug traffickers, location withheld, April 2018.
- 317 See p. 66. Allegations of financial links between traffickers and Nigerien government officials at all levels are common. Author interviews with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with a Tubu traditional leader, location withheld, March 2017; with Tuareg and Tubu smugglers, Agadez and Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with a Tubu cigarette trafficker, location withheld, March 2017; and with an international observer, location withheld, January 2017.
- 318 Author interviews with a Tubu traditional leader, location withheld, March 2017; with Tubu and Tuareg traffickers, locations withheld, March 2017; and with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017.
- 319 Author interviews with former Chadian rebels who escorted drug traffickers, locations withheld, April 2018.
- 320 See p. 93.
- 321 Author interviews with a Nigerien official, Bilma, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss and other MNJ veterans, Agadez, Niger, and undisclosed locations, March 2017; and with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017. In the words of Saleh Boss: 'If traffickers see you're a danger, they approach you to neutralize you. It's what happened with the MNJ. The MNJ began to [stage attacks], so traffickers contacted the MNJ.'
- 322 Author interview with a Tuareg drug trafficker, location withheld, March 2017, and with former rebels, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 323 Author interviews with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; with another MNJ veteran, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; and with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, March 2017. FARS veteran Barka Sidimi reportedly attacked drug traffickers as early 2007–09, when the MNJ was active. Since he took up arms again in 2017, he has reportedly fought against, or taxed, traffickers. Author interviews with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, March 2017; with a Chadian rebel leader, location withheld, November 2017; and with a Chadian Tubu politician, location withheld, January 2018.
- 324 Author interviews with former Chadian rebels who escorted drug traffickers, locations withheld, April 2018.
- 325 Author interview with a Tuareg drug trafficker, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; and with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 326 Author interviews with former Chadian rebels who escorted drug traffickers, locations withheld, April 2018.
- 327 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Agadez, Niger, March 2017.
- 328 Author interviews with a Tubu traditional leader, location withheld, March 2017; with Tubu cigarette traffickers, Agadez, Niger, and an undisclosed location, March 2017; with Tuareg and Tubu smugglers, Agadez, March 2017; with Tuareg road bandits, Agadez, March 2017; and with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017.
- 329 Author interview with a Tuareg drug trafficker who was the victim of an attack, Agadez, Niger, March 2017; with Saleh Boss, location withheld, March 2017; and with a Tubu smuggler, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017. In 2012, the Malian Tuareg National Movement of Liberation of

- Azawad (Mouvement national de libération de l’Azawad, MNLA) also attacked drug traffickers in Niger, alongside Nigerien Tuareg road bandits. Author interview with a Nigerien Tuareg road bandit who was involved in an attack, Agadez, March 2017.
- 330 Author interviews with Tubu smugglers, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017.
- 331 See, for example, Conflict Armament Research (2016); de Tessières (2017; 2018); Lacher (2014); Murray (2017); Pellerin (2017); Spleeters (2013); Tubiana (2011b; 2017a); Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017).
- 332 For additional analysis of this sample—specifically, the data on ammunition seized in northern Niger—see de Tessières (2017, pp. 77–97).
- 333 Nigerien officials cited the gold rush as a major reason for the growing local demand for firearms, noting that many miners from Chad, Libya, and Sudan arrived in Djado and Tchibarakaten with weapons procured elsewhere. Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Agadez, Bilma, Dirkou, and Niamey, Niger, January–March 2017. Nigerien statistics on weapons and ammunition seized in 2012–15 corroborate these statements (documents viewed by the authors).
- 334 This methodological approach was applied in view of the fact that military-type weapons are generally procured in large volumes (several hundreds of items) and that each transfer from the manufacturer to the first consignee involves weapons with serial numbers that are sequential or quasi-sequential. It follows that any two identical weapons—ones of the same type and model produced by the same manufacturer—that bear close serial numbers, even if they are documented in different countries, were originally part of a unique transfer to a single first authorized importer and that they were diverted—simultaneously or not—from the same state-controlled stockpile. This approach generates less relevant results when applied to the ammunition inspected for this report, all of which was documented as spare rounds. In fact, the headstamps of small-calibre ammunition generally reveal only the manufacturing factory and the year of manufacture. For industrial manufacturers, annual production runs typically comprise several million identical rounds, all of which bear the same headstamp markings. Since these items tend to be exported to dozens of different consignees, it is not possible to know whether two identical rounds that were documented in two different locations originated in the same stockpile—unless they come with their packaging units, on which batch numbers and additional information about the first transfer are generally marked. See Note 371.
- 335 Correspondence with Conflict Armament Research, dated 20 October 2017.
- 336 Correspondence with Conflict Armament Research, dated 28 July 2017.
- 337 Correspondence with Conflict Armament Research, dated 23 October 2017.
- 338 Correspondence with Conflict Armament Research, dated 11 August 2017. On 11 August 2017, the Government of Switzerland responded to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 27 June 2017, stating that it had consulted with the State Secretariat of Economic Affairs and the Swiss company Schweizerische Industrie Gesellschaft (SIG), but that neither could provide information on the item being traced.
- 339 Correspondence with Conflict Armament Research, dated 16 December 2017.
- 340 Correspondence with Conflict Armament Research, dated 20 and 21 November 2017. On 20 November 2017, Aksa Arms responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by Conflict

Armament Research on 18 October 2017. This response confirms that Aksa Arms did not export the items being traced: Sentetien F90 pistols with serial numbers 16-03351 and 16-03356 subject to Conflict Armament Research's trace requests.

- 341 Correspondence with Conflict Armament Research, dated 27 November 2017. On 27 November 2017, Hedef Arms responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 18 October 2017. This response confirms that Hedef Arms did not manufacture the item being traced: Mod 29 pistols with serial numbers 13-039491, 13-2959, 13-3232, and 2013 T 8080 subject to Conflict Armament Research's trace requests. Hedef Arms informed Conflict Armament Research that the company and its brands, including Armyserra, are not licensed to produce pistols. Hedef Arms further stated that the company was not aware of any other companies licensed to trade under the Armyserra brand.
- 342 The corresponding serial numbers are XXXX YY 02174 (where XXXX stands for the year of manufacture and YY for the Polish manufacturer's standard two-letter code, both of which were obliterated and are illegible); 1976 KP 05747; 1976 KP 20027; 1977 CK 20921; 1977 PP 12181; 1977 SS 10267; 1978 GL 04006; 1978 LK 19757; 1978 MG 09613; and 1978 MG 20475. Overall, Conflict Armament Research has documented 29 identical rifles—with serial numbers ranging from 1976 HT 12175 to 1978 MO 21441—in the region, in Burkina Faso, CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Mali, and Niger. According to the Polish authorities, Kbk AKMS rifles with Arabic markings on the rear sights were manufactured in the late 1970s for exports to Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen. See Conflict Armament Research (2016, pp. 12–14). For data and pictures of the rifle documented in Dirkou in March 2017, see Conflict Armament Research (n.d.).
- 343 The corresponding serial numbers are 051454551; 051476454; 071375948; 071488933; and 081371419. The assault rifles were probably manufactured in 2005, 2007, and 2008. According to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, AK 103-2 rifles bearing the serial numbers 050457971 and 051463378 were authorized for export to Libya in 2005 and 2008 (UNSC, 2014, para. 118). Two of the rifles (with the serial numbers 051454551 and 051476454) documented in Bilma and Dirkou were probably part of the same consignments. The 2017 Panel's report contains additional references to AK 103-2 rifles with serial numbers ranging from 051453701 to 071448896; these originated in Libya and were seized by Tunisian authorities (UNSC, 2017b, annex 44). Finally, the Libyan origin of these rifles also seems confirmed by the fact that Conflict Armament Research documented another AK 103-2 assault rifle (serial number 081428478) under the custody of the Misratan Third Force in Libya in 2015. Conflict Armament Research addressed a trace request to the Russian Federation regarding these rifles on 26 September 2017. A reminder was sent on 26 October 2017. As of October, 2018 Russian authorities have not responded to these requests. For data and pictures of the rifle documented in Dirkou in March 2017, see Conflict Armament Research (n.d.).
- 344 The corresponding serial numbers are 07 1570 and 07 1983. Conflict Armament Research documented an identical AKMS-type rifle, bearing the serial number 07 793, among weapons seized on the *Letfallah II*, a ship that was intercepted off the Lebanese coast in 2012 and that was transporting equipment diverted from Libyan stockpiles. Given the small gap between the serial numbers of the rifles documented in Dirkou and the rifle

seized in Lebanon, it is plausible that the manufacturer exported the three rifles to a single first consignee—the Libyan government—and that they were subsequently diverted from Libya's national stockpile. For data and pictures of the rifle documented in Dirkou in March 2017, see Conflict Armament Research (n.d.).

345 The corresponding serial numbers are 55953/989893 and 147722/1260623. On 17 October 2017, Conflict Armament Research addressed a trace request to Belgium regarding these rifles. As of October, 2018 Belgian authorities have not yet responded. Separately, Conflict Armament Research documented an FN FAL rifle bearing the serial number 61814/995754 among the weapons seized on the *Letfallah II*. On 9 October 2015, the Government of Belgium responded to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 5 August 2015. This response confirms that the FN Herstal-manufactured rifle with the serial number 995754, the subject of Conflict Armament Research's trace request, was part of order number 23-2-4709 of 30 July 1973, which was delivered to Libya on an unspecified date.

Given that the serial number of the rifle documented in Dirkou (55953/989893) and the one seized on the *Letfallah II* are separated by only 5,861 units, it is probable that the two rifles were exported to Libya under the terms of a single contract. Conflict Armament Research documented three additional FN FAL rifles seized on the *Letfallah II*, bearing the serial numbers 112210/1225111, 119163/1232064, and 130168/1243069. On 9 October 2015, the Government of Belgium responded to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 5 August 2015. This response confirms that the FN Herstal-manufactured rifles with serial numbers 1225111, 1232064, and 1243069, the subjects of Conflict Armament Research's trace request, were part of order number 23-2-6255 of 29 August 1975, which was delivered to Libya on an unspecified date. In addition, according to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, the manufacturer also confirmed that a rifle with the serial number 1252901 was part of a 1975 delivery to Libya (UNSC, 2014, para. 117). The serial numbers of the rifle number 1260623 documented in Dirkou and of the four other FALs are relatively close, with gaps of 35,512, 28,559, 17,554, and 7,722 units. It is thus probable that they were all part of the same batch that was exported to Libya in 1975. The export year also corroborates the data presented in other relevant Small Arms Survey publications (Spleeters, 2013). For data and pictures of the rifles documented in Dirkou, see Conflict Armament Research (n.d.).

346 The corresponding serial number is G-3229. Conflict Armament Research documented six additional sniper rifles of Romanian manufacture with identical features: four in Libya (serial numbers E-4389, E-7597, H-0380, and H-1823), one in Lebanon (seized on the *Letfallah II* and bearing the serial number F-7503), and one in Niger (documented in Niamey in 2016 and bearing the serial number H-0344). On 7 October 2015, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 20 August 2015. This response confirms that: 1) the Romanian company Uzina Mecanică Cugir SA manufactured the FPK sniper rifles, calibre 7.62 × 54R mm, with serial numbers E-4389, E-7597, F-7503, and H-0380 between 1976 and 1978; 2) Uzina Mecanică Cugir SA delivered the four rifles to the Romanian ministry of defence under a supply contract ordered by the ministry; 3) between 1978 and 1979, the Foreign Trade Department of the Romanian ministry of defence exported a consignment of 7.62 × 54R mm calibre rifles to Libya from Romanian army stocks; and 4) the exporter could not provide any further

information regarding the export documentation, the circumstances of the export, or details regarding the consignment, because the materiel was manufactured and exported more than 30 years ago. The Government of Romania also confirmed that according to Romanian legislation, records and relevant documents for military goods subject to the UN International Tracing Instrument must be kept for a period of 30 years by manufacturing companies and 20 years by exporters and importers of such materiel (UNGA, 2005).

On 28 September 2016, the Government of Romania responded to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 5 September 2016. This response confirms that: 1) UM Cugir manufactured the PSL-type sniper rifle with serial number H-0344, subject to Conflict Armament Research's trace request, in 1978; 2) UM Cugir delivered the item to the Department for Foreign Trade of the Romanian ministry of defence for export to Libya in 1978; 3) the item was part of a consignment of 2,400 sniper rifles; and 4) no export records remain because, under Romanian law, manufacturers of military materiel are only required to keep export records for a period of 30 years and companies licensed to trade in military materiel are only required to keep records for a period of 20 years.

On 14 December 2017, the Government of Romania responded to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 23 October 2017 regarding the rifle with the serial number G-3229. In its response, the Government of Romania states that: 1) UM Cugir manufactured the AKM with serial number G-3229, subject to Conflict Armament Research's trace request, in 1978; and 2) taking into consideration that the rifle was manufactured and exported more than 30 years ago, the exporter could not provide details regarding the export of this item. However, according to the Romanian authorities, it is likely that this item was exported to Libya in 1987.

For data and pictures of the rifle documented in Dirkou, see Conflict Armament Research (n.d.).

- 347 The corresponding serial number is J52439. Among weapons seized on the *Letfallah II*, Conflict Armament Research documented an identical Vz. 58 P assault rifle of Czechoslovak manufacture. The rifles documented in Dirkou (serial number J52439) and in Lebanon (serial number J54557) were both manufactured in 1981. On 16 September 2015, the Government of the Czech Republic responded to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 5 August 2015. In its response, the Czech government confirmed that the Vz. 58 P assault rifle with lot/batch/serial no. J54557 was manufactured in the former Czechoslovakia by the Czech company Česká zbrojovka Uherský Brod between 1980 and 1981 and was supplied to the Czechoslovak People's Armed Forces. The Czech government also stated that the arms export records from the former Czechoslovakia from before the Velvet Revolution and fall of the communist regime in November 1989 were most deliberately not stored and therefore it was not possible to trace the connection between the manufacturer and the seized materiel. The relevant authorities of the Czech Republic confirmed, however, that the item concerned was not exported or transferred to Lebanon or Libya from the Czech Republic.

On 28 July 2017, the Government of the Czech Republic responded to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 27 June 2017. This response confirms that: 1) the company Agrozet Uherský Brod (now Česká zbrojovka Uherský Brod) manufactured the Vz. 58 P assault rifle with the serial number J52439, the subject of Conflict Armament Research's trace request, in the former Czechoslovakia in April 1981; and 2) the company

supplied the weapon to the Czechoslovakia People's Armed Forces. Czech authorities informed Conflict Armament Research that they had no information on any further transfer of the rifle.

Similarly, on 23 October 2017, the Government of Slovakia responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 26 September 2017. This response confirms that Slovakia's licensing authority did not approve export of the Vz. 58 P assault rifle with serial number J52439, subject to Conflict Armament Research's trace request. The relative proximity of the rifles' serial numbers (only 2,118 units apart) nevertheless suggests that the weapons were part of a single consignment to Libya, through which rifle J54557 certainly transited. For data and pictures of the rifle documented in Dirkou, see Conflict Armament Research (n.d.).

- 348 The AKMS rifle was produced by Izhmash in 1972 and bears the serial number HC051.
- 349 Each rifle was reportedly distributed with 40 rounds of ammunition, already charged in two separate magazines. In interviews, individuals who had witnessed the distribution reported that most of the rifles had a distinctive pistol grip on the lower wooden handguard. Author interviews with Libyan Tubu traders, Dirkou and Puits Espoir, Niger, March 2017.
- 350 The French army—which deployed several hundred troops and, until 2015, significant aerial reconnaissance in the Sahara–Sahel region—coordinated the best part of these operations. Author interviews with diplomatic and military sources, Chad and Niger, 2014–16.
- 351 These rifles bear the serial numbers 1984-AM 1994, 1984-AN 4974, and 1984 NX 9473. On 14 December 2017, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 23 October 2017. In its response, the Romanian government states that: 1) UM Cugir manufactured the AKM with the serial number 1984 NX 9473, subject to Conflict Armament Research's trace request, in 1984, and that UM Sadu manufactured the AKMs with the serial numbers 1984-AM 1994 and 1984-AN 4974, also subject to Conflict Armament Research's trace request, in 1984; and 2) given that the rifle was manufactured and exported more than 30 years ago, the exporter could not provide details regarding the export of this item. For data and pictures of the rifle documented in Dirkou, see Conflict Armament Research (n.d.).
- 352 These rifles bear the serial numbers 1983 NH 7149 and 1983 NK 2455. On 20 November 2017, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by Conflict Armament Research on 23 October 2017. In its response, the Romanian government states that the AKMs with the serial numbers 1983 NH 7149 and 1983 NK 2455, subject to Conflict Armament Research's trace request, were not produced in Romania.
- 353 As of October 2018, the delivery of these rifles to Libya had not been confirmed.
- 354 Conflict Armament Research submitted a formal trace request to the Government of Algeria on 27 June 2017 and on 20 October 2017. As of October 2018, the Algerian authorities had not yet responded to these requests.
- 355 One of the Galil rifles was a Model 365, with the serial number 2006188; the other was a Model 707, with the serial number 99112506.
- 356 For data and pictures of the Galil rifles, see Conflict Armament Research (n.d.).
- 357 Conflict Armament Research submitted a formal trace request to the Government of Israel on 27 June 2017 and on 20 October 2017. As of October 2018, the Israeli authorities had not yet responded to these requests.

- 358 Author interview with a diplomatic source, location and date withheld.
- 359 See pp. 66–73.
- 360 As above, X stands for a figure between 0 and 9. Conflict Armament Research has recorded 15 of these rifles, with serial numbers falling between 56011258 and 56066288, in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and Syria.
- 361 It is clear that at least some of these rifles reached Libya since French soldiers of Operation Barkhane, which is based in Madama in north-eastern Niger, seized rifles with the serial numbers 56041955 and 56066288 when they intercepted a convoy of weapons, ammunition, and cash aimed at the Malian MNLA, in the Arlit area, in March 2015. Conflict Armament Research independently inspected these weapons in July 2016.
- 362 Conflict Armament Research submitted a formal trace request regarding the rifle with the serial number 56047966 on 17 June 2017 and on 20 October 2017. As of October 2018, the Chinese authorities had not yet responded to these requests.
- 363 Conflict Armament Research submitted a formal trace request regarding this rifle on 17 June 2017 and on 20 October 2017. As of October 2018, the Chinese authorities had not yet responded to these requests.
- 364 The authors documented these items, which amount to more than 36 per cent of the sample, during the field research in 2017, in Bilma, Dirkou, and Niamey, Niger—after they had been seized in the Abalak region.
- 365 The identified companies are: Aral Arms (14 pistols), Retay Arms (13), Saric Arms (10), Zira Silah Sanayi (6), Kral Arms (4), and Voltran-Ekol (1). As of October 2018, the authors had not yet identified the manufacturers of the remaining 14 blank pistols.
- 366 A growing presence of blank pistols has also been documented in West Africa and the Horn of Africa. Conflict Armament Research's database, for one, confirms the presence of blank firing pistols in Somalia at least since mid-2016, in particular on the Bosaso and Burao black markets (Conflict Armament Research, n.d.). The most spectacular illustration of this emerging trend in the Horn of Africa, however, was provided by the seizure of more than 25,000 Turkish-manufactured pistols (both 8 mm PAK and 9 × 22 mm) on board the vessel *SJ African*, which the African Union Mission in Somalia and Somali authorities intercepted in Kismayo port in January 2017. See, for instance, Nastranis (2017) and UNSC (2017d, p. 8, annex 1).
- 367 The pistols bear the following serial numbers: 14-01210; 14-02671; 14-05080; 14-07926; 14-07929; 14-07930; 14-07933; 14-07935; 14-07940; 1511-1361; 1511-1377. Conflict Armament Research addressed a trace request to Aral Arms regarding these blank-firing pistols on 18 October 2017. The company provided an answer to the trace request on 20 November 2017, confirming the manufacture of the items; however, it did not provide details on their transfer.
- 368 The pistols bear the following serial numbers: 13-67554; 13-67692; 13-69540; 14-00104; 14-10592; 14-13713; 14-15335; 14-17718; 16-03351; 16-03356. Conflict Armament Research addressed a trace request to Retay Arms regarding these blank-firing pistols on 18 October 2017. As of October 2018, the company had not yet responded.
- 369 Government statistics of weapons and ammunition seized between 2012 and 2015, seen by the authors.

- 370 See, for instance, de Tessières (2018, p. 46, box 1).
- 371 All lots are described at length in de Tessières (2018, annex). Tracing efforts were hampered as none of the rounds were in their original packaging, which meant that they could only be analysed based on their headstamps (or, for rockets, based on inscriptions). In practice, industrial manufacturers produce millions of identical rounds that bear the same headstamps, sometimes well before signing contracts for export. They typically transfer batches of such identical rounds of ammunition to several recipients in different countries or regions. Given that the consignee of the first transfer can only be inferred from inscriptions on crates and boxes, and that the security forces in Dirkou did not record detailed information on the circumstances of every single seizure, it is nearly impossible to determine the date of export and consignee of the documented rounds. See Note 334.
- 372 During the 2007–09 MNJ rebellion in Niger, for instance, landmine-related incidents claimed the lives of 70 individuals and injured another 360, in particular in Aïr and Kowar. Figures provided by Niger’s National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (Commission nationale pour la collecte et le contrôle des armes illicites, CNC-CAI). See also Monitor (2017).
- 373 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Agadez, Dirkou, and Niamey, Niger, February–March 2017.
- 374 Author interviews with Nigerien officials, Agadez, Dirkou, and Niamey, Niger, February–March 2017.
- 375 The agency was Niger’s CNCCAI.
- 376 Two of these landmines were collected from a former MNJ combatant in Aderbissinat (between Agadez and Zinder) in February 2012; the third one was seized in Tamazalak (Aïr) in April 2014. Government statistics of weapons and ammunition seized between 2012 and 2015, seen by the authors.
- 377 On social networks, young Tubu have discussed the possibility of forming an ethnic Tubu state under the name ‘LiTchaNi’ (for Libya, Chad, Niger). Author interviews with a Tubu politician, Dirkou, Niger, March 2017; with a Nigerien official, Niamey, Niger, February 2017; and with Chadian officials, N’Djaména, Chad, May–June 2017.

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