



This infograph is based on,  
Combating Daesh in Libya, by Dr. Saskia van Genugten.  
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## DAESH IN LIBYA

Since the fall of Qaddafi, a number of different regional groups have been meeting, recruiting, training, propaganising and plotting operations on Libyan soil. These include Daesh, but also Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar al Sharia, Boko Haram, and Al Mourabitoun.

### 2014

A group of foreign fighters returned from Iraq and Syria to their hometown in Derna, in Eastern Libya. They pledged allegiance to Daesh-leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

### 6,500

Estimates of the numbers of Daesh fighters in Libya vary. The US believes there are around 6,500 fighters. Most analysts agree that the group constitutes an evident threat.

### 200 km

Around the coastal city of Sirte, Daesh controls a coastal strip of 200 km of land. This is the only significant territory the group holds outside of Iraq and Syria.



## WHAT IS BEHIND THE RAPID GROWTH OF DAESH IN LIBYA?

### LAWLESSNESS

### UNCONTROLLED BORDERS

### INABILITY OF POLITICIANS TO PRIORITISE STABILITY

### Close to Core Organisation

Daesh's leadership has actively called upon supporters to travel to Libya and has dispatched prominent fighters, clerics and (media) technicians to assist the Libyan branch.

### Booming Migrant Smuggling Trade

Libya plays a prominent role in illicit trafficking routes. The migrant smuggling business is a potential source of income as well as recruits - some join for ideology, others for a (better) salary.

### Support of Former Regime Loyalists

In Sirte, hometown of the late Qaddafi, Daesh co-opted former regime supporters. Post-2011 authorities neglected Sirte. Some inhabitants might believe Daesh brings back some basic services.

### Poaching from other Groups

Daesh in Libya poaches fighters from AQIM, Ansar al Sharia, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab. It tries to offer better salaries, perks and a start-up mentality with opportunities to quickly rise through the ranks.

## TRANSNATIONAL THREATS AND REGIONAL RISKS

Daesh in Libya terrorizes innocent people. It also disregards any national and international institutions and conventions, and it does so despicably under the false banner of Islam. But there is more.



Daesh has attacked Libya's oil installations - sabotaging the main source of revenue for Libyan authorities. Losses exceed US\$68 billion. Daesh targeted facilities at Al Sidra and Ras Lanuf and is active near the Melitta oil and gas complex, which hosts a pipeline into Italy.



Cities in Libya's southern desert thrive on the smuggling of drugs, cigarettes, weapons and migrants. Smuggling networks are expanding in Libya's coastal cities and Daesh could tap into the profits. There are also fears that terrorists can infiltrate the migrant and refugee flows to Europe.



The spectrum of extremist groups in Africa remains deeply fragmented. AQIM sees Daesh as a major threat and Ansar al Sharia and LIFG consider Daesh as the outsider. The prospect of a showdown between extremist groups is just as threatening as the prospect of their cooperation.

## HOW TO ASSIST LIBYANS IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST DAESH



### Diplomacy and Mediation

Continue support for the political dialogue in terms of resources and political commitment.

Intensify mediation efforts at the level of security actors and economic elites.

Encourage local ceasefires and prevent a split in Libya's vital financial institutions.



### Disrupting Financial Resources

Enhance understanding of what Daesh's resources are and where they come from.

Add Daesh members and associated entities to Al Qaeda sanction list.

Strengthen Anti Money Laundering regimes and monitor virtual currency exchange platforms and prepaid cards.



### Border Management Assistance

Secure borders and streamline unclear and diverse reporting lines that took root post-2011.

Counter smugglers' circumvention of checkpoints and the strength of kin ties in the region.

Anticipate that the closure of the Balkan migrant route is likely to lead to more pressure on the routes via Libya.



### Economic and Humanitarian Aid

Recognise that the predicted economic crisis could increase the appeal of extremism.

Ensure that the Libyan population will not be deprived of basic goods and services.

Assist with tackling corruption and mismanagement; help it design and implement diversification strategies.



### Military and Security Support

Ensure that military support goes hand in hand with creating inclusive political and security institutions.

Pro-actively counter Daesh's attempts to use intervention for recruitment purposes.

Focus training on enhanced cooperation, communication and integration aimed at building a united army.