

# Weekly Intelligence Brief

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## African Union convenes to discuss the political progress of Libya

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On 05 FEB, the African Union (AU) held a high-level committee meeting to discuss the future of Libya. Political division and instability have been on the rise since the 2011 toppling of Muammar Gaddafi. Libyan elections for a stable government were set to take place multiple times, but each was ultimately postponed due to differing approaches in how the political process would work.

The President of the Republic of Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, gathered high-

level members for the AU meeting and discussed ways to restore Libya and bring peace and stability. One of the main considerations was to remove any foreign interference but to provide outside support during this process. According to the AU, the involvement of outside actors diminishes Libyan security and would only prolong the internal conflict going on. The United Nations Special Representative for Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, also took part in this meeting and called on Libyan political leaders to discuss ways to end disputes and put forward a plan to resolve disagreements. Alongside this, Libyan stakeholders were also requested to support the AU's decisions and

assist in Libya's restoration process. The AU has planned a National Reconciliation Conference for Libya on 28 APR 2024. This would have Libyan leaders come together and come to a solution to the political process. The United States Special Envoy for Libya, Richard Norland has spoken out and supports the AU's decisions.

We can assess with high confidence that it is unlikely the National Reconciliation Conference will be postponed. We can also assess with moderate confidence that it is likely Libyan political leaders will peacefully come together for deliberations during the National Reconciliation Conference

# Body of high-ranking Sinaloa Cartel found dumped on Mexican highway beside 310 kg of drugs

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On 01 FEB, the body of Jose Carrera, also known as “El 010,” was found dead on a highway in the northern Mexican state of Chihuahua. Jose Carrera was formerly a highly-ranked member of the Sinaloa Cartel and was second-in-command of the Gente Nueva, which is a Sinaloa Cartel cell that operates in Ciudad Juarez. With his body was 310 kg (about 683.43 lb) of drugs that included “China white” (fentanyl that resembles heroin), fake

oxycodone pills, and crystal meth. There were also two narco-signs hanging from the highway. The first sign read, “In the state of Chihuahua this garbage is not tolerated, we are not desperate enough to traffic this garbage”. The second sign was addressed to Chihuahua state prosecutor Gilberto Chavez who alleged that law enforcement agents from the state capital were directly involved with the trafficking and distribution of fentanyl. Carrera had been missing since August 2023 when an armed group traveling in a convoy of cloned National Guard pickup trucks abducted him.

We can assess with moderate confidence that it is likely a Mexican vigilante group was responsible for leaving the body of Jose Carrera and 310 kg of drugs alongside a highway in Mexico.



# Senior Kataib Hezbollah commander killed in air strike

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In the early morning of 07 FEB, Abu Baqir al Saadi, a senior commander of the Kataib Hezbollah, which is backed by the Iranian government, was among three individuals who were killed in a drone strike by the United States. This was in response to the drone strike last month that killed three United States Marines in Jordan. On 02 FEB, the United States carried out drone strikes, with President Joe Biden claiming that “this is just the beginning.” On 30 JAN, Hezbollah claimed it was suspending

military operations against the United States to avoid embarrassing the Iraqi government, but the United States continued to strike more than 85 targets in the region. On 07 FEB, other Iran-backed militia groups were targeted, but the Hezbollah commander was the main target of the strike. Al Saadi was a high-ranking commander of the militia group and was responsible for directing attacks on American forces in the region. He oversaw the Hezbollah unit in Syria, and he coordinated attacks on U.S. forces in Syria and Jordan, and this strike is in retaliation to the Tower 22 attack. The drone strike will be a major escalation, and

militias in the country called for retaliation against the United States.

We can assess with high confidence that it is likely that the United States will continue to carry out drone strikes against these Iran-backed militia groups as tensions increase, and fighting continues.



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