

# LIBYA

## Cyrenaicans

Activity: 2012-2020

### General notes

NA

### Movement start and end dates

- On March 6, 2012, about 2,800 political and social activists gathered in an old soap factory near Benghazi to announce the formation of an interim council that would eventually lead to the creation of an autonomous government in Barqa state. They hoped that such a move would provide them with better community services and a greater share of the spoils of the oil industry. (Associated Press Online 2012; Minahan 2002; Reuters 2013; Sotloff 2012). The start date is pegged at 2012.
- The movement remained active in subsequent years (Minahan 2016: 114f; Roth 2015: 234ff) and is hence coded as ongoing. [start date: 2012; end date: ongoing]

### Dominant claim

- The collapse of the Libyan state in 2011 ‘allowed actors in Cyrenaica to reassert claims to territorial self-governance’ (Ahram, 2019:72); these actors began to ‘agitate’ for the restitution of the 1951 federal constitution (Ahram, 2018:325). In March 2012, around 3,000 people declared Cyrenaica to be a federal region (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:126; Roth, 2015:235). Minahan (2016:114f) and Roth (2015: 234ff) both also suggest an autonomy claim. [2012-2020: autonomy claim]

### Independence claims

NA

### Irredentist claims

NA

### Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Cyrenaicans is known today as the Barqa region (also known as Cyrenaica) and is composed of seven districts in eastern Libya (Roth 2015: 234f). We code this claim using data on admin units from the Global Administrative Areas Database (2019) for polygon definition.

## **Sovereignty declarations**

- In 2012, Cyrenaica was unilaterally declared a federal region (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:126; Roth, 2015:235; Minahan, 2016: 114). [2012: autonomy declaration]
- Minahan (2016: 482) also suggests an independence declaration in 2013, but other sources suggest there was another autonomy declaration (e.g., Libya Herald 2013). [2013: autonomy declaration]

## **Separatist armed conflict**

- There has been minimal violence associated with the Cyrenaica movement, and thus we code it as NVIOLSD (International Crisis Group). [NVIOLSD]

## **Historical context**

- When the Italians entered the territory which is now modern-day Libya in 1911, its regions (Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan) reacted differently (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:121). In Cyrenaica, the Senussi movement opposed Italian colonisation, leading to Italo-Senussi wars in 1911-7 and 1923-31 (Minahan, 2016:114). In 1918, Italy granted both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica elected provisional legislatures as imperial citizens. In 1920, an Italian accord granted Idris al-Senussi the title Emir of Cyrenaica; he held autonomous administrative rights in the inland oases of Kufra, Jalu, Jaghbub, Awjila and Ajdabiya (Ahram, 2019:75). During the second Italo-Senussi war, the Italians built concentration camps and it is estimated that between one quarter to one third of tribespeople in Cyrenaica perished (Ahram, 2019:75). Following Italy's defeat in World War II, the UK won most of Libya (Roth, 2015:234). Idris, who had fled to Egypt in 1922, 'pushed' the British for assurances regarding Libya's post-war future (Ahram, 2019:76).
- In June 1949, Idris proclaimed, from Manar Palace in Benghazi, Cyrenaica, the independence of the Emirate of Cyrenaica. In November 1949, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution recommending that Libya, comprising Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan, should be constituted as an independent and sovereign state. Tripolitanian leaders 'begrudgingly' accepted Idris as leader and, in December 1951, King Idris stood once more at Manar Palace to declare the independence of the Kingdom of Libya (Ahram, 2019:77; Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:122). Libya adopted a federal system comprising three regions (Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan), with Tripoli as the capital (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:122).
- During the rule of Idris, Cyrenaica was perceived as a favoured territory and royalist stronghold (Ahram, 2019:78). Cyrenaica was the epicentre of administrative rule and Cyrenaicans held top positions in the police and security forces (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:122). Under the 1951 Constitution, Cyrenaica 'enjoyed broad federal autonomy, including its own parliament and armed forces, and remit over the large oil deposits in the province' (Ahram, 2018:325). However, revisions to the constitution in 1963 abolished federalism, undermining this autonomy (Ahram, 2018:325; Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:123).
- The monarchy was toppled in 1969 by the Free Officers Coup. Muammar al-Qadhafi rose to power. The state's core executive functions were relocated to Tripoli, the Senussi Islamic University was shuttered and the Cyrenica Defence Forces (CFD) were dissolved (Ahram, 2019:79). Power became increasingly centralised under Qadhafi (Ahram, 2018:325) while the territorial base of power shifted to Tripolitania (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:124). Roth (2015:235) claims that Qadhafi drove the 'Cyrenaican national identity underground', leaving the east 'marginalised and with rotting infrastructure'.
- Cyrenaica became a centre of anti-Qadhafi opposition but this resistance was 'not overtly regionalist in nature'; instead, it adopted an Islamist outlook (Ahram, 2019:79). In 1976, the Qadhafi regime suppressed a student movement at Benghazi University while, in 2005, there were further demonstrations against Qadhafi in Benghazi (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:125). These demonstrations were not, however, in support of federalism.

- The 2011 Libyan revolution began in Cyrenaica, in Benghazi (Ahram, 2019:81; Anderson, 2017:240). While, initially, it was not inspired by regionalism the breakdown of the Libyan state gave Easterners ‘a chance to redress their marginalisation’ (Ahram, 2018:325; please refer to the Claims section below).
- The National Transitional Council (NTC) of Libya, which formed in Benghazi in February 2011 in the wake of the revolution before handing over power in August 2012, created a National Congress, an interim parliamentary body assigned to draft the new Libyan constitution. Cyrenaica was offered 60 seats while Tripolitania was assigned nearly three times as many (Umana, 2012; similarly, Grigoriadis and Kassem (2021:126) refer to the ‘selection of several Tripolitanian ministers to form a new government’). This is not a restriction, however, as it did not reduce the level of self-rule in Cyrenaica (prior to the revolution, as detailed above, Qadhaffi operated a centralised state).
- No concessions or restrictions were found in the ten years before the first year we cover in the dataset.

### **Concessions and restrictions**

- In March 2012, around 3,000 people declared Cyrenaica a federal region, and proclaimed the emergence of the Cyrenaica Transitional Council headed by Ahmed Zubayr al-Senussi (the great nephew of Idris) (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:126; Roth, 2015:235). Roth (2015:235) describes this moment as a unilateral declaration of autonomy. He also notes that the Cyrenaica Transitional Council is also known as the Cyrenaica National Council and the Council of Cyrenaica in Libya (Roth, 2015:235). Offering support, Minahan (2016:114) states that an ‘autonomous Cyrenaican state’ was ‘proclaimed’ in 2012 and, furthermore, that Cyrenaica ‘officially’ became an ‘autonomous federal region in 2013’ (we found no confirmation of the latter claim; see below). Also in 2012, the Political Bureau of Cyrenaica (PBC), led by Ibrahim al-Jadhran, announced the formation of an autonomous Cyrenaican government (Roth, 2015:235). ‘Federal forces’ have seized control of oil installations and disrupted elections; indeed, Cyrenaica has become ‘administratively and politically removed from the rest of Libya’ (Ahram, 2018:325). Furthermore, Ahram (2019:73) has described Cyrenaica as a ‘quasi-state’, as ‘possessing a measure of coercive, economic and infrastructural power’ but without ‘legal recognition either within Libya or by international society’. However, unilateral actions by regional governments controlled by SDM groups are not coded as concessions. We also do not code a concession if a group attains independence without the consent of the rump state.
- Post-revolution Libya ‘institutionalised a formal, democratically elected local governance system for the first time in its history’ (Molenaar et al., 2019:115); this seems to have been introduced in 2012 following the introduction of Law 59 on Local Governance (Molenaar et al., 2019:117; see also: Bader, 2014; Mikail and Engelkes, 2019:2). However, Law 59 seems not to have led to significant changes on the ground. As of 2014, the newly created districts relied on the central government for expenses. Furthermore, the districts, at that point, were not able to collect taxes; there was no clear mechanism to determine the districts’ budget; and the districts were inefficient in delivering basic services (Bader 2014). In 2019, decentralisation was described as stalled while the same authors argue that ‘the imprecise terms and limited duties assigned to local government authorities have assured that the law falls short of achieving real and efficient decentralisation’ (Mikail and Engelkes, 2019:1f). We do not code a concession due to the lack of implementation. More generally, local (as opposed to regional) governance reforms are not generally coded (see the codebook).

### **Regional autonomy**

- Due to de facto independence. [2015-2020: regional autonomy]

## De facto independence

- Ahram (2019:73) describes Cyrenaica as a ‘quasi-state’ and as ‘possessing a measure of coercive, economic and infrastructural power’ but without ‘legal recognition either within Libya or by international society’. The start date of de facto independence is unclear; somewhat arbitrarily, we code de facto independence from 2015 onwards. This is because since 2014, there have been two competing governments in Libya and the internationally recognized government in Tripoli has had little influence over Cyrenaica. [2015-2020: de facto independence]

## Major territorial changes

- [2014: establishment of de facto independence]

## EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Cyrenaicans
<i>Scenario</i>	n:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Arabs
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	62001000

## Power access

- The Cyrenaicans (or Sanussis) are an Arab group concentrated in the Cyrenaica area around Benghazi (Minahan 2002: 1654-1655). EPR codes the Arabs as a single group. The movement is thus best seen as a regionalist Arab group.
- According to EPR, executive power switched to the National Transitional Council after Gadaffi's fall in 2011. The National Transitional Council's chairman and de facto head of state at the time, Mastafa Abdul Jalil, stems from northern Cyrenaica. The Council was also headquartered in Benghazi, Cyrenaica's largest city (Roth, 2015:235). On this basis, we code the Cyrenaicans as included in 2012.
- Between 2012 and 2014, the legislative authority in Libya was the General National Congress (GNC). In the GNC, 60 seats were given to Cyrenaica while 106 were allocated to Tripolitania and 34 to Fezzan (Carter Center 2012:19, 22). A similar level of regional balance was applied at the executive level (Ghanmi and Hakala, 2013:11). On this basis, we code the Cyrenaicans as junior partner in 2013-2014.
- Since 2014, Libya has been divided between competing governments based in the east and the west of Libya. Tripoli has hosted the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), which was created in December 2015. Meanwhile, the east (which includes Cyrenaica) hosts the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) which does not endorse the GNA (Molenaar et al., 2019:126). [2012-2014: junior partner; 2015-2020: powerless]

## Group size

- According to Minahan (2002: 1654), there were about 1.485 mio Cyrenaicans in Libya in 2002, which combined with the 2002 WB estimate of Libya's population (5.34 mio) leads to the group size estimate. [0.2781]

## Regional concentration

- According to Minahan (2002: 1654), the Sannusis/Cyrenaicans made up 78% of Cyrenaica's population in 2002 where almost 90% of all Sannusis/Cyrenaicans in Libya resided. [regionally concentrated]

## Kin

- We found no evidence for transborder kinship ties. [no kin]

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## **Fezzani**

Activity: 2013-2020

### **General notes**

- Fezzan is mainly desert, and is rich in crude oil. Since 2014, artisanal miners have extracted gold in the region without government oversight (International Crisis Group, 2017). The administrative capital of the region is Sebha (International Crisis Group, 2017). Various tribes and ethnic groups live in Fezzan, including Awlad Suleiman, the Qadhadhfa, the Tebu, the Tuareg and the Ahaili (International Crisis Group, 2017). Minahan (2016:145) writes that the Fezzanis comprise several groups, including Tuaregs, Toubous, Arabs, Bedouins, Berbers and Dawada while Grigoriadis and Kassem (2021:121) claim that the Fezzan region is composed of the following tribes: Awlad Sulaiman, Magariha and Tebu. Due to the multi-ethnic/regional character of this movement, we treat Fezzan as a separate movement.

### **Movement start and end dates**

- In 2013, Fezzani leaders declared autonomy (Minahan, 2016:145; Anadolu Ajansi, 2013; Al Arabiya, 2013; Reuters, 2013; Libya Business News, 2013). Fezzani leaders suggested that the decision to declare autonomy was due to “the weak performance of the General National Congress and the lack of response to the demands of the Libyan people, especially in Fezzan”. This statement further noted that a military chief would later be appointed in order to protect the region’s borders and natural resources (Anadolu Ajansi, 2013; Al Arabiya, 2013; Al-Khalidi and Markey, 2013; Libya Business News, 2013). Another source reports that “Libya’s autonomy protests have grown out of Tripoli’s lack of control, tribal loyalties and a series of unresolved local grievances over security, corruption and poor services that have festered since the 2011 revolution” (Al-Khalidi and Markey, 2013). Nevertheless, a Reuters article published in 2013 cautioned that: “independence declarations by Cyrenaica and more recently by the southern Fezzan region change little on the ground politically...as they have no mass support for now, and carry no authority under Libya’s transitional arrangement” (Al-Khalidi and Markey, 2013). Roth (2015:236) describes the movement as ongoing, though it is worth noting that we found no corroborating evidence. [start date: 2013; end date: ongoing]

### **Dominant claim**

- The dominant claim is for autonomy (Small Arms Survey, 2014; Bruno, 2013; Al Arabiya, 2013; Al-Khalidi and Markey, 2013; Anadolu Ajansi, 2013; Libya Business News, 2013). [2013-2020: autonomy claim]

### **Independence claims**

NA

### **Irredentist claims**

NA

## **Claimed territory**

- The area claimed is the Fezzan region of Libya. Maps are available in Libya Business News (2013), Al Arabiya News (2013), and Small Arms Survey (2014). The area corresponds to present-day Al Jufrah, Wadi ash Shati, Sabha, Wadi al Hayat, Ghat, and Murz. We code this area as the movement's claim using GIS data on administrative units from GADM.

## **Sovereignty declarations**

- Fezzani leaders declared autonomy in 2013 (Small Arms Survey, 2014; Bruno, 2013; Al Arabiya, 2013; Al-Khalidi and Markey, 2013; Anadolu Ajansi, 2013; Libya Business News, 2013). [2013: autonomy declaration]

## **Separatist armed conflict**

- There have been various violent conflicts in Fezzan since the fall of Qadhafi in 2011. International Crisis Group (2017) identifies 'three main axes of rivalry':
  - o The Tebu-Awlad Suleiman conflict which 'erupted with extreme violence in 2012 and again in 2014'. These conflicts were over 'access to state funds and state-subsidised goods'.
  - o The Qadhadhfa-Awlad Suleiman conflict which broke out in 2014 and 2016. This conflict reflected the divide between the 'losers' and 'winners' of the 2011 revolution and war and, later, the divide between pro- and anti-Libyan National Army forces.
  - o The Tebu-Tuareg conflict which took place between 2014 and 2015 'over national-level political and military rifts, external funding and the inflow of foreign fighters'. The fighting also 'continued in Ubari [a region in Fezzan] until early 2016'.
- As none of these conflicts concerned separatism, they are not coded.
- More broadly, since the outbreak of war in 2014, 'the south has become a battlefield for nationwide rivalries opposing Misratan forces aligned with the GNA on one side and the Libyan National Army (LNA) loyal to the eastern government on the other' (International Crisis Group, 2017). However, this violence again does not concern self-rule in Fezzan.
- In January 2019, the military forces (the LNA) under the command of General Khalifa Haftar launched an attack on the Fezzan region with the aim of taking control of local oil production (Mezran, 2019; see also: Tossell, 2020). Once more, however, this does not constitute separatist armed conflict. [NVIOLSD]

## **Historical context**

- The Italians entered the territory which is now modern-day Libya in 1911 (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:121). In the aftermath of the Italian occupation, Fezzan was ruled by France (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:121). Fezzan has a history of 'informal governance, traditionally implemented by tribal elites', extending back to Libya's colonial era (Molenaar et al., 2019:115).
- In November 1949, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution recommending that Libya, comprising Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan, should be constituted as an independent and sovereign state (Ahram, 2019:77; Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:122). In the early 1950s, Fezzan was in favour of a federal system, and Libya did indeed adopt a federal system comprising three regions (Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Fezzan) with Tripoli as the capital. During this time, Libya was a monarchy (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:122). The monarchy was toppled in 1969 by the Free Officers Coup and Muammar al-Qadhafi rose to power. The territorial base of power shifted from Cyrenaica to Tripolitania (Ahram, 2019:79; Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:124). The consolidation of the Qadhafi regime exacerbated the 'socioeconomic backwardness' of Fezzan (and Cyrenaica) by comparison with Tripolitania (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:127). Nevertheless, the south (Fezzan) was the Qadhafi regime's stronghold: 'the communities in the



region were among the main recruitment bases for the regime's security battalions and intelligence services' (Small Arms Survey, 2014:2).

- In 2011, the Libyan revolution broke out, taking root initially in Cyrenaica (Ahram, 2019:81; Anderson, 2017:240). Following the revolution, several movements emerged in Fezzan to 'address the grievances of the south' (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:127). The Qadhafi regime was toppled in 2011; the National Transitional Council (NTC) formed in Benghazi in February 2011 before handing over power in August 2012 to a National Congress (an interim parliamentary body assigned to draft the new Libyan constitution) (Grigoriadis and Kassem, 2021:126). Molenaar et al. (2019:115) write that, 'since the fall of the Gaddafi regime in 2011, the Fezzan region has become increasingly neglected and unstable': 'the region has always been subject to neglect in comparison with Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, but since 2011 it has experienced a near total lack of state infrastructure'. After the revolution, the Tuareg and other groups presented in Fezzan were 'ostracised' due to 'their perceived or actual support for Gaddafi, and a deep-rooted racist sentiment towards darker-skinned inhabitants of the Libyan south' (Molenaar et al., 2019:115). Fezzan therefore 'received little input,, integration or representation in post-revolution decisionmaking' (Molenaar et al., 2019:115).
- Post-revolution Libya 'institutionalised a formal, democratically elected local governance system for the first time in its history' (Molenaar et al., 2019:115); this seems to have been introduced in 2012 following the introduction of Law 59 on Local Governance (Molenaar et al., 2019:117; see also: Bader, 2014; Mikail and Engelkes, 2019:2). However, Law 59 seems not to have led to significant changes on the ground. As of 2014, the newly created districts relied on the central government for expenses. Furthermore, the districts, at that point, were not able to collect taxes; there was no clear mechanism to determine the districts' budget; and the districts were inefficient in delivering basic services (Bader 2014). In 2019, decentralisation was described as stalled while the same authors argue that 'the imprecise terms and limited duties assigned to local government authorities have assured that the law falls short of achieving real and efficient decentralisation' (Mikail and Engelkes, 2019:1f). We do not code a concession due to the lack of implementation. More generally, local (as opposed to regional) governance reforms are not generally coded (see the codebook).

### **Concessions and restrictions**

- Since 2014, Libya has been divided between competing governments based in the east and the west of Libya. Tripoli has hosted the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), which was created in December 2015. The east hosts the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) which does not endorse the GNA. Both governments are dependent on networks of armed groups, with General Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) acting as the armed forces of the HoR. In Fezzan, Tuareg brigades have tended to side with the GNA, although some Tuareg offshoots have joined Haftar. Most Tubu forces have fought under the loose umbrella of GNA forces. Haftar's LNA 'has been successful in forging local alliances with armed groups affiliated to' tribes include the Awlad Suleiman and Zuwai (Molenaar et al., 2019:126). The internationally recognized government in Tripoli is disengaged from, and lacks influence in, Fezzan (International Crisis Group, 2017). Moreover, support for Haftar is strong (International Crisis Group, 2017). More broadly, Fezzan has 'fragmented into multiple local spheres of influence', with some areas contested by multiple groups and inter-communal tensions rife (Small Arms Survey, 2014:7). In January 2019, the military forces under the command of General Khalifa Haftar launched an attack on the Fezzan region with the aim of taking control of local oil production (Mezran, 2019; see also: Tossell, 2020).
- We found no concession or restriction as defined here.

### **Regional autonomy**

- Although a system of local governance was introduced in Libya in 2012 (see Historical Context section for further details), due to severe insecurity in the country, it has not been meaningfully

implemented (Molenaar et al., 2019). Traditional authorities have attempted to breach the gap by supplying services and security (Molenaar et al., 2019), but there is no system of meaningful regional autonomy in place.

- We still code regional autonomy from 2015 onwards due to de facto independence. [2015-2020: regional autonomy]

### De facto independence

- The evidence we found is not fully conclusive but points to de facto independence. While Cyrenaica has been described as a quasi-state, Fezzan has not been described in this way. Still, it has been argued that Fezzan has splintered into ‘multiple local spheres of influence’, with ‘traditional’ authorities attempting to supply basic services and security’. The internationally recognized government in Tripoli is disengaged from, and lacks influence in, Fezzan (International Crisis Group, 2017). The start date of de facto independence is unclear; somewhat arbitrarily, we code de facto independence from 2015 onwards. This is because since 2014, there have been two competing governments in Libya, and the Fezzani generally sided with the one that is not officially recognized (International Crisis Group, 2017; Molenaar et al., 2019:126). [2015-2020: de facto independence]

### Major territorial changes

- [2014: establishment of de facto independence]

### EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Fezzani
<i>Scenario</i>	No match
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	-
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	-

### Power access

- Between 2012 and 2014, the legislative authority in Libya was the General National Congress (GNC). In the GNC, 34 seats were given to Fezzan while 106 were allocated to Tripolitania and 60 to Cyrenaica (Carter Center 2012:19, 22). A similar level of regional balance was applied at the executive level (Ghanmi and Hakala, 2013:11). On this basis, we code the Fezzani as junior partner.
- Since 2014, Libya has been divided between competing governments based in the east and the west of Libya. Tripoli has hosted the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), which was created in December 2015. The east hosts the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) which does not endorse the GNA. In Fezzan, Tuareg brigades have tended to side with the GNA, although some Tuareg offshoots have joined Haftar (who supports the HoR). Most Tubu forces have fought under the loose umbrella of GNA forces. Haftar’s LNA ‘has been successful in forging local alliances with armed groups affiliated to’ tribes include the Awlad Suleiman and Zuwai (Molenaar et al., 2019:126). The internationally recognized government in Tripoli is disengaged from, and lacks influence in, Fezzan (International Crisis Group, 2017). Based on this, we code the group as powerless from 2015 onwards. [2012-2014: junior partner; 2015-2020: powerless]

## Group size

- Fezzan is home to less than 10% of Libya's population, about 500,000 people (International Crisis Group, 2017). In 2013, according to the World Bank, the population of Libya was 6,320,350. The population of Fezzan is therefore approximately 8% of the total population of Libya. [0.08]

## Regional concentration

- We found no good data; however, the Fezzanis are a heterogeneous regionalist movement, which almost certainly implies that the criteria for regional concentration are met. [regionally concentrated]

## Kin

- We found no evidence for transborder kinship ties. [no kin]

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## **Toubou**

Activity: 2012-2020

### **General notes**

- The Toubou are a nomadic group located in Libya, Chad, Sudan, and Niger.

### **Movement start and end dates**

- In response to decades-long fierce repression, in 2007 the Toubou Front for the Salvation of Libya (TFSL) was founded and soon engaged in fights with the Gaddafi regime. Initially, the Front was however concerned more with basic rights of the Toubou population and not with separatism. This changed after Gaddafi's fall, when Front leaders have begun to claim autonomy or even secession. We code the start date in 2012, when the first separatist claims were made, and code the movement as ongoing as of 2012. The TFSL was reactivated in 2012 in order to protect the Toubou people from ethnic attacks. According to Al-Jazeera (2012), Al Arabiya (2012) and Ahram Online (2012), the TFSL brought up the possibility of an independent Toubou state as a reaction to rampant ethnic attacks that received no attention from the Libyan government. Minahan (2016: 424) and Roth (2015: 236) describe the movement as ongoing. [start date: 2012; end date: ongoing]

### **Dominant claim**

- Toubou separatism in Libya emerged in 2012 when the Toubou Front for the Salvation of Libya (TFSL) actively started to pursue separatist goals (Roth, 2015:236; Al Arabiya, 2012; Ahram Online, 2012; Al Jazeera, 2012; Minahan, 2016:424). According to Martin and Weber (2012: 2), the TFSL leader Issa Abdel Majid has "threatened to work towards the creation of a separate state in the south". Idrissa and Decalo (2012) also describe the Toubou as an independence movement that wants reunification with its kin in Chad, Libya and Sudan. As with the Toubou in Niger, claims for secessionism can be seen as a mere bargaining strategy to extract concessions from the center (Carment 2012). Nevertheless, Toubou reunification in an independent state still counts as the dominant claim made by a formal organization. [2012-2020: independence claim]

### **Independence claims**

- See above. [start date: 2012; end date: ongoing]

### **Irredentist claims**

- Idrissa and Decalo (2012) describe the Toubou as an independence movement that wants reunification with its kin in Chad, Libya and Sudan. This is not an irredentist claim as defined here as the goal is not to join any of those states, but to gain joint independence, analogous to the Kurds. [no irredentist claims]

### **Claimed territory**

- The territory claimed by the Toubou is not clearly defined. The Toubou inhabit mostly the southeastern part of Libya, notably the Tibesti mountains, and also areas that cross the border to

Niger and Chad (van Waas 2013: 5). We code this claim based on Roth (2015: 230), but only include areas within Libya in keeping with SDM's coding rules on cross-border claims.

### **Sovereignty declarations**

- According to Roth (2015: 236), the Toubous and others unilaterally declared Fezzan to be an autonomous federal region within Libya in September 2012 (Roth, 2015:236). However, other sources including Al Arabiya (2013) state that this declaration took place in September 2013. Furthermore, the declaration relates to the Fezzani movement, which includes the Toubous, but also other groups. We do not code a declaration.

### **Separatist armed conflict**

- There has been significant inter-ethnic violence involving the Toubou (Al Jazeera 2014; Martin et al. 2012), but this is not considered violence over self-determination. [NVIOLSD]

### **Historical context**

- The Toubou are a Saharan ethnic group; in Libya, they are oasis-farming (Roth, 2015:236). Most Toubou live in the Tibesti mountain range and the southern towns of Sabha, Kufra, Murzuq and Qatrun. While the Toubou were converted to Islam by Senussi missionaries in the nineteenth century, the Toubou people retain many of their earlier beliefs and speak a language belonging to the Nilo-Saharan family (Minority Rights Group, 2018).
- When Libya gained independence, many Toubou living in isolated areas effectively became stateless (Minority Rights Group, 2018).
- Qadhafi disenfranchised the Toubou (Roth, 2015:236) while Minahan (2016:424) describes the Toubou as having been persecuted under Qadhafi. More precisely, in the 1970s, the Toubou were forced to register in the Aouzou strip; however, after years of conflict, in 1994 the International Court of Justice ruled that the strip should be returned to Chad and Libya complied. In 1996, Qadhafi issued Decree No. 13 (1485) declaring that those holding identification issued in Aouzou would be considered foreigners (Minority Rights Group, 2018).
- Moreover, in 2007, Qadhafi stripped the Toubou of their citizenship, claiming they were Chadians while local authorities denied the Toubou access to education and healthcare. In response, the Toubou Front for the Salvation of Libya staged an uprising which lasted five days before being crushed by government forces. In 2009, the government forcibly evicted Toubou from their homes and demolished their property rendering many Toubou homeless. Furthermore, the Libyan authorities refused to renew or extend the passports of the Toubou, and parents were prevented from registering births of their children (Minority Rights Group, 2018; Human Rights Council, 2010).
- Following the revolution of 2011, the Toubou were re-enfranchised (Roth, 2015:236). However, the Minority Rights Group (2018) notes that 'it is not clear how far this was implemented' and, 'reportedly, Tebu [Toubou] still face problems applying for documentation and accessing public services, especially in towns where state institutions are dominated by the Arab majority'.
- Following the fall of Qadhafi in 2011, the Toubou announced the reactivation of their own armed Toubou Front for the Salvation of Libya in 2012 and 'committed themselves to seeking autonomy' for their people (Roth, 2015:236). Issa Abdel Majid Mansur stated the following: 'We announce the reactivation of the Toubou Front For the Salvation of Libya...to protect the Toubou people from ethnic cleansing'. He continued: 'If necessary, we will demand international intervention and work towards the creation of a state'. He further criticised the National Transitional Council (NTC), comparing it to Qadhafi's regime (Al Arabiya, 2012; Ahram Online, 2012; Al Jazeera, 2012).
- No concessions or restrictions were found in the ten years before the first year we cover in the dataset.

## Concessions and restrictions

NA

## Regional autonomy

- Although a system of local governance was introduced in Libya in 2012, due to severe insecurity in the country, it has not been meaningfully implemented (Molenaar et al., 2019). Traditional authorities have attempted to breach the gap by supplying services and security in the south more broadly (Molenaar et al., 2019), but there is no system of meaningful regional autonomy in place.
- We still code regional autonomy from 2015 onwards due to de facto independence. [2015-2020: regional autonomy]

## De facto independence

- The evidence we found is not fully conclusive but points to de facto independence. The Toubou are largely based in the south-east of Libya in the Fezzan region. It has been argued that Fezzan has splintered into ‘multiple local spheres of influence’, with ‘traditional’ authorities attempting to supply basic services and security’ (Small Arms Survey, 2014:7; Molenaar et al., 2019). The internationally recognized government in Tripoli is disengaged from, and lacks influence in, Fezzan (International Crisis Group, 2017). The start date of de facto independence is unclear; somewhat arbitrarily, we code de facto independence from 2015 onwards. This is because, since 2014, there have been two competing governments in Libya, although it is worth noting that the Toubou have mostly sided with the internationally recognized government militarily (International Crisis Group, 2017; Molenaar et al., 2019: 126).

## Major territorial changes

- [2014: establishment of de facto independence]

## EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Toubou
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Toubou
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	62002000

## Power access

- EPR codes the Toubou as discriminated against until and including 2011, and as powerless after Gaddafi's fall in 2011. [2012-2020: powerless]

## Group size

- We use data from EPR (0.6%). [0.006]

## Regional concentration

- Information is scarce. EPR codes the Toubou as regionally concentrated, but EPR uses a lower bar. MRGI suggests that the Toubou are “centered” in the Tibesti Mountains and other parts of southern Libya. The CIA World Factbook suggests that the Toubou dominate in large parts of southern Libya. On this basis, we code regional concentration while noting that it is not fully clear whether the thresholds are met. [regionally concentrated]

## Kin

- According to EPR, there are Toubous also in Chad (>100,000) and Niger (>100,000). [kin in neighboring country]

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