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# Middle East Brief

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## Libya's Untold Story: Civil Society Amid Chaos

Jean-Louis Romanet Perroux

Two Parliaments and two governments<sup>1</sup>—neither of which is exercising any significant control over people and territory; two coalitions of armed groups confronting one another and conducting multiple overlapping localized conflicts; thriving organized crime, kidnappings, torture, targeted killings, and suicide bombings; and an increasing number of armed groups claiming affiliation to ISIS (also known as *Da'esh*): These are powerful reasons to portray Libya as the epitome of the failure of the Arab Spring. The country is sliding into a civil war, and a functional Libyan state is unlikely to emerge anytime soon. By all measures and standards, the Libyan democratic transition appears to have been derailed.

Yet notwithstanding these sorry aspects of Libya's transition, there is a slow, less visible, but more positive change occurring in the midst of the country's chaos. It is not a change that is happening at the level of state institutions, and it is hard to see its fruits in the short term. This process of more positive change is unfolding, rather, at the level of individual and small-group attitudes and behaviors, and it is mostly visible through civil society organizations and initiatives. Despite the fighting and division affecting Libya, the country possesses a surprisingly vibrant civil society that has been largely overlooked.

This Brief provides an assessment of the potential role and importance of Libyan civil society today. It first identifies some key requirements of a democratic polity. It then highlights three deficits Libya faces in its possible democratic transition: the failure of its politics, the lack of state institutions,

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and a narrow communalism. In the second half, the Brief depicts Libya's vibrant civil society by focusing on three roles it has played and continues to play: cultivating empowerment and civic engagement, forging a national identity, and fostering trust and social cohesion.

The attitudes and behaviors associated with civil society will determine the extent to which Libyans may be able to craft and respect the democratic institutions capable of fulfilling their political and economic aspirations. They may appear generationally and otherwise complex; but the process itself is as important as the outcome, because it generates a momentum that becomes self-reinforcing. Moreover, it can provide the time and space Libya needs to fill its large institutional and identity void.

## Requirements for a Democratic Polity

In February of 2011, Libyans rose up against the Qaddafi regime, driven by popular demands for political participation and access to economic opportunities, and were quickly aided by a large international intervention. After more than four decades of a totalitarian regime, the uprising was an unprecedented and empowering process that turned Libyans from passive subjects to active, albeit unruly, participants. Such empowerment is a key driving force in the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic state—but it is only a first step. Democratic governance rests on three civic attitudes and behaviors that together shape interactions among citizens and with the state. Civic and political engagement; a national identity trumping narrower communal ones; and trust—trust beyond one's own inner circle and trust in the ability of state institutions to respond to people's needs: These are what determine how newly empowered citizens shape their polity.

The involvement of citizens in social and political life is a crucial component of democracies. Civic and political engagements are peaceful and democratic ways through which individual empowerment can be expressed and channeled to produce collective goods. If citizens do not have the space and means for such engagement, empowerment may translate to either violent confrontation or apathy.

A national definition of identity, which allows citizens to transcend factionalism and seek to implement national policies, is another crucial component of democratic politics: Social identities determine the interests that drive individual and collective action. Thus, it is through the emergence of a national identity overriding communal ones that the structure of allegiance slowly changes from family, tribe, and city to the state. A pluralistic and inclusive conception of national identity can accommodate ethnic, cultural, and religious differences; this is especially important when people attempt a large state-building endeavor. Yet such a pluralistic and inclusive national identity can be achieved over time only through the practice of dialogue and tolerance.

The third key component is trust and social cohesion. This interpersonal attitude is essential for any sort of enterprise, because it lessens the need for information and enforcement mechanisms, thereby making cooperation much easier. In short, the degree of trust determines how easy it will be for an individual to cooperate with other community members—and the radius of trust dictates how far this benefit extends.

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## Libyan Liabilities and Challenges

In meeting these three requirements, Libya faces enormous deficits: the failure of its politics, the lack of state institutions, and a narrow communalism.

### *Political Failure*

Libyan decision-makers carry an important share of responsibility for the political failure that is at the center of the current unraveling. Since 2011, state authorities have been unwilling or unable to achieve the much-needed process of socialization of Libyans into a united, plural, and inclusive nation. Post-2011 Libyan politics were characterized, rather, by intolerance, a lack of dialogue, and exclusionary policies that reinforced popular communal attitudes. This was best reflected in three highly consequential decisions. On April 4, 2012, the National Transitional Council (NTC) established the Integrity and Patriotism Commission, tasked with vetting all public officials, whether appointed or elected. The Commission barred several ministers and fifteen members of Parliament, leaving entire regions without representatives, the principles on which it based its decisions were broad, vague and the decision rationales were not made public.<sup>2</sup> Second, under duress, with hundreds of militia fighters surrounding its premises, on May 5, 2013, the Libyan Parliament (GNC) passed a drastic Political Isolation Law, which purged many prominent political figures and top-ranking state officials who had occupied prominent positions in the Qaddafi regime during its forty-two-year-long tenure.<sup>3</sup> And on February 5, 2014, the Parliament promulgated a law that criminalized various expressions of dissent that could be construed as glorifying the Qaddafi regime, thereby reinstating a law passed by the NTC in 2012 that was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court a month later.<sup>4</sup> Thus, not only was nothing done to include those who supported the former regime into the new Libya by upholding dialogue and reconciliation, but quite the opposite took place. Toward the end of the revolution and in its immediate aftermath, entire neighborhoods and even an entire town accused of being pro-Qaddafi were forcefully evacuated, and so far their inhabitants have been prevented from returning to their homes.<sup>5</sup>

The newly formed government also failed to provide protection for the Tubu, Tuareg, and Amazigh minorities, who make up over 10 percent of the Libyan population. In the fall of 2013, calls to guarantee respect for minority rights in the constitution-drafting process were met with skepticism by decision-makers who refused to grant veto power to minorities on key cultural issues at the Constitution Drafting Assembly,<sup>6</sup> leading these minority groups to boycott its election.

In short, instead of capitalizing on the energy and optimism created by the successful toppling of the Qaddafi regime so as to gain popular support and build a state, Libyan decision-makers squandered the credit, trust, and support that their people had granted the newborn democratic state institutions. Although a strong majority of Libyans continues to believe that democracy is the best form of government, they have lost faith in elections, in political parties, and in their Parliament.<sup>7</sup> This is clearly visible in the dramatic decline in voter turnout in the three national elections held between July 2012 and June 2014. Only 18 percent of eligible voters cast their ballot in the June 2014 elections, down from 50 percent in 2012.<sup>8</sup> The lack of progress in the political transition, the absence of transparency in the democratic process, the increasing polarization of politics, and the unresponsiveness to public demands have combined to alienate would-be Libyan voters.

Moreover, women and youth have remained largely underrepresented in successive Libyan governments and parliaments, which in turn have remained deaf to the relentless petitions and demonstrations of citizens. Despite the new opportunities and political space granted by the 2011 revolution, decision-makers have not created any channels for dialogue and exchange with their constituency. Their exercise of power has not deviated enough from the culture of secrecy and unresponsiveness that had characterized the previous regime to gain the trust of the Libyan people.

Overall, the failure of Libyan politics has led to the current breakdown of state institutions, sparked by key decisions marked by intolerance and an unwillingness to engage in dialogue and compromise. On May 16, 2014, rogue general Khalifa Haftar launched a military campaign to rid Libya of all Islamists, ranging from Muslim Brotherhood politicians to violent Islamic militias, who were portrayed as foreign-driven terrorists. The political dimension of these threats quickly became tangible when a militia affiliated to Haftar's operation attacked the Parliament in Tripoli.<sup>9</sup>

Two months later, following a defeat in the national elections, some political parties and groups refused to recognize the newly elected Parliament, hanging on to the remnants of the Parliament elected in 2012 and appointing their own government. This government and Parliament sit in the capital city, Tripoli, after their affiliated militias took control over it. The Parliament that emerged from the hurried national vote of June 2014 is installed at the opposite end of the country, in the coastal town of Tobruk near the border with Egypt, and enjoys most of the international recognition. Each government counts on its alliance with state and non-state armed forces without actually controlling them; each side can also count on

the support of external patrons. But most Libyans do not trust either of the current governments. Despite relentless dialogue and mediation efforts led by the UN, the two sides have, as of this writing, been unwilling to form a coalition government.

### *Lack of State Institutions*

Since its creation as an independent state in December 1951, Libya has never developed a strong set of centralized state institutions, except for those dedicated to overseeing investments and oil extraction.<sup>10</sup> While highly repressive, the state bureaucracy remained largely ineffective and unresponsive during the Qaddafi era. Official representative institutions were no more than a facade, while all key decisions were made and enforced through a parallel set of highly personalized organizations. Qaddafi's Libya, in other words, had the traits of a stateless nation.<sup>11</sup> Libya's *Jamahiriya*—a neologism created by Qaddafi to convey the concept of “rule through the masses”—was intended to create a stateless system that would purportedly allow for nonmediated government by the people, while in reality, state institutions were hollow shells that simultaneously accommodated local traditional loyalties and highly personalized rule. As a result, today's large Libyan bureaucracy lacks the experience and skills to carry out its functions.

One telling indicator of this bureaucratic failure in the three years following the end of the 2011 revolution was the inability of the transitional governments to spend their allocated budgets. This was because ministries were paralyzed by their lack of specialized staff and their need for clear and detailed directives. Typically, decision-making and implementation required multiple signatures from various departments and bureaucratic echelons in order to assuage the concerns of civil servants.

The inability of Libyan political bodies to deliver on economic development, security, justice, or even very basic services has alienated Libyans from their national state institutions and their politics and left them no alternative but to continue to appeal to their communal identities and interests.

### *Communal Identity*

The 2011 revolution played an important role in fostering a national spirit in Libya. For the first time, the vast majority of Libyans arose as a nation, bound by a common struggle. Many Libyans will tell you that the first time they identified as Libyans was during the revolution.<sup>12</sup> But this national spirit continues to contend with powerful communal attitudes. The horizon of the identity and interests of many Libyans still often extends only to the limits of their narrow community. This was particularly visible during the 2011 revolution, when most armed

groups formed around members of a tribe, a town, or even a neighborhood, which often directly supported them with funding and logistics. Most of these armed groups fought independently and shied away from campaigns extending beyond their territory of origin. This localized dimension of security in Libya has persisted and even been further reinforced since the revolution, owing to the failure to reinstate an effective national police force and army. As a consequence, Libyans have increasingly turned toward their families, clans, and tribes to obtain some measure of justice and security—thereby, of course, reinforcing the connection and identification between individuals and their local community.<sup>13</sup>

Libyan communal identity, however, coexists with the national identity fueled by the successful revolution. Individuals tend to hold multiple overlapping identities at any given time; what influences their perceptions and behavior is the relative importance they attach to different levels of identity. In the case of Libya, what matters is to what degree national identity trumps communal identity. When asked in a 2013 national poll about the extent to which they see themselves as part of their nation, 78.6 percent of Libyans answered “strongly agree,” which is higher than the average such response among Egyptians, Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans, or Yemenis, who vary between 62 percent and 70 percent. Still, the identification with the nation relative to the local community is higher in all the countries mentioned above. The difference between the two is the smallest in Egypt (9.2 percent) and Libya (10.5 percent), as compared with Morocco (18.5 percent), Algeria (24.2 percent), Tunisia (15.3 percent), and Yemen (14.6 percent).<sup>14</sup> This appears to confirm the continuing importance of communal identity in Libya, and that poses a serious problem for democratic governance.

## **Libyan Civil Society**

Unknown to most observers and despite the difficult conditions under which it operates, Libya enjoys a surprisingly vibrant civil society. While Libyan state institutions may not be able to effectively carry out Libya's democratic transition, its civil society has the potential to lead the way.

Civil society is a social domain, distinct from the state, the family, and the economic marketplace, which individuals voluntarily join in the pursuit of a shared objective. The Qaddafi regime actively suppressed this domain, which remained largely nonexistent in the public sphere until the 2011 revolution. In order to assess whether such a civil society exists in Libya today, the author, on behalf of Acted, UNICEF, and UNDP<sup>15</sup>, surveyed 1,022 civil society

organizations (CSOs) in six major cities in Libya<sup>16</sup> between 2012 and 2014. Considering that these cities alone are home to about half of the Libyan population, a conservative estimate of the total number of CSOs operating in Libya as of early 2014—only three years since voluntary associations were allowed to exist in Libya—would be roughly 2,000.<sup>17</sup> This represents a concentration of CSOs by number of inhabitants that is six times larger than that in Iraq in 2011,<sup>18</sup> and is comparable to that reported in Egypt in 2006.<sup>19</sup>

This remarkable prevalence of associational membership among Libyans is confirmed by the 2010–2014 World Values Survey, according to which Libya has a greater number of members of volunteer organizations per capita than any other Maghreb country, and than Egypt.<sup>20</sup> This holds true for all types of organizations: religious; sports or recreation; artistic, musical, or educational; environmental; professional; humanitarian or charitable; and consumer, self-help, or mutual aid group, as well as labor unions and political parties.<sup>21</sup> Since the degradation of security in Libya after May 2014, many CSOs have become inactive, and scores of activists have left the country. Nonetheless, it is clear that nowadays a solid, active, and resilient network of Libyan civil society organizations exists in the country and among Libyans abroad.

### *Empowerment and Civic Engagement*

Unlike government authorities and political parties, CSOs are able to channel and cultivate people's empowerment and participation by developing civic and political engagement. This is immediately visible at the level of the individual attitudes of CSO leaders. A comparison between the author's research and the World Values Survey conducted on a representative national sample of Libyans in 2013 showed that CSO leaders were more likely to believe that they had some freedom of choice and control over their life as compared with the average resident of Libya.<sup>22</sup> A comparison at the level of concrete behaviors, such as voting, also confirms the correlation between activism in civil society and political engagement: CSO leaders consistently demonstrate greater turnout in national elections and express much greater propensity to vote in future elections.<sup>23</sup> Whether this shows that CSOs are a cause or an expression of greater civic and political engagement is an intriguing question, which may not have a clear answer. What is clear is that CSOs provide a means for the expression and development of both kinds of engagement.

Libyan civil society has also actively worked to develop state-citizen dialogue. One such example is the "Eye on the GNC" project, carried out by H2O Team and Bokra Youth Organization, two youth CSOs based in Tripoli and Benghazi, respectively. For two years, this internet

platform publicly provided unprecedented and systematic information on the discussions and decisions of the legislative body.<sup>24</sup>

A variety of other Libyan CSOs across the country have provided public information and fostered political participation before each election. Some organized debate sessions with the candidates; others published their information and political platforms, articulated a "goodwill charter" laying out a contract between voters and candidates, or set up and promoted meetings between candidates or elected officials and the electorate. These are only a few examples of many trust-building measures that Libyan CSOs have organized to develop political engagement.

Civic engagement and political participation, however, do not tell us much about the objectives that are being pursued through such activities. As mentioned earlier, these are intimately tied to the definition of one's identity.

### *National Identity*

A shared national identity binds people together through a sense of solidarity based on shared elements, such as language, culture, ethnicity, descent, history, and the belief in a common destiny. The balance between that national identity and a more communal orientation can be shifted over time only through a process of dialogue and other activities based on tolerance, pluralism, and inclusion. Even though activists are increasingly targeted by militias seeking to control the public space, Libyan CSOs have been promoting these values through countless local, national, and international campaigns, such as "I am Tawfik," calling for peace and civic engagement following the murder of two young activists;<sup>25</sup> the "My city is Libya" initiative, undertaken by Volunteer Libya to promote the unity of Libya through recreational activities, volunteerism, and a media campaign;<sup>26</sup> and the "This is my Libya" campaign, highlighting all the beauty in Libya's land and people.<sup>27</sup> And the active role that CSOs play in forging national unity and a national identity echoes the strong identification with Libya among civil society activists. When CSO leaders were asked to select the geographical group they identified as being from primarily, a large majority (69 percent) selected Libya, whereas only 13 percent selected their hometown and almost as many selected "the world."<sup>28</sup> Since the beginning of the 2011 revolution, music has also started playing an important role in promoting national unity and tolerance of diversity. For instance, Libyan rapper Ibn Thabit composed a loving anthem to his people,<sup>29</sup> and was also among the first to publish a song in Amazigh, the language of Berbers that was prohibited for four decades under the Qaddafi regime. Rock bands such as Guys UnderGround have provided songs and videos articulating collective grievances and

weaving common experiences into a narrative that binds Libyans together.<sup>30</sup> Currently, Libyan singers and activists are working on a song called “We are one,” conveying a message of unity, hope, and peace. Many of these songs have had several hundred thousand hits. These rap, pop, and rock songs have given a new voice to Libyan youth, in a country where youth makes up over half of the total population, and are helping rally Libyans around ideas of pluralism, diversity, and a united Libyan nation.

### *Trust and Social Cohesion*

Since the end of the 2011 revolution, countless Libyan civil society initiatives have proven to be a strong antidote to individualism and intolerance. Hundreds of Libyan CSOs whose activities range beyond their own city have allowed scores of Libyans across communities to freely pursue common passions and interests and access the public space. One of the most impressive gains was in the realm of women’s empowerment and participation. The 2011 revolution in Libya saw women on the forefront since its outset, with the February protests in Benghazi.<sup>31</sup> The seven months of fighting that culminated with the toppling of Qaddafi witnessed Libyan women feeding fighters on the front lines, providing medical assistance to the injured, smuggling arms, and conveying important information to rebel commanders.

Many of these women have formed civil society organizations and continue to advance the role of women in Libyan society and politics. The Libyan Women’s Platform for Peace, for example, provided an arena within which women from across the country and abroad could join forces to advance women’s rights.<sup>32</sup> Recently, it launched a Charter of Libyan Women’s Constitutional Rights that was drafted collectively by Libyans in the country and abroad.<sup>33</sup> This project to include women in the process of drafting a Constitution is one of many, such as the “Dastoor” project, carried out by the the Libyan Women’s Union and the Libyan Forum for Civil Society, and the Women’s Charter Project, designed and conducted by Voice of Libyan Women.<sup>34</sup> Many other initiatives, such as “Project Silphium,” empower women and educate Libyans about feminism and gender issues.<sup>35</sup> These projects change the public’s perception of the role of Libyan women, thereby paving their way to start playing an active role in the economy, in society, and in politics.<sup>36</sup>

Libyan CSOs bring the country’s people together across a multitude of activities and interests. Thus, as it did for women’s empowerment and participation, civil society in Libya has created a space for individuals who care about the environment to initiate efforts to clean up their cities and spread love and respect for the environment across their country. Some of these movements are “The Libyan Wildlife Trust,” “The Cleaning Revolution,” “Cleaning

up Tripoli,” and “Cleaning Up Benghazi.”<sup>37</sup> These groups have the clear goal of supporting the government and local authorities in protecting the environment and seeing to the upkeep of cities.

The author’s findings show that more than two-thirds of Libyan CSOs cooperate with other volunteer organizations, and that almost half promote activities that range beyond their own city. Libyan civil society activists also displayed a much greater level of generalized trust than is typical among Libyan citizens. Generalized trust is trust that extends to the out-group—to people that a person does not directly know.<sup>38</sup> Twenty-three percent of CSO leaders surveyed believed that most people could be trusted, compared with only 11 percent among the general Libyan population.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, CSO leaders displayed *lower* levels of trust in their family and their neighborhood, as compared with the overall Libyan population. This lower level of personalized trust (that is, trust in people one knows) coupled with a higher level of generalized trust may reflect a lesser inclination to social acceptance of and conformity with respect to traditional and familial figures alongside a greater openness toward ties based on common interests. And this is another reason why Libyan civil society activists may serve as positive agents of change. By engaging together across communities in the pursuit of a common cause, Libyans expand the definition of their identity and reframe their interests from identifiers that are acquired by birth (e. g., tribe or ethnicity) to freely *chosen* criteria.

These civil society initiatives may often be invisible, and they are largely unknown to foreign observers. But unlike the conflicts among militias that make up much of the news about Libya, daily civil society initiatives are building the trust and social cohesion that are needed to bridge across Libyan divides. These attitudinal changes knit divided communities into one pluralistic nation, and are helping prepare Libyans to become citizens of a modern state. It is civil society, rather than divided state institutions, that is fostering tolerance and pluralism in Libya through the exercise of freedom of choice, expression, and association across community divides. But these freedoms will need a minimum level of social order and stability if they are to be able to be enjoyed.

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## Conclusion

As we have seen, Libya has a resilient fabric of civil society organizations in the country and among its diaspora. Civil society will no doubt be unable to prevent continued

fighting, or the current derailment of the democratic transition process. However, owing to the widespread individual empowerment gained as a result of the 2011 revolution and to Libyans' unprecedented access to information and knowledge since then, thousands of Libyan CSOs and tens of thousands of invisible Libyan activists across ethnic, tribal, and other communities are seeking freedom, political participation, and access to economic opportunities. By doing so collectively, many are forging a new Libyan identity by developing bonds of common interest that cut across kinship ties. They are reconquering the public space and fostering participation through volunteerism. And they are developing attitudes of tolerance and inclusion by giving voice to the pluralism that characterizes their society. Civil society may not be able to create a Libyan state, but it is preparing Libyans to act as citizens.

As a dramatic recognition of the importance of their influence, Libyan activists have increasingly become targets of threats, aggression, kidnappings, and killings.<sup>40</sup> But if the state cannot protect individual freedoms and rights, not only are activists killed or otherwise silenced, but individuals withdraw from the public space (or leave the country), and civil society organizations abandon those advocacy-type activities that are crucial for the development of a liberal democracy. Certainly, Libyan society has shown its capacity to confront the most powerful and violent armed groups,<sup>41</sup> but if the state authorities cannot follow up on these attempts at curbing the power of militias by maintaining justice and security, civil society cannot win alone against violent groups.

## Endnotes

- 1 Although a new Parliament was legitimately elected, albeit with a very low voter turnout, in June 2014, some members of the old Parliament (General National Congress - GNC) refused to dissolve and instead appointed their own government in Tripoli. (See text below).
- 2 For more information on the Commission, see [“Libya: Amend Vetting Regulations for Candidates, Officials: Prohibitions on Candidacy Vague and Imprecise,” \*Human Rights Watch\*, April 28, 2012.](#)\*
- 3 For more information on the Political Isolation Law and its consequences, see [“Libya: Reject ‘Political Isolation Law,’” \*Human Rights Watch\*, May 4, 2013,](#)\* and [“Zeidan: Isolation Law the Greatest Cause of Chaos in Libya,” \*Bawabat al-Wasat\*, July 9, 2014.](#)
- 4 For further information, see [“Libya: Three Years On, Gaddafi-Era Laws Used to Clamp Down on Free Expression,” \*Amnesty International\*, February 12, 2014,](#)\* and [“Libya: UPR Submission September 2014,” \*Human Rights Watch\*, September 16, 2014.](#)\*
- 5 Essan Mohamed, [“Libyan Tawerghans Delay Return as Gaddafi-era Tensions Remain,” \*Al-Bawaba\*, June 26, 2013,](#)\* and [“Libya: Displaced Camp Residents Need Immediate Protection: Militia Attacks on Tawerghans Leave One Dead,” \*Human Rights Watch\*, November 20, 2013.](#)\*
- 6 Ulf Laessing, [“Libya’s Berber to Boycott Committee Drafting Constitution,” \*Reuters\*, November 13, 2013.](#)\*
- 7 National polls conducted in May and November 2013 show that support for democracy only slightly declined in that time period, from 83% to 80%. In the same time span, however, support for the Parliament dropped from 63% to 31%, and the proportion of Libyans who believed in the necessity of political parties in a democracy plummeted from 86% to 53%. [JMW Consulting and National Democratic Institute, “Committed to Democracy and Unity: Public Opinion Survey in Libya,” March 2014.](#)\*
- 8 See Mustafa Fetouri, [“Poor Election Turnout Sign of Libya’s Despair,” \*Al-Monitor\*, June 30, 2014.](#)\*
- 9 For more, see [“Libya Parliament under Attack,”](#) interview, [Radio France Internationale](#), May 18, 2014,\* and [“Rogue Libyan General’s Forces Attack General National Congress,” \*AFP\*, May 19, 2014.](#)\*
- 10 Specifically, the Libyan Central Bank, the National Oil Corporation, and the Libyan Investment Authority.
- 11 See John Davis, *Libyan Politics: Tribe and Revolution; An Account of the Zuwaya and Their Government* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 31, 40–44.
- 12 Author’s interviews, Tripoli, November 2011.
- 13 For a broader description of this phenomenon, see [“Searching for Stability: Perceptions of Security, Justice, and Firearms in Libya,” \*Small Arms Survey\*, Issue Brief, Number 1 \(August 2014\).](#)\*
- 14 As measured by questions 213 and 214 (Libya questionnaire) in the World Values Survey, Wave 6: 2010–2014. [Questionnaire available](#) and [data available.](#)\*
- 15 ACTED is a French NGO called [Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development](#), UNICEF is the United

- Nations Children's Fund, UNDP is the United Nations Development Program
- 16 Namely: Benghazi, Misrata, Sebha, Tripoli, Zawia, and Zuwara.
- 17 As elsewhere in the world, there are many more *registered* organizations. In Libya in 2014 there were about 4,000 registered CSOs, many of which were inactive.
- 18 Based on "2011 CSO Sustainability Index for the Middle East and North Africa: The 2011 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Report for the Middle East and North Africa," [USAID, 2011](#).\*
- 19 The 2,000 estimate, for a Libyan population of 6.2 million, represents a concentration of 333 CSOs per million inhabitants, which is higher than that for Egypt in 2006, estimated at 317 CSOs per million inhabitants. This is based on data provided by the Government of Egypt, as reported in Andrea Liverani, "Civil Society and Social Capital in North Africa," in *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, ed. Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler (Springer Science + Business Media, 2010), pp. 268–73.
- 20 No data are available for Mauritania.
- 21 As measured in 2013 by questions 25 to 35 (Libya questionnaire) in the [World Values Survey, Wave 6: 2010–2014](#).\*
- 22 As measured by question V55 (Libya questionnaire) in the World Values Survey, Wave 6: 2010–2014. [Questionnaire available](#) and [data available](#).\*
- 23 On average, 86% of CSO leaders surveyed between August 2013 and April 2014 had voted in the 2012 national election compared with 72% of Libyans generally, and 79% intended to vote in the next election compared with 58% (both excluding "don't know" answers), as measured by national surveys conducted in May 2013 and November 2013, respectively. See [JMW Consulting and National Democratic Institute, "Believing in Democracy: Public Opinion Survey in Libya," August 2013, p. 18](#),\* and [JMW Consulting and National Democratic Institute, "Committed to Democracy and Unity," p. 20](#).
- 24 See <http://www.h2o.org.ly/>\* and "Eye on the Libyan General National Congress: First Report," [Jadaliyya, January 31, 2013](#).\* The original website of the "Eye on the GNC" project has been temporarily suspended due to domain and server issues; the CSO activists are working on launching the project again on a new site and launch a parallel project called "Eye on the HoR", to cover the activities of the new Parliament as well as those of the old one.
- 25 For more information, see [IamTawfikOfficial, facebook.com](#)\* and [www.tawfikbensaud.org](#).\*
- 26 For more information, see [Volunteer Libya, facebook.com](#)
- 27 See a sample of the campaign pictures at "This Is #MyLibya," [buzzfeed.com](#),\* or see [#MyLibya, facebook.com](#).\*
- 28 Author's research, 2013–14.
- 29 "Libya Hiya" [ibnthabitmedia, youtube.com, March 27, 2011](#).\*
- 30 For example, see [MC SWAT Featuring Guys UnderGround, "Lies & Pain," youtube.com](#).\*
- 31 For a short video summarizing the role of women in the 2011 revolution, see "Behind the Rising," [Libyan Women's Platform for Peace, October 9, 2014](#).\*
- 32 The Libyan Women's Platform for Peace (LWPP) was launched in October 2011 by over thirty-five women from different cities and backgrounds. It has since grown to a network of over one hundred organizations and people. More information can be found at: [www.lwpp.org](#).\*
- 33 [Charter of Libyan Women's Constitutional Rights, The Libyan Women's Platform for Peace](#).\*
- 35 Silphium was a plant that was used in Cyrene (Shahat, Libya) as a medicine. Project Silphium on the other hand aims at healing women by voicing their frustration, views and opinions. It is a civil society initiative aimed at empowering women and increasing awareness about gender issues. For more information, see the Project's Facebook page, [Project Silphium, facebook.com](#)
- 36 For a short video summarizing the activities and challenges of women in Libya, see "Our Revolution, Our Constitution," [Gender Concerns International, February 18, 2014](#).\*
- 37 For more information, see [facebook.com: Libyan Wildlife Trust; Cleaning Up Tripoli; and Cleaning Up Benghazi](#).\*
- 38 For a detailed explanation of the distinction between particularized trust and generalized trust and for a description of the importance of the latter, see Toshio Yamigichi and Midori Yamigichi, "Trust and Commitment in the United States and Japan," in *Motivation and Emotion* 18 no. 2 (1994): 129–166; Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, Free Press, 1995; and Eric M. Uslaner, *The Moral Foundation of Trust*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002.
- 39 As measured in 2013 by question 24 (Libya questionnaire) in the World Values Survey, Wave 6: 2010–2014.
- 40 Prominent activists were murdered beginning with Abdelsalam al-Mismari in July 2013, and further escalating with the killing of human rights lawyer and activist Salwa Bugagais in her home on the very night of the June 2014 parliamentary elections. These were followed by the killings of Muftah Buzaid and Fariha Berkawi. Violence against activists crossed yet another threshold in September 2014 with the assassination of two peaceful and engaged young activists, Sami Elkwafi and Tawfik Bensaud, seventeen and eighteen years old, respectively. (See discussion above re the "I am Tawfik" campaign, and footnote 24.) Other activists have been killed until the time of this writing. Overall, there have been several dozen targeted killings of civil society activists since 2011.
- 41 On "Save Benghazi Friday" (September 21, 2012), for example, and during the "Gharghour massacre" in Tripoli (November 15, 2013), popular demonstrations succeeded in chasing the most brutal and powerful militia from their cities, although peaceful protests quickly turned into armed confrontations between protesters and armed groups. For more information, see "Voices in the Streets: Mass Social Protests and the Right to Peaceful Assembly," [Freedom House Special Report, January 2015, pp 29 and succ.](#),\* and "Make or break: A showdown with the militias may mark a turning-point. Which way?," [The Economist, November 23, 2013](#).\*

\*Weblinks are available in the online version at [www.brandeis.edu/crown](#)



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## Middle East Brief

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Jean-Louis Romanet Perroux

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