

society because they have acted against the whole. The use of this term is particularly dangerous because, according to some doctrine in Islam, it is justifiable to kill an apostate (someone who has renounced a religious belief or principle). The word is used in an inflammatory manner when it is used to call for violent action against those accused of being “khawarij.” The term may be used to signal that the person labeled as such is an extremist and therefore an acceptable target for violence. Particularly in LNA-controlled areas, calling someone a “kharij” (singular form of “khawarij”) could potentially threaten that person’s safety.

The term was used extensively in the civil war in Benghazi in 2014 when Haftar launched “Operation Dignity.” It was used not only to describe Islamists, but also people who were sympathizers, relatives, or members of the MB or Ansar al Sharia. For this reason, many people who left Benghazi due to fears of “Operation Dignity” are now referred to as “khawarij” in the east of Libya; there is graffiti of the term on the walls of some of the abandoned houses.

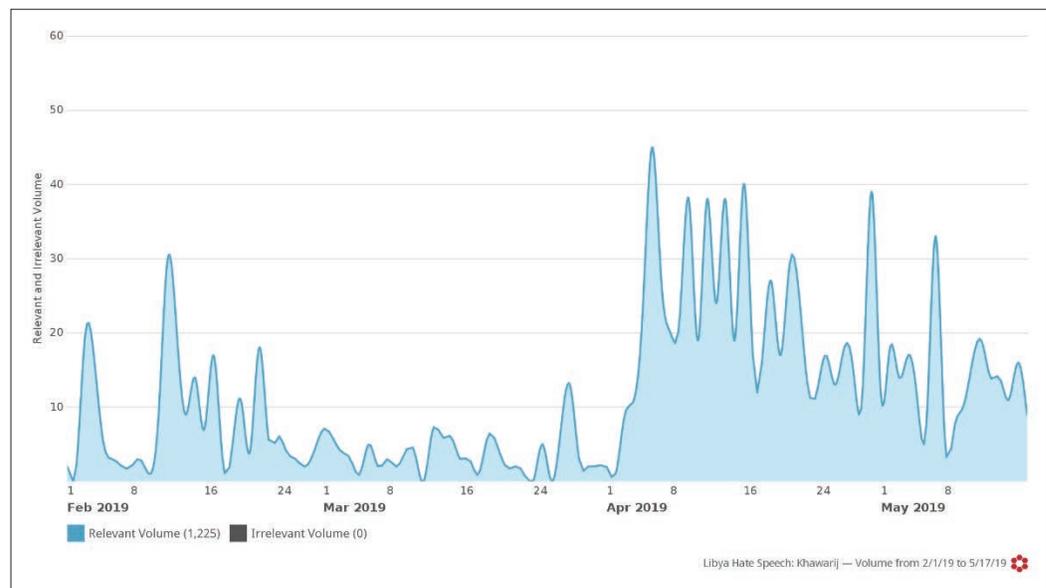


Figure A: This illustrates the daily volume of tweets containing the word “khawarij” from February 1 - May 17, 2019. There is a clear uptick in the use of the term online in early April, corresponding with the date that the LNA launched an offensive in and around Tripoli. Several other hate speech terms also saw a significant increase during this time period.

Non-offensive alternative terms: مصلحين / *muslihin* (English translation: *reformers / reformists*); الجماعات الاصوليه / *jamaat usuli* (English translation: *fundamentalist / reformist group*); الثوار / *althuwwar* (English translation: *revolutionaries*); المعارضين / *almuearidin* (English translation: *opponents / objectors*); جماعه اصلاح وتغيير (English translation: *reform and change group*)