to the conflict in Libya that should be addressed, PeaceTech Lab believes that online hate speech is a priority issue given the rapid growth of social media networks and information and communications technology (ICT), and given the potential for these tools to be used to incite violence. ICT and mobile technology are increasingly accessible to populations globally, expanding the reach of both negative and positive messaging. It is imperative to leverage the impacts of positive messaging through projects such as this one.

Internet Reliability

Our local partners in Libya experienced intermittent problems with internet connectivity that caused some delays in communication and the transmittal of survey data. This lengthened the timeline of the data collection somewhat as they were unable to submit the data immediately upon completion of the sorting and translation. Poor internet connection in Tripoli was exacerbated by daily shelling by Haftar's forces in and around Tripoli, where many of PeaceTech Lab's local partners live and work.

Language and Translation Challenges

Another challenge that impacted the timeline of the project, as well as the ease with which the PeaceTech Lab team was able to analyze the collected data, was a lack of Arabic language knowledge on staff. The local partners provided valuable translation support but having a fluent Arabic speaker as a dedicated consultant on the project would enable faster and more direct translation, data sorting, and analysis for future lexicons in Arabic-speaking regions.

This issue, particularly in Arabic-speaking countries and regions, also has implications for monitoring of hateful language. It is key that the individuals and organizations using this lexicon to monitor and combat hateful speech possess Arabic language skills, preferably specific to the Libyan dialect, and knowledge of the Libyan context. Many of these terms and phrases may appear unbiased to the outside observer, but the implications become clear through an understanding of the Libyan context and the subtle differences in meanings due to spelling or pronunciation changes and other nuances.

Cultural Sensitivity around Profanity

A specific issue that arose during the project was cultural sensitivity around profanity and personal slurs. The initial list of prevalent offensive terms that we developed included two terms that had to be left out of the validation workshop discussions based on the recommendation of local consultants. PeaceTech Lab was advised that workshop participants would not be comfortable discussing these terms in a group setting due to their classification as slurs and the relatively conservative nature of certain parts of Libya's society. The excluded terms were slurs against women and homosexual men. The decision was made to omit these terms to ensure that workshop participants were able to share their views comfortably without upsetting social norms. This was not ideal for the project as these terms are still used online, and further data collection through online methods or in a more permissive environment would likely be useful in further understanding the use of these terms in Libya and how inflammatory they are.