

LIBYA SITUATION

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1 May – 31 August 2016



Visit to the men section of a detention center in Libya © UNHCR

KEY FIGURES

696,381

People of concern to UNHCR as of 31st August 2016

37,744

Refugees registered in Libya (Source: UNHCR, July 2016)

348,372

Internally displaced persons in various regions of Libya (Source: DTM, Round 5 July 2016)

11,725

Individuals received medical assistance in 2016

13,434

Refugees and asylum seekers provided with hygiene items in 2016

FUNDING

USD 23.9 million

requested for the operation



PRIORITIES

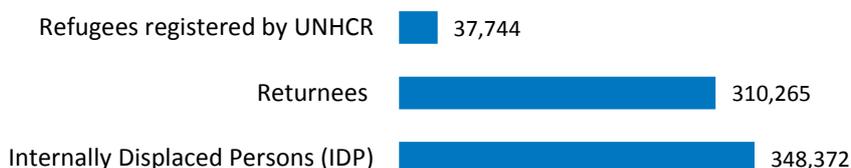
- Protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in Libya
- Support to internally displaced people and returnees as well as to host communities
- Capacity building of Libyan authorities on asylum- and protection-sensitive border management
- Detention monitoring, seeking alternatives to detention and basic assistance to persons of concern in detention.

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR and its partners resumed **distribution of cash assistance to the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in June 2016**, after several months of suspension due to the lack of liquidity in Libyan banks. At the end of August, more than 1,100 individuals received cash assistance. In Benghazi, UNHCR's **Community Development Centre reopened and resumed activities in August 2016**, after closure since March 2016. UNHCR partner's CESVI completed the registration required by local authorities and obtained the license to resume humanitarian activities. The plan for the resumption of activities focuses in priority on the most urgent cases.
- As of August 2016, almost 10,000 persons were intercepted or rescued at sea by the Libyan Coastal Guards (LCG)**, including women and children. UNHCR is expanding its **emergency intervention for people rescued / intercepted at sea** and disembarked in Libya: in addition to two health posts already established in Tripoli and Zawyah ports, UNHCR is establishing presence in three additional disembarkation points. Through these health posts, UNHCR will ensure that **persons rescued or intercepted at sea** upon disembarkation have access to primary health care. It is also an opportunity for UNHCR to identify persons in need of international protection, including vulnerable cases, and follow-up on their cases with Libyan authorities.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR's partner LibAid distributed **non-food items to internally displaced families** from Sirte: more than 650 received assistance in Western Libya (Misratah and Bani Waled) and 375 families in Benghazi. UNHCR partner's Mercy Corps is currently undertaking a **rapid needs assessment in Sirte** in order to identify the gaps and needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities.

Persons of concern

A total of **696,381** persons of concern



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Political and Security Context

Implementation of the UN-brokered Libyan Political Agreement, signed on 17 December 2015, was delayed despite the Presidency Council setting up headquarters in Tripoli in March 2016. In a session held on 22 August 2016, the House of Representatives (HoR) rejected the Government of National Accord (GNA) suggested by the Presidency Council (PC). The PC took note and announced a new cabinet would be presented before the HoR.

Pending the endorsement of a Government of National Accord by the House of Representatives, **Libya therefore continues to be de facto divided among three main political entities**, in addition to hundreds of militias:

- The Presidency Council (PC) now based in Tripoli has received international support; a Government of National Accord is to be submitted to the House of Representatives for endorsement;
- The House of Representatives (HoR), based in Tobruk since 2014 elections, is to handover powers to the Presidency Council's Government of National Accord once endorsed ;
- The General National Congress (GNC) supported by Fajr Libya, a coalition of Islamist militias, remains in Tripoli.

The security situation in Libya remains fragile with confrontations involving a complex constellation of armed groups. Forces loyal to the Government of National Accord (GNA) have been fighting for weeks the Islamic State (IS) in Sirte, an IS stronghold since June 2015. Upon the request of the GNA, American airstrikes have targeted IS positions in Sirte since August 2015, contributing to the GNA-forces taking over most of the city. This has sparked concern, however, of IS fighters fleeing Sirte to move back to neighbouring countries, south of Libya or towards Europe. In Derna, the Libyan National Army, loyal to the House of Representatives and led by General Haftar, is fighting against the Shoura Council of the Mujahedeen of Derna, a coalition of Islamist militias who themselves initially fought the Islamic State for the control of Derna.

Humanitarian Situation

The conflict in Libya has affected an **estimated 100,000 refugees and asylum-seekers** (of which almost 38,000 are registered with UNHCR), close to **350,000 IDPs** and over **310,000 persons recently returned** to their area of origin after displacement. Many require varying degrees of protection and assistance from UNHCR.

In the absence of rule-of-law and functioning institutions, refugees and asylum-seekers are particularly vulnerable to harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, limited freedom of movement and other serious human rights violations. Various areas in the country are extremely difficult to reach and there is subsequently limited presence of actors on the ground to provide basic assistance. Several thousands people are held in detention centers run by the Department for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) or by militias.

Libya continues to be the main transit and departure point for irregular sea migration to Europe from North Africa. About 90 per cent of the 117,000 individuals arrived in Italy from January to August 2016 have been reported departing from Libya.

UNHCR Presence in Libya

Since July 2014, UNHCR has maintained operations in Libya through remote management from Tunisia, relying on a team of dedicated national staff based in Tripoli and Benghazi and several partner organizations. UNHCR outreach to refugees and asylum seekers through Community Development Centres (CDC), home visits and its nine hotlines. Through partners, the office also established health posts at disembarkation points in rescue/interception at sea incidents.

Achievements



Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to register vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, albeit capacities remains limited.** UNHCR's partners assist in the registration process through outreach activities as well as data collection; UNHCR completes the registration and issues asylum-seeker certificates. So far in 2016, UNHCR completed the **registration of more than 900 asylum-seekers**, out of more than 2,600 individuals who have shared their data with UNHCR partners.
- UNHCR and its partners run two community development centres**, one in Benghazi and another Tripoli. The centres provide a space where persons of concern can receive counselling and protection services. This includes registration, renewal of UNHCR's documents, identification of persons with specific needs or in need of health or financial assistance. Due to a new local legislation, UNHCR Community Development Centre in Benghazi was closed from March to August 2016; activities resumed after UNHCR's partner completed the required registration. In addition to the CDCs, UNHCR partners carry out home visits in western and eastern Libya to identify persons in need of assistance. So far in 2016, almost **5,000 individuals were interviewed** by Protection Monitoring teams.
- UNHCR, through its partner CESVI, resumed cash assistance distribution in June 2016.** Cash assistance was suspended early 2016 due to Libyan banks' liquidity problem. **Some 1,100 individuals have received monthly cash assistance** since the resumption of cash distribution.
- As of August 2016, UNHCR hotlines received more than 1,700 calls from refugees and asylum-seekers.** The nine hotlines managed by UNHCR and partners provide information to refugees and asylum-seekers on protection support and community services. Main queries relate to resettlement, medical assistance, cash assistance, reports of detention, education support, and other protection concerns. Staff also receive via the hotlines requests for assistance from people who have been arrested and are in detention.
- Through detention visits, UNHCR reached around **15,000 detained persons in 2016**. More than **5,000 persons have been assisted with medical assistance** by UNHCR and its partner IMC. In addition, UNHCR successfully intervened for the **release to around 90 persons of concern** who were detained in various DCIM centres on the account of their irregular entry, presence or attempt to leave. UNHCR advocate for alternatives to detention and in the meantime, provide humanitarian assistance to improve conditions for the detainees. UNHCR has expanded its detention visits to the South (Kofra and Sebha) and has now access through its partner International Medica Corps (IMC) to 14 of some 18 detention centres run by Department of Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM).
- UNHCR was alerted in August on the **critical food situation due to the lack of funds of detention facilities**; together with partner IMC, UNHCR developed a contingency plan for immediate intervention in case of discontinuation of food distribution. Lack of food is a chronic problem in detention facilities. UNHCR is currently undertaking an in-depth technical assessment of water and sanitation systems in six detention facilities in Tripoli, to improve conditions for detainees. This is part of UNHCR's strategic approach towards enhancing the protection environment for refugees and asylum seekers in Libya.
- As of August 2016, over 10,000 persons were intercepted or rescued at sea by the Libyan Coastal Guards (LCG)**, including women and children. The total number of recovered bodies on Libyan shores according to the Libyan Coast Guard and Libyan Red Crescent is over 660. UNHCR is expanding its emergency intervention from two to five sea ports in Tripoli and continues monitoring rescue at sea/interception operations, providing basic emergency assistance to refugees and migrants disembarked in Tripoli and Zawyia, where UNHCR has established health posts through its partners. UNHCR is also currently undertaking an in-depth technical assessment for its water and



UNHCR partner's IMC is providing basic health assistance to detainees in the detention centers regularly visited. © IMC

sanitation and shelter intervention in the five identified sea ports in order to undertake rehabilitation of disembarkation areas.

- During the reporting period, UNHCR started the implementation **of a comprehensive capacity building programme on refugee protection to take place not only in Tunisia but also inside Libya through local partners**. For this purpose, UNHCR completed two 7-day “Training of Trainers” for local partners in the West, East and South of Libya. Local partners received a full training on refugee protection and presented a work plan to implement this training inside Libya targeting key stakeholders engaged in refugee protection. UNHCR signed partnership with local partners with solid network to advocate for refugee protection in Libya.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- As a result of the conflict, protection space for refugees and asylum-seekers in Libya has shrunk further while access to education and health services is getting more difficult. Rental costs had risen while opportunities for employment for all persons of concern are scarce, combined with hyperinflation and a liquidity crisis in Libyan banks.
- Refugees and asylum seekers in Libya are particularly at risk of arrests and detention, violence, abuses and human rights violations, but also forced labour and forced prostitution.



Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period, UNHCR, through its partner the Libyan State Humanitarian relief Agency (LIBAID), completed a **distribution of non-food items to IDPs**, reaching 375 families displaced from Sirte to Benghazi area (around 3,154 persons in total). Families received blankets, jerry cans, solar lamps and kitchen sets, a package adapted to their needs as they have no family links in their area of displacement and hence, are living in makeshift accommodation. Out of the 500 families initially targeted, some 125 were contacted but did not show up at the distribution points.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Latest IOM findings on displacement in Libya indicate an increase of returns - 310,265 returnees in August 2016 in Libya, of which 85,500 returns to Benghazi but also in Derna. In addition to rehabilitation of private and public infrastructure, there is an urgent need to clear unexploded devices, mines, etc.
- Internally displaced populations continue to be affected by ongoing conflict and difficult socioeconomic conditions. Hyperinflation in Libya combined with shortage of food and basic items are creating a pressure on the most vulnerable. Due to limited capacities, UNHCR assistance to IDPs focuses on the most vulnerable.



Health

Achievements and Impact

- 23,711 refugees and asylum seekers in total had access to basic health services so far in 2016, at the Community Development Centers or through regular visits to detention centers by UNHCR’s partner IMC; patients are being referred to Libyan health services when relevant. Refugees and asylum-seekers use UNHCR’s attestation letters to obtain access to public health services.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The Libyan health care system is on the verge of collapsing, heavily impacted by the ongoing clashes and severe shortages. As a result, refugees and asylum-seekers are also facing difficulties to access public health services and basic medicines. Sanitation and hygiene conditions in detention centers are particularly difficult.



Education

- Refugees and asylum-seekers continue to have access to primary, secondary and higher education such as university level programmes on the basis of the documentation provided by UNHCR.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- UNHCR is a **member of the United Nations and Humanitarian Country Team in Libya** and works in close cooperation with other UN agencies. As part of the [Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\) 2015-2016 for Libya](#), UNHCR leads the Protection Working Group (PWG), the Shelter/NFI working group and co-leads the Detention Task Force with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) under the HRP for Libya's Refugee and Migrant Response Plan.
- UNHCR collaborates with Libyan authorities** and has set up a forum to boost Libya's ability to respond to rescue at sea incidents and provide humanitarian assistance to the persons rescued or intercepted. The group brings together UNHCR, the Libyan Coastguard, the Port Security Department, the Directorate for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM), the Libyan Red Crescent Society (LRC), international actors, such as the IOM and IMC.
- 4th Technical meeting on Saving lives and rescue at sea took place in August jointly with IOM. The meeting concluded with establishment of the Technical Working group and development of draft Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) on rescue at sea.
- For its refugee response, UNHCR works with two international NGOs** - CESVI and theIMC - in Benghazi and Tripoli to carry out protection and assistance activities and detention monitoring. UNHCR is also partnering with non-for-profit organisation IMPACT Initiative, to assess migration routes and trends so as to best adapt and tailor its humanitarian response to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR is also working in partnership with local NGOs Arkan for Development, a consulting agency, as well as with the Libyan Organization for Development (LOD), to establish an advocacy and capacity building plan on refugee protection in Libya and to provide legal counselling to refugees and asylum seekers in Libya.
- As for IDPs, UNHCR works with three international NGOs** – Acted, the IMC and Mercy Corps – to monitor and assess protection issues of persons internally displaced and/ returned and to provide core relief items and financial assistance. UNHCR is also working in partnership with an local NGO, Libyan humanitarian relief agency to provide core relief items and hygiene kits for most vulnerable households.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **USD 10.9 million**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds in 2016.

Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016 (in USD):

United States of America (200 M) | Sweden (78 M) | Netherlands (46 M) | Norway (40 M) | Priv Donors Spain (35 M) | Australia (31 M) | Japan (24 M) | Denmark (24 M) | United Kingdom (23 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (13 M) | Priv Donors Italy (13 M) | Germany (13 M) | Priv Donors Japan (11 M) | Italy (10 M)

Other donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016:

Algeria | Argentina | Austria | Belgium | China | Costa Rica | Ecuador | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Hungary | India | Indonesia | Ireland | Israel | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Mexico | Monaco | Mozambique | New Zealand | Peru | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Romania | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private Donors

Funding received (in million USD)

United States of America	3,000,000
Germany	2,121,389
CERF	1,800,006
Italy	1,395,010
European Union	958,600
Sweden	612,220
Spain	558,659
Republic of Korea	350,000

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