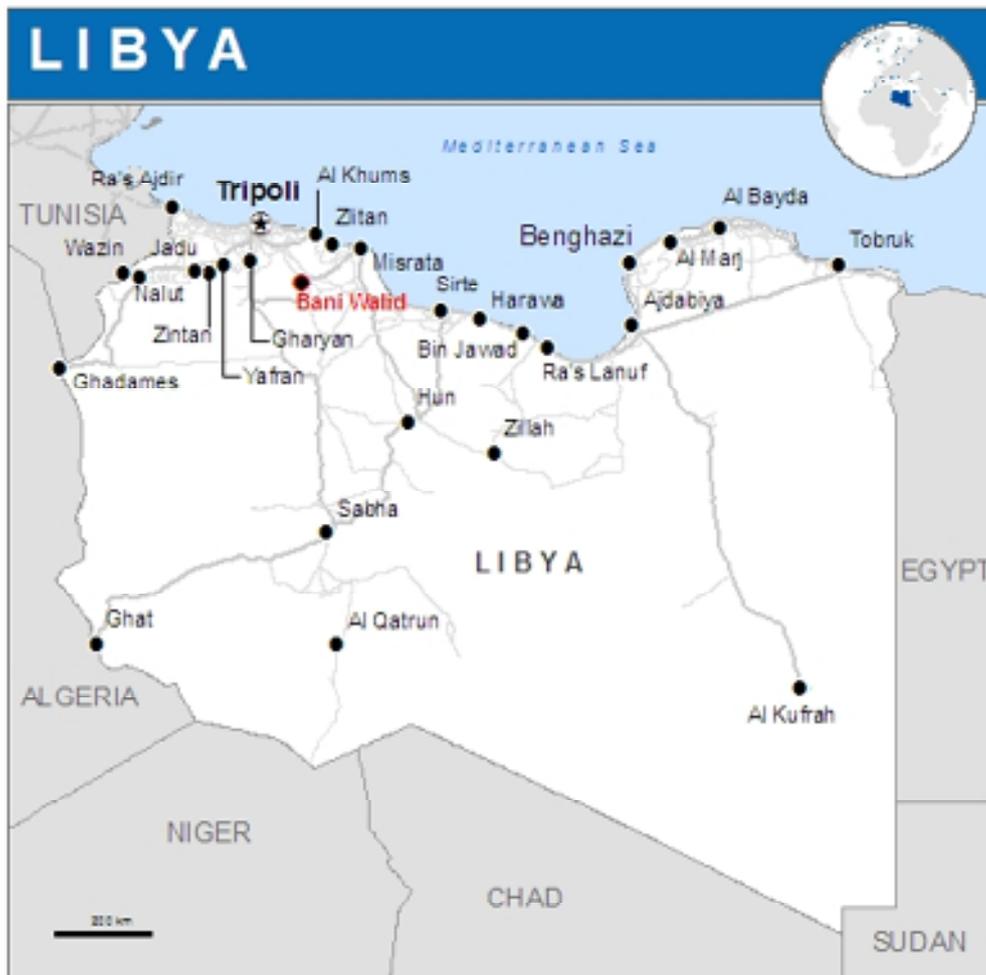




OCHA and WFP Joint Mission to Bani Walid 14 November 2011



DISCLAIMER: This report outlines key observations and recommendations of the **United Nations Inter-Agency Technical Mission to Bani Walid, Libya** on 14 November 2011. Given the limited duration of the mission, this report should only be used as an indicative guide.

1. Objectives

OCHA and WFP staff based in Misrata visited Bani Walid on 14 November to follow-up on the findings and recommendations of the Inter-Agency Mission to Bani Walid on 25 October. Islamic Relief staff also participated in the visit.

2. Methodology

Meetings were held with officials from the Civil Council / Relief Committee and officials from the town's main hospital. Government warehouses were visited where relief supplies and subsidised food commodities were stored.

3. Situation Overview

The Civil Council estimates that some 70-75% of the population has now returned. The remaining 25% of the population that continues to be displaced are either still living in camps, or with host families or in rented accommodation in Tajura, Wadi Swaji, Girza, Wadi Zam Zam, Wadi Gharghar and Al-Leheegia. Damages to residential housing and cash liquidity may be factors delaying their return to Bani Walid.

The Civil Council / Relief Committee have completed a preliminary assessment of damaged houses and estimates that around 250 houses have been severely damaged. Electricity supplies have been restored in 80% of the town and fuel stations have reopened. The maintenance of the electricity network may prove challenging as there is currently a shortage of technicians and labourers and a shortage of spare parts for transformers and transmission lines (these were either destroyed or stolen during the conflict). Cellular phone companies are not functioning and communication is a problem.

The overall security situation was reported to be calm and no clashes were reported.

4. Sectoral Overview

Food

The government subsidised food programme is reportedly functioning. Families, on presentation of their "family book", can buy flour, rice and oil at subsidised prices at the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) warehouses in Bani Walid. The National Transitional Council (NTC) has recently supplied 240 metric tonnes of food commodities, including wheat flour, pasta and edible oil.

During the visit to the warehouses it was observed that a large quantity of rice with an expiry date of June 2013 (estimated at over 1,000 Mt) has been damaged due to infestation. The Relief Committee reported that they will prepare a fumigation plan and may contact WFP for assistance.

The warehouses contained stockpiles of edible oil, beans, pasta, tomato paste, noodles, dates and mineral water with no records of stock balances. Some food commodities from WFP, such as edible oil, beans, rice and pasta, were also still in the warehouse. There were also some quantities of baby food, diapers, and children's clothes. Storage conditions, records and booking keeping need to be substantially improved.

Most of the food shops in the town and surrounding areas were open throughout the day and life appeared to be returning to normal. The commercial markets appeared to be functioning well. Bakeries were also open although people were queuing up even at mid-day. According to the Relief Committee, the prices of vegetables have increased by some 40%, reportedly due to the shortage of supplies from Misrata and Tripoli. Similarly, meat and poultry prices have increased beyond 50%.

Public and private employees have not received their salaries since August, which may be affecting the dietary and consumption patterns of the population and banks are still closed.

Actions and Recommendations:

- Support current residents and returnees with specific basic food commodities.
- Continue supporting IDPs with the necessary basic food commodities in partnership with the LRC and other stakeholders, to avoid response gaps.
- Coordinate with other partners, such as LibAid, Qatar Charity, and the Libyan Businessmen Club, to provide complimentary food products.
- Communicate the current situation to the PSF and discuss possible support options.

Health

According to the hospital authorities, 90% of the staff has now returned to work. The Out Patient Department (OPD) reopened two weeks previously and is now receiving around 150 children per day and about 200 medical cases per day. There has been a rise in hospital deliveries; 140 since the conflict ended (compared to an average of 200 per month in 2010). The hospital has a total bed capacity of 158 and only 30 beds were occupied. The hospital administration reported that there are no new cases of bullet injuries and there was only one reported case of UXO injuries.

Hospital staff reported an increase in water borne diseases and pneumonia and that the Ministry of Health has not provided the required medicines and supplies, including x-ray films. They said that vaccines for five communicable diseases are in short supply, stocks of chemical reagents for various tests in the laboratories are also running low and X-ray machines are malfunctioning. The hospital is currently using two ambulances and is requesting an additional 10 to transport patients to Tripoli. According to the hospital administration they have provided lists of required items to many agencies however they have received little response. The ICRC has recently provided some medicines.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Water is available from wells and from the water network for only two days a week. The resumption of electricity has resolved the supply of water for washing and cleaning to a great extent. However,

the Relief Committee reported that there is no adequate water purification and they requested that potable water is provided to the population since families with decreasing purchasing power cannot afford bottled water.

The Relief Committee acknowledged that supplies of potable water have been received from UNICEF. They requested that supplies of chlorine are sent to Bani Walid and that support is given for laboratory water quality testing.

The hygiene conditions in the town have improved. Solid waste is being collected and main roads have been cleaned of debris.

Actions and Recommendations:

- Dispatch an additional 100,000 liters of bottled water to the Bani Walid relief committee pending resumption of network services. A subsequent consignment is available if needed (UNICEF).

Protection

The ICRC's demining team arrived on 14 November to start Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) in Bani Walid. Danish Church Aid (DCA) will send one team to assess the contamination of ERWs/UXOs. According to hospital sources and the Relief Committee, only one case of a child injured by UXOs has been reported.

Actions and Recommendations:

- Further assessment required on broader protection needs once the situation allows (UNHCR).
- MRE activities to be conducted immediately with local partners in coordination with UNMAS survey / clearance teams. An MRE specialist is available for immediate short-term deployment (UNICEF).
- Establish child-friendly spaces in the absence of alternative safe locations for returnee children, including for those of pre-school age (UNICEF).

Education

Bani Walid has around 100 primary schools. The academic year has been delayed from September to December due to the conflict and population displacement. There has been damage to several schools and other educational facilities, including the Electronic Technology College and the university campus, which was used for weapon storage during the conflict. According to the Relief Committee, 90% of laboratory equipment and other learning materials were looted. A committee has been set up to assess damages to the schools and other institutions.

Actions and Recommendations:

- A school assessment is underway and will be aligned with the nationwide UNICEF-supported assessment planned with the MoE.
- School rehabilitation and cleaning will be carried out in zones highly affected by the conflict.

- The procurement process for school equipment and learning materials for all children in Bani Walid and Sirte (as part of a nationwide effort) will be supported.
- Student and teacher tracking will be carried out for the start of the new school year on 7 January 2012.
- Psychosocial support and MRE will be conducted in target schools.
- Early Childhood Development (ECD) activities will be carried out in IDP locations and affected communities.

5. Conclusions

According to the Bani Walid Civil Council, the immediate identified needs are the chlorination of the town's water supplies, basic and complimentary food, baby food, and the repair/rehabilitation of education infrastructure. A household survey would need to be conducted to determine the current food security and nutritional status of the returning population.

Islamic Relief has indicated that it has substantial quantities of food, kitchen sets, hygiene and baby kits that could be sent to Bani Walid. Islamic Relief has been advised to liaise with LibAid on the distribution of this assistance.

While UNICEF has provided potable water supplies to Bani Walid and there are still stocks of WFP food in the government warehouses, the perception is that the UN has either not provided assistance or the response has been inadequate.

6. Key Recommendations

- Any future UN agency missions to Bani Walid should be coordinated with LibAid to ensure that UN staff are fully aware of the support being provided by LibAid and other organisations. In order to avoid duplication no assistance should be provided unless ratified by LibAid and/or the line ministries.
- WHO to be requested to follow-up with the Ministry of Health regarding supplies of medicines and equipment to the Bani Walid Hospital.
- UNICEF to be requested to follow-up with the Bani Walid Civil Council and the Great Man-made River Authority (GMRA) regarding the request for chlorination and water testing.
- WFP to follow-up on the distribution of the remaining WFP food stocks in the Bani Walid warehouses.