



Egyptian Migration to Libya

The estimated 330,000 to 1.5 million Egyptians in Libya remit up to 33 million USD every year. It is estimated that 147,800 Egyptian migrants returned from Libya via Tunisia and Sallum in February and March 2011. The implications for the Egyptian economy of the current crisis in Libya are significant. Egyptians working in Libya come predominantly from rural areas and Lower Egypt and the majority of them have completed only basic education.

Migrants in Libya

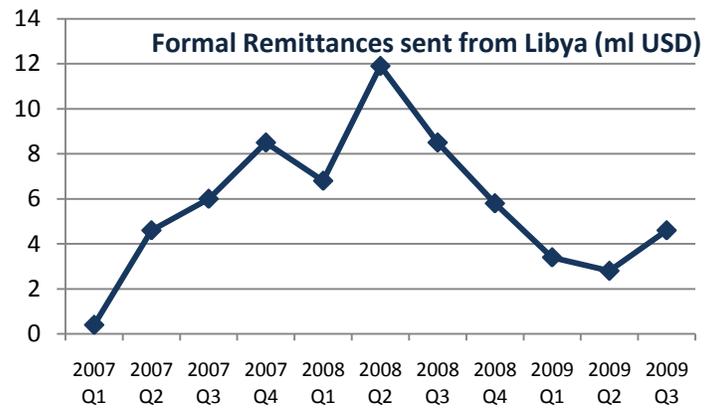
While accurate statistics are not available, Libya remains the major destination country in North Africa. UN statistics show that migrants represented 10.5 per cent of the total Libyan population in 2010, the highest percentage in North Africa (IOM, 2010a) and in 2009 these migrants sent home an estimate 1 billion USD in remittances, or 1.7 per cent of Libya's GDP (World Bank, 2011).

Libya is also a transit country for irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa aiming to reach Europe. Those who fail to cross the Mediterranean tend to stay in Libya to seek employment informally. The informality of migration to Libya makes it more difficult to estimate the composition of its migrant population.

Egyptians returning from Libya

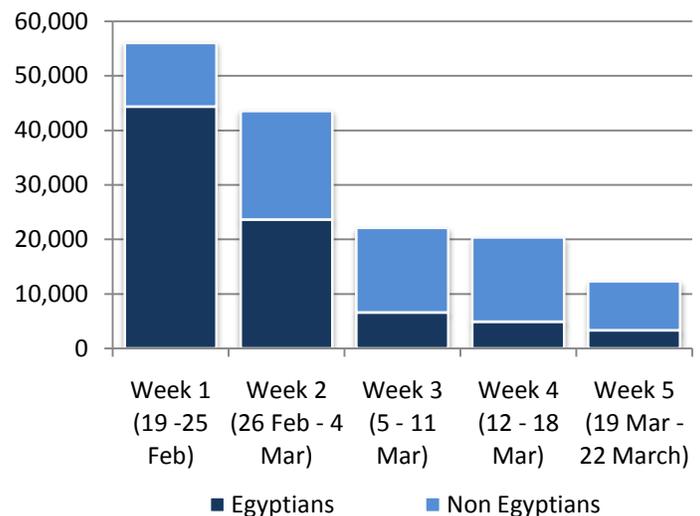
Official sources estimate that between 330,000 (IOM, 2010b) and 1.5 million Egyptians worked in Libya before the current crisis.

Based on latest available data, Egyptians in Libya send home between 19.5 and 33 million USD in remittances every year. This figure can be considered a low estimate due to the nature of migration to Libya and the fact that many migrants may prefer to send money home through informal channels.



Source: Monthly bulletin of Central Bank of Egypt (2009).

According to IOM data based on official sources, as of March 9, 65,000 Egyptians entered Tunisia from Libya while 82,800 returned from Libya through the Sallum border in the month 19 February to 22 March. Based on this data, it can be estimated that 147,800 Egyptians lost their job in Libya (and potentially all of their belongings) due to the crisis and may now be looking for employment in Egypt.



Source: IOM operations data based on daily reports from Egyptian authorities

Egyptian migrants in Libya

Libya ranks on top of the list of destinations of Egyptian migrants. This is the result of geographical proximity and various open border policies that until

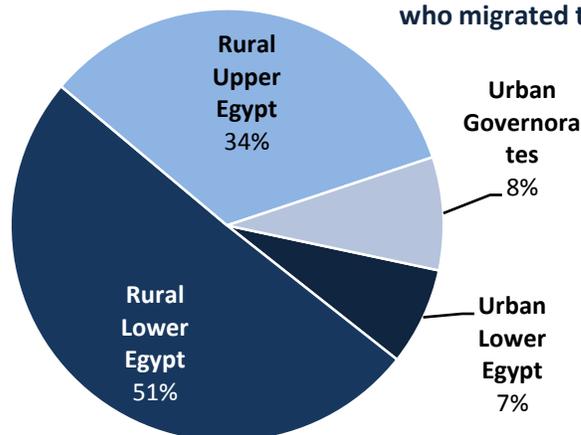
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2006 allowed Egyptians to enter and reside in Libya with an ID only.

A 2009 nationally-representative survey of 15,000 Egyptian youth reveals that when asked about their aspired migration destination, 32 per cent of Egyptian youth chose Saudi Arabia as the most aspired destination followed by Kuwait (18%), UAE (16.7%), Italy (6.4%) and Libya (4.6%). The same study reveals that 36.4 per cent of Egyptian youth thinks that Libya is the easiest destination for irregular migration (followed by Italy, 34.7%), while 14 per cent think it is an easy destination for regular migration (second to Saudi Arabia, 46.9%) (IOM, 2011).

Unemployment and underemployment are the main push factors for Egyptian youth to migrate. Looking at youth aged 15-29 that had migrated in the past (either independently for work or study or as family dependants), Libya is the top destination for Egyptian youth with 38 per cent of youth that migrated to Libya, followed by 29.4 that migrated to Saudi Arabia.

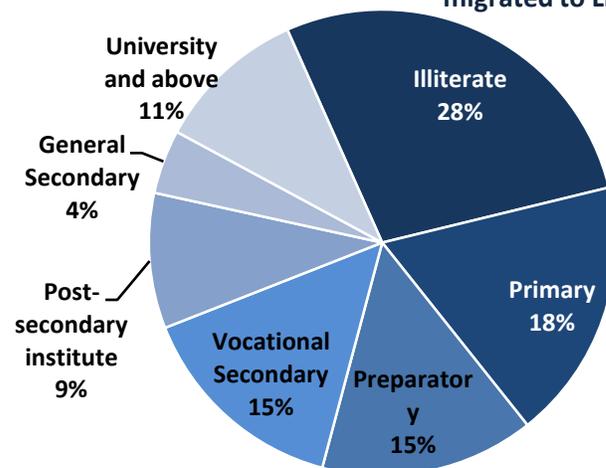
Main regions of origin of Egyptian youth who migrated to Libya



Source: IOM (2011)

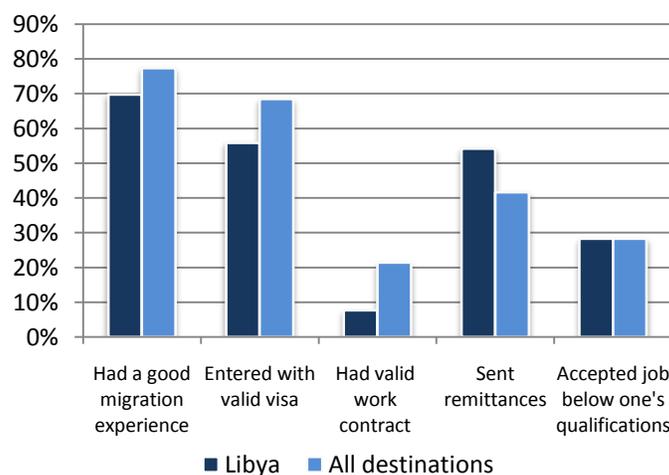
Based on the same survey, the majority of Egyptians who worked in Libya and were living in Egypt in 2009 came from Lower Egypt (58%) and from rural areas (85%). Egyptian youth who migrated to Libya tend to have a basic level of education (8 years of schooling or less, with a quarter being illiterate). The remaining 24 per cent has a vocational education background and 15 per cent has a general secondary high school or university background.

Education level of Egyptian youth who migrated to Libya



Source: IOM (2011)

The vast majority of youth that had migrated to Libya reported being satisfied with the experience. Compared to youth who migrated to other destinations, young Egyptians who worked in Libya were less likely to have entered with a valid visa (56%), to have had a work contract before leaving (8%) but they were more likely to send remittances (54%) and as likely to accept a job below their qualifications than the average migrants.



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