

UNICEF Situation Report # 21 - Sub-regional Libya crisis

Date: 01 August 2011

Reporting period (11 – 31 July 2011)

Highlights:

- In the days between the 26-29 July, the anti-government forces in the western mountain region near the Tunisian border launched one of its largest campaigns thus far. Opposition and government forces engaged in heavy fighting in areas near Nalut, killing at least four and injuring 18 opposition fighters. Government forces have now reportedly been driven out of Ghazaya to Tiji.
- UNICEF has delivered a total of 50,140 doses of critically needed vaccines, including PENTA and DTP, to local health authorities in Benghazi on 17 July. Further, the LRT is currently planning to extend its programmatic response to Misrata, Ajdabiya and the western mountain region focussing on psychosocial support and child protection issues.
- UNICEF has participated in various inter-agency missions in the past weeks, including a high-level mission to Tripoli, a mission to Misrata, and one mission to the western mountain cities of Zintan, Jadu and Kabau. A permanent UN presence in government-controlled areas is not feasible at this time, but UNICEF strongly recommends regular focused missions in order to continue the dialogue with local authorities.
- UNICEF has received 51.5 per cent of Flash Appeal requests as of 01 August. The overall Libya appeal for the UN has been funded by 60 per cent. The Libya Flash Appeal will go through a second revision process in August 2011 with an anticipated extension until the end of 2011.



© UNICEF Libya/2011/Tidey

A young IDP girl participating at HI/UNICEF mine-risk awareness activities at Bayt At-talibat IDP camp in Benghazi

Situation Overview

The past weeks have been characterized by a gradual increase in fighting on several frontlines across Libya. Particularly the killing of colonel Abdel Fatah Younes in Benghazi has led to increased political tensions in Benghazi. The violence continues to limit humanitarian access, in particular in the most affected areas such as Brega, Zlitan, and Ghazaya.

The killing of colonel Abdel Fatah Younes, one of Gaddafi's closest allies who defected in February, in Benghazi on the 28 July has led to political confusion. The exact circumstances around the colonel's death remain unclear. Fighting broke out in Benghazi in the evening of the 30 July between pro- and anti-regime fighters, during which at least four opposition fighters are reported killed.

During the period between the 26-29 July, the anti-government forces in the western mountain region near the Tunisian border launched one of its largest campaigns thus far. Opposition and government forces engaged in heavy fighting around Nalut, killing at least four and injuring 18 opposition fighters. Government forces have now reportedly been driven out of Ghazaya to Tiji. The Dhiba border-crossing to Tunisia remained closed in the morning of the 28 due to the fighting, but was later re-opened.

On 20 July, heavy fighting was reported in and around the port and oil city of Brega, 200 km southwest of Benghazi, resulting in 18 deaths and 150 injuries. The city appears to be in opposition control. It is not clear whether any of the injured or killed were children. A number of landmine related deaths have also been reported near Brega, further exacerbating the threats to the safety of civilians and in particular children.

The Libya Contact Group, during a meeting in Istanbul, Turkey on 16 July, formally announced that it recognises the National Transitional Council as the sole and legitimate interlocutor of the Libyan people.

Coordination, Cluster Leadership and Key Partnerships

Libya

UNICEF is currently planning to extend its activities through new partnerships across Libya, particularly in Misrata, Ajdabiya, and the western mountain areas, in order to respond to child protection concerns, children's needs for recreational activities as schools continue to be closed, and psycho-social support to victims of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).

UNICEF is participating in recent missions inside Libya aiming at establishing sustainable relationships with local counterparts. In the reporting period, UNICEF has participated and led inter-agency missions to Misrata, Tripoli, and the western mountain region.

UNICEF and the Child Protection working group in Benghazi are finalizing key child protection messages for parents and communities that will be distributed at the beginning of Ramadan. The messages will focus particularly on the issue of random shooting in the streets, as this is increasingly of concern to the safety and psychosocial well-being of children in Benghazi.

The WASH cluster now only meets on an ad-hoc basis since there are currently only a few active wash actors within Libya. Regular communication with cluster partners continues. UNICEF actively participates in the Protection meetings both in Zarzis and Benghazi, as well as in the education and child protection working groups in Benghazi.

The inter-agency contingency plan was presented by the Humanitarian Coordinator to a wide audience including the HCT and UNCT in Cairo on 27 July. This plan is to be considered as an internal UN document, addressing the key strategies and actions proposed until the end of the year.

OCHA has communicated a review of the sub-regional Flash Appeal for Libya in the coming weeks and to be launched on 25 August.

Depending on the evolution of the conflict OCHA and the humanitarian community will initiate a consolidated appeal process (CAP) for 2012, will be initiated in September and is anticipated to be finalized by November 2011.

The humanitarian meeting schedule in Zarzis, Tunisia has been amended in respect of the upcoming month of Ramadan. All meetings will end by 2:30 pm.

Tunisia border

A contingency planning process for the Tunisian response has been initiated by UNHCR in which UNICEF is actively participating, particularly in child protection, education, and WASH.

UNICEF is in the process of realigning its activities to reflect evolving programme priorities in the two implementation areas of the relief operation. This will entail the gradual phasing out of many activities in the Ras Ajdir camps with a refocusing of attention on the situation of urban refugee children and families in the Tataouine area. According to UNHCR, there are currently an estimated 100,000 Libyans who have fled the Libya as a result of the fighting, of which the majority are staying in host families.

UNICEF Libya Advocacy

UNICEF LRT is increasingly focussing on advocacy, focussing on its Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies, and particularly around issues related to child protection, WASH, Education, and child health.

During the recent inter-agency mission to Tripoli (16-23 July) it became evident that there are no critical humanitarian needs at the time being despite an extremely fragile stability. Communities are well stocked with food in both commercial and public (subsidised) stores. The main concerns are the shortage of drugs/vaccines and shortage of fuel and the continued lack of skilled capacities after the departure of a significant number of third country nationals.

UNICEF believes that continued shorter and more focussed missions are imperative to build relations and confidence with counterparts in Tripoli and elsewhere to ensure that information is verified and relevant.

There is a request to support children's actions for peace across the country reaching out to children on all sides. The LRT is considering how to engage with partners to make this possible.

The recommendation from the recent mission to the western mountain region (28-29 July) is to immediately establish sectoral coordination mechanisms in order to streamline information and make sure actual needs are met. UNICEF will continue to advocate for this in the coming weeks.

Child Protection

As the conflict continues and the frontlines continue to shift, children struggle for normality in a highly tensed and volatile conflict situation. The inter-agency mission to Misrata reports

that the presence of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) remains a serious risk for civilians, including IDPs and residents, both adults and children. Several ERW incidents have been reported.

Further, the mission reported that the risk of forced recruitment for children seems to have declined since the start of the crisis (in February, several boys over the age of 12 were reportedly taken from an orphanage and have not been seen since). However, some children were observed operating the checkpoints.

WASH

UNICEF as the WASH cluster lead continues to be concerned about the impact of power cuts and pre-existing poor water infrastructure possibly exacerbated by the current conflict. The recent inter-agency mission to the western mountain region reports that access to water is a concern in the towns of Zintan, Jadu and Kabao. There is an urgent need for further assessment of the actual water needs and supporting the water authorities to find solutions to these needs.

Reports of temporary power cuts affecting water supply have also been received in the eastern cities of Darna and Al-Bayda by the recent inter-agency mission (23-24 July) to these cities, affecting a total population of 50,000 in Darna and 250,000 in Al-Bayda according to OCHA Libya. Alternative solutions to provide the population with water have been put in place.

Education

The UN inter-agency mission in Tripoli, contrary to previous information, has reported that schools in government-controlled areas have completed the school year as normal. This has not been independently verified however.

One of the highest priorities for UNICEF's response in eastern and western Libya is to ensure that schools are re-opened for formal education in early September as planned by the NTC. With the recent fighting in central Benghazi over the weekend between pro- and anti-regime fighters, it is however unclear whether this will be possible should the insecurity prevail.

UNICEF and the education working group continue to meet regularly in Benghazi, and the Education Council has identified a number of material needs necessary for the re-opening of the schools. UNICEF is working with the council to identify the budgetary needs for this to be realised.

Health & Nutrition

The MoH in Tripoli has stated that they will run out of vaccines in mid-September. WHO has taken the lead on coordination with the GoL for the procurement of drugs and vaccines for 100 million Euro, it is not yet clear when this will materialise due to the complicated sanctions regime. UNICEF continues to be involved in the discussions and has expressed its willingness to cover short-term urgent needs of vaccines.

Drugs and vaccines needs have also been reported by health authorities in the western mountain region during the latest inter-agency mission. UNICEF will continue to liaise with local health authorities to address these.

UNICEF Response

Libya

The UNICEF LRT is currently in discussions with potential new partners aiming to extend its response on the ground and reaching the most vulnerable children across the country (with the exception of government-controlled areas) as the UN continues to have only limited access.

Child Protection

The UNICEF head of Benghazi office, during the recent inter-agency mission to Misrata, delivered 30 tents, 30 ECD kits, and 30 recreational kits to our new implementing partner Mercy Corps as part of an effort to expand psycho-social support to children beyond Benghazi. 12 of the tents have already been distributed to 36 schools, and 12 of each of the kits have been distributed to the schools. Currently, 3660 children between the age of 6 and 13 are benefiting from semi-structured educational activities. These will continue throughout the month of Ramadan, and the remaining tents will be distributed in August.

UNICEF has provided Save the Children with 12 additional recreation and 39 ECD kits for the expansion of recreational activities in Benghazi. The kits will benefit IDP and local children during the month of Ramadan in the absence of any other organized activities for children.

UNICEF and SCF have provided four activity centers in Benghazi with top-up material such as paper, pencils, crayons, clay, footballs. More centers will receive materials in the coming weeks.

6500 children continue to benefit from activities supported directly by recreational kits provided by UNICEF, and an additional 2000 are taking part in activities managed by volunteers SCF has trained, equaling a total of 8500 children.

UNICEF partner Handicap International continues to provide Explosive Remnants of War and small arms Risk Education. Handicap International is also providing a range of awareness sessions to teachers in support of the upcoming school opening scheduled for 05th September. So far over 500 teachers have been provided with presentations.

WASH

With the kind donation of previously received field lab test equipment by VEOLIA, basic water tests have commenced in Benghazi.

UNICEF has procured 60 tons of anti-scalant, a key chemical for desalination plants, that will support a sustained flow of potable water in Benghazi for one month.

UNICEF has ordered critically needed key spare parts for the GMRA pipeline monitoring system. These will arrive in the coming weeks.

Health & Nutrition

UNICEF has delivered a number of critically needed vaccines to the local health authorities in Benghazi during the reporting period, including 3,200 doses of BCG, 30,000 doses of DTP, 5,600 doses of MMR, 8,300 doses of PENTA, and 3,000 doses of Hepatitis pead.

More vaccines are currently being procured to cover needs of PENTA and DTP for one month in Benghazi.

Tunisia

The total camp population at the Ras Jdir camps (Shousha, El-Hayet (previously IFRC now UNHCR managed), UAE) is as of 24 July estimated at 3,750 persons, equaling a slight decrease from the last report. There are an additional 2,250 Libyan refugee families at the Dhiba camp further south.

Child Protection

UNICEF and IOM have identified, verified and assessed 10 unaccompanied and separated children among the rescued migrants that were on a boat attempting to reach the Italian island of Lampedusa in mid-July, all boys between 15-17 years old from Mali and Chad.

UNICEF and IOM organized focus group discussions with youth from different nationalities to discuss the risks of illegal migration. Children stated that they are in need of more information regarding refugee status determination and other issues.

UNICEF, SCF, and UNFPA have finalized preparations for an inter-agency child protection rapid assessment to be undertaken in the coming week in the cities of Tataouine, Medenine, and Gabes. The objectives of the assessment are to determine the specific needs and protection risks for Libyan refugee children in the three southern Tunisian governorates. A group of locally recruited assessment staff and the testing of the survey questions has been finalized. Data collection will take place 01-05 August.

Education

UNICEF has together with the MoE opened six educational and recreational centres within schools in the regions of Tataouine, Medenine and Gabes in southern Tunisia. Around 3,500 children between 4-6 years, 6-11 years and 12-15 years are benefiting from these activities.

A meeting with local educational authorities has been held in order to plan for the integration of Libyan refugee children into Tunisian schools for the new school year in September.

WASH

UNICEF has worked closely with UNHCR in the handover of the sanitation and hygiene management at Shousha camp as UNICEF is phasing out.

Health and Nutrition Response

The UNICEF Tunisia team has completed an assessment of nutrition needs and concerns in the camps and in areas where Libyan refugees are hosted. A final report will be released shortly.

Funding

UNICEF has received 51.5 per cent of Flash Appeal requests as of 01 August. The overall Libya appeal for the UN has been funded by 60 per cent. Pledges from the Swedish government will be received shortly. The Libya Flash Appeal will go through a second revision process in August 2011 with an anticipated extension until the end of 2011.

Recently received funds include:

- The Australian Government has donated around 2 million USD
- The Iceland National Committee has donated 15,000 USD
- The Norwegian National Committee has donated 105,000 USD
- The Canadian National Committee has donated 25,000 USD

Date of next Situation Report: on or around 15 August 2011

For more information, please contact:

Pierre Poupard Libya Response Team Leader Camp Zarzis Tel: +216 28 09 74 82 Email: ppoupard@unicef.org	Maria Luisa Fornara Representative UNICEF Tunis Tel: + 216-71-802-700 Fax: + 216-71-793-001 E-mail: mlfornara@unicef.org	Yosi Echeverry Burckhardt Reports Officer UNICEF LRT Camp Zarzis Tel: + 21650579303 Email: yburckhardt@unicef.org
--	--	---