



DESTRUCTION, LIBERATION AND THE CIVILIANS OF SIRTE

Humanitarian Newsletter

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HUMANITARIAN NEWSLETTER

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Armed Libyan forces must allow humanitarian aid to reach Sirte by Abdulbaset A Etbiga

All parties in Libya's armed conflict must act to spare civilians and ensure that urgently needed supplies can be delivered safely to Sirte, Alrassed International is concerned that the humanitarian situation in the coastal city is swiftly deteriorating.

Since the beginning of 2016 Alrassed has been working with residents and community leaders to understand the situation in the city, which was presented in its report "Addressing the Humanitarian crisis in Sirte, Libya" 27 Aug 2016.

The International aid organisations have done little since 2014, when embassies and organisations fled the country due to the unstable political situation and the spread of murder and suicide missions in residential, governmental and foreign whereabouts by extremists and armed groups. Despite various programs run by UN organisations and other NGO's aimed for Libya in general; the medical and non-medical aid fails every time to reach the residents fleeing the city or in its outskirts. However, what we found is that the aid by the organisations was handed to the armed forces in the city which then distributed in the way they pleased – and in the ethical point of view it is not the right

conduct of humanitarian work to hand the supplies to armed forces (partners) that do not share the same humanitarian values or beliefs. What should have been done, if the international committee, the UNSMIL etc. are unable to carry the work themselves due to the security situation, is hand the supplies to independent parties and local NGO's in the country.

After months of continues clashes the Misurata-led forces declared liberation of Sirte from IS. However, the residents are still displaced outside the city and are unaware of their faith. Forces in Sirte must take necessary safeguards to spare civilians and must immediately set up humanitarian corridors to ensure that urgently needed supplies can be delivered safely to Sirte residents.

We are told by our representative Mr Badar Mohamed that "meetings of officials assigned by both the eastern and western governments are held outside the country, and are not transparent in the outcomes of those meetings – leaving the residents and organisations like us unaware of the plans for the city and the faith of the displaced residents."



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A mayor for Sirte is to be elected on 12 December. The date has been chosen by the Central Committee for Municipal Council Elections (CCMCE). The city mayor is said to have proposed rehabilitation projects, with aims to return residents safe to their homes.

However, we spoke with Hamza (a father of two children) he told us that "there is no hope, we don't think that they have a solution to what happens after the liberation, and my house is burned to the grounds". A number of pictures from the violent clashes in the city has been brought to Alrassed International, showing almost entire neighbourhoods wiped-out by the heavy bombing and airstrikes.

"Have you heard one day someone went looking for his home and did not find it? I entered the city of Sirte looking for my house and it is no were to be found, maybe my home left with me as I fled the city. Every beautiful thing is gone, even the electricity, water and political stability is gone in my country." Said Musbah AL-Sharif a resident of the city – during his search for his home after the fighting has calmed down.

All civilians who want to return to Sirte should be allowed to do so immediately in dignity and safety. Establishing humanitarian corridors would include setting up neutral zones and negotiated routes that are clearly defined to give humanitarian workers safe access to the sick and injured.

The civilians who remained in Sirte and its outskirts have been victimised by ongoing fighting and surviving on decreasing food, fuel and water supplies. Sirte's main hospital, Ibn Sina, reportedly came under attack on March 2015.

In a recent incident; on January 2017; Saad Idris Al-ba'ba tried to save his only daughter

(Picture 1) and treat her in Bani-Walid. His daughter who did not exceed the age of one year, caught a severe cold and high temperature as a result of the cold wave and power outages; and the only health centre in the village (Girza) has been long shutdown. Unfortunately, the girl died in the road before reaching the city of Bani-Walid.

Health centres in the outskirts of the city can be essentially important and an alternative to provide health care services to residents, however, the majority are shutdown, and the rest are struggling to cope with the large numbers of casualties, and do not have the necessary supplies.

All those involved in the fighting have legal obligations to spare civilians by ending immediately the use of indiscriminate weapons like GRAD rockets, and not firing artillery and mortars into residential areas. International humanitarian law prohibits the use of weapons that are inherently indiscriminate or which cannot be targeted at military objectives.

Alrassed received a video, on the 6th of August 2016, for a man said to be General Mohammed El-gasary "Head of Al-Bunyan Almarsus operations in Sirte"; Stated on the fifth of August 2016 on Misurata channel "That we will not hesitate to destroy all the buildings of Sirte to ensure that none of our men is injured; even if it led to the destruction of all the buildings in Sirte, It does not concern us. A Fingernail of one fighter is not worth the 100 Building in Sirte."(2)

The fact that a "military official" (a UN ally), publicly states that he does not care if he bombed all the building; explains that they do not have a strategy to protect citizens nor their properties and belongings.

Alrassed International has collected evidence that militias and Misurata-led forces committed war crimes throughout the conflict, including by carrying out attacks targeting civilians and indiscriminate attacks. They launched artillery, mortar and rocket attacks against residential areas. They also concealed tanks and heavy military equipment in residential buildings. Militias looting properties and belongings of citizens, taking advantage of the people who left their homes, who took refuge away from the areas of conflict.

"The GNA (Libyan government of national accord), which has publicly dedicated to respect international human rights and humanitarian law, must ensure that these armed forces which are believed to belong to the GNA, respect these norms and to also avoid revenge attacks and other retaliations.



(Picture 1) The picture of Saad Idris Al-ba'ba and his daughter.

(2) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6DVin4Ajto>

Damages estimated at 45% to buildings in the city. Before the return of its people the city needs to be various chemicals like fertilisers or insecticides sprayed on it to expel harmful insect pest resulting from dead Bodies and air pollution. Pictures bellow show parts of the destruction after the conflicts to take the city from the extremist groups (IS).



PICTURES FROM THE AIRPORT ROAD CAMP

Pictures taken from Tawergha Youth Organisation on January 2017.



The water floods deep in to what looks like rooms of metal sheets.



Residents try to assist the water out of the camp using a long tube and other personal efforts.



IDP in Libya could freeze to death due to inadequate winter preparations

By [Dr Abubakar Ahmed](#)

The airport road camp, some 20 kilometres south of Tripoli, is home to around 2000 displaced people, many of whom are displaced people from Tawergha city. The camp is the largest among other two camps in the outskirts of the capital.

Today the Airport Road Camp, is swamped with rain water, only worsening conditions in this harsh winter in what looks like small rooms of cardboard and sheet metal, which accommodates families of 5+ individuals. Many of the children are wearing only thin sweaters and slippers/flip-flops; whereas men slept on concrete floors and plastic sheets – it gave off a choking view.

We spoke with Ahmed who told us “the cold is too much and most of the night we can’t sleep, we all sitting around the small fire, and rely on charity donations” he added “our only demand is to return to our homes in Tawergha city, every year they promise us ‘the return’, I don’t understand why is it that difficult”.

Without adequate housing and poor winter preparations, internal displaced residents may die as the country continues to be gripped by freezing winter weather. Parts of the country have seen more than a metre of rain floods over the weekend, and communication lines and roads are out of action on several regions.

Local charities and international aid organisations have help from time to time

with donations, provided some shelter material, and other non-medical supplies. However it is a small portion that scarcely satisfies the whole camp.

With no functioning government to provide support, there are more than 490,000 displaced People inside Libya, and they have nowhere to run too. The number of displaced inside and outside Libya has grown since the political struggle in 2013. While political groups struggle over power and the UNSMIL struggles to understand the political situation, Tawerghan people are still facing racism and mass displacement in their own country.

Alrassed International has called on the relevant authorities to intervene and to preserve the lives of civilians and the protection of human rights and work to hold the perpetrators accountable. Our first priority is to build up pressure on key figures within the Libyan government and the various bodies or companies, which have influence or power to change the inhuman condition of the Tawerghan civilians.

Libya must pursue its future on a solid grounding of equality, justice and respect for the rule of law and human rights.

Ensuring the safe return, protection and support of Tawerghans will greatly contribute to this effort and is vital to a successful attempt at national resolution.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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COUNTRY DIRECTOR, LIBYA

A Recent Success

Alrassed International has been able to collect a large sum of donations from the generous community in the North East.

This campaign was launched after our visit to Al Amal Al Manshood Camp in Dora, on the 26th of August 2016.

With the help of the Children Bringing Change Charity & the Iraqi Students Association in Newcastle and we would also like to thank everyone who contributed to the campaign. Soon these donations will be sent to the displaced people in Mosul, who are much in need of these supplies to cope with the harsh winter in the camps.

The campaign is still continuing – we hope to send additional supplies to other camps around Iraq.



“The community was helpful, I was amazed with the amount of help that we had. To be fair more than half of the donations came through the Children Bringing Change Charity - It is an English Iraqi organization was founded here in the United Kingdom for the purpose of helping the children of Iraq. We had donations on the 3rd December 2016 & and the second was on the 31st December 2016 – we also have managed to collect number of cloths donations and a sum of £900 – which was all sent to the camps in Mosul.” Said Ahmed Sabaawi, our country director for Iraq.

The outcome of the donations

- Children coats × 49
- Men’s Coats × 18
- Women’s Coats × 61
- kids T-shirts/shirts and sweatshirts 316
- Women’s T-shirts/shirts and sweatshirts 105
- Men’s T-shirts/shirts and sweatshirts 51
- Children’s Pants/trousers 139
- Women’s Pants/trousers 35
- Men’s Pants/trousers 36

The total number of pieces = 810

Financial donations: £380 pounds

In addition to a wide range of gloves, packaging, towels and footwear.



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COUNTRY DIRECTOR, IRAQ

Libyan Human Rights Commission monitors 296 civilian casualties

National Human Rights Commission said, in its monthly report on the situation of human rights and humanitarian situation in Libya, documenting the occurrence of 296 civilian casualties in the country, including 76 deaths and 34 injuries as a result of conflicts, acts of violence and terrorist attacks and violations that occurred in Libya.

The commission said in its report; that among the victims were 4 children dead and two were wounded and four women have been killed and three infected wounds, and has also been monitoring and documenting the occurrence of 89 cases of abduction, including 6 children and 5 women and 97 cases of armed robbery in the cities of Tripoli, Warshifana, Alzawya and Sabha.

The Commission noted that it recorded the continued suffering of civilians in Derna city, due to the continued siege imposed on the city, as a result of the military operations by the Libyan Armed Forces against Al-Qaeda and Ansar al-Sharia who follow the leadership of the Shura Council of the Mujahedeen of Derna who are still in control of the city.

The report also points out that the humanitarian situation and living conditions are worsening and the crisis is increasingly deteriorating in the country and the collapse of the health sector and a large number of inoperative medical facilities in Libya.

The National Commission for Human Rights in Libya carried the responsibility of what happened to the victims and injuries among the civilian population; on the conflicted parties in Tripoli as well as the terrorist organizations in Benghazi and the armed groups west of the country. As well as bearing the responsibility to Political parties and both Western and Eastern governments for the suffering of the civilians in Libya and the worsening humanitarian and security conditions caused by the continuing political conflict, which has exacerbated the suffering of civilians at all levels.

Furthermore, the National Commission called for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Criminal Court for the need to carry out the humanitarian and legal duties assigned to them, towards the suffering of the civilians because of violence, kidnappings, killings, forced disappearances and terrorist attacks, in accordance with the resolutions of the UN for Libya as well as in accordance with the provisions of the Treaties of Rome that established the International Criminal Court, considering these crimes and violations committed against civilians, are systematic violations of international humanitarian law, and end the state of cowardice and double standards towards the suffering of civilians in Libya.



The Commission renewed its warning to all parties that continue to target civilians with all forms of violence and hostilities, incidents of kidnapping and murder, as well as the use of civilians as human shields and hostages and the siege of cities and starvation of civilians; these practices and violent acts elevate to the ranks of war crimes and violate of international humanitarian law.

Electricity outage, Kills a number of children in Libya

From the beginning of December 2016, every week a child dies from severe cold in Libya because of the power outage, the picture on the right shows a list of the four children from Al Bayda' city in east Libya – Mayar 7 months old, Nahla 45 days old, Othman a new born and Osama 5 months old. There is also number of unconfirmed deaths in the west region – the resent is the daughter of Saad Idris Al-ba'ba, a new born who died on the way to the Hospital in Bani-Walid.



The Blackboard in Al Bayda' city showing the 4 children who passed away since December.



Alrased International is a human rights monitor. Our aim is to raise awareness of abuses that take place within the Middle- East and North Africa regions. We currently have active campaigns focused on the displacement of people within Libya and Iraq.

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