

# Libya – Complex Emergency

JUNE 25, 2021

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<b>6.6</b> MILLION	<b>1.3</b> MILLION	<b>245,483</b>	<b>623,219</b>	<b>575,874</b>
Estimated Population of Libya	Estimated Number of People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance in Libya	IDPs in Libya	Registered IDP returns	Migrants in Libya
UN – November 2018	UN – January 2021	IOM – May 2021	IOM – May 2021	IOM – May 2021

- The spread of COVID-19 has exacerbated humanitarian needs in Libya, complicating ongoing IDP returns to areas of origin.
- Needs are particularly high among migrants in Libya, who continue to experience severe protection violations.
- With more than \$27 million in FY 2021 funding, USAID/BHA and State/PRM partners are working to provide health, protection, shelter, and other humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in Libya.



<b>TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING</b> For the Libya Response in FY 2021	USAID/BHA <sup>1</sup>	\$7,123,228
	State/PRM <sup>2</sup>	\$20,000,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$27,123,228</b>

*For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 5*

<sup>1</sup>USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)  
<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### Heightened Humanitarian Needs Pose Challenges for Returning IDPs

While a reduction in conflict beginning in mid-2020 resulted in relatively improved security conditions, the socioeconomic impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, compounded by a continuing economic crisis and lack of basic services, have strained living conditions in Libya, according to the UN. To meet the increased challenges faced by the most vulnerable populations during the pandemic, the UN aims to reach 451,000 of the estimated 1.3 million people in need during 2021, as outlined in the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Libya.

The UN also reports an increasing number of previously displaced families returning to their areas of origin in recent months, primarily due to relatively stable security conditions. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than 18,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) returned to places of origin between December 2020 and May 2021. However, a widespread lack of livelihood opportunities, unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination, and lack of access to basic services—including education, electricity, health care services, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure—have posed challenges for returning households, according to the UN. Damage to property and housing in areas of return, along with continued insecurity and violence, also represent barriers to IDP returns, the UN reports.

While some IDPs are voluntarily returning to areas of origin, others have been forced to return due to evictions by Government of Libya (GoL) authorities, the UN reports. In a recent incident, the GoL Ministry of Interior ordered the rapid departure of more than 530 displaced households from the town of Tawergha—located near the northeast coastal city of Misrata—who had been residing at Tripoli District's Janzour Naval Academy displacement site. Only 6,900 of the approximately 40,000 people displaced from Tawergha at the height of hostilities in 2011 had returned to the town as of May 2021, according to IOM. In addition to the widespread, severe damage to public and private infrastructure in the town, IDPs have cited a lack of basic services and livelihood opportunities, social tensions, and UXO contamination as barriers to return. Increasing eviction threats against Tawerghans in current areas of displacement are pushing more IDPs to return, raising concern among relief actors regarding the lack of adequate planning and support for reintegration. Humanitarian organizations warn that rushed returns could exacerbate protection risks, including a risk of arbitrary detention, gender-based violence (GBV), and trafficking.

### Relief Actors Report Increased Migration Despite Protection Concerns

Libya remains both a destination and a transit point for migrants in the region, hosting nearly 576,000 migrants, including approximately 42,800 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as of mid-June. Discrimination and inadequate legal protection continue to prevent migrants and refugees from accessing basic services, with the UN recording unmet humanitarian needs among nearly 60 percent of all migrants and all refugees as of January 2021. Moreover, migrants and refugees who are intercepted and rescued at sea and returned to Libya are detained, where they are at risk of facing torture, GBV, neglect, and protracted detention without access to due process of law. Illegal migrants elsewhere also face a risk of abduction for ransom, trafficking, and unlawful killings.

Despite severe risks, migrant attempts at crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Europe are increasing, leading to an increasing number of migrants being intercepted and returned to Libya. As of May 29, nearly 8,600 migrants and refugees had been intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard and

disembarked in Libya in 2021, representing a 220 percent increase compared to the same period in 2020, UNHCR reports. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs), IOM, and UNHCR are present at disembarkation points to provide medical assistance and relief items before arrivals are transferred to detention centers by GoL authorities. Relief organizations have also performed nearly 40 monitoring visits to detention centers in 2021, according to UNHCR.

### **Bureaucratic Restrictions Limit Humanitarian Access**

During the month of April, humanitarian agencies reported through the Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework more than 190 incidents in which humanitarian access was constrained in Libya, according to the UN. Bureaucratic restrictions on the movement of humanitarian staff and relief items into and within Libya represented nearly 60 percent of all recorded access incidents. Humanitarian staff report an absence of clear processes for the registration of INGOs and visas for INGO staff. Challenges with customs clearances have also resulted in the delayed importation of humanitarian supplies, the UN reports. Health assistance has been most affected, representing 41 percent of all reported access incidents.

### **UN Agencies Identify Food and Livelihood Needs in Libya**

Approximately 700,000 people in Libya are in need of food and livelihood assistance, including 123,000 migrants and 76,000 IDPs, according to the Food Security Sector. COVID-19 continues to exacerbate difficult living conditions for vulnerable populations, due to increased prices of essential commodities, including food, and limited or loss of income due to the lack of employment opportunities, according to IOM. In January, the GoL introduced a new unified exchange rate, resulting in a 60 percent increase in the cost of imported staple food commodities such as vegetable oil and milk. The cost and affordability of food and other basic supplies remain the primary concern for migrants in Libya, according to IOM. Relief actors, including USAID/BHA partners IOM and the UN World Food Program (WFP) and State/PRM partner UNHCR, have scaled up ready-to-eat food assistance for vulnerable migrants living in urban areas, IDPs, returnees, and host communities who have lost their livelihoods due to COVID-19.

## **KEY FIGURES**



**6,000**

Health consultations provided with USAID/BHA funding since January 2021.

## **U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

### **HEALTH**

USAID/BHA addresses urgent health needs in Libya through support for IOM and the UN World Health Organization (WHO), as well as two INGO partners that provide life-saving services in static health facilities and mobile clinics. USAID/BHA health partners provide medicine, medical supplies, and basic equipment, as well as training to community health workers, who support the provision of community-based maternal and child health care services, among other activities. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Libya, USAID/BHA is also supporting an INGO partner to provide COVID-19 case management. Meanwhile, with State/PRM support, UNHCR and another implementing partner provide primary and emergency health care services to refugees, IDPs, and other vulnerable populations throughout Libya. State/PRM partners also provide equipment and infrastructure support to local health care facilities and distribute hygiene kits, soap, personal protective equipment, and other items to vulnerable populations.



90

Humanitarian organizations supported with information management services by USG partners in Libya.

## LOGISTICS AND COORDINATION

With USAID/BHA support, the WFP-managed UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) provides humanitarian transport for personnel and cargo—including urgently needed COVID-19 supplies—across Libya, bolstering response efforts in Libya by improving humanitarian access. USAID/BHA funding to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and two INGOs also supports humanitarian advocacy, coordination, assessments, and information management in Libya.



\$3 Million

In dedicated USAID/BHA support for protection programming in Libya.

## PROTECTION AND REFUGEE SUPPORT

State/PRM partner UNHCR provides reception and registration services for refugees and asylum seekers, distributes essential relief items, and provides cash assistance to urban refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, USAID/BHA supports four INGOs to implement protection programs for vulnerable populations in Libya. USAID/BHA-funded protection activities include bolstering child protection services, delivering emergency case management and referral services for GBV survivors, providing individual psychosocial support services, and conducting community awareness-raising sessions on protection risks and related issues. USAID/BHA partners also operate child-friendly spaces and listening and counseling centers for women and girls to meet protection needs.



2

State/PRM partners providing MPCA in Libya.

## MULTIPURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE

With funding to UNHCR and another implementing partner, State/PRM supports the distribution of multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to help migrants, IDPs, and other vulnerable households in Libya meet their basic needs. MPCA provides a flexible means for vulnerable populations with access to markets to purchase food or other basic items according to their needs.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Armed conflict, civil unrest, and political instability have plagued Libya since 2011. Fluctuations in localized conflict—ongoing since 2014—and economic volatility, combined with Libya’s status as a major transit country for refugees and migrants, have contributed to turmoil in the country. Consequently, the UN estimates as many as 1.3 million people in Libya will require humanitarian assistance in 2021.
- On November 5, 2020, U.S. Ambassador Richard B. Norland reissued a disaster declaration for Libya due to the effects of the ongoing complex emergency and lack of local capacity to effectively address the humanitarian needs of conflict-affected populations.

## USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE LIBYA RESPONSE IN FY 2021<sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
Implementing Partners	Health; Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments; Protection; Shelter and Settlements	Benghazi, Misrata, Murqub, Sabha, Tripoli, Wadi al Shati	\$6,623,228
OCHA	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments	Countrywide	\$200,000
WFP (UNHAS)	Logistics Support and Relief Commodities	Countrywide	\$300,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$7,123,228</b>
<b>STATE/PRM</b>			
UNHCR	Protection, Health, Logistics Support and Relief Commodities, Multipurpose Cash Assistance	Countrywide	\$13,700,000
Implementing Partner	Protection, Capacity Building, Food Security, Health, Logistics Support and Relief Commodities, Multipurpose Cash Assistance, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	Countrywide	\$6,300,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING</b>			<b>\$20,000,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR THE LIBYA RESPONSE IN FY 2021</b>			<b>\$27,123,228</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of June 25, 2021.

### PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)