

HIGHLIGHTS (17 Mar 2020)

- Clashes continue in and around Tripoli, with the escalation in violence reaching pre-truce levels. As of 9 January 2020, more than 149,000 people have been displaced.
- The security situation in Sirt, Abu Qurayn and surrounding areas remain tense. Fighting since January 2020 has resulted in more than 4,650 people fleeing their homes.
- Many migrants and refugees continue to risk the crossing to Europe. Since January, around 2,670 people were intercepted/rescued at sea and returned to Libya, most to detention.



*Vegetable market in the old town area in Benghazi
 UNOCHA/Giles Clarke*

KEY FIGURES

0.9M

People in need

0.3M

People targeted

216k

IDPs in need

324k

Migrants and refugees in need

FUNDING

\$202M

Required

\$103M

Received



51%

CONTACTS

Niels Scott
 Head of Office
scott2@un.org

Kasper Engborg
 Deputy Head of Office
engborg@un.org

BACKGROUND (17 Mar 2020)

Situation update

During the reporting period, hostilities in and around Tripoli have increased, despite the agreed-upon truce, and have reached near pre-truce levels. As of 9 January 2020, more than 149,000 people have been forced to leave their home since the beginning of the conflict in April 2019. Clashes continued to be reported in densely populated areas, particularly in South Tripoli. Internally displaced families who remain close to areas of conflict, along with host communities providing them with shelter, migrants and refugees in urban communities or in detention centres remain at significant risk. Around 749,000 people are estimated to be in areas affected by clashes, including almost 345,000 people who remain in frontline areas.

Heavy shelling around Mitiga Airport continues to disrupt its operation and has resulted in civilian casualties and damage to homes in surrounding neighbourhoods. Schools and hospitals have been damaged or closed also as a result. As of March 2020, a total of 27 health facilities have been damaged to varying degrees due to proximity of clashes, including 14 health facilities that have been closed and another 23 which are at risk of closure due to shifting lines of conflict. Around 4 March 2020, ten schools in Ain Zara and all schools in Misrata that were closed for more than a month have reopened, allowing 127,000 students to go back to school. On 8 March, eight schools were reported closed in the proximity of Mitiga airport due to the risks posed by shelling in the area. However, on 15 March 2020, as preventative measure for the outbreak of COVID-19, all schools in the country were closed starting for two weeks.



Internally displaced families from around Tripoli since April 2019 and from recent clashes received assistance in Central Tripoli, including food and essential non-food items.

UNOCHA/Nasreddin Dekakni

Families from Sirt and Abu Qurayn areas have also fled fighting following clashes since January. Since mid-February 2020, an additional 372 families (1,860 individuals) have been internally displaced due to the volatile security situation in the area. This brings the total to at least 930 families (4,650 individuals) that are reported to have fled their homes to neighbouring areas.

In conflict-affected areas, people increasingly face challenges to access basic essential goods and public services and their ability to go to work and earn livelihoods. A subsequent protection risk due to the combination of economic instability and displacement is the risk of eviction, both for displaced families and host communities in areas of displacement. In response to the Tripoli crisis and fighting near Sirt and Abu Qurayn more than 24,000 IDPs have been reached with humanitarian assistance during the reporting period.

More than 654,000 migrants and refugees are currently in Libya and remain at risk of unlawful killings, torture, arbitrary detention and unlawful deprivation of liberty, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, slavery and forced labour, extortion and exploitation. Of particular concern are the more than 1,800 migrants and refugees held in the state-run detention centers, where conditions are characterised by severe overcrowding, insufficient access to sanitation facilities, food, or clean water, and where there are wide-spread reports of human rights violations. On 29 February, a fire that broke out in Libya's Dhar el Jebel Detention Center in Zintan killed a 26-year-old Eritrean man and destroyed a building that was holding another 50 migrants. As part of the 1,670 individuals held in detention, UNHCR estimates there are over 1,100 persons of concern to UNHCR. Since January 2020, UNHCR has advocated for the release of 215 refugees and asylum-seekers from detention. Together with partners, UNHCR has made 143 monitoring visits to, and provided over 780 medical consultations at detention centres in Libya. Those released are able to receive counselling and medical services as well as non-food items within the urban community, where they can be processed for possible solutions outside of Libya.

Migrants and refugees also continue to take risks to attempt to cross into Europe. In 2020, more than 2,670 migrants have been returned to Libya after by intercepted/rescued at sea; most of whom are taken into detention. UN agencies and partners continue to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants and refugees, including health screenings and relief items after disembarkation.

UN agencies and partners continue to provide assistance to migrants and refugees both in urban communities and those in official detention centres, reaching more than 7,000 since the beginning of the year. In addition, UNHCR continues to support the evacuation or resettlement of refugees out of Libya - 161 since January 2020. IOM also continues to support the voluntary humanitarian return of migrants to their countries of origin through its voluntary humanitarian return programme (VHR). Between the dates 16 January and 16 March, IOM facilitated the voluntary humanitarian return of 1,466 vulnerable migrants to 16 countries of origin.

Across Libya, the protracted crisis continues to pose grave risks for both Libyans and non-Libyans. More than 356,000 people remained displaced throughout Libya and nearly 448,000 previously displaced people have returned to their places of origin. In 2020, it is estimated that around 893,000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance due to conflict, insecurity and political and economic instability.

ARTICLE (17 Mar 2020)

Libya takes measures to prepare against COVID-19

Libya is at high risk of the spread of COVID-19 given its growing levels of insecurity, political fragmentation, weak health system and high numbers of migrants, refugees and IDPs. As such, prevention and preparedness measures are rapidly being put in place to both address and mitigate against the disease. On 14 March 2020 the Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya and Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord (GNA) announced a state of emergency in Libya. This included the closure of all air, ground and maritime Libyan borders three weeks (with potential extension), prayers in mosques to be cancelled, schools and universities to be closed for two weeks and public gatherings limited. The announcement also included the allocation of 500 million LYD for COVID-19 preparedness and response.

WHO's rapid assessment of Libya's detection and response capacities for COVID-19 has identified several weaknesses. The health information system is functioning poorly and only a limited number of health care facilities are reporting to the disease Early Warning and Response Network (EWARN). Contact tracing capacity is extremely weak. Although Libya is able to perform basic influenza tests on clinical specimens, it has limited capacity to test for COVID-19. In many hospitals, isolation units are either non-existent or inadequate.

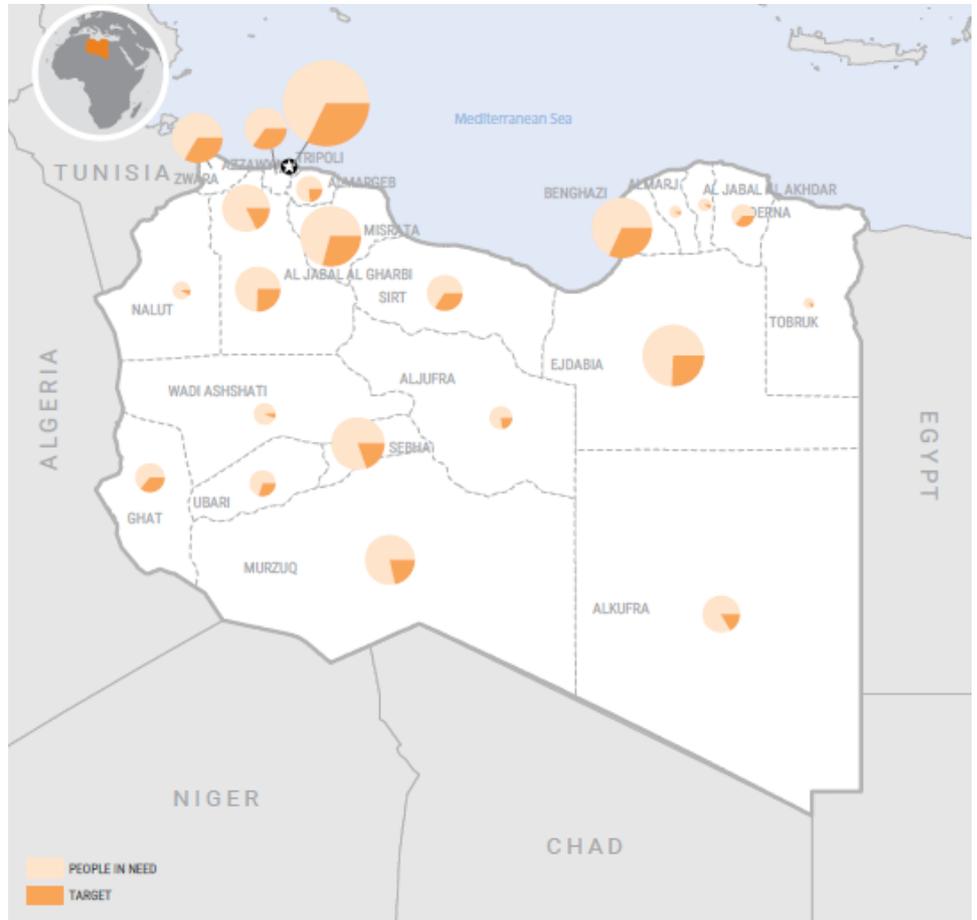
The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is monitoring the situation closely and has taken steps to prevent and control possible importation of the virus from other countries. Screening points and medical units have been set up to monitor arrivals at points of entry to and isolate suspected cases if needed. WHO regularly reports global epidemiology to the Ministry of Health and NCDC. WHO, the health authorities and health partners have prioritized six technical areas for urgent support, including enhancing surveillance, strengthening rapid response teams; supporting health control offices at points of entry; improving laboratory capacity; increasing health information and communication; and supporting the establishment of isolation wards in selected hospitals and quarantine areas at points of entry.

ARTICLE (17 Mar 2020)

345,000 Libyans, refugees and migrants need humanitarian assistance in 2020

Libya is in its ninth year of instability and conflict. In 2019, escalations in the conflict, in both the south and in the country's capital, Tripoli, which saw fighting move into more populated urban areas. With each passing year, people's well-being and living standards have been eroded.

On 16 February, OCHA Libya launched this year's Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)– with humanitarian organizations seeking US\$115 million to assist 345,000 people most severely in need. This is out of a total of 893,000 Libyans and non-Libyans who are estimated to be in need of some form of humanitarian assistance in 2020, based on the analysis of needs outlined in the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). This includes internally displaced persons (IDPs), returned and vulnerable, conflict-affected Libyans, as well as refugees and migrants. Of those in need, 34 per cent are women and 30 per are children.



As outlined in the HNO 2020, insecurity and conflict continues to drive displacement, with the number of IDPs nearly doubling in 2019. Many Libyans remain at risk of violence, indiscriminate attacks and exposure to explosive remnants of war. Migrants and refugees are some of the most vulnerable groups, and continue to be at risk of killings, torture, arbitrary detention and unlawful deprivation of liberty, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), slavery and forced labour, extortion and exploitation. Of particular concern are those held in detention centres, where there are conditions of severe overcrowding and with insufficient access to food, clean water and sanitation.

The use of negative coping mechanisms and the risk of exploitation remains high particularly among vulnerable populations who are unable to meet their basic needs. The already fragile governance systems, especially those responsible for delivering basic services, has been tested to the limits by the protracted conflict and it is getting worse, level of shortages in health care, education, water, sanitation, electricity and other essential services is growing.

While the funding requirement is smaller than last year, this does not mean that the humanitarian needs have reduced, but reflects increased effort made by humanitarian organizations to produce a more focused and prioritized plan designed to act as a catalyst for Libyan institutions, both national and local, to provide the assistance required by affected people. While access remains a challenge, including restricted movements due to conflict and insecurity, bureaucratic impediments and customs delays, the humanitarian community continues to stay and deliver assistance, reaching 400,000 people in 2019.

ARTICLE (17 Mar 2020)

WFP's agriculture and livelihood needs assessment in the South

In order to understand the main impacts of the continuing conflict on the agricultural sector, and its impact on people's access to food and livelihoods, WFP Libya conducted a needs assessment, from December 2019 to February 2020, on agriculture and livelihoods in the Fezzan. The southern Fezzan region in Libya remains extremely important for the country's agricultural production. Due to its geographical position, the region also hosts many migrants and IDPs, many of whom are employed in the sector.

Around 80 per cent of farmers are involved in crop production for their own consumption and income generation, with the remaining in crop production and livestock rearing. A large proportion of the population involved in farming in the Fezzan region currently face serious challenges in continuing their activities. Many people were obliged to cease agricultural production, because they did not have the means to continue. A main obstacle to continuing farming is the poor security situation which affects the overall agricultural value-chain, from production, to sales, storage and processing. The scarcity of water and fuel, coupled with irregular electricity supplies, the lack of or high prices of agricultural inputs, difficulties in accessing markets and shops due to the lack of funds and transportation constraints are some of the other reasons that people have been forced to stop farming activities.



More than 100 semi-structured interviews were conducted with farmers, involving migrants, women and IDPs.

WFP / Fezzan Libya Organization

According to most of the interviewed farming households, the protracted crisis pushes a large number of households (44 per cent) to spend up to 75 per cent of their income on food. For these respondents between 25 per cent and 75 per cent of the food they consume comes from their own production, especially vegetables, fruit and animal products. Other food commodities usually consumed are purchased from shops and markets and are therefore strongly affected by food price inflation, which is higher in the south than other parts of the country. Therefore, the agriculture sector provides a critical component of a family's resilience and coping strategies to meet their food needs in the face of the protracted crises.

The agriculture sector is also an important factor in many IDP's resilience and coping mechanisms. By working in agriculture, IDPs reported having better access to food and income generation. Equally, for migrants, agriculture is an important source of employment and income generation due to its casual nature and that many already have the skills to work in the sector. However, unlike IDPs they generally do not have access to rent or purchase land because they do not have the required legal documentation. This is a similar situation faced by migrants trying to access other services in Libya, such as health and education services.

The assessment demonstrated the importance of agriculture to the livelihoods and resilience for the significant part of the local population, as well as for IDPs and migrants, in the Fezzan region in Libya. As such, the sector requires effective interventions to strengthen its sustainability particularly in the face of the challenges posed by the ongoing conflict. While the conflict remains unpredictable it is necessary to support the sector and the people that rely on it—both in the short and longer term

OCHA coordinates the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. We advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.

<https://www.unocha.org/libya>
<https://reliefweb.int/country/lby>
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/libya>

About Terms of Use Privacy policy Copyright notice

