

Introduction



Source: New York Times

With reports that NATO airstrikes may be beginning to strain government forces, yesterday's gains by rebel forces are reported to be significant. In the Misurata vicinity, rebel forces gained ground to the west of the city, taking up positions in Qaryat az Zurayq. This development means that Gaddafi forces are being pushed further and further from mortar range of the city and are approaching the outer range of their heavier weapons, according to rebel reports. Reports indicate that rebel fighters will attempt to push further west to Ad Dafniyah in the coming days.

These gains have however come at a cost, with over 110 wounded and 7 dead received by hospitals in Misurata today. With this increase, hospitals do not have any beds available, including ICU beds, and are extremely concerned as to where any wounded can be treated if received tomorrow. There is an urgent need for medical evacuations and a field hospital to enable space in these facilities to treat incoming casualties.

The city remains to be besieged by pro-government forces, with supply routes still limited to the port. The port is currently open, with limited amounts of shelling reported in the past few days. Yesterday evening, shells have landed in the airport vicinity, with one striking a civilian neighborhood, reportedly wounding four women and two children. Rebel operations are ongoing to take and hold the airport.

In previous days, coinciding with missile attacks of the port and attacks on the fuel depot, it is reported that helicopters marked with red crosses were flying over Misurata. According to OCHA, these did not originate from any known humanitarian sources. Following the fuel depot attack, there are concerns that Misurata will face severe fuel shortages. International Medical Corps' team in Misurata has yet to see any signs of such shortages; however, shortages of medical supply continue, due to the ongoing demand from health facilities that are continuing to receive casualties of the conflict.

In Tripoli, after reports of a rebel uprising in the suburbs yesterday, Al Jazeera today reports that rebel fighters hoisted the independence flag at the Mitiga airbase in the west of the city. There are also reports of a new round of NATO airstrikes targeting government buildings in Tripoli.

Following the fierce fighting outside of Ajdabiya yesterday, it is reported that the Ajdabiya hospital received the bodies of six dead and three wounded rebel fighters. Rebel forces are reported to have advanced approximately 35 kilometers towards Brega, breaking the long-deadlocked front, which was shortly followed by a retreat, reportedly due to anticipated NATO airstrikes. Reports indicate that rebel

forces will continue with a slow and controlled push towards Brega from Ajdabiya. An International Medical Corps team member today travelled to the village of Sultan, between Benghazi and Ajdabiya, encountering only a few checkpoints along the way.

With continuing arrivals of Libyans over the Tunisian border, at least 50,000 Libyans are known to be currently displaced within host communities in southern Tunisia, according to OCHA. Reports indicate that several armed Gaddafi militants have been arrested in Tataouine, Tunisia, this evening, with others who remain on the loose. On the border, the situation remains to be calm. Sporadic fighting has been heard coming from the Al-Ghazaya direction, where a large number of pro-government vehicles and reinforcements are reported to be and fighting has also been heard on the outskirts of Nalut. A Tunisian Military Official has expressed skepticism that Gaddafi forces could retake and hold the border, now that it has been lost to the rebels, as rebels hold the surrounding areas.

As of May 10, 2011:

LIBYA/TUNISIA BORDER AREA

An increase in arrivals at the Ra's Ajdir camp was observed today, reflected in the increase in the number of consultations provided by International Medical Corps at health post (83 consultations). This increase in arrivals is thought to be a possible indicator of a worsening humanitarian situation in Gaddafi held areas. Approximately 100 new arrivals at Ras Ajdir transit camp are in urgent need of food and assistance. Sanitary conditions at the camp also require improvement. To address these needs, International Medical Corps will tomorrow distribute hygiene kits and will coordinate possible food assistance with UNHCR.

At the Dehibat health post, consultations were today provided to 29 patients. Medications and supplies were provided to the Dehibat hospital to address supplies of needed items. As fighting is continues to be anticipated in the border region, International Medical Corps' medical team remains on stand-by to provide medical care as needed.

WESTERN LIBYA

International Medical Corps has delivered needed medical supplies to the Nalut hospital. Supplies for Zintan and Jadu are also inside western Libya, ready to be delivered to these health facilities shortly. Supplies include analgesics, antibiotics, vitamins, compresses, insulin, lab reagents, suture equipment, syringes, IV bags, sterilization boxes and catheters, among other items.

Although hospitals in Misurata have recently been experiencing a reduction in the number of casualties received, today's numbers have significantly overwhelmed capacity. With no beds available, International Medical Corps is focusing urgent efforts on potential operations to provide medical evacuations and the provision of a field hospital. In addition to problems faced as to how treatment can be provided for any additional cases, patients are also being discharged early to go home without adequate follow-up. Without this care, wound infections may result, potentially leading to more serious consequences including sepsis, amputations, and even death. The bed capacity situation will be closely monitored by International Medical Corps as efforts are made to respond to this urgent need.

International Medical Corps is continuing to provide staffing support in the Misurata hospitals and is also continuing in efforts to provide needed medical supplies including anesthetic medications, consumables, disposables ICU equipment and supplies, heart medications, chemotherapy drugs and immunosuppressant agents for kidney transplant and hemodialysed patients. International Medical Corps is preparing to send further identified supplies, including water purification tablets provided by MAP International.

EASTERN LIBYA

To address critical nursing shortages, International Medical Corps today provided an additional 20 nursing staff to the Benghazi Medical Centre. Further staffing deployments are planned to further support health facility needs.

International Medical Corps will tomorrow commence the Ambulance Staff training workshop, in cooperation with the MOH and the Benghazi Medical Center, to train staff in safe transportation of patients and use of ambulance equipment.

To support the clinic in the village of Sultan (located between Benghazi and Ajdabiya), International Medical Corps today provided medicines, medical instruments, dressings and consumables to support the provision of primary health care to the 7,000 residents, including 1,500 IDPs.

To support the needs of IDPs in eastern Libya, the team today distributed 1050 hygiene kits provided by UNICEF to IDPs in Derna, east of Benghazi.

International Medical Corps has provided a Health Advisor/Liaison Officer to the Transitional Administration Health Authority, who began work on May 7 and will work closely with the Director of the Office of International Cooperation at the Health Sector Office. The position clearly fills a current gap, with the Advisor responding to a wide range of requests including broad strategic health systems advice, procurement queries, briefings on the various roles of the international organizations, logistics assistance for coordination meetings, and liaison issues related to International Medical Corps' and other NGO operations.

The National Transitional Authority (NTC) has now defined the organizational structure of the Health Sector Office and named officials to head its various departments. The Health Sector Office wishes to begin coordinating the health aspects of the response, by setting up a Strategic Health Operations Center and shifting the weekly Health Cluster meetings from the Tibesti Hotel, to the Center. WHO is assisting with equipment and supplies to set up this Center.

International Medical Corps is currently sourcing supplies of the antibiotic colistin, for treatment of the nosocomial infection of multiple drug resistant Acinetobacter species bacteria (causing meningitis) at the Benghazi Medical Centre. The extent of the outbreak and number of cases is still being determined, with results to be sent to WHO for further investigation.

International Medical Corps is planning to hold a meeting on the plans for an orthopedic and rehabilitation program for victims of the conflict in eastern Libya, with relevant agencies attending.



Rabih Torbay

VP, International Operations

rtorbay@internationalmedicalcorps.org

Hakan Bilgin

Country Director - Libya

hbilgin@internationalmedicalcorps.org

Robert Lankenau

Team Leader - Tunisia

rlankenau@internationalmedicalcorps.org

