

LIBYA

August 2021

An estimated **897,613 people in Libya are in need of humanitarian assistance**. Displaced populations, refugees and migrants are amongst the most vulnerable. Between April 2019 - June 2020, some 200,000 were internally displaced. Following the October 2020 ceasefire, notable decrease in IDP numbers was observed.

UNHCR's works to enhance the **protection** environment and provide **life-saving assistance** to **IDPs, refugees, asylum-seekers, and host communities**. The outbreak of **COVID-19** in March 2020 raised new challenges to which the operation responded, by adjusting priorities and budgeting.

UNHCR's priorities in Libya include providing **life-saving activities, assistance to the most vulnerable persons in need of international protection in detention centres and at disembarkation** and ensuring their access to protection and solutions such as resettlement and family reunification.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

897,613

Returnees *

643,123

IDPs *

212,593

Refugees **

41,897

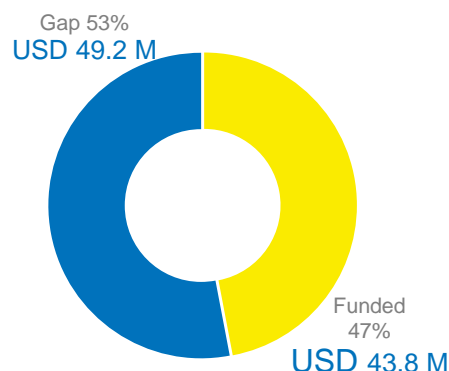
* IOM-DTM April 2021

** Refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR (as of 1 July 2021)

FUNDING (AS OF 28 SEPTEMBER 2021)

USD 93.0M

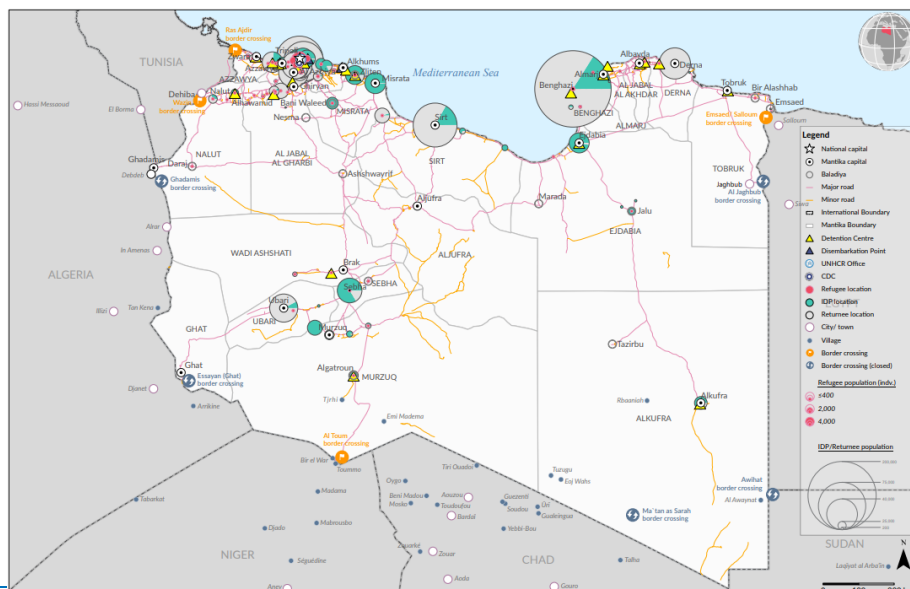
requested for the Libya operation in 2021



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

129 national staff
 (111 in Tripoli, **one**
 in Misrata, **four** in
 Benghazi, **13** in
 Tunis);
55 international staff



Working with Partners

- **UNHCR is a member of the United Nations Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team in Libya.** Together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), UNHCR co-leads the Migrants and Refugees Platform. UNHCR also leads the Shelter/Non-Food Item (NFI) Sector and the Protection Sector on IDPs, returnees and non-displaced populations, as well as refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants. On 20 October 2020, in Tripoli, UNHCR and UNICEF [signed](#) a joint plan, the [Blueprint for Joint Action](#), pledging to expand assistance and to facilitate access to education and protection for refugee children in Libya, along with improving the delivery of essential services like water, sanitation and hygiene. UNHCR also has concluded agreements with the World Food Programme (WFP) for the joint distribution of food packages.
- **UNHCR supports the Libyan authorities in enhancing the rights environment and providing assistance to displaced and conflict-affected Libyan populations.** It works with partners to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR is currently expanding partnerships with both international and national NGOs, as well as civil society organizations. Partners include ACTED, *Cooperazione e Sviluppo* (CESVI), IRC, INTERSOS, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and LibAid. In addition to UNICEF and WFP, agreements have been concluded with sister UN agencies, UNFPA and UNDP.

Main Activities

Assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs)

- **Support for IDPs remains a priority. UNHCR provides basic assistance to IDPs in Libya, including as core-relief items and cash assistance.** Cash assistance helps the most vulnerable displaced families afford shelter and basic needs. Under its 2020 programme, UNHCR with partners ACTED and then-partner Danish Refugee Council (DRC) provided pre-paid e-cards to purchase basic items at point-of-sale outlets across Libya, reaching some 3,400 households (21,317 individuals). New agreements for 2021 have been concluded with ACTED and NRC, who continue to make preliminary assessments. Considering the challenges posed by the liquidity crisis in the country, UNHCR and its partners have distributed NFIs and hygiene kits to 32,825 IDPs and returnees in 2021. During winter 2020/21, UNHCR, together with partners LibAid and Libyan Red Crescent, distributed winter kits to a total of 3,164 IDP households across Libya. In April 2021, UNHCR, in coordination with WFP, provided food packages, kitchen sets, hygiene kits and other relief items to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in [Ghadames](#) in southwestern Libya. A total of 300 families (some 1,650 individuals) benefitted from these distributions.
- **UNHCR implements quick impact projects (QIPs), which are small, rapidly implemented projects to support IDPs, returnees and host communities with a view to promoting social cohesion.** Together with communities, UNHCR and partners identify projects, mainly targeting local infrastructure, equipment and basic services within the health, education, shelter and WASH sectors. In 2020/21, UNHCR implemented 66 projects both directly and through its partners, including rehabilitating and upgrading hospitals, clinics and schools. In May 2021 UNHCR and DRC conducted the [handover](#) of Qawmia Al-Arabiya school and Ghout Al Shaal Health Centre QIPs. The two QIPs are located in the municipality of Hay Al Andalus, with the aim of supporting the host community, IDPs, and refugees. The health centre serves around 200 refugees per month, while several refugee students are now enrolled in Al Qawmia Al-Arabiya school. The conducted activities included WASH and small-scale rehabilitation works on the building. On 9 September, UNHCR donated ambulances to five local municipalities including Al-Swani, Azzawiya, Nalut, Daraj and Bani Walid, and to the Primary Health Care Institute. The handover ceremony was attended by UNHCR's Chief of Mission, Jean-Paul Cavalieri, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Georgette Gagnon, and the Health Sector Coordinator for the World Health Organization, Azret Kalmykov, along with members of the municipal councils. The project aims to strengthen health facilities by reaching Libyans, including internally displaced persons and returnees, in need of urgent medical assistance.

Support following rescue/interception at sea

UNHCR's interventions at disembarkation points in Libya focus on the provision of life-saving assistance and protection monitoring to identify persons in need of international protection and vulnerable individuals, including unaccompanied and separated children, the elderly, persons with specific needs, women at risk and victims of trafficking. UNHCR and partner IRC has access to and conducts protection monitoring at disembarkation points in western Libya when alerted by local authorities. In the past, UNHCR upgraded reception areas at six disembarkation points to meet the basic needs of refugees and migrants following rescue/interception at sea. Support includes establishing health posts and constructing water and sanitation facilities such as toilets, showers and shaded areas to protect refugees and migrants from harsh elements.

Assistance for persons of concern in detention

UNHCR advocates for an end to arbitrary detention in Libya and for the release of refugees and asylum-seekers from detention, particularly those who are unaccompanied or separated children and other vulnerable individuals. UNHCR also calls for alternatives to detention, including care arrangements for unaccompanied children. So far in 2021, UNHCR and partners have conducted 141 visits to detention centres. However, new distribution modalities by Libyan authorities have meant that presently UNHCR and its partners have restricted access to official government detention centres. Additionally, some detention centres are located in areas deemed insecure. At present, through its partners, UNHCR provides life-saving assistance, including medical services where particularly poor hygiene conditions contribute to the risk of spreading disease. **UNHCR continues to advocate for alternatives to detention, an end to arbitrary detention and the establishment of a judicial review process.** UNHCR also advocates for measures to be taken to reduce the risk of gender-based violence.

- **In 2021, a total of 127 refugees and asylum-seekers have been released following UNHCR's advocacy efforts (389 in 2020)**, to be evacuated to a safe third country. Some having been screened for evacuation, and the majority have been supported by having essential needs met in urban centres. In mid-January of this year, UNHCR helped to support the [transfer](#) of 121 asylum-seekers detained at Zintan (Daher Al Jabal) detention centre (135 km south-west of Tripoli), to Tripoli, where they received UNHCR's urban package of assistance.

Urban Refugee Programme

- **One of UNHCR's key objectives in Libya is to enhance the protection environment for refugees and asylum-seekers.** UNHCR assists persons in need of international protection through its telephone hotlines, via its Community Day Centre (CDC) in Tripoli and through outreach visits. UNHCR's partners CESVI and IRC provide specialized assistance to persons with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children and victims of trafficking. UNHCR and NRC's call centre—supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)—provides information and advice about services and assistance. NRC also runs a weekly legal service at the CDC, providing refugees and asylum-seekers with practical legal advice and counselling on topics such as legal residence and rental agreements.
- **Cash assistance is key to building the resilience of vulnerable refugees in urban settings.** To date, through CESVI and IRC, UNHCR has distributed cash assistance to some 8,024 refugees in Tripoli, based on vulnerability criteria. This has consisted of emergency cash (between LYD 500 - 1,120, or USD 100 – 265, depending on the family size) and monthly/regular cash assistance. NRC has also begun distributing gift cards under a new hybrid modality to help offset the challenges presented by periodic cash liquidity.
- Refugees and asylum-seekers have limited access to local health facilities. **UNHCR and partners provide primary healthcare and psychosocial support** to refugees and asylum-seekers in Tripoli and detention facilities, as well as referrals to specialized care in secondary healthcare settings. In 2021, UNHCR and partners have conducted 13,003 medical consultations for vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in both urban (10,665) and detention (2,338) settings. In partnership with IRC and the Libyan Red Crescent (LRC), supported by the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), a 24-hour medical hotline and ambulance service operates for emergency cases.

Durable Solutions

- **UNHCR continues to seek durable solutions**, such as resettlement, family reunification and voluntary repatriation, for refugees and asylum-seekers, giving particular attention to the most vulnerable populations. Since November 2017, a total of 6,544 refugees and asylum-seekers departed from Libya, either through resettlement (1,770 since 2017) or humanitarian evacuations (4,774 since 2017, including 3,327 to Niger, 874 to Italy, and 648 to Rwanda).
- **From March - August 2020, all evacuation/resettlement flights were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** So far in 2021, 189 people have departed for resettlement through eleven flights, while 133 individuals have been evacuated to the ETM in Rwanda.

COVID-19

- **Libya reported its first case of COVID-19 on 24 March 2020.** As of 14 September 2021, the NCDC recorded a total of 326,370 cases of COVID-19 in Libya, of whom 81,228 were active cases, 240,685 were recovered and 4,457 were reported deaths.

UNHCR and its partners have introduced new health and safety protocols at the Serraj Registration Centre and the CDC in Tripoli and now work on an appointment-only basis, to ensure social distancing to protect the health of persons of concern, partners and staff members, while temperature checks, hand sanitisers and masks are required for everyone entering the facilities. In the event of emergency cases arriving without an appointment, urgent cases are screened and reviewed by partner IRC's doctors based on urgency.

- **Periodic assessments highlight the worrying socio-economic impact of COVID-19, which is compounding the vulnerability of refugees.** Data collected through regular assessments suggest that a significant proportion had lost their jobs with the inability to work due to COVID-19 related movement restrictions, particularly those who relied on temporary employment and casual daily labour such as in commerce or construction. With increasing prices of basic food and commodities, many refugees and asylum-seekers cannot afford even the most basic costs of day-to-day living. So far in 2021, **UNHCR and WFP have reached 11,628 people with over 53,000 food parcels.**
- **UNHCR continues to support IDPs.** Cash assistance is a valuable tool for IDPs to meet their basic needs. As of 15 September, more than 700 IDPs have received cash grants. They are provided with pre-paid cash cards that are used in a variety of outlets including shops, supermarkets and pharmacies. Provision of core-relief items (CRIs) through UNHCR and its national partner LibAid is also ongoing. Some 40,000 IDPs have so far received CRIs in Libya.
- **Detention centres (DC) present a particular health risk due to COVID-19, due to overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.** UNHCR through and partner LibAid and IRC distribute hygiene kits and other CRIs at several DCs across the country, in both east and west Libya. On 23 August, UNHCR teams distributed urgent relief items at the Al-Mabani detention centre in Tripoli. The centre currently hosts some 1,500 refugees and migrants, who are mostly being held following transfer from Tripoli's disembarkation points. In 2021, a total of 2,592 individuals have received hygiene supplies and 3,600 emergency life-saving items have been distributed in detention centres.
- **The health sector remains the focus of UNHCR's support.** To date, UNHCR has supplied 20 ambulances to various municipalities, hygiene kits, soap, PPE, blankets, sanitary cloth for hospital bedding and tents. In addition, the provision of 13 generators has been an invaluable form of assistance in the face of Libya's fluctuating power grid. UNHCR has also provided 14 prefabricated containers, to be used as COVID-19 testing and reception facilities at Misrata, Benghazi, Sebha and Zawiya, to help expand space at primary healthcare centres.

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