

KEY FIGURES

455,671

People of concern to UNHCR
(including an IDP population of
418,803)

8,801

Individuals received medical
assistance from UNHCR partners,
over 6,000 while in detention

98,384

USD provided in cash assistance to
refugees in Libya (2015)

4,467

Refugees and asylum seekers
provided with protection assistance
through three community centres

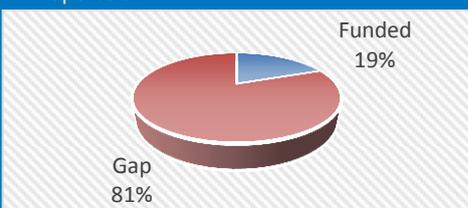
18,116

Persons of concern received life
sustaining items from UNHCR
partners

Funding

USD 20.1 Million

Requested by agencies for the
operation



PRIORITIES

- IDP data consolidation; needs assessments; capacity building.
- Distribution of NFI s to newly displaced and vulnerable IDPs and host community families.
- Humanitarian assistance for individuals intercepted/rescued at sea that disembarked in Libya.
- Detention monitoring, NFI provision and seeking alternatives to detention.
- Provide documentation for refugees/asylum seekers; enhance outreach and protection monitoring; provision of legal; social assistance.

LIBYA SITUATION

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

June 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- Several rounds of UN-led talks since January resulted in a proposed agreement to create a unity government, which was rejected by the House of Representatives in eastern Libya and later by the General National Congress government in western Libya.
- A total of 4,467 individuals have been assisted since the re-opening of the three community centres in February. Protection assistance provided by UNHCR and its partners includes financial support, registration, documentation and renewal of attestations, legal and medical assistance, and psychosocial counselling.
- UNHCR suspended all new registration activities in May 2014. However, UNHCR has recently resumed small scale renewal of attestations and has reached 20 families (116 individuals).
- Through its partner CESVI, UNHCR provided a total of USD 98,384 in monthly or emergency one-time cash assistance to 745 vulnerable refugees in 2015.
- Some 6,869 people held in detention facilities received medical assistance and 2,615 detainees received essential relief items.
- Humanitarian assistance is hampered due to the volatile situation, which impedes access to many areas of the country and reduces communication and monitoring. UNHCR relies on remote management from Tunisia.



Distribution of essential household items takes place in Benghazi for displaced families sheltered in school buildings, March 2015/UNHCR.

Population of concern

A total of **455,671** people of concern



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Libya continues to navigate a tumultuous transition period characterized by political divisions, failing institutions, clashes in various regions, and rising insecurity and criminality. The security situation deteriorated in early 2015 resulting in increased attacks against civilians. While the second round of political dialogue facilitated by UNSMIL ended on a positive note on 29 January, UNSMIL-led talks scheduled in Morocco for 1 March were cancelled by both Tobruk and Tripoli governments. Parallel talks in Morocco and Algeria on 13 and 14 April were said to have ended positively. However, Libya's House of Representatives (HoR) officially rejected the new UN proposal to address the terms of a truce, disarmament, and a unity government. The General National Congress (GNC) had already rejected the proposal agreement. The situation remains unresolved.

The conflict and lack of security impacts urban refugees and asylum-seekers, an already vulnerable population. In the absence of efficient protection mechanisms and a lack of rule of law and functioning institutions, refugees and asylum-seekers are subjected to harassment, arbitrary detention, limited freedom of movement, and overall human rights violations. Continuous threats of mass arrests and detention are common, particularly for Sub-Saharan Africans.

Primary concerns of refugees and asylum seekers identified through the UNHCR hotlines include registration or renewal of expired UNHCR attestations; requests for financial assistance; access to education, health care and disability support; and resettlement. The majority of the calls are from unregistered persons of concern (PoCs) who approach UNHCR for assistance. While some are new arrivals, many have been residing in Libya for years and were not in need of assistance until the situation deteriorated; long-time Palestinian and Syrian residents of Libya are increasingly approaching the office. Most are in dire need of assistance as a result of the conflict but also due to secondary effects including rising food prices and rental costs, and increased unemployment. In Benghazi, 1,500 Palestinians approached UNHCR in January and February requesting assistance and/or relocation to another country.

The current conflict in Libya has uprooted and displaced a significant portion of the Libyan population. By December 2014, UNHCR estimated a total of 360,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in various parts of Libya as a result of escalating armed conflict in the latter half of 2014. The current displaced population in the country (as of May 2015) is estimated to be between 420,000 and 440,000 persons. The majority of IDPs require varying degrees of support, including non-food items, medicine, and alternative shelter for those accommodated in schools and other public facilities. The most affected area continues to be Benghazi, though there are no recent reports of displacement. The most direct humanitarian impact has been the closure of schools since October 2014 with over 70 schools hosting IDPs in Benghazi. A few schools re-opened in March 2015 but most schools and the university remain shut. Continuous indiscriminate shelling has also affected the security of IDPs in these schools. Many affected families in Libya face multiple displacements.

As a result of the overall instability, Libya continues to be the main transit and departure point for irregular sea migration to Europe. In 2014, over 170,100 persons arrived in Italy and of whom some 141,484 departed from Libya. In 2015, thus far 54,000 arrivals to Italy have been reported. Also of concern to UNHCR are the 4,612 detainees including 229 women and 12 children in government-run detention centres in Libya. To date the Libyan Coast Guard has rescued or intercepted nearly 4,000 individuals from the sea. Those rescued are then disembarked and transferred to a detention centre.



After interception/rescue at sea, persons of various nationalities disembark at the port of Misrata, May 2015/IMC.

The protection space for refugees and asylum seekers has further diminished with limited options available. While Libya is not party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol, Libya ratified the 1969 OAU Convention; Libya has yet to establish legislation or administrative procedures of asylum in the country.

The UN Country Team in Libya continues to work from Tunis as a result of the evacuation of international staff in July 2014. UNHCR national staff in Benghazi and Tripoli continue to work from home; UNHCR works closely with partners for implementation of programme activities through remote management.

Protection

Achievements and Impact

- The Office relies on a robust team of national staff and partners who, on a daily basis, provide protection assistance – registration, documentation and renewal of attestations, as well as financial and medical assistance, and psychosocial counselling at three Community Development Centres (CDCs) in the country; two are located in Tripoli and one in Benghazi. Renewal of attestations (UNHCR refugee registration certificates or recognition of asylum seeker status) enables freedom of movement while providing critical documentation for both asylum seekers and refugees to access a range of social services including education and health care. Some 30 to 80 registered and unregistered families of various nationalities approach the centres weekly. At the CDCs, persons of concern are referred to a caseworker who conducts an initial assessment of their needs as well as assessing the eligibility for assistance in accordance with the vulnerability criteria. UNHCR partners International Medical Corps (IMC) and Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI) jointly running the centres. Since they re-opened, a total of 4,770 individuals have received financial support or psychosocial counselling.
- In 2015, UNHCR conducted emergency registration of six new asylum seekers; the Office will continue examining the feasibility to resume registration. In June, the Office began renewing attestations for refugees and asylum seekers who were previously registered with UNHCR and whose documents have expired. So far, 20 cases (116 individuals) have had attestations renewed, and UNHCR will continue renewing attestations in the coming months to strengthen legal protection and ensure access to education and health care for persons of concern.
- Recently, a medical/social mobile team has helped UNHCR to expand its mobile protection outreach to monitor the situation within the refugees/asylum seeker community, follow up on individual cases, disseminate information within the refugee/asylum seeker community, and provide medical services/legal/social counselling for those who cannot access the CDCs. The mobile outreach unit consists of two medical staff, three social workers and one legal advocate (an increase from 2 staff in April). The out-reach team has conducted 22 home visits since April.
- Registered and unregistered refugees and asylum-seekers reach out for assistance through UNHCR's emergency hotlines. Given the difficulty of access due to the crisis, the hotlines provide easily accessible information and counselling to people of concern on protection services (including on the limitations of registration under current circumstances) and community services, and responding to requests for assistance from those who have been arrested due to lack of documentation in order for UNHCR to advocate for their release. UNHCR responded to and followed up on more than 600 calls between January and April 2015 and has increased the number of hotlines from six to eight covering registration/renewals, detention and community services.
- UNHCR's partner CESVI provides cash assistance to families meeting the vulnerability criteria. The criteria include female-headed households, elderly people and people with special needs and chronic illnesses. UNHCR partners provided a total of USD 98,384 cash assistance to 745 refugee and asylum seekers in 2015. This assistance provides a lifeline for the most vulnerable refugees/asylum seekers with diminishing livelihood options in Libya.
- UNHCR's partner IMC conducts monitoring in seven of the 18 detention centres run by the Department for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM), which has been more systematised since April. IMC conducts regular visits to the centres and provides medical assistance and distribution of non-food items to persons held in detention. Thus far, through IMC, UNHCR provided medical assistance to 6,869 individuals and 2,615 with non-food item packages. In 2015, UNHCR assisted in the release of 148 individuals (19 men and 52 women from Syria, 25 Sudanese men, 15 Eritrean women, 23 women and 11 children from Somalia).

- UNHCR monitors rescue at sea/interception operations carried out by the Libyan Coast Guard and where possible, provides life sustaining items and medical assistance to those disembarked. UNHCR provided the Libyan Coast Guard authorities with an emergency hotline, which is used to give information on rescue operations to the UNHCR Field Protection team in Tripoli. UNHCR maintains daily communication with both the Libyan Coast Guard and DCIM, and coordinates an immediate response to rescue at sea with its partner IMC. Through IMC and in close coordination with the Detention sub-working group, UNHCR has attempted to monitor the situation of persons of concern who are disembarked and detained in Libya, and collect disaggregated data where possible, and also monitor for deportations. On an ad-hoc basis the Office is able to advocate for the release of those in detention into the community for an appropriate protection response.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Given the difficulties in the country, refugees in urban areas often rely solely on UNHCR for assistance. Due to the evacuation of international staff and restricted movement for national staff, UNHCR relies heavily on partners to ensure the continuation of basic services. While life-saving activities continue, UNHCR's ability to implement its operational plan is impacted by the lack of access to persons of concern and the overall insecurity in the country. This is resulting in the further shrinking of available protection space in Libya.
- Faced with growing needs and limited resources, the Office has had to prioritise providing essential relief items to vulnerable persons or in exceptional circumstances.
- UNHCR can access eight DCIM run detention facilities and is exploring access to additional centres through the verification with DCIM headquarters and within the Detention sub-working group. IMC, UNHCR's partner for detention monitoring, is currently targeting detention centres in the west of Libya, while investing in additional staff resources, medical supplies and logistical support to establish a presence in the south and east of Libya, subject to security considerations. As a result, the Office will be able to better track the movement of those in detention across Libya.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to advocate with the Ministry of Education so that persons of concern can continue their education and sit exams.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- UNHCR remains concerned about the number of schools that are closed to provide shelter to IDP families in Benghazi who have been fleeing ongoing fighting in the city since May 2014.

Health

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR provides medical care through IMC to urban refugees and to those in detention.
- Some 1,359 individuals received health care through the CDCs and 6,869 individuals in detention facilities received medication attention.
- UNHCR, through IMC, advocates for access to individuals held in state-run facilities that require secondary care.
- Mobile clinics provide immediate medical assistance for rescue at sea/interception operations. In 2015, 573 individuals were assisted after being rescued/intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Ongoing clashes and instability throughout the country has greatly impacted the health sector. Of particular concern are remote areas,



Distribution of essential household items in Misrata. May 2015/UNHCR

notably the south, highlighting the importance of ensuring that funding for the health sector is directly allocated to less visible and remote areas.

- Access to medical care for refugees, asylum seekers remains of concern to UNHCR, particularly for secondary healthcare needs.

Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- Through partners, UNHCR is targeting a total of 3,600 IDP families with life sustaining items (1,400 in Benghazi and 2,200 in Misrata) and over 3,020 families (15,501 individuals) have received life sustaining items. These items such as blankets, mattresses, jerry cans and other household materials, help families to be better equipped while in displacement and use their financial resources on other critical items, such as food and medicine.
- UNHCR partners are also distributing non-food items (NFIs) to detainees in government run facilities after needs assessments are carried out. So far in 2015, partners have distributed a total of 2,615 NFI kits to persons in detention in Libya.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Delivery of essential items is hampered across Libya as a result of ongoing fighting. While UNHCR partners are able to access some areas, other locations are completely inaccessible.
- Shelter is an urgent need across the country, i.e. in Benghazi, Wershifana, Al-Zawya and in southern Libya.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR is helping to improve community support primarily for identified unaccompanied minors through caregivers found within the communities as a means of ensuring support and care for minors in urban refugee areas. UNHCR provides cash assistance for families in need based on the established vulnerability criteria.
- The community development centres (CDCs) offer a safe space for urban refugees living in difficult circumstances. Through the CDC's, urban refugee and asylum seeker communities gradually develop a community support network in the absence of traditional forms of livelihood programmes. The CDC's also offer a venue for focus group discussions with the communities as well as information exchange.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Livelihood and community empowerment initiatives remain limited; activities for refugee communities and the host community are not possible in the current security context.
- Cash assistance is not a long-term livelihood project but does ensure the maintenance of dignity and support.

Durable Solutions

Achievements and Impact

- Where feasible, UNHCR promotes and facilitates resettlement, family reunification and voluntary repatriation for vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers at risk, such as unaccompanied children and female-headed households.
- In 2015, UNHCR made 12 submissions for refugee resettlement consideration, of which 11 were accepted and five have departed. The remaining case is pending a decision by the resettlement country.
- UNHCR continues to support informed voluntary repatriation, in safety and dignity, for those seeking to return to their countries. Two cases have been counselled for voluntary repatriation in 2015.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The possibility of undertaking resettlement in Libya remains limited. The resettlement needs of the refugee/asylum seeker community in Libya remain high given the precarious protection environment in the country.

Working in partnership

UNHCR leads the following sectors in Libya:

1. Protection Sector for the on-going IDP response
 2. Shelter/NFI Sector for the on-going IDP response
 3. Refugees/Migrants Sector (Co-led by IOM)
- **PROTECTION WORKING GROUP:** The Protection working group (PWG) was established in August 2014 and is the primary source of protection information and coordination on the Libya Crisis. The PWG meets bi-monthly in Tunis for information sharing and coordination of protection activities in Libya related to refugees/asylum seekers, IDPs, and migrants. A key area of intervention for the PWG is the development of an IDP data strategy, which was endorsed by the UNCT and establishes the figure of IDPs in the country and developing standards on IDP data collection and analysis.
 - **DETENTION SUB-WORKING GROUP:** The Detention sub-working group was established in April 2015 to provide a coherent policy around engagement in detention centres. The group is currently working on a consolidated list of active Department of Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) detention centres and profile of the current detention population, which is maintained and updated regularly, using information sourced from DCIM headquarters in Tripoli and partners who conduct regular visits to detention facilities. The objectives are to coordinate humanitarian assistance and individual protection interventions, and seek alternatives to detention.
 - **SHELTER/NFI SUB-WORKING GROUP:** UNHCR leads the Shelter/NFI sector in Libya. A dedicated working group was established in early May 2015 and initial discussions centre on the need to coordinate distributions to avoid overlap and to assess gaps. A common understanding of vulnerability is being developed to ensure a coherent NFI response.
 - **IDP WORKING GROUP BENGHAZI:** This group reports to the PWG. It is the only in-country coordination forum and is based in Benghazi. It meets on a weekly basis to discuss IDP data/NFI coordination meetings of national and international organizations established in Benghazi, with CESVI attending on UNHCR's behalf owing to restricted movement of national staff. Other participants include CIL/ACTED, IMC, ICRC, Libyan civil society representatives, and municipality officials. The main objective of the meetings is to unify the Benghazi IDP database, an initiative that UNHCR spearheaded and contributes to best practices on data collection and compilation.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR is grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operation.

Donors who have contributed to the operation:

- CERF
- European Union
- United States of America

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Links:

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e485f36&submit=GO>