

Update no 26 Humanitarian Situation in Libya and the Neighbouring Countries

27 May 2011

TUNISIA

Djerba, Ras Jdir (Medenine Governorate)

This week saw serious disruption at the Choucha camp near the Tunisia - Libya border where around 4,000 migrant workers and refugees from the conflict in Libya are accommodated pending humanitarian evacuation to their countries of origin, or other solutions. Four Eritreans died in a fire in the Eritrean block of the camp on 22 May as residents were sleeping. Twenty tents were lost, and the cause is being investigated. At the time, the Choucha camp was hosting some 4,500 people - mostly Somalis, Eritreans, and Sudanese.

The problems continued on 23 May when a large group of migrant workers surrounded UNHCR's office at the camp, seeking immediate resettlement. UNHCR staff and other humanitarian workers received death threats and were forced to withdraw. Some of the demonstrators then blocked the main highway between the Ras Ajdir border point and the rest of Tunisia, prompting anger among the local Tunisian community. Early on 24 May violence erupted among various groups in the camp and at least two deaths were reported. Despite the efforts of the Tunisian military to prevent clashes, the situation deteriorated further as some 500 local Tunisians descended on the camp. In the chaos, more tents were looted and burned. Many camp residents fled to the surrounding desert. Order was restored by the Tunisian authorities by the evening.

On the morning of 25 May, a small inter-agency team, led by UNHCR, arrived to find that two thirds of the camp had been destroyed or looted. In coordination with UNHCR, the Tunisian army distributed mattresses, blankets and food to camp residents, who had lost most, if not all, of their belongings. At present, many of the people from the Choucha camp are staying either in makeshift tents or in the open. As of the morning of 26 May, most of the agencies and NGOs had returned to the camp and resumed their activities.

Efforts to ease tension are currently underway. UNHCR staff have been meeting with representatives of all the communities in the Choucha camp as well as with the Tunisian central and local authorities. Security at the camp, as well as finding separate solutions for migrants and refugees, are at the top of the agenda.



Around two thirds of the Choucha camp has burnt down or been looted/UNHCR



60
YEARS



Dehiba, Remada (Tataouine Governorate)

More than 57,000 Libyan refugees have fled to Tunisia through this crossing. In the past days, an average of 500 Libyans crossed the Dehiba border point per day. However, due to heavier military clashes for control of the border area on the Libyan side, no crossings were reported since 25 May, and the situation remains highly volatile. The majority of the Libyan refugees stay with local host families, who reside in one of the poorest areas of Tunisia. 1,389 Libyans are currently hosted in camps in Tataouine, including 596 in the UAE camp in Dehiba and another 793 in the UNHCR-run Remada camp.

LIBYA

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and a UN team travelled to Tripoli from 20-23 May to discuss the return of an international humanitarian presence in Tripoli. The HC met with the Prime Minister as well as with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Health, Social Affairs and Trade. The Libyan Government reiterated its commitment of ensuring UN staff safety and welcomed the UN back to Tripoli, extending full support and cooperation to the humanitarian actors. The Minister of Social Affairs informed the HC about the establishment of two committees dealing with housing and relief assistance for some 36,000 internally displaced Libyans from Misrata and Nafusa mountains, which are assisted in government controlled areas. The Minister of Health expressed concern about public health due to the lack of urgently needed vaccines, medication and other medical supplies, whose delivery is blocked by the current sanctions. The Government asked the UN to intervene and seek permission from the sanctions committee to facilitate delivery of medical supplies and equipment.

In his discussion with the HC, the Libyan Prime Minister agreed, in principle, to a window of up to 72 hours to deliver humanitarian aid by all possible routes to front line areas such as Misrata and Nafusa. Hence, the UNHCR Libya Team in Zarzis is working closely with WFP, OCHA and the LRC on preparations for immediate entry of NFIs and food to west Libya in the event of such a humanitarian pause. The Prime Minister also approved the request by IOM to have access to Gatrun area with a view of facilitating the evacuation of some reportedly 25,000 Chadians back home as well as to provide support to evacuations of stranded third country nationals in other parts of the country.

Of the 11,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers in Libya prior to the conflict, over 1,400 have now made their way to neighbouring countries. This includes 700 to Tunisia, 350 to Italy, 77 to Malta and 38 to Egypt. The total number of persons of concern to UNHCR from conflict affected countries remaining inside Libya is estimated to be some 50,000, as many did not have the opportunity, or see the reason, to access UNHCR.

EGYPT

Saloum Border Crossing

The number of people stranded at the Saloum border area stands at 1,297 persons, of which 765 are registered with UNHCR as of 25 May (448 Sudanese, 104 Eritreans, 82 Ethiopians, 100 Somalis among others). Of these, some 252 have been processed for resettlement. Since February, UNHCR has also helped 722 Palestinians stranded in a no man's land to travel to Gaza, through the Rafah border crossing, in Egypt.

The third UNHCR rub-hall was erected on 25 May and it currently accommodates some of the 598 third country nationals who arrived by an IOM evacuation boat from Misurata yesterday. They originate from Niger (331), Chad (82), Sudan (55), Nigeria (52), Pakistan (28), Egypt (12), Ghana (9), Morocco (9), Tunisia (4), Bangladesh (4) and Mali (3).



The first families moving into the rub halls at Saloum Land Port/UNHCR/M.Fawe

UNHCR provided blankets, mattresses and sleeping mats to IOM for onwards distribution to the new arrivals. Breakfasts, lunches and meals were increased accordingly.

A total of 34,885 third country nationals have been evacuated from Saloum by IOM and UNHCR since the conflict began in February.

Movements across the Mediterranean *Italy*

The total number of new arrivals since mid-January has increased to some 37,829 people. Among them are 24,152 Tunisians and 13,677 other nationalities, including 1,924 Nigeriens, 1,194 Ghanaians, 1,161 Malians, 1,069 Ivorians, 819 Eritreans and 799 Somalis. Of this number 14,000 have departed from Libya. Currently, there remain 986 people in the reception center in Lampedusa and there are reports that tensions in the reception center are rising due to the prolonged detention of Tunisian migrants in Lampedusa.

Since the beginning of the crisis, there have been several reports of boats sinking. Based on accounts from survivors and family members, more than 1,200 people are unaccounted. UNHCR repeats its call to all vessels on the Mediterranean to consider all boats departing Libya to be in need of assistance. UNHCR has raised with NATO the urgent need for a proactive, preventive strategy to save lives in the Mediterranean. UNHCR continue to call for enhanced coordination and communication between NATO vessels and national coast guards to ensure that the many boats in poor condition, crowded with desperate people fleeing from Libya, can be detected and assisted before they get into distress and lives are threatened.

Resource Mobilization

The revised Regional Inter-Agency Flash Appeal for the Libyan Crisis was launched on 18 May by the Emergency Relief Coordinator in Geneva. Requirements now amount to USD 407.8 million to provide humanitarian assistance to 1.6 million people within Libya, and 500,000 outside Libya for the period March-September 2011.

UNHCR's requirements for the Libya situation have been revised to USD 80,659,396. So far, UNHCR has received contributions in the amount of USD 48,168,087. Some 40% of the Appeal remains unfunded. Without additional contributions, a critical shortfall of funding for UNHCR's operations in Libya and neighbouring countries is likely to affect vital humanitarian assistance.

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Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and neighbouring countries

As April 2011



FIGSS
Field Information and
Coordination Support Section

Sources:
UNHCR, Global Insight digital mapping
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Population figures:
IOM / UNHCR Humanitarian
Evacuation Cell

The boundaries and names shown
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 - Refugee camp
 - Asylum-seeker centre
 - Urban refugee location
 - Main town or village
 - Secondary town or village
 - Town of Interest
- Crossing point
 - International boundary
 - Main road
 - Secondary road
 - Railway
- Elevation
(Above mean sea level)
- 3,250 to 4,000 metres
 - 2,500 to 3,250 metres
 - 1,750 to 2,500 metres
 - 1,000 to 1,750 metres
 - 750 to 1,000 metres
 - 500 to 750 metres
 - 250 to 500 metres
 - 0 to 250 metres
 - Below mean sea level



See Google Earth Zoom 4

0 79.71
kilometers
Scale: 1:3,742,000

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