

KEY FIGURES

12,000 IDPs

received humanitarian aid in Libya

2 million people

risking food and medical supply shortages if fighting continues in Libya

100,000 people

displaced due to ongoing fighting and insecurity

99,000 people

reported to have left Libya on boat this year

PRIORITIES

- Assess humanitarian needs of refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs
- Provide counselling support and share information through UNHCR's hotlines in Libya
- Facilitate access into Libya in order to carry planned activities and assistance on the ground
- Ensure that all people seeking safety can cross Libya's land borders / keep land borders open to those fleeing violence and seeking international protection

LIBYA CRISIS

UNHCR REGIONAL UPDATE

25 – 31 August 2014

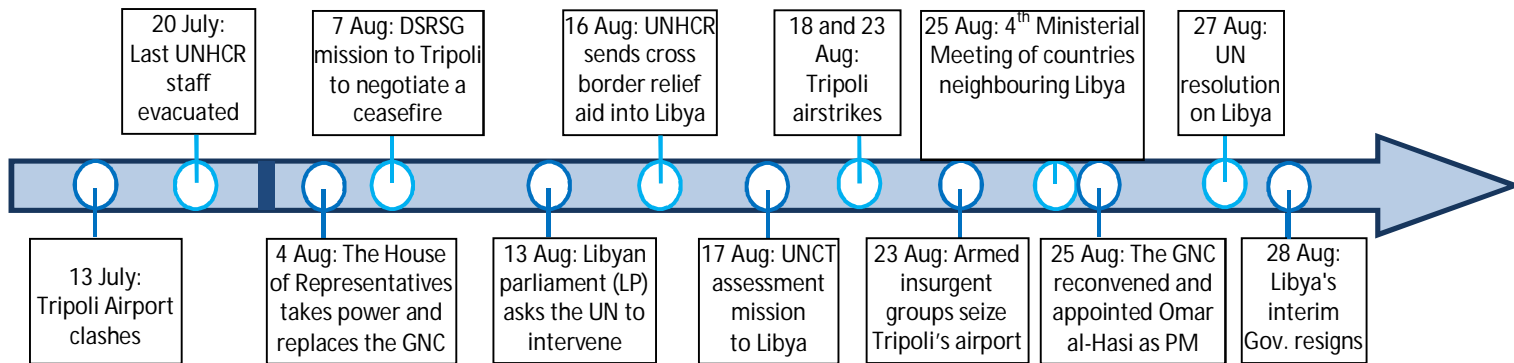
HIGHLIGHTS

Recent developments affecting humanitarian response

- Libya's Ambassador to the United Nations has warned of the risk of a civil war unless the country receives support from the international community.
- Foreign Ministers from Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Sudan met in Cairo, Egypt, on 25 August to discuss the escalating crisis in Libya; express support for Libya's legitimate institutions; and call for collaboration to combat terrorism and to fight against cross-border organised crime.
- On 23 August, armed groups (Libyan Dawn) declared control of Tripoli and its airport and called for the resumption of the General National Congress (GNC). Two days later, the previous parliament reconvened (25 August) and appointed a new prime minister, leaving Libya with two parliaments and two prime ministers, each struggling for power and legitimacy.
- On 27 August, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2174 (2014), calling for an immediate ceasefire in Libya. This was agreed to by the insurgent forces the same day.
- Libya's interim Government resigned on 28 August, hoping to pave the way for the formation of a new inclusive government.
- On 18 August, UNHCR and partners distributed the first cross border relief items in Zawiya, west of Tripoli. The distribution reached some 12,000 IDPs.
- In the third week of August, some 50,000 people crossed the border into Tunisia through both official border points with Libya (Ras Jedir and Dehiba).
- During the reporting period, over 3,000 Egyptians returned from Libya, another 1,000 Libyans crossed into Egypt. UNHCR is advocating with the government on behalf of persons of concern stranded at the border.
- UNHCR reports that around 110,000 people have arrived in Italy since the beginning of the year, of whom 99,400 people had departed from Libya. The month of August saw the highest number of people arriving in Italy – close to 25,000 new arrivals.
- More than 300 people drowned when three boats departing from Libya capsized, bringing the death toll from vessels sinking on the Mediterranean to 1,600 since June this year (1,900 since January).

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Timeline of Main Events



Operational Context

LIBYA

Events Affecting Persons of Concern

- According to the camp manager, an unidentified armed group entered the Tawergha internally displaced people (IDP) camp near Tripoli on 30 August in an attempted carjacking. Two Tawerghan IDPs were injured and five were reportedly kidnapped and later released. One Tawerghan IDP later died after sustaining injuries. As a result of the incident, all families have left the camp again. There are concerns that Tawerghan IDPs may lack shelter or other essential items and are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. Since fighting started in Tripoli, an estimated 4,800 Tawerghans IDPs have been re-displaced.
- Life is slowly returning to normal in Tripoli. Most petrol stations, especially those in the western part of Tripoli hit hardest by the conflict, are expected to resume operation in approximately three weeks. There are reports of food available in shops but banks continue to be short on cash. This affects refugees and asylum-seekers most as banks may have opened but there are no available cash to withdraw.
- While many areas of Tripoli are calm, since 29 August clashes have resumed between insurgent forces and the Wershafana tribe on the coastal road linking Tripoli and Zawiyah.
- Heavy clashes broke out between rival forces in Benghazi during the last week of August, killing at least 20 people.
- There are reports that the road between the Ras Jedir border point and Tripoli has been blocked; one part of the road has been dug up leaving a large hole in the ground.

Identification of Needs

Internally displaced persons

- The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) reports having assessed 17,838 families/107,000 people displaced from or within Tripoli. According to ICRC/Libyan Red Crescent an estimated 21,000 households have been displaced across country. However, the estimates do not include the re-displaced Tawerghans. Prior to the fighting, there were around 40,000 Tawerghan IDPs.
- The Tawerghan IDP committee has reached out to UNHCR Tripoli with request for assistance, such as provision of core relief items.
- UNHCR is continuing to contact local authorities and humanitarian organizations in Benghazi to monitor the situation of IDPs displaced by the fighting in Sidi Faraj, Hawary and Bu Atny areas. The number of IDPs in Benghazi is estimated at more than 6,000 people (1,000 families). Most displaced families seek shelter with host families or rent in other parts of Benghazi and nearby cities. Five schools continue to host 94 displaced IDP families (approximately 564 people).

Refugees and asylum-seekers

- UNHCR has conducted a mapping exercise of neighbourhoods in Tripoli with refugees, asylum-seekers and other people of concern; this sample survey is to gauge the current number of people of concern residing in Tripoli and assess their needs. The mapping exercise revealed that there are a few pockets of Syrian nationals within Tripoli. The team is conducting another exercise with larger scope and outreach to verify this information. The mapping exercise also revealed that many refugees' homes and apartments have been looted.
- The initial mapping exercise shows that some 1,890 Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis and Sudanese were still in the neighbourhoods affected by fighting as of 28 August. Among them are some 446 women and children. Through the emergency hotline calls, refugees and asylum-seekers request financial assistance and help with food and water.

Humanitarian Assistance Responses

- UNHCR Tripoli and Benghazi offices continue to assist asylum-seekers and refugees calling through the emergency hotlines requesting for assistance.
- On 18 August, UNHCR and partners International Medical Corps (IMC) and Taher Al-Zawi completed the first cross-border delivery of relief items in Zawiya, west of Tripoli. The distribution reached some 12,000 IDPs.

Mixed Migration Challenges

- UNHCR continues to raise awareness about the risks of irregular sea crossings, and provide information on what can be expected on board and upon arrival or interception.
- The Syrian community's representative has reported daily boat departures from Benghazi with passengers trying to reach Europe, many of whom are believed to be Syrians, including some who are registered with UNHCR; but no exact figures are available so far.
- On 31 August, the Libyan Coast Guard informed UNHCR that they had rescued survivors and recovered bodies from three separate shipwrecks. The survivors are mostly from Nigeria, Mali and Gambia.
- UNHCR reports that around 110,000 people have arrived in Italy since the beginning of the year, of whom 99,400 people had departed from Libya. This is four times more than the number of documented irregular sea departures from Libya in 2013. The month of August saw the highest number of people arriving in Italy – close to 25,000 new arrivals.

TUNISIA

Border Movement and Access to Asylum

- In the third week of August, some 50,000 people crossed the border into Tunisia through both official border points with Libya (Ras Jedir and Dehiba). This represents a slight increase compared to 43,000 people the previous week. Meanwhile, some 30,000 people have crossed the border from Tunisia towards Libya.
- All people holding valid travel documents and a transit visa, flight ticket, or arrangements with respective embassies are admitted into Tunisian territory. All Libyans have been admitted so far.
- UNHCR is working in close cooperation with the Tunisian authorities to facilitate access to Tunisia for humanitarian cases and persons in need of international protection.
- UNHCR is registering refugees and asylum-seekers in Tunisia. This includes persons of concern to UNHCR arriving by land, either through official or unofficial border points and rescued at sea.
- UNHCR is conducting refugee status determination for survivors of the boat rescued off the Tunisian coasts on 9 August.

Prepositioning Humanitarian Assistance

- UNHCR has set up its pre-registration system, according to the contingency plan, and is currently procuring non-food items stocks (blankets, mattresses and kitchen sets) to be prepositioned for an estimated 1,000 people.
- UNHCR and its partner the Tunisian Red Crescent (TRC) are setting up their new office in Tataouine. An International Organization for Migration (IOM) staff member will also be hosted in this office.

- Following the Joint Mission with the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior, a container office will be installed at Dehiba border crossing to set up the pre-registration system. The container office already installed at Ras Jedir border crossing will be moved closer to the *Garde Nationale* checkpoint.
- Deployment of UNHCR teams to Medenine in Tataouine is complete. UNHCR team deployed in southern Tunisia continue to closely link with local authorities and other agencies.

Rescue-at-Sea and Mixed Migration

- On 29-30 August, Tunisian rescuers recovered more than 40 bodies off the shores of El Ketf Port in Ben Guerdane. Some had Syrian identity documents.

Contingency Plan and Coordination

- On 26 August, the Shelter working group (WG) visited abandoned schools and student dormitories that could potentially accommodate persons of concern to UNHCR. On 28 August, the non-food items WG discussed warehousing management. As for the Health WG, the Ministry of Health organized a joint field visit to public health facilities in Dehiba, Ramada and Tataouine on 26 August.
- On 29-30 August, UNHCR participated in a joint border mission to southern Tunisia with the focal point from the Tunisian Interior Ministry, IOM and the TRC. The joint mission met with local authorities in Medenine and Tataouine governorates and visited Ras Jedir and Dehiba border crossings.

EGYPT

Border Movement and Access to Asylum

- The border between Egypt and Libya is closed, except for the return of Egyptian nationals.
- During the reporting period, 3,275 Egyptians returned from Libya, 1,017 Libyans crossed into Egypt, 70 Sudanese transited via Egypt.
- During the reporting period, there 63 people were stranded at the border: 41 Sudanese, 20 Nigerians and 2 Jordanians. This group is currently not receiving any material assistance.
- UNHCR is advocating with the Government of Egypt on behalf of persons of concern stranded at the border.

Humanitarian Assistance

- The Egyptian army provides medical services and 300 lunches per day for Egyptians.
- UNHCR continues to advocate for permission to provide food and water to those stranded at the border.
- UNHCR has two staff monitoring the situation in Salloum, and has prepared a contingency plan should the situation change and the border be re-opened.