LIBYA: Humanitarian Access Report

May 2020

This report is produced by OCHA Libya

1023 access constraints/ incidents reported   **768 COVID-19-related access constraints**

893,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance

Key Findings

- Humanitarian partners reported a total of 1,023 access constraints during May 2020.
- Out of 1,023 reported access constraints, 768 are directly or indirectly linked to COVID-19 imposed restrictions, precautionary measures and elements. Several of these constraints existed before the COVID-19 crisis but were exacerbated by the emergence of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Bureaucratic constraints make up 91% of all 1,023 reported access constraints. These include restrictions of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya as well as restrictions of movements, activities and projects within Libya.
- The West Region continues to have the highest number of access constraints out of all the regions with a total of 421 reported access constraints (41%) followed by the East and South regions with 366 (36%) and 236 (23%) reported access constraints respectively.
- Out of all reported access constraints during the month, only 394 could be linked to the different humanitarian sectors, out of which 222 constraints can be linked to COVID-19 related measures, with the constraints reported by Health Sector and Protection Sector partners making up almost half of the reported sector-specific constraints.
- Funding for humanitarian activities remains a major access constraint impacting all humanitarian sectors as the average HRP funding gap across all sectors is nearly 84% as of 31 May.

Overview:

Humanitarian partners reported a total of 1,023 access constraints during May 2020. The number of constraints increased slightly by 1 per cent compared to April 2020. An additional layer of analysis has been included to this report that identifies the access constraints that can be directly or indirectly linked to the humanitarian sectors. This report aims to identify the main access constraints affecting the humanitarian situation and people in need. A total of 1 million people in Libya are in need of some form of humanitarian and protection assistance. The analysis for the month is more detailed as a result of adopting a more robust monitoring system to track access constraints. The humanitarian community in Libya aims to use this analysis to work with all relevant stakeholders to pursue ways to mitigate such access constraints in order to ensure to the extent possible that the people in need are given the assistance that they require.**

Breakdown of challenges based on type of access constraint:

Similar to what was reported in April, **restrictions of movements of humanitarian agencies, humanitarian personnel, or humanitarian goods into Libya** make up the majority of reported access constraints during May 2020 with 658 reported access constraints (64% of all reported access constraints during the month). These constraints include delays and inconsistencies in obtaining and renewing work permits and registrations for humanitarian agencies to operate in Libya as well as significant delays and difficulties in issuing visas and security clearances for international humanitarian staff members. There is a crucial need for national authorities to rationalize the processes by which visas are issued to international humanitarian staff members, as a significant portion of humanitarian staff could not obtain visas during the month.

Furthermore, humanitarian agencies reported that humanitarian supplies in certain situations have not entered the country because of delays in obtaining clearances from Libyan seaport and airport authorities and because of not being able to secure approval from the national authorities in Tunisia and Libya.

The suspension of the UNHAS flights continued throughout the entire month. UNHAS flights have not been able to operate since 23 March 2020 due to lack of clearances from Tunisian authorities as well as COVID-19 related restrictions. In addition, commercial flights continued to be suspended during the month, also due to COVID-19 measures, causing further challenges for humanitarians to access the country. This meant that the two UNSMIL flights during the month were the only means by which humanitarians (although only internationals staff) were able to enter Libya. National staff from UN agencies and INGOs could not return to Libya at all via UN flights, as they couldn't get permission to use UNSMIL flights, because of regulations imposed by the authorities in response to COVID-19. COVID-19 related restrictions resulted in the limited number of UNSMIL flights, but UN agencies and INGOs continued to use the UNSMIL aviation services to send their international staff members to Libya. The limited number of UNSMIL flights during May meant that only few staff rotations were able to happen and as a result very few humanitarians managed to enter the country. As was the case during April 2020, INGOs were required to obtain special authorization from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as obtain clearances from the Ministry of Interior (at the insistence of the Misrata Airport officials) every time the INGOs used the UNSMIL flights

** It is important to mention that the access constraints reported in a given Mantika does not necessarily signify that the constraints or incidents materialized as a result of actions taken by inhabitants of the Mantika. The reason for the emergence of the constraint could very well be associated with elements and factors outside of the Mantika and in some cases outside of Libya itself. Therefore, the map reflects incidents and constraints that impacted the people in need within each Mantika, and not the number of incidents caused by the Mantika.

Restrictions on activities and on movement of agencies' personnel or goods within Libya make up 27% of all access constraints recorded during May 2020, as partners reported 280 constraints under this category. Partners reported significant delays and difficulties as a result of COVID-19 related restrictions, including curfews and restrictions in movements from one location (municipality) to another. There were restrictions imposed by the authorities on humanitarian movements that intended to reach people in need who were in frontline areas. These restrictions are not linked to the COVID-19 restrictions. Similar restrictions were imposed because movements originated from locations under the control of opposing political and military parties. Other restrictions were imposed on movements that intended to reach locations under opposing political and military parties. Furthermore, partners reported other difficulties that they encountered during the month such as irregularities, inconsistencies and ambiguities in the procedures and regulations that humanitarians need to adhere to in order to get clearances for projects, activities and movement from national, local and technical authorities. Such challenges predate the COVID-19 global pandemic and only complicated matters further for the people in need.

Overall, the total percentage of bureaucratic constraints reported (restrictions of humanitarian elements in getting access into Libya and within Libya) equal 91% of all reported constraints.
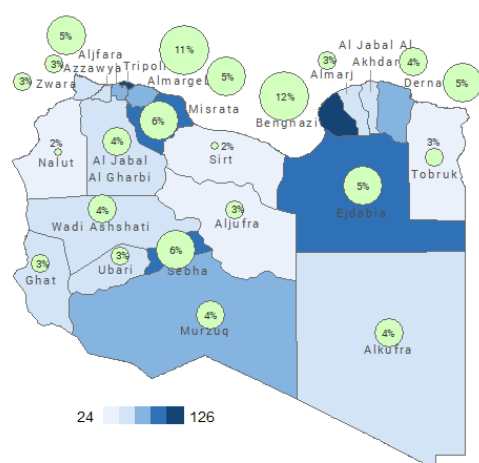
A total of 39 reports indicated that **military operations and ongoing hostilities impeded humanitarian operations** during the month. This constitutes approximately 4% of all reported access constraints and incidents. The ongoing fighting and shelling in addition to the presence of armed groups have caused delays in humanitarian operations and in some instances, has led some organizations to restructure their programming. Military operations also significantly impacted public facilities that provided basic services such as healthcare. On some occasions, certain locations, such as Tarhuna, could not be accessed by several humanitarian actors because of the ongoing military activity in the area.

Humanitarian partners also reported that the **physical environment** in certain situations where humanitarians operate featured as access constraints. A total of 34 reports indicated that agencies were impeded by electricity outages and fuel shortages which resulted in difficulties in communication and transportation respectively. Not to mention, stoppages in the water supply in certain areas. Some agencies cited the poor infrastructure in certain locations and the inhibitions this caused for their operations and the impact it left on those in need of humanitarian assistance.

Although there were only four reports (less than 1% of reported access constraints/incidents) of **violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities** during the month, these incidents unfortunately had catastrophic outcomes as one doctor was killed and others within the Public Health Sector sustained injuries in the ongoing clashes and military attacks while they were fulfilling their duties in providing much needed healthcare to those in need. Assets and facilities were also reported to have been damaged or stolen.

During the month, there was one report (less than 1% of all reported access constraints) **on restrictions on, or obstruction of, conflict affected populations' access to services and assistance.**

There were also seven reports of **other access constraints** (also less than 1% of total access constraints) that were reported mainly concentrating on the impact that the closure of schools has had on the suspension of certain activities targeting students.
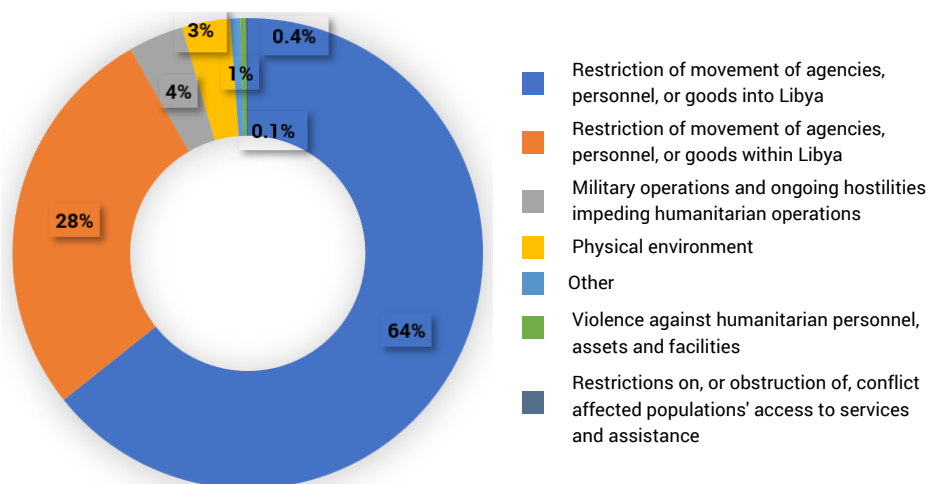

Map 1 : No. of access constraints
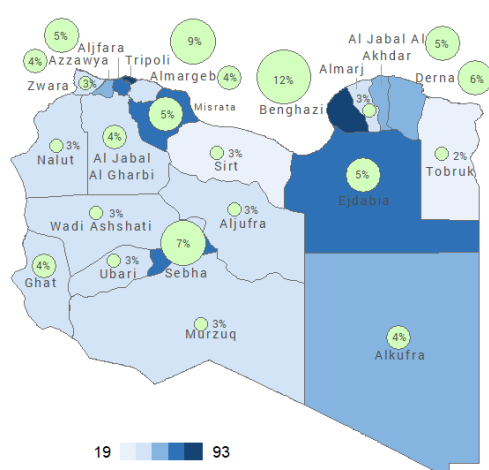

Chart 1: Overview of reported incidents

Breakdown of COVID-19 related access constraints:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to significantly impact the humanitarian operation in Libya. Out of the 1,023 access constraints reported, 768 are directly or indirectly linked to COVID-19 imposed restrictions, precautionary measures and elements. Several of these constraints existed before the COVID-19 crisis but were exacerbated by the emergence of COVID-19 restrictions.
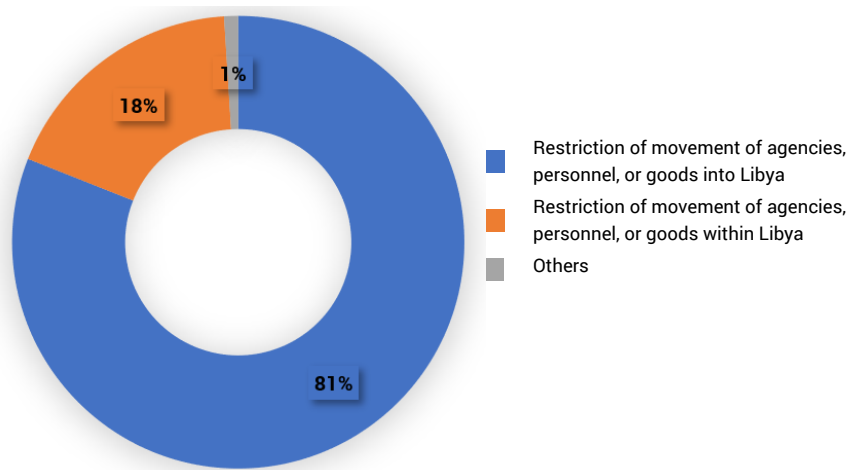
The COVID-19 related access constraints reported during May feature in only three out of the seven aforementioned access constraint categories. The vast majority; 620 of the COVID-19 access constraints (81%) involve bureaucratic restrictions of movements of humanitarian personnel, items and agencies into Libya. This includes suspension of UNHAS flights (UNHAS flights have not been able to operate due to lack of clearances from Tunisian authorities as well as COVID-19 related restrictions), suspension of commercial flights, limited number of UNSMIL flights as a result of COVID-19. Moreover, the situation became even more complicated for humanitarian agencies that had already been facing difficulties in obtaining visas and security clearances for their staff and clearances and permits to import items through the seaports and airports in Libya. This is largely due to the curfew and lockdown regulations in both Libya and Tunisia which resulted in the limited work hours and capacity of institutions overseeing such processes. Curfew restrictions extended into working hours of the relevant authorities, limiting the time needed for authorities to process clearances.

Out of the 768 COVID-19 related access constraints are 141 access constraints (18% of the 768) that are restrictions imposed on movements, projects and activities within Libya. These are mostly bureaucratic in nature, including curfew regulations, that were put in place by different Libyan authorities. Road movements to different municipalities were hampered significantly because of the imposed restrictions on movements. In certain occasions, road movements from one region were not allowed by the authorities to reach other regions out of fear that these movements to deliver assistance may transmit COVID-19. Moreover, humanitarian actors faced difficulties in interacting with their counterparts as they have not been able to congregate since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and have resorted mostly to video and teleconferencing. These remote techniques and mechanisms, although useful, have their limitations and have impacted the interactions required to sustain humanitarian activities.

Lastly, all seven access constraints under the category of "other access constraints" can be directly or indirectly linked to the COVID-19 related restrictions and elements.

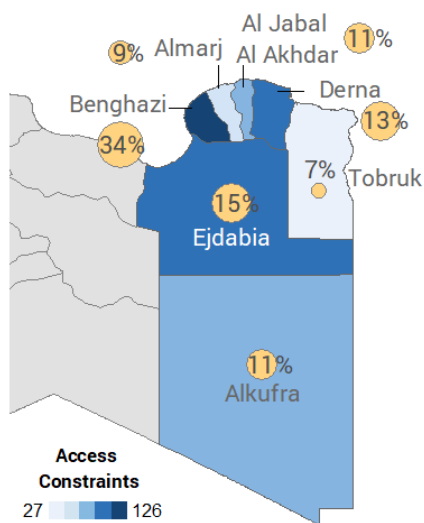COVID-19 : No. of access constraints

COVID-19: Overview of reported incidents

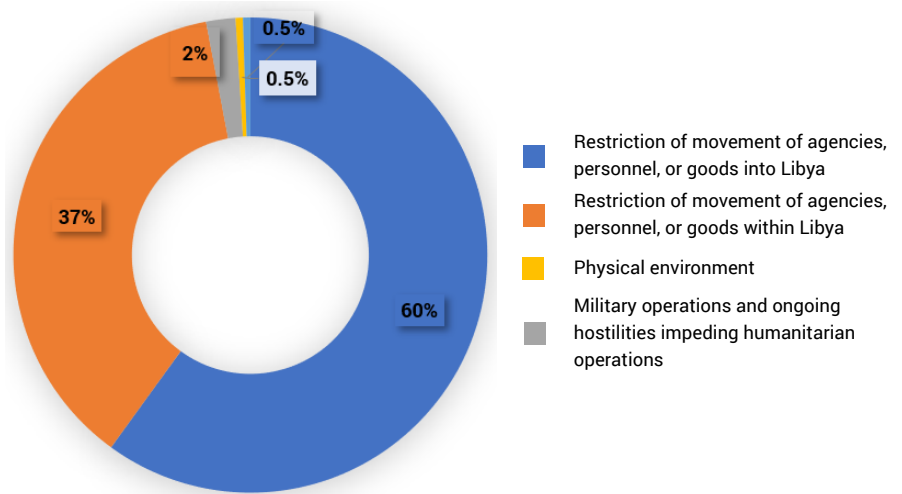## Breakdown of access constraints based on geographical regions:

East: In the East, a total of 366 humanitarian access constraints were reported by humanitarian agencies, which is approximately 36% of all reported access constraints during May. This constitutes an increase of 35 access constraints compared to those reported in April, which is an approximate 11% increase in access constraints reported in the Eastern Region. Out of the 366 constraints/incidents, 271 are in some form linked with the COVID-19 related restrictions.

In the East, 60% of the access constraints were restrictions on movements of agencies, personnel, or goods into East Libya, while 37% pertain to restrictions on movements of agencies, personnel, or goods as well as the implementation of activities within the East. Seven of the reported access constraints or 2% indicated the physical environment impeded humanitarian activities. Military operations and violence against humanitarian assets make up the remaining 1% in the East, as two incidents were recorded under each category. Reported access constraints include delays and difficulties in obtaining visas and security clearances for international staff members, delays in obtaining clearances for the clearance of supplies at the Benghazi seaport, irregularities, inconsistencies and ambiguities concerning the procedures to obtain approvals of activities from the local, national and technical authorities, strict restrictions on cross-municipality movements, and the stipulation that no road movements of trucks carrying humanitarian assistance were allowed to move from the West to the East, with very few exceptions despite continuous negotiations. In addition, the suspension of UNHAS for COVID-19 related reasons made it difficult for staff to be present in the East, as only three international humanitarian staff were present in the East during May. Stringent security restrictions put in place by the UN Security system following the tragic attack that claimed the lives of three UN staff members and injured two others on 10 August 2019 still persist, making it difficult for humanitarians to move without obtaining the necessary internal approvals. The two violent incidents that occurred in the East during May affected the Health Public Sector as hospitals in Benghazi and Albreyga were impacted by clashes, indiscriminate shelling and open gunfire that left casualties and significant damages to Health assets.

Benghazi Mantika reported 126 (34%) of the access constraints. Ejdabia and Derna follow Benghazi as the second and third highest numbers of constraints recorded with 56 (15%) and 49 (13%) respectively. The variation in recorded restraints can be attributed to operational presence more than the prevalence of impediments per Mantika with Benghazi having the most operational partners.
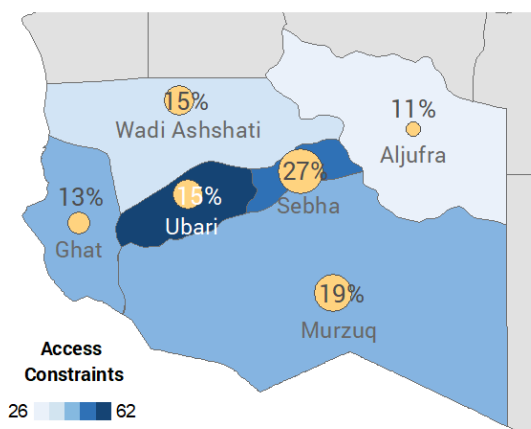

East: No. of access constraints
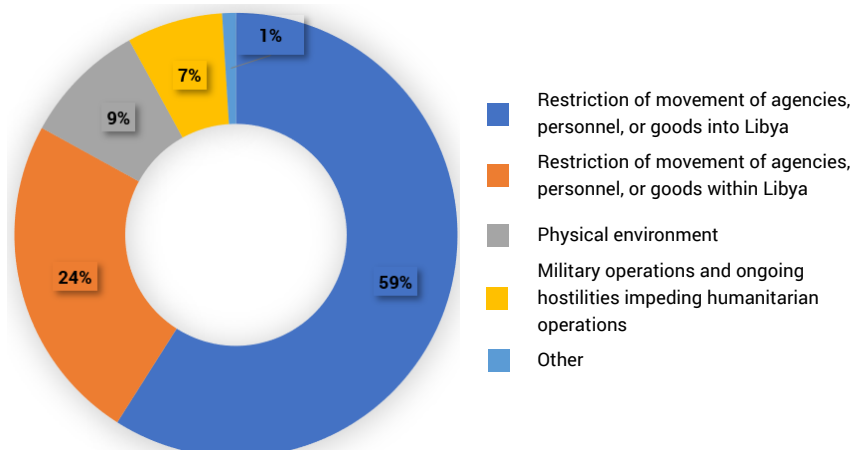

East Overview of reported incidents

South: In the South, there was an almost 30 per cent increase in the number of constraints compared to April, as a total of 236 access constraints were reported to have impacted the South during May 2020, which represented around 23% of all access constraints. Again, the limited presence of partners explains the relatively low number of reported constraints compared to the East and West. Out of these 236 access constraints are 171 constraints that are linked in some way with COVID-19 restrictions.

Restriction of movements of agencies, personnel, or goods into South Libya and within the South as well as bureaucratic impediments to the implementation of activities in the South make up 83% of all constraints reported in the South (142 and 55 respectively). In general, several of these bureaucratic access constraints that impact the South emerged as a result of access constraints that originate from the national level, such as bureaucratic constraints impeding staff from entering the country and having a better chance of interacting and engaging with affected populations from the South. Even though there were not that many regular flights into the South prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarians have a better chance of accessing the South once they enter the country either through the East or the West, but the suspension of UNHAS flights and commercial flights have both prevented this from happening. Therefore, these bureaucratic access constraints are also reflected in the South. In addition, poor infrastructure in certain areas in the South continues to impede the transportation and communication demands of the humanitarian operations making it difficult to operate there. Liquidity difficulties were also reported by partners to have negatively impacted humanitarian programming in the South (1% of access constraints in the South). The existence of extreme armed groups in other parts of the region also causes various difficulties for humanitarians to operate, as 15 reports of these constraints surfaced during the month.

When it comes to curfew restrictions on movements, the South was noted for being the most accessible, as local authorities played a key role in facilitating movement of trucks from the West to different municipalities in the South.

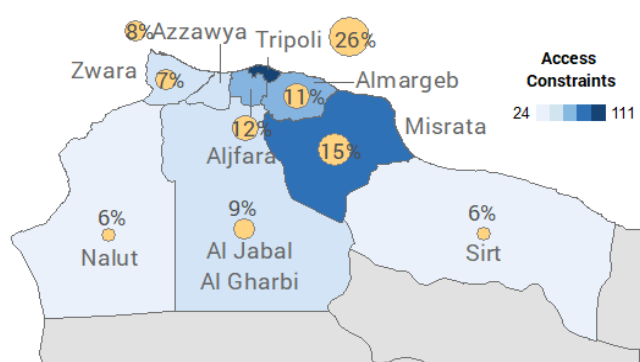*South: No. of access constraints*

South: Overview of reported incidents

The highest number of incidents/access constraints were reported for Sebha followed by Murzuq with around 27% and 19% of incidents respectively reported from the South. Similar to the East, operational presence factors into why varying degrees of access constraints exist in the different mantikas inside and outside the region.
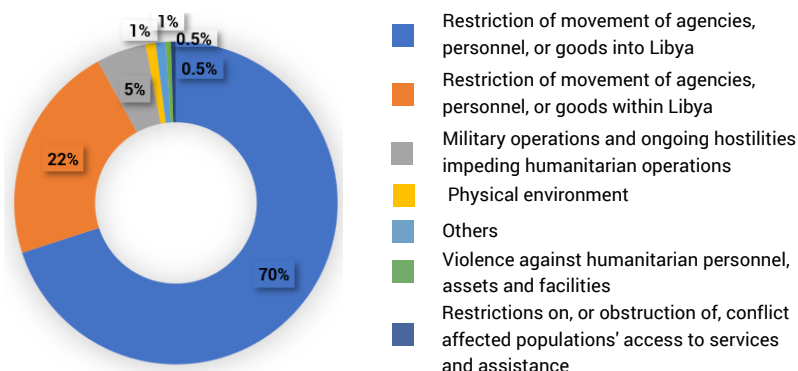
West: The West continues to have the highest number of access constraints out of all the regions, although a decrease of 16% has been recorded for this month compared to the access constraints last month. For this month, a total of 421 humanitarian access constraints were reported by humanitarian agencies, which is approximately 41% of all reported access constraints during May. Out of the 421 constraints/incidents reported, 318 are in some form linked with the COVID-19 related restrictions.

Of the access constraints affecting the West, 70% are restrictions on movements of agencies, personnel, or goods into East Libya, while 22% pertain to restrictions on movements of agencies, personnel, or goods as well as the implementation of activities within or to the West. Such bureaucratic constraints encompass physical environment impeded humanitarian activities. Reported bureaucratic access constraints include delays and difficulties in obtaining visas for international staff members, delays in obtaining work permits for INGOs to operate, delays in obtaining clearances for items at the main ports, irregularities, inconsistencies and ambiguities concerning the procedures to obtain approvals of activities from the local, national and technical authorities, strict restrictions on cross-municipality movements. Few exceptions were made despite continuous negotiations. In addition, the suspension of UNHAS for COVID-19 related reasons made it difficult for staff to be present in the West. Military operations and active frontlines are located in the Western Region. Partners submitted 22 reports on how such military operations are hindering their ability to access those in need. In addition, two violent incidents that occurred in the West affected the Health Public Sector as two health facilities in Tripoli and Tajoura were impacted by ongoing clashes, indiscriminate shelling and open fire. Such violence resulted in the killing of one doctor in Tajoura.

Tripoli mantika represented 111 (26%) of the access constraints reported in the West. Misrata, Aljfara and Almargeb follow Tripoli as the second, third and fourth highest numbers of constraints with 65, 49 and 46 recorded constraints respectively. The reason for varying degrees of access constraints in the different mantikas doesn't necessarily mean that one location is more accessible than the other but that there is a clear correlation between operational presence of humanitarian agencies and access constraints.

West: No. of access constraints

West: Overview of reported incidents:

- Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya
- Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within Libya
- Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations
- Physical environment
- Others
- Violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities
- Restrictions on, or obstruction of, conflict affected populations' access to services and assistance

Breakdown of access constraints based on sectors and working groups:

- Health
- Protection
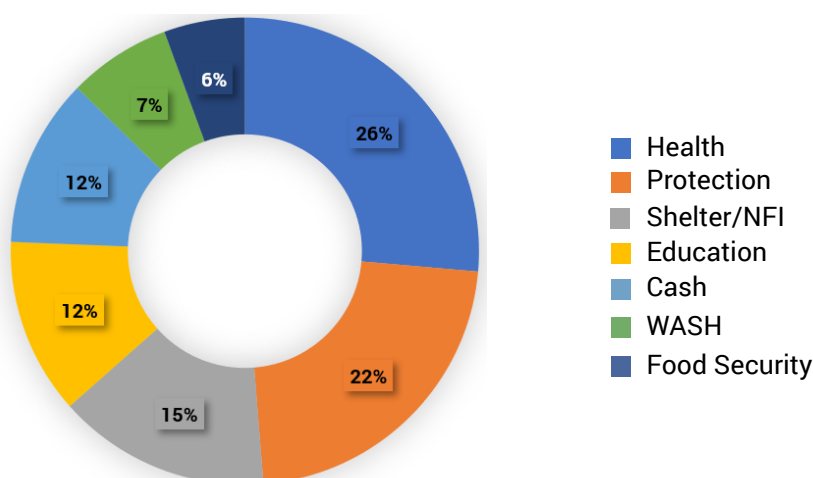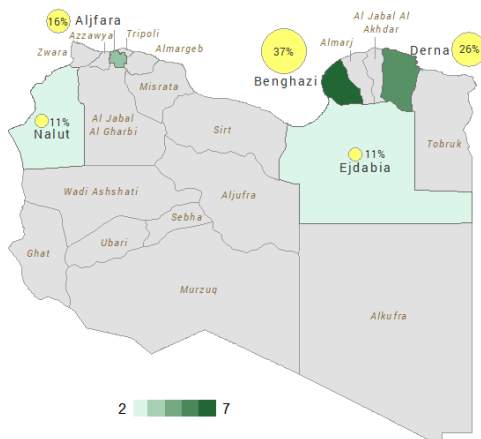- Shelter/NFI
- Education
- Cash
- WASH
- Food Security

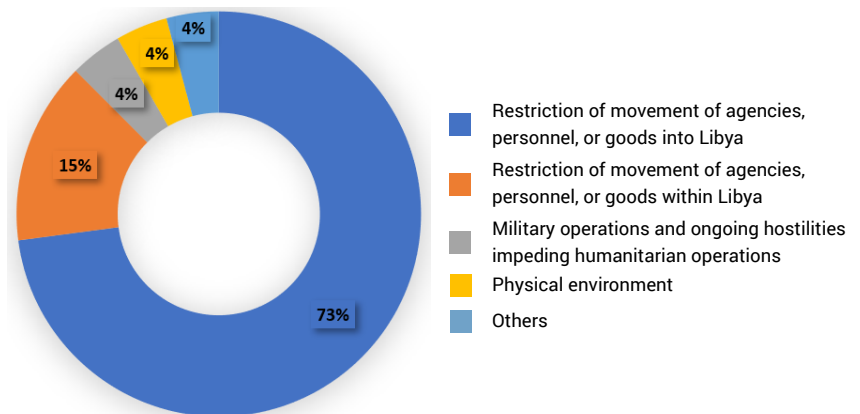*Chart 6: Number of Incidents by Sectors*

Out of the 1,023 access constraints reported during the month, only 394 could be linked to the different humanitarian sectors, out of which 222 can be attributed to COVID-19 measures. In addition to these access constraints, shortages in funding have constrained the ability of the sectors and the agencies to operate. Below is a breakdown of the main access constraints that can be attributed to the sectors for their planning and support in developing standard approaches to tackle such constraints in the future. The Health and Protection sectors had the highest number of constraints during the month.

Education:

Approximately 5,000 schools in Libya have suspended their activities and services due to COVID-19. The Education Sector had requested a total of $8 million in the 2020 HRP. Sector partners have received a total of $0.456 million as of June 2020, according to the Humanitarian Dashboard for Jan.-Apr. 2020, which is only 5.7% of the requested amount. This means that there is a funding gap of 94.3%. A total of 48 access constraints impeded Education activities during the month. Approximately 87.5% of these constraints are bureaucratic restrictions inhibiting Education partners from carrying out their activities. Moreover, the Education Sector Coordinator and Co-lead are facing many difficulties in being able to actually operate in Libya, as they are currently coordinating efforts from abroad.
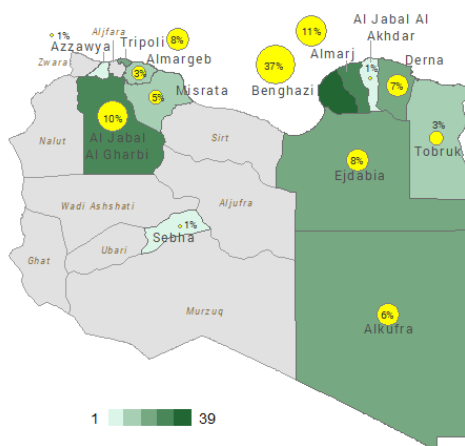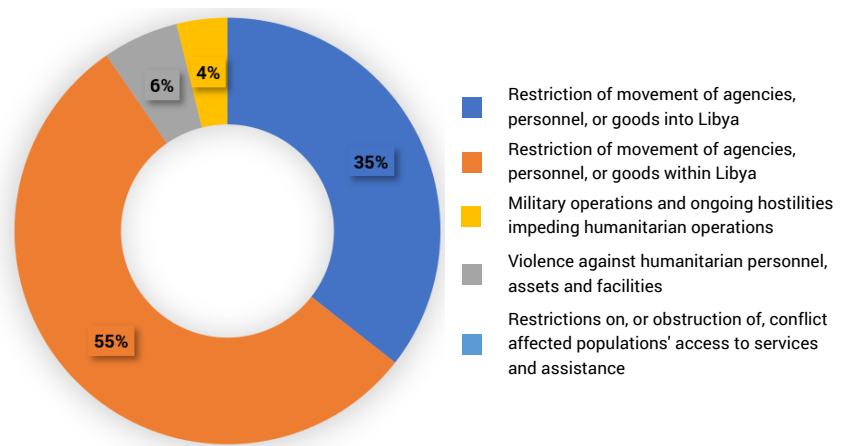

EDU : No. of access constraints

EDU: Overview of reported incidents

- Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya
- Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within Libya
- Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations
- Physical environment
- Others

Health:

The Health Sector had requested a total of $44.6 million in the 2020 HRP. Sector partners have received only $7.0914 million (15.9%) as of June 2020, according to the Humanitarian Dashboard for Jan.-Apr. This means that there is a funding gap of 84.1%. A total of 104 access constraints impeded Health activities during the month, including all four reported incidents of violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities. 94 out of the 104 access constraints are bureaucratic restrictions.
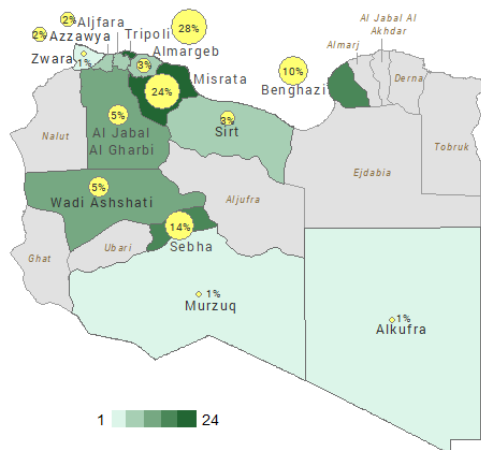
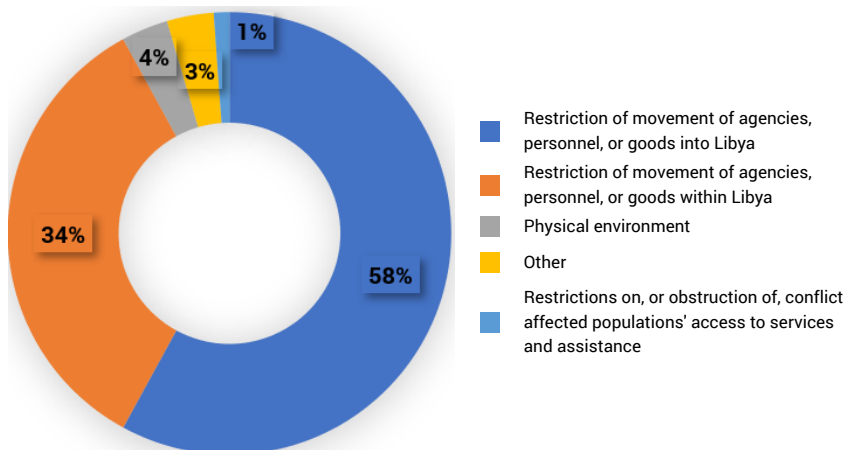

Health: No. of access constraints

Health : Overview of reported incidents

- Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya
- Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within Libya
- Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations
- Violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities
- Restrictions on, or obstruction of, conflict affected populations' access to services and assistance

Protection:

The Protection Sector and its sub-working groups had requested a total of $30.1 million in the 2020 HRP. Sector partners have received only 13.5% of this amount as of 27 May 2020. A total of 88 access constraints impeded Protection activities during the month as mentioned in the following chart and map. A total of 81 access constraints (almost 92% of access constraints reported) are bureaucratic restrictions that are stifling movements into Libya as well as movements and activities within Libya. Moreover, the Protection Sector Coordinator and Co-lead as well as the coordinators of the GBV, Mine Action and Child Protection working groups are facing many difficulties in being able to actually operate in Libya, as they are currently coordinating efforts from abroad.

The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to
Coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises.
We advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.
www.unocha.org

Protection : No. of access constraints

Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya

Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within Libya

Physical environment

Other

Restrictions on, or obstruction of, conflict affected populations' access to services and assistance

Protection: Overview of reported incidents

Cash:

The Cash and Markets Working Group had requested a total of $4.9 million in the 2020 HRP. CMWG partners have received only $2.499 million (51%) as of as of June 2020, according to the Humanitarian Dashboard for Jan.-Apr. This means that there is a funding gap of 49%. A total of 46 access constraints impeded Cash activities during the month. 40 of these constraints are bureaucratic restrictions. Moreover, the CMWG Coordinator and Co-lead are facing many difficulties in being able to actually operate in Libya, as they are currently coordinating efforts from abroad.

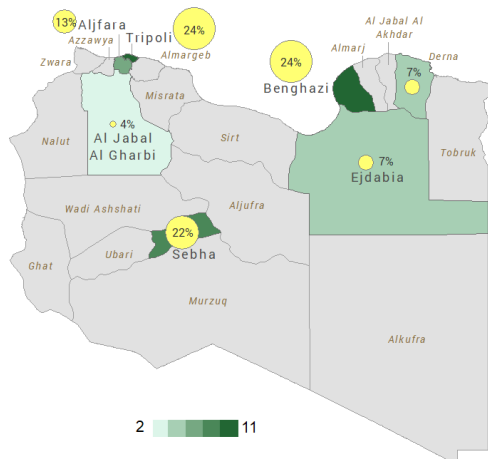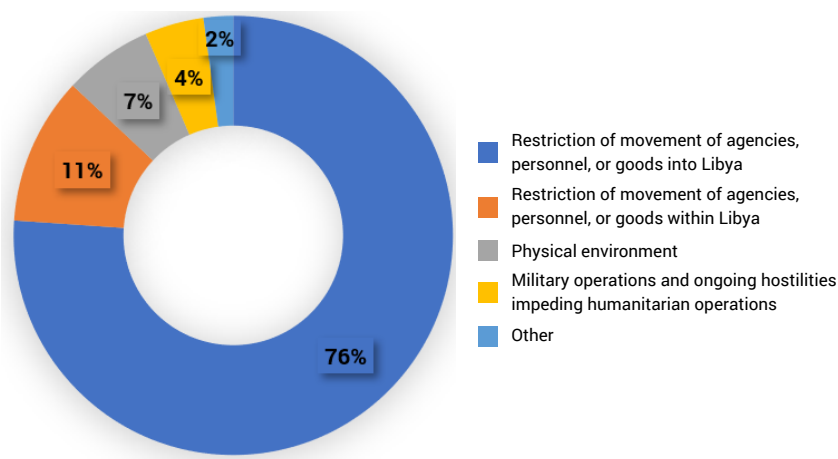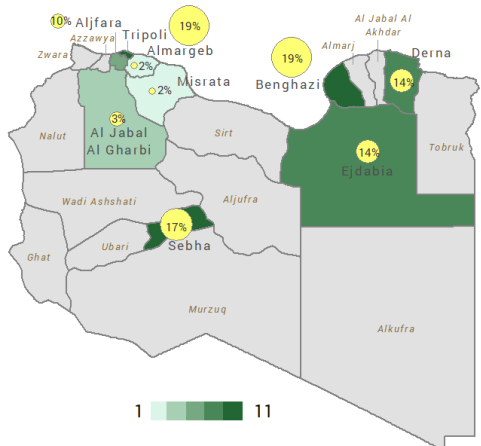*Cash : No. of access constraints*

Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya

Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within Libya

Physical environment

Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations
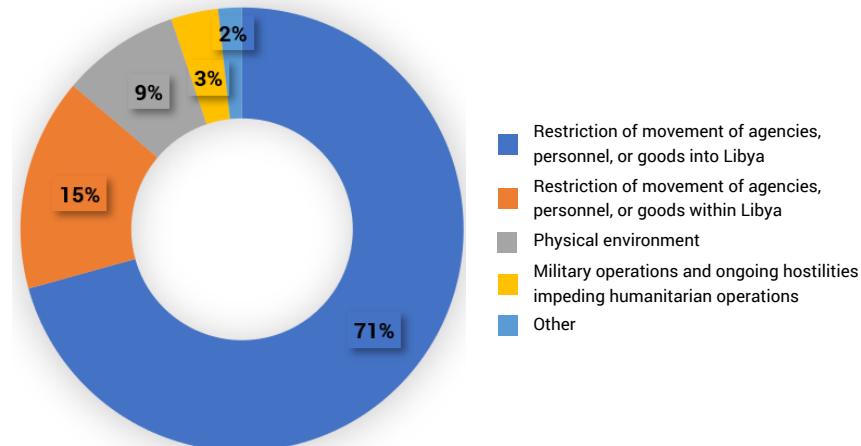
Other

Cash: Overview of reported incidents

Shelter/NFI:

The Shelter/NFI Sector had requested a total of $7 million in the 2020 HRP. Sector partners have not received funding at all, as of June 2020, according to the Humanitarian Dashboard for Jan.-Apr. This means that there is a funding gap of 100%. A total of 58 access constraints impeded Shelter/NFI activities during the month. Approximately 86% of these constraints are bureaucratic restrictions inhibiting Shelter/NFI partners from carrying out their activities. Moreover, the Shelter Sector Coordinator and Co-lead are facing many difficulties in being able to actually operate in Libya, as they are currently coordinating efforts from abroad.
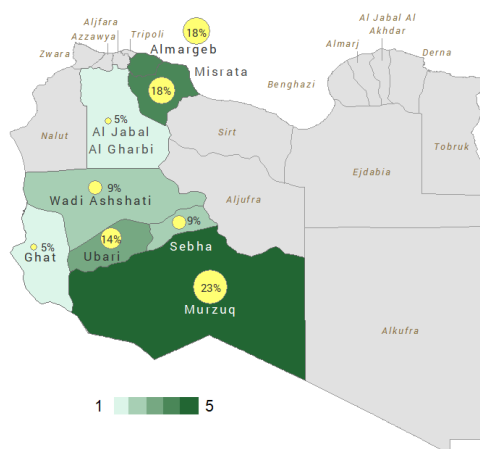

SNFI : No. of access constraints

Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya

Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within Libya

Physical environment

Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations
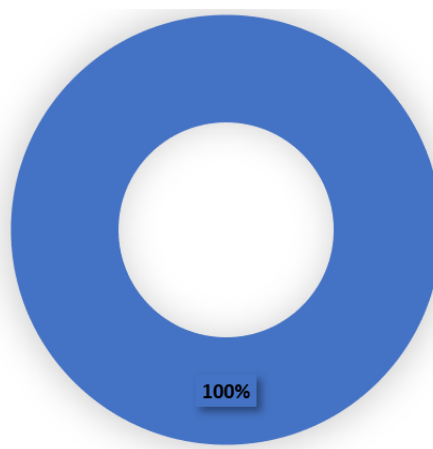
Other

SNFI: Overview of reported incidents

Food Security:

The Food Security Sector had requested a total of $14.9 million in the 2020 HRP. Sector partners have received only $1.2516 million (8.4%) as of June 2020, according to the Humanitarian Dashboard for Jan.-Apr. This means that there is a funding gap of 91.6%. A total of 22 access constraints impeded Food Security activities during the month, all of which are bureaucratic restrictions inhibiting Food Security partners from carrying out their activities inside Libya.
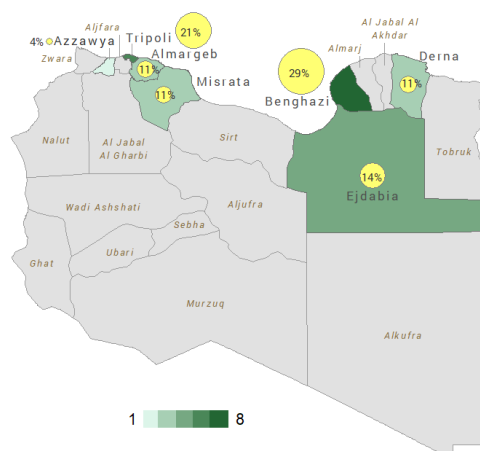

FSS : No. of access constraints

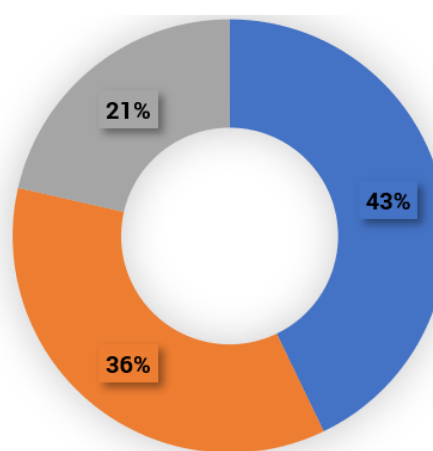Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya

FSS: Overview of reported incidents

WASH:

The WASH Sector had requested a total of $5.1 million in the 2020 HRP. Sector partners have received a total of $0.9 million as of June 2020, according to the Humanitarian Dashboard for Jan.-Apr. 2020, which is only 17.8% of the requested amount. This means that there is a funding gap of 82.2%. A total of 28 access constraints impeded WASH activities during the month. Approximately 79% of these constraints are bureaucratic restrictions inhibiting WASH partners from carrying out their activities. The remaining 21% of the reported constraints are related to the physical environment in which the partners operated. Moreover, the WASH Sector Coordinator and Co-lead are facing many difficulties in being able to actually operate in Libya, as they are currently coordinating efforts from abroad.

WASH : No. of access constraints

Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into Libya

Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within Libya

Physical environment

WASH: Overview of reported incidents

******

The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to Coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. We advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.

www.unocha.org