

### Highlights:

- Over 18,000 displaced people return home since December 2020.
- Average food prices in Libya are still almost 12 per cent higher compared to pre-COVID-19 levels.
- About 61,000 people in Libya have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19.
- The Libya Humanitarian Response Plan asks for US\$189 million to support 451,000 people – 81 per cent of the plan requirement is still unmet.



A water tank showcasing the extent of damage resulting from the 2011 conflict in Tawergha (OCHA/Jennifer Bose Ratka)

### KEY FIGURES

**1.3M**

People in need

**0.5M**

People targeted

**278k**

People displaced in Libya

**571k**

Migrants and refugees in Libya

**205k**

People reached

### FUNDING (2021)

**\$189.1M**

Required

**\$36.1M**

Received

**19.1%**

Progress

FTS: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1027/summary>

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### More displaced people are returning home

An increasing number of previously displaced families returned to their places of origin as the security situation continued to be stable. This is mostly due to the political process of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum continuing towards implementation. According to Round 35 of IOM-DTM's Libya IDP and Returnee Report, over 18,000 people returned home since December 2020. The number of returnees increased to over 623,219 returnees by the end of February 2021, while the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) correspondingly decreased to 245,483 people.

However, challenges for returnees still persist ranging from lack of adequate access to livelihoods and basic services to insecurity. Initial findings indicate that families were unable to find employment or livelihoods locally, hindering their successful return and reintegration.

Most of the small and large businesses in the areas assessed were open, indicating a certain degree of normalization of the situation post-conflict<sup>1</sup>. Stable operation of private businesses and public companies is indicative of normalization and hints to a conducive environment for returns. Conversely, in areas where businesses cannot operate due to the security situation or market dynamics (e.g. inadequate infrastructure resulting in increased cost of operating or small consumer base), livelihoods and employment opportunities suffer, which is impeding the return of displaced families.

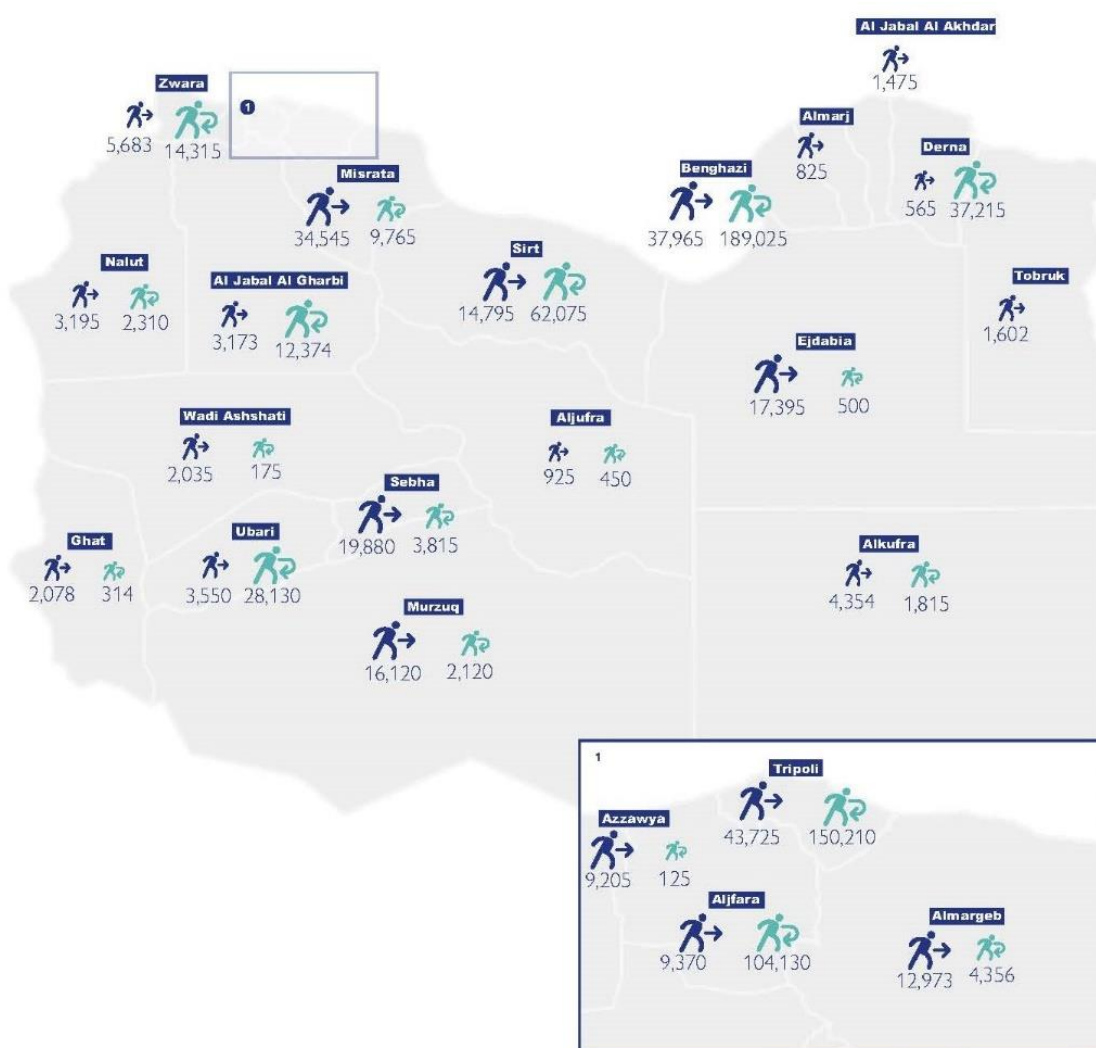
Difficulties in finding employment due to lack of livelihood opportunities and lack of access to education, health and other public services (such as electricity and water) indicate that significant improvements are needed in the areas of return, especially in Ain Zara, Qasr Bin Ghahseer and Tawergha.

<sup>1</sup> For most locations assessed as part of the Return Index pilot in IOM-DTM's Libya IDP and Returnee Report (Round 35), the post-conflict situation refers to the 2019-2020 western Libya armed conflict.

As identified in previous interviews with returnee households<sup>2</sup>, damaged property and housing has been one of the most significant barriers to return and reintegration post displacement. In 17 of the 46 assessed communities (muhallas) by IOM-DTM, key informants reported that the armed conflict had resulted in damage to houses and property.

Furthermore, in half of the communities assessed, residents were reportedly concerned about insecurity and violence, indicating that perceptions of safety are a significant factor in the return of IDPs to their places of origin and impacting their daily activities and movement. Community reconciliation and cohesion were identified as a need in five of the assessed muhallas, namely Abusliem, Derna, Qasr Bin Ghasheer, Suq Aljumaa, and Tawergha

According to the REACH Joint Market Monitoring Report, the average food prices across Libya decreased slightly in April compared to previous months. However, overall average food prices are still 11.8 per cent higher compared to pre-COVID-19 levels in March 2020 and many cities have still not recovered from the price spikes one year ago. For example, the average cost in Benghazi, Al Khums and Al Aziziya are over 36 per cent more expensive in April 2021 compared to March 2020.



*Locations of displacement and returns as of February 2021 (IOM-DTM)*

<sup>2</sup> DTM Libya IDP and Returnee Report 33 (September – October 2020)

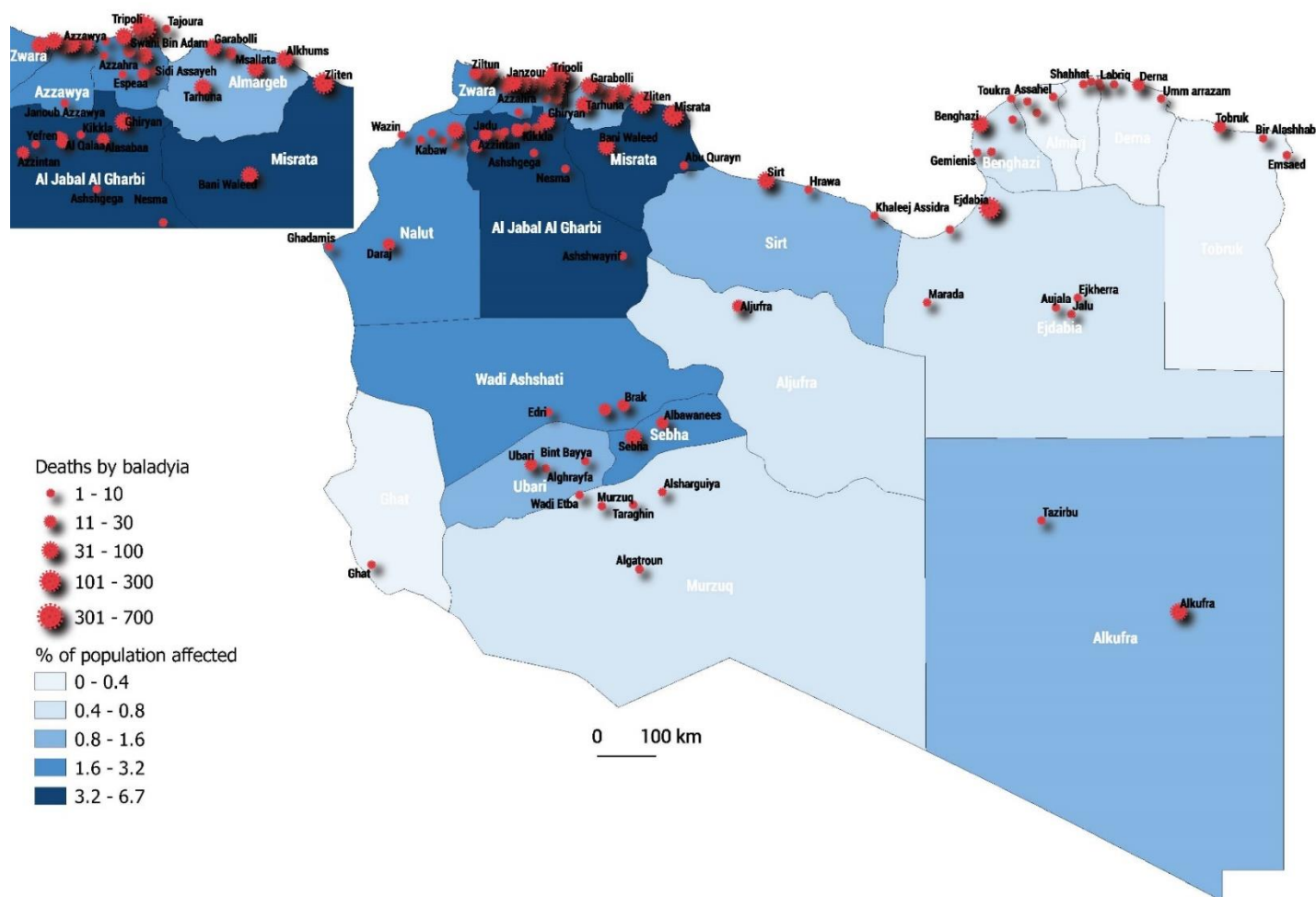
### First COVID-19 vaccines arrive in Libya

As of 5 May, the National Center for Disease Control is reporting that there are 179,193 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Libya, including 3,059 deaths, and 10,630 active cases. While the number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise, the national vaccination campaign against the Coronavirus continued to be rolled out across Libya in April. According to the authorities, the campaign has kicked off in a number of municipalities, including Ghadames, Alkufra, Sebha, Ajdabiya, Marj, Sabratha, Jadu, Bani Walid, Sirte, Abu Salim and Janzour. The first stage of the campaign targets elderly people, those suffering from chronic diseases and medical personnel. As of 29 April 2021, Libya administered 61,000 vaccine doses.

The national COVID-19 vaccination campaign started on 10 April led by the Prime Minister. A total of 426 vaccination sites were established across the country with 107 municipality vaccine supervisors, 1,450 vaccinators and 355 medical doctors having been trained on field implementation, vaccine safety and Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI) management.

Libya received its first COVID-19 vaccines in April. A total of 57,600 doses of the Astra Zeneca vaccine (procured through the COVAX Facility) arrived on 8 April 2021 while 200,000 doses of the Sputnik V vaccine arrived on 4 and 9 April 2021. In addition, 150,000 doses of the Sinovac vaccine arrived on 14 April 2021.

WHO followed up on the necessity of including migrants and refugees into the COVID-19 vaccination deployment. WHO was informed that refugees and migrants residing in Libya would be entitled to the COVID-19 vaccine under the same criteria as for the Libyan population. An electronic registration system for refugees and migrants is presently under development. The National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) requested UN support to prepare an annex to the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan targeting these vulnerable groups, on which UNICEF is working.



*Geographic COVID-19 case distribution as of April 2021 (OCHA)*

## Tawergha: Returning to a place once called home

Whenever Mohammed dreamed about returning home, he recalled the house in which his children grew up. A home filled with joyful memories of family and friends. A place to which he felt deeply rooted in his hometown Tawergha.

Today, the walls that provided him and his family with safety are reduced to rubble. “All we have left is this one room, where we stay with our 6 daughters,” Mohammed says. His home, once a large single-story family house, almost looks like an empty skeleton. Most of its facade was destroyed, while piles of debris surround it.

About 40,000 people fled as their town of Tawergha, about 250 km east of Tripoli, was pounded relentlessly through the conflict in 2011. Armed forces had prevented people from returning to their homes. Many of the former residents have been displaced, sometimes multiple times, for over 10 years.

“I only returned a few days ago. Since we fled in 2011, we had been living in Tripoli, but we were threatened with eviction. We had nowhere else to go, so we came back,” Mohammed says. According to the local council, around 6,000 Tawerghans have already returned in the city. The incremental increase in eviction threats against displaced Tawerghans in their current areas of residence creates push factors for unprepared and rushed returns. Many humanitarian actors are concerned that premature returns without adequate planning and support to reintegration is likely to aggravate protection risks and incidents, including risk of sexual and gender-based violence, risk of trafficking and risk of arbitrary detention.

Many families like Mohammed’s have returned to homes without running water or electricity. Children have limited access to education or healthcare as many schools, hospitals and residential areas have been destroyed, and the lack of electricity or internet in the area impedes them from remote-learning opportunities.

“Water is the biggest problem for us at the moment as our water storage tank was damaged. I also don’t have enough money to pay for electricity,” Mohammed adds. And while access to livelihoods and basic services pose great challenges for safe and dignified returns, for many families it is the only option.

“I lost three of my sons due to the war,” Mohammed says as he is entering the only room that is still standing with a large rug covering the floor. While it is clear that he has little left to lose, there is much to regain. However, for this to happen, people like Mohammed depend on assistance and on authorities to develop durable solutions focusing on physical, material and legal safety. Only then can dreams about returning home potentially become a reality for thousands of Tawerghans still displaced.



*Mohammed in the only room that is still standing amidst the destruction of his home (OCHA/Jennifer Bose Ratka)*

### Humanitarian organizations visit Tarhouna

In April, humanitarian organizations met with local officials, partners and vulnerable groups in Tarhouna, a city that was severely affected by the conflict in Libya. The purpose of this visit was to look at the humanitarian situation in the city and the needs of civilians who are still struggling to rebuild their lives following years of war.

The visit included members from UN OCHA, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and NRC.

The team met with Tarhouna's Steering Council, with whom discussions were held on cooperation opportunities and areas on possible humanitarian intervention. The council emphasized needed assistance on child protection, livelihood support and health. The council also highlighted that after the conflict in 2019 and 2020, families returning to Tarhouna are still suffering from lack of resources.

Since June 2020, dozens of mass graves containing hundreds of bodies have been discovered in Tarhouna. Some of the families lost multiple family members at once, leaving mothers and grandmothers to provide for their children by themselves. One elderly woman told the team how she lost seven of her sons and was left to herself to care for the grandchildren.

A joint session with the Libyan Red Crescent's Tarhouna branch provided an opportunity to hear from those directly delivering assistance on the ground. The team also met with several families who were displaced from Tawergha after the conflict erupted in 2011. They shared their experiences and the difficulties they have faced during displacement, giving the team a personal account on the current situation in Tarhouna.



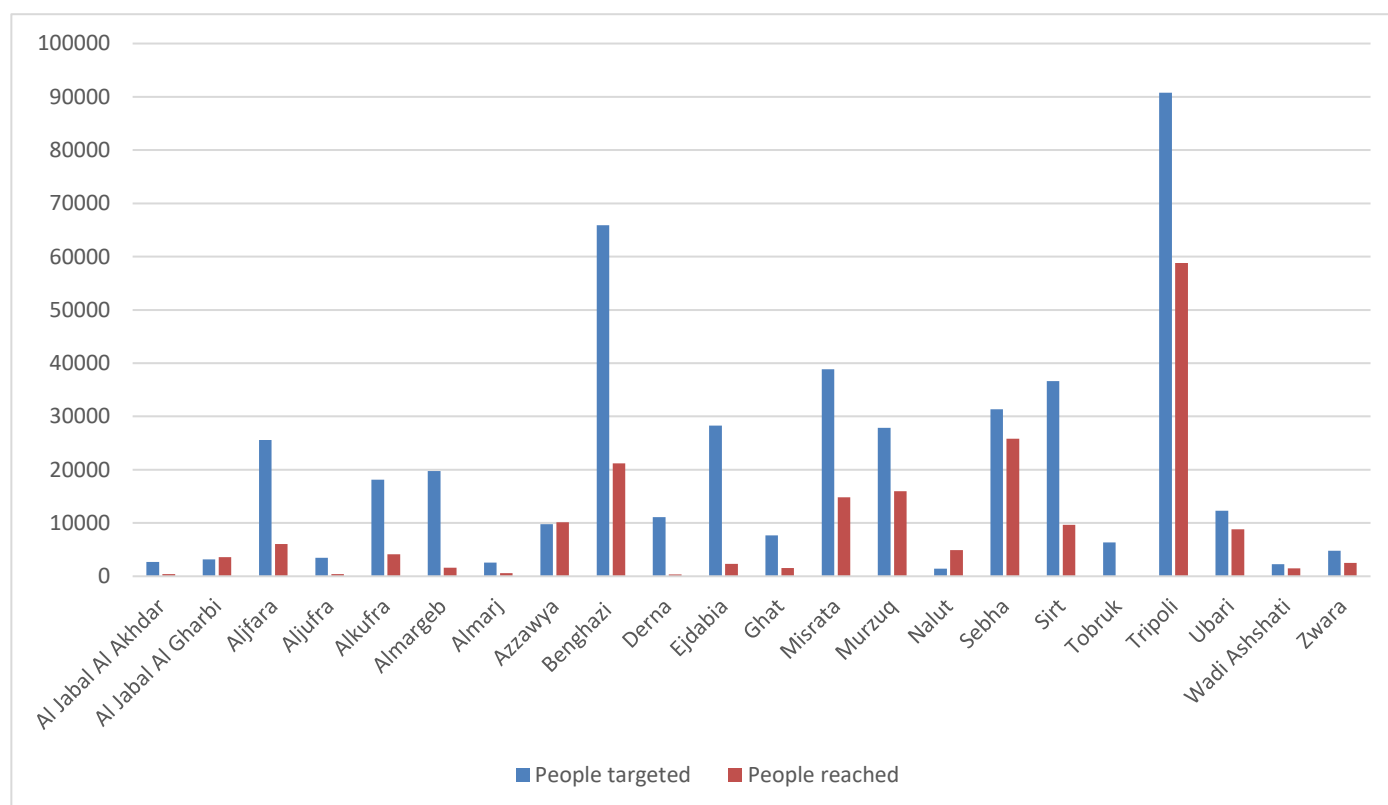
*The humanitarian team visiting a displacement camp in Tarhouna and listening to the needs of displaced Tawerghans (OCHA/Ahmed Rih)*

### Bureaucratic restrictions remains largest access constraint

In April, a total of 191 access constraints were reported by humanitarian partners through the Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework (AMRF). With 58 per cent of the total reported constraints, bureaucratic restrictions on movements of humanitarian staff and relief items into and within Libya continue to make up the largest portion for more than a year. The absence of clear processes for visas for INGO staff and for registration of INGOs in Libya has led to inconsistent procedures and validity durations of visas and work permits. Similarly, there are still no clear and consistent processes expressed by the relevant authorities with regards to customs clearances, which in the past resulted in the disposal of imported supplies, particularly for the health sector, due to medical supplies being detained beyond their expiry dates at airports and seaports. Unless reliable processes for customs clearances are established, this situation is likely to recur.

In total, 59 per cent of the reported access constraints impacted humanitarian sector activities. The Health Sector has been the most impacted by access constraints, representing 41 per cent of reported sector-related constraints. Mantikas in the west (59 per cent of total constraints) continued to be the most heavily affected, followed by mantikas in the south (27 per cent) and the east (14 per cent).

International humanitarian actors need to expand their footprint, while also increasing engagement with national partners in line with the recommendations put forth by the [Peer to Peer Mission](#), which took place in Libya in December 2020. Partners are looking at how best to do this in conformity with partnership principles and accountability frameworks.



**Overall humanitarian response by mantika in 2021 under the Humanitarian Response Plan (OCHA)**

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