



## SITUATION REPORT - JANUARY 2017



A one-day event on 21 January to support women and children. Photo: ©PSS/IOM 2017

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## SITUATION OVERVIEW

The power struggle between the House of Representatives (HoR), based in the north-eastern city of Tobruk, the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Fayez al-Sarraj and the Tripoli-based General National Congress (GNC) remains. At the same time, the Libyan National Army continues to be involved in geographical and resource power struggles, making advances across the country.

The Italian Embassy reopened in Tripoli, the first Western country to do so since 2015. Migration management remains a top priority for the Mediterranean neighbour. Not long after, in the end of January, the Turkish Embassy also reopened in the capital Tripoli.

For ordinary Libyans, power cuts and water outage continue all over the country with reports of almost two-day electricity shortages in the south. In Tripoli, the winter weather has also contributed to petrol and cooking gas cylinder queues, which has been compounded by occasional near total power blackouts in the city.

During January, UNSMIL documented 28 civilian casualties, including 16 deaths and 12 injuries in hostilities across Libya. Victims included 5 children killed and 3 injured, 10 men killed and 9 injured, and one woman killed.

Despite harsh winter conditions, migrants continue to embark on the perilous journey across the Mediterranean Sea. In 2016, 18,904 migrants were rescued in Libyan territorial water. Whilst, so far in 2017, 808 migrants have been rescued in four different incidents off Tripoli, Az Zawiyah and Al Khums. IOM is working to support rescued migrants through humanitarian assistance including non-food items and hygiene kit distribution, as well as health assistance. In addition, in the month of January, 42 bodies were retrieved along the western coastal strip.



## DIRECT ASSISTANCE

For the month of January, 694 migrants received non-food items, clothes, slippers, blankets and diapers through IOM staff and local partners Multakana and LRC Tukra.

1,251 IDPs (6,255 individuals) received hygiene kits, pillows, mattresses and blankets through local partners Multakana, PSS and Al Salam Bani Walid Organization.

In addition, following one of this year's rescue at sea operations, in the morning of 4 January, in which, 60 men and 5 women, were rescued outside Tripoli, IOM distributed non-food items, including mattresses, pillows, winter blankets and clothes (sportswear, underwear, socks and t-shirts), as well as slippers to the rescued migrants.



## HEALTH SUPPORT

Through local implementing partners, IOM has assisted 352 migrants in need of medical care in January. The medical cases included preterm labor and birth, upper respiratory infection, urinary tract infection, gastritis, and scabies. As for the symptoms, there were fever, skin rash and cough.

IOM also carried out a fumigation and disinfection operation at Al Fallah detention centre. "It is important to fumigate and disinfect detention centres in order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases by eliminating pests and insects (through fumigation) and destroying viruses and microbes (through disinfection)," explained IOM Libya's Medical Officer Dr. Sabrine Hamdi.

IOM also conducted fumigation operations in Triq Al Shook on 17 January and Triq Al Sekka detention centres, the latter hosting more than 1,000 migrants, on 30 January. IOM has also installed water purification systems in the detention centres of Al Fallah, Triq Al Matar and Ghariyan Al Hamra.



## FOOD EMERGENCY INTERVENTION

On 15 December, IOM responded to an urgent appeal from several international humanitarian agencies concerning deteriorating conditions at migrant detention centres throughout the country. The situation was particularly critical at Al Fallah detention centre in Tripoli, which was described as "life-threatening" after all regular food supplies were stopped in the beginning of December.

On 7 January, the emergency food intervention expanded to include Tripoli's Abu Salim detention centre, which also started facing problems feeding its more than 100 migrants. As at Al Fallah, the intervention includes 3 meals per day.





## VOLUNTARY RETURN ASSISTANCE

On 23 January, IOM helped 46 stranded Bangladeshi male migrants return home to Bangladesh from Misratah, Libya.

The repatriation – the first such operation out of Misratah since 2014 due to security concerns – was carried out in close coordination with the Bangladeshi Embassy and Krareem Detention Centre in Misratah.

IOM interviewed the migrants before departure and provided medical check-ups to ensure they were fit to travel. All the migrants also received clothes and shoes, as part of IOM's pre-departure assistance.

Farhan, 26, left Bangladesh for Libya to find work several

years ago. He and his family raised the USD 4,000 needed for the journey by selling belongings and borrowing from acquaintances. He was promised a visa on arrival, but instead of starting a new job in Tripoli as planned, he was taken to Misratah and thrown into a detention centre. IOM's voluntary return assistance was the only way he could to leave Libya and he was glad to return to his family.

*"We are happy to again be able to help migrants stranded in Misratah for the first time in a long while,"* said IOM Libya Operations Officer Ashraf Hassan. *"We are working hard to ensure that we can offer support to migrants across Libya and not just from Tripoli."*

### In addition....

On 18 January IOM assisted six stranded migrants to return home to Bangladesh, they departed Tripoli airport to Dhaka airport and are all eligible to receiving reintegration assistance upon their arrival to Bangladesh.

On 23 January, IOM assisted two stranded female migrants to return home to Kenya, one of the two women was a victim of trafficking. The two women will also receive reintegration assistance. Also on 23 January, IOM assisted a mother and a six-year-old child to return home to Ivory Coast.

On 13 January, during a one-day visit to Tripoli, IOM met with the leadership of the Libyan Coast Guard to discuss the outcomes of a needs assessment conducted last year. This assessment aimed to identify ways to improve the infrastructure of Libyan disembarkation points and enhance the capacity of government agencies involved in rescue operations. A work-plan for a capacity building programme was discussed during the meeting and concrete steps for the rehabilitation and provision of communication equipment was agreed.

On 17-18 January, IOM and UNHCR organized a technical coordination meeting in Tunis with Libyan partners to improve rescue-at-sea operations in the Mediterranean.

The meeting was organized within the framework of the established Technical Working Group and Contact Group on Saving Lives at Sea, which aims to ensure internationally recognized best practices to protect the lives of the migrants and refugees when conducting embarkation/disembarkation procedures on often unseaworthy and overcrowded vessels in distress.

During the two-day meeting the Standard Operation procedures, drafted during earlier technical meetings, were reviewed and amended in order to improve the emergency and humanitarian responses of actors involved in rescue-at-sea operations off the Libyan coast."

Rehabilitation of the civil construction work at Zuwara disembarkation point also began, which is one of the main points along the Libyan coastlines. The reception area will be set up with showers and rest rooms, which will improve the infrastructure for receiving migrants following rescue at sea operations.

AS OF JANUARY,

808

RESCUED IN 2017



Women and children during a one-day event at Abu Salim detention centre in Tripoli. Photo: © IOM 2016

## PROTECTION

IOM has begun to roll out a psychosocial support programme for migrants at detention centres, kick-starting with a one-day recreational event at Tripoli's Abu Salim detention centre.

“We do nothing but eat, drink and sleep, the only entertainment we have is talking to each other and that is very annoying, sometimes I wish I could die. However, today I feel alive again,” Esse (not the migrant's real name) who is at Abu Salim centre with her two, three-year-old and one-year-old, siblings, explained following a day in which, for the first time, recreational activities were offered to the migrants of the centre. “Please come again,” the twenty-year-old added following the sessions.

The one-day event on 21 January kick-started a wider IOM strategy, developed in coordination with the NGO Psychosocial Support Team (PSS), to provide support to women and children, which are particularly vulnerable. The support will begin at a number of detention centres, starting with the capital Tripoli. There are an estimated 3,000 to 6,000 migrants at detention centres in Libya, who are all considered vulnerable.

Karolina Edsbacker, IOM Libya's Protection Officer, explained that those activities “do not only offer the migrants a break from the misery they face inside the detention centres, they also serve as a measure to build trust between the PSS team and the children in particular.”

“To provide psychosocial support for migrants inside detention centres is a pioneer project that has never been tried in Libya before,” according to Khaled Hamidi, Executive Manager of IOM's implementing partner the PSS Team. “I'm very happy that we could try this out together with IOM,” he added.

In addition, on 5 January, IOM took part in a joint delegation visiting Misratah, following a coordinated assessment with UNHCR and UNICEF of the needs of the unaccompanied children hosted in Libyan Red Crescent's premises in Misratah.

Thirty-six children were identified and the needs included: medication, psycho-social support, wheel chairs for two children, winter clothes, hygiene kits and oil heaters. IOM's support includes distribution of hygiene kits and procurement of two wheel chairs.

IOM also provided non-food aid in the form of mattresses, pillows, winter blankets, sportswear, socks and hygiene kits to five children of African origin. The children, which are considered extra vulnerable have had their needs assessed by the Libyan Red Crescent in Benghazi. IOM is now working to provide them with three consistent meals per day and arrange for a suitable family to host them.



One of the children in Benghazi receiving assistance. Photo: © IOM 2016

# COMMUNITY STABILIZATION

IOM's Recreation Centre and Psychosocial Support Teams in Sabha and Al Qatrun conducted five mobile activities in the elementary and secondary schools of Albakhi and Abou Baker Alsadeek, reaching 230 students aged between 6 and 16 years old.

Activities included drawing, sports and cultural activities for the student body in general with the objectives to promote resilience and identify vulnerable cases, as well as a special session targeted at providing psychosocial support to referred cases. Additional activities in Sabha were postponed due to extended school closures due to power blackouts, and the related absence of fuel and water cuts.

Prior to this work, the teams initiated a series of meetings with the municipalities, community representatives, CSO's, Ministries of health and education, and other key elements in the community to introduce the objectives of the recreation centres, and understand the community's needs.

On 30 - 31 January, a two-day Community Stabilization Coordination Meeting for Sabha was held in Tunis, bringing together community representatives for a joint review of 2016 accomplishments, technical sessions on community engagement methodology and tools, and discussion of areas of intervention and project prioritization for 2017.



One of the children in Sabha, during a drawing session. Photo: © IOM 2016

## DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX

During the first two weeks of January, DTM's Mobility Tracking local partners and Flow Monitoring enumerators have conducted data collection trainings in Libya for their enumerators using the tools and updated methodologies they obtained in DTM's training conducted in Tunis in December.

Upon completion of the trainings, Mobility Tracking partners began collecting data for DTM Round 8 on 14 January. The data collection phase will continue for four weeks, and will close on 14 February.

In the meantime, DTM has been preparing two reports reviewing all data collected 2016 data, to be published by mid-February:

- A DTM Mobility Tracking 2016 Review Report, which will conduct a trends analysis of DTM data on internal displacement and return from Rounds 1 to 7.
- A Flow Monitoring survey analysis report, which presents the results of surveys conducted with over 8,000 migrants in Libya in 2016.

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