



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés



UPDATE ON THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN LIBYA AND IN THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES 2 March 2011



People fleeing Libya at the Tunisian border @ UNHCR / A. Duclos

Overview

Libya

Information from western Libya is limited as there are no international humanitarian agencies there due to insecurity. However, there are concerns over availability and accessibility of medical care and supplies for the injured from previous fighting. Food supplies are expected to dwindle due to limited distribution and depletion of stocks. The eastern part of Libya is controlled by the opposition and humanitarian organizations started to access to Benghazi. UNHCR's implementing partner is looking into establishing a presence in Benghazi. There are 8000 Palestinian, Iraqi, Sudanese, Ethiopian, Somali and Eritrean refugees in Libya registered with UNHCR. Over 3000 more are seeking asylum and IOM estimates that there are an estimated 1.5 million irregular migrant workers in Libya from Africa and Asia. UNHCR has received a number of anguished calls from refugees trapped in Libya and from their relatives abroad, asking for assistance in evacuating them from the country. UNHCR received reports that some of the refugees have tried to reach the port of Tripoli to board the departing evacuation boats. In addition to general safety concerns, the African refugees are concerned about being associated with pro Government foreign mercenaries.

Tunisia

UNHCR estimates that approx. 85,000 persons have crossed the border since 20 February (as of 2 March). It is currently estimated by IOM and UNHCR that 1000-1,500 people cross the border per hour. The border situation has become increasingly tense and congested; shots were fired by border guards. Vessels and flights are organized by the Egyptian authorities, IOM and UNHCR to transport Egyptians home. The vast majority of people crossing are predominantly male Egyptians. The number of Libyans crossing is still relatively low. Those Libyans UNHCR was able to interview described a tense and terrifying atmosphere in Tripoli. As requested by the Tunisian Government, UNHCR will support IOM to address the critical displacement situation at the border crossing, which is seriously congested.

Egypt

The situation at the border is currently stable, less than 1,000 persons remain in the arrival area awaiting embassy or IOM support. Since 20 February, 77,320 persons have crossed into Egypt. They include 58,279 Egyptians, 3,636 Libyans, 15,405 third country nationals (as of 1 March). 33 Palestinians out of 41 were pushed back to Libya on 1 March. The Consular of the Palestinians Consulate in Alexandria was at the borders in the Egyptian side and is working on the papers of the 41 Palestinians so that they are allowed entry inside Egypt. UNHCR was informed that the remaining 8 and 5 newly arrived Palestinians were also pushed back late this afternoon. UNHCR Egypt convened a meeting with the Egyptian authorities to discuss this issue.

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Latest UNHCR activities

Libya

- UNHCR supported the construction of a second transit site established by the Tunisian Government with a capacity of 10,000 people. The first transit site has a capacity of 800.
- UNHCR procured 20,000 mattresses to support the Tunisian authorities in accommodating the mass influx.
- UNHCR's implementing partner in Tripoli has restarted its operation and is able to provide counseling and material support. It is currently looking at providing financial assistance to at least ensure that the most vulnerable are able to survive while confined to their homes. Two telephone hot lines have been established.
- UNHCR is concluding an agreement with Egyptian Red Crescent to send medical and small food supplies to eastern Libya.
- The first truck taking UNHCR assistance inside Libya arrived on 2 March.

Tunisia

- NFIs for 10,000 people airlifted by UNHCR.
- 500 tents delivered and installed at camp site identified by the Tunisian Government.
- Airport authorities supported with tents, blankets and mats for setting up waiting area outside the airport.
- Three additional airlifts coordinated, carrying in total 2,900 tents, 35,000 blankets and 3 rub halls.
- 20,000 mattresses procured, delivery planned to be completed by mid-week.
- Air evacuations authorized by the HC as well as engaging boats in order to help decongest the border.
- UNHCR's first evacuation flight is scheduled to take place on 2 March, with a capacity of 175 persons.

Egypt

- UNHCR team distributed food and blankets at the Saloum border.
- From the Egyptian border, Sallum, UNHCR crossed into the no-man's land between the two border points where they found 75 people from Sudan, Bangladesh, Thailand and Pakistan. They had no passports and were waiting for support from their embassies. UNHCR has agreed with the Egyptian border authorities to provide shelter, blankets, and food for all those waiting in between the two border points.
- UNHCR has concluded an agreement with Egyptian Red Crescent to send medical and small food supplies to eastern Libya. Consignment will leave Cairo on Friday.

Staffing

As of 28 February, UNHCR activated an additional 32 emergency staff for Egypt, Tunisia and Libya; 16 are already on site in Tunisia and Egypt. The others are awaiting visas and should be on site in the coming days.

Coordination

UNHCR and IOM, in consultation with the Tunisian and Egyptian governments, have established on 1 March the joint humanitarian evacuation programme. UNHCR and IOM will merge their efforts on the "IOM-UNHCR Humanitarian Evacuation Operation", creating a single cell for management of the effort.

Funding

UNHCR's additional needs for the North Africa and Mediterranean Emergency Response will include the following (does not yet include the joint IOM/UNHCR appeal for establishing an air bridge for the humanitarian evacuation):

Country	Programme	Description of Beneficiaries	Amount (USD)
Egypt	Pillar I	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	1,150,000
Tunisia	Pillar I	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	4,224,000
Libya	Pillar I	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	5,374,000
Libya	Pillar IV	Internally Displaced Persons	550,000
Europe	Pillar I	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	589,341
Regional Activity			5,220,000
Total			17,107,341
7% Overhead Cost			1,197,514
Grand Total			18,304,855