



Libya Floods Emergency Six-Month Impact Report

SEPTEMBER 2023 - MARCH 2024

UNHCR's response to the Libya Floods Emergency

KEY FIGURES

Affected population



44,000 people
displaced
by flooding*



3,000 refugees
living in eastern Libya
before the flooding and
206 directly affected
by the floods



46,000 internally displaced people
living in eastern Libya
before the flooding**

UNHCR's response



Medical supplies to support up
to **10,000 people** given to
health authorities in Derna



Provided cash assistance to
more than **2,400 people**
affected by the floods



UNHCR teams **conducted protection assessments**
with people affected by the
floods to better understand and
respond to their needs



Four prefabricated shelters and power
generators provided to
authorities in Derna to establish
women and child-friendly spaces



Co-chaired and led the
Protection, Cash, and Shelter/
Non-Food Item Thematic
Working Groups

* IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix figures

** OCHA figures

More than **60,000 items** reached **27,000 people** in 13 areas including:



Financial requirements

Thanks to the generosity of donors, UNHCR received the total \$5.5 million requested for the Storm Daniel emergency response. UNHCR continues its operations across Libya to improve protection and life-saving assistance for refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced people, and host communities – including longer-term support for those affected by the devastating floods, for a total funding need of \$67.5 million in 2024. As of 31 January 2024, this was 32 per cent funded.



© UNHCR/Ahmed Al Houdiri. Destruction caused by Storm Daniel in Derna, Libya.

Humanitarian context

On 11 September 2023, Storm Daniel – the deadliest Mediterranean tropical-like cyclone or ‘medicane’ in recorded history – hit eastern Libya, causing extreme weather conditions including strong winds and sudden heavy rainfall in several areas along the coast. The storm caused two dams to burst and consequently massive floods inflicting significant casualties and destruction throughout several cities and towns in the northeastern region of Libya. Areas that were particularly hard-hit include Derna as well as Al Bayada, Soussa, Al Marj, Shahat, Taknis, Battah, Tolmeita, Bersis, Tokra, and Al-Abyar, among others.

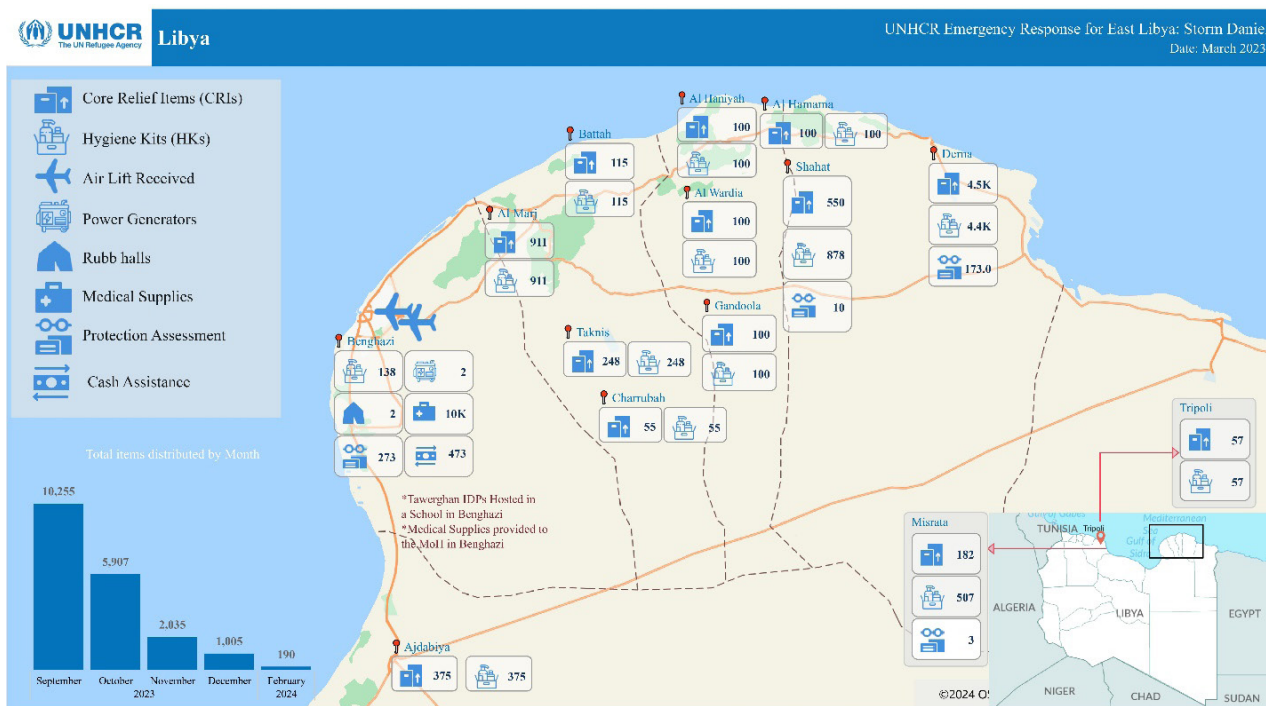
The death toll surpassed 4,000 people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health, and the **floods caused mass displacement of an estimated 44,000 people,**

with 30,000 in Derna alone, while an estimated 250,000 people were affected**. Refugees and internally displaced people already living in the area were once again displaced. **Roughly 3,000 refugees were registered with UNHCR in eastern Libya at the time of the storm, out of which 206 were directly impacted by the storm.** Eastern Libya also hosted 46,000 internally displaced people prior to the storms**. Following the devastating floods, Benghazi city has been hosting thousands of families who have lost everything – their homes, their belongings, their livelihoods and, worst of all, their loved ones.

UNHCR has been present in Benghazi since 2014 and works with the Government of Libya, national and international organizations to provide humanitarian aid and durable solutions to refugees, displaced people and asylum-seekers in Libya.

** OCHA figures

UNHCR's response



Core relief items: Blankets, mattresses, plastic sheets, kitchen sets, adult diapers, winter gloves, rain coats, winter socks, diapers, baby kits, solar lamps, jerry cans, winter boots, jackets, rubber slippers, tracksuits, heaters, sleeping mats.

Protection assessment: household visit, key informant interview, psychosocial first aid.

Source of data: UNHCR in Partnership with Libaid. All figures represent number of households. Estimated average household size is five.

UNHCR has been able to assist more than 40,000 people affected by the flooding, working with partners and the Libyan authorities. Thanks to the timely contribution of donors, UNHCR and

partners were able to deliver core relief items, shelter, protection services and cash assistance to families who lost everything.

Shelter and emergency aid items

From the onset of the storm response, UNHCR immediately dispatched emergency relief items from local warehouses to reach those in need. In addition, two airlifts carrying 53 and 35 metric tons of humanitarian supplies were dispatched from our global warehouse in Dubai in the first and third weeks following the storm.

As of March 2024, UNHCR with partner LibAid had distributed more than 60,000 emergency aid items to assist 27,000 people.

Core relief items included: plastic sheeting, bedding (blankets, mattresses, sleeping mats), clothing (winter jackets, gloves, socks and boots, tracksuits, raincoats and rubber slippers), hygiene items (such as soap, adult and infant diapers) and household items such as kitchen sets and heaters.

In addition, **UNHCR gave power generators and medical supplies which can assist up to 10,000 people** to health authorities in Benghazi and procured four prefabricated houses in Derna to establish women and child-friendly spaces.



© UNHCR/Ziyad Alhamadi. UNHCR teams distribute hygiene kits, blankets, and other relief items to families displaced by the floods in Al Marj, eastern Libya.

Protection and psychosocial support

UNHCR teams travelled throughout eastern Libya to meet with people affected by the flooding and speak with them to understand their most urgent needs and concerns and provide targeted support.

UNHCR contacted all 1,559 refugee families who were registered with UNHCR in the east prior to the floods. After three rounds of phone calls, UNHCR identified 303 families who were still present in the east, while the remaining phone numbers were disconnected or out of service. 206 refugees were directly affected by the floods, primarily from Sudan and Syria, and some from Palestine, Ethiopia and other countries. Their individual needs were identified and addressed by UNHCR as part of the overall UN response.

The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) working group played a pivotal role in ensuring the inclusion of refugees in programs collaboratively undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health.

People in need can also find information online through [UNHCR's Help website](#) and on social media, including X and Facebook.

People particularly at risk who were identified through this outreach are children who had been separated from their nuclear families, people with ongoing medical and mental health issues, and women and girls at risk of gender-based violence.

Cash assistance

Cash support remains one of the most effective and dignified ways to directly assist refugees as well as provide a benefit to local communities. Money spent in local shops and services stimulates the local economy and boosts job creation. It allows displaced people to use the money where it is most needed, particularly those with severe medical conditions and those with disabilities, so they can access specialized services.

UNHCR and partner Norwegian Refugee Council provided 1,500 individuals (283 families) with multi-purpose cash assistance during the last months of 2023. They received US 120 per month for three consecutive months to help ease the financial hardship faced after the disaster. The assistance is provided through a pre-paid card that can be used to buy basic needs

from certain shops and vendors in Benghazi and flood affected areas.

At the end of February 2024, **952 individuals (190 families) in Benghazi received cash assistance by UNHCR** in close coordination with the local branch of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Benghazi. This lays the groundwork for future scale-ups in flood-affected areas and aimed at reaching a total of 1,150 families (approximately 6,000 individuals).

Cash programming faces significant challenges in Libya due to a shortage of cash, lack of confidence in the banking system, high level of fluctuation of the Libyan Dinar vs USD, and rigid central bank regulations. In addition, persisting access issues in the East and in the affected areas pose challenges to carry out cash assistance.



© UNHCR Libya. UNHCR staff members speaking with a woman affected by Storm Daniel.

Ikhlas*, displaced person in Libya

Ikhlas and her husband Mohammed* were displaced by the flooding in Derna. Ikhlas lost 21 of her family members in the flooding and has severe trauma from the event.

"I was up that night when the floods happened," Ikhlas told me. "I was watching the sea from my balcony and all of a sudden, I started hearing a horrific sound, and I didn't know what was happening. I thought it was an earthquake, but the floor was not moving. Before I knew it, my husband and I were pushed by strong waves into our bathroom. I kept hold of his shirt, and he held on to mine."

I told him: *'Mohammed, we either die together tonight, or we survive together'. We never had children. He is all I have.'*

Ikhlas and Mohammed are sheltering in a compound donated by a local businessman to house those displaced by the flooding. UNHCR visited them and other families to find out their needs, to deliver core relief items and to provide counselling.

"There was nothing left in my house. I am very thankful for receiving these mattresses and kitchen items, but I miss my house, my furniture, my own kitchen. I can't believe I used to tease Mohammed about finding a new home, a better one, and buying new furniture. I would give anything to get our home back."

Beyond aid items, there is an acute need for psychological support for survivors of the flooding. UNHCR supported community services where people can feel safe, share their experiences and find the help they need is critical to their recovery.

*Names changed for protection reasons.

Support for women and children

Prefabricated buildings supplied by UNHCR to local authorities in Derna were used to establish women and child-friendly spaces, providing a safe and supportive environment to conduct mental health assessments, offer psychosocial support and refer those in need to further services.

UNHCR is also supporting the protection and education of children. **In November 2023,**

UNHCR visited 12 schools in Derna where displaced students are studying alongside local children. Teams spoke with students and teachers to better understand their needs including building repairs, school equipment and school meals. **UNHCR donated 1,410 school kits to two schools in Shahat** helping displaced and local children to continue their education.

Coordination

As part of a coordinated response within the broader UN framework, UNHCR has actively collaborated with national and international partners to effectively map and respond to the needs of people affected by the flooding. As the lead in UN coordination for Protection, Shelter & Non-Food Items (NFI), and Cash-Based Intervention (CBI), UNHCR has led the response in these sectors with a focus on accountability to affected populations and ensuring that people with specific needs (due to age, gender or disability for instance) are included.

Under UNHCR's leadership, a joint cash transfer mechanism involving World Food Programme, International Organization for Migration UNICEF was established as an agreed-upon system to

transfer cash to those in need. Coordination with Libyan authorities is in place to avoid duplication with assistance that already provided by authorities.

UNHCR led and participated in 11 interagency missions involving diverse UN entities to assess the effectiveness of aid delivery and maintain communication with affected people and authorities. UNHCR's pivotal role in these missions was to fortify the Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) framework, oversee the implementation of humanitarian interventions, and pinpoint any existing gaps or challenges. The findings from these missions were used to revise the OCHA Flash Appeal and municipal operation plans.

Ongoing needs

“The flood waters may have receded in Derna, but the devastation felt by survivors remains, and we cannot turn our backs on them now.”

– Rana G. Ksaifi, Assistant Chief of Mission, UNHCR Libya

UNHCR is continuing visits to areas affected by the flooding to talk to survivors and understand their needs and how they are changing over time. This will ensure that their needs and wishes guide ongoing UNHCR programmes so that the assistance provided is timely and relevant.

As many of refugees' and displaced people's most immediate needs (such as core relief items like bedding, kitchen items and winter clothing) have been met, longer-term support is vitally needed to meet needs such as stable accommodation and regular utility costs.

Cash assistance is the most dignified and cost-effective modality to provide refugees and flood affected families with this kind of support. UNHCR is one of the establishing partners of the Multipurpose Cash Assistance Program, which aims to provide around 9,000 flood-affected households (around 45,000 people) with cash assistance. The payments of approximately 700 LYD per household per month would aim to cover 50 per cent of their basic household needs.

Donor acknowledgement

UNHCR extends its thanks to our public and private donors who donated to the Libya floods emergency, as well as those who provided flexible funding to general emergency preparedness and response in 2023. Your support has been invaluable to help and protect millions of people forced to flee by new and deteriorating crises.

Donors that contributed \$100,000 or above to the Libya floods emergency response:

Central Emergency Response Fund | Germany | Liechtenstein | Norway | Private donors in Australia (Australia for UNHCR) | Private donors in China

| Private donors in Denmark | Private donors in Germany (UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe) | Private donors in Italy | Private donors in Republic of Korea | Private donors in the Middle East and North Africa | Private donors in The Netherlands | Private donors in Spain (España con ACNUR) | Private donors in Sweden (Sweden for UNHCR) | Private donors in Switzerland (Switzerland for UNHCR) | Private donors in the United Arab Emirates | Private donors in the United Kingdom (UK for UNHCR) | Private donors in the United States of America (USA for UNHCR) | United States of America

Flexible funding: a lifeline in emergencies

Flexible funds help UNHCR to prepare for the unpredictable – such as the unprecedented floods in Libya in 2023, to kick-start an emergency response, and to help displaced people in forgotten or under-resourced crises. They also enable UNHCR to plan and manage resources efficiently and effectively to help save and transform lives.

Without flexible funding, we would not be able to properly prepare for any new emergency that may arise. Without flexible funding, the first phase of our emergency response, which delivers thousands of emergency supplies, essential

shelter and protection assistance to families in need, would struggle to get off the ground.

Flexible funding is especially important as our emergency response develops, and we provide longer-term support to displaced people and their host communities. When emergencies fade from the spotlight, flexible funding enables us to help those who are suffering most.

We could not do our job without such invaluable support, and we count on donors' continued solidarity for people affected by emergencies in 2024.

© UNHCR/Ziyad Alhamadi. UNHCR teams distribute hygiene kits, blankets, and other relief items to families displaced by the floods in Al Marj, eastern Libya.