



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Libya

Operational Update

28 February 2026

UNHCR/ Ziyad Alhamadi

When Samia and Idris fled Sudan to Libya, they believed they had lost their teenage son, Muhanned, during the conflict. After registering with UNHCR in Libya, family tracing helped reunite them turning uncertainty into a moment they never thought possible.



110,009

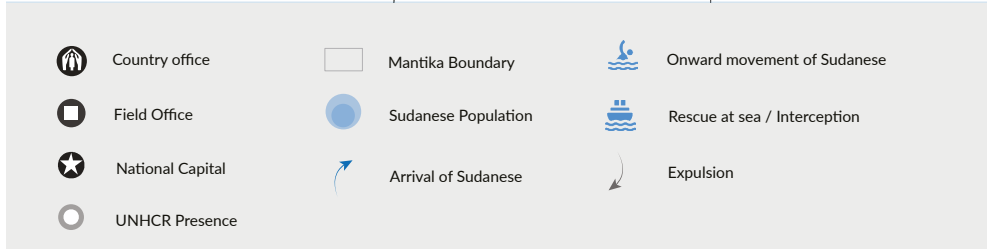
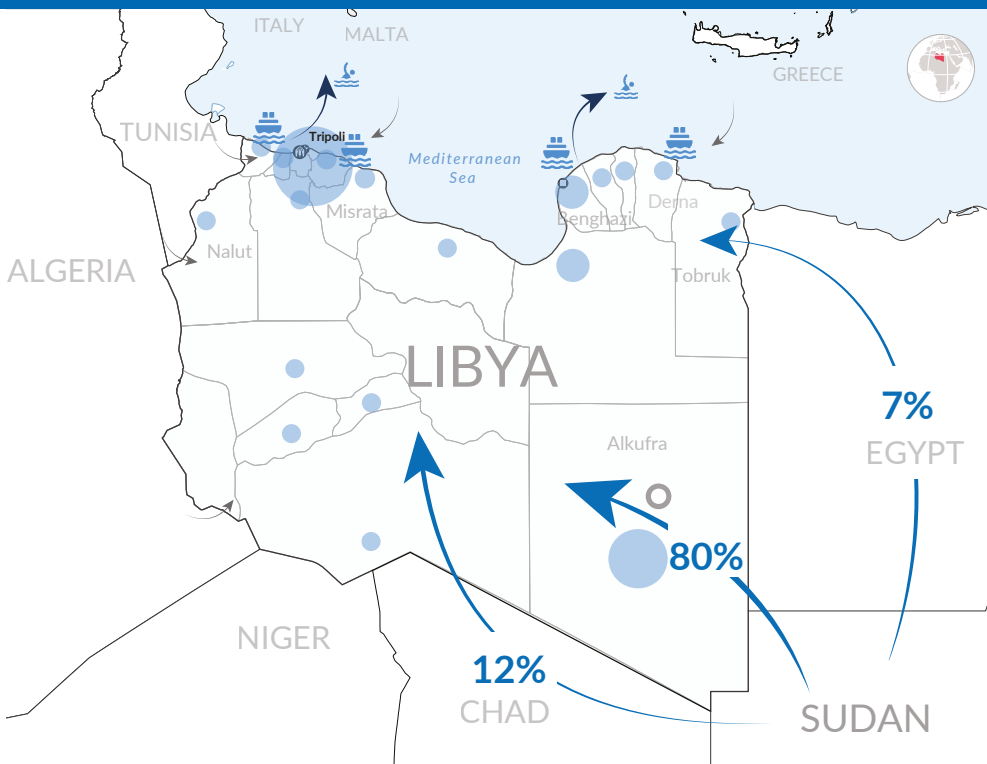
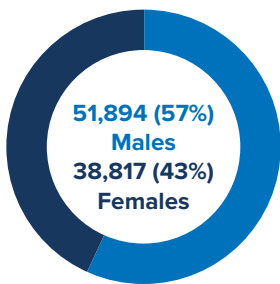
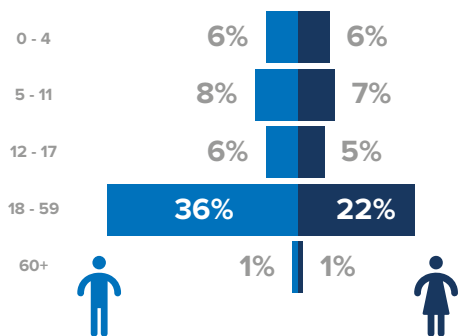
registered with UNHCR in Tripoli.

82% are Sudanese refugees
8% are Eritrean refugees
4% are Syrian refugees
6% other refugees²

Sudanese Refugees

90,711

Sudanese registered with UNHCR Libya, including those who arrived before the onset of the crisis.



1. The arrival trends of Sudanese refugees are based on surveys conducted with Sudanese refugee households in 2025, registration data, protection monitoring and outreach findings.
2. UNHCR registers refugees from 9 nationalities: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Yemen.

HIGHLIGHTS

Key numbers¹

Overall	Sudanese refugees	Assistance
110,009	90,711	Refugees registered at UNHCR's registration centre in Tripoli
4,500	4,432	Refugees who received protection services
50	-	Refugees relocated from detention centres to the urban setting following UNHCR's advocacy
1,615	284	People rescued at sea
536	166	Refugees who departed Libya safely on durable solutions
7,461	4,261	Refugees and host communities who received core relief/non-food items and hygiene kits
1,308	1,072	Medical consultations provided (including in primary health in the urban settings, detention centres and disembarkation points) and cases assisted through the medical hotline
106	24	Refugees who received cash or vouchers

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

At the end of February, 5,762 individuals were held in detention centres managed by the Directorate for Combatting Illegal Migration in Libya (DCIM), including 1,325 in need of international protection. Through UNHCR's advocacy and facilitation, 50 refugees were released from the Tajoura Detention Centre in two groups on 3 and 4 February. The group comprised 7 Eritreans, 16 Ethiopians, and 1 Somali. All were males: 22 between the ages of 18 and 35, and 2 were minors. The group was brought to UNHCR's Registration Centre, where they were registered and given humanitarian assistance, including cash support, and received appointments for protection interviews for further assessment. The two minors were placed in community care.

On 18 February 2026, the committee for regularizing the legal status of Sudanese nationals held its seventh meeting in Benghazi. The committee is established to organize and regulate the legal, administrative, and humanitarian situation of Sudanese residents in eastern Libya. Its mandate includes developing legal frameworks for residency and work, harmonizing health and administrative procedures, and coordinating between ministries and field teams to ensure services are delivered in line with humanitarian and legal standards. The committee operates under the supervision of the east-based foreign affairs authorities.

¹ Numbers may change following verification



PROTECTION

- As the situation for refugees in Libya becomes harder, people continue to risk the perilous journey across the Mediterranean. In 2026, a total of 1,615 people were recorded during interceptions and rescues, of which 1,078 were intercepted in February, mainly from Sudan and Somalia. Additionally, 44 persons were reported missing and 12 dead bodies had been recovered from Libyan waters.
- Movement of Sudanese refugees toward Alkufra remained limited and continues to occur exclusively through the Chad route via Rebiana. Tracking movements into Alkufra remains difficult, as groups often travel independently and do not consistently inform the community of their routes or timing.
- Further, in Sebha, refugee movement continued at a rate of 20 to 25 individuals per day, including women and children. While some stop in Al-Qatroun, others proceed to Marzuq and Um Al-Aranib. However, overall movement in the south was limited during this period, which is believed to be linked to [intensified clashes along the border areas, during which 2 people were killed](#).
- On 3 February, the Department for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) South in Sebha conducted a security operation on Sudanese makeshift shelters in the Al-Harari area along the airport road, during which approximately 1,350 Sudanese refugees were arrested for illegal activity and no documentation for stay in Libya. Around 350 people were transferred to Al-Shati detention centre (DC) and a similar number to Ganfouda DC in Benghazi. The remaining number of refugees were taken to Sebha DC. Fifty families were released two days later. UNHCR conducted two visits to Ganfouda DC and coordinated with the Sudanese consulate for their release. In Sebha, releases have continued throughout the month, and approximately 40 individuals remain in the DC, with community sources indicating individuals are required to undergo a medical test (250 LYD) prior to release.



REGISTRATION

- By the end of February 2026, UNHCR had registered 110,009 refugees at its registration centre in Tripoli, with Sudanese nationals continuing to constitute the majority with 90,711 individuals. In February, 1,970 individuals were newly registered, reflecting sustained arrivals and registration services. Refugees are primarily concentrated in western Libya, with majority residing in Tripoli, followed by smaller populations in Misrata and Az-Zawya.
- The registered population has varied educational and professional backgrounds. While some individuals have little or no formal education, others have completed primary or secondary school, and some hold technical or university qualifications. Many have experience in services, construction, agriculture, and trade, with smaller numbers in professions such as teaching, health, and engineering.
- In Alkufra, the Registration Centre at the Isolation Centre remains open and operational. However, there is still no available information regarding the daily number of individuals being registered, as access to the facility is restricted and requires prior coordination directly with the committee head. Registration activities remain low, with few Sudanese refugees approaching the centre. Communities indicate that the cost of obtaining the SRC, which is 500LYD, as well as the documentation requirements, are the main barrier as the majority of Sudanese refugees in Alkufra cannot afford it.
- As a result, Sudanese refugees continue to use health cards issued by the Libyan Red Crescent or private laboratories to present at checkpoints when traveling to northern cities.



PROTECTION OUTREACH

- Through its local partner Moomken, UNHCR initiated legal counselling services to refugees and asylum-seekers facing legal and administrative challenges. These services include legal awareness sessions focused on accessing civil registry documents—particularly important for survivors of violence and abuse—as well as information related to obtaining legal residency in Libya.

- The first two sessions held at UNHCR’s Registration Centre reached 49 and 133 refugees respectively, mostly Sudanese nationals. Over 30 individuals reported challenges of accessing the civil registry and expressed interest in further legal counselling, particularly for birth certificates. As a follow-up, a dedicated legal session will be held for this group to facilitate their access to the civil registry. In addition, refugees requiring further legal counselling were assessed to determine their specific legal needs and receive tailored support.
- Home visits to caregivers in Abusalim, Tripoli, enhance case monitoring, allow UNHCR to directly assess living conditions, strengthen communication with caregivers, and ensure support needs are accurately identified. UNHCR works with 44 caregivers who collectively host 118 vulnerable refugees under alternative care arrangements, including 96 unaccompanied children, 17 single females, and 5 medical cases.
- In February, 11 Communication with Communities awareness sessions were conducted reaching 348 refugees providing information on UNHCR services, official communication channels, and reporting mechanisms for fraud and misconduct. Participants were highly engaged and actively raised questions throughout.



CALL CENTRE

- UNHCR’s Call Centre is managed by its local partner Moomken and is accessible country-wide. By calling 1504, refugees access the interactive voice response (IVR) that provides answers to frequently asked questions. If more detailed information is needed or a request requires tailored assistance, the call is taken by an operator who can then make a referral if necessary. In February, the call centre received 26,257 calls, 8,066 of which escalated to the operators, and the centre thus far has made 561 referrals, addressing a wide range of protection and assistance needs, including issues related to documentation and a sustained demand for mental health and psychosocial support.
- The Call Centre has a dedicated team for Syrian refugees wishing to repatriate to their homeland. UNHCR has facilitated the voluntary return of 773 Syrians to their home country since the start of the operation in November 2025.



CHILD PROTECTION

- In February, UNHCR conducted 62 Best Interest Assessments (BIAs) for vulnerable refugee children. Referred by the Call Centre, community mobilizers, or during the registration process, these BIAs assess the needs of children at risk, including unaccompanied and separated children. Based on their specific needs, children were referred to specialized services such as temporary care, while families caring for them received non-food items or cash assistance. UNHCR works with 44 caregivers who collectively host 118 vulnerable refugees including 96 unaccompanied children.
- Throughout the month, the Child-Friendly Space (CFS) at UNHCR’s Registration Centre continued to provide a safe, stimulating, and supportive environment for children through unstructured walk-in activities and structured sessions. Forty children—16 girls and 24 boys—participated in Cycle 1 of the structured sessions in 2026. The opening session introduced objectives and rules, followed by activities on personal aspirations and future career interests. Another session covered the theme “Our World and



Tripoli, Libya. A Sudanese girl embraces her sisters after being separated for weeks. She reached a UNHCR office seeking help, where support enabled her safe reunification with her family and referral for further care.


 UNHCR/ Ziyad Alhamadi

Planets,” using interactive methods to support learning. Attendance throughout the four-week programme of Cycle 1 was encouraging, with children actively participating and showing interest in the topics presented.

- Over the course of February, 696 children participated in daily unstructured and structured activities at the CFS. These sessions offered recreational, educational, and psychosocial support opportunities, enabling children to build positive peer relationships, express themselves through play, and enjoy a safe environment. To ensure comprehensive care, CFS staff observed the children continuously and referred any cases requiring further protection or psychosocial support to relevant specialized services for appropriate follow-up.



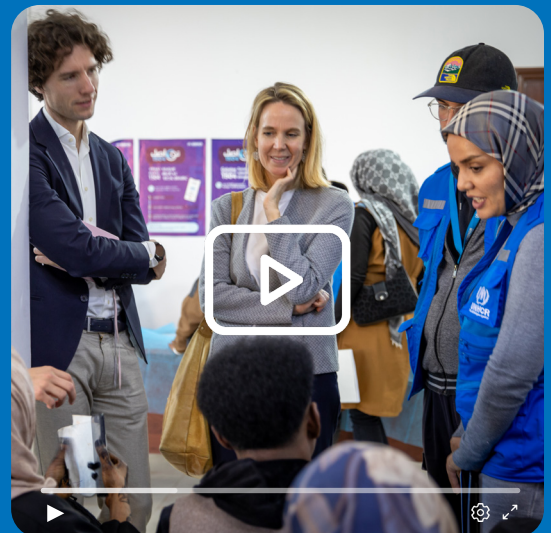
Refugees attend an awareness session at a child friendly space in Tripoli, Libya, where UNHCR shares key messages on safety, risks, and making informed decisions in daily life..

 UNHCR/ Abdulrauf Alqundi

A PLANE CAN CARRY MORE THAN PASSENGERS

These evacuations are lifesaving and underscore UNHCR’s continued commitment to providing durable solutions and protection-sensitive pathways for refugees in Libya, ensuring their safety, dignity, and hope for the future.

Watch: [here](#).



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

- Although extremely limited when faced with the needs, a key priority for UNHCR is durable solutions for vulnerable refugees, including evacuation, resettlement, and complementary pathways.
- Following the approval of the Government of Rwanda, UNHCR resumed evacuations of refugees at heightened risk from Libya via the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) to Rwanda. UNHCR facilitated the flight from Tripoli to Rwanda on 25 February, evacuating 164 refugee men, women, and children. **The Deputy Ambassador of the Netherlands visited the Jugurthine Medical Centre on 24 February,** meeting with families preparing for the flight. This marked the first ETM movement to Rwanda since flights were paused in April 2025.
- Only one flight departed Libya for Rwanda in 2025, evacuating 137 refugees, due to lack of space in the transit centre owing to the slow departures of refugees and asylum-seekers to resettlement countries. By the end of 2025, over 400 places were available, and resettlement countries were allocating quotas for 2026.

FIELD OPERATIONS

Basic Needs

- In February, 1,721 Sudanese refugees in Ajdabiya, Tripoli, and Tobruk, received winter supplies such as jackets, boots, blankets, and solar lamps. Families also received essential items like kitchen sets, hygiene kits, and jerrycans to help with daily life helping to restore dignity and improve wellbeing during the winter. In addition, UNHCR carried out distributions at Ajdabiya detention centre and jointly with IOM at Tobruk DC, reaching over 300 vulnerable individuals with mattresses, blankets, clothing, and hygiene kits

Health Assistance

- To address the shortage of medicines and medical services for refugees in the south, UNHCR is collaborating with the International Rescue Committee medical teams operating in health facilities around Sebha and Al-Shati, with referrals now underway to ensure continued access to essential care.
- On 12 February, in coordination with east-based health authorities, **UNHCR handed over three fully equipped ambulances**. This support will enhance emergency medical responses and improve access to life-saving services for both refugees and host communities, strengthening the capacity of first responders to deliver timely care in high-risk areas.
- In addition, on 10 February, UNHCR handed over medical equipment to the Libyan Red Crescent branch in Sabratha (western Libya), including two otoscope–ophthalmoscope sets and an ultrasound machine. The support aims to strengthen emergency responses for vulnerable refugees and migrants in urban areas, including individuals rescued at sea, ensuring that diagnostic tools are available when and where they are most needed.



UNHCR provides fully equipped ambulances to strengthen emergency health response in eastern Libya, supporting life-saving medical transport for refugees and host communities, especially in remote areas.

 UNHCR/ Ahmed El Houdiri

Coordination

- In Libya, UNHCR leads the Inter-Agency coordination for the Sudan Refugee Response Plan (RRP) through a dedicated task force structure. This framework includes seven thematic task forces, focusing on Protection, Basic Needs, Food Security, WASH, Public Health & Nutrition, Education, and Livelihoods & Economic Inclusion, supported by an Information Management (IM) Task Force for data collection and management.
- On 11 February 2026, UN agencies and representatives from relevant Libyan government ministries held technical consultations on the Libya chapter of the 2026 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offices in Tripoli. The meeting fostered an open and collaborative discussion focused on critical issues such as data management, the impact of the crisis on Libya, and areas for enhanced UN-government collaboration. Following the consultations, UNHCR received formal feedback from the government ahead of the virtual launch of the RRP planned for March.



UNHCR/ Aml Albarghouti

A FAMILY LEAVES AGAIN. THIS TIME, IT'S DIFFERENT

They have left before.

But this is different.

After years of displacement, Maha's family reflects on what it means to leave again but this time, by choice, to home and when the moment finally felt right.

Read more: [here](#).

UNHCR PARTNERS



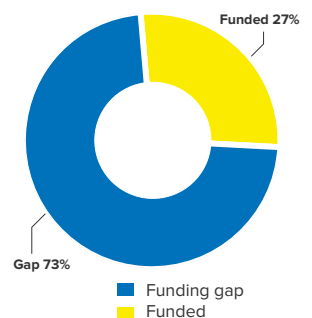
FUNDING INFORMATION

UNHCR is grateful for the crucial and generous contributions from its donors, who have provided both earmarked and flexible funding to support its operations in Libya, including in response to the Sudan situation.



US\$ 51.1 million

UNHCR requested for the operation in Libya, including the Sudan refugee response



CONTACT: UNHCR External Relations and Public Information Unit: lbytr@unhcr.org

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