



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Libya

Operational Update

30 April 2026

UNHCR/Mohammed Abraheem

"Before, the classroom was loud... students couldn't focus. Now, everything feels calmer," says Maryam, a teacher at Alwifaq school in Ajdabiya. Desks provided by UNHCR will help create more supportive classrooms for Libyan and Sudanese students.



112,458

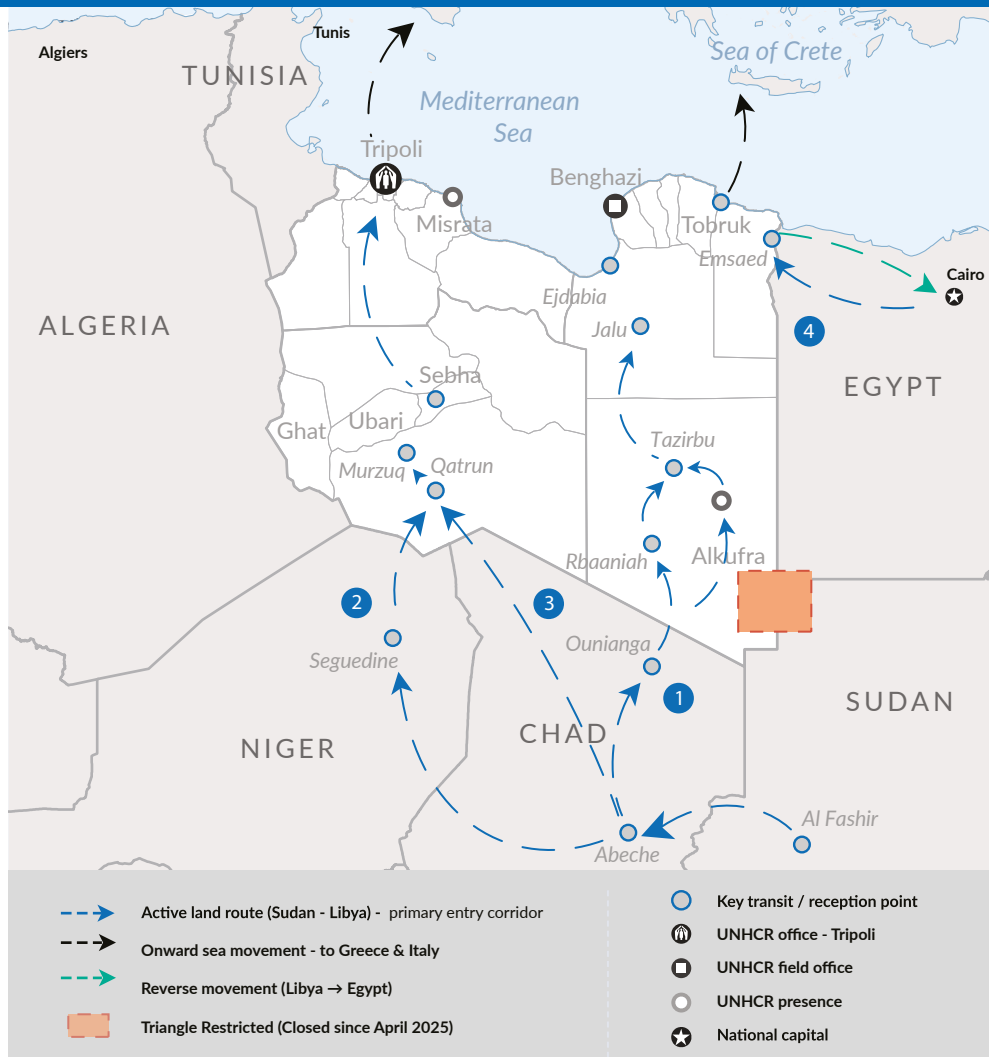
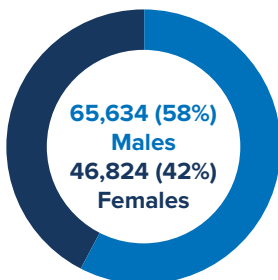
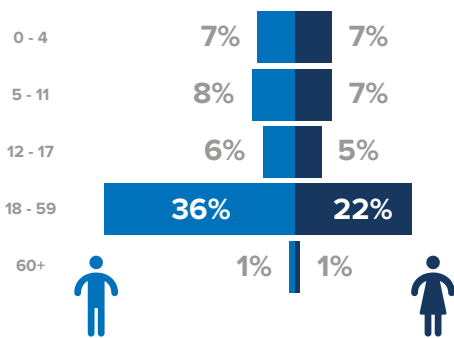
registered with UNHCR in Tripoli.

83% are Sudanese refugees
7% are Eritrean refugees
4% are Syrian refugees
6% other refugees²

Sudanese Refugees

93,159

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 numbers*

Overall	Sudanese refugees	Assistance
112,458	93,159	Refugees registered at UNHCR's registration centre in Tripoli
11,261	6,636	Refugees who received protection services
83	-	Refugees relocated from detention centres to the urban setting following UNHCR's advocacy
5,505	1,408	People rescued at sea
652	277	Refugees who departed Libya safely on durable solutions
28,797	20,759	Refugees and host communities who received core relief items and hygiene kits (including in urban settings, detention centres and disembarkation points)
1,871	421	Medical consultations provided (including in primary health in the urban settings, detention centres and disembarkation points) and cases assisted through the medical hotline
566	319	Refugees who received cash or vouchers

* Numbers may change following verification

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT


On 3 April, protests took place in Martyrs' Square, calling for the expulsion of refugees, migrants, foreign workers, and UNHCR, and rejecting any form of settlement in Libya. Protesters spread false claims about the role of international organizations, including allegations that humanitarian actors promote settlement and demographic change.

A statement circulating publicly from a group identifying as the [National Observatory for the Protection of Libyan Identity](#) alleges that UNHCR is operating without a legal mandate, contributing to irregular migration, and undermining national sovereignty through resettlement. The group filed a formal complaint with Libyan authorities demanding that UNHCR halt its operations in Libya, investigations into relevant authorities, and stricter deportation measures. Social media reactions have been strongly hostile towards UNHCR and refugees, marked by concerns over demographic change, and calls for tighter migration controls. UNHCR [published a post](#) clarifying the distinction between refugees and migrants and reaffirming its humanitarian and protection role in Libya, and [issued a video](#) in which the Chief of Mission further clarified UNHCR's mandate to support accurate public understanding and media coverage.


PROTECTION

- Refugees in Libya are treated as irregular migrants, continue to face difficult conditions, and many still risk the perilous journey across the Mediterranean. In 2026, 5,505 people were intercepted or rescued at sea, including 1,987 intercepted in April, mainly from Sudan, while 29 persons were reported missing and at least 42 people were reported deceased in Libyan waters. **The UN Migration Agency, IOM, announced that around 1,000 deaths have been recorded in the Mediterranean** since the start of 2026, with most departing from Libya.
- At the end of April, 6,987 individuals were held in official detention centres across Libya, including 2,722 (39%) potentially in need of international protection. UNHCR has improved access to detention centres in Alkufra, Benghazi, Ganfouda, and Tobruk, enabling distribution of essential items such as blankets, mattresses, and hygiene kits, and identification of people of concern. On 12 and 13 April, following sustained UNHCR advocacy, 33 refugees from Eritrea and Ethiopia, including six children, were released from Tajoura detention centre and transferred to the UNHCR office, where they were registered and received post-release assistance including clothing kits and food vouchers. The children were placed in community care.
- During the month, movement from Sudan to Alkufra continued at low levels through the Chad route, with no movement observed via the Triangle route. Movement of Sudanese refugees from Alkufra to northern cities continued, using health cards as temporary documentation at checkpoints. In the southwestern region, a limited number of families continued to enter Al-Qatroun via Chad. In Sebha, 1,650 Sudanese refugees (around 90 families and 1,200 single men) are residing in the airport road neighbourhood, where overcrowding has reached a critical level. This area was previously raided in February, and refugees face significant humanitarian hardship due to limited livelihood opportunities and an increased risk of arrest or raids as numbers rise.
- At the same time, protection risks were reported along migration routes, particularly during cross-border movement between Egypt and Libya. Two Sudanese refugees sustained severe injuries, including amputations, due to separate landmine incidents in the Libya–Egypt border area. One individual was referred for medical treatment in Benghazi, and the other was transferred to Tobruk Hospital.



During a mission to Benghazi, **UNHCR's Deputy Chief of Mission, met with the management of Ganfouda detention centre**, and discussed activities at the DC, including UNHCR access and challenges. Meetings were also held with national partners, LRC and LibAid. 



UNHCR's protection team facilitated a training workshop for 14 participants from Libyan Red Crescent branches of Ajdabiya, Alzawiya, Benghazi, Qatroun, Sebha, Sirt, Tobruk and Tripoli. The workshop aimed to strengthen participants' capacities and field readiness through sessions on protection, interventions in detention centres and at disembarkation points, as well as prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, ensuring protection activities are carried out in line with humanitarian standards and effectively reach the most vulnerable.

REGISTRATION:

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD PROTECTION

- Registration of refugees and asylum seekers in Libya is only authorized in Tripoli where UNHCR carries out its mandate at the Registration Centre in Sarraj. Activities include biometric registration, continuous registration (updating of bio data, additions by birth or reductions by death, etc.), interviews for durable solutions and refugee status determination. UNHCR is authorized to register refugees and asylum-seekers of nine nationalities – Eritrean, Ethiopian, Iraqi, Palestinian, Somali, South Sudanese, Sudanese, Syrian, and Yemeni. There are approximately 500 individuals who pass through the Registration Centre each day.
- By the end of April 2026, UNHCR had registered 112,458 refugees, including 93,159 Sudanese refugees. In April alone, 2,576 new registrations were recorded. This work is carried out by a dedicated team of 27 registration staff responsible for booking appointments, conducting registrations and verification interviews, processing renewals, issuing referrals to protection, facilitating family reunification, and supporting pathways to durable solutions. Registration remains a lifesaving activity, one that enables access to essential services and, for many families, marks the beginning of safety after difficult journeys.
- Registration translates into protection. The support extended is both wide-ranging and needs-based. In 2026, protection needs assessments were conducted for 3,723 refugees, 566 refugees received multi-purpose vouchers to help meet immediate needs, 472 benefited from legal assistance, and 204 survivors of violence and abuse received specialized, survivor-centered services. Durable solutions were sought for 652 refugees and asylum-seekers, offering a longer-term pathway out of displacement. For 338 Syrian refugees, that pathway led home, as they returned to Syria through Voluntary Repatriation.
- For many, registration also [meant finding each other again](#). Through family tracing and reunification efforts, UNHCR helped reunite hundreds of refugees with their families, [including children separated from their loved ones by conflict and displacement](#). These reunions stand among the most profound expressions of what international protection can achieve.



Watch: [here](#).






PROTECTION OUTREACH

- As part of Community Support Projects, **UNHCR conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with 102 Sudanese refugees (majority were women) across Ajdabiya, Al-Bayda, Alkufra, and Tobruk.** The FGDs were designed to assess refugees' access to health and education services, identify challenges in obtaining support, and determine priorities and needs, in order to inform future field assessments.
- UNHCR also strengthened outreach capacity through training sessions for 8 Sudanese, Ethiopian, and Syrian refugee community mobilizers. The training covered the core principles of the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse including confidentiality, survivor-centered approaches and safe referral pathways for survivors of violence and abuse, as well as community engagement, awareness-raising, and accountability mechanisms.
- Through its legal partner Moomken, UNHCR delivered legal awareness and counselling activities to 126 refugees and asylum seekers facing legal and administrative barriers, with a particular focus on civil documentation and birth registration for undocumented and newborn children. Individual legal counselling was also provided to six asylum seekers experiencing legal challenges affecting access to rights and services, including cases related to confiscated documents and family disputes.



In Ajdabiya, UNHCR meets with refugees to discuss their experiences, concerns and priorities, helping inform protection and support activities.  UNHCR



CALL CENTRE

- UNHCR's Call Centre, managed by Moomken and accessible country-wide by dialling 1504, continued to connect refugees and asylum seekers to information and protection support through its interactive voice response (IVR) system and operator assistance. In April, the centre received 33,507 calls, of which 10,663 were escalated to operators from over 8,000 unique individuals, responding to an increase in MHPSS needs and high-priority cases, as well as a growing volume of evacuation and resettlement inquiries.
- To strengthen service delivery, the Call Centre team participated in capacity-building sessions delivered by UNHCR, including refreshers on referrals and counselling for survivors of violence and abuse and an introduction to the UNHCR WhatsApp chatbot. In parallel, psychosocial support sessions were conducted for operators to address work-related burnout, stress, and anxiety, including one group session attended by all 20 operators and two individual follow-up sessions.
- Soft-launched in January 2026, UNHCR's WhatsApp chatbot is a free, confidential 24/7 automated service available nationwide in Arabic, English, and Tigrinya, allowing refugees and asylum-seekers to access key information on registration, protection services, health, education, resettlement, and feedback and complaint mechanisms without needing to call the UNHCR helpline. The service is built with user privacy in mind, in line with UNHCR's data protection standards. Languages in Amharic, Oromo and Somali will be available soon. Since January, the chatbot has exchanged over 596,000 messages. In April, the chatbot recorded over 4,500 users and more than 200,000 messages were exchanged.



124,118

CALLS RECEIVED
so far in 2026



37,275

CALLS HANDLED BY OPERATORS
so far in 2026



2,893

REFERRALS MADE
for specialized protection, legal & social services, so far in 2026



UNHCR/ Ziyad Alhamadi

Structured sessions under Cycle 2 of 2026

provided focused educational and psychosocial support through guided group activities, reaching 114 children across age-appropriate themes including environmental awareness, animals and habitats, and planets and seasonal changes. Delivered through storytelling, games, creative exercises, and hands-on activities, sessions encouraged curiosity, teamwork, communication, and respect for diversity while strengthening confidence and emotional expression.



CHILD PROTECTION

- In April, 37 Best Interest Assessments (BIAs) were conducted for vulnerable refugee children. The majority of assessed children were boys (28 cases), alongside 9 girls, highlighting ongoing protection concerns affecting unaccompanied and separated boys in particular. Children from Sudan represented most of the cases. Referred by the Call Centre, community mobilizers, or during the registration process, these BIAs assess the needs of children at risk. Based on their specific needs, children were referred to specialized services such as temporary care. By the end of April, the total number of BIAs conducted since the beginning of the year reached 200.
- In addition, UNHCR Child Protection team conducted a Family Strengthening session on positive parenting and caregiver support, for six female caregivers, primarily from Sudan. The session focused on positive discipline, supportive communication, emotional regulation, and strategies to strengthen family relationships.
- **UNHCR distributed school desks and whiteboards to Sudanese and public schools across eastern and southern Libya.** In total, 63 schools received 3,185 school desks and 207 whiteboards, supporting the education of 6,370 students, including more than 1,000 Sudanese students in Ajdabiya, Al-Bayda, Al-Brega, Al-Fogha, Alkufra, Benghazi, Houn, Sokna, Tazirbu and Tobruk.

FIELD OPERATIONS



Basic Needs

- In April, UNHCR provided essential items to over 8,600 refugees, asylum-seekers, and host community members across Libya, including 6,633 Sudanese refugees. The assistance included blankets and mattresses, solar lamps, kitchen sets, hygiene and dignity kits, jerry cans, clothing, and other essential items, helping families to sleep, cook meals, store water, and meet their daily needs.
- As part of efforts to reduce risks and promote the safety, **UNHCR provided 10 fire extinguishers, along with fire blankets and first aid kits, to Alkufra Municipality** to strengthen local emergency preparedness and response capacity.

3 YEARS SINCE THE WAR IN SUDAN

Millions of people remain forced to flee in search of safety. Over 500,000 refugees have arrived in Libya with very little, while others continue moving as conflict, uncertainty and limited support shape their journey. As displacement continues across the region, humanitarian needs remain urgent and support for refugees must continue. In Libya, the Sudan Refugee Response Plan, involving 14 UN agencies and international NGOs, seeks \$115.5 million to respond to the needs of 596,000 Sudanese refugees, 1,000 third country nationals, and 70,000 Libyan host communities. So far, funding received represents only 7% of total needs.



Watch: [here](#).

Coordination

- On 14 April, [UNHCR welcomed Peter Bundy, Political Counsellor at the Canadian Embassy](#), during his first visit to UNHCR Libya. He visited the Registration Centre and met with the Deputy Chief of Mission. Discussions highlighted the growing needs of Sudanese refugees amid the global funding crisis and ongoing challenges in refugees' access to public services, underscoring the urgent need to expand legal pathways as resettlement opportunities decline globally.
- In April, [UNHCR Chief of Mission met with Ambassadors in Tunis](#) from Argentina, [Austria](#), Belgium, [Canada](#), Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States to highlight the humanitarian and protection situation in Libya, UNHCR's operational priorities, and seek their continued support.

UNHCR PARTNERS



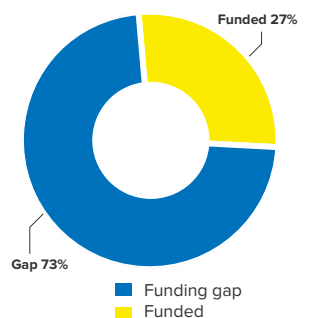
FUNDING INFORMATION

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



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LINKS: [UNHCR Libya Facebook](#) | [UNHCR Libya X](#) | [UNHCR Data Portal](#) | [UNHCR Libya website](#)