

# Update no 6 Humanitarian Situation in Libya and the Neighbouring Countries

11 March 2011

## Highlights

- **Libya:** UNHCR office in Tripoli will restart providing financial assistance to refugees and other persons of concern in Libya through a local implementing partner. The initial target beneficiaries will be 3,000 families and 1,500 individuals.
- **Egypt:** UNHCR team reported a total of 2,287 new arrivals in Saloum transit camp on 9 March. A group of 35 Somalis, 6 Eritrean and 2 Ethiopian, who had been evacuated from Benghazi to Alexandria, was eventually allowed to disembark the IOM vessel and was transferred to Saloum border crossing by Egyptian authorities.
- **Tunisia:** On 10 March, the number of persons currently staying in the transit camp reached 17,220. Numbers change daily due to new arrivals as well as departures (increase of 2,300 persons from 9 March). Bangladeshis are by far the largest group (13,748) followed by Sudanese (1,301), Mali (965) and Somalis (702). There are currently 806 persons of concern to UNHCR in the camp, mainly Somalis (702) and Eritrean (101). UNHCR and Red Crescent volunteers have undertaken pre-registration profiling for some 200 persons.
- On 11 March, the UNHCR HC and IOM DG provided a joint briefing to donors on their recent mission to Tunisia in Palais des Nations (GVA).
- EU HR Ashton announced that she will travel to Egypt for discussions with the Arab League and the new Foreign Minister of Egypt, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, following the European Council meeting of 11 March.
- On 11 March, Mr. Abdel-Elah Mohamed Al-Khatib, the new special envoy of the UN Secretary General for Libya will have a meeting with representatives of OCHA, UNHCR, OHCHR and DSS in New York to discuss current situation in Libya.
- The HC will be visiting Egypt starting Tuesday, 15 March.



A UNHCR staff member and an Egyptian soldier distribute food and water to Egyptian migrant workers atop a truck taking them back home. / UNHCR / F.Noy / March 2011

## Population Movements

According to the IOM/UNHCR Humanitarian Evacuation Cell (HEC) by 10 March, 235,100 persons had arrived to Tunisia (total 117,727 including 18,800 Tunisian, 44,967 Egyptians, 53,960 others), Egypt (total 109,720 including 71,531 Egyptians and 38,189 others), Niger (total 2,205 including Niger 1,865 and 340 others) and Algeria (total 5,448 - not specified, reported by OCHA).

On 10 March, a total of 19,703 persons had been evacuated (IOM/UNHCR arranged flights and bi-lateral flights coordinated with HEC) including 16,510 from Tunisia (11,687 Egyptians and 4,823 others) and 2,563 from Egypt.

60  
YEARS



On 9 March, 9 flights were scheduled: From Djerba to Cairo (2), Bangladesh (4), Accra (2) and from Mersa Matruh to Bangladesh (1).

On 10 March, 8 flights were scheduled: from Cairo to Accra (1), from Mersa Matruh to Bangladesh (2), and from Djerba to Bangladesh (1), Bamako (2) and Khartoum (1).

Following the surge in arrivals of third country nationals on 8 March, with 3,500 new arrivals crossing into Egypt and 2,700 new arrivals crossing into Tunisia, the need to urgently increase the numbers of long haul flights is highly evident. With no camp or shelter at the Egyptian border, greater priority will be afforded to flights from Egypt in the days to come.

There are some 15,000 persons awaiting flights from Djerba in Tunisia, and a further 5,000 persons awaiting flights from Egypt. Donors have been asked to make every effort to make available in kind and cash contributions as soon as possible to alleviate the suffering of growing numbers of Asian and sub-Saharan African third country nationals who are already awaiting a flight to their home countries.

Since 28 March, the Humanitarian Evacuation Cell (HEC) has coordinated a total of 130 flights (IOM/UNHCR arranged flights and bi-lateral flights coordinated with HEC).

## Country Updates

### LIBYA

#### • Protection

UNHCR Senior Emergency Co-ordinator (Libya team) met today with the newly appointed UN Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. for Libya regarding UNHCR's participation in humanitarian assessment mission to Tripoli, as there are a large number of vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in the Tripoli area.

Four hotlines at the UNHCR office in Tripoli have received almost 800 calls from refugees, asylum-seekers and their relatives inside and outside the country. Many refugees and asylum-seekers are requesting food items, financial assistance and renewal of refugee attestations.

UNHCR and its implementing partner have identified 3,000 families and 1,500 individuals in need of urgent financial support.

Eritrean refugee committee members have reported that more than 50 Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees are detained in Twesha detention center some 30 km south of Tripoli by the Libyan authorities. The UNHCR team was able to contact one person of the group who explained to UNHCR that they were detained two weeks ago by police. Detainees are

kept in harsh conditions with insufficient food. Reportedly all are men as women and children have been released. It is unknown what the situation is of those who have been released as fighting has been reported in the area.

While awaiting security access to eastern Libya, UNHCR's main priority is to continue to monitor the situation of persons of concern to UNHCR including Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis in Benghazi areas through partners such as the Libyan Red Cross and ICRC.

The UNHCR Libya team is currently on stand-by in Al Saloum in readiness to enter Libya. Members of the team are also interviewing recent arrivals from Benghazi in Alexandria to have a better understanding of conditions as well as assistance and protection needs on the ground.

UNHCR has dispatched two aid convoys to Benghazi with the help of the Egyptian Red Cross and through the Libyan Red Cross in recent days and is assessing needs for additional humanitarian assistance with the Libyan Red Cross.

### TUNISIA

#### • Protection

**Transit camp:** On 10 March, the number of persons staying in the transit camp Choucha reached 17,220. Numbers change daily due to new arrivals as well as departures (increase of 2,300 persons from yesterday).

Bangladeshis are by far the largest group (13,748) followed by Sudanese (1,301), Mali (965) and Somalis (702). There are currently 806 persons of concern to UNHCR in the camp, mainly Somalis and Eritrean (101). Three UNHCR and five Red Crescent volunteers have undertaken pre-registration profiling for some 200 persons. The exercise has provided UNHCR with a better – albeit still very tentative – understanding of problems faced in Libya. Less than half of the Somalis have proof of registration from Libya. Small numbers are recognized refugees. The majority of the Eritreans are already registered with UNHCR. UNHCR will continue to profile new arrivals and registration will be initiated shortly.

#### • Humanitarian assistance

UNHCR has erected two rub halls at the Choucha transit camp. The work on the third has been postponed due to bad weather conditions. One rub hall will be donated for food storage and the camp kitchen, while the two others will be used to keep a stock of non food items at the camp site enabling the immediate response to a large influx of people (up to 10,000 persons).

UNHCR has identified warehouse in Ben Gerdane, some 45 kilometers from the camp.

As transit camp is growing, UNHCR is providing more tents from the stock. On 14 March, shipment of additional

5,000 tents, 3 rub halls and 5 school tents is estimated to arrive.

## EGYPT

### • Protection

**Egyptian border with Libya:** On 8 March, 2,290 persons arrived (Sudan 622, Pakistan 51, India 25, Bangladesh 264, Nigeria 5, Mali 132, Palestine 7, Iraq 6, Niger 28, Liberia 1, Ghana 35 and others). Some 4,500 persons including 3,400 from Bangladesh remained in the port. The UNHCR team reported total of 2,287 new arrivals on 9 March in Saloum transit camp.

The 35 Somalis, 6 Eritreans and 2 Ethiopians who arrived in Alexandria port on 8 March aboard an IOM evacuation vessel from Benghazi have been allowed to disembark IOM vessel and are being transferred to Saloum. UNHCR is accompanying the group. UNHCR will assess the refugee claims and pursue resettlement for them.

UNHCR has continued to provide guidance and assistance to different nationalities. Some 400 Chadians who arrived on 8 March are requesting evacuation to Chad. Thirty out of 88 persons from Niger have left.

Mobile clinics are treating some 400 cases per day with serious cases being evacuated to Marsa Matrouh.

## ALGERIA

**Algerian border with Libya:** According to OCHA, a total of 5,448 people have crossed into Algeria as of 9 March.

UNHCR is anticipating permission to access to the border crossing. Protection mission is planned for 14 March to access to the border with Libya and the persons currently arriving there.

The Government was committed to keep the border open and allow access of third country nationals to Algeria and provide humanitarian assistance. Although third country nationals have access and are well treated in general, people from sub-Saharan Africa, particularly without legal travel documents, continue to be most vulnerable to summary deportations.

## NIGER

**Nigerien border with Libya:** More than 500 migrants, mainly Nigeriens have arrived at the IOM migration reception and transit centre in Dirkou. Among the group there are 70 Malians,

Senegalese, Burkinabes and Ghanaians (some women and children). The centre is now hosting 638 migrants with IOM also providing food and non food assistance. Another 1,154 Nigeriens have already transited through the IOM centre in Dirkou.

## SUDAN

**Sudanese border with Libya:** UNHCR is closely following the possibility of arrivals into Sudan from Libya. So far, there have been no reports of any influx of Libyans. However returns of Sudanese from Libya are taking place, both in organized movements to Khartoum by air (press reports) and across the border into North Darfur. Numbers so far are relatively small but there are indications that this may increase. UNHCR was part of an inter-agency assessment mission to Malha on 7 March. Amongst the Sudanese returnees, a handful of Eritreans and Ethiopians have also crossed to Sudan, some of whom were previously registered as refugees in Sudan.

## ITALY

Some 55 Tunisian migrants arrived in Lampedusa on 10 March bringing the total since 1 March to 2,633 persons.

The 58 Eritreans who were evacuated by Italy on 8 March from Tripoli to Crotona are composed of some 20 families, among them many single women with children; almost all of the 27 children are under 10 years of age, half of them under 5 years. UNHCR is in contact with the group. Reportedly all had been registered with UNHCR Tripoli.

## MALTA

Disembarkation of the 13 Eritreans who arrived on board a Maltese cargo ship from Tripoli has not yet taken place according to the immigration police. UNHCR was informed by the relevant authorities that they are discussing the situation but indicated that the Eritreans will be allowed to disembark. Only two individuals, a mother and a child have been allowed offshore so far. UNHCR has been informed by members of the Eritrean community that several of the people on board the cargo ship are registered with UNHCR in Libya. They will most probably undergo the normal asylum procedure in Malta.

### Air Evacuation

Following the surge in arrivals of third country nationals on 8 March, with 3,500 new arrivals crossing into Egypt and 2,700 new arrivals crossing into Tunisia, the need to

urgently increase the numbers of long haul flights is highly evident. With no camp or shelter at the Egyptian border, greater priority will be afforded to flights from Egypt in the days to come. Some 15,000 persons are awaiting flights from Djerba in Tunisia, and a further 5,000 persons awaiting flights from Egypt.

The HEC is grateful to those donors who have responded to the joint appeals, and will be making every effort to use both the in kind and cash contributions as soon as possible to alleviate the suffering of growing numbers of Asian and sub-Saharan African third country nationals who are already awaiting a flight to their home countries.

### Emergency Staffing

As of 10 March, a total of 77 emergency staff will/have been mobilized for Tunisia (33), Egypt (20), Libya (17) as well as the MENA and the Airops Cell at HQ (7). 43 staff members are already on site in Tunisia (22), Egypt (9), Libya (6) and in HQ (6).

A senior UNHCR Contingency Planning Coordinator has arrived in Tunisia to assist with the contingency planning for the Libya operation.

### Resource Mobilization

Both the UNHCR High Commissioner and the IOM Director General stressed that there is an urgent need for cash/in kind contributions for humanitarian evacuation as the influx of people in need still continues. The current operation is costing some USD 3.6 million/day.

Both heads of agencies praised Tunisia as well as the neighboring countries and the humanitarian effort by all actors and citizens.

Many countries announced different measures of support for the ongoing operation.

OCHA announced that USD 41 million (26% of the required total) has been received against the USD 160.3 million Regional Flash Appeal for the Libyan Crisis.

UNHCR's total requirements are USD 32.2m. So far, UNHCR has received contributions in the amount of USD 21,379,629. There are indications from several donor countries of further funds to be expected in the coming days.

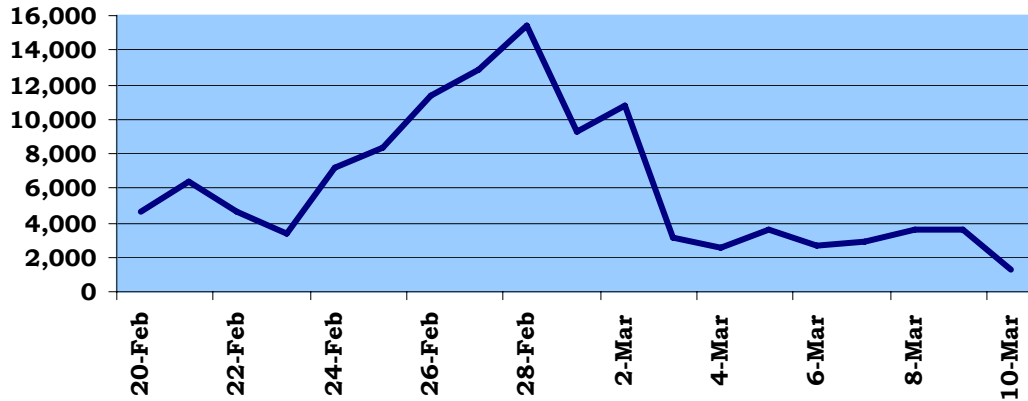
According to OCHA, the contingency planning figures in the flash appeal will be revised and a revised version of the Flash Appeal will be made available in two weeks time.



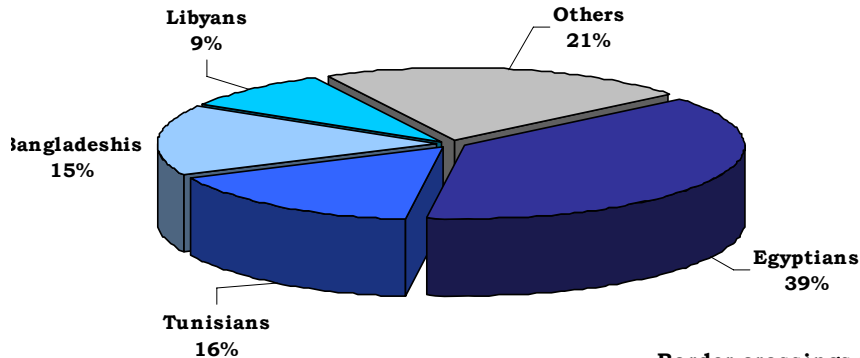
The new Choucha transit camp near the Tunisian town Ras Adjir, on the border with Libya./UNHCR

**Statistics**

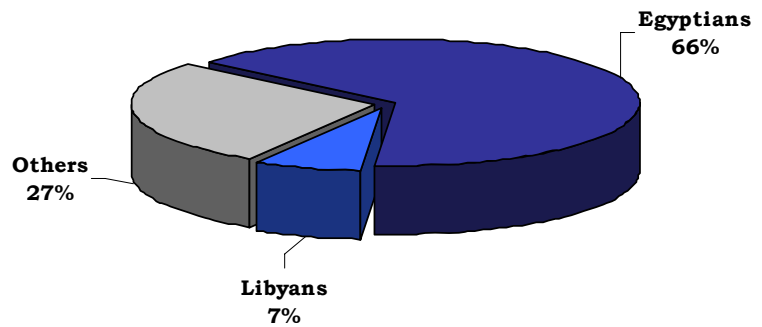
**Border crossings from Libya to Tunisia from 20 February to 10 March 2011**



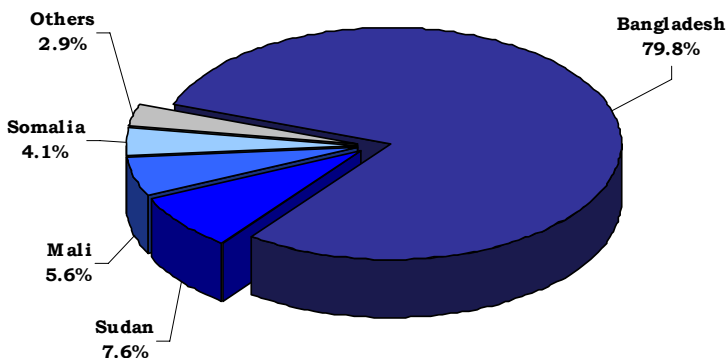
**Border crossings from Libya to Tunisia as of 10 March**  
Total population 117,727



**Border crossings from Libya to Egypt as of 10 March**  
Total population 109,720



**Choucha camp population as of 10 March**  
Total population 17,220



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# Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and neighbouring countries

## Population movements since 20th February 2011

As of 10 March 2011



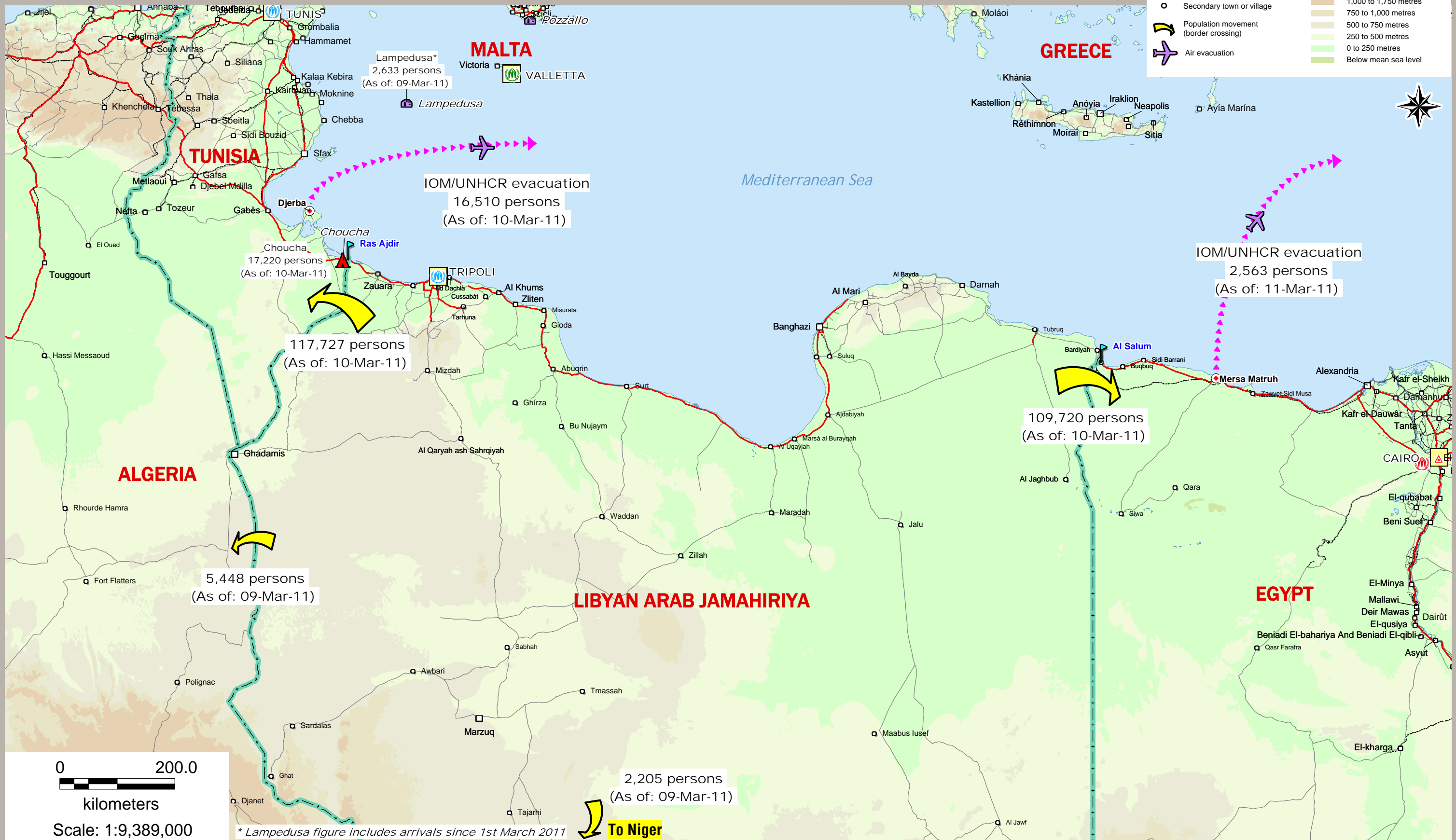
**FIGSS**  
Field Information and  
Coordination Support Section

Sources:  
UNHCR, Global Insight digital mapping  
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Population figures:  
IOM / UNHCR Humanitarian  
Evacuation Cell

The boundaries and names shown  
and the designations used on this  
map do not imply official endorsement  
or acceptance by the United Nations.



- Capital
  - UNHCR Regional Office
  - UNHCR Country Office / National Office / Liaison Office
  - UNHCR Field Unit
  - Refugee camp
  - Asylum-seeker centre
  - Urban refugee location
  - Main town or village
  - Secondary town or village
  - Population movement (border crossing)
  - Air evacuation
  - Crossing point
  - International boundary
  - Main road
  - Secondary road
  - Railway
- Elevation  
(Above mean sea level)
- 3,250 to 4,000 metres
  - 2,500 to 3,250 metres
  - 1,750 to 2,500 metres
  - 1,000 to 1,750 metres
  - 750 to 1,000 metres
  - 500 to 750 metres
  - 250 to 500 metres
  - 0 to 250 metres
  - Below mean sea level



0 200.0  
kilometers  
Scale: 1:9,389,000

\* Lampedusa figure includes arrivals since 1st March 2011