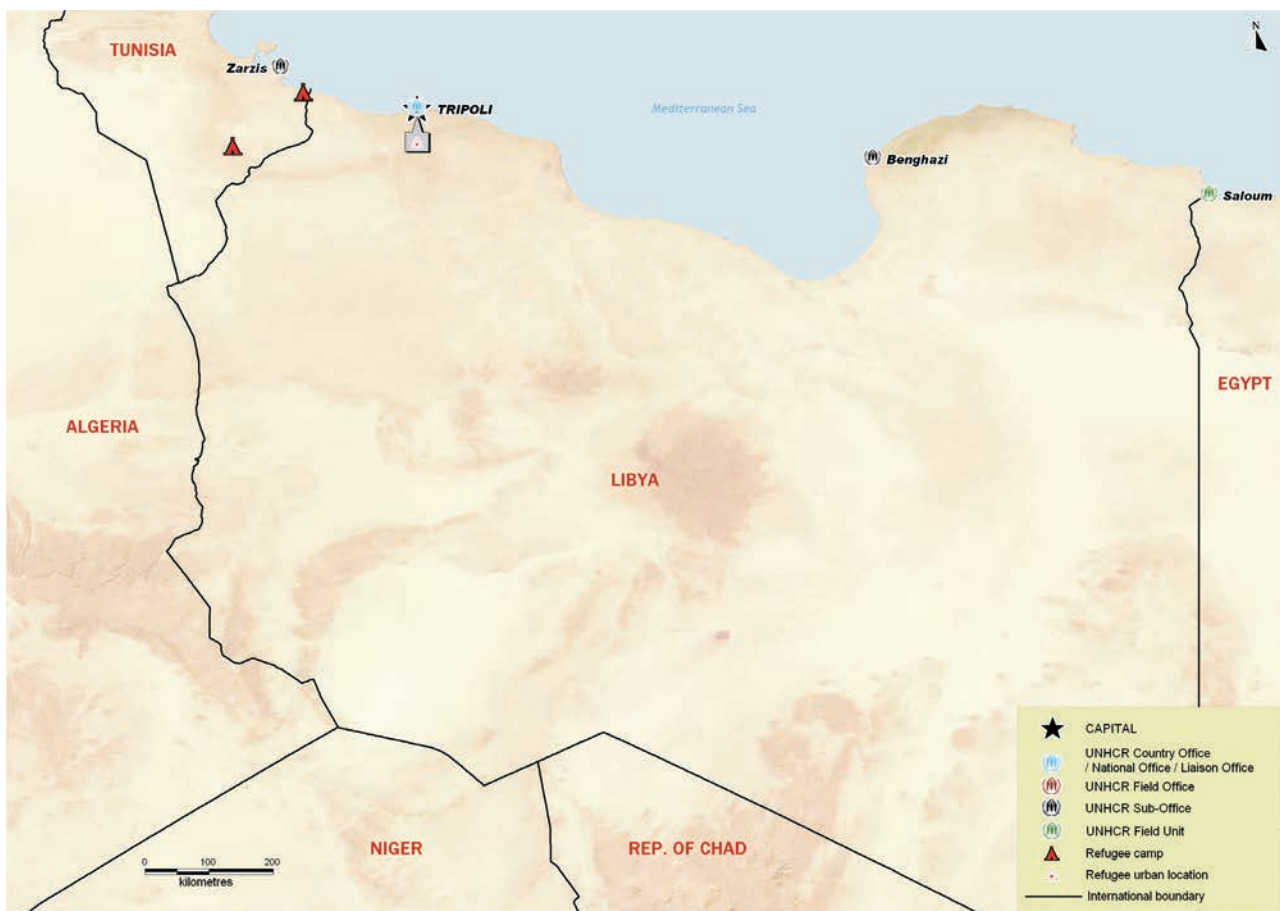# LIBYA

| Operational highlights |

- Following the outbreak of violence in Libya in February 2011 and the subsequent closure of UN offices in Tripoli, UNHCR mobilized two emergency teams to provide protection and assistance to people of concern stranded in the country or on the move towards its borders.

- UNHCR opened an office in Benghazi from which it provided emergency shelter and non-food items (NFIs) to internally displaced persons (IDPs); monitored protection; and conducted capacity-building activities.

- Although the Tripoli office was officially closed until September 2011, UNHCR was able to provide cash assistance and counselling services to refugees and asylum-seekers through its national staff and

Persons of concern

Type of Population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Iraq	2,700	2,700	49	30
	Occupied Palestinian Territory	2,700	2,700	48	30
	Eritrea	800	800	22	21
	Sudan	800	800	40	34
	Various	450	450	37	28
People in a refugee-like situation	Somalia	1,900	1,900	-	-
	Various	700	700	-	-
Asylum-seekers	Eritrea	1,300	280	24	11
	Somalia	600	600	35	23
	Iraq	500	20	45	34
	Sudan	320	320	34	25
	Various	120	70	36	16
IDPs	Libya	93,600	-	-	-
Returnees (IDPs)	Libya	458,000	-	-	-
Returnees (refugees)	Tunisia	149,000	-	-	-
Total		**713,490**	**11,340**		

implementing partner in Tripoli. In addition, telephone hotlines were established locally and at UNHCR Headquarters.

- UNHCR lobbied the interim Government to expand protection space and re-establish refugee processing activities, including registration, refugee status determination (RSD) and identification of durable solutions.

Working environment

Inspired by the Arab Spring popular movements, the Libyan revolution began in mid-February 2011 and concluded with the declaration of liberation by the National Transitional Council (NTC) on 23 October 2011. These events have resulted in historic changes to the political, economic and social fabric of the country. At the same time, heavy fighting during the conflict caused widespread civilian displacement, especially in frontline areas on the coast and in the Nafusa Mountains. More than 550,000 Libyans were displaced internally, while over 900,000 people, both Libyans and third-country nationals, fled the country.

With the end of the conflict, significant numbers of Libyans returned from abroad and from within the country to their places of origin. However, many from minority groups were unable or unwilling to return owing to inter-communal tension and fear of reprisals by armed groups. By the end of 2011, some 170,000 persons remained internally displaced.

Prior to the crisis, some 11,000 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR. Of these, some 9,400, mostly Eritreans, Iraqis, Somalis and Sudanese, remained in Libya at the end of 2011. However, it is estimated that there were several hundred more refugees and asylum-seekers in Libya at the end of 2011 who had previously been unable to register with UNHCR or had recently entered the country.

Irregular entry into Libya continued during and after the conflict. Third-country nationals, especially sub-Saharan Africans, became more vulnerable to human rights violations (including arbitrary search, arrest and detention) because of widespread xenophobia targeting alleged mercenaries.

Somalis represented one of the largest groups arriving in Libya throughout this period, either directly, or from Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan. Many resided in camp-like settings, either to find protection with other displaced people, or because they had been transferred there after being arrested. Most sites were operated by local authorities. Meanwhile, UNHCR and IOM identified hundreds of other fearful third-country nationals gathered in small urban pockets or in public premises in very difficult conditions.

Libya is a signatory to the Organization of African Unity's 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, but it is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. In the absence of national asylum legislation and institutions, UNHCR had carried out registration, documentation, RSD and the identification of durable solutions prior to the crisis. These activities were put on hold in 2011, pending the signing of an agreement with the new Libyan authorities to formalize UNHCR's presence in the country.

Achievements and impact

- *Main objectives and targets*

UNHCR's priorities in Libya changed drastically due to the conflict, shifting from protection and assistance for urban refugees and asylum-seekers to immediate evacuation of third-country nationals and provision of humanitarian assistance to displaced Libyans, refugees and asylum-seekers.

As the conflict neared its conclusion, the scope of humanitarian needs lessened. However, protection continued to be a priority, particularly for third-country nationals, refugees and asylum-seekers facing the risk of detention and arrest, as well as for minority IDP populations unable or unwilling to return.

Favourable protection environment

- UNHCR monitored protection conditions and profiled newly arriving asylum-seekers and refugees displaced within Libya in order to identify protection and assistance gaps and extremely vulnerable individuals needing urgent support.

- UNHCR was the lead agency for identifying and responding to the protection needs of IDPs throughout the conflict. It coordinated with the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to provide protection and seek solutions for IDPs, including those from former frontline areas such as Tawargha, Bani Walid and Sirte. Some 225 IDP monitoring visits identified vulnerable groups in numerous areas.

- UNHCR trained some 500 people on international protection, human rights and refugee law issues, targeting representatives of various ministries, lawyers, judges, human rights activists, academics and the media. It also trained some 80 implementing-partner staff on protection standards.

Fair protection processes

- As a result of the conflict and pending the signing of a country agreement between UNHCR and the Libyan Government, there were no registration, documentation or RSD activities in 2011. When violence erupted in Libya, some people of concern fled to Saloum in Egypt, and Shousha in Tunisia, where these procedures were being carried out. There were no reception facilities for asylum-seekers during the conflict in Libya. Asylum-seekers were received through implementing partners in Benghazi and Tripoli. Emergency hotlines were operational.

- More than 133,000 IDPs were profiled through protection monitoring visits and in coordination with registration undertaken by LibAid (the Government's humanitarian arm).

Security from violence and exploitation

- Because of their perceived involvement in the armed conflict, third-country nationals, particularly those from sub-Saharan Africa, came to be at risk of arrest and arbitrary detention. UNHCR undertook numerous

interventions at checkpoints and with local militias to obtain the release from detention of more than 400 individuals; it also negotiated with armed groups on freedom of movement and protection of rights. Vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors and women, were identified and assisted with food and health care.

- UNHCR advocated with the NTC and local authorities on the protection of third-country nationals. It developed a strategy for the protection of third-country nationals and shared its recommendations with the NTC, including on alternatives to detention and the provision of temporary migrant registration documentation under an immigration amnesty.

- There were significant gains in improving awareness of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) at national and community levels; creating coordination mechanisms among partners; and formulating standard operating procedures and safe referral pathways for victims.

Basic needs and services

- Both during and after the crisis, UNHCR provided cash assistance, medical care and educational support to vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers. Furthermore, it coordinated emergency shelter activities and distributed food and NFIs to people of concern throughout the country.

- During the period of Ramadan, the Office provided supplementary food to families in the Nafusa Mountains, Benghazi and Misrata. In addition, during the crisis, UNHCR provided hot meals, NFIs and services in water network maintenance and solid waste management for more than 1,000 people at informal camp sites.

- Through its implementing partner, UNHCR conducted shelter assessments. UNHCR assessed nearly 10,000 houses for damage and household vulnerability in the Nafusa Mountains, Bani Walid, Sirte and other areas. The findings were shared with the relevant authorities for follow-up action.

Community participation and self-management

- Despite the conflict, participatory assessments were conducted in June with 375 women, girls, boys and men in 16 IDP sites in Benghazi. More assessments were made in December with the participation of some 500 women, girls, boys and men in seven IDP sites in eastern and western Libya. The recurrent finding in almost all groups was fear of retaliation owing to association with the former regime. Fear of arbitrary arrest and detention, as well as concerns about lack of documentation, were also highlighted.

Durable solutions

- Despite the identification of a number of urgent and emergency cases, no resettlement took place in 2011 due to government restrictions on the issuance of exit visas. All of the resettlement cases submitted to the Resettlement Hub in Beirut remained pending.

Logistics and operations support

- During the conflict, NFIs were purchased in Egypt or Tunisia and transferred to Libya for distribution. The items included some 38,000 mattresses, 31,000 blankets and 5,000 kitchen sets.

Nigerian and Sudanese families rest on the dock at Benghazi after being evacuated by boat from the war-torn city of Misrata. Their next destination is Saloum, Egypt, for onward flights to their countries of origin.

UNHCR / H. CAUX

Libya

Constraints

During the conflict, UNHCR was constrained by security measures limiting movement outside city centres and restricting the total number of staff. The rapidly moving conflict also made it difficult to access displaced populations, especially in areas close to the front line.

The absence of national asylum mechanisms and the lack of a country agreement to formalize UNHCR's presence in Libya hampered the resumption of registration, documentation and RSD activities.

Financial information

In 2011, the budget for Libya increased from its initial USD 6.2 million to USD 25.7 million as a result of the establishment of a supplementary budget of USD 110 million for the North Africa and Mediterranean emergency response.

Organization and implementation

The UNHCR office in Tripoli was closed during the period of unrest and reopened in September 2011. This situation necessitated the rapid opening of a sub-office in Benghazi in March 2011. The sub-office covered eastern Libya, which was under the control of the NTC, while the rest of the country was covered by an emergency team based in Zarzis, Tunisia.

UNHCR's presence in 2011

☐ **Number of offices**	**2**
☐ **Total staff**	**57**
International	15
National	35
UNVs	6
Others	1

Working with others

In addressing the complex humanitarian needs during the crisis, UNHCR participated in the coordinated efforts of the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team. Throughout this period, it led the Protection and Shelter/NFI Clusters. Key operational partnerships were established with UNSMIL's human rights, rule of law and transitional justice sections, as well as with other UN agencies and IOM. UNHCR also worked with the Red Cross Movement and MSF, and entered into agreements with several new implementing partners.

Expenditure in Libya 2007 - 2011
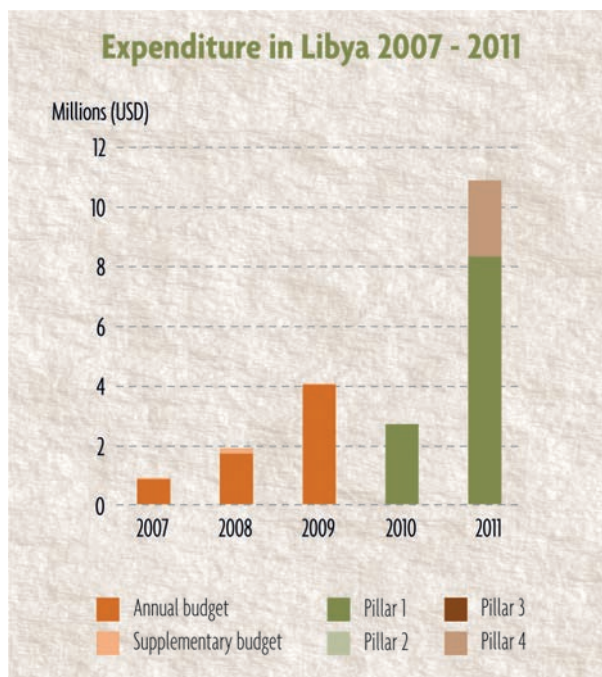
Overall assessment

The year 2011 provided important lessons about operating in the new, rapidly changing and unpredictable context resulting from the Arab Spring. UNHCR had to quickly shift its approach from one of urban refugee protection and assistance to a large-scale emergency humanitarian response in armed conflict. Lack of access to conflict-affected areas, as well as the need to manage operations remotely from Tunisia, led to some delays in the humanitarian response.

Partners

Implementing partners

NGOs: ACTED, Al Wafa Charity Society, Danish Refugee Council, International Medical Corps, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Libyan Red Crescent Society, Mercy Corps, Mine Advisory Group
Others: Libyan Red Crescent, UNDP, UNV

Operational partners

NGOs: *Médecins Sans Frontières*
Others: FAO, ICRC, IOM, OHCHR, UN Mine Action Service, UN Support Mission in Libya, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO

Budget, income and expenditure in Libya | USD

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
FINAL BUDGET	14,894,907	10,848,957	25,743,864
Income from contributions	1,613,134	576,667	2,189,801
Other funds available	6,728,424	1,988,378	8,716,802
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	8,341,558	2,565,045	10,906,603

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN			
Favourable protection environment			
National administrative framework	40,670	0	40,670
Prevention of displacement	24,006	148,099	172,105
Cooperation with partners	430,503	0	430,503
Non-refoulement	24,006	0	24,006
Emergency management strengthened	0	148,099	148,099
Subtotal	**519,185**	**296,198**	**815,383**
Fair protection processes and documentation			
Reception conditions	60,684	0	60,684
Registration and profiling	111,783	296,198	407,981
Access to asylum procedures	51,577	0	51,577
Fair and efficient status determination	256,980	0	256,980
Family reunification	43,197	0	43,197
Subtotal	**524,221**	**296,198**	**820,419**
Security from violence and exploitation			
Effects of armed conflict	165,596	0	165,596
Gender-based violence	22,663	296,198	318,861
Protection of children	19,205	0	19,205
Non-arbitrary detention	47,802	0	47,802
Access to legal remedies	19,205	0	19,205
Subtotal	**274,471**	**296,198**	**570,669**
Basic needs and essential services			
Nutrition	370,385	245,839	616,224
Shelter and other infrastructure	965,563	49,366	1,014,929
Basic domestic and hygiene items	1,216,892	162,190	1,379,082
Primary health care	130,643	49,366	180,009
Education	72,363	49,366	121,729
Services for groups with specific needs	312,054	49,366	361,420
Subtotal	**3,067,900**	**605,493**	**3,673,393**
Community participation and self-management			
Participatory assessment	75,965	0	75,965
Self-reliance and livelihoods	386,164	0	386,164
Subtotal	**462,129**	**0**	**462,129**
Durable solutions			
Voluntary return	116,572	0	116,572
Resettlement	149,684	0	149,684
Subtotal	**266,256**	**0**	**266,256**
External relations			
Public information	103,936	0	103,936
Subtotal	**103,936**	**0**	**103,936**
Logistics and operations support			
Supply chain and logistics	328,644	352,103	680,747
Programme management and coordination	742,565	171,553	914,118
Subtotal	**1,071,209**	**523,656**	**1,594,865**
Balance of instalments with implementing partners	2,052,255	547,299	2,599,554
Total	**8,341,562**	**2,565,042**	**10,906,604**