

A WORD FROM THE CHIEF OF MISSION

Federico SODA

Last year has been a particularly difficult one for migrants and displaced people in Libya. The first month of 2021 continued with challenges linked to COVID-19; its consequences on mobility and vulnerability experienced by migrants, and tragic loss of lives in the Mediterranean Sea.

The COVID-19 situation in Libya remains worrying, with 118,631 cases registered by the end of January and 1,877 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic, a number which continues to increase. Support to the national COVID-19 preparedness and response plan remains a priority for our work in Libya, through capacity building, awareness-raising, delivery of personal protective and medical equipment, medical assistance and support to authorities at points of entry.

The big questions about mobility in 2021 is whether the pandemic may be a deterrent – according to IOM DTM the number of migrants in Libya fell by approximately 80,000 in 2020 – or whether COVID-19 and its economic implications are going to be a driver toward Libya from countries of origin, particularly as the country stabilizes and its economy recovers. If COVID-19 subsides or is a driver in other countries, we can probably expect large numbers of migrant workers will be returning to Libya.

During January, IOM laid the foundation for increased collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation on labour migration management. Labour offices in most municipalities were informed about the upcoming registration of migrant workers, which aims at providing an overview of migrants' skills to meet needed labour force in Libya. IOM supported Labour Market Information system (LMIS) will go a long way to support the Ministry in this endeavor and beyond to advance an integrated labour market.

On 19 January, the first shipwreck of 2021 claimed the lives of 43 people, while 10 survivors were brought back to Libya by the Libyan Coast Guard. The boat reportedly capsized due to bad sea conditions just a few hours after departure. During the past year, the Central Mediterranean Route has remained the highest for the number of fatalities along a single journey, worldwide. This tragedy highlights the importance of the re-activation of a coordinated State-led search and rescue mechanism and a change to the international approach to the situation in the Mediterranean.

Despite the high number of interceptions/rescues at sea and arrests in urban locations during 2020, the number of migrants held in official governmental managed detention centres is at its lowest, with a total of 1,186 migrants in the West and 702 in the East of Libya, as of 31 January.

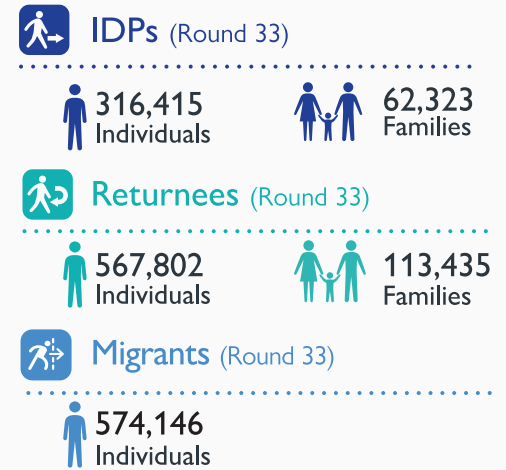
IOM Libya has been present in East Libya and running an operational office in Benghazi since November 2017, implementing a range of life-saving programmes and maintaining effective collaboration with local authorities.

IOM has also been meeting with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Supreme COVID-19 Committee in the East on a regular basis, in order to address the challenges posed by the pandemic and to expand its static and mobile health services provided to vulnerable populations. In this context, the scaled-up health assistance in detention centres in the East is part of a broader effort to address the needs of vulnerable migrants, including those who are in detention.

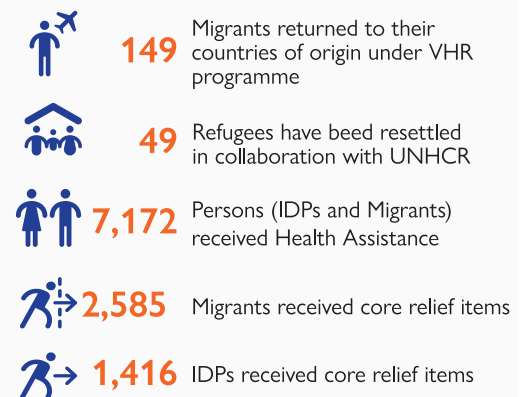
DTM published the study *Closely Knit: An assessment of migrants' social networks in Libya*, highlighting how migrant's social networks affect many aspects of migrant experiences, including employment opportunities, security and information sharing.

While social networks can be helpful to migrants as a source of information, this study also found information shared between migrants, especially from friends, is not always accurate especially when it comes to border crossing and the risks involved in the experience of migration. These findings show how IOM can scale up and orient its awareness-raising activities on the dangers of the migratory journeys.

KEY FIGURES



ASSISTANCE PROVIDED IN JANUARY 2021



CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN UPDATE



ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS AND LIBYAN COMMUNITIES



During the month of January, **Direct Assistance** teams provided core relief items such as hygiene kits, mattresses, blankets, clothing kits snacks and water to **2,585** migrants (2,047 in detention centres and 538 in urban areas) as well as to **1,416** internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Azzawya and Misrata.



IOM **medical teams** provided **7,172** primary health care consultations to migrants, IDPs and host community members and referred 73 migrants to secondary and tertiary health care facilities for further medical investigation, treatment and management.

IOM medical teams provided pre-departure medical screenings for 431 migrants to assess fitness to travel (FTT) under the Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme.

In close collaboration with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and Directorate of Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM), IOM conducted a three-day tuberculosis screening campaign for migrants and staff at Triq Alsikka detention centre.

IOM medical teams conducted 102 COVID-19 awareness-raising outreach sessions in Sabha, Ubari, Tripoli and Benghazi for **4,747** migrants.

IOM medical teams supported the NCDC staff at Ras Jdir and Wazin points of entry by providing medical check-ups and COVID-19 screening to **67,055 cross-border travellers returning to Libya**.

IOM provided personal protection equipment, furniture, medical consumables and medications to the NCDC to set-up COVID-19 screening stations and temporary isolation units at Mitiga International Airport.

IOM also organized a two-day workshop on strengthening emergency preparedness and response for points of entry in Libya for 15 NCDC officials and points of entry staff, as well as seven IOM health management staff.



Vulnerability assessments led by the **Protection** unit were provided to **123 migrants** (69 men, 29 women, 23 boys and 2 girls), 81 of which (55 men and 26 women) required in-depth vulnerability assessments. In January, 25 child protection assessments were made for 23 boys and two girls, and 17 victims of trafficking assessments were made for 14 men and three women. Over the month, 220 migrants (152 men, 49 women and 19 boys)

were screened for Protection assistance in different locations across Libya.

Protection teams also distributed 17 food baskets, 50 blankets, 20 pillows, 30 baby kits, 16 hygiene kits, 2 baby bathtubs, 6 children's drawing kits, and one summer blanket for 78 migrants (36 women, 30 men and 12 children) in need. The team also referred 32 migrants to UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Danish Refugee Council, as well as 122 migrants to IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return programme, Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism, Migration Health Division and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. Moreover, two nationals from Mali were flagged to their receiving mission.

Protection teams paid **44 follow-up visits** to check on the welfare and well-being of 118 migrants and seven outreach visits to four urban areas in Tripoli, Misrata, Benghazi and Zwara and to six detention centres: Triq-Alsika, Mabani, Abuslim, Zliten, Ganfouda and Shar'a Al Zawya. The unit was also present during seven Search and Rescue operations that took place at Abusetta and Zwara disembarkation points to provide protection monitoring services to migrants rescued/intercepted at sea.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services were provided to **219 migrants** (147 men, 39 women, 25 boys and 8 girls) at the IOM centre in Hay Alandalus and in urban locations, health care facilities, detention centres and at disembarkation points following rescue/interception at sea operations in Tripoli and Zwara.

During January, the MHPSS teams conducted a varied set of activities, including individual counselling and psychological first aid, psychosocial awareness sessions, art-based psychosocial activities, group readings from the IASC MHPSS COVID-19 storybook for children and their families, facilitation of recreational activities and distribution of drawing kits to children, psychoeducation sessions, psychosocial assessments and referrals to Protection and specialized mental health care services.

Also, the MHPSS teams conducted **32 follow-up** psychosocial support sessions throughout the month, including sessions for migrants with mental health conditions and for migrants following distressful events in Tripoli and Zwara.

Through the MHPSS helpline, and as a response to COVID-19 mobility restrictions, migrants living remotely continued to access Mental Health and Psychosocial Support services. The MHPSS helpline received 13 calls from Ejdabia, Tripoli and Zwara, where migrants from Chad, Eritrea, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan were provided with remote counselling and psychosocial support services.

Moreover, IOM is supporting the national coordination mechanism through chairing the MHPSS technical working group (MHPSS TWG) with IMC (International Medical Corps) and in close coordination with the Ministry of Health. Through the month of January, IOM chaired the monthly meeting of the MHPSS TWG on 13 January with active participation from local and international NGOs.



During the month, **Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM)** teams in Tripoli, Zwara, Bani Waleed, Sabha and Qatroun reached **2,909 migrants** (1,874 men and 1,035 women) mainly from Niger, Nigeria, Sudan and Chad. **2,846 migrants** (including 455 households) received core relief items, 568 clothing kits, 1,702 hygiene kits, 106 solar lamps, 217 mattresses, 620 winter blankets, 4 tarpaulins, 69 diapers and 183 kitchen sets, while 63 migrants (including 15 households) received 15 family food kits.

MRRM teams conducted 35 health awareness-raising and information sessions on COVID19- impacts and precautions in Qatroun for 426 migrants (288 men and 138 women) and distributed 33 COVID19- information flyers in Arabic, English and French.

During the month, **131 #InformedMigrant** awareness-raising sessions on irregular migration were conducted for 2,174 migrants (1,530 men and 644 women) in Zwara, Bani Waleed, Sabha and Qatroun and 946 booklets and 23 posters were distributed in Arabic, English and French.

MRRM teams also conducted an online training session for staff on communication for development, and how counter-trafficking and safe migration approaches should be applied. The training sessions were based on the inputs gathered from the previously held participatory planning and capacity development (PPCD) workshops.



Since the beginning of the **Community Stabilization** programme IOM has signed 21 contracts with local organizations to implement social cohesion and livelihood projects in **Sabha, Qatroun, Benghazi** and **Kufra** to respond to community needs. Fifteen grants have now been finalized and in December, three local organizations completed their activities:

In collaboration with local organization Fezzan Libya, IOM organized the Naseej initiative aimed to contribute to social cohesion in **Sabha** by bringing together 250 youth and women from different tribes and countries of origin, across ten mahallas to attended activities on sport, capacity building, women’s empowerment and cultural activities. Also in collaboration with Fezzan Libya, through the Youth forum initiative, IOM developed a youth committee through which youth voices can be expressed and youth have the capacity to engage local government stakeholders. So far, 40 young people (27 men and 13 women) have attended several training sessions on election process and political debates, forms of governance and advocacy.

In Sabha, IOM and local organization Friends of People with Disabilities aimed to increase awareness of the rights and challenges of those with disabilities, while making government and community services more accessible by installing ramps at Sabha’s Municipal Council building, Sabha Cultural Centre, a primary health care facility and at the Al-Qaradiya Social Club. The project involved 1,000 people in several workshops, meetings and awareness-raising sessions on physical, social and economic challenges of people with disabilities.

In January, medical equipment, furniture and air conditioning units were delivered and installed at Alfwehat polyclinic in **Benghazi** to improve the efficiency of the new COVID19- department. The clinic is the only public health care facility located in the west of Alfwehat area, which in 2019 provided services to 144,000 people of which 13 per cent were migrants.

Two water wells were handed over to the General Water and Wastewater Company in January. Al-Tayouri water well on 2 January and Al-Hani water well on 28 January. In addition, nine generators have been installed at the completed water wells. Only one water well is awaiting completion out of the 13 wells drilled across various sites in Sabha to boost the water capacity for the entire city of approximately 120,000 residents.



IOM LIBYA'S ACTIVITIES ARE SUPPORTED BY



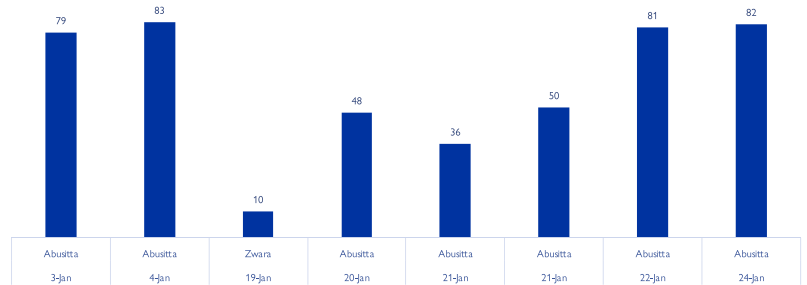


IN JANUARY 2021

469 Migrants Disembarked in Libya

1,480 Men
131 Women
109 Boys
40 Girls

Disembarkation Location and Date
(January 2021)



In 2020

11,891

DISEMBARKED IN LIBYA



381 Deaths **597** Missing

In 2021 so far

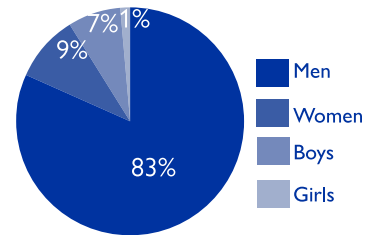
469

DISEMBARKED

384 Men
44 Women
35 Boys
6 Girls



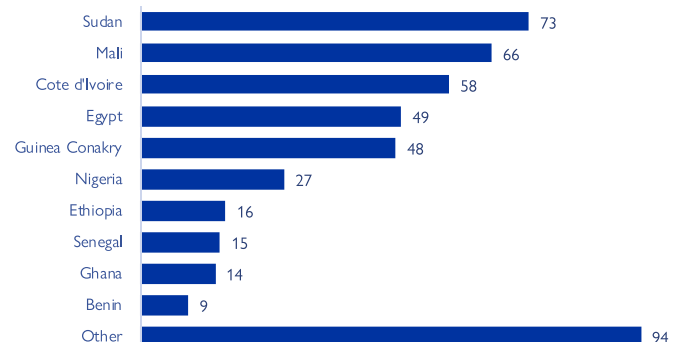
9 Bodies Retrieved **67** Missing



Monthly Disembarkation Trends
2019, 2020 and 2021



Nationalities of Individuals Disembarked
in 2021



Disclaimer: Figures based on updates from IOM Libya Search and Rescue (SAR) data, compiled from disembarkations in Libya. For detailed data on deaths and missing migrants please refer to the missing migrants project. (<https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>)
Figures on Maritime incidents in Libya are estimates based on initial reports at the time of each incident, and are regularly updated as more information becomes available.