

A WORD FROM THE CHIEF OF MISSION

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As we wrapped up a very challenging year globally and prepare for a new one, I'd like to take a few moments to reflect on key events from the past 12 months, including several tragic landmarks as well as positive turning points.

January and February 2020 saw hostilities in and around Tripoli escalating and the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) increased to over 300,000 by the end of February. IOM continued to deliver much needed direct assistance and supported the voluntary return of more than 1,000 migrants.

In **March** the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in Libya. The country's airspace was closed, which prompted a pause in Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme flights that assist migrants to safely return to their home countries. IOM quickly responded to the pandemic by launching hygiene and information campaigns in detention centres, migrant shelters and IDPs communities to reduce the risk of virus spread. The IOM Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) office opened in Hay Andalous to provide support to an increasing number of migrants in need, many whose livelihoods have been impacted by the pandemic.

The impact of border closures was further exacerbated in **April** when thousands of Tunisian migrants were stranded on the border between Libya and Tunisia. IOM MRRM teams distributed food kits and relief support in response to alleviate needs.

May saw armed clashes intensifying, including shelling of hospitals and shelters where migrants and IDPs were seeking medical support. In a tragic incident, 30 migrants were killed at a traffickers' warehouse in Mizda, triggering a stark reminder of continued and increased vulnerabilities of migrants in Libya.

As of **June** there were over 400,000 IDPs and about 600,000 migrants in the country. IOM observed an increase in the number of displaced people and a slow decrease in the number of migrants which can be attributed to the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and population mobility.

In **July**, COVID-19 cases continued to increase. The number of migrant departures from Libyan shores exceeded the figure from the previous year, with over 6,000 migrants returned to shore by the Libyan coastguard. In **August**, the VHR programme secured the first charter flight in five months, assisting migrants to return to Ghana. The same month, a tragic shipwreck off Libya cost the lives of 45 migrant.

The total number of COVID-19 cases increased exponentially in **September**, and IOM stepped up its support to the national pandemic response. The Organization conducted awareness raising campaigns, installed COVID-19 detection equipment at points of entry including airports and delivered advanced technical training nationwide to laboratory workers and frontline health care providers.

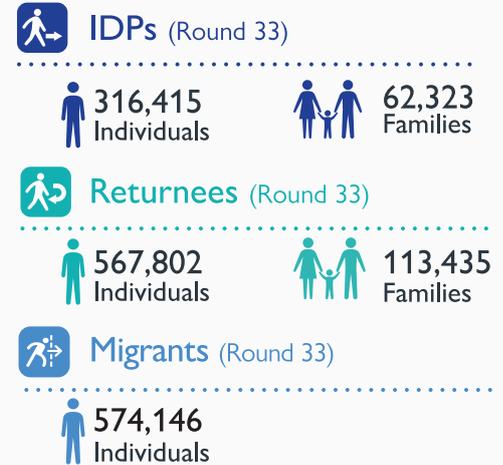
On **23 October** the announcement of a permanent ceasefire between major armed groups provided some optimism for peace in the last months of the year. By October, over 75,000 migrants had left Libya since the beginning of the pandemic.

November was the deadliest month for migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean with 84 dead bodies recovered and 77 people missing at sea. Since the start of 2020, over 11,700 migrants have been returned to Libya. November was also the month when political talks gained traction and led to agreement to hold elections in 2021.

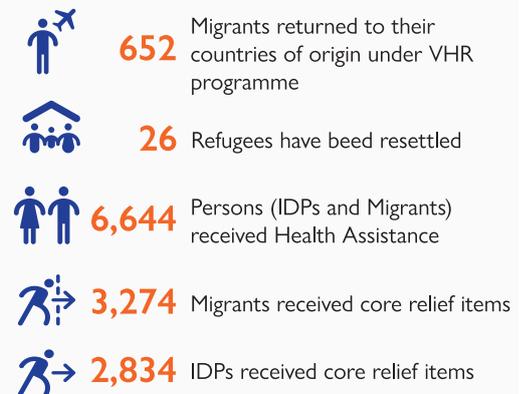
In **December**, IOM organized a week of activities to celebrate International Migrants Day, to promote unity, strength and resilience to migrant communities who have endured a year of conflict and insecurity in Libya.

I am pleased to share that IOM has also finalized the IOM Libya country strategy for 2021 – 24. This strategy is structured around three thematic pillars: resilience, mobility and governance. We look forward to engaging with partners on our strategy and implementing in 2021 and beyond.

KEY FIGURES



ASSISTANCE PROVIDED IN DECEMBER 2020



CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN UPDATE



ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS AND LIBYAN COMMUNITIES



During the month of December, **Direct Assistance** teams provided core relief items such as blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits, personal protective equipment, clothing and snacks to **3,274** migrants (2,525 in detention centres and 749 in urban areas) as well as to **2,834** internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ghadamis and Nalut.



IOM **medical teams** provided **6,644** primary health care consultations to migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and referred 63 migrants to secondary and tertiary health care facilities for ongoing treatment.

The medical teams provided primary health care consultations for **1,143** migrants in six detention centres (1,049 men and 94 women), of which 26 migrants referred to the secondary and tertiary hospitals for further clinical management.

Through its support in six primary health care centres, IOM provided **1,464** primary health care consultations (767 men and 697 women) to the IDPs and migrants, along with supporting the centres with medicines, medical consumables and information, education and communication materials on COVID-19.

Through the Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM), IOM conducted medical consultations to **1,866** migrants (1,324 men and 542 women) in **Bani Waleed, Zwara, Sabha, Qatroun, Tripoli**, and at the Hay Al-Andalus office while referring 35 migrants to other health care facilities. The teams also held COVID-19 awareness-raising sessions while distributing information, education and communication materials on the virus.

During the month, IOM donated the necessary medical equipment, consumables and medications to three medical hub hospitals in Tripoli (Tripoli Central hospital, Abu Slim hospital and Tripoli University hospital), Nalut COVID-19 isolation centre, Bani Waleed General Hospital, Misrata Medical Centre and three polyclinics in Benghazi (Wadi Qatara, Zwetina and Bersis) to support the national health system for maintaining essential health care services across the continuum of care while managing the COVID-19 response.



Vulnerability assessments led by the **Protection** unit were provided to **91** migrants (53 men, 24 women, 9 boys and 5 girls) 39 of which (20 men and 19 women) required in-depth vulnerability assessments.

14 child protection assessment were made for 9 boys and 5 girls and **38** victim of trafficking assessments were made for 33 men and 5 women. Furthermore, 97 migrants (64 men, 31 women and two boys) were screened in different locations in Libya during filed visits.

Over this month, protection teams distributed 29 food baskets, 173 blankets, 15 pillows, 44 baby kits, 55 hygiene kits, 1 baby bathtub, colouring books and other children's stationery for 322 migrants (109 women, 172 men and 41 children) in need. The team also referred (6 men, 4 women and two families) to UNHCR and DRC, as well as 48 migrants (33 men, 10 women and five children) internally to IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return programme, Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and the Migration Health Division. Moreover, 56 nationals of Mali were flagged to their receiving mission and **13** joint counselling sessions were conducted for 102 migrants from Mali and Somalia. 90 chose to return to their country of origin with IOM.

Protection teams paid **28** follow up visits to check on the welfare and well-being of 56 migrants and conducted 24 outreach visits to two urban areas in Tripoli and Misrata, and to five detention centres: Abusalim, Tarik Alsikka, Alkufra, Baten Al Jabal and Zliten

Protection unit contributed to the celebration of **International Migrants Day** along with the international NGO Cesvi and in coordination with the African School in Misrata. This event targeted over 60 migrant students from different nationalities including Niger, Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire. This event comprised many recreational activities such as drawing, singing and theatrical performances.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services were provided to **245** migrants (147 men, 52 women, 28 boys, 18 girls) at IOM's Hay Al-Andalus office and in urban locations, health facilities, detention centres in Tripoli and Zwara.

During December, MHPSS teams conducted a varied set of activities, including individual counselling and psychological first aid, psychosocial awareness sessions, art-based psychosocial activities, group readings of the UN-developed COVID-19 storybook "My Hero is You" for children and their families, facilitation of recreational activities and distribution of drawing tools to children, psychoeducation sessions, psychosocial assessments and referrals to protection and specialized mental health care services.

Follow-up psychosocial support sessions were conducted with migrants on 27 occasions 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 14 calls from Azzawya, Benghazi, Tripoli and Zwara, where migrants from multiple nationalities were provided with remote counselling and psychosocial support services.

MHPSS continued the efforts in supporting national coordination through MHPSS Technical Working Group (TWG), which IOM is co-chairing with the International Medical Corps, in close coordination with the Ministry of Health.



Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) teams in Tripoli, Zwara, Sabratha, Bani Waleed, Sabha and Qatroun reached **12,699 migrants** (8,905 men, 3,794 women) from different nationalities during the month of December. 2,515 migrants (including 306 households) received core relief items, 601 clothing kits, 1,452 hygiene kits, 124 solar lamps, 164 mattresses, 232 winter blankets, 40 diapers and 28 kitchen sets, while 10,184 migrants (including 1,213 households) received 4,056 individual food kits and 3,873 family food kits.

Over the month, MRRM teams conducted **27 focus group discussion** awareness raising and info sessions on COVID-19 Impacts and precautions in Sabha and Qatroun for **483 migrants** (396 men, 87 women) and distributed 71 health awareness COVID19- flyers in Arabic, English and French.

169 #InformedMigrant awareness-raising sessions were conducted for **3,330 migrants** (2,381 men, 949 women) in Zwara, Bani Waleed, Sabha and Qatroun and the teams distributed 1,962 #IM awareness booklets and 8 posters in Arabic, English and French.

MRRM teams also contributed to the celebration of **International Migrants Day** in Tripoli, Zwara and Qatroun and conducted a series of activities on the theme of Reimagining Human Mobility. The activities from 13 to 20 December included open mic and speed introduction sessions on human mobility, protective mask making, recreational games for children, film screening and future-self expressional activity, art activities followed by presentation of traditional handmade items and awareness raising info session on irregular migration for 128 migrants from different nationalities mainly from Chad, Sudan, Nigeria and Niger.



IOM's **Community Stabilization** team signed **21 contracts** with local civil society organizations to implement social cohesion and livelihood projects in Sabha, Qatroun, Benghazi and Al-Kufra.

During December, four IOM-funded CSOs completed their activities: Noqoush CSO trained 60 people on calligraphy, sewing, painting on wood and tree trunks with traditional techniques, leatherwork for bags and shoes, and accompanied by the provision of individual toolkits in order to allow participants to initiate independent work. The initiative named «Caravan of Artistic Carving» aimed to improve livelihoods by providing vocational skill sets in artisanal and handicrafts.

In **Benghazi, Sabha, Qatroun and Kufra** with a focus on empowering women in the workforce, Libya 2020 CSO organized training initiatives to help improve livelihood opportunities for all in Libya. This month, 60 men and women have attended a technical training on maintenance of air conditioners, and mobile maintenance in addition to a -5day business management course in Sabha and Qatroun. During the closing ceremony, all participants received toolkits to set up their business.

Omar Addar CSO aimed to contribute to adult literacy in **Sabha** by building capacity in Arabic language skills for 35 men and women, as well as personal development soft skills for additional 75 community members. The initiatives have been successfully completed and aimed to bring together people from different tribes with accessible activities and support them with basic skills.

Brilliant Talents CSO aimed to expand access to arts, particularly for youth in Sabha. 30 youth have attended a theatre training with the scope to develop and perform a script on family and social dynamics in Libya – specially related to the challenges women are facing from family and community members. The performance took place in Sabha Cultural Festival and was attended by around 700 people.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (CIPs)

On 29 and 31 December, medical equipment have been delivered to Attia Al-Kasah general hospital in **Al-Kufra** and to Alkish hospital in **Benghazi** to improve the efficiency of the new COVID19- departments. After the outbreak of COVID 19-, a new department have been created in both hospitals and designated to detect and isolate positive cases. The new departments have been equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE), specialized medical devices, and office furniture.

On 6 December, Al Yarmouk water well and five out of 13 generators in Sabha were handed over to the General Water and Wastewater Company (GWWC). The work is ongoing on the remaining three out of 13 wells being drilled across various sites in Sabha to boost the water capacity for the entire city of approximately 120,000 residents. The GWWC, which suffered years of underdevelopment, has been unable to build and maintain wells for the population of Sabha, with 42 of the 102 wells obsolete causing water shortage. A well usually has a life span of 15 to 20 years depending on consumption. In some locations, the poor water pressure meant there was no local water at all, as the flow from other well sites was not sufficient to reach all areas.

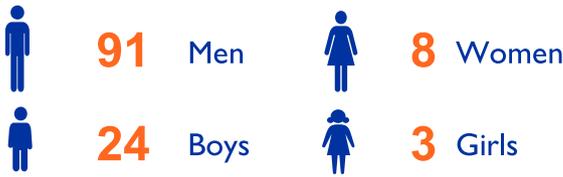
IOM LIBYA'S ACTIVITIES ARE SUPPORTED BY



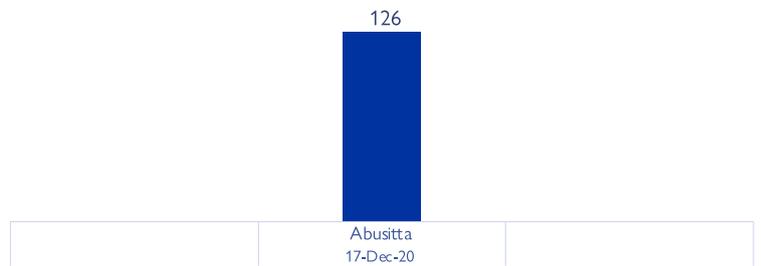


IN DECEMBER 2020

126 Migrants Disembarked in Libya



Disembarkation Location and Date
(December 2020)



In 2019

9,225

DISEMBARKED IN LIBYA

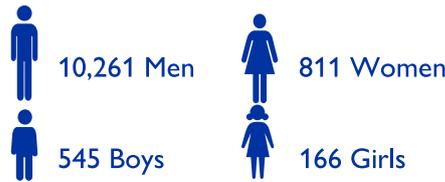


121 Deaths 102 Missing

In 2020 so far

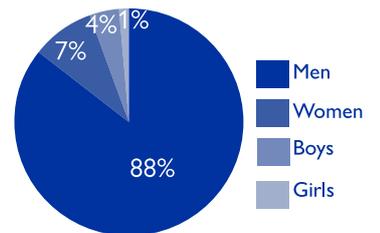
11,891

DISEMBARKED



*No gender data available for 108 individuals

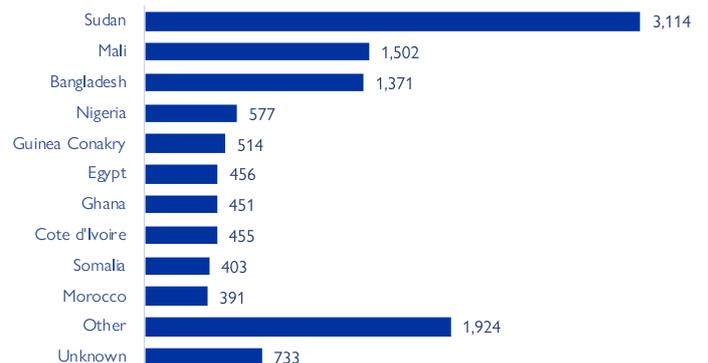
226 Bodies Retrieved 219 Missing



Monthly Disembarkation Trends 2019 and 2020



Nationalities of Individuals Disembarked in 2020



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.