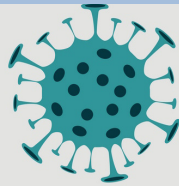


ONE UN supporting Libya to tackle COVID-19



By the United Nations Country Team

In Libya, the effects of [COVID-19](#) are exacerbated by the ongoing conflict and the internal security, political and economic crisis. At the beginning of this pandemic, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and leading medical and health institutions have urged the world to “[Stay Home, Save Lives](#)” in effort to combat the pandemic. Unfortunately, this is a luxury for 392,000 Libyans who are still displaced. In addition, the lack of basic services and the continuous power cuts affect the water supply for over a third of the Libyan population in the north west parts of the country, and consequently, it is not easy for people to practice simple but necessary measures, such as frequent hand-washing to protect themselves from the coronavirus. Furthermore, [the current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked social stigma](#) and discriminatory behaviours against people of certain ethnic backgrounds as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus.

In response, the United Nations in Libya assisted in delivering swift, cost-effective and life-saving services that not only save lives today but prevent needs that may arise in the future.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the UN in Libya coordinated by [the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#) has supported the development of preparedness and immediate response plans together with the Libyan Government and partners, while bolstering coordination among UN agencies, as well as international and local NGOs.

To mitigate the longer-term impacts, the UN in Libya also developed the [Socio-Economic Framework for the Response to COVID-19 in Libya \(UNSEF\)](#). Structured around five socio-economic pillars (Pillar I: Health First; Pillar II: Protecting People; Pillar III: Economic Response and Recovery; Pillar IV: Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration; and Pillar V: Social Cohesion and Community Resilience), it is designed primarily to support the most vulnerable groups of society. It also seeks to foster conditions for a quick socio-economic recovery that can accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in Libya.

Some key highlights of the UN’s efforts to tackle the virus and its impact in Libya include:

[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) provided the national laboratory with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and PCR diagnostic kits, while supporting the Ministry of Health with the latest information about lab testing, handling suspected cases, and prevention of infection. It is also supporting the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) to develop the national guideline on preparedness, and guidelines for the Ministry of Health on maintaining quality services.

WHO supports the testing and diagnostic capacity of the NCDC laboratory. Photo: ©WHO



The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) partnered with MoH, NCDC, MoE co-leading RCCE Working Group for preparedness and response while contributing to system strengthening. Combating the info-demic, as a credible source of information and reaching over 4,500,000 with national, regional and municipality level campaigns on television, radio, newspapers, social media and printed material/handouts focusing on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), migrants and refugees. UNICEF provided 11 health facilities with generators to maintain the vaccine cold chain. Over 500,000 children and women had access to improved healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal and postnatal care as well as GBV services in UNICEF-supported facilities.

Ensure learning continuity and safe learning environment for over 100,000 children so far by supporting remote learning, disinfection of schools, awareness activities, distribution of PPE to over 3,000 learners/teachers to date and training teachers and municipalities staff on safe school protocol. Recorded over 1,400 online curriculum sessions and broadcasted TV and YouTube with distribution of paper-based curriculum worksheets/CDs.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has ensured the availability of essential reproductive health services by deploying specialized mobile medical units, which assisted over 7,800 women. UNFPA has built the capacity of 537 health workers to provide integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH/GBV) amidst COVID-19. Over 4,600 PPE supplies were donated to frontline health facilities. Young people have been actively engaged in the COVID-19 response through UNFPA's Youth Against COVID-19 Fund. Through its national hotline and women and girls' safe spaces, UNFPA also provided psychosocial support and gender-based violence (GBV) response services to over 10,900 women, girls, boys and men in need of assistance.

UN Women is conducting several training sessions to strengthen institutional and organizational skills and enhance women's participation in peace and security process. UN Women trained 20 Libyan CSOs to advance their skills to conceptualize, design and implement effective projects to fight COVID-19 outbreak and address its impact on the country. In partnership with UNDP, UN Women launched "We Shape our Future," to support civil society organizations for them to be able to promote gender equality, women & youth empowerment in times of coronavirus in West, East and South of Libya.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) delivered a COVID-19 awareness workshop to judicial police management at the Centre of Endemic and Infectious Diseases and Prevention, focusing COVID-19 prevention and control measures such as specific risk assessments and contingency plans, enhanced hygiene and infection control measures.



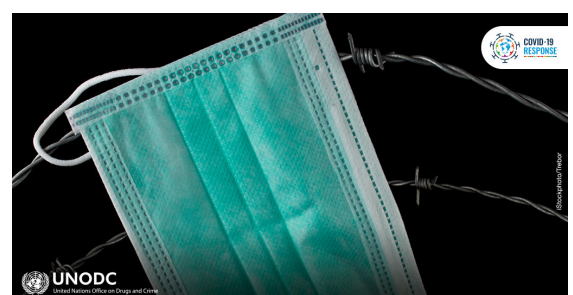
UNICEF emergency staff distributing sanitation and hygiene supplies to internally displaced persons in western Libya.
Photo: ©UNICEF Libya/2020/Mohamed



Libyan women trained by UNFPA distribute handmade face masks to migrants and the local community in Tripoli.
Photo: ©Esahebi/UNFPALibya 2020



"We Shape our Future" launched by UNWomen and UNDP to promote gender equality, women and youth empowerment in Libya.
Photo: ©UNDP Libya





Workers bring the new COVID-19 testing machines to the National Center for Disease Control in Misrata.
Photo: ©UNDP Libya.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Stabilization Facility for Libya, has delivered 15,000 COVID-19 test kits, five testing machines, and 12 ventilators to the NCDC. With support from the European Union, UNDP delivered protection materials to several municipalities. Under a Public-Private Partnership model, UNDP facilitated the expansion of a Telemedicine application to enable vulnerable groups to access COVID-19 diagnosis and treatment throughout Libya. As the leading agency of the UN socio-economic framework for COVID-19 response in Libya, UNDP has coordinated the UN assessment and response framework and is conducting COVID-19 impact assessments which will guide future programmatic responses. UNDP also works with other UN agencies in developing response and policy advice in the area of social protection and basic income modelling.



UNHAS Libya brings in a larger, more powerful plane as flights restart. June 2020. Photo: ©UNHAS Libya.



WFP provides food at an inter-agency Rapid Response Mechanism distribution to newly displaced people in Libya in May 2020. Photo: WFP/Libya

The World Food Programme (WFP) has reached more than 208,000 vulnerable people across the country this year alone. In addition to monthly food distributions to about 90,000 people, WFP implemented the e-voucher transfer modality in Tripoli and Zwara to 10,000 people and provided emergency food assistance through the inter-agency rapid response mechanism to 4,240 newly displaced families. During school closures, WFP distributed take-home food rations to over 18,000 schoolchildren in the South. Livelihood training in western Libya resumed in September with COVID measures in place; further training has now started in the East of the country. Recognising the severe socio-economic impact of COVID-19, UNHCR and WFP began a partnership in June to target 10,000 food-insecure refugees/asylum seekers with emergency food packages.



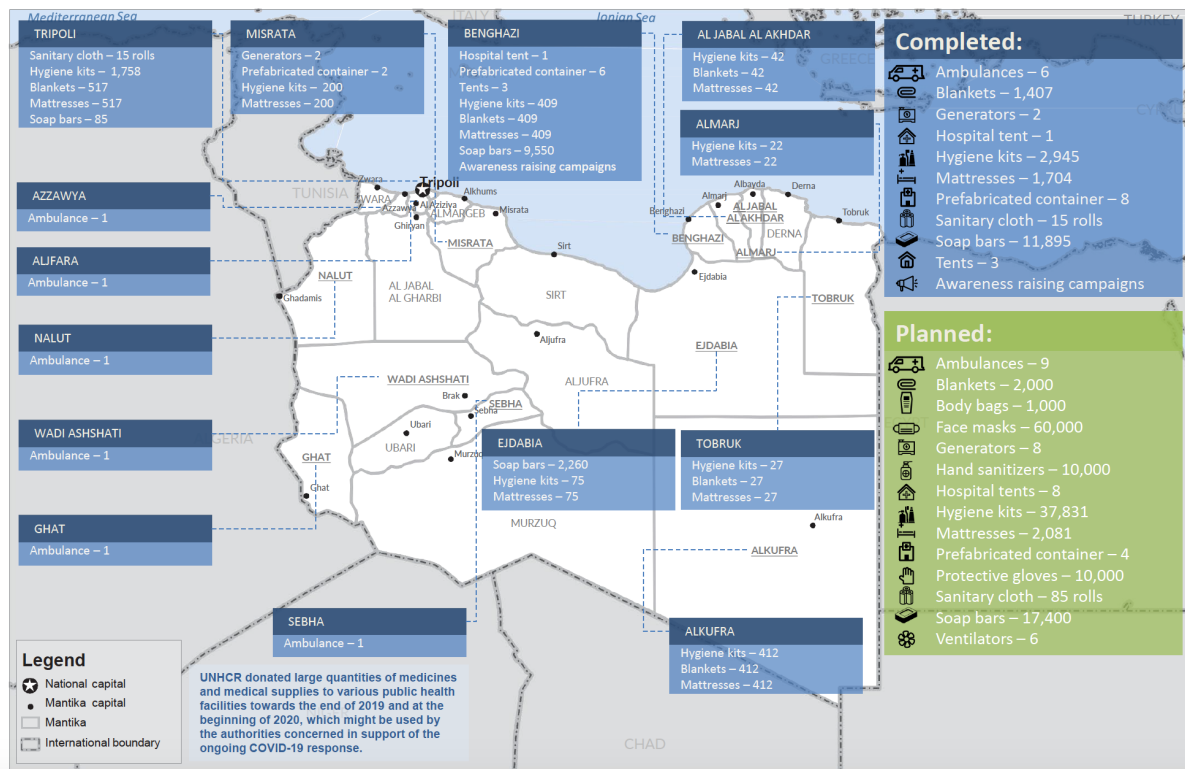
IOM staff provide food baskets to vulnerable migrants affected by COVID-19 in Tripoli.
Photo: ©Moayad Zaghdani / IOM Libya

The International Organization for Migrations (IOM) developed a Libya-specific COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan in March. This aimed to help the Government of Libya and national health partners to reduce associated morbidity and mortality and to address the crosscutting humanitarian needs of migrants impacted by the COVID-19. Despite the challenges linked to curfews and mobility restrictions, IOM managed to provide vital health services to more than 33,000 people and deliver core relief items to more than 48,000 migrants and almost 37,000 IDPs.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) is managed by the World Food Programme (WFP), ensuring reliable air transport for the humanitarian and donor community in Libya.

Despite being grounded from April to June due to virus restrictions, at the end of June, UNHAS was able to bring in a larger, more powerful plane, and flights were resumed. UNHAS has also brought essential COVID-19 supplies into the country.

UNHCR LIBYA: Support to COVID-19 Response
16 March – 22 May 2020



[The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) has supported the Libyan authorities supplying nine ambulances and 11 generators to various municipalities, 7,000 face masks and protective gloves, 18,000 hygiene kits, 12,700 mattresses, 3,500 blankets, medical tents and prefabricated containers for testing and isolation spaces. With its partner The International Red Cross (IRC), UNHCR helped to re-open a Primary Health Care Centre in Gergaresh, Tripoli, which provides free healthcare for all.

[The WFP-led Emergency Telecommunications Sector Common Feedback Mechanism \(CFM\)](#), at the request of NCDC, is the national Libyan COVID-19 hotline. Since March, the call centre has been used to provide information and official guidelines, raise awareness about the virus and how to protect from it, and hear back from people about any potential rise in needs.

Working as “ONE UN” and in coordination with communities and local authorities, UN agencies are boosting the Libyan response to COVID-19 while promoting peace and a culture of zero stigmas to ensure that no one is left behind.

UN agencies in Libya launched a social media campaign in efforts to destigmatize COVID-19. [The hashtag #stigmaaway](#) (#وقف_الوسم) reached more than 100,000 users on various social media channels. [“The Platform المنصة”](#), a Facebook page launched in April 2020 by a group of Libyan peace mediators and supported by the UN in Libya which aimed to ask for a ceasefire to focus on the combat against COVID-19, [attracted more than 7,000 followers within two months](#). With increasing COVID-19 cases in Libya, as well as the ceasefire and the Libyan political talks, the relevance of these campaigns will keep growing.

As such, the UN in Libya will continue to support national and local institutions to strengthen their health systems, bringing all local and national authorities, civil society and private sector around the table for long-term solutions, addressing the socio-economic and human rights impacts of COVID-19 and safeguarding progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including addressing stigma and discrimination arising from the spread of the virus.