

## Mounting humanitarian Concerns as Libya Conflict intensifies



An off-duty rebel fighter sits on the steps of a heavily shelled building at the western gate of Ajdabiya. Photo: Kate Thomas/IRIN

Humanitarians have voiced increasing concern over the deteriorating situation for people living in areas directly affected by the conflict in Libya, such as the city of Misrata and the Nafusa Mountains area in the west of the country. Although people's most basic needs are still believed to be met in most parts of Libya, it is clear that the longer the conflict drags on, the higher the likelihood that humanitarian needs will arise. The UN-imposed international sanctions also affect the availability of fuel and access to cash and credit, inhibiting the ability of many people to buy food and other basic commodities across Libya.

Access to the population in need and the ability to carry out assessments and humanitarian relief operations is still severely hampered by insecurity. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, obtained agreement with the Government on 17 April to expand humanitarian access within Libya. However, following attacks in Tripoli on several UN offices and diplomatic residences, UN international staff and the Humanitarian Coordinator were evacuated to Tunisia on the 1 May. The UN established an office in Benghazi in early April.

More than 665,000 third-country nationals and Libyans have fled the country by the end of April, mainly to Egypt and Tunisia. Meanwhile, over a dozen aid ships had docked at Misrata, evacuating around 12,000 people and delivering over 3,000 tons of humanitarian aid.

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### UAE Organizations responding to Crises in Libya, Pakistan and Haiti

Donor organizations from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) continued to provide aid to those affected by the Libyan crisis during April, including in a camp set up in Tunisia by the UAE Red Crescent Authority (RCA).

"The camp is a good example of the growing importance of the UAE within the international humanitarian response community", the former Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Rashid Khalikov, wrote in a letter to the Office for the Coordination of Foreign Aid in the UAE after a visit to the camp.

In Pakistan, the UAE-based aid organization Noor Dubai established a so-called eye camp in the flood-hit Sindh area, focusing on treating and preventing low vision and curable forms of blindness. Meanwhile, the RCA provided aid to 5,000 families in Baluchistan province to help people affected by last summer's heavy flooding in Pakistan.

In Haiti, Dubai Cares is evaluating its programmes which have reached over 200,000 beneficiaries. Since the earthquake in January 2010, Dubai Cares in partnership with UNICEF and CARE International have been working to address the post disaster needs of the primary education sector.

### Turkey hosts OCHA Donor Briefing in Cairo

On 27 April, the regular humanitarian donor briefing provided by OCHA regional office (ROMENACA) was hosted by the Turkish Ambassador H.E. Huseyin Avni Botsali in Cairo. Donors, representatives from the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foreign diplomatic representatives, international NGOs and UN agencies attended the briefing.

The donor briefings are intended to review and discuss the regional funding levels and trends (funding into and out of the region), highlight funding gaps, imbalanced funding of appeals and other issues of humanitarian financing. Emphasis was placed on the region as a resource provider as well as recipient of humanitarian funding.

The meeting coincided with the arrival of the newly appointed Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Mr. Panos Moutmzis, who briefed the donors on the latest developments in Libya and the UN's plans for the immediate future.

<http://unocha.romenaca.org>

## Lebanon: UNRWA seeks improved Health Care for Palestinian Refugees



More than eight in ten elderly Palestine refugees in Lebanon suffer from chronic disease and few can afford hospitalization. Photo: UNRWA

A significant number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon suffer from severe chronic diseases such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and kidney and heart failure. A poverty survey carried by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the American University of Beirut showed that 83 per cent of Palestine refugees aged 55 and above and one in ten of the youngest age group (under 20 years) have reported that they suffer from at least one chronic illness. Considering that 95 per cent of the Palestine refugees in Lebanon are without health insurance, a case of acute illness often leads to extraordinary expenses and may push a household into poverty.

Also, Palestinian refugees have very limited access to public health care and most cannot afford treatment at private hospitals. The cost of hospitalisation in Lebanon is much higher than in the surrounding countries. Each year, UNRWA manages to help around 26,000 patients to cover the cost of secondary or tertiary care treatments. On average 500 refugees appeal to UNRWA each year for support to cover the costs of critical life-saving medical treatment. However, due to limited resources, the agency is only able to support 40 per cent of the hospitalisation bills for inpatient treatment.

Because no one should be denied access to health care, regardless of country of origin, UNRWA continues to seek funds to ensure that Palestine refugees requiring critical tertiary care can receive adequate health services.

## UNHCR Aid to Benghazi from Dubai



In April, the UNHCR Emergency Stockpile in Dubai flew the first humanitarian air charter directly into Benghazi with staff safety equipment and relief items. With Dubai's strategic location in mind, UNHCR established a global emergency stockpile in the city in 2006. The UNHCR office and warehouse are situated in the International Humanitarian City. Photo: UNHCR

## Pakistan: Transition from Flood Relief to Recovery

New early recovery coordination structures in flood-affected areas of Pakistan are gathering momentum. Early Recovery Working Groups (ERWG) have been established and the emergency clusters have made the necessary arrangements to ensure a smooth transition to the new coordination mechanisms.

The capacity to coordinate early recovery interventions at the provincial level has been strengthened with the secondment of a large number of OCHA staff to the UN Development Programme UNDP. OCHA sub-offices in Punjab and Sindh are closing, while the OCHA office in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) remains fully operational.

While emphasis now is on early recovery, there is still some need for humanitarian relief in the worst affected areas of Sindh and Baluchistan, in particular in the camps and spontaneous settlements that continue to host tens of thousands of displaced persons (IDP).

IDP families in Jalojai and Benazir camps are amongst the most vulnerable. Inter-agency needs assessments in areas in Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai and South Waziristan

to which the flood-affected have returned, consistently highlight the importance of household-level food and livelihoods support, and the immediate restoration of basic community services.

<http://pakresponse.info>

### **Iraqi singer Kadhum Al-Sahir new UNICEF Ambassador to Iraq** The renowned Iraqi singer,

Kadhum Al-Sahir, has been appointed UNICEF goodwill Ambassador to Iraq. Making his first visit to Iraq in 14 years for the occasion, Mr. Al-Sahir called on all segments of Iraqi society to come together to improve the opportunities for the children of Iraq.

"Khadum's commitment to use his time, energy, and talents to shine a spotlight on the needs of Iraq's children is extraordinary and will contribute to improving their lives," said UNICEF Representative to Iraq, Mr. Sikander Khan.

As UNICEF's Ambassador, Mr. Al-Sahir will focus on raising awareness and mobilizing support to respond to the needs of the most deprived and vulnerable children across the country. The goal is to build an equitable society where all of the 15 million children in Iraq have equal opportunities to realize their full potential.



The most vulnerable children in Iraq need UNICEF support. File Photo: IRIN

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