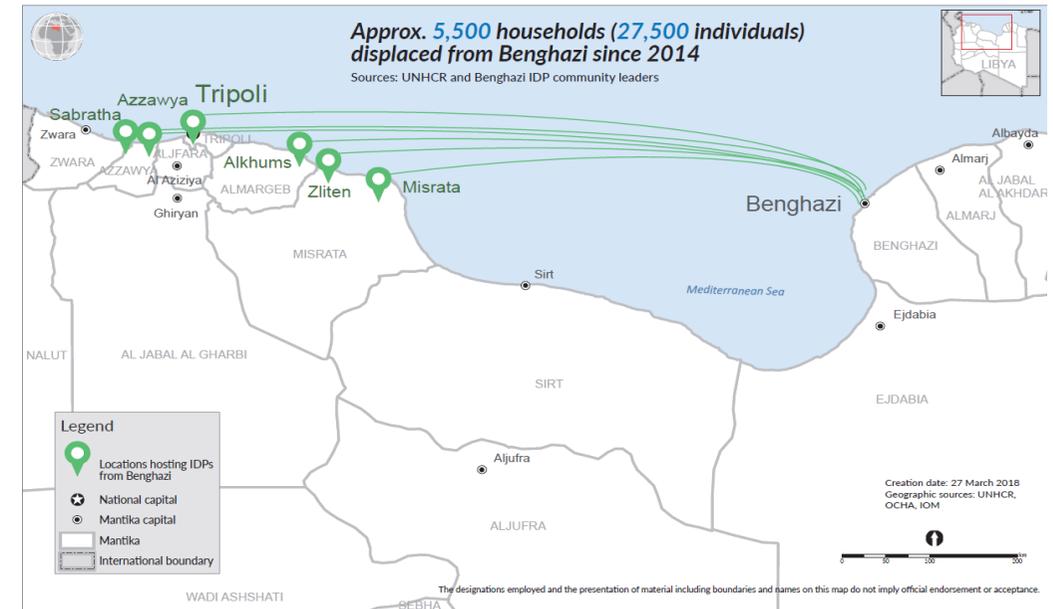


Internally Displaced Persons from Benghazi

Due to the fighting in 2014, the region of Benghazi witnessed multiple waves of displacement with hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking safety in the urban centre of Tripoli and its surroundings. While a big number of IDPs have returned home, approximately 27,000 displaced persons are continue to be displaced in several areas in Libya. The main reasons for displacement is linked to political opinion or perceptions of supporting a specific group. The main areas of displacements from Benghazi are Tripoli, Misrata, Az- Zawya, Sibrata, Al Khums, Zlita and other scattered areas inside Libya. Participants in the FGDs also flagged a concern relating to the increase number of adults, among the IDPs, who are joining, or preparing to join seek the sea option to reach Europe where they can seek international protection. This is due to the facing increasing challenges in coping with the life in Libya, where all prospects for work and proper livelihood are deteriorating.

The Protection sector lead in partnership with UNHCR conducted five focus group discussions (FGDs) with 43 IDPs from Benghazi¹, residents in informal settlements and urban areas in Tripoli and Misrata. The primarily purpose of undertaking FGDs was to gain a better understanding of the IDPs protection and humanitarian situation, to enable advocacy for intervention and designing the right response to the actual needs on the ground.



Protection and humanitarian situation in places of displacements:

Security, safety and freedom of movement were reported as the main concerns by IDPs who informed of being targeted by different military groups on the account suspected affiliations with terrorist groups or supporting rivalry political positions. As a result, freedom of movement is restricted in certain areas, particularly in Misrata and Tripoli. According to the IDPs committee and interviewed IDPs, the security situation has compelled an increasing number – up to hundreds - of young adults to embark on dangerous trips across the sea to reach Europe in search of safety, security and dignified living conditions.

Access to Documentation continues to be one of the main concerns mainly in Misrata, where IDPs face increasing challenges/difficulties to issue documents related to birth/death registration, marriage registration, divorce registration, passports, etc. Access to the civil registrar office is reported by many IDPs who also reported denial from civil register offices to provide them with certificates and asked them to return to Benghazi to get civil documents. The only paper provided by the civil register offices is the family status certificate "شهادة وضع العائلة".

¹ The assessment/ FGDs were carried by the UNHCR protection team and protection sector lead. The assessment based on five Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) during the period February 1st to April 28, 2018. The discussions were held with various IDP profiles including women, youth and elderly to ensure the inclusiveness of the findings.

The human rights situation and the lack of durable solution prevents many IDPs from returning back to areas of origin due to fear of being subjected to human rights violations by groups which are present in their areas. Participants in the FGDs emphasized their fear of arbitrary arrest, torture, unlawful killings and disappearances in areas of origin. Exploring durable solutions is, therefore, linked to assurances of physical safety, which continues to be a major challenge. During the interviews, participants in the FGDs requested to remain anonymous to avoid security issues such as arrest or harassment from the neighbouring communities.

IDPs in Benghazi face challenges in accessing their savings, to be able to have cash in hand, due to limited options in accessing to the banks. The assessment team was informed that several banks request IDPs to return to Benghazi to solve the problem by transferring their files and savings to other branches in the country, which is not an option. However, the participants in the FGDs reported that many of the IDPs fear their safety of being arbitrary arrested if they go in person to areas of origin. Their fear is based on real case scenarios which happened to other members among the IDPs who attempted to do so. In April 2018, the IDP community leaders met with the central bank in Libya to discuss access to their savings. The central bank instructed all banks in Libya to facilitate IDPs' access to their savings and accounts; however and according to the IDPs, they continue to face the same challenges and no improvement in accessing their accounts.

Shelter and accommodation remain an issue of concern. The majority of Benghazi IDP families are accommodated in rented houses in various areas in the country. The main concentration areas are Tajoura and Misrata where the cost of the rented houses has been covered by several groups including the "Supporting Committee", the crises group" and a group of wealthy businessmen. In Misrata, 144 families who live in the Al-Aman resort in Misrata is at risk of eviction as the resort management provided them with note to leave by June 2018.

The risk of secondary displacement/ forced mass eviction was also raised by IDPs from Benghazi. During the inter-agency mission to Misrata on 11 April 2018 the city council and the military commander asked the UN and humanitarian community to support in helping the IDPs from Benghazi to return to areas of origin. According to the municipality council, the security situation in Benghazi have been improved and IDPs have to return; meanwhile, IDPs from Benghazi have fear of becoming victims of violations of human rights, including arbitrary arrest, torture, unlawful killings and disappearances in case they will return before any political solution in Libya. However, during the FGDs the IDPs are not aware of the Misrata municipality request or they did not raise any immediate concerns or pressure on them to return Benghazi.

Access to basic services in urban areas is one of the main challenges for IDPs from Benghazi. This is mainly because they are not sharing any detailed information about their exact locations of displacement and information details on their numbers (disaggregated by gender, age group, special needs, etc.) due to their fear of prosecution from militia and members of the neighbourhood, or due to their fear that Benghazi authorities will know about them and then harm their family members who remain in Benghazi. Not having the aforementioned information will hinder the humanitarian assistance process, weaken the quality of the response and eventually lead to poor identification of the most vulnerable individuals who need protection and humanitarian assistance. Around 2,500 to 3,000 heads of households, especially people who used to work in the private sector or their employment files managed by the local government in Benghazi, have not received their salaries since the start of displacement in 2014. Some had to use all their savings to survive. Others are working in alternative professions; mostly as drivers to provide for their families.

For IDPs who are displaced in the city of Benghazi (approximately 1,400 families) and are living in rented houses, their return is pending the reconstruction of war damaged houses.