



LIBYA

COUNTRY PROFILE

Development Partners Meeting on the Sudan
Regional Refugee Crisis

September 17, 2024

Country Context

Since the conflict in Sudan began in April 2023, Libya has seen a significant influx of Sudanese refugees, primarily entering through key points such as Alkufra, Tobruk, and the southern border. As of September 2024, there have been around 350 daily arrivals in Alkufra, southeastern Libya - a region with harsh, arid conditions and little access to services. Many refugees are attempting to reach cities like Benghazi and Tripoli, but there are several challenges, including limited and expensive transport options. The difficult conditions make movement from the border extremely difficult for many refugees.

Alkufra, a primary stop for new arrivals, is where most Sudanese refugees seek temporary shelter before trying to move toward other urban centres like Benghazi and Tripoli, where they hope to find relatives and employment. However, warnings have been issued about an impending humanitarian crisis in Alkufra if urgent aid is not provided, as refugees are enduring harsh conditions without adequate shelter or services.

In Tripoli, the authorities do not register Sudanese refugee and UNHCR is the only organization registering them. As of 15 September 2024, there were 45,452 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR in Libya, with 26,219 arriving since the outbreak of violence in Sudan, and 2,944 Sudanese individuals awaiting registration. In Alkufra, the eastern authorities register Sudanese refugees and provide them with security cards that allow them freedom of movement and access to public services.

Sudanese refugees are fleeing an increasingly dire situation in Darfur, where violence is intensifying. Approximately 38% of the new arrivals are women and children. They face critical shortages in healthcare, water, sanitation, and hygiene services, and emergency shelter, overwhelming the already limited resources in Libya. Many refugees who remain unregistered face severe risks, including exploitation and lack of basic rights.

UNHCR's strategic priority in cooperation with Libyan authorities is to enhance the protection environment and provide life-saving assistance to displaced populations, asylum seekers, and refugees, while also seeking (durable) solutions for the most vulnerable groups. There are growing concerns that many refugees in Libya may attempt the dangerous Mediterranean crossing to Europe if they do not receive adequate support.

Evidence Base

While Libya is considered a middle-income country, it is heavily dependent on oil and gas revenues and an estimated 803,000 people, including displaced Libyans, asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants, are in need of humanitarian assistance. Despite the government's efforts, the influx of refugees from Sudan has stretched public services to the breaking point.

There is a clear need for greater collaboration with development partners to support the self-reliance of Sudanese refugees arriving in Libya, particularly by providing employment opportunities in sectors such as agriculture. In urban areas, refugees are often left to find jobs on their own. However, a significant number of new arrivals are skilled workers, including doctors, nurses, and teachers, who could contribute to Libya's workforce if properly integrated. Female-headed households, in particular, require additional support due to their vulnerability. Access to freedom of movement within Libya is tied to obtaining a security registration card, and health certificate from the Ministry of Interior in the eastern region. Without these documents, refugees face several risks.

With support from the Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement, the World Bank, UNHCR, IOM and WFP have collaborated to undertake a [socioeconomic survey of refugees and migrants in Libya](#). The main objective of the activity is to start creating a solid base of socioeconomic data on migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities. To date, four rounds of data collection

have taken place - with the last concluding in February 2024 - and are being consolidated and analyzed. The report and key findings are expected to be released by the end of the year.

Recommended Priority Investments

Conflict and long-running fragility have resulted in gaps in infrastructure and public services, and deep institutional deficits. Despite these challenges, Alkufra border area welcomes refugees, and consequently, investments by development partners would bolster the resilience of the host communities and displaced persons by supporting their access to essential services, durable shelter, and livelihood opportunities. These investments are needed, even if many refugees along the border are seeking to move to coastal cities where they can find jobs and register with UNHCR. Access to registration remains key to protection and solutions, therefore support to registration efforts by UNHCR and the authorities is a strategic objective.

In Alkufra, immediate investments are needed to improve access to basic services. Further resources are necessary to support the education sector and accommodate the influx of students. In terms of healthcare, arrivals are suffering from malnutrition and injuries, with no access to basic sanitation, latrines, or clean water, raising the risk of cholera and other diseases. Waste management systems are also needed.