

Facts on the European Dimension of Displacement and Asylum: Libya

February 2016

OVERVIEW

Demographic Structure

Population	6.2 million
Growth rate	2.2%
Ethnic groups	90% Arab, 10% Berber, Tuareg, Tebu and other minorities
Languages	Arabic (official language), Italian, English and Berber languages
Religion	97% Muslim (Sunni), Christian minorities
Median age (EU 28)	28 years (42.2 years)

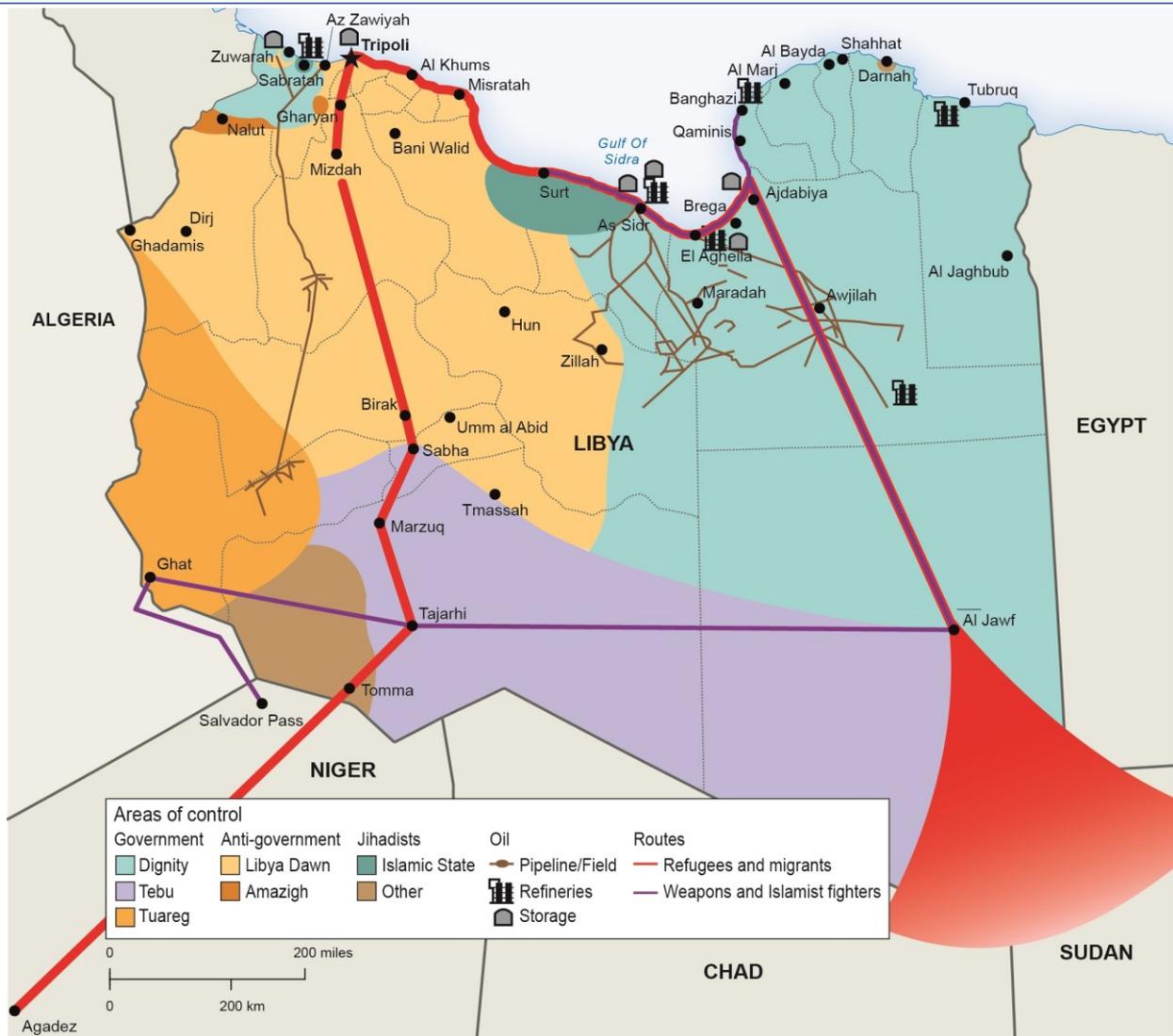
(Figures are for 2015, except ¹2015 according to IMF estimates, ²2014; arrows: change from previous year)

Economics & Employment

GDP (per capita)	\$29.7 bn (\$4,754) ¹	↓
GDP growth	-27.8 % ¹	↘
GNI (PPP) (per capita)	\$100.1 bn (\$16,000) ²	↘
Inflation (CPI)	8.0 % ¹	↑
Unemployment	19.2 % ²	→
Youth unemployment (15-24 years)	42.2 % ²	→
FDI (inflows) Share of EU 28	\$50.0 mn ² (NA)	↓
Imports of goods Share of EU 28	\$18.8 bn ² 37.0 % ²	↓
Exports of goods Share of EU 28	\$16.6 bn ² 73.0 % ²	↓

Political System and Relations with the EU

Type of state/government	2012-14: Parliamentary republic Since August 2015: Two competing parliaments and governments
Degree of democratization	Bertelsmann Stiftung, Transformation Index 2016 Democracy status: 2.38 (out of 10, higher = better), failing state Rank: 126/129, comparable to Sudan and Eritrea
Human rights and protection of minorities	UNSMIL / UN OHCHR, Report on the human rights situation in Libya – 16 November 2015 All parties to the conflict are abusing human rights and violating international humanitarian law through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks • Summary executions and other unlawful killings • Arbitrary deprivations of liberty • Torture and other forms of ill-treatment The situation is particularly precarious for refugees and migrants as well as for human rights defenders, humanitarian workers and journalists.
Corruption	Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2014 Rank: 161, comparable to Iraq and Angola
Freedom of the press	Freedom House, Freedom of the Press Index 2015 Status: not free Score: 73 (out of 100, lower = better), comparable to Myanmar and Egypt
Relations with the European Union	Status: Eligible for participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and its funding mechanisms; remains outside most structures due to lack of an Association Agreement Previous steps to integration: none



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REFUGEE SITUATION IN LIBYA

Category	<p>Unsafe transit country for migrants and refugees, especially from Central and East Africa</p> <p>Country of origin for Libyan refugees, many of whom have fled to Tunisia or Egypt</p>
Number of refugees and migrants in Libya	<p>Some 440,000 Libyans have become internally displayed persons (IDPs) since 2011.</p> <p>Tens of thousands of non-Libyan migrants and refugees are said to be residing in Libya.</p> <p>Each week 1,500 migrants and refugees arrive in Tripoli via the western Sahara route.</p>
Housing for refugees in Libya	<p>Most refugees in the country live in private accommodations and engage in part-time work to earn enough money for a crossing to Europe. In view of the growing economic crisis (rampant inflation, collapse of oil exports) it is becoming increasingly difficult to find jobs even as day laborers. The pressure is therefore increasing to continue on to Europe.</p>
Status of refugees in Libya	<p>Libya has no asylum laws. Almost all refugees enter without a visa and are in the country illegally. Refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa in particular are often confined by Libyan militias to one of ten detention camps located between Misurata and Zuwarah in western Libya. Syrians are increasingly unable to find jobs. In view of current conditions, Libya is not a safe country of origin.</p>
Funding	<p>UN organizations have appealed for €150 million to fund the Libya Humanitarian Response Plan. Only 1 percent has been received from the international community to date.</p>
Irregular border crossings into the EU	<p>154,000 registered migrants and refugees came to Italy via the Mediterranean in 2015.</p> <p>Passage to Europe currently costs approximately €1,100 per person.</p>

A heavy burden in a fateful year

After a colonial era, a monarchy and over 40 years of the Qaddafi dictatorship, Libyans are largely unfamiliar with centralized, good government.

The country of six million people is comprised of seven major tribes, which spread across three large regions. Since Libya is primarily desert, most people live on the Mediterranean coast.

Overall, 70 percent of Libyans receive government salaries which are financed by oil revenues.

Although the country has considerable oil reserves as well as beaches and historical sites, it has little infrastructure and is dependent on the expertise and labor of foreign workers.

When the country's dictator, Muammar Qaddafi, threatened to use violence to suppress the popular uprising in March 2011, NATO began an aerial bombing campaign to aid rebel fighters. That first civil war lasted six months and ended when Qaddafi was killed in October of the same year. The democratic movement, which was enthusiastically supported by civil society and resulted in exemplary elections conducted freely and fairly in July 2012, could not hold its own against the dictatorship's oppressive legacy: there were too many conflicting demands, too many weapons, too much desire for revenge, too many open wounds and a polarized society that, roughly speaking, pitted the Islamists against the erstwhile power holders.

As of 2016, Libya finds itself struggling under a heavy burden, with smugglers, human traffickers and dozens of militias controlling the country. Moreover, it is riven by a political schism: two cities are each home to a parliament and a government – Tripoli in the west (supported by Qatar and Turkey) and Tobruk (internationally recognized, supported by Egypt and UAE). Financial reserves are dwindling; the health-care system is collapsing. The self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) is making use of this vacuum to gain a foothold. All of the above developments are contributing to the current refugee crisis.

A boom in human trafficking

Libya is one of the main – and least safe – countries of destination, origin and transit for refugees and migrants.

First, it is a traditional destination country for migrants (until 2011/2014). Without foreign workers it would be hard for the country to function at all. Over a million foreign workers from North Africa (services and administration) once lived and worked in Libya, along with hundreds of thousands of Sub-Saharan Africans (low-wage sector) and Asians (domestic employment and nursing care) and thousands of Europeans (oil industry). For the most part, their wages were repatriated to their families at home. Jobs in Libya were particularly attractive to workers from the neighboring countries of Tunisia and Egypt. Now hundreds of thousands of those workers are back home and unemployed, further burdening their native countries' already fragile social structures.

During the civil war in 2011 – and especially since the outbreak of the second civil war in mid-2014 – 90 percent of Libya's foreign workers have left the country and returned home. Many North Africans, however, fled to Turkey and many Sub-Saharan Africans crossed the Mediterranean. In many cases, other Africans have taken their place, but they are in the country illegally and, being mostly Christians, are often subject to harassment and attacks.

Were oil-rich Libya a safe, well-governed country, it would offer both work and a future to hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees.

Second, Libya is a country of origin for refugees. Having been excluded and persecuted, thousands of Libyans began fleeing abroad during the colonial era and the Qaddafi dictatorship. Europe is therefore home to various expatriate communities. Many displaced Libyans returned after the first civil war in 2011 to help reconstruct their native land. Libya's most prominent exile in Germany is Ali Zeidan, who was appointed prime minister of the new parliamentary republic after the free elections in 2012. He fled the country in March 2014, returning to Germany, after having been kidnapped by militia combatants. Since then more than 400,000 Libyans have left in order to escape the fighting taking place at numerous locations throughout the country. Hundreds of thousands of others have fled to Egypt or Tunisia, where many have been waiting for over two years to return. Their savings are being depleted and they constitute a major social challenge for Libya's neighbors. No one can say whether more Libyans

will try to make a future for themselves and their children in Europe. Libya is not a safe country of origin.

Finally, Libya is the second most important transit country for refugees and migrants heading to Europe, after Turkey. In 2015, 154,000 refugees were registered after having crossed the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy, making it the second most frequented route for refugees and migrants after the Balkans (approx. 850,000). The actual number is undoubtedly higher since not all of those who made the crossing were registered after they arrived. The Italian island of Lampedusa is barely 300 kilometers from the Libyan coast. The crossing is dangerous; hundreds have died.

Most of the opportunity-seekers and war refugees come from West and East Africa and are smuggled through the Sahara along traditional trading routes. Some 1,500 people arrive each week in Tripoli, Misurata and Sabratha (ISIS controlled). Since they now require a visa to enter Turkey, more Syrian families are once again traveling to Libya via Mali and northern Niger.

Libya has no asylum laws. Most refugees enter the country without a visa and are there illegally as a result. It is dangerous to reside in many parts of the country: refugees are often captured by militias and held in camps. Most refugees live in private homes and find part-time work in order to finance a crossing to Europe.

Because of the legal vacuum, refugees and migrants are at the mercy of smugglers and human traffickers. Smuggling refugees has become the last remaining source of income for numerous militias. Almost everyone involved wants the smuggling operations to go smoothly. And as long as no alternative sources of income exist, they would like to see more activity on Libya's refugee routes.

UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, estimates that at least €150 million are needed to overcome the country's refugee crisis. According to the UN's humanitarian coordinator for Libya, Ali Al-Za'atari, the United Nations has only received 1 percent of the requested funds to date.

Outlook

In general, the Libya-Italy transit route is not favored by refugees and migrants due to the dangers involved (militias, the desert and the Mediterranean). Yet given the sporadic fighting, economic crisis and ongoing political, administrative and legal vacuum, as well as the growing power of the militias, smugglers and traffickers, it must be assumed that a large number of refugees and migrants will continue to flee from or transit through Libya in 2016. Much depends on related developments, such as how the various wars and conflicts extending from Syria to Somalia to Niger progress; which visa policies are implemented in transit countries in the Mediterranean region; and how easy it is to cross through the Balkans. Libya faces other wildcard factors in 2016, including: How will the international community respond to ISIS? Will international mediation indeed result in a unity government in Libya, thereby resetting the country politically?

Little time to create a unity government

Since February 2015 foreign jihadists from the Islamic State have infiltrated the central section of Libya's coast, the homeland of Muammar Qaddafi. Having arrived from warzones in Syria and Iraq, the ISIS combatants are exploiting rivalries between local militias and ethnic groups in order to expand their sphere of influence between the western government in Tripoli and the eastern government in Tobruk. They also control Sabratha, the most important supply route from Tripoli to Tunisia. The American government estimates that up to 5,000 jihadists are now present and have been able to persuade numerous locals in Libya to join them, drawing on the ranks of frustrated supporters of the former regime and members of the various militias. A key reason their recruiting efforts have proven successful is the reliable, high pay they offer. ISIS is now forming alliances with smuggler networks and even attacked the oil refinery in Ras Lanuf in January.

As part of the international fight against ISIS, a number of western states, first and foremost Italy, are now planning to use military attacks, including air raids, to combat ISIS in Libya.

Whether the attacks will prove effective remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that the Libyans

themselves must extricate many of their compatriots from the ISIS system and fight the terrorist group.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) is being led by German diplomat Martin Kobler. Supported by the international community and empowered by UN Resolution 2259 and the Rome Communiqué, UNSMIL is emphatically committed to moving the political process forward. Its goal is to bring the two competing parliaments and cabinets together in a national unity government which is capable of taking effective action and has enough legitimacy that, supported by the international community, it can ensure peace and security, combat ISIS and both reconstruct and modernize the country politically and economically. The west is hoping a central authority will emerge in Libya for a number of reasons, including so that the two sides can collaborate to improve coast guard operations in the Mediterranean and eliminate terrorist training camps.

The Libyan Political Agreement was signed in December; Fayeze al-Sarraj has been designated prime minister, and a nine-member Presidency Council has been formed. However, disagreement persists about the number of ministries that should be created, their regional affiliation and who will work in key areas such as internal affairs and defense.

Seen from the outside, the decision makers are under enormous pressure to come to agreement. Some 2.4 million Libyans are already receiving humanitarian aid and within three years the country's financial reserves have dwindled from \$280 billion to \$50 billion. In addition, oil production has virtually stopped and ISIS is gaining ground in areas close to oil fields and refineries.

In fact, a desire for power on the part of some leaders is preventing the installation of an effective unity government. Obstructionists have faced the threat of sanctions since mid-2015. UNSMIL needs more time to negotiate, despite the fact that the mediators are under increased pressure since various military leaders and politicians in the west are calling for bombing raids to stop ISIS from increasing its presence in Libya and to attack terror camps.

Libya needs the EU's help to rebuild

In January the European Council said it was willing to support Libya in its fight against extremist violence. To this end, it announced it would launch a €100 million program to provide immediate humanitarian assistance and help reform the country's security sector.

Both the army and police must be completely reestablished, said Martin Kobler, head of UNSMIL, in an interview with the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*. Training, advisory services and technical equipment will all play a major role. It is also possible that the United Nations will have to provide a unity government with a peacekeeping force, at least for a limited amount of time, so that the government can assert its authority over militias that are not yet ready to lay down their weapons and defer to the country's reconstituted armed forces.

At the same time, international reconstruction teams could, with the Libyan government's approval, enter the country to provide support that would quickly enable the central administration to become operative. One point of symbolic importance would be having the national unity government located in Tripoli, the country's capital.

For its part, the business sector can provide incentives that could serve as alternatives to joining the militias. The key here is diversification. Transforming an economy purely oriented toward exporting oil into one with manufacturing capabilities and a service sector will require job-training programs and small-scale loans to help young entrepreneurs start businesses. Of Libya's total population, 70 percent is under 30 years of age. Education, work and a regular income are the incentives that will convince young people to leave the militias. That will undoubtedly be a difficult and protracted process, as well as a necessary one, if the country is to be demilitarized, its militias disbanded and peace secured.

Education is also the key to reducing the considerable distrust that currently exists and overcoming the lack of knowledge people have of each other – thereby paving the way to reconciliation.

Even though Libya is one of Africa's richest nations, thanks to its oil reserves, the country will require long-term financial assistance from its

neighbors and the EU on all levels in order to transform itself. In contrast to other conflict-torn countries, Libya can afford to pay for the necessary expertise, personnel and technical support.

People will only be willing to put their trust in a well-functioning central government if even the smaller towns and villages are provided with electricity, water and medical care. Despite the conflicts and crises, many communities have functioning social networks and civil societies – a solid foundation for modernizing Libya. Partnerships with communities in Europe could help make local administrators and authorities more effective. An alliance among cities and towns could promote joint learning and provide support, thus helping people make informed choices between federalist and centralized structures. The EU has already held meetings with Libyan mayors. The cities located on the country's coast could, for example, enter into partnerships with Barcelona, Rome, Athens, Tunis and Algiers, thereby becoming part of a trans-Mediterranean network.

The various international institutions can provide more effective external support by working hand in hand across the relevant projects and issues.

Tunisia, Egypt and Libya have traditionally had close ties – historically, culturally and economically. Tragically, many Libyans are now living as refugees in Tunisia. Conversely, hundreds of Tunisians are being trained in terrorist camps in Libya, some of them returning to Tunisia (from western Libya) or traveling to Egypt (from eastern Libya) to carry out attacks there. Tunisia remains the only Arab country in the post-Arab Spring era that is still trying to move toward greater democracy and a socially just market economy. Every euro that is invested in Tunisia's security, economy and rule of law benefits Libya indirectly. One possibility would be to help Libyans in Tunisia prepare for a return to their native country and help Tunisians prepare to assist Libya in its efforts to modernize.

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