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Hunger, displacement and migration

A joint innovative approach to assessing needs of migrants in Libya



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vam
food security analysis



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Key highlights

- In Libya, IOM and WFP conducted joint analysis combining face-to-face and web-based interviews. Methodologies used allowed to capture a varied sample of both female and male migrants from various age groups originating from 36 countries. Almost two-thirds of interviewed migrants originated from neighboring countries in Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa, including Algeria, Egypt, Niger, Chad and Sudan.
- The strongest migration drivers identified among respondents were economic reasons, followed by insecurity, persecution and conflict, limited ability to meet food needs, environmental degradation and climate related shocks. According to the web-based survey, six out of ten respondents expressed having had a choice to leave their country of origin, while four reported not having a choice but to leave based on their own perception.
- Nearly half of interviewed migrants during face-to-face surveys reported being aware of potential risks of migration prior to departing from their countries of origin, such as robbery, detention or facing serious transportation accidents. Nonetheless, nearly 80 percent reported not having put any measures in place to mitigate these serious risks during their journey.
- The average cost of the journey to reach Libya was estimated at USD 700, indicating the need for a certain economic capacity to pay for the travel to Libya. Nearly 40 percent encountered a debt to finance partially or entirely migration related costs.
- Results from face-to-face interviews identified that two-thirds of interviewed migrants were sending remittances to their home countries, with an average cash amount of USD 95 per month. The web-based interviews highlighted that the main use of remittances in countries of origin were to meet food needs (19%) and pay off debts (17%). Health and education related costs were also found to be important needs covered by remittances.
- Main challenges faced by migrants in Libya are related to security and finding opportunities to make a living, closely followed by high food prices. The recent conflict and violence in Tripoli and surrounding governorates have raised much concern, also among host communities who reported insecurity/violence as one of their top concerns.
- Over half of migrants reported to have been worried about not having enough food to eat. Results from face-to-face interviews, showed that a third of migrants were found to have poor and borderline food consumption, compared to 12 percent of Libyan citizens. Similarly, web-based surveys found that 33 percent of migrants and 12 percent of citizens reported having to compromise their food consumption by eating only one meal. Food coping strategies were adopted by 57 percent of migrants due to lack of food or means to buy food. Most concerningly, one in four migrants reported to have gone a whole day without eating in the past month.
- Migrants who come from East African and South/Southeast Asian countries were found to be more vulnerable to food insecurity than other migrants. Unaccompanied minors are of particular concern. Moreover, those interviewed along migration routes in Central and Eastern Libya as well as those who arrived more recently also significantly showed more vulnerability to food insecurity.
- Intentions to return home were reported by one quarter of respondents, which can be attributed to the desire to visit family but also to the challenging living conditions in Libya. The lack of income and the need to repay debts incurred to reach Libya in the first place were identified as critical factors impeding those who wish to return.
- Attention must focus on ensuring migrants' safety in Libya, enhancing their capacities to support themselves to meet their food and other essential needs, and providing adequate support to those who wish to return to their home countries. Comprehensive migration management policies, including labour migration programmes, are of critical importance.

Background

Libya has been an attractive destination for economic and seasonal migrants since the late 1960s, largely for migrant workers from Arab and African countries. From the 1970s to the 1990s, the Libyan government encouraged migration from Arab countries and later from Sub Saharan African countries to temporarily meet low-skilled labour needs in private and public sectors such as agriculture, construction and domestic work. Migrant workers were attracted by the country's relative wealth and by an open-door policy, which granted them visa-free entry¹. In addition, Libya's geographical proximity to southern Europe also resulted in a mix of regular and irregular migrants attempting to reach the shores of the European Union via Libya.²

Prior to the 2011 revolution, Libya had an estimated 2.5 million migrant workers³ due to better employment opportunities than in many countries in the region⁴. Migrant workers were employed in many sectors, ranging from oil and construction to health and agriculture. While most migrant workers left with the start of conflict in 2011, IOM estimates that around 655,000 migrants are still present in the country as of July 2019⁵, originating mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa but also from other African countries, Asia and the Middle East. Some are merely transiting with the plan or desire to continue their journey to Europe, while a majority come with expectations of finding work and remain in Libya for significant lengths of time⁶. Libya's main sources of income have been from oil and natural gas revenues. Despite the political instability and the ongoing conflict, oil production continues allowing for some employment opportunities for migrant workers. However, the conditions of migrants inside Libya remain inherently complex. With another spike in conflict, in and around the Tripoli region, as well as the ongoing deterioration of the economic situation, many migrants are faced with major human security and livelihood risks as well as increasing burdens in meeting their food needs.

The protracted nature of the crisis and prolonged years of conflict have also taken a toll on the Libyan population. Political instability has led to a deterioration of macroeconomic fundamentals, currency devaluation, and the inflation of food and fuel prices. While most market assessment reports⁷ indicate that food is generally available, food prices and inability to access cash have been on the rise due to liquidity issues in the country. This complex crisis has not only impacted migrants in Libya but has also led to the reduced resilience of Libyan citizens. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix has tracked 301,407 internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of July 2019, of which 93 percent were displaced due to deterioration of security⁸. The situation of Libyans is also of serious concern. Further assessments of the challenges they face with regards to their food security and basic needs, in relationship to the state of migrants can provide a more holistic understanding of the humanitarian needs in the country.

Purpose

To better understand and assess the overall situation of migrants and affected host communities in Libya, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) collaborated to collect information through a mixed-methods' approach comprised of face-to-face interviews and remote web-based surveys. The objective of the study was to jointly collect credible information and conduct joint analysis to:

¹ Migration Policy Centre (2013): EU Neighbourhood Migration Report: http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Libya.pdf

² Zampagni, F. et al (2017): Migrants in Countries in Crisis: Libya Case Study: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Libya_CaseStudy_FINAL.pdf

³ IOM (2011): The humanitarian response to the Libyan crisis <https://publications.iom.int/books/humanitarian-response-libyan-crisis>

⁴ European Training Foundation (2014): Labour Market and Employment Policy in Libya https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/01BE9A2F283BC6B2C1257D1E0041161A_Employment%20policies_Libya.pdf

⁵ IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (2019): Libya – Migrant Report 26 (June-July 2019): <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/libya-%E2%80%94-migrant-report-26-june-july-2019>

⁶ Mixed Migration in Libya (2018): <https://reachinitiative.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=6aaac5f77087478a987fc3bb6804f4a7>

⁷ Joint Market Monitor Initiative (various publications): <https://www.reachresourcecentre.info/country/libya/theme/cash/cycle/678/#cycle-678>

⁸ IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (2019) : Libya – IDP and Returnee Report 26 (June – July 2019): <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/libya-%E2%80%94-idp-returnee-report-round-26-june-july-2019>

1. Inform development and humanitarian actors on the status of migrants and affected Libyan citizens, including their interactions;
2. Identify the most vulnerable groups, their food security situation, the challenges they face and other basic needs to determine how best to assist these populations in their current location; and
3. Provide an understanding of the underlying drivers of migration and intentions, and what role food security plays in migration decision-making.

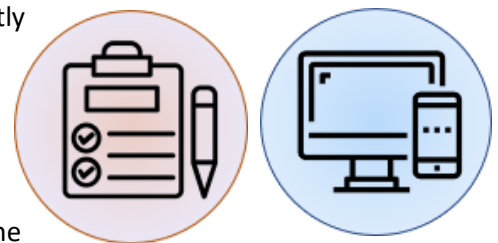
Methodology

While lack of timely information and access to affected areas remain a significant challenge for the humanitarian community in Libya, in recent years WFP and IOM have made significant improvements in monitoring food security and other needs of the affected populations, as well as population mobility trends. IOM's DTM regularly captures information on mobile populations to monitor and understand the trends of migration flows and population mobility throughout Libya.

The Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS) is part of DTM's survey component used in Libya for conducting face-to-face interviews with migrants at the individual level, using purposive sampling on a rolling basis. The questionnaire includes questions on migration dynamics vis-a-vis intentions, migration decision-making, routes, potential return to the country of origin and other migration related aspects. In 2019, DTM incorporated food security related modules in the FMS questionnaire, and ran a successful pilot in 17 governorates throughout the month of January.

WFP's Migration Pulse initiative captures the voices of affected populations, using anonymous web-based surveys⁹. In practical terms, when respondents navigate to a link that is broken or inaccurate, they encounter a survey form instead of a broken link notification. The pulse collects high-frequency sex- and- age disaggregated data on the drivers of migration, movement intentions, challenges faced, needs and food security status of displaced populations in sensitive and hard-to-reach environments.

In the framework of this study, data obtained via both methodologies was jointly analyzed to provide a holistic picture of the situation of migrants and affected host communities in Libya. IOM and WFP worked closely together to ensure that each data collection exercise collected complementary quantitative and qualitative information.



The FMS survey gathered in-depth data on food consumption patterns, income sources and remittances, as well as migration drivers, risks and movement intentions through face-to-face interviews. Meanwhile, Migration Pulse questionnaires explored the situation of migrants and host communities on a thematic level, collecting perceptual data on food security and other main needs, as well as main concerns. Two open ended questions gave respondents the chance to share additional information about migration drivers and intentions to return home.

⁹ WFP contracted RIWI Corporation to implement web-based surveys using its patented Random Domain Intercept Technology (RDIT™). Detailed information regarding RDIT can be found on the service provider's website: <https://riwi.com/>

Data collected and limitations

Between January and May 2019, WFP surveyed a total of **2,545 migrants** across the 22 governorates of Libya, including **827 migrants from West Africa, 442 from East Africa, 526 from North Africa, 507 from Middle East and 243 from South and Southeast Asia**¹⁰. Moreover, **10,029 Libyan citizens** were surveyed across the country via web during this same period.

Internet usage in Libya has grown significantly since the early 2000s, and mobile ownership covers nearly 95 percent of the population.¹¹ This was also reflected in the FMS, where more than a third of interviewed migrants reported relying on mobile phone service providers to transfer remittances back home. However, a level of selection bias cannot be ruled out. Given the nature of the web-based methodology, this sample may be biased towards literate internet users who live in urban areas, hence it is not representative of the migrant population in Libya. Consequently, weights were applied in the analysis to avoid distortions resulting from geographic representation imbalances across population distribution of migrant groups in Libya. Applied weights were determined based on the DTM Mobility Tracking migrant stock figures from July 2019.

In January 2019, a total of **1,650 migrants** in 17 out of 22 governorates of Libya were interviewed through the FMS pilot. Migrants were interviewed face-to-face in public spaces, such as job recruitment points where migrants gather for short-term casual labour, other urban locations like markets and public buildings, and transit points along key migration routes. Information collected at job recruitment points may suffer from selection bias due to over-representation of young men who look for work in these locations. During this pilot round, only five percent of interviews were with women migrants, which may have been influenced by women's inability to partake in income generating opportunities. And that may explain their limited presence at job recruitment points. Furthermore, migrants who are integrated in the formal economy may not be captured due to the location of interviews. However, these challenges and limitations will be systematically addressed in future assessments, while the findings of this study present a non-generalizable baseline.

Additionally, those in detention centers, in rapid transit, or staying with their employers are not captured in this exercise. The exercise also does not distinguish between economic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Profile of survey respondents

The demographics and socio-economics of migrants play a large role in their livelihoods and employment opportunities. Migrants responding to both the face-to-face interviews and online surveys come to Libya from various countries, with diverse capabilities, but similar goals. Backgrounds of migrants (i.e. socioeconomic status) may determine their status in a host country. Furthermore, commonalities in population groups form new communities, and therefore it is important to explore the situation of migrants in Libya by countries and regions of origin, as well as other important demographics including time of arrival, sex and age and education level.

Countries of origin

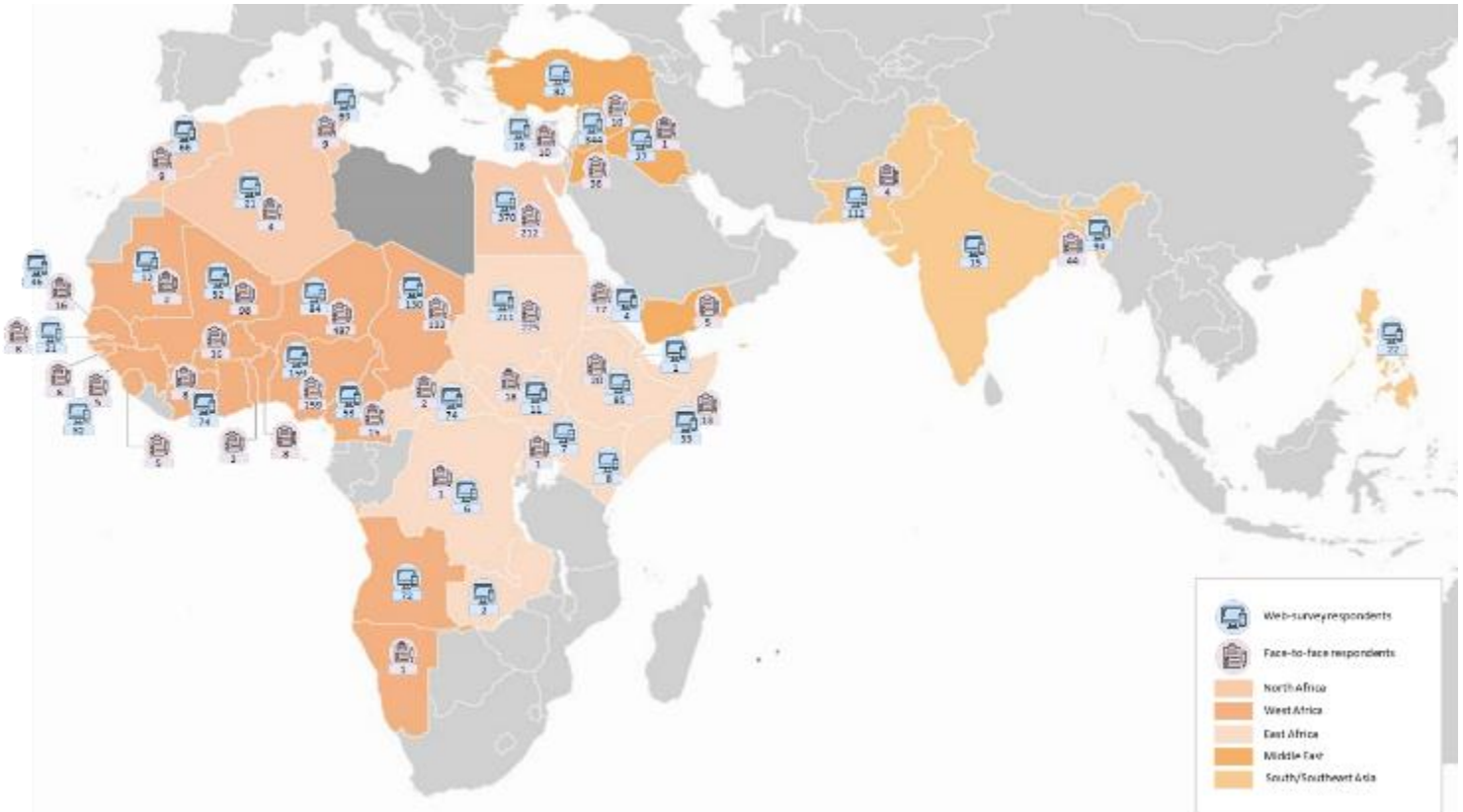
WFP interviewed migrants in Libya originating from 36 different countries through web-based surveys. The sample included migrants from West, East and North Africa, the Middle East as well as South and Southeast Asia regions. The majority of interviewed migrants come from African countries including Sudan, Nigeria, Chad, Ghana, Ethiopia and Niger, while most of those originating from Asia are from Pakistan and Bangladesh. In addition, the survey also captured a significant number of Middle Eastern respondents, mainly Syrian.

¹⁰ The minimum sample requirement was 400 completed surveys for East Africans, North Africans and Middle Easterners (95% confidence level, margin of error inferior of 5%), 800 completed surveys for West Africans and 240 completed surveys for South/Southeast Asians. Sample requirements have been reached and exceeded for all groups

¹¹ World Bank (2017): Individuals using the internet (% of population): <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/it.net.user.zs>

IOM’s DTM, through its FMS, conducted face-to-face interviews with migrants from 35 countries. The largest share of interviews were conducted with migrants from Niger, followed by Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria and Chad. Migrants originating from neighboring countries to Libya, accounted for 65 percent of this sample.

Map 1: Number of respondents by country of origin – FMS survey and Migration Pulse



Duration of stay

Length of stay in Libya is one of the main factors found to have a direct correlation with the situation of the migrant population. According to the web-based survey results, those who arrived in the country within the last year and a half are less established, as they struggle for sustainable livelihoods. Inversely, migrants who settled in Libya prior to 2017 were found to be in a better situation. Time-frames in the analysis were determined based on changes in domestic and foreign political policies, which have affected migration routes into Libya and to Europe.

Additionally, analysis of the FMS results found that migrants who have been in Libya for less than six months were more vulnerable compared to those who arrived earlier. Those who arrived less than six months ago have a higher level of unemployment, with nearly 57 percent reporting to be unemployed. These findings indicate that migrants who had recently arrived in Libya are faced with a significant number of challenges.

One in five migrants reported to have recently arrived in Libya, majority coming from West Africa (60%) followed by East Africa (17%).



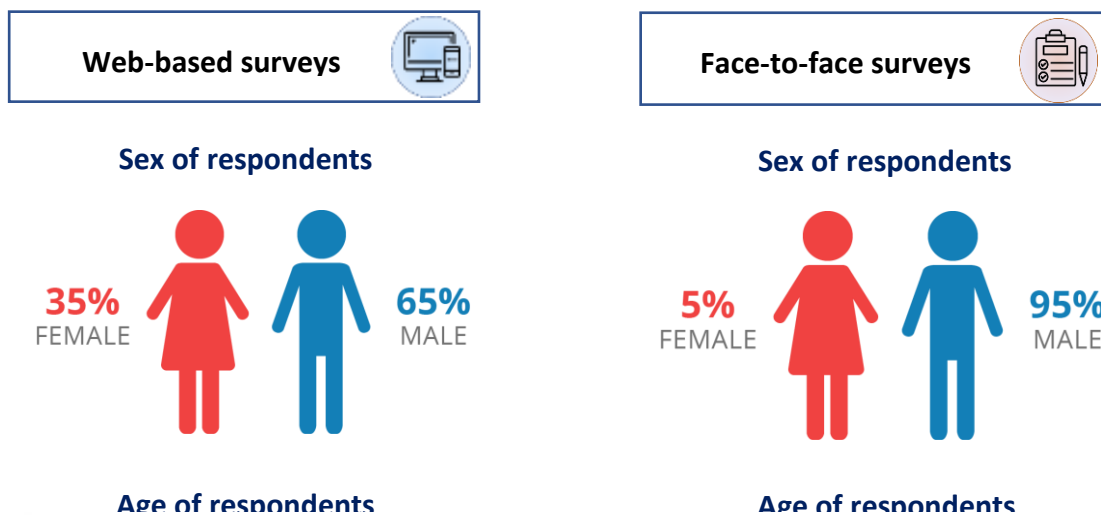
Sex and age

Disparities within the migrant population were also considered in this study, where independent variables such as sex and age data were triangulated with key indicators. The web-based technology managed to reach a high proportion of women compared to the percentage captured in the FMS sample size. Women migrants were under-represented in the face-to-face interviews, as FMS respondents were reached in public spaces (mainly job recruitment points), where women migrants may struggle to compete with men migrants over casual labour opportunities, as a majority are short-term physically intensive jobs. Furthermore, as women continue to face limitations in their freedom of movement due to insecurity and are at risk of being exploited, they are less visible.

Moreover, about two-thirds of the sampled population in the web-based surveys was found to be under the age of 34, including 11 percent of minors¹². Out of these children, around a third were identified as unaccompanied minors. The percentage of minors taking part in the web-based surveys corresponded with the estimated proportion of unaccompanied minors in the Libya migrant stock via DTM Mobility Tracking.¹³

Comparisons of demographics and profiles reiterate the biases in both methodologies; where coverage problems of web-based surveys may have resulted due to internet access by the migrant population, so does purposive sampling¹⁴ with the face-to-face interviews at public sites. However, the two feasible data collection methodologies for Libya, together, provide a clear picture of the situation of migrants in the country. Demographic details of interviewed migrants via FMS can be seen in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Comparison of sex and age between migrants interviewed via FMS and Migration Pulse



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