

**Statement of Valerie Amos, United Nations Under-Secretary-General
for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator**

Launch of the Regional Flash Appeal for the Libyan Crisis

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Room XXVII

Palais des Nations

Welcome to this briefing on Libya. Since the beginning of the crisis in Libya almost three months ago, over 803,000 people have fled the country. The conflict, the breakdown of state infrastructure, and shortages of cash and fuel, are causing serious problems for the population of Libya. Approximately 5,000 people remain stranded at border points in Egypt, Tunisia, and Niger. Some 200,000 people are IDP's living with host communities. Almost 58,000 internally displaced people are living in spontaneous settlements in eastern parts of Libya. Widespread shortages are paralyzing the country in ways which will gravely impact the general population in the weeks and months ahead; particularly the poorest and the most vulnerable. We do not yet have an accurate figure of the total number of casualties since the start of the crisis.

Today, humanitarian agencies are most concerned about the people living in areas where fighting continues. In Misrata, which remains at the forefront of our concern, shelling and fighting has been ongoing in parts of the city for over two months. Stocks are available, but some people are running short of food, water and other basics. Medical facilities need supplies and more trained personnel and the violence has made access, assessments, and a humanitarian response extremely difficult. Land routes into the city are blocked, but food, medical supplies and Non Food Items (NFIs) have been delivered by a dozen ships.

Approximately 80 per cent of Libyans live in the west of the country. The situation in the Western Mountains region, where an estimated 500,000 people live, has received less attention, but is also of grave concern. Fighting has reduced access to food and medical supplies and 50,000 people have fled to Tunisia, many of whom are now residing with Tunisian host families who have generously received them.

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Most of the eastern part of Libya has now stabilized after heavy fighting in March and early April. Basic services and essential products appear to be available, but an influx of 58,000 displaced people has exacerbated humanitarian requirements there.

In terms of the humanitarian response, over 4,000 metric tons of humanitarian aid have been delivered to Misrata, including food assistance, medical supplies, and water and sanitation materials; the vast majority of which has entered through the port. More than 13,000 people, mainly Third Country Nationals, have been evacuated from the city by boat.

The World Food Programme has delivered some assistance, and Non-Governmental Organizations have taken great risks to reach the main towns of Nalut and Zintan in the western part of Libya with medical aid.

Around 2,200 people are in refugee camps in southern Tunisia. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and its partners are providing food and non-food items to these refugees, as well as to host families.

In my statement to the Security Council on 9 May, I called upon the Council to continue to insist that all parties to this conflict respect International Humanitarian Law and ensure civilians are spared. Despite the repeated requests of the Secretary-General and the international community as a whole, civilians are still coming under fire in these areas of conflict and this has to stop. The reported use of cluster bombs, sea and land-mines, as well as deaths and injuries caused by aerial bombing, show a callous disregard for the physical and psychological well being of civilians. There are reports of sexual violence including rape. We are also concerned that children could be recruited as combatants. Disappearances and abductions are reported and the shelling of the port in Misrata has prevented humanitarian ships from accessing the port.

All parties need to agree to a humanitarian pause in the conflict in Misrata and other areas. This would provide respite from violence for the civilian population and enable those who wish to leave to do so. An independent assessment of the humanitarian situation could be conducted and a pause would also enable delivery of essential medical supplies and other relief items; as well as the evacuation of the remaining Third Country Nationals, the wounded, and others who require emergency medical assistance. My colleagues and I will continue to press for this.

The manner in which sanctions are implemented and monitored is causing serious delays in the arrival of commercial goods. In addition, the conflict has caused a severe disruption of supply lines within the country, which has already led to shortages of fuel, difficulties in obtaining commodities including foodstuffs, medicines, and other essential goods and there are also severe cash shortages throughout the country.

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The current situation will contribute to a continued need for humanitarian assistance in Libya in the months ahead. These structural vulnerabilities need to be addressed to ensure that the adverse affects on the civilian population are minimized.

The next two to three months will be a critical period for Libya.

The original Flash Appeal of 5 March 2011 initially sought US\$160 million to support humanitarian needs in Libya and neighboring countries affected by the crisis. The Appeal was partially updated to reflect the changing needs in Libya and its neighboring countries on the first of April. This update increased the funding requirements to \$310 million.

The fast changing circumstances and increased operations inside Libya have required a major revision of the Appeal. What we present to you today is the May revision of the *Regional Flash Appeal for the Libyan Crisis* covering the period from May to early September 2011. The Appeal today **seeks \$407 million**. To date, we have received \$175 million, which is 43 per cent of what is needed. The Humanitarian Coordinator will expand further on the Flash Appeal.

I would like to thank Member States for their extensive support to date. I count on your continued support for the humanitarian effort in Libya and in the region in order to ensure a continuous and timely humanitarian response.

Thank you.

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