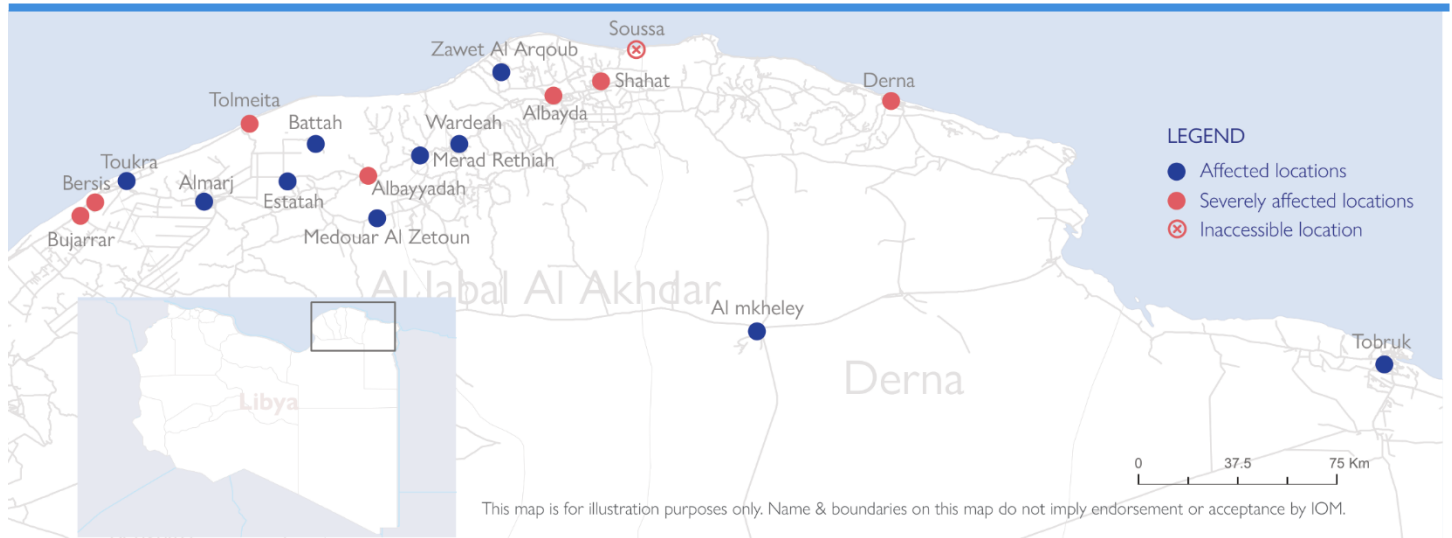


Libya: Flood update

Flash Update No. 3

16 September 2023 (as of 5pm local time)



Areas affected by Storm Daniel (IOM)

Highlights

- Nearly a week after Storm Daniel hit northeastern Libya, unprecedented flooding has left 3,958 people dead according to the WHO and more than 9,000 still missing. These figures are expected to rise as search-and-rescue crews work tirelessly to find survivors.
- Contradictory reports of two dams overwhelmed by rapidly rising water in the northeast – the Jaza dam between Derna and Benghazi and the Qattara dam near Benghazi – have raised concerns of yet another devastating dam collapse. However, authorities say that both dams are in good condition and functioning well.
- According to the latest data from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, more than 40,000 people have been displaced across northeastern Libya, though these figures are likely to be higher as access restrictions have limited data collection in the worst-affected areas, such as Derna, where at least 30,000 people have been displaced.
- With thousands of displaced people now on the move, the risk of exposure to landmines and Explosive Ordnance of War (ERW) leftover from years of conflict is on the rise, as flood waters have now shifted landmines and ERW, including into areas previously free of weapon contamination, per the International Committee of the Red Cross.
- According to UNICEF, nearly 300,000 children exposed to Storm Daniel now face increased risk of diarrhea and cholera, dehydration and malnutrition, as well as increased risks of violence and exploitation. The National Centre for Disease Control has already detected at least 55 children poisoned as a result of drinking polluted water in Derna.
- Despite significant access challenges, authorities and humanitarian organizations are managing to reach more people in need as response efforts are quickly scaled-up. UN Member States and multilateral institutions continue to increase their support through much-needed funding, the deployment of specialized response teams and in-kind assistance.
- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) visited Labraq and Derna on 16 September, together with the assessment team comprised of the UN Agencies, Funds and Programme.

Situation overview

Nearly a week after Storm Daniel hit northeastern Libya, unleashing devastating flooding that swept away large swathes of entire cities, the humanitarian toll of the disaster continues to mount. According to the World Health Organization, unprecedented flooding has left 3,958 people dead and more than 9,000 still missing. These figures are expected to rise in the coming days and weeks as search-and-rescue crews work tirelessly to find survivors.

After the collapse of two dams wrought havoc in Derna, reports of two more dams overwhelmed by rapidly rising water in the northeast – the Jaza dam between Derna and Benghazi and the Qattara dam near Benghazi – have raised serious concerns that yet another dam collapse could trigger even more destruction and human suffering. However, authorities say that both dams are in good condition and functioning well, adding that water pumps are being installed to relieve pressure on the Jaza dam.

Storm Daniel's multi-faceted impacts have severely exacerbated already high levels of pre-existing needs and vulnerabilities, damaged or destroyed scores of homes, hospitals, schools and other critical infrastructure, and significantly increased the affected population's exposure to waterborne diseases and protection risks. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), nearly 300,000 children exposed to Storm Daniel now face increased risk of diarrhea and cholera as well as dehydration and malnutrition, while unaccompanied and separated children are more vulnerable to violence and exploitation after the storm.

The humanitarian situation remains particularly grim in Derna, where urgent multi-sectoral assistance is required to save lives and ease suffering. With thousands of injured people in desperate need of medical assistance, Derna's limited operational health facilities are facing staff shortages and a lack of critical equipment, medicines and supplies, including antibiotics and chronic disease medications as well as surgical instruments and body bags. The city is also dealing with severe drinking water shortages, as water networks are likely no longer operational in many areas, while there are reports that certain sources of drinking water have been contaminated. The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has already detected at least 55 children poisoned as a result of drinking polluted water in Derna.

The widespread damage and destruction of homes has forced thousands to seek refuge in makeshift shelters, schools and in overcrowded houses with family and friends, many of whom themselves have been affected by the storm. According to the latest data from the International Organization for Migration's [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), more than 40,000 people have been displaced across northeastern Libya, though these figures are likely higher as access restrictions have limited data collection in the worst-affected areas, such as Derna, where at least 30,000 people have been displaced.

With thousands of displaced people now on the move, the risk of exposure to landmines and Explosive Ordnance of War (ERW) leftover from years of conflict is on the rise, as flood waters have now shifted landmines and ERW, including into areas previously free of weapon contamination, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Landmines and ERW pose additional safety risks for the affected population as well as first responders and aid workers in the aftermath of Daniel.

Humanitarian Needs and Response

Storm Daniel has triggered an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in northeastern Libya. Authorities are leading search-and-rescue operations and delivering humanitarian aid in the most affected areas, though severe infrastructure damage and fuel shortages continue to hinder response operations. National response efforts are being bolstered by increasing support from the international community, following the authorities' request for assistance to scale-up the humanitarian response and early recovery efforts. The UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team is now on the ground to support response coordination and assessments, including an ongoing rapid inter-agency assessment in Derna, Shahat, Albayda and Al Marg.

While assessments are still in the very early stages, preliminary analysis suggests that the most critical needs include health, food, water and sanitation as well as shelter and non-food item support. Some of the most vulnerable groups include internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants, returnees and refugees, who will require tailored assistance and protection support to address their specific needs and vulnerabilities. Even before the flooding, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported that eastern Libya was home to around 46,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), including some 2,800 IDPs in Derna and 3,100 in Ajdabiya, as well as large numbers of forcibly displaced people from countries such as

Sudan and Syria. The storm has likely re-displaced many of these vulnerable populations, further depleting their already limited resources and potentially increasing their dependence on negative coping mechanisms to survive.

Despite significant access challenges, authorities and humanitarian organizations are managing to reach more people in need with assistance as response efforts are quickly scaled-up. The World Food Programme (WFP) has already begun delivering food assistance to more than 5,000 families displaced by flooding. WFP plans to scale-up its response with the aim of providing monthly food assistance to 100,000 people in flood-affected areas for three months. UNICEF is procuring around 50 tons of lifesaving relief supplies, including hygiene kits, winter clothing and essential medical supplies, and has supported the NCDC to dispatch some 32,000 chlorine water purification tablets to meet the needs of affected people. UNHCR has delivered core relief items, including blankets, plastic tarpaulin and kitchen kits, to around 1,200 people Derna and dispatched similar items to Benghazi to assist some 5,000 people.

UN Member States and multilateral institutions have quickly stepped up their support for the response, providing much-needed humanitarian funding and deploying specialized equipment, supplies and response teams to support authorities in responding to the most urgent needs of flood-affected people. This support complements the US\$10 million already allocated by the Emergency Relief Coordinator through the [Central Emergency Response Fund](#) to help kick-start relief efforts. Continued generosity from donors will be needed to ensure that UN agencies and humanitarian partners can reach the 250,000 people targeted for assistance over the next three months through the recently launched \$71.4 million [Flash Appeal](#).