



United Nations Support Mission in Libya
بعثة الأمم المتحدة للدعم في ليبيا



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

BUSINESS AS USUAL:

A close-up photograph of several dark-skinned hands, some wearing a green cap, resting on a metal structure. The hands appear weary and are positioned in the lower half of the image, partially obscured by a blue banner.

Human Rights Violations and Abuses
Against Migrants, Asylum-Seekers and
Refugees in Libya

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Executive summary

In Libya, systematic and widespread human rights violations and abuses against migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees persist with impunity. They are entrenched within an exploitative model that preys on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in situations of heightened vulnerability and has become “business as usual” – a brutal and normalized reality. These grave violations and abuses have evolved into deliberate, profit-driven practices that together form a ruthless and violent business model.

Across the country, migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees are forcibly rounded up, abducted, separated from their families, arbitrarily arrested and detained, and transferred without due process – often at gunpoint – to official¹, unofficial², or illegal³ detention facilities. There, they endure prolonged detention and are coerced through torture and inhumane treatment into paying for their release. Trafficking networks, often with ties to State actors, further prey on these vulnerabilities for profit through practices, including forced labour, sexual exploitation, ransom and extortion, the sale and transfer of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees between traffickers, and the confiscation and resale of personal belongings and identification documents. Thousands are intercepted at sea through dangerous methods and forcibly disembarked and returned to Libya, which is considered by United Nations entities and the authorities of various third States as unsafe for disembarkation, perpetuating the exploitative cycle of human rights violations and abuses. Mass graves containing the bodies of migrants have been discovered in the south, east and west of Libya, with indications that more remain undiscovered.⁴

This report, jointly published by UNSMIL and OHCHR, highlights patterns of human rights violations and abuses perpetrated with impunity against migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Libya, as documented throughout 2024 and 2025. The findings reveal that widespread and systematic violations and abuses against migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees persist, perpetrated by traffickers, smugglers, armed groups, and State-affiliated actors involved in migration and border management. The report sets out key recommendations to the Libyan authorities and the international community aimed at addressing these violations and abuses and ensuring effective protection.

¹ All official detention centres listed are facilities operated by the Ministry of Interior's (MOI) Department for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM).

² The Tobacco Factory in Ghot al-Sha'al detention facility, operated by the Head of the General Security Apparatus under MOI; the al-Mabani/Ghot al-Sha'al and Bir al-Ghanam detention facilities, operated by the Deputy Director of DCIM; and the al-Maya facility, run by the Stability Support Apparatus (SSA), are all unofficial detention sites. Although these facilities operate under State security agencies, they are not formally affiliated with the DCIM. Liaising with the officials managing these facilities has consistently proven difficult.

³ Osama detention facilities, including Shuhada al-Nassr and other secret detentions, Misfat al-Zawiya detention facility, Mohamed Bahroun detention facilities and other secret detention facilities in al-Zawiya and other detention facilities run by traffickers in al-Zawiya; Tamanhint military base, which houses multiple migrant detention facilities, under the control of armed groups affiliated with the Libyan National Army, among others; Bir al-Ghanam has several hangars operated by traffickers.

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/07/peace-and-stability-libya-go-hand-hand-human-rights-says-high>; <https://www.iom.int/news/discovery-mass-grave-65-migrants-bodies-libya>; <https://x.com/UNHumanRights/status/1890074252378067021>; <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-emergency-teams-support-migrants-libya-following-discovery-mass-grave-and-underground-detention-sites>.

دولة ليبية

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1

**Background, methodology and
legal framework**

Background

Since 2015, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)⁵ and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have documented patterns of human rights violations and abuses against migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees in Libya, revealing a deeply rooted exploitative business model.⁶ Aggravated smuggling and trafficking in persons – often perpetrated by organized networks with ties to State actors – exploit the extreme situations of vulnerability faced by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. These vulnerabilities stem from the criminalization of irregular entry, stay and exit,⁷ exacerbated by the lack of safe and regular migration pathways, and are further fuelled by pervasive discrimination, racism, and xenophobia.

Libya's approach to migration governance – compounded by restrictive migration policies across Europe's Mediterranean borders – provides a conducive environment for actors in the illicit economy to perpetrate human rights violations and abuses. International support to the Libyan authorities involved in border and migration management, including technical, logistical, and financial assistance, is often provided with inadequate human rights risks assessment, safeguards or monitoring, as previously highlighted by the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya.⁸ The lack of human rights due diligence has resulted in serious adverse consequences for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

The absence of sufficient protective measures and rights-based migration laws, coupled with the lack of comprehensive national legislation for the protection of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees – including survivors of human trafficking – perpetuates a cycle of exploitation and impunity and limits the ability of affected individuals to seek adequate protection and remedies.

Methodology

This report is primarily based on information gathered by UNSMIL/OHCHR between January 2024 and November 2025. It draws on firsthand data collected through individual interviews with

⁵ In accordance with UNSMIL's mandate, as established in Resolution 2542 (2020) and most recently extended by the United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2025 through Resolution 2796, the Mission's responsibilities include human rights monitoring and reporting.

⁶ See previous joint UNSMIL/OHCHR thematic reports on the situation of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers in Libya: *Detained and Dehumanized: Report on human rights abuses against migrants in Libya*, 13 December 2016, https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/migrants_report-en.pdf; *Desperate and Dangerous: Report on the human rights situation of migrants and refugees in Libya*, 20 December 2018, <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/libya-migration-report-18dec2018.pdf>; *Lethal Disregard: Search and rescue and the protection of migrants in the central Mediterranean Sea*, 30 May 2021, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR-thematic-report-SAR-protection-at-sea.pdf; *A Pandemic of Exclusion: The impact of COVID-19 on the human rights of migrants in Libya*, 30 August 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/pandemic-exclusion-impact-covid-19-human-rights-migrants-libya>; *Unsafe and Undignified: The forced expulsion of migrants from Libya*, 25 November 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/unsafe-and-undignified-forced-expulsion-migrants-libya>; *Nowhere but Back: Assisted return, reintegration and the human rights protection of migrants in Libya*, 11 October 2022, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Report-on-assisted-return-and-reintegration.pdf.

⁷ Article 1 of Law No. 19 of 2010 on combating illegal immigration stipulates that 'In the application of the provisions of this Law, anyone who enters or resides in the territory of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya without permission or permission from the competent authorities with the intention of settling there or crossing into another State shall be considered an illegal immigrant'.

⁸ See Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya (2023), Report of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session50/A_HRC_52_83_AdvanceEditedVersion-EN.docx. In para. 41, the Mission established that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that migrants across Libya are victims of crimes against humanity and that acts of murder, enforced disappearance, torture, enslavement, sexual violence, rape and other inhumane acts are committed in connection with their arbitrary detention". It further found that it "has grounds to believe that the European Union and its member States, directly or indirectly, provided monetary and technical support and equipment, such as boats, to the Libyan Coast Guard and the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration that was used in the context of interception and detention of migrants" (para. 46).

over 95 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, both within and outside of Libya. The interviewees included 45 women and girls (aged 17 to 43) and 50 men (aged 20 to 51), from diverse places of origin, including Bangladesh, Cameroon, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

On 14 February 2024, UNSMIL/OHCHR conducted a monitoring visit to the Bir al-Ghanam detention facility, located 90 km south-west of Tripoli, as facilitated by the Ministry of Interior (MOI). Despite repeated official requests since this visit, UNSMIL/OHCHR were denied access to several other detention centres in both eastern and western Libya operating under the MOI's Department for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM). This impacted UNSMIL/OHCHR's ability to accurately assess detention conditions and provide support measures to address alleged human rights violations. A wide range of documentary material, including medical reports, photographs, videos, and voice recordings, were further examined. This material provided additional context and corroborated individual accounts. Open-source information, including from social media and media outlets, was also analysed to supplement and cross-verify findings. Additionally, a review of secondary sources, including public communications from eastern and western Libyan authorities and reports from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), United Nations agencies, and journalists, was undertaken.

This report focuses on four distinct patterns of violations and abuses that have been systematically observed and documented to provide a comprehensive overview of the human rights challenges confronting migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees in Libya, including:

1. illegal and dangerous interceptions at sea and abuses following disembarkation in Libya,
2. violence at borders, collective expulsions, and *refoulement*,
3. human trafficking, slavery, forced labour, exploitation, and sexual and gender-based violence, and
4. arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, torture and ill-treatment, and discrimination.

Legal Framework

Libya has ratified several international human rights treaties that form the basis of its obligations to respect and protect the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. In addition, several protections for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees derive from customary international law. While Libya is not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, certain core principles contained therein – in particular the prohibition of refoulement – are binding on Libya as customary international law and through its obligations under international and regional human rights conventions.

Key international and regional instruments

Libya is bound by several core international treaties that require it to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all individuals within its jurisdiction, without discrimination, including migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. These treaties include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

(ICESCR), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), which variously guarantee a series of fundamental rights, such as the right to life, right to liberty and security of person, the prohibitions on torture and ill-treatment, slavery and discrimination, and the right to an adequate standard of living.

Both international and regional human rights frameworks to which Libya is a party further guarantee the right to leave any country,⁹ and prohibit slavery,¹⁰ torture and ill-treatment,¹¹ and arbitrary arrest and detention, among others.¹² All detainees must be treated humanely, and be protected from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, rape or other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, killing or any other form of violence.

Libya is obliged under both the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights to prohibit and criminalize all forms of slavery, servitude, and trafficking in human beings.¹³ It is also a State party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its supplementary protocols, notably the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. These instruments obligate Libya to take measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, protect and assist victims, and promote international cooperation to address transnational organized crime.

Libya's obligations toward refugees and asylum seekers are further reinforced by the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, which requires States Parties to use their best endeavours to receive refugees, to cooperate with international and regional bodies in addressing refugee situations, and to respect the principle of non-refoulement.¹⁴

Additional obligations arise under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Libya also ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW) in June 2024, reinforcing its duty to uphold the rights of migrant workers and their families. Notably, the ICMW and the Arab Charter prohibit collective expulsion.¹⁵

Libya is not a State party to the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED). Nevertheless, enforced disappearance results in a violation of several substantive and procedural provisions of the ICCPR, to which Libya is a party.¹⁶

In addition, Libya is a State party to the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR Convention), which directs coastal states to establish national Search and Rescue (SAR) zones in cooperation with neighboring states and to take primary responsibility for responding to SAR incidents that occur within their region, either through deploying national vessels, coordinating responses with other states, or tasking private, commercial or other non-state actors

⁹ ICCPR, article 12(2); Arab Charter on Human Rights, article 27.

¹⁰ ICCPR, article 8; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 5; and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, article 10.

¹¹ ICCPR, article 7; Arab Charter on Human Rights, article 8; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 5.

¹² ICCPR, article 9(1); CRC, article 37; Arab Charter on Human Rights, article 14; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 6.

¹³ Arab Charter on Human Rights, article 10; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 5.

¹⁴ Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, articles 2(1)-(3).

¹⁵ ICMW, article 22; Arab Charter on Human Rights, article 26.

¹⁶ UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 36 (Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on the Right to Life), paras. 57-58.

to respond and render assistance.¹⁷ The SAR Convention also requires States providing the overall coordination of such SAR zones, on receiving information that a person is in distress within their SAR zone, to “take urgent steps to provide the most appropriate assistance available” and, where such assistance is rendered, to take primary responsibility for ensuring effective co-ordination and co-operation “[s]o that survivors assisted are disembarked from the assisting ship and delivered to a place of safety”.¹⁸

Libya has also ratified the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), which provides that any ship master at sea who is in a position to be able to provide assistance, upon receiving information that persons are in distress at sea must proceed with all speed to their assistance, and that “[t]his obligation to provide assistance applies regardless of the nationality or status of such persons or the circumstances in which they are found”.¹⁹ In General Comment No 36, the Human Rights Committee explained that the duty of States to protect the right to life includes ‘those individuals who find themselves in a situation of distress at sea, in accordance with their international obligations on rescue at sea’.²⁰

National laws

Libya has neither an asylum or anti-trafficking law, and it makes no formal legal distinctions between refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants, and victims of trafficking, including individuals with specific needs or children. Instead, migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, and victims of trafficking are governed by Law No. 19 of 2010 on Combating Illegal Migration, which criminalizes irregular entry, stay, and exit from Libya. It stipulates that foreigners present in the country without regular status “shall be penalized by detention with hard labour or by a fine not exceeding 1,000 LYD”. It further states that foreigners convicted of a crime contained in the law “shall be expelled from the territory...immediately upon execution of the sentence”.²¹

The legislation, which is implemented by DCIM, provides neither safeguards against refoulement nor access to asylum procedures or specific legal remedies. Although Libya is obligated to adhere to the international legal framework outlined above, the absence of national legislation adequately incorporating such standards results in significant protection gaps for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Libya.

Libyan law contains certain safeguards against arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and torture. The Code of Criminal Procedures requires that an arrest warrant be issued by the competent judicial authority before a person can be detained and provides that detainees shall be held only in ‘prisons designed for that purpose’.²² Only law enforcement officials vested with police powers under the law may carry out arrests, investigate certain criminal offences, and gather evidence.²³ Law No. 10 of 2013 criminalizes ordering, committing or acquiescing to torture, defined as “any act that inflicts physical or mental suffering for the purpose of extracting a confession for any act that a detainee has or has not committed, or because of discrimination,

¹⁷ SAR Convention, Annex 2.1.3.

¹⁸ SAR Convention, as amended by Resolution MSC.155(78) (2004), para. 3.1.9. “[T]he Party responsible for the search and rescue region in which such assistance is rendered shall exercise primary responsibility for ensuring such co-ordination and co-operation occurs, so that survivors assisted are disembarked from the assisting ship and delivered to a place of safety”.

¹⁹ SOLAS Convention, chapter V, regulation 33(1)

²⁰ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No 36 (n 28), paras 21, 63.

²¹ Law No. 19 of 2010 on Combating Illegal Migration, article 6.

²² Code of Criminal Procedures, articles 27, 30 and 31.

²³ Ibid, article 13.

regardless of its type, or revenge, regardless of its motive".²⁴ It further criminalises 'forced disappearance', defined as "kidnapping or detaining a human being or depriving the same of any of his personal freedoms, whether by force, threats or deceit".²⁵

²⁴ Law No. (10) of 2013 on the criminalisation of torture, forced disappearance and discrimination, article 2.

²⁵ Ibid, article 1.



2

Illegal and dangerous interceptions at sea and abuses following disembarkation in Libya

Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees continue to be intercepted at sea across multiple SAR regions in the Central Mediterranean Sea and off the coast of Libya by Libyan authorities.²⁶ The Central Mediterranean remains the world's deadliest migration route, with thousands of men, women, and children losing their lives each year while attempting to reach safety. Interceptions are carried out in ways that violate international human rights law, refugee law, maritime law, and the international customary law of the sea. Those intercepted are generally forcibly returned to various disembarkation points along the Libyan coast, despite the country being deemed unsafe for the disembarkation of migrants and refugees by the United Nations, including OHCHR, UNHCR, and IOM.²⁷ Domestic courts of third States have reached similar assessments. For example, on 17 February 2024, Italy's highest court – the Supreme Court of Cassation – ruled that handing over migrants to the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG) constituted the crime of "abandonment of incapacitated persons" and that the incident amounted to collective refoulement to a country not deemed safe, in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.²⁸ On 26 June 2024, the Italian Civil Court of Crotone, a first-instance court, declared that the LCG's operations "cannot be qualified as rescue operations".²⁹

Interceptions are carried out by Libyan actors presumed to be affiliated with the LCG, under the Ministry of Defence (MOD), or the General Administration of Coastal Security (GACS) under MOI, as well as other unidentified actors. Moreover, in June 2024, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) recognized Tunisia's SAR region, thereby expanding the Tunisian Coast Guard's operational area. This newly defined SAR region overlaps with parts of the Maltese and Libyan SAR zones and extends toward the Italian SAR region.³⁰ This expansion reportedly led to a pattern whereby the Tunisian Coast Guard intercepted vessels departing from Libya's western coast. Those intercepted and disembarked in Tunisia were reportedly routinely expelled to Libya or Algeria, often following periods of detention.

Interceptions by Libyan actors were frequently dangerous and involved threats, hazardous manoeuvres, and excessive use of force, putting people's lives at risk. These interceptions occur on one of the deadliest migratory routes in the world – the Mediterranean Sea – where 33,348 deaths and missing persons have been recorded from 2014 to 2025, with the actual figure likely to be much higher.³¹ On the Central Mediterranean Route alone, 1,699 dead or missing persons

²⁶ For previous reporting on this issue, see OHCHR (2021), Lethal Disregard: Search and rescue and the protection of migrants in the central Mediterranean Sea, pages 14-18, [OHCHR-thematic-report-SAR-protection-at-sea.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/ReportCentralMediterraneanSea.aspx).

²⁷ See Report of the Secretary-General, 30 August 2024. Smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya ([S/2024/642](https://www.un.org/News/Press-Releases/2024/08/2024-08-30-report-smuggling-migrants-and-trafficking-persons-mediterranean-sea)); The Secretary-General has similarly noted "Libya cannot be considered a place of safety for the disembarkation of refugees and migrants under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and the law of the sea." Report of the Secretary-General, Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019), S/2020/275, 2 September 2020, para. 10, available at: <https://undocs.org/S/2020/876>.

²⁸ Corte Suprema di Cassazione, Sez. V, Sentenza n. 4557/2024 (deposited 1 February 2024), http://i2.res.24o.it/pdf2010/S24/Documenti/2024/02/20/AllegatiPDF/P_4557_2024_SENTENZA.pdf. The ruling upheld the conviction of the captain of the Italian private vessel, Asso 28, who, on 30 July 2018, rescued 101 people in the Central Mediterranean and subsequently handed them over to the LCG, resulting in their return to Libya.

²⁹ Tribunale Civile di Crotone, Sentenza 26 giugno 2024, Humanity 1 (Italy), https://www.asqi.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2024_06_26_Court-of-Crotone_final-decision_ITA_geschwartz.pdf. See also: <https://realaw.blog/2024/09/27/the-court-of-crotone-on-the-libyan-coast-guard-interception-and-returns-to-libya-are-not-rescue-operations-will-it-be-enough-to-stop-eu-funding-by-andreina-de-leo/>

³⁰ Civil MRCC, 2024, From Libya to Tunisia: How the EU is extending the push-back regime by proxy in the Central Mediterranean. Available at: <https://civilmrcc.eu/criminalisation/from-libya-to-tunisia-how-the-eu-is-extending-the-push-back-regime-by-proxy-in-the-central-mediterranean/>. See also: Alarm Phone, 2024. Interrupted Sea: How the Tunisian National Guard uses violence against people on the move. Available at: <https://alarmphone.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Interrupted-sea-EN.pdf>.

³¹ IOM Libya (2025). Missing Migrants Project. Available at: <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>.

were recorded in 2024 and 1,314 dead or missing persons recorded between 1 January and 31 December 2025.³²

IOM recorded deaths and missing persons on the Central Mediterranean route³³	IOM recorded persons intercepted at sea and returned to Libya³⁴
2024: 1,699 dead or missing persons	2024: 21,762 migrants intercepted and returned to Libya
2025: 1,314 dead or missing persons	2025: 27,116 migrants intercepted and returned to Libya
2024-2025: 3,013 dead or missing persons	2024-2025: 48,878 migrants intercepted and returned to Libya
2014-2025: 25,927 dead or missing persons	

UNSMIL/OHCHR documented multiple incidents that occurred between January 2024 and September 2025, where individuals fell into the sea or jumped overboard as a result of actions of Libyan responders,³⁵ including the LCG and GACS, who on occasion reportedly fired gunshots near or at distressed vessels and at individuals on board or already in the water.

In some instances, the LCG directly fired at rescuers. For example, according to a statement by the organization Mediterranea Saving Humans, their rescue ship, Mare Jonio, came under fire from the LCG while conducting a rescue operation in international waters, in April 2024. The organization reported that the LCG opened fire as their crew was assisting migrants in distress.³⁶ In September 2024, the INGO Sea-Watch International posted images and video footage on social media depicting two LCG armed personnel firing at an overcrowded boat and forcibly boarding individuals onto their vessel.³⁷

On 24 August 2025, a grave and unprecedented incident occurred when the search and rescue vessel, MV Ocean Viking, came under heavy fire from the LCG while operating in international waters. Although no one on board was physically injured, the attack inflicted serious damage on the vessel and its equipment and placed at imminent risk the lives of 87 rescued migrants and asylum-seekers, as well as the humanitarian workers and crew.³⁸

On 26 September 2025, the Sea-Watch 5, an INGO-operated vessel, reported coming under fire while rescuing 66 individuals at sea. During the nighttime operation, the crew was threatened by a LCG vessel and instructed to leave “their waters.” Minutes after all individuals were safely aboard, a gunshot was fired.³⁹

³² IOM Libya, December 2025.

³³ IOM Libya, December 2025.

³⁴ IOM Libya, December 2025.

³⁵ Responders at sea in both western and eastern Libya include a variety of entities, such as, but not limited to, the Libyan Coast Guard, the General Administration of Coastal Security, the Counter-Terrorism Force, the Stability and Support Apparatus, Tariq Ibn Ziyad Battalion, Frogmen, and the Libya Special Naval Forces.

³⁶ <https://www.ilpost.it/2024/04/05/mediterranea-mare-jonio-migranti-spari-guardia-costiera-libica/>

³⁷ Sea-Watch International, post on X, 23 September 2024, https://x.com/seawatch_intl/status/1838267250861563998. See also: Sea-Watch International, post on X, 26 September 2024, https://x.com/seawatch_intl/status/1839364523771166898.

³⁸ <https://www.sosmediterranee.org/sos-med-libyan-attack/>

³⁹ https://x.com/seawatch_intl/status/1971561757974933897

In eastern Libya, the Tareq Bin Ziyad (TBZ) battalion and Frogmen, both units operating under the Libyan National Army (LNA), have taken over the role of law enforcement at sea. Organizations, including Sea-Watch International and EMERGENCY, have reported incidents where NGO vessels responding to distress calls were subjected to verbal abuse, intimidation, and threats if they did not vacate the scene and abort their rescue operations.⁴⁰

Between January 2024 and 30 September 2025, six male survivors from South Sudan, Sudan, and Syria, reported being intercepted in the Libyan SAR zone off the coast of western Libya following extended periods at sea. Four of them recounted use of live ammunition during these operations. All survivors described being forcibly boarded onto the responders' boat at sea, subjected to physical assault, and threatened with being thrown overboard if they resisted either the boarding or forced return to Libya. Following their interception, all individuals were reportedly detained with their personal belongings confiscated, including passports, identification documents, mobile phones, money, and other valuables. These items were not returned, leaving the survivors without essential resources or legal identification, drastically increasing their vulnerability.

Furthermore, UNSMIL/OHCHR reviewed videos and pictures posted on social media by INGOs operating at sea, allegedly showing the LCG and other maritime actors using physical violence to forcibly coerce individuals onto an LCG vessel during an incident on 19 June 2024.⁴¹

Rather than finding safety, intercepted migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees disembarked in Libya were forced back into a cycle of violations and abuse. Upon their return to Libya, they were systematically denied human rights protection at disembarkation points, including due process and the right to seek asylum.

Interceptions of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees at sea by Libyan authorities may encompass or themselves amount to unlawful acts, systematically depriving individuals of the protection guaranteed under international human rights and maritime law. These include the obligation to render assistance to persons in distress at sea, ensure safe and appropriate disembarkation, and to uphold the principle of non-refoulement. According to the *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders*,⁴² the authorities are urged to ensure the safety and dignity of all persons intercepted, which includes providing immediate assistance such as medical care, food, water, blankets, clothing, sanitary items, and safe opportunities for rest and recovery. Interceptions must also respect the principle of non-refoulement, ensuring that individuals are not returned to places where they risk persecution, torture or other serious harm. By pursuing migrants, asylum seekers and refugees at sea, using violence, and returning them to Libya – where they face high risks of arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, torture and ill treatment, and exploitation – the LCG and affiliated actors at sea frequently violate these obligations, rendering such interceptions illegal under international law.⁴³ Libyan authorities lack a comprehensive registration, screening and referral process for individuals following disembarkation, further exacerbating their vulnerability and lack of legal protections.

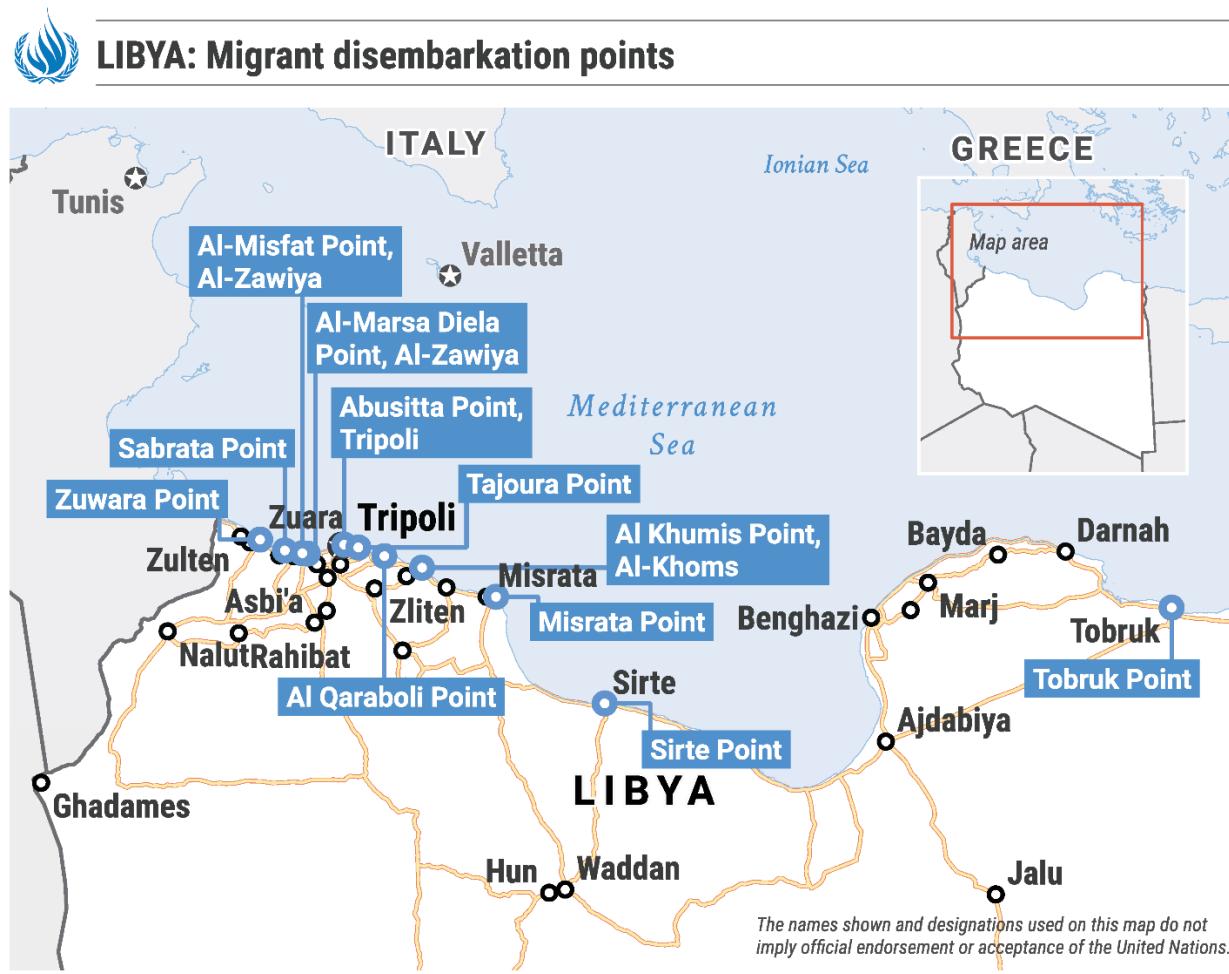
⁴⁰ Sea-Watch, Airborne Quarterly Factsheet: January to March 2024, 2024, https://sea-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Sea-Watch-Airborne-Quarterly-Factsheet_January-to-March-2024.pdf.

⁴¹ Sea-Watch International, post on X, 19 June 2024, <https://t.co/ptx8mXm0ml>.

⁴² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/recommended-principles-and-guidelines-human-rights-international>

⁴³ Ibid, page 114.

Figure 1: Migrant disembarkation points in Libya⁴⁴



Created: 30 January 2026 Sources: OHCHR, OSM, UN Geospatial

In several cases, individuals intercepted by the LCG and GACS were handed over to DCIM or affiliated security agencies and transferred to official and unofficial detention facilities, where they were subjected to arbitrary detention in overcrowded conditions and exposed to torture, ill-treatment, extortion, exploitation, and other serious abuses. During the reporting period, people were taken to detention centres such as Tajoura DCIM detention centre, al-Mabani Ghot al-Shaal and Bir al-Ghanam detention facilities.

In other instances, depending on the disembarkation point, intercepted migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees were taken to clandestine facilities controlled by armed groups, sold to traffickers, or detained in illegal warehouses where they faced trafficking, torture, sexual violence, forced labour, and other egregious human rights violations and abuses. Several survivors reported being intercepted at sea, transferred to Osama prison in al-Zawiya, and subsequently taken to Bir al-Ghanam warehouses operated directly by traffickers.

A number of survivors and families of missing migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees reported the disappearance of family members at disembarkation points. During the reporting period,

⁴⁴ This figure is for illustration purposes only.

multiple reports from victims' families and NGOs emerged of women, men and children disappearing following their interception at sea, disembarkation, and subsequent detention, raising serious concerns about abductions and enforced disappearances. The persistent lack of accountability for these human rights violations and abuses has perpetuated a cycle of impunity for crimes committed against migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Libya.⁴⁵

On 6 June 2024, an unidentified armed group intercepted a vessel at sea and forcibly moved those onboard to al-Nasser detention centre, an unofficial detention facility in al-Zawiya controlled by local militias and traffickers (also known as "Osama Prison"⁴⁶ after a notorious trafficker listed by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, which oversees the sanctions measures imposed by the security council). Reports indicate that hundreds of individuals, including women and children, from Bangladesh, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, continue to be arbitrarily detained at the illegal detention facility. Some detainees reported being subjected to torture and forced labour, with captors demanding a ransom of 4,000 Libyan dinars (approximately 700 USD) per person for release. In May 2025, a Syrian man reported paying 1,500 USD for his freedom.

A South Sudanese man recounted that, in March 2024, armed and uniformed Libyan men intercepted his boat at sea, firing shots into the air and ordering it to stop. Fearing for their lives, many passengers jumped into the sea but were subsequently rounded up, returned to Libya, and transported to Osama prison. In May 2024, a man was shot in the hand after his boat was intercepted at sea by armed men near al-Zawiya. He was subsequently detained and denied medical treatment.

UNSMIL/OHCHR was in contact with the families of 27 Tunisians, including one woman and one child, who were reported missing since 24 January 2024. Allegedly intercepted at sea by the LCG, they were subsequently taken to an unknown location. On 2 April 2024, the families' legal representative filed a formal complaint with the prosecutor's office seeking accountability and clarification on their whereabouts.

A man described how in September 2024, a group of 110 people, including seven women and an unknown number of children, was intercepted at sea by armed, uniformed men allegedly from the LCG. Three armed men boarded the vessel, beating and assaulting those onboard with gun butts, sticks and kicks, and threatening to throw the people overboard. At gunpoint, they forcibly redirected the boat to a harbour in al-Zawiya, where the migrants were taken to Osama detention facility. Upon arrival, the detainees were stripped, searched, and had all their belongings confiscated. Guards demanded ransom payments and subjected them to daily beatings and torture. The man interviewed managed to escape after 15 days in captivity.

A Syrian survivor with maritime studies and professional experience reported that in May 2024, while their vessel was in the Maltese SAR zone, it was deliberately rammed by a LCG boat. Several individuals jumped or fell into the sea, while those who remained were ordered to board the LCG vessel. Those who refused were beaten with hoses, ropes, and gun butts. They were held on the LCG boat for 24 hours. While still aboard the LCG vessel, another group of individuals – rescued from a shipwreck – was brought on board. All individuals from both groups

⁴⁵ 27th report of the Prosecutor of the ICC to the United Nations Security Council pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), May 2024.

⁴⁶ Witnesses interviewed used the term 'Osama prison' to refer to multiple prisons located in different areas of al-Zawiya.

were eventually disembarked in al-Hmidiya, where their belongings were confiscated by armed and uniformed men. They were then transferred first to al-Mabani (Ghot al-Sha'al) detention facility and subsequently to the Bir al-Ghanam detention facility. The Syrian survivor had to pay a ransom for his release.

According to Egyptian families and Egyptian officials, hundreds of Egyptians, including one woman and children, remain missing in Libya. Two young Egyptian brothers reportedly disappeared after disembarkation at Al-Khoms harbour in 2022. On 31 January 2024 and 2 October 2024, they reappeared separately in pictures and video footage from Tariq al-Sikka detention centre. They were scheduled for deportation to Egypt via Emsa'ed. At the time of their disembarkation, one of them was still a child. They never reached home. In late December 2024, UNSMIL/OHCHR sent a letter to the Office of the Attorney-General and western authorities, inquiring about their fate, requesting access to the DCIM detention centres where they may have been held. No official response has been received to date.

Externalization of migration control

The European Union's (EU) externalization of migration control to Libya is implemented through a combination of EU institutional mechanisms, the Pact on Migration and Asylum⁴⁷, the Pact for the Mediterranean⁴⁸ and bilateral agreements with individual EU Member States. This strategy, aimed at deterring crossings and preventing migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees from reaching shores of EU member states, engages various Libyan authorities, including the LCG, DCIM, GACS and LBG. The EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya), launched in May 2013 and recently extended through June 2027, plays a central role by providing technical and operational support to Libyan institutions in managing both land and maritime borders. It supports Libya's MOI and MOD and affiliated forces, including in border areas like al-Kufra, Sabha, Ghat and al-Assa⁴⁹ where migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are at high risk of violations and abuses by State and non-State actors, including trafficking, arbitrary detention, torture, forced labour and modern slavery.

As consistently documented by civil society organizations and through investigations, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) allegedly assisted the Libyan Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (LJRCC) and LCG in carrying out interceptions by providing the coordinates of vessels located outside the Libyan SAR zone.⁵⁰ According to civil society organizations,⁵¹ including Sea-Watch International, such collaboration occurred in the first half of 2024 and continues in various forms.

⁴⁷ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en.

⁴⁸ https://north-africa-middle-east-gulf.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/pact-mediterranean_en.

⁴⁹ Al-Assa is a detention facility located in north-western Libya, near the Tunisian border. It is operated by the LBG, with one branch under the MOD and another under the MOI.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Heinrich Böll Foundation, 'The EU and the externalisation of migration and asylum: An analysis of potential human rights violations and legal responsibility', <https://gr.boell.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/the-eu-and-the-externalisation-of-migration-and-asylum.pdf>; and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, 'Human rights of migrants. Externalization of migration governance and its effect on the human rights of migrants', 4 August 2025, A/80/302, <https://docs.un.org/>, paras. 8 and 10 and relevant footnotes.

⁵¹ Lighthouse Reports (2024), 'How Frontex is driving migrants into the arms of the Libyan coast guard', www.lighthousereports.com; Human Rights Watch (2023), 'EU: Frontex Complicit in Abuse in Libya', www.hrw.org; Sea-Watch (May 2024), 'Frontex Factsheet: 2nd Report', <https://sea-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Frontex-Factsheet-2nd-Report>; InfoMigrants (October 2025), <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/67224/the-libyan-coast-guard--explained>.

Although Frontex does not operate directly in Libyan territory, it has been reported to share aerial surveillance data and maritime intelligence with Libyan authorities, particularly the LCG,⁵² enabling the interception and return of individuals attempting to cross the Mediterranean and resulting in their disembarkation back to Libya where they face egregious human rights violations and abuses. Frontex has reportedly transmitted over 2,200 communications containing detailed geolocation data of migrant vessels to Libyan authorities since January 2021.⁵³ Reportedly, this has facilitated LCG interceptions and pull-backs into Libya, where returnees routinely faced arbitrary detention and other human rights violations.⁵⁴

Over the past decade, the EU and its member states have significantly decreased their maritime SAR capacity.⁵⁵ Additionally, several EU member states have introduced rules, memoranda and codes that constrained humanitarian SAR operations;⁵⁶ as a result, many INGOs carrying out SAR operations have been compelled to suspend or reduce such operations. On the other hand, the LCG and other Libya maritime actors have increased interception of migrants in the central Mediterranean Sea and returns to Libya. INGOs that have continued conducting SAR operations in the Mediterranean⁵⁷ often face legal challenges, verbal threats, and risk of violence. They have reported systematic non-cooperation from Rescue Coordination Centres, particularly the LJRCC, which severely hindered their ability to provide life-saving assistance to migrants in distress in the Mediterranean SAR zones.⁵⁸ Media reports further indicate that clear orders were issued to ensure 'no one gets through'⁵⁹ - a directive effectively meaning that migrant boats should be prevented from reaching EU member states' shores, regardless of the risks to their safety or the obligations under international maritime law. On 5 November 2025, a coalition of 13 SAR INGOs announced a new alliance called the 'Justice fleet' and its joint decision to sever all operational communication with LJRCC.⁶⁰

In parallel, EU member states have entered into bilateral agreements with Libyan authorities. The most significant of these is the Italy–Libya Memorandum of Understanding,⁶¹ first signed on 2

⁵² Actors or responders at sea in both western and eastern Libya include a variety of entities, such as, but not limited to, the Libyan Coast Guard, the General Administration of Coastal Security, the Counter-Terrorism Force, the Stability and Support Apparatus, Tariq Ibn Ziyad Battalion, Frogmen, and the Libya Special Naval Forces.

⁵³ <https://front-lex.eu/litigation/challenging-the-complicity-of-frontexs-aerial-surveillance-activities-in-crimes-against-humanity/>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ [https://fra.europa.eu/fr/news/2025/les-capacites-de-sauvetage-et-les-difficultes-juridiques-continuent-dentraver-la-https://mail.mediterranearescue.org/en/news/eu-member-states-must-immediately-remove-obstacles-to-civil-fleet-search-and-rescue-operations-in-the-central-mediterranean; https://eu-renew.eu/on-board-with-the-hawks-eu-migration-policies-after-10-years-of-civil-sea-rescue-in-the-mediterranean; https://www.unhcr.org/news/press-releases/unhcr-warns-over-mediterranean-rescue-capacity.](https://fra.europa.eu/fr/news/2025/les-capacites-de-sauvetage-et-les-difficultes-juridiques-continuent-dentraver-la-https://mail.mediterranearescue.org/en/news/eu-member-states-must-immediately-remove-obstacles-to-civil-fleet-search-and-rescue-operations-in-the-central-mediterranean; https://eu-renew.eu/on-board-with-the-hawks-eu-migration-policies-after-10-years-of-civil-sea-rescue-in-the-mediterranean; https://www.unhcr.org/news/press-releases/unhcr-warns-over-mediterranean-rescue-capacity)

⁵⁶ See, in particular, Italy's Law No. 15 of 24 February 2023 (known as the Piantedosi Decree) which requires humanitarian rescue ships to head to port immediately after each rescue, foregoing additional rescues even if they are in the immediate vicinity of people in distress. See further the High Commissioner's press release of 16 February 2023 on the law: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/italy-proposed-new-sea-rescue-law-puts-more-lives-risk-turk> and communications of UN independent experts of 7 February 2023 (AL ITA 1/2023), <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownLoadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27855>, and of 31 May 2024 (AL ITA 4/2024), <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownLoadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29122>.

⁵⁷ See, as at June 2024, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2024/june-2024-update-ngo-ships-sar-activities?page=2#read-online>. For previous reporting see also: A/77/178, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n22/428/94/pdf/n2242894.pdf>; OHCHR (2021), Lethal Disregard: Search and rescue and the protection of migrants in the central Mediterranean Sea, pages 14-18.

⁵⁸ Sea-Watch, Airborne Quarterly Factsheet: January to March 2024, https://sea-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Sea-Watch-Airborne-Quarterly-Factsheet_January-to-March-2024.pdf.

⁵⁹ <https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/europe-s-brutal-and-illegal-approach-to-migration-our-orders-are-clear-nobody-gets-through-a-2b65b102-46ce-4160-b8c4-7970cf631229>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/nov/07/civil-rescue-groups-in-mediterranean-cut-ties-with-libyan-coastguard>; <https://apnews.com/article/italy-libya-coast-guard-migrant-death-mediterranean-migration-7163ed5b99a1634d6a05c88e88a18da6>

⁶⁰ Sea-Watch, Search and Rescue Organisations Suspend Communication with Libyan Rescue Coordination Centre, 5 November 2025, <https://sea-watch.org/en/search-and-rescue-organisations-suspend-communication-with-libyan-rescue-coordination-centre/>

⁶¹ <https://www.asgi.it/antidiscriminazione/italy-libya-agreement-the-memorandum-text/>.

February 2017, and automatically renewed every three years, which formalizes cooperation between Italy and Libya to intercept and return migrants, and includes financial, logistical, and training support to the LCG, GACS, DCIM and LBG, as well as other affiliated armed formations. Malta followed with its own bilateral agreement signed on 28 May 2020,⁶² aimed at joint coordination of search and rescue operations in the Central Mediterranean. Spain and Greece also intensified cooperation in 2022 and 2023, respectively, through bilateral discussions with Libyan officials on migration control and security cooperation, although the full details of these arrangements remain unclear. These national efforts are often aligned with broader EU funding instruments, such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, and support under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe). Under these frameworks, approximately 65 million euros were allocated to Libya for migration, border management and protection-related activities between 2015 and 2021, with funding extended through to 2027.⁶³

Such discussions and informal agreements on migration cooperation have also been extended to the *de facto* authorities in eastern Libya, including armed groups aligned with the LNA. On a visit to Libya, starting in Tripoli on 8 July 2025, the EU Commissioner for Migration, accompanied by ministers responsible for migration from Greece, Italy and Malta, met with the Government of National Unity's (GNU) Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and other Libyan officials.⁶⁴ The meeting “reaffirmed a joint commitment to combat migrant smuggling” and “laid the groundwork for broader cooperation” on migration.⁶⁵ When the delegation attempted to enter eastern Libya, the Benghazi-based authorities refused them entry and accused them of disregarding Libyan national sovereignty by coordinating solely with the Tripoli-based government.⁶⁶ In response, on 9 July 2025, Greece announced a suspension of asylum registration for sea arrivals from North Africa, including Libya, for a period of three months. As a result, such arrivals faced heightened risk of arbitrary detention and refoulement in the absence of access to international protection.⁶⁷ Although the official suspension period ended in mid-October 2025, there has been no public confirmation, at the time of writing, that access to the right to apply for asylum had been fully restored. Human rights organizations report that access to asylum remains severely restricted, with continued pushbacks and accelerated return measures replacing standard registration and processing procedures.

⁶² <https://www.independent.com.mt/file.aspx?f=206640>

⁶³ https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/libya_en

⁶⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003277-ASW_EN.pdf

⁶⁵ <https://x.com/magnusbrunner/status/1942667855331201501>.

⁶⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/libyas-eastern-based-government-bars-entry-eu-migration-commissioner-three-2025-07-08/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.rescue.org/eu/press-release/unlawful-suspension-access-asylum-greece-must-be-immediately-withdrawn>



3

Violence at borders, collective expulsions and refoulement

Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees attempting to enter Libya by land face systematic violence from traffickers, smugglers, as well as State actors and de facto authorities. Some are caught in crossfire or left behind when smugglers and traffickers flee from rival traffickers or armed formations. Vehicles transporting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, including the injured, are frequently abandoned, leaving individuals to perish in the desert.

On 16 June 2025, the DCIM announced that it had rescued 1,300 Sudanese refugees, including women and children, stranded in the al-Awinat Triangle, located at the tri-border area between Libya, Egypt, and Sudan. According to reliable sources, however, among those "rescued" were individuals who had previously been forcibly deported from al-Kufra in Libya by the Subul al-Salam Brigade and the DCIM. These individuals were eventually returned to al-Kufra after spending several days in harsh conditions, with limited access to food and water.

On 12 June 2025, the Subul al-Salam Brigade and DCIM announced that they had rescued 90 Sudanese migrants including women and children – who had been abandoned by traffickers in the al-Awinat mountains, a remote desert and rocky area near the Libyan border with Egypt and Sudan. The group had been stranded for eight days without food or sufficient water.

Those intercepted at Libya's borders are often transferred to official and unofficial detention centres or border crossings to forcibly expel them. Expulsions and forced deportations occur without examination of each individual's case, breaching the prohibition of collective expulsions, denying the right to seek asylum and human rights protection and assistance, and exposing individuals to the risk of refoulement. Those expelled along the borders are often left without access to water, food, and healthcare, further violating their rights. After arriving in Libya, many face difficulties moving between Libyan cities, often encountering checkpoints where they are subjected to extortion.

In July 2025, forces aligned with the LNA's Commander, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, carried out a series of crackdowns in eastern Libya, targeting farms and houses used by traffickers. Large groups of migrants were arrested and deported. On 18 July, the DCIM head of the eastern branch announced that 700 Sudanese migrants detained in central and southern Libya had been deported by land to conflict-affected Sudan. Officials claimed the expulsions were based on alleged health concerns, for example referring to cases of AIDS/HIV and hepatitis⁶⁸ among the migrants.⁶⁹

In July 2024, at least 463 individuals and, again, between January and June 2025, more than 1,400 individuals were forcibly deported to Niger through the Sahara Desert. The majority were Nigerian nationals, but also included Nigerians, Burkinabe, and Cameroonian, among them dozens of children, women, and men in poor health. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) announced that they found 16 people in the Sahara near Siguidine, including a woman and her daughter, who had died of thirst, with their nationality unknown. Nine other people allegedly were lost in the desert and remain missing.

According to survivors' accounts and information gathered by NGOs, the individuals were arrested in various locations across Libya, including Tripoli, Misrata, al-Qatroun and Sabha, in mosques, on streets, and at workplaces. While in detention, they endured extortion and violence, including torture and ill-treatment. During deportation, they were tightly packed into trucks without food or

⁶⁸ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02mGQk2U7gUp9CeYApeysYZ9k9BEpd7fMwncquBdyypcaKGFC4n8QAkppbcfQ5evpol&id=6155543483423

⁶⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/reel/672739852471848>.

water, with their belongings, including mobile phones and money, confiscated by the arresting Libyan authorities and never returned.⁷⁰

On 11 February 2025, clashes between Brigade 87 and the 128 Brigade, both affiliated with the LNA, led to the burning and destruction of makeshift shelters for migrants and asylum-seekers, including in al-Jinsiya. Hundreds of individuals were arrested and taken to unknown locations. Local NGOs indicated that some were forcibly deported and expelled to Niger, including Sudanese asylum-seekers,⁷¹ while others were detained in DCIM detention centres.

In early September 2024, dozens of Egyptian men and boys were reportedly expelled to the Emsa'ed border crossing, according to reliable sources. Many were forced to walk barefoot for two days without food or water. This was not an isolated incident; several survivors reported being packed into trucks by DCIM personnel and then abandoned at the Emsa'ed crossing. From there, they walked for hours before being rescued by local villagers in the nearest settlement.

UNSMIL/OHCHR received reports of closed border points with Sudan and Niger, denying thousands of people entry, due process, and procedural guarantees. In al-Kufra, eastern authorities conducted medical tests on primarily Sudanese individuals, including those "freed" from traffickers' clandestine detention facilities in June 2024. Consequently, thousands of migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees who managed to cross into Libya seeking safety were reportedly subsequently deported under the pretext of failing health tests, including individuals freed from trafficking hubs. Sudanese and other sub-Saharan Africans were pushed back at the al-Awinat and al-Tum borders, while Syrians and other nationals were deported via Benghazi airport. According to credible sources, at least 1,200 individuals were deported to al-Awinat from DCIM detention centres in al-Kufra in late June 2024.

According to IOM, between June 2023 and December 2025, **13,783 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees were intercepted at the Libya-Tunisia border by the Libyan authorities**, including MOI, MOD, LBG, Customs and DCIM.

The eruption of the Sudanese civil war in April 2023 significantly increased the number of Sudanese refugees crossing into Libya. Following heightened concerns about Sudanese refugees, LNA security forces deployed to al-Kufra in late April 2024 to reinforce the border. On 29 April 2024, a committee comprising six House of Representatives-appointed ministers and high-ranking LNA commanders formed a joint Operation and Emergency Room to oversee border security operations.

UNSMIL/OHCHR received reports that the border was selectively opened to allow entry for families, women, and children. The border, however, was later reinforced, and individuals caught entering were allegedly threatened with imprisonment. By late June 2024, borders were completely closed for several weeks and then reopened. By the end of December 2025, UNHCR had registered 108,455 refugees in Tripoli, including 89,153 Sudanese refugees, while the overall Sudanese refugee population in Libya was estimated at 550,000. Women and children constituted 60 per cent of refugees, with 26 per cent children of school age.⁷² The denial of entry and detention

⁷⁰ https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/jan/10/libya-expels-600-nigeriens-migrant-workers-eu?CMP=share_btn_url, <https://alarmphonesahara.info/en/blog/posts/niger-the-plight-of-deportees>.

⁷¹ <https://x.com/rgowans/status/1895152740063408430>.

⁷² UNHCR (2025). Sudan Situation: Sudanese Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Libya as of 31 December 2025.

of Sudanese and other refugees fleeing conflict raise serious concerns under international law, including violations of the right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement.

“I am just tired, I wish I had stayed in Darfur, I could die and put an end to the suffering... I want to end this suffering; I want to go to Darfur and die there...”

A Sudanese mother shared this sentiment in an interview in March 2024. Separated from her family while being expelled at the Tunisia-Libya border, she endured detention under horrific conditions in extreme heat in al-Assa and Bir al-Ghanam. She was extorted and her 12-year-old granddaughter sexually harassed.

“While crossing the gates and checkpoints of Libyan cities, security forces checked our documents as we have valid passports and medical tests, but at one checkpoint, the security forces took 50 LYD and at another took 30 LYD as extortion.”

A Sudanese woman recounted her experience during an interview with UNSMIL/OHCHR in June 2024:

“We were arrested upon crossing to Tunisia by the Tunisian National Guards and taken on foot to an enclosure. We spent 9 days there; 40 other people were brought in. We were expelled to the Libya side, where LBG vehicles were waiting for us. We were guarded by dogs and at gun points... till we reached the Libya border. Then they took us to another hell called al-Assa and Bir al-Ghanam...”

A Yemeni man describes his ordeal upon his release, in early March 2025.



4

Human trafficking, slavery, forced labour, exploitation, and sexual and gender-based violence

Stringent, security-oriented border controls and the absence of adequate safe and legal pathways for migration or fleeing have forced many individuals to resort to dangerous smuggling or trafficking networks. In Libya, these networks operate with near-complete impunity and are often connected to the official security apparatus and militias, exerting *de facto* control over many Libyan territories.

Patterns and hubs for human trafficking

Human trafficking has continued in Libya, with reports of egregious human rights violations and abuses against migrants, asylum seekers and refugees along dangerous routes, including torture, other forms of ill-treatment and sexual violence.

Eastern Libya

In northeast Libya, Tobruk, Benghazi and Ajdabiya remained key hubs for human trafficking, aggravated smuggling and sea crossings, despite declared efforts by the *de facto* authorities to curb these activities following the tragic sinking of a fishing trawler on 14 June 2023 that had set off from this area, with 79 bodies recovered and as many as 500 more presumed dead, many of whom were women and children.⁷³ Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees arriving via Benina Airport in Benghazi, including Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Palestinians, and Syrians, as well as those smuggled through Egypt, including Egyptians, Eritreans, Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis, continued to face high vulnerability situations. Those seeking to cross the sea from Tobruk often fell victim to trafficking schemes, facing extortion, physical abuse, and sexual violence and exploitation by traffickers, with women and girls disproportionately at risk.

In Sabha, trafficking hubs have reportedly proliferated. Based on credible testimonies and information gathered, certain perpetrators of trafficking and those running clandestine detention facilities for trafficking purposes, appeared to be affiliated with military actors in the east. While further investigation is needed, reports indicate that Sudanese and other foreign nationals, along with Libyan traffickers, were perpetrating human trafficking, extortion, forced labour, sexual violence and other human rights abuses. UNSMIL/OHCHR further received disturbing reports of the sale of human beings, akin to slavery, from trafficking hubs, particularly in Sabha and al-Zawiya.

In March 2024, Libyan security authorities discovered a mass grave in al-Shuweirif, located in southwest Libya, containing 65 unidentified bodies believed to be migrants.⁷⁴ IOM reported that “the circumstance of their death and nationalities remains unknown, but it is believed that they died in the process of being smuggled through the desert”.⁷⁵ The MOI and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) have consistently failed to cooperate with United Nations agencies and international organizations on the issue of missing migrants. In April 2024, UNSMIL/OHCHR sent a formal communication to the Judicial Expertise and Research Centre (JERC) of the Ministry of Justice and the General Authority for the Search and Identification of Missing Persons (GASIMP) for clarification around the circumstances of the deaths in al-Shuweirif

⁷³ A/HRC/56/70, 3 June 2024, para. 40.

⁷⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/07/1151866>

⁷⁵ International Organization for Migration, Discovery of Mass Grave with 65 Migrants' Bodies in Libya, 22 March 2024, <https://www.iom.int/news/discovery-mass-grave-65-migrants-bodies-libya>.

and other suspected areas. No response has been received to date. On 7 and 8 February 2025, two mass graves containing 93 bodies were found in two locations – Jekharra in al-Wahat district and a desert area approximately 100 km northeast of al-Kufra district.⁷⁶ Following anti-trafficking raids by the de facto eastern authorities, 344 asylum-seekers were “freed”.⁷⁷ Reports indicated that many of the victims died from torture used to extort ransoms.⁷⁸ Those rescued were later transferred to DCIM detention centres. According to a reliable source, at least two individuals from the Jekharra trafficking hub died en route. While a few were released on health grounds, all remained at risk of deportation due to lack of medical clearance and their irregular migration status.

Western Libya

On 23 August 2024, the TBZ battalion, an LNA-affiliated armed group, reported that it had “freed” 1,300 migrants from traffickers’ hubs in al-Shuweirif. Pictures and videos posted on social media by the LNA showed dozens of migrants, including women and children, suffering from serious injuries, skin diseases and other conditions.⁷⁹ The Attorney-General’s Office reportedly announced the dismantling of a trafficking network in al-Shuweirif, revealing that migrants had been deprived of their liberty for periods ranging from months up to as long as three years and subjected to torture, ill-treatment, forced labour, rape, and extortion.⁸⁰

In July 2024, UNSMIL/OHCHR, along with other United Nations agencies, raised concerns with local authorities about the trafficking networks in al-Shuweirif. Many of those who were “released” from the trafficker’s hub, including women and children, were subsequently detained in Tamanhint military base detention facilities and DCIM’s Sabha and Brak al-Shati detention centres in inhumane conditions.

In northwest Libya, human trafficking of migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees continued in al-Assa, close to the Tunisian border, and in Bir al-Ghanam, Bani Walid, Tripoli, Sabrata, al-Zawiya, al-Ajilat, Zuwara, and Wershafana, often with the involvement of armed groups. With al-Shuweirif serving as a hub for trafficking and criminal activities for the past decade, traffickers and smugglers from Bani Walid and Sabha have been using it as a transit point to the western coast.

In June 2025, in the western Libyan city of Sabrata, the alleged arrest of migrant trafficker, Ahmed al-Dabbashi, a militia leader listed on the UN Security Council sanctions list since June 2018 for his role in migrant trafficking,⁸¹ prompted a series of raids conducted by the Countering Security Threats Agency and the Security Directorates Support Agency. These operations led to the detention of several hundred migrants and asylum seekers, including Eritrean, Ethiopian, Somali, and Sudanese nationals. Some were transferred to al-Zawiya and held in a former DCIM-run facility controlled by a UN-sanctioned individual, Osama Al Kuni, and in other illegal detention facilities under his control. Al-Dabbashi was killed in December 2025 during a raid by the Countering Security Threats Agency and the Security Directorates Support Agency.

⁷⁶ <https://x.com/rgowans/status/1888664151993504157>

⁷⁷ A/HRC/60/82, 23 July 2025, para. 13.

⁷⁸ <https://x.com/rgowans/status/1888558929988206741>

⁷⁹ YouTube Video, Libya: UN-backed independent fact-finding mission accuses all parties of human rights violations. Al Jazeera English. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcDTojOpWBk>. See also: Migrant Rescue Watch. 25 August 2025.

⁸⁰ <https://libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/network-smuggling-and-kidnapping-migrants-dismantled>

⁸¹ <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1970/materials/summaries/individual/ahmad-oumar-imhamad-al-fitouri>

On 13 May 2025, the GASIMP announced the discovery of a mass grave containing 30 bodies along the shores of Misrata in western Libya. Although the location of the grave suggested the victims may be migrants, their identity remained unconfirmed at the time of writing the present report.

Human rights abuses by smugglers and traffickers

Migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees faced extortion, forced labour, forced prostitution and other forms of gender-based sexual violence and abuses, slavery, torture, ill-treatment, violence, exploitation, and domestic servitude at the hands of human traffickers. 45 out of a group of 50 men from Bangladesh, Cameroon, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, and the occupied Palestinian territory interviewed by UNSMIL/OHCHR, reported being tortured or beaten as a means of extortion while in trafficking hubs or detention in unofficial and illegal centres. Families of these individuals were forced to pay ransom amounts ranging from 500 to 10,000 USD to secure their release. Individuals, whose families were unable to pay, remained detained – or held in captivity – for periods ranging from three years to a few months. One Sudanese man, detained for a year in Ain Zara, was forced into labour for a period of seven months, as he was unable to pay his way out.

An Ethiopian man “freed” from al-Shuweirif trafficking camp, in August 2024, recounted that he was among victims of trafficking, including children and women, who spent around three years at the camp.

UNSMIL/OHCHR has identified a systematic and widespread pattern of severe human rights violations and abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, against migrants, asylum seekers and refugees across Libya, targeting men, women and children. The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court reported similar conclusions in its twenty-seventh report to the United Nations Security Council in May 2024, stating that “accounts from migrant victims of crimes consistently portray systematic patterns of violence and alleged acts of rape, beatings, torture, and cruel treatment”.⁸²

Between January 2024 and September 2025, UNSMIL/OHCHR interviewed 45 women and girls from Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Sudan, aged 17 to 43, all of whom reported being subjected to sexual violence, including rape, attempted rape, and sexual exploitation at workplaces and in trafficking hubs. A 9-year-old boy was also allegedly raped by a member of an armed group with links to trafficking networks, with his mother facing threats and intimidation that prevented her from seeking legal recourse. In mid-August 2025, three Sudanese boys aged 12 to 16 were victims of sexual assault by two foreign adult men at their workplace in Tripoli. Instead of receiving protection and justice, the boys were arbitrarily arrested and detained when they attempted to file a complaint. While in police custody, they were subjected to torture and ill-treatment, and at least two were wrongfully accused of defamation. These actions represent serious violations of their rights as children and survivors of sexual violence. Migrant men held in unofficial and illegal detention centres reported witnessing the rape and sexual exploitation of both men and children. Obtaining testimonies was extremely challenging due to

⁸² 27th report of the Prosecutor of the ICC to the United Nations Security Council pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), May 2024.

deep trauma, stigma and unwarranted shame. In early 2025, UNSMIL/OHCHR also received reports of sexual violence and exploitation in the migrants' branch of al-Daman juvenile prison, where migrant children were detained. Access to the facility was requested but had not been granted at the time of writing this report.

Five girls, aged between 14 and 17, were raped several times in 2024 and 2025, in al-Kufra trafficking hubs and in Tripoli. Four other girls from Sudan, aged from 12 to 17, reported attempted rapes in Tripoli and Bir al-Ghanam.

Survivors of trafficking reported being held in so-called "*makhazen*" – temporary sites such as warehouses, farms, or urban residences – used by traffickers and smugglers to detain migrants while extracting payments or arranging land or sea journeys. Such facilities were identified in multiple locations across Libya, including Ajdabiya, Jekhara, Tobruk, Emsa'ed, al-Kufra, Tazerbu, Sabha, al-Shuweirif, Zella, Misrata, Sabrata, al-Ajilat, al-Zawiya, Wershafana, Zuwara, Bir al-Ghanam, Janzour, and Tripoli.

These locations served as sites of extortion and abuse, with survivors reportedly being sold or trafficked for financial gain. Between June 2024 and November 2025, ten women reported being trafficked and sexually abused within trafficking hubs, where they also witnessed other women and girls being raped. Six women and one girl further recounted witnessing others being taken by traffickers, allegedly for sexual abuse.

In January 2025, a video circulated on social media showing an Ethiopian woman who had been tortured and sexually abused, pleading for her family to pay a ransom for her release. On 28 January, she was "freed" after her family paid 6,000 USD.⁸³ In early February, two more videos emerged on social media: one showing a sick Ethiopian child begging for ransom to secure her release from traffickers in al-Kufra and another depicting a Somali man being violently beaten and tortured. Both were part of a group held captive by traffickers. On 22 February, the Joint Security Committee operating in al-Kufra freed the group of asylum-seekers, which included women, men, and children.⁸⁴ Instead of being released and provided protection, they were transferred to a DCIM detention centre in Sabha.

UNSMIL/OHCHR received consistent reports of migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees being forced to work on farms, in detention centres run by traffickers, and at construction sites operated by official and private actors, including armed groups affiliates. Those detained and exploited had no access to justice or any other means to challenge the legality of their detention and the abuse they endured.

Between January 2024 and August 2025, 20 women and four girls reported being coerced into forced labour on farms and in domestic roles under exploitative conditions in al-Kufra, Zuwara, Sabha, Sabrata and Ajdabiya. They were subjected to non-payment, inadequate provision of food and water, and insufficient shelter. Four of them also experienced sexual violence perpetrated by their employers and/or the employers' male relatives. One woman was held in conditions of sexual

⁸³ <https://x.com/RefugeesinLibya/status/1876177125863989534>

⁸⁴ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02ZcVeV56RtnBzLhTsTwi2PMCSF6Atd4CAwqnuB4rj9SzDk3zn1N5NnyYRNqWDgH1gl&id=100091178449405; Al Dawla, 'The joint security committee apprehends human traffickers and frees a number of migrants in the southern region', 15 December 2025.

slavery for two years. Another, aged 18, was repeatedly sexually assaulted by multiple men over a six-week period.

“Same business; you have money, you pay your way out; or you are forced to work; or you risk it all and escape, then you face live bullets, and you may die.”

Lamented a young South Sudanese man who managed to escape in August 2024.

“I was in detention in Abu Salim; I was harassed and strip-searched by male guards who wanted to have sex. I was hiding until I got released. I am scared to go to work. I have no money to go on a boat and risk it all...”

A Sudanese young woman told UNSMIL/OHCHR.

A Nigerian woman, who was trafficked to Libya in 2021, endured two years of forced sexual servitude in Tripoli before being moved to a household in Zuwara following a police raid, where she was forced into domestic slavery under abusive and exploitative conditions, denying her freedom and wages. She left Libya in February 2025.

A survivor detained in a hangar recounted:

“In June 2024, I saw girls aged between 14 and 17 in the hangar. A 17-year-old was taken by force from her sick Sudanese mother to an unknown location. The mother was beaten, and the daughter never returned. Men with weapons used to come and take women during the night. They used humiliating methods with women; making them take off their clothes in front of other men and women migrants, before raping them in public, torturing and beating them. I was raped twice in that hangar before my daughters and other migrants. A Sudanese man tried to help me and stop them, but they beat him severely. My daughter was traumatised and is still asking me about that night.”

Another woman recounted the exploitation of her husband:

“In March 2024, we had no choice but to flee once again. When we reached the al-Muthalath (Triangle) area, on the border with Libya, we encountered a group of young men in cars who seemed to be smugglers. We paid 70 LYD each for transportation to al-Kufra. While we were sheltering on the streets of al-Kufra, a Libyan man approached us and offered us work on his farm. One day, after the farm owner had left for a few days, a Libyan man came to the farm and asked for labour to help with construction at his house. My husband and the three young men went with him. By evening, my husband hadn't returned, and my calls to his phone went unanswered. When the Libyan man finally answered, he claimed my husband was still working and would return later. At midnight, I called again, and the Libyan man told me to stop calling and switched off my husband's phone. He had trapped my husband and forced him to work without pay or enough food.”

In January 2024, in one documented incident, at least 250 male migrants, mainly from the Hausa and Tuareg ethnic groups from Niger and Nigeria, were abducted from a border checkpoint in southwest Libya and taken to Umm Al-Aranib (150km from Sabha) in LNA military vehicles. The migrants, of whom around 70 per cent were children, remained in detention for approximately 15 days before being transported to the Al-Jabal hotel. Reportedly, at least 100

of them were sold in nearby markets, including at least one migrant child who was sold for 1,200 Libyan dinars (approximately 190 USD) to a local farmer. Once a price was agreed, migrants were reportedly transferred to an unknown location in al-Menshia suburb of Sabha district, where the exchange took place. Migrants were mostly sold as forced labour to local farmers in the region. Migrants not sold remained detained in the hotel, unable to challenge their illegal detention, with some held for up to 32 days prior to being sold.

In late May 2024, reports from southern Libya indicated that hundreds of migrants, including women and children, were kidnapped and detained in trafficking camps in Tazerbu, al-Kufra, Brak, and Wadi al-Shati. They suffered abuses for months, including torture, sexual violence, extortion, and starvation due to lack of food and water. According to reliable sources, at least two women became pregnant as a result of rape by traffickers. All of the individuals who were “freed” from these camps were subsequently detained by southern authorities, including DCIM and LNA-affiliated armed groups, pending investigation and medical clearance.

An Eritrean woman, who crossed the border from Egypt to Libya in January 2025, was taken to a trafficking house in Tobruk. She was raped several times by different male traffickers over a six-week period before being released when her family paid a ransom. She said:

“I wish I died... It was a journey of hell; I couldn’t tell anybody about what happened to me. Different men raped me many times. Girls as young as 14 were raped daily.”

In December 2024, a young Ethiopian woman was repeatedly raped by multiple perpetrators at a trafficking hub in al-Kufra, resulting in pregnancy and miscarriage, requiring surgery. Four days later, she was arrested by the police at the clinic and taken to a DCIM detention centre, where she was held without adequate food or medical care.

An Eritrean woman, a survivor of trafficking and prolonged abuse between January and September 2024, in the al-Kufra and Tazerbu trafficking camps, provided harrowing testimony of sexual violence and exploitation inflicted on at least 19 women and girls detained with her. Among them were 15 Eritrean nationals, three Somali, and one Ethiopian, aged between 13 and 40 years. She recounted that, due to her being a survivor of female genital mutilation (FGM), she was forcibly cut open with a knife by traffickers to enable rape. She and a close friend were subjected to this act together. Her friend later died as a result of the rape and extensive injuries caused by severe bleeding. The victim continues to suffer physically and psychologically from the abuse she endured.

A 19-year-old Ethiopian woman, a survivor of trafficking and disturbing abuse, including beatings, starvation and rape in al-Kufra which resulted in her pregnancy, died after she was refused access to medical care, on 21 July 2025. Her relative and a trafficking survivor stated “we are not safe anywhere; we have no rights even to be treated after horrific abuses in Libya when we were captives in al-Kufra”

Between January 2024 and August 2025, seven men from Eritrea, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan shared harrowing accounts of their captivity in trafficking camps in al-Kufra, Tazerbu, al-Shuweirif, al-Zawiya and Wershafana. They reported being tortured, beaten while chained, and suspended upside down. All four witnessed the killings of fellow migrants, either as punishment for escape attempts or due to their inability to pay the demanded ransom.



5

Arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, and discrimination

Arbitrary arrests and detentions in Libya are enabled by Law No. 19 of 2010 on Combating Illegal Migration, which criminalises irregular entry, stay and exit. The law also established a framework under which release is conditioned on the payment of fines and permits forced labour. This is coupled with a lack of rights-based, non-custodial alternatives to detention. Additionally, migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees often face discrimination, xenophobia, exclusion, and intolerance based on nationality, religion, race, ethnicity or migration status, often fuelled by the spread of disinformation, misinformation and hate speech, exacerbating their vulnerability to roundups, arbitrary arrests, violence, and abuse. Sub-Saharan Africans – derogatorily referred to as “a’bid” – meaning “slave” in the Libyan dialect – face systemic discrimination and are often detained under the most deplorable conditions in Libyan detention facilities. They are exposed to forced labour in extremely harsh conditions, including rubbish collection, work in mechanic workshops, agricultural labour on farms, and serving as cell guards, often under coercion. They are often coerced into punishing other detainees. Many are also forcibly recruited to guard traffickers’ hubs, detention camps, and farms. Sub-Saharan African women are disproportionately subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation, including servitude and forced prostitution.

In late September 2025, a wave of protests and online campaigns⁸⁵ spread across Libyan social media platforms, calling for the rejection of migrant settlement and the acceleration of deportations. This was accompanied by videos and inflammatory posts, which quickly morphed into acts of violence and attacks on markets and shops owned or frequented by migrants and foreigners, particularly those of African descent. Misrata emerged as the epicenter of these events. While similar demonstrations in other cities were not reported, security forces nonetheless intensified large-scale raids on migrant housing⁸⁶ in Zuwarah, Surman, Sabrata⁸⁷ and Tripoli⁸⁸, arresting many and transferring some to detention centres, including those run by the DCIM.

Monitoring by UNSMIL/OHCHR highlights that migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees in Libya are routinely rounded up, abducted, arbitrarily arrested, extorted, and forcibly transferred to both official and clandestine detention centres. In western Libya, campaigns of mass arrests have been carried out in Zuwarah, al-Zawiya, Tripoli, Tajoura, Ghedames, Sabrata, al-Zawiya and Janzour by the DCIM, the CID, and armed groups affiliated with the MOD or MOI.

Such arrests often occur following or in parallel to waves of hate speech, disinformation, and incitement against migrants. During the reporting period, there was a marked increase in hate speech and misinformation targeting migrants and asylum-seekers, fuelled by statements from government officials⁸⁹ and amplified through social media. These actions have reinforced a climate of fear and stigmatization, constraining the work of NGOs and increasing the vulnerability of migrants. Since March 2025, false claims regarding migrant resettlement in Libya triggered

⁸⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/DrIntisaralQilayb/posts/pfbid0i8qPrPpZC4bjzcazoqxH4dNDTLCh7WCqgdRaoBzHBBq44wiyEdskCE3PAbJiZLZil>,

<https://www.facebook.com/G.TWtw/posts/pfbid02rzc5Z4w7irzpxCoefCzDS4sT1aSSYF1VLKxcstFBPmpkLPzYD4b4F5ma1ppb5p3I>:
<https://www.facebook.com/61581177812068/videos/1299335228338076/>.

⁸⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BHnzqXPYt/>,
https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=122134226330939983&id=61578199507532&rdid=kOPz8nrP4sN5Yz00

⁸⁷ <https://x.com/RefugeesinLibya/status/1972219429862748437>

⁸⁸ <https://x.com/RefugeesinLibya/status/1971848252065447957>

⁸⁹ See <https://libyaobserver.ly/news/interior-minister-libya-wont-be-settlement-country-immigrants>? . High-ranking officials of the ISA have accused humanitarian actors of supporting resettlement or settlement schemes, conducting raids and suspending NGO operations. See further: <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/north-africa-middle-east/libya/libya-stop-the-crackdown-on-ngos-supporting-migrants-refugees-and> and <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/en/statement-united-nations-libya-warns-against-misinformation-and-hate-speech>.

demonstrations, arbitrary arrests, raids, and violent attacks against migrant communities across the country.

The Tripoli-based Internal Security Agency led a campaign targeting INGO and humanitarian aid workers supporting migrants, with at least ten organizations subsequently ordered to suspend their operations and activities in April 2025 and several of their staff members summoned and interrogated. The suspensions severely affected access of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to essential services, exposing affected communities to heightened risks of violence, exploitation and abuse. One international medical NGO reported that at least 14 patients, including individuals suffering from tuberculosis, have died since the suspension. Eight of the suspended organizations were reinstated in September 2025; however, due to ongoing threats and restrictions, they have not been fully operational. Two other INGOs were expelled from the country in early October by the GNU authorities.

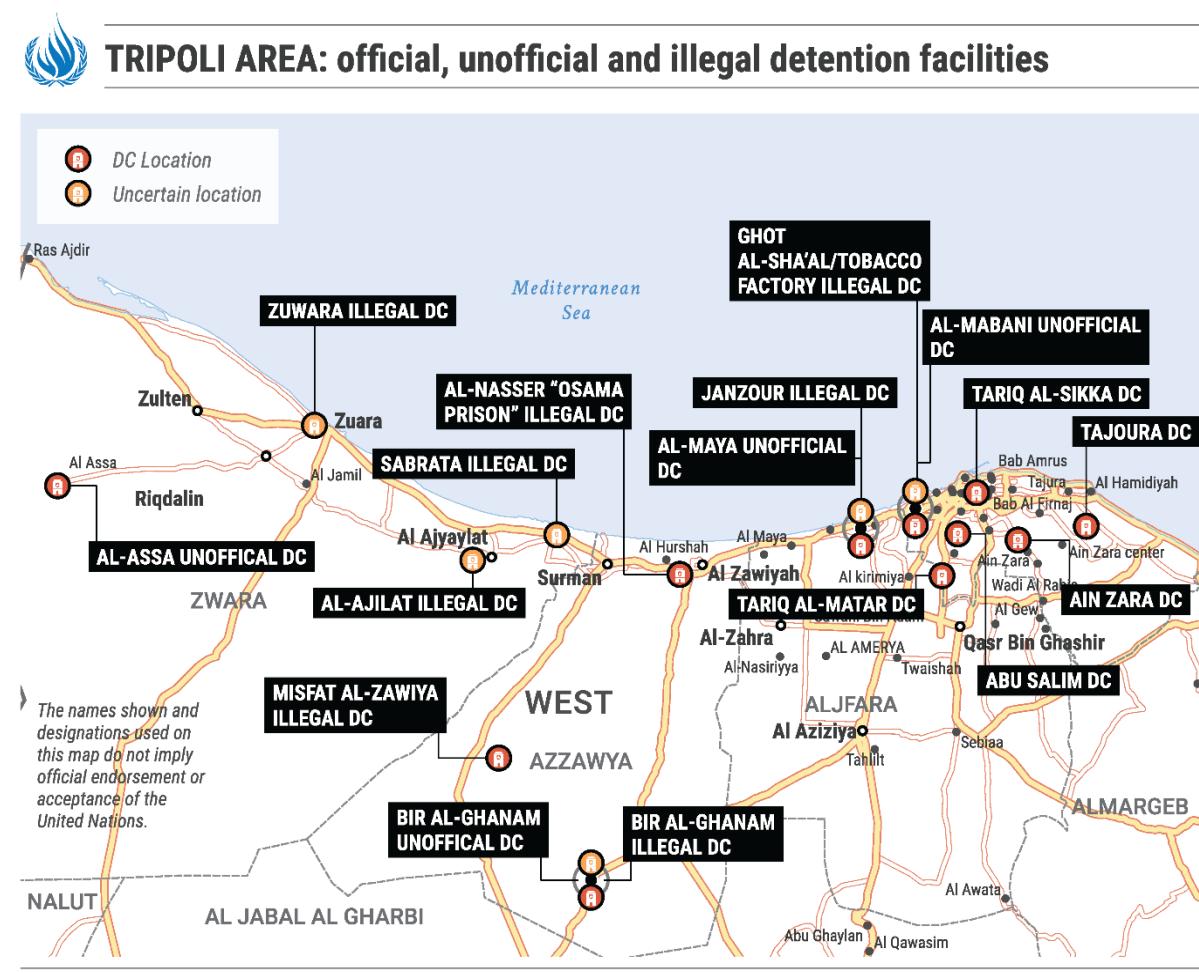
Figure 2: Official, unofficial and illegal detention facilities in Libya⁹⁰



Created: 30 January 2026 Sources: OHCHR, OSM, UN Geospatial

⁹⁰ This figure is for illustration purposes only.

Figure 3: Official, unofficial and illegal detention facilities in Tripoli area⁹¹



Since its formal establishment in 2014, DCIM has operated as a department under the MOI, with its own budget and administration structure. However, on 13 May 2025, the Prime Minister issued Decision 227/2025, dissolving the DCIM and establishing the General Administration for Combating Irregular Migration under the MOI, transferring all DCIM assets and personnel to the new body. This change in name did not address the underlying structural problems, and no tangible reforms have been implemented as at the time of writing this report. Tajoura and other detention centres in eastern Libya, for example, continued to operate with the same staff previously implicated in serious human rights violations and abuses. In addition, Decision 227/2025 abolished the Judicial Police's Department of Operations and Judicial Security – responsible for guarding prisons and transporting detainees, including migrants and asylum-seekers – without clarifying which entity would now assume these essential functions.

⁹¹ This figure is for illustration purposes only.

According to IOM and UNHCR, **as of 31 December 2025, 4,876 individuals are detained in official DCIM detention centres across Libya** (gender disaggregated data unavailable).⁹² The actual figure is likely to be significantly higher.

Tripoli area:	Northwest and Western Libya:	Southern Libya:	Eastern Libya:
Tajoura: 1,200	Zliten: 0	Sabha: 366	Al-Bayda: 66
Ain Zara: 0	Sirt: 0	Al-Shati: 341	Shahhat: 57
Tri al Sika: 0	Daraj: 0	Al-Qatroun: 190	Tobruk: 409
	Baten Al Jabal: 0	Al-Jufra: 2	Al-Kufra: 335
			Ejdabia: 275
			Qanfouda: 1,635

In official migration detention centres, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees including children, have been arbitrarily held in inhumane conditions rife with human rights violations, including torture and ill-treatment, forced labour, and extortion. Such violations have been widely documented by OHCHR/UNSMIL and other INGOs as taking place in DCIM-run detention centres, including in Abu Salim/Tripoli, Ajdabiya, Ain Zara, al-Kufra, Brak al-Shati, Ganfuda, Sabha, Tajoura, Tariq al-Matar, Tariq al-Sikka, Tobruk. Women detained in Abu Salim reported sexual harassment and witnessed other women being taken away and not returned, in February 2025. Harsh conditions, torture, and extortion were reported in unofficial and illegal detention facilities, such as al-Mabani/Ghot al-Sha'al, the Tobacco Factory/Ghot al-Sha'al, al-Zawiya/Osama prisons, al-Ajilat, Bir al-Ghanam, Sabrata, and Zuwara, which operate under the security agencies and/or affiliate traffickers. Based on remote UNSMIL/OHCHR monitoring as well as interviews with victims, violations and abuses, including forced labour in agriculture, construction, and cleaning and sexual exploitation, were particularly prevalent in al-Assa, Ain Zara, al-Zawiya, Bir al-Ghanam, Sabha and Tamanhint.

On 3 August 2025, at least three Sudanese were reportedly shot dead, and four other migrants were injured in al-Assa detention facility. According to preliminary information, the shooting occurred following a riot of the detainees in a hangar.

In late February and early March 2025, in southwestern Libya, hundreds of migrants were rounded up by eastern security forces in Um al-Aranib, al-Qatroun,⁹³ Ghat, Brak, Sabha, and other areas. According to reliable sources, those arrested by security forces were taken either to DCIM detention centres or the Tamanhint military base, where they were forced to work, re-trafficked, or held in deplorable conditions.

In February 2025, leaked videos showed the beating and whipping of migrants and asylum-seekers, including children, by DCIM officials in Ajdabiya detention facility. Another video showed an Egyptian man, explaining that he was beaten by a metal bar by DCIM officials in August 2024.

On 19 February 2025, dozens of migrants and asylum-seekers were released from a trafficking hangar in the Zella region located 400 km southwest of Tripoli. Testimonies and images circulated on social media revealed their exposure to torture and violent abuses for ransom.⁹⁴ A credible source confirmed that 83 individuals were transferred to Tajoura DCIM detention centre.

⁹² IOM/UNHCR, 31 December 2025.

⁹³ <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/17Cgx7vLAc/>

⁹⁴ <https://x.com/RefugeesinLibya/status/1892206692567302285>

Migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees in eastern and southern Libya – Tamanhint, Brak al-Shati, Sabha, and Tobruk – faced extreme risks in detention, including arbitrary and prolonged detention, enforced disappearance, overcrowding, malnutrition, lack of medical care, extortion, and deaths resulting from lack of medical care. Groups in vulnerable situations, include women, children, pregnant individuals, and those with chronic illnesses, have also experienced severe mental health impacts.

In May 2024, around 1,500 migrants from Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and other Sub-Saharan countries were transferred from trafficking camps in al-Shuweiref to Tamanhint following LNA raids in collaboration with DCIM. Dozens died during transfer from malnutrition, dehydration, and untreated illnesses. Survivors had already endured sexual violence, forced labour, and other violations. In subsequent months, detainees were moved to Sabha and Brak al-Shati, where nearly 1,000 detainees – over 200 from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia – have been held for more than a year. The facilities are far below capacity, lacking adequate sanitation facilities, ventilation, medical care, and adequate food, resulting in tuberculosis, infections, malnutrition, anaemia, and over 20 deaths from tuberculosis since December 2024. Many also reportedly died from starvation.

In September 2025, around 900 detainees – including 400 Sudanese and others from Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia – were held in Tobruk in a facility built for 150. Severe overcrowding, as well as inadequate food, water, sanitation, and healthcare created life-threatening conditions, with guards reportedly extorting 2,500–7,000 LYD (approximately 500–1,000 USD) for release.

On 14 February 2024, UNSMIL/OHCHR were granted restricted access to an unofficial detention facility in Bir al-Ghanam, where detainees were confined in two overcrowded hangars, with inadequate sanitation, severe shortage of food and water, and no appropriate clothing and footwear, despite temperatures dropping below 10 degrees Celsius. Detainees reported enduring extreme heat in summer and cold during winter months, with untreated medical conditions such as scabies and ulcers. Torture, extortion, and forced labour were also reported, with officials demanding payments for release, and amounts varying based on detainees' nationality. Those unable to pay remained in prolonged detention and were subjected to further forced labour. Men, women, and children, including those from sub-Saharan Africa, were all detained under the same harsh conditions.

On 26 July 2025, Libyan authorities conducted a large-scale raid on a makeshift encampment east of Tripoli, arresting and detaining approximately 1,500 undocumented migrants. According to the MOI, the detainees – primarily Egyptian and sub-Saharan nationals – were accused of lacking identification papers and/or health records. They were subsequently transferred to DCIM detention centres in western Libya awaiting deportation.

In May 2024, UNSMIL/OHCHR received reports that LNA-affiliated security agencies raided clandestine prisons and warehouses used by traffickers, leading to the release of some 400 migrants from various locations. These individuals, some detained for months and others years, suffered beatings and extortion by smugglers who forced them to contact their families for money. After being “freed”, they were transferred to official detention centres in al-Kufra, under DCIM and CID control.

On 5 June 2024, a mass arrest operation near al-Saraj targeted hundreds of Sudanese men, women, and children. The operation, which lasted several hours, was reportedly conducted by heavily armed security agencies, including the Security Directorate of Janzour. Witnesses asserted that tents were destroyed, and gunfire was used against those fleeing. Families were separated, and women were reportedly sexually harassed, including inappropriate gestures and touching. Those arrested were transported to the Tobacco Factory (Ghot al-Sha'al) detention centre, where approximately 300 men, women, and children were separated again, with some women and children transferred to the Abu Salim detention centre, and mostly men to Ain Zara. Sudanese women and children were released five days later from Abu Salim.

From January 2024 to June 2025, hundreds of individuals, including Bangladeshis, Egyptians, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Syrians, Somalis, Sudanese and other Sub-Saharan Africans, were detained at Ain Zara DCIM detention centre, where they were required to pay for their release. Reliable sources reported that at least four detainees were shot in their legs following a dispute among guards over ransom amounts. According to survivors, there are 10 hangars in the Ain Zara compound, each holding between 350-400 individuals.

“If you fail to pay the ransom or refuse to work, you are deprived of food and beaten by the prison guards. This is the routine,”

stated an Eritrean man who was detained in Ain Zara for one year and seven months. He managed to escape in January 2025.

In Zuwara, “The Masked Men”, under the control of Amazigh armed groups and affiliated with the Western Region Support Forces,⁹⁵ engaged in interceptions and detentions. As of early June 2024, around 350 individuals, including women and children, were detained in inhumane conditions. Migrants were extorted for their release and those who failed to pay were transferred to Tariq al-Sikka detention centre in Tripoli.

In late June 2024, armed groups affiliated with the Government of National Unity conducted roundups in Tajoura, accompanied by a campaign of incitement against sub-Saharan Africans. Those identified were detained in Tajoura detention centre,⁹⁶ which was officially re-opened by the DCIM in July 2024.

“In late August 2024 after an engine failure, we were intercepted at sea by the LCG and disembarked in Tajoura... Hundreds of migrants, including Pakistani, Sudanese, Syrian and other Sub-Saharan Africans, were detained in three overcrowded hangars, including children”

In May 2024, a Sudanese woman working as a cleaner reported being raped by two men at her employer’s home. She later fled to al-Sarraj and sought refuge with a family in a makeshift camp sheltering hundreds of people. Following an attack on the camp in early June, she was arrested and detained at Abu Salim detention centre before her release in early July.

“ We have nowhere to go. If you find a job to secure bread, you are not safe. If you go to seek protection, you are arrested and detained.”

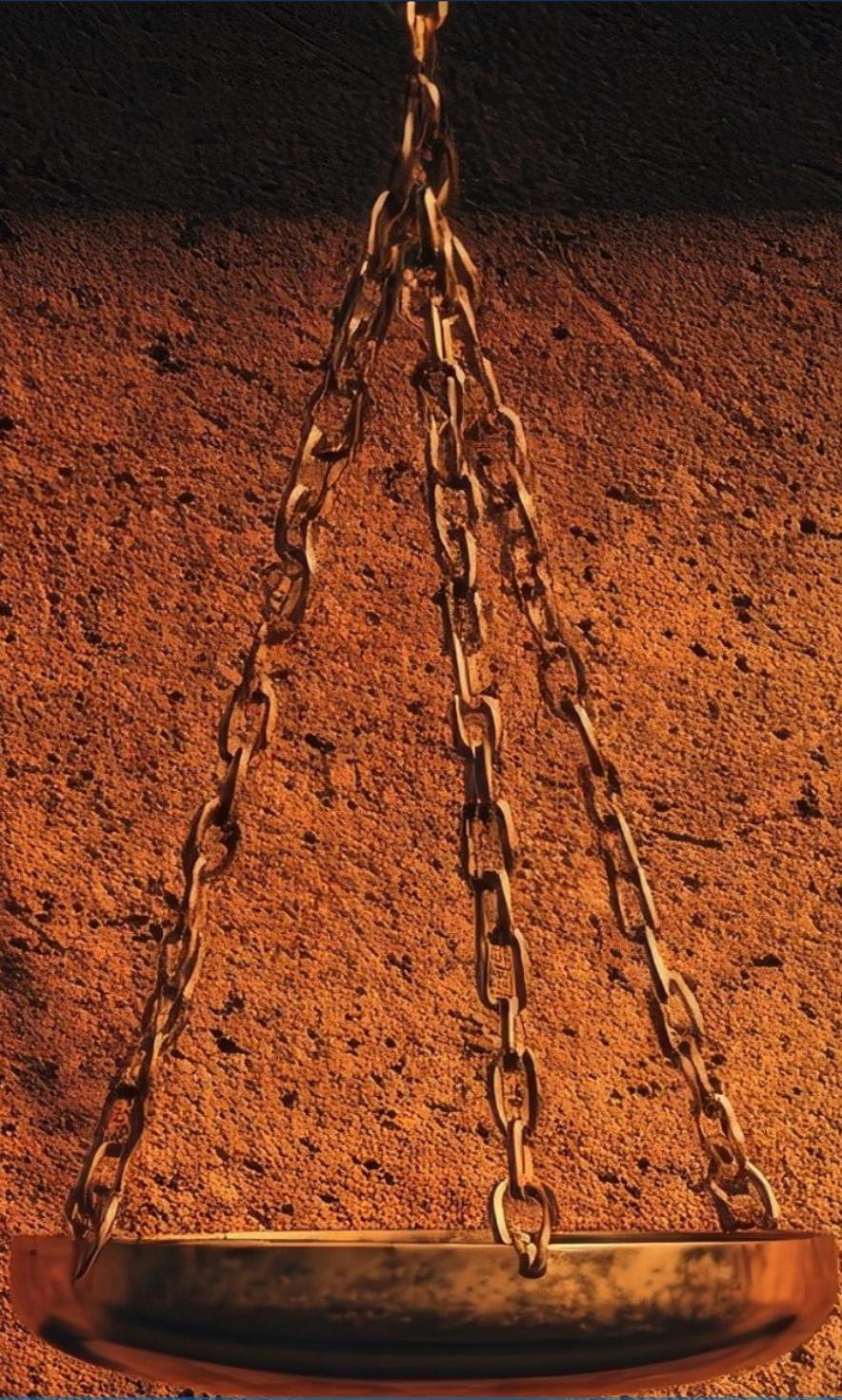
⁹⁵ Migrant Rescue Watch, Post on X, 22 August 2024, <https://x.com/rgowans/status/1826691655040213140>

⁹⁶ Migrant Rescue Watch, Post on X, 14 September 2024, <https://x.com/rgowans/status/1804947337800020160>

On 27 August 2024, 154 individuals, including 30 children and several pregnant women, were “rescued” near Tobruk by the Special Maritime Forces after departing Lebanon on 15 August. Following medical attention in Tobruk, they were transferred three days later to Qanfuda detention centre operated by DCIM. On 25 August 2024, 102 Syrian nationals were intercepted and disembarked in Tajoura. Their families reported receiving no information about their whereabouts but were demanded ransom payments of 1,500 USD per person for release. Those unable to pay were transferred to Tariq al-Sikka.

In August 2024, an Egyptian man, who had lived in Libya for over two decades, was arrested from his home and taken to Ain Zara detention centre in Tripoli. He told UNSMIL/OHCHR:

"I have no words to describe what I endured in there – torture, humiliation, lack of food, filth, stench, extortion... you don't wish it on your worst enemy. I paid 15,000 LYD to get out. My passport was confiscated and never returned. I am illegal now."



6

Lack of accountability and persistent impunity for violations and abuses against migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees

Human rights violations and abuses against migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees in Libya remain widespread and systematic, carried out by traffickers and smugglers as well as State and non-State actors, often through involvement in trafficking and other criminal networks. Accountability for such abuses remains extremely limited, with authorities either unwilling or unable to pursue accountability measures for gross violations of international human rights law. Based on information received, only a small number of criminal proceedings have been initiated against alleged perpetrators, including human traffickers and State-affiliated actors,⁹⁷ with limited information on the status of these proceedings. Many individuals implicated in trafficking continue to operate unimpeded, while judicial and law enforcement responses have often been insufficient or absent, resulting in a denial of justice, truth and accountability for victims and survivors.

In the context of trafficking in persons, for instance, several individuals have been designated by the United Nations Security Council for their involvement in trafficking and other serious human rights violations in Libya. In June 2018, the Security Council sanctioned Abd al-Rahman Salim Ibrahim al-Milad (al-Bija), Ahmad Oumar Imhamad al-Fitouri (Al-Dabbashi), Mohammed Kachlaf, and Mus'ab Mustafa Abu al-Qassim Omar for leading trafficking networks and exposing migrants to violence and life-threatening conditions.⁹⁸ Al-Bija, a LCG commander and alleged human trafficker, was assassinated in September 2024, while Al-Fitouri was killed in December 2025, both without being held accountable for the conduct underlying their designation. In October 2021, Osama Al Kuni Ibrahim, the de facto manager of the Al-Nasr detention centre in Zawiyah, was sanctioned for engaging in or providing support to acts that violate international human rights law, including systematic abuse and exploitation of migrants.⁹⁹ Other well-known actors continue trafficking and operating secret detention facilities in al-Zawiya.

In January 2025, Osama Njeem, a senior Libyan official subject to an arrest warrant of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Mitiga Prison in Tripoli – a notorious and well-documented site of violations against migrants – was arrested in Italy but released and returned to Libya without being surrendered to the ICC.¹⁰⁰ The Libyan Attorney-General subsequently ordered Njeem's arrest on 5 November 2025, a move effectively preventing his transfer to the ICC - while he remains at large and a domestic trial appears unlikely - highlighting that genuine cooperation with the ICC must include the arrest, transfer, and surrender of suspects. By contrast, in July 2025, Khaled Mohamed Ali Al-Hishri, also a senior Libyan official subject to an ICC arrest warrant for crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed at Mitiga Prison, was arrested in Germany and subsequently surrendered to the ICC.¹⁰¹ Against this backdrop, in May 2025, the ICC received a declaration by the Government of Libya under article 12 (3) of the Rome Statute, accepting the ICC's jurisdiction with respect to alleged crimes in its territory from 2011 to the end of 2027.¹⁰²

While Libya's acceptance of the ICC's jurisdiction until 2027 is a positive development, State officials and members of security forces in eastern and western Libya continue to act with impunity, despite credible allegations of involvement in migrant trafficking and related abuses. These cases underscore the persistent culture of impunity in Libya for gross violations of human

⁹⁷ On limited proceedings against human traffickers in Libya, see, for example, communication of UN independent experts of 2 May 2023 (AL LBY 1/2023) and subsequent press release: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/07/libya-un-experts-alarmed-reports-trafficking-persons-arbitrary-detention>.

⁹⁸ <https://press.un.org/en/2018/sc13371.doc.htm>.

⁹⁹ <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14674.doc.htm>.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/defendant/njeem>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/defendant/el-hishri>

¹⁰² <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/libya-accepts-icc-jurisdiction-over-alleged-crimes-2011-end-2027>.

rights against migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, and highlight the failure of domestic judicial mechanisms to effectively address widespread grave crimes.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

The patterns of human rights violations and abuses against migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees in Libya, are not only widespread and systematic, they have become so entrenched and normalised that gross violations and abuses of human rights are perpetrated daily as part of an exploitative business model. Impunity for these violations reigns, with minimal accountability at both the national and international levels. To date, very few criminal cases have been brought against perpetrators, including traffickers and State-affiliated actors, resulting in a significant lack of prosecutions and denial of justice for survivors. Moreover, while the primary responsibility for investigating migration-related crimes lies clearly with the Libyan authorities, they have often remained unresponsive or unwilling to take decisive action, hindering effective cooperation and accountability.

The widespread violations and abuses documented in this report reflect broader structural weaknesses in Libya's security sector governance, including the absence of effective civilian oversight, transparency, and accountability. In western Libya, these acts have and continue to be perpetrated by state security actors, including DCIM, LCG and GACS – entities operating under GNU oversight – including those nominally operating under the MOI or the MOD.

Since May 2025, both the Prime Minister and the Presidency Council have issued a series of decisions reshaping or renaming state security institutions, particularly those involved in human rights violations against migrants and refugees. While authorities have pledged and initiated elements of security sector reform, concrete progress toward implementing a rights-based, victim-centred approach remains elusive.

Restrictive approaches taken by the Libyan authorities that prioritize deterrence over the protection of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, combined with the absence of adequate safe and regular migration pathways, the criminalisation of irregular entry, stay, and exit, and a lack of alternatives to detention, undermine the enjoyment of rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. These factors expose them to heightened risk of human rights violations and abuses. Many are left with no other choice but to rely on smuggling and trafficking networks, which often act in collusion with State actors and exploit migrants' lack of options, including by using arbitrary detention in both official and unofficial facilities as a mechanism for exploitation and profit. This perpetuates a vicious cycle of violence and reinforces an exploitative model that has become "business as usual".

The perception and treatment of migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees as "illegal" and undeserving of protection, rather than as rights-holders with legitimate protection needs, further exacerbate their marginalisation and abuse. This perception is fuelled by pervasive discrimination, racism, and xenophobia. Without access to legal status and civil documentation, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are often excluded from the formal labour market, and denied basic services such as education, healthcare, financial services, and access to justice and redress mechanisms. Survivors and witnesses of human trafficking and other human rights violations and abuses are often prevented from seeking assistance from authorities for fear of arbitrary arrest and detention and further exploitation.

The risks of human rights violations and abuses in detention settings are further exacerbated by corruption, collusion with traffickers and smugglers, the absence of functioning monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and a lack of oversight and transparency.

To bring an end to these violations and to dismantle this highly exploitative model, urgent legal and policy reforms are required to ensure respect for the dignity and inherent rights of all migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees in Libya. Moreover, a structural overhaul of Libya's migration management system is vital to break the vicious cycle of abuse and impunity documented in this report. As part of these efforts, the international community has a responsibility to ensure that the protection of the rights of migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees in Libya remains a priority. This includes promoting accountability, including by supporting and facilitating accountability processes at both the national and international level, supporting independent monitoring and reporting, and mobilizing political and diplomatic efforts to end impunity and advance rights-respecting reforms. Countries and regional organizations cooperating with Libyan authorities in border and migration management bear a specific responsibility to ensure that any technical, financial or operational support is grounded in human rights due diligence and the 'do no harm' principle. Such cooperation must be grounded in a rights-based and victim-centred approach, supported by robust risk assessments, safeguards, and monitoring – and suspended where the risk of violations and abuses cannot be effectively mitigated.

Recommendations

UNSMIL/OHCHR call on Libyan authorities to:

1. **Immediately release all arbitrarily detained migrants, asylum seekers and refugees** from both unofficial and official detention centres, and **end all forms of arbitrary detention**, including illegal, mandatory, indefinite, and incommunicado detention.
2. **Ensure detention is used only as a last resort**, subject to judicial review and in line with applicable international standards.
3. **Children must never be detained solely because of their or their parents' migration status**, as their detention contravenes the best interests of the child, is a clear violation of child rights, and may constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of children.
4. **Decriminalise irregular entry, stay and exit**, and establish legal pathways for residence, regularisation, documentation, and safe access to decent work with labour rights protections. **Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees should not be treated as criminals, or as in themselves national or public security threats**. Irregular entry or stay should not be treated as a criminal offence, as the mere act of crossing a border or remaining in a country without authorisation is not, in itself, a crime against persons, property, or national security, and criminalisation in such circumstances runs contrary to international human rights standards.
5. **Prioritize the development and implementation of non-custodial alternatives to detention**, in line with international human rights law, such as safe and accessible shelter in the community, consistent with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees right to an adequate standard of living and gradually close all Libyan immigration detention centres.
6. **Reform migration management and border control** to comply with Libya's international obligations, upholding the principle of non-refoulement, the right to seek asylum, and the

prohibition of collective expulsions, and **guarantee that any return procedure ensures due process**, including the right to a fair trial, access to legal representation and interpretation, the right to challenge the legality of return, and effective remedies.

7. **Immediately cease dangerous rescue or interception practices** that put migrants, asylum seekers and refugees' lives, safety and human rights at risk.
8. **Ensure that Libya's Joint Rescue Coordination Centre is adequately and professionally staffed**, including with the ability to answer and respond to distress calls in a timely manner.
9. **Ensure that expulsions only proceed on the basis of an individual assessment** taking into account the full range of circumstances that may prohibit expulsion under international human rights law, in particular the principle of non-refoulement and the prohibition of collective expulsions, including through transferring a person to another authority that would result in chain-refoulement.
10. **Take immediate and concrete measures to end all forms of modern slavery, forced labour and trafficking in persons.** Ensure adoption and enforcement of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation, aligned with the UNTOC Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and other international standards, in conjunction with strong victim protection and institutional capacity.
11. **Establish survivor-centred protection and support systems** for victims of trafficking, sexual violence, slavery, torture, and other violations and abuses. These systems should be age and gender-responsive and include shelters, medical care, legal aid, and the application of the non-punishment principle for victims.
12. **Protect and decriminalize humanitarian actors.** Refrain from expelling international NGOs or obstructing their humanitarian operations and ensure they can continue delivering essential assistance. **Safeguard and expand civic space** so that humanitarian and civil society organizations can operate freely, safely, and without intimidation.
13. **Guarantee access to justice and effective remedies**, with independent complaint mechanisms, firewalls between immigration and justice systems, confidential legal aid, and due process.
14. **Pursue truth, justice and effective accountability for human rights violations and abuses**, including torture, ill-treatment, trafficking, sexual violence, slavery, enforced disappearance, and arbitrary detention, through independent, impartial, thorough and prompt investigations and prosecutions, and cooperation with international processes, as relevant.
15. **Protect and support survivors and witnesses who assist investigations** by providing safe-house accommodation, ensuring their confidentiality and personal security, guaranteeing access to legal counsel and necessary support (medical, psychosocial,

interpreters), allowing testimony by video-link or other protective means, and ensuring they are never detained – but treated as persons entitled to protection, dignity, and justice.

16. **Respect and protect the rights of all migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees**, ensuring non-discriminatory access to healthcare, education, documentation, and legal assistance. **Actively combat xenophobia and racial discrimination by addressing hate speech and misinformation about migrants**. This includes monitoring and sanctioning hate speech, promoting accurate, rights-based information, and fostering responsible media coverage and community dialogue to strengthen tolerance, inclusion, and social cohesion.
17. **Establish a centralized and independent mechanism** to document and investigate cases of missing migrants, with a national database accessible to families, survivors, and civil society, in line with privacy and data protection standards.
18. **Ensure close coordination between forensic authorities and judicial investigations**, and guarantee the protection of mass grave investigations, in full compliance with international standards.
19. **Strengthen data collection and analysis systems** with disaggregated data by sex, age, nationality, and migration status to track detention, returns, trafficking, and abuse, while upholding the right to privacy and data protection standards.
20. **Guarantee unrestricted and sustained access to all places of detention and relevant sites for UNSMIL/OHCHR and UN agencies, funds and programmes and relevant INGOs** and take immediate, concrete steps to implement the recommendations issued in UNSMIL/OHCHR reports concerning human rights protection and accountability.
21. **Fully cooperate with international and regional human rights mechanisms**, including UN Special Procedures, the Universal Periodic Review, and treaty bodies, by ensuring timely engagement, transparent reporting, and effective follow-up to their recommendations.

UNSMIL/OHCHR call on the international community, including the European Union and its Member States to:

1. **Establish a moratorium on all interceptions and returns to Libya until adequate human rights safeguards are ensured**. In the context of inter-State cooperation on SAR, ensure that any support or assistance – including provision of assets, intelligence sharing, or involvement in SAR operations with private vessels or other States' SAR assets – does not result in designating Libya as the nearest safe port or forcibly returning migrants there. Avoid facilitating pushback operations by third parties.
2. **Rigorously apply human-rights due diligence to all funding, training, equipment, technology, and cooperation involving Libyan entities** credibly implicated in gross human rights violations and abuses – including against migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees. **Suspend technical and financial assistance until those entities**

demonstrate consistent respect for international human-rights standards, including effective vetting, ongoing monitoring, and accountability mechanisms.

3. **Scale up safe and regular pathways for migration** out of Libya, including humanitarian pathways and humanitarian corridors for the regular admission and stay of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on the move who suffered torture, gender-based violence and other violations and abuses in Libya, as a means to ensure their rehabilitation.
4. **Support documentation efforts led by civil society and survivors' groups**, including the creation of an international repository of evidence relating to migrant deaths and disappearances in Libya.
5. **Provide technical and financial support for forensic investigations and victim identification** through international expert deployment, training, and equipment for Libya's forensics authorities.
6. **Support and facilitate accountability efforts to ensure justice for victims and their families**, including through the ICC and national courts exercising universal jurisdiction, notably through the arrest, transfer, and surrender of suspects.
7. **Ensure that all United Nations support to Libyan entities involved in migration and border management fully complies with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP)** and suspend support where risks of grave violations cannot be effectively mitigated.