

Refugees and migrants' assistance needs and access to services in Libya

This snapshot sheds light on refugees and migrants' access to assistance and primary assistance needs in Libya, using 4Mi data collected between February and December 2021. The findings complement a 2021 REACH multi-sectoral needs assessment (MSNA) in Libya which found that 73% of refugee and migrant respondents had severe or extreme multisectoral needs and that only 8% had received humanitarian assistance in the 6 months prior.¹ Furthermore, this snapshot explores changes in assistance needs in Tripoli, where, since October 2021, Libyan authorities launched mass arrest and eviction campaigns targeting refugees and migrants.²

Key findings

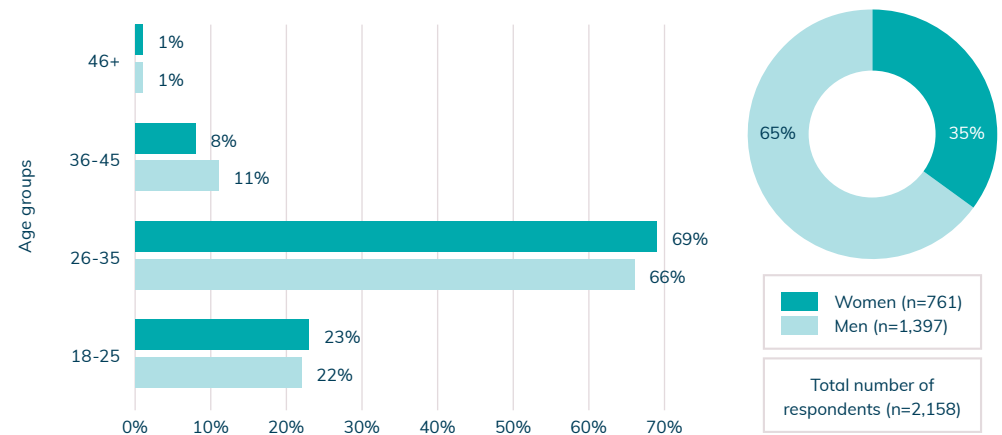
- Almost three-quarters of interviewed refugees and migrants reported needing assistance at the time of interview.
- The most frequent form of assistance needed by respondents was cash (79%), followed by food (30%). In Zwara, respondents also commonly needed medical assistance (50%), washing facilities (48%) and clothes (42%). In Tripoli, 41% identified shelter as a key need.
- Since the start of the mass arrest and eviction campaigns in October, more respondents in Tripoli reported needing assistance (increase from 73% in Feb-Sep to 83% in Oct-Dec).
- One-fifth (20%) of respondents reported that, over the course of their journey, the location where they most needed assistance but were not able to get any was in Libya.

Profiles

This snapshot draws on data collected through 2,158 surveys with refugees and migrants interviewed in Libya between February and December 2021. The sample consists of 35% women and 65% men, aged between 18 and 58 years with an average age of 29. Most interviews were conducted with respondents in: Tripoli (34%), Sebha (23%), Ejdabia (11%), Zwara (8%) and Benghazi (5%).³

The most common nationalities of respondents were: Nigerian (31%), Sudanese (12%), Nigerien (8%), Cameroonian (6%), Ghanaian (5%), Beninese (4%) and Eritrean (3%). 16% of respondents said they were currently travelling or living with children under their care.

Figure 1. Age and sex distribution of respondents



1 REACH (2021) [MSNA - Libya](#)

2 Reuters (2021) [Migrants in Libya fearful and angry after crackdown and killings](#)

3 All interviews were conducted remotely, by phone.

Almost three-quarters of refugees and migrants needed assistance at the time of interview

The majority of respondents reported they were currently in need of assistance (72%), with no major variation in gender. The main nationalities requiring assistance at time of interview were Beninese (86%), Ghanaian (80%), Cameroonian (79%), Nigerian (77%) and Nigerien (76%). It was comparatively less common for respondents from Eritrea (47%) and Sudan (46%) to report needing assistance, meriting further exploration.

In terms of locations of need within Libya, the highest proportions of respondents in need of assistance at the time of the interview were in Benghazi (91%), Murzuq (88%; 36/41) and Brak (86%; 49/57). Assistance was also needed by the majority of respondents in interview locations with the largest samples: 73% in Ejdabia, 75% in Tripoli and 53% in Sebha. This underscores a high level of need country wide.

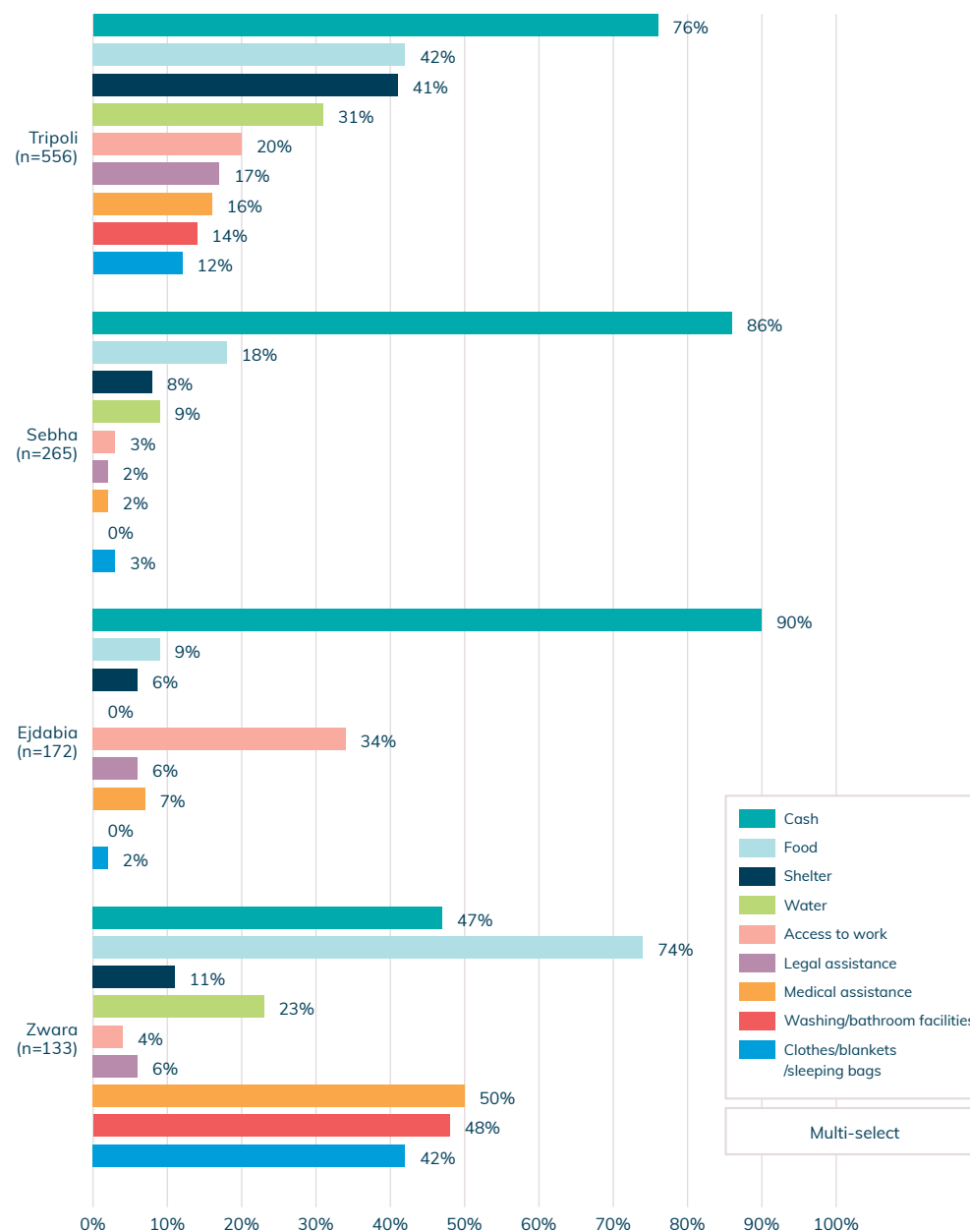
Cash and food are the most common needs

Among respondents in need, the most frequently cited forms of assistance needed were cash (79%), food (30%), shelter (19%) and water (17%). While needs were generally consistent between respondents of different nationalities, legal assistance was selected more frequently by Sudanese respondents (20%) compared to other main nationalities. No major differences in needs were observed between men and women.

Cash was the primary need in Tripoli, Sebha and Ejdabia; food, medical assistance and washing facilities were selected more often in Zwara

The types of assistance needed varied widely by location. As shown in Figure 2, cash was the most reported need for respondents in Ejdabia (90%), Sebha (86%) and Tripoli (76%). By contrast, food (74%), medical assistance (50%) and washing facilities (48%) were selected more often as a current need in Zwara. In Tripoli, a comparatively high proportion of respondents identified shelter as a current need (41%).⁴

Figure 2. What kind of assistance do you need? Top 9 responses (Amongst respondents who reported being in need of assistance now)

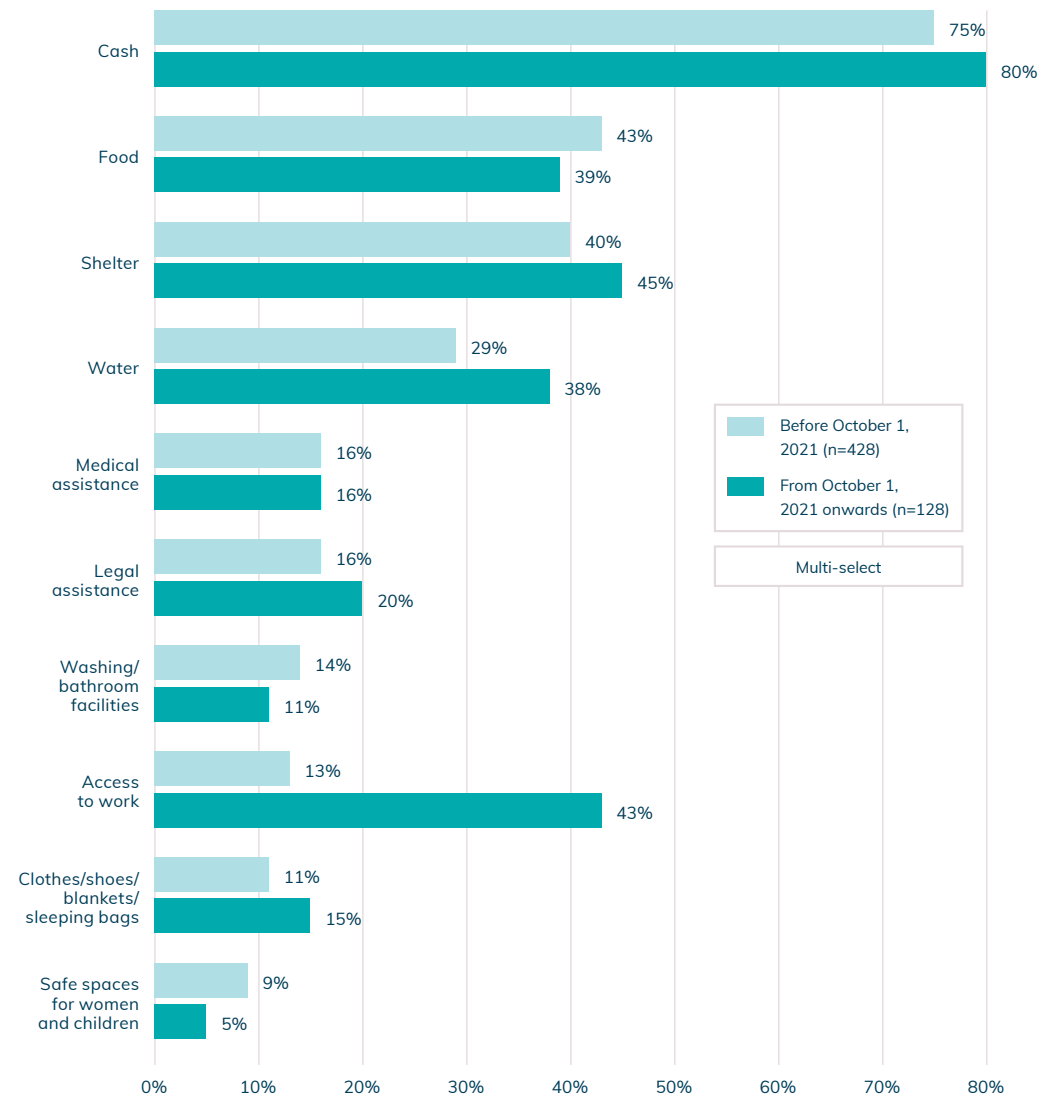


⁴ In Tripoli, this was particularly the case for respondents residing in the neighbourhoods of Sog Almjumaa (43/66), Ain Zara (24/38), Abu Salim (14/27) and Aldahra (10/12), and Hai Demashk (8/10).

Since October, more respondents in Tripoli reported being in need of assistance, namely access to work

Since October 1, 2021, Amnesty International has reported an increase in the arbitrary detention and eviction of refugees and migrants or demolition of their homes in Tripoli by Libyan authorities. While 4Mi data are not representative and can only describe tendencies in the survey sample, in Tripoli, data indicate that the proportion of respondents saying they needed assistance at the time of the interview is 10 percentage points higher since 1 October (from 73% in the February to September period (n=428) to 83% in the October to December period (n=128)). Some variation is also seen in the type of assistance needed, namely access to work (from 13% to 43%). This may be linked to refugees and migrants' perceiving greater risks of arrest, keeping them from engaging in their normal work activities, or increased labour market discrimination from employers. Other differences in assistance needs were smaller and inconclusive given the small sample size.

Figure 3. What kind of assistance do you need? (Amongst respondents interviewed in Tripoli who reported being in need of assistance now)



Map 1. Main locations of interview and unmet needs in Libya



One-fifth of respondents said their unmet needs were highest in Libya

Overall, when asked what information would have been most useful for their journey, which refugee and migrant respondents had not received, 11% expressed wanting to know where and how to access services. Respondents were also asked where along their journey they were most in need of assistance but unable to access any. One-fifth of respondents (20%) reported that this occurred in Libya and 24% said this was the case in the Sahara Desert between Libya, Sudan and Chad. Others cited Niger (11%), Chad (3%) and other countries (5%),⁵ while 37% did not find themselves in such a situation. Respondents who had needed assistance in Libya but were not able to access it (n=437) most often cited this occurred in Sebha, Al Jawf, Tripoli and Tazirbu. Locations where unmet needs were flagged most often are, therefore, determined by the lack services but also the frequency with which certain routes were used.

⁵ Namely Algeria and Sudan.

Food, clothing and blankets were key unmet needs in desert locations

The type of assistance needed but not accessed varied significantly by location. Food was commonly identified as an unmet assistance need in Al Jawf (45/66 of respondents who reported having faced situations where they were in need of assistance but were not able to get it) and Tazirbu (41/46), while a smaller proportion identified food in Tripoli (28/57) and Sebha (35/103). Cash was identified as an unmet need by more than half of respondents in Sebha (62/103), which is often the first large urban center encountered after the desert crossing. By contrast, in Tripoli, respondents commonly cited shelter (28/57) and water (25/57) as unattained needs. Clothes and blankets were highlighted by a majority of respondents in Al Jawf (44/66). When one considers Al Jawf and Tazirbu's location in Al Kufra District, which borders Chad, Sudan and Egypt, the aforementioned needs align with what we know about these desert locations as physically precarious transit locations.



4Mi data collection

4Mi is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field enumerators are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in West Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.

Note that the sampling approach means that the findings derived from the surveyed sample provide rich insights, but the figures cannot be used to make inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at:

www.mixedmigration.org/4mi