

Libya: Flood

Key messages / 12 September 2023

Background

- Storm Daniel hit the north-eastern part of Libya on Sunday, 10 September. It came with severe weather conditions, including strong winds and sudden heavy rainfall. It affected several north-eastern areas of Libya, including the cities, towns and villages of Derna, Benghazi, Tobruk, Toukra, Talmeitha, Almarj, Taknes, al-Owailia, Bayada, Albayda, Shahhat and Sousa.
- This has led to massive flooding. Infrastructure is greatly affected. Roads have been flooded and blocked.
- Dams in Derna have been damaged which caused flooding that swept away entire neighbourhoods. Floods reached up to 3 meters high in some areas.
- The head of Libya's government, Osama Hamad, announced the situation is catastrophic and unprecedented in Libya, and called on medical personnel and medical assistants to go to the badly affected city of Derna.
- According to reports coming from the Libyan Red Crescent on the ground, at the moment, about 10,000 people are missing. We are NOT speculating on the number of dead. We are only giving the 10k number if asked, not proactively.
- The death toll is huge and expected to reach into the thousands in the coming days.
- Communication lines and power networks are down in Derna, and pictures shared by the Libyan Red Crescent and on social media show submerged cars, collapsed buildings and torrents of water rushing through streets.
- The parliament has issued a call for support to the international community and all humanitarian actors in Libya.

Key Messages

Following Storm Daniel, Libyan Red Crescent teams and volunteers were the first on the ground, evacuating people and providing first aid and search and rescue efforts with very limited resources.

IFRC expresses its deepest condolences to the families of three Libyan Red Crescent volunteers who lost their lives while trying to save the lives of others. We extend those condolences to the families of all those killed by this large-scale disaster and wish a speedy recovery to those injured. We are also deeply concerned those missing and are thoughts are within their families too.

The search and rescue team operations are still ongoing. The top priorities are to provide first aid to survivors, to take care of them, search for the missing and reunite families.

Logistics are very tough, particularly in terms of telecommunications, rescue equipment, and volunteer safety equipment.

Libya has endured years of ongoing conflict and now it is experiencing a large-scale disaster that goes beyond the abilities of the Libyan Government and the Libyan Red Crescent. It adds another layer of complexity to the compounded crises in the North African country.

The main needs are:

Emergency shelter kits: the provision of emergency shelter kits, including tents, blankets and basic household items is crucial to meet the immediate shelter needs of the displaced individuals. These include the most vulnerable - women, children, and the elderly.

Psychosocial support: the survivors of the storm are facing immense emotional trauma with many experiencing grief, shock and anxiety. There is a critical need for psychosocial support services to help individuals cope with the psychological impact of the disaster.

Healthcare: the affected areas are facing a significant strain on their healthcare infrastructure. Immediate medical assistance - including emergency medical supplies, medicines themselves and medical personnel - is required to treat the injured and prevent the outbreak of diseases.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene: Access to clean water, proper sanitation facilities, and hygiene promotion are essential to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases and ensure the well-being of those affected.

Food assistance: the hurricane has disrupted the local food supply chain, leading to food shortages and increased vulnerability to malnutrition. Immediate supplies of ready-to-eat meals, dry rations and nutritional support for infants and young children is of utmost importance.

Non-food items: the affected communities require hygiene kits, cooking utensils, and clothing. Flashlights are needed to meet their basic needs and restore a sense of normalcy.

The Libyan Red Crescent mobilised its teams ahead of Storm Daniel and activated its emergency room at the headquarters level. It put out an alert to the likely-affected branches and mobilised the required equipment and stocks.

National Red Cross Red Crescent societies act as one family and are already in contact with the Libyan Red Crescent to offer the support needed.

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