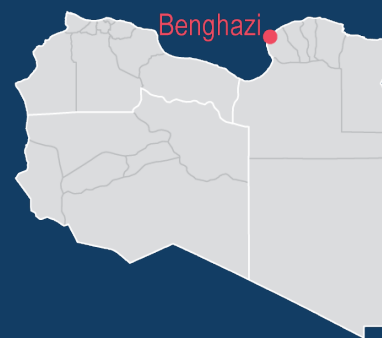


Benghazi Neighbourhoods and Returnees Profile

Findings from Workshops & Field Visits

Libya - August 2017



CONTEXT & KEY FINDINGS

Context:

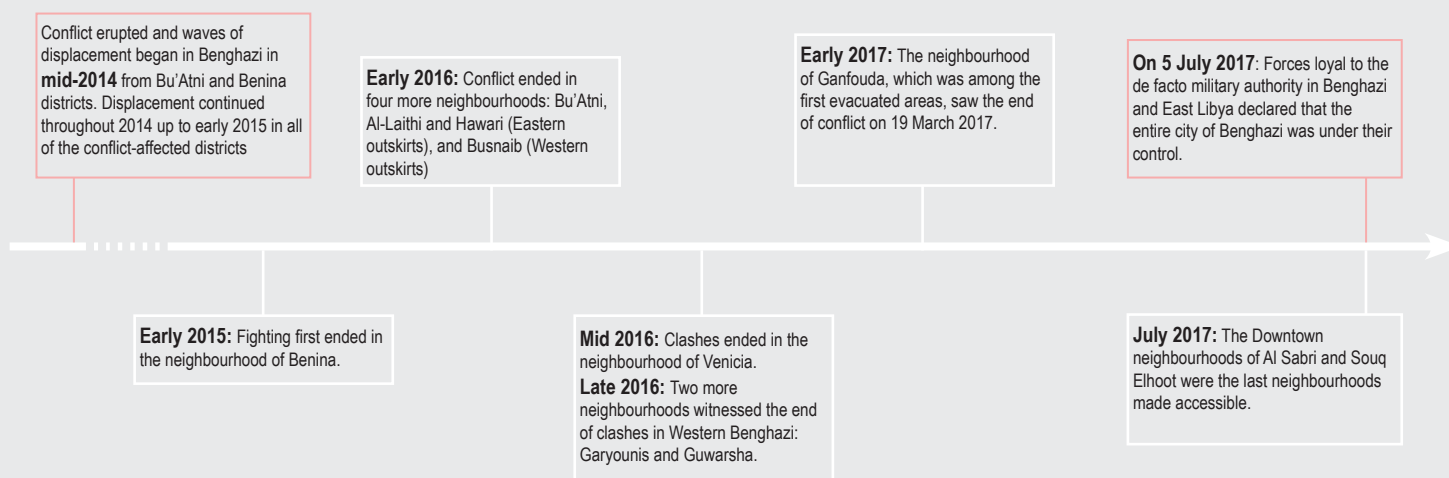
Conflict erupted in the city of Benghazi and its suburbs in 2014, slowly progressing from neighbourhood to neighbourhood from Benina westwards. From the end of 2014 until most recently (5 July 2017), there were heavy clashes between the military authorities in Eastern Libya against insurgents comprised of the Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries. Neighbourhoods affected by the conflict sustained heavy damage and were almost completely evacuated. They are now in need of rapid humanitarian assistance and reconstruction. Pressing damage and needs have to be dealt with in a timely fashion to ensure a dignified return for previously displaced families.

In order to enhance the understanding by humanitarian stakeholders on the situation of returnees and returnee areas in Benghazi, ACTED partnered with LibAid to obtain timely information on the situation of returnees and returnee areas in Benghazi, which were until recently affected by conflict to address information gaps and provide this information to local and international stakeholders. Data was collected through workshops with local CSOs working on IDPs and returnees, and local councils. Field visits to these areas were also conducted.

Key Findings:

- **The neighbourhoods more recently affected by conflict are most damaged and in need of humanitarian assistance.** In particular, immediate needs remained in Ganfouda and Guwarsha since the presence of many unexploded ordnances (UXOs) - improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and mines - were reported highlighting grave protection concerns. Similarly, the presence of human remains raises serious health and contamination concerns.
- **In those neighbourhoods witnessing the end of the conflict earlier (early 2016 and prior), it was reported that the needs and priorities focused much more on rehabilitation of infrastructure and energy networks, or on building reconstruction.** In Benina for instance, issues of infrastructure damage regarding water and electricity provision have already been addressed, transport infrastructure were already functional again, the remaining priorities focused on private individuals' other needs and housing reconstruction or repair.
- Both Downtown neighbourhoods (Sabri and Souq Elhoot) are not properly assessed in this profile since they were still in a state of active conflict at the time of the assessment. **However, additional available information highlighted severe priority needs such as environmental pollution, notably the reported presence of mines and of human remains^[1].**

CONFLICT TIMELINE



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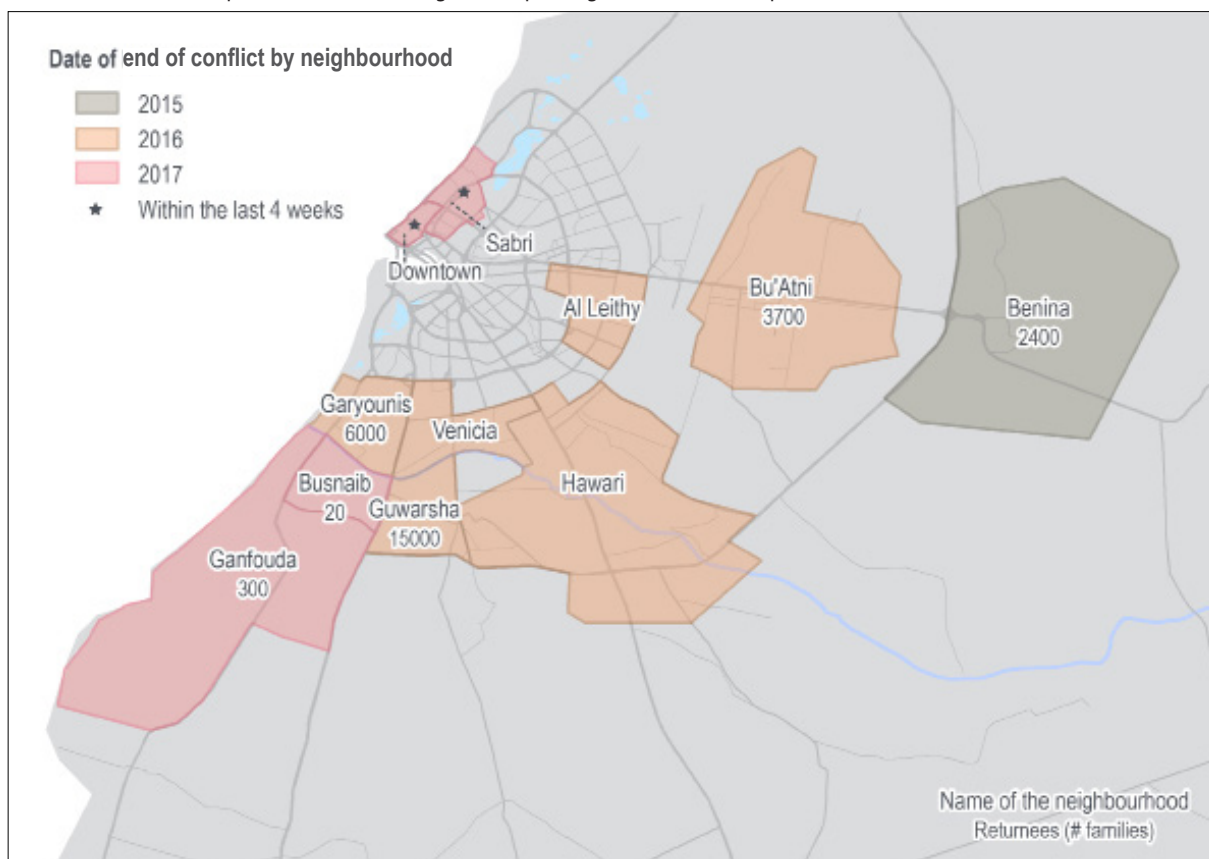


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Map 1: Number of returning families per neighbourhood and respective date of end of conflict.



METHODOLOGY

Timely qualitative data on the priority needs of returnees in the affected neighbourhoods was collected using two different strategies: the organisation of two workshops on the needs of returnees in Benghazi, facilitated by ACTED Local Governance teams in partnership with Libaid and the Civil Commission Society - responsible for the registration and monitoring of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the country. **The first component was the workshops respectively organised on 21-22 May and 5 June 2017**, and additional participant organisations included the Benghazi branch of Red Crescent, LibMAC (the Libyan Mine Action Centre), Social Affairs Benina Office, the ICRC and many others. During these workshops, participating organisations provided insight on the needs of returnees, as they are working closely with IDPs who are beginning to return to their homes. The second component was **the qualitative data that was reinforced by field visits, also organised by ACTED Local Governance teams, which occurred between 11-20 June 2017**. The field visits allowed for direct observation of damage in the affected neighbourhoods and for meetings with local governance actors, mainly members of respective local councils.

Given the methodology used, data are qualitative and therefore are not statistically representative. They are however an initial and important snapshot of the immediate needs of affected

neighbourhoods in Benghazi, in view of already ongoing and/or planned efforts of reconstruction and early recovery, which are now the priority of the city.

The findings below illustrates qualitative information on the timeline of conflict and current state of neighbourhoods in Benghazi; a focused snapshot of damage and needs in the several neighbourhoods assessed; and a final section on the overall severity of needs per neighbourhoods.

ASSESSED NEIGHBOURHOODS

Ganfouda

Priority needs:

- Mine Clearing and Awareness
- Environmental Pollution
- Electricity and Water
- Psychosocial Support



At the time of assessment, reportedly only 10% of the neighbourhood's inhabitants have returned (300 families out of 3,000)

The Ganfouda neighbourhood was visited on 11 June 2017. Located in the suburbs of Western Benghazi, it was one of the first neighbourhoods to be evacuated at the early stage of the conflict, and one of the last ones free of conflict on 19 March 2017. Heavy clashes in the residential areas left widespread damage. It is at the time of writing considered as the neighbourhood assessed with heaviest destruction and highest needs (excluding most recently Downtown neighbourhoods).

Protection. Returnees reportedly face important risks in Ganfouda due to the presence of unexploded ordnances (UXOs). In addition, a strong environmental pollution caused by the reported presence of human remains under destroyed buildings' rubbles poses a serious health threat for returning families.^[2]

Aside from physical protection needs, there has also been reports of psychosocial needs among IDPs, particularly those who were displaced in collective spaces.

Infrastructure damage. It is important and widespread, the main road in the neighbourhood reportedly needs repairing; main networks of street lighting, water and electricity are reported to be seriously or completely unavailable. Private housing is also reported as heavily damaged, in addition to having sustained looting.

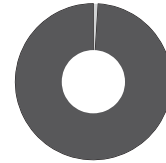
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). Water needs are also reported to be concerning. The local water utility company is not being able to provide any service; water tanks present in various buildings are reported to be damaged and not functional. No water pump was observed in the entire area during field visits. Additionally, waste management seems to be poor. Furthermore, the municipality is reportedly dumping garbage in a land fill without any kind of treatment and garbage trucks reportedly drive uncovered, littering garbage in the neighbourhood upon service.

Livelihoods and Basic Services. Many households reportedly lost their source of livelihoods due to damage to buildings, some of them being businesses. In addition, damage was caused to the local mosque, to all educational facilities except for two, and to the local clinic rendering it non-functional. No recreational space other than the beach alonging the neighbourhood on the Western side could be observed.

Busnaib

Priority needs:

- **Mine Awareness**
- **Electricity and Water**
- **Recreational Spaces**
- **Psychosocial Support**



At the time of assessment, reportedly only 1% of the neighbourhood's inhabitants have returned (20 families out of 3,000)

The Busnaib neighbourhood was visited on 12 June 2017. Located in wider Western Benghazi inbetween Ganfouda and Guwarsha, Busnaib is a relatively new area which began to be settled in 2011, and is considered as an informal settlement. Although the area did not witness direct conflict and did not suffer heavy damage, the widespread presence of unattended unfinished buildings constitutes the main concern. The district witnessed end of conflict mid-January 2017.

Protection. UXOs and in particular mines are reported as a risk in the area for potential returning families, although the risk is deemed not as high as in neighbouring Ganfouda. They mostly live in the abovementioned many unfinished buildings, which also raise concern for the shelter and protection situation of returning households.

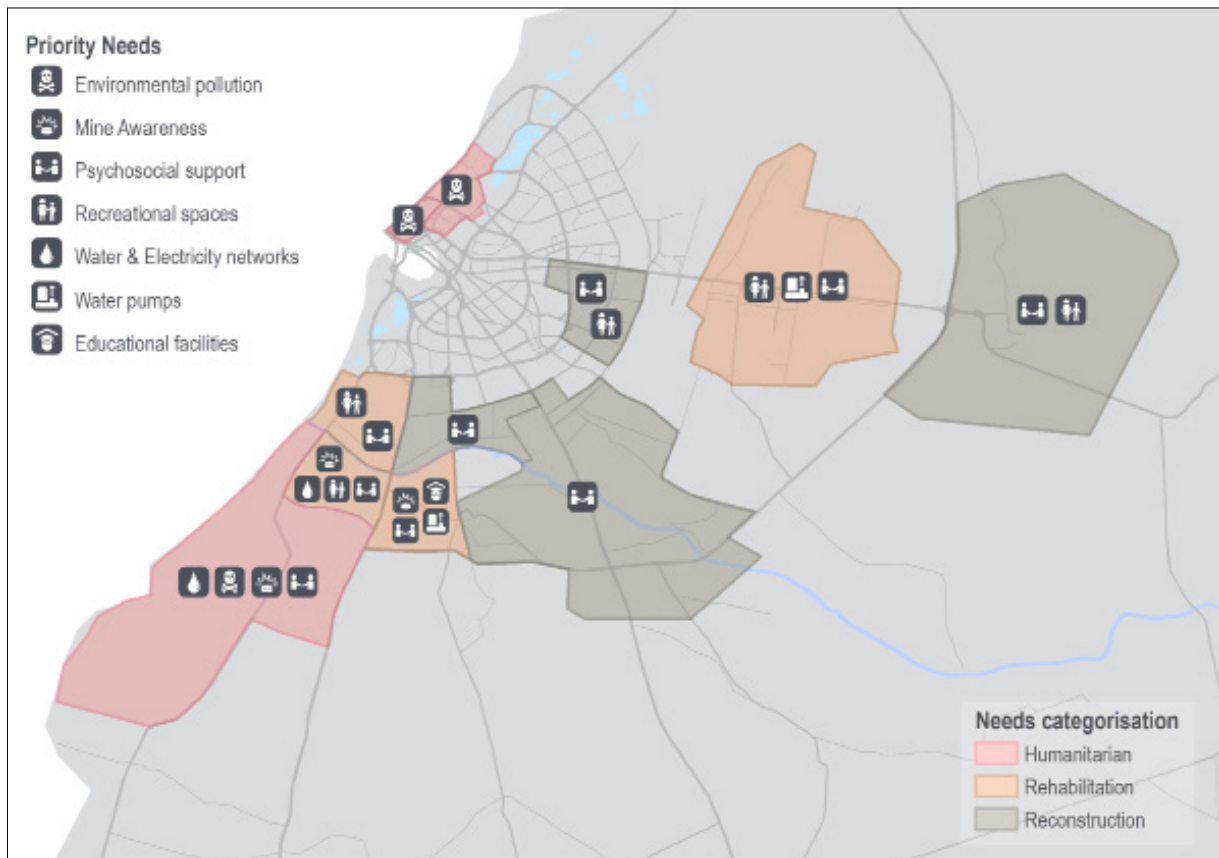
Infrastructure damage. While the damage to buildings and road is apparently limited, the water and electricity networks are reported as mostly not functional. This is due to, respectively, the reported absence of water pumps and electricity that could power those pumps; and the looting of copper wires constitutive of the main grid in the area.

WASH. Water was observed as mostly unavailable. In addition, management needs to be improved, the major problem being reportedly linked to the strike declared by the local cleaning company.

Guwarsha

Priority needs:

- **Mine Awareness**
- **Water Pumps**
- **Educational Facilities**



To be able to 'rank' the damage and needs following their "severity" or different "categories", the methodology used during the returnees workshops was based on four aspects: timeframe of the end of unrest (the more recently accessible, the higher the priority of intervention); population density (the higher the density, the higher the priority); the extent damage (idem); whether or not the infrastructure has already started to be reconstructed. Taking these criteria in consideration allowed for a categorisation of needs not only based on "severity", but to focus on different "areas of intervention" (severe humanitarian needs, needs for rehabilitation, or for reconstruction) to be able to trigger an efficient response of different types of actors, where and when they are most needed.

• Psychosocial Support



At the time of assessment, reportedly 50% of the neighbourhood's inhabitants have returned (15,000 families out of 30,000)

The Guwarsha area was visited on 14 June 2017. The neighbourhood is located on the western side of Benghazi. It had 30,000 families registered before the revolution, and was one of the first areas to be evacuated by the end of 2014 because of neighbouring presence of military bases. Airstrikes, mostly, affected the neighbourhood, before the end of conflict on 17 November 2016.

WASH. Priority needs for WASH consist mainly of water access and the development of the water network. Indeed, even before the war, the water system required pumps. The available water station was reportedly damaged and looted during the conflict.

Infrastructure damage. Public networks, notably the electricity and sewage systems, are reportedly dysfunctional: around 10%

of the neighbourhood does not have access to electricity, and repairs to the sewage system are needed to address sewage water leaks. Regarding access to basic services, at the time of the assessment it was reported that only one out of the four clinics in Guwarsha was renovated and will be operational in the short term.

Protection. UXOs and in particular mines seem to be an important issue in the neighbourhood with "continuous incidents of people injured or killed by mines" registered by the Guwarsha local council.

Educational and Recreational Spaces. Most school facilities are reportedly damaged at the time of the assessment, rendering access to educational services more difficult and most probably diminishing intentions to return for families.

Bu'Atni

Priority needs:

- **Recreational Spaces**
- **Water Pumps**
- **Psychosocial Support**



At the time of assessment, reportedly 62% of the neighbourhood's inhabitants have returned (3,700 families out of 6,000)

The Bu'Atni neighbourhood was visited on 20 June 2017. Located in the eastern suburbs of Benghazi, it is primarily a neighbourhood centralising industrial and agricultural facilities. The damage was reportedly extremely heavy in the neighbourhood due to its strategic positioning. For this reason, the neighbourhood knew one of the earliest wave of displacement, as early as July 2014 for some families.

WASH. While issues with electricity have reportedly already been addressed, access to water is still difficult. Water infrastructure, in particular a main water tower, is damaged and solutions to address this issue - such as water pumps - do not seem to be effective for returnees as they do not cover the needs of the entire area. In addition, returnees allegedly use water wells in surrounding areas where they dispose their waste, which could cause the propagation of waterborne disease.

Recreational Spaces. There are outdoor spaces but that are reportedly not designed or maintained as recreational spaces for children of community members.

Benina

Priority needs:

- **Building Reconstruction**
- **Recreational Spaces**
- **Psychosocial Support**



At the time of assessment, the overwhelming majority of the neighbourhood's inhabitants (97%) have reportedly already returned (only 65 families out of 2,465 have not)

The Benina area was visited on 18 June 2017. This separate

municipality - since 2015 - is located further East in the Benghazi outskirts; it is a crucial area in the context of the conflict since it was where clashes started in 2014, during the battle for control of Benina airport. This occasioned the earliest wave of displacement, and Benina was also the first area free of clashes at the end of 2014. Almost all residents have returned except few families whose shelters have been completely destroyed. Needs observed in Benina focus more on continuation of reconstruction since damage have already started to be addressed.

Protection. While the presence of UXOs was reported as a serious threat in the aftermath of the end of conflict in the area, this is reportedly not the case anymore after most of the neighbourhood has been swept and several awareness campaigns have been conducted.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that this area is the only one for which a local council member expressly reported during the organised field visit the need for psychosocial support for traumas related to conflict, especially focusing on children.

Infrastructure Reconstruction. It was reported that a health clinic in Wadi Qatara has been repaired. The municipality and military authorities took part in infrastructure repair such as paving roads, and repairing a bridge and the airport (**which has at the time of writing reopened and is functional^[3]**). The remaining issues with infrastructure are centred on roads and sewage system.

Access to basic services. Similarly, repairs have reportedly started in the area. Some educational and health facilities are available thanks to those repairs, even though they might lack specialised supplies.

Recreational Spaces. The lack of sufficient recreational spaces was underlined as a concern in the area, due to the lack of sufficient urban planning in the municipality.

Other Neighbourhoods (Downtown, Garyounis, Hawari, Al-Laithi, Venecia)

Priority needs:

- **Environmental Pollution (Garyounis, Downtown)**
- **Recreational Spaces (Garyounis, Al-Laithi, Venecia)**
- **Psychosocial Support (Garyounis, Hawari, Al-Laithi, Venecia)**

Other recently accessible neighbourhoods were not visited but timely information was provided by the assessment team and



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during the organised workshops. They include **Al-Laithi**, a high-density district located between Bu'Atni and the city centre, which witnessed the end of conflict on 23 February 2017; **Hawari**, located in the southeast suburbs of Benghazi, a "buffer area" between Guwarsha and other affected districts of Benghazi, free of conflict on 16 April 2017; **Venecia**, located directly East of Garyounis, turmoil ended early 2016; and **Garyounis** in the Western Benghazi area, located between Ganfouda and the more proper Benghazi urban area, where clashes ended shortly before Guwarsha on 22 June 2017. Additionally, available information from Downtown neighbourhoods of **Sabri and Souq Elhoot** are provided in this section too, regarding the severity of damage and highest priority needs as observed post-end of conflict on 5 July 2017, and the start of debris removal/reconstruction actions led in the area since then^[4].

Environmental Pollution. This need was reported after heavy clashes in the downtown area occasioned damage and remaining environmental pollution as well as the reported presence of wild animals and insects potentially causing grave health issues.

Regarding Downtown neighbourhoods of Sabri and Souq Elhoot, at the time of writing it still seems difficult to assess with precision the level of contamination but it is allegedly the highest of all affected neighbourhoods in Benghazi. Until recently completely blocked for populations to access, injuries and deaths provoked by UXOs of people returning to their houses to clear them from rubble were reported^{[2][4]}.

Recreational Spaces. The need for more recreational spaces was reported in three out of the four neighbourhoods (Garyounis, Al-Laithi and Venecia) but no other details or precise expected projects were reported.

Psychosocial Support. This need was reported in the four neighbourhoods, but no other details or precise expected actions were reported.

Table 1: neighbourhoods comprehensive needs matrix

	Ganfouda	Busnaib	Guwarsha	Bu'Atni	Benina	Garyounis	Al-Laithi	Hawari	Venecia
Psychosocial Support									
Mine Awareness									
Remnants of War									
Environmental Pollution									
Electricity									
Water									
Waste Management									
Public/Services Buildings									
Recreational Spaces creation									

Priority needs were defined based on frequency of reporting from those attending the workshops and the field visits/interviews with the local council

KEY PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings presented in this profile, the following key priorities and recommendations can be highlighted for further humanitarian planning and assistance:

- **The most severe needs were reported in those neighbourhoods most recently declared free of conflict.** Severe and immediate needs remain in such neighbourhoods like both Downtown neighbourhoods, Ganfouda and Guwarsha because of the presence of UXOs and of human remains, raising health and contamination concerns. **Mine awareness remains a crucial domain for improvement, highlighted during the workshops as the least developed among all CSOs operating in the country.**
- **In those neighbourhoods witnessing the end of clashes earlier (early 2016 and earlier on), observers reported that the needs and priorities focus much more on rehabilitation of infrastructure and energy networks, or on building reconstruction.**
- The needs and priorities for interventions were highlighted



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during the workshops and revolve around two main areas:

1. **Psychosocial support:** Returnees are a psychologically affected population group, especially those **displaced in a collective public space such as schools rather than staying with family; returning to destroyed and/or looted housing.** 34% of IDPs were found to be in need of intensive psychological support following a mapping study of 940 IDP families from the Libyan Organization for Psychology. It is essential to bring in together local actors and notably CSOs to address this issue which is not sector-specific but cross-sectoral and can be tackled on different fronts.
2. **Economic Crisis:** The general economic context hitting the country is also critical for affected populations assessed here. Crossed vulnerabilities such as accentuated depletion of resources due to several displacements can be evoked. This vulnerability is **exacerbated by the liquidity crisis making it very difficult for Libyans to access funds.** In addition, it was reported in the workshops that banking functionality is still challenging in Benghazi with banks not able to give out loans to people. This means that **affected people without enough liquid funds cannot meet their basic needs or cannot undertake repairs necessary to a dignified return.**

ENDNOTES

^[1] Libya Herald reporter (2017, 24 July). Red Crescent finds 41 unidentified bodies in Benghazi mass graves. *Libya Herald*. Retrieved from <https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/07/24/red-crescent-finds-41-unidentified-bodies-in-benghazi-mass-graves/>

^[2] Moutaz Ali (2017, 20 July). After defeating the terrorists, Benghazi must defeat the terror of the mines. *Libya Herald*. Retrieved from <https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/07/20/after-defeating-the-terrorists-benghazi-must-defeat-the-terror-of-the-mines/>

^[3] Esam OMRAN AI-Fetori (2017, 15 July). Benghazi airport reopens after three-year closure during war. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-benghazi-idUSKBN1A00HP>

^[4] Libya Herald team (2017, 30 July). Sabri volunteers start to clean up. *Libya Herald*. Retrieved from <https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/07/29/sabri-volunteers-clean-up-streets/>



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