

LIBYANS AT RISK

MEASURING THE DAILY SAFETY FOR EFFECTIVE PEACEBUILDING IN LIBYA

Photo Ahmed Jadallah

**KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS
BASED ON STORIES ON EVERYDAY
THREATS AND CHALLENGES IN LIBYA**

This research and publication was made possible by



This report is based on collected stories. These stories have provided us a profound insight on the lived realities by Libyans in their communities. The stories themselves do not necessarily represent the opinion of the network or individual organizations. The stories guided the partners in selecting priorities and contributed to the development and implementation of the project initiatives under this program.

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1. INTRODUCTION

We present to you this report during a pandemic that has brought significant changes to all our lives. Covid-19 has clearly shown us that the ‘security’ of people and communities, as opposed to the security of states, must include health, food, economic, environmental, personal, community and political security. If we acknowledge that a pandemic does not recognize jurisdictions and borders, and as we respond to the emergency and the immediate needs of the people and communities impacted by it, we must recognize that Human Security is a universal concern. Human security places the individual at the center and considers conditions that threaten its survival, livelihood and dignity.

This report follows a human security approach and brings in the lived experiences of Libyans through their own personal stories. The report is not intended as a comprehensive analysis of the geo-political situation in Libya since the 2011-overthrow of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Instead, this report will exhibit a unique account of how the conflict developed and what it meant for the people experiencing the conflict: the insecurities, the deterioration of services and infrastructure, the increase of weapons and armed groups, and the decrease in jobs. In addition to a people-centered perspective, this report is also unique as it elevates the voices of marginalized groups. Youth and women take center stage.

In the next chapters we will raise the voices, draw conclusions and formulate recommendations from 124 stories collected between October 2017 and May 2018. These stories were collected by 32 activists, representing eight women and youth-organizations based in the west, east and south of Libya. Women and men in different age categories shared their experiences, providing us an insight into the daily realities of Libyans. The stories highlight experiences of displacement, the constant and real fear that something may happen to you - or worse, to your loved ones, the loss of property, jobs and access to education, and the widespread presence of weapons and small arms that have an incredible impact on the life of civilians in Libya.

While the stories refer to events that took place before 2018, **the issues that affect day-to-day safety in the community are still relevant.** In fact, the conflict has since intensified with months of military clashes transforming the landscape in and around Tripoli into a military battlefield. As the conflict in Libya evolves, we recommend conducting a further round of story collection to identify patterns and developments on the ground.

The purpose of the story collection is to inform all those who are interested about the needs of the communities in Libya and to inform the development of tailor-made actions. The stories have provided us with valuable insights, which we have used to formulate recommendations directed to different stakeholders. We also felt the urgency to share and disseminate this publication. The stories may complement other research conducted on Libya and inspire further research. The following report describes the story collection process, methodologies, analysis and recommendations. In the final stages of drafting this report, partners were further consulted for input on context and recommendations on how to engage with various issues presented in the report, ensuring that this report and its rich content provide practical insights that address all the challenges as described in the hundred twenty-four stories.

A word of thanks and appreciation: This report was made possible by the collective efforts of many people. A special and warm thanks goes out to the interviewees, those women and men that were willing to share their very personal stories. This could not have been possible without our Libyan partners who identified the respondents and interviewed and documented the stories. We also thank our Libyan resource persons Asma Khalifa, Inas Miloud, Khalifa Abdulla, Dr. Rida Altubuly and Zorgh Madi. Furthermore, our appreciation goes out to Sabina Atzei, Amber Bel and Anne Kwakkenbos (Cordaid), Thalia Malmberg (Human Security Collective) and Heidi Paredes, who supported the development of the research. We also like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands which is financially supporting the partnership of Cordaid and Human Security Collective with the eight Libyan partners through the grants framework Women, Peace and Security 2016-2019 and 2020.



Libyan soldiers try to fix a weapon that jammed during clashes with militants on the frontline in Al Ajaylat, 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of Tripoli, Libya.

IN MEMORY OF MOHAMED BEN KHALIFA, PHOTOGRAPHER

The photos in this report, illustrating daily life in Libya, were taken by Mohamed Ben Khalifa. Ben Khalifa was a close family member of one of our partners and friend of the network. He was also a respected news photographer who started working after 2011. Ben Khalifa covered stories in Libya such as the [migrant crisis](#), [clashes between armed groups](#), [terror attacks](#) and [civilians' day-to-day lives](#).

In January 2019, during one of his missions, Mohamed Ben Khalifa was killed during a clash between the Tripoli Protection Force and the Seventh Brigade from Tarhuna. He left behind his wife and young daughter.

<https://cpj.org/data/people/mohamed-ben-khalifa/>

BOX 1: HUMAN SECURITY IN LIBYA FURTHER DETERIORATED SINCE APRIL 2019

On the 4th of April 2019, General Khalifa Haftar, head of the Eastern-based Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), launched a large-scale offensive towards Tripoli and against the Government of National Accord (GNA). Haftar justified this attack by arguing that he is fighting “extremist groups” and “terrorism” that aim to destabilize Libya.¹ The offensive was followed by months of military clashes between the two parties, transforming Tripoli and its surroundings into a military battlefield. Haftar’s military campaign collapsed when the GNA forces gained the upper hand, driving Haftar from the outskirts of Tripoli and other western towns. In July 2019, the GNA forces pressed towards the strategic city of Sirte, the birthplace of Gaddafi, located 450 km (280 miles) east of Tripoli. Amid these tensions, foreign actors have threatened to send troops into Libya².

As a result of this latest military campaign, the United Nations postponed the National Conference that was to take place from 14 - 16 April 2019 in the Libyan city of Ghadames. The aim of the conference was to discuss the possibility of holding presidential and parliamentary elections by the end of the year³. Effectively, Libya has been split between rival east- and west-based administrations, each backed by armed forces and foreign governments since 2011. In January 2020, Germany hosted an international conference in Berlin where several countries agreed to uphold the weapons embargo. However, this commitment has been repeatedly violated.

Many civilians have found themselves trapped between fighting forces and have been forced to evacuate their houses and run for their safety. Food and water supplies are limited, and the prices of basic items - including gas for cooking, have risen. In addition, there are frequent electricity blackouts, limiting communication in the capital and elsewhere. Hospitals are struggling with chronic shortages of medical supplies amid power outages and weakened water pumping stations. The violence has caused more than 3,000 casualties and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. The armed conflict has resulted in the destruction of hospitals and schools, as well as the mitiga airport in May 2020.

In the meantime, COVID19 reached Libya in March 2020. Years of violence have left the healthcare system especially vulnerable. Recent attacks on health facilities and important hospitals, like the Al Khadra General Hospital in Tripoli, have made the situation more precarious. Global calls have been made for a humanitarian ceasefire to allow authorities to address the ongoing pandemic. Despite the calls, the fighting has intensified. Indeed, conflicting parties have used the shift of international attention away from Libya as an opportunity to escalate military operations.

The impact, response and consequences of the conflict as well as the COVID19 crisis are gendered in multiple ways. UN Women conducted a survey to capture the pandemic’s specific impact on women. They found that the current COVID19 prevention measures have negatively affected women’s livelihoods and safety. For more information on the current situation and the gendered impact of COVID19, please see our most recent [policy brief on the gendered impact of COVID19 crisis in Libya](#)⁴.



Photo Mujaddara, Wikimedia Commons

Sandy roads in Libya (February 2011).

2. THE PROGRAM “WOMEN AND YOUTH AS BRIDGE BUILDERS, STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE IN LIBYA”

This report has been issued as part of the program “Women and youth as bridge builders, strengthening resilience in Libya.” As part of the Dutch National Action Plan 1325, two Dutch organizations, Cordaid and Human Security Collective joined forces in 2016 with Libyan partners to enable women’s leadership and political participation in Libya. The four-year project supports strong, resourceful women and men in Libya who often risk their lives to create more peaceful communities. The project, with its long-term commitment, aims to deepen local partnerships through capacity building, lobby and advocacy, and information and knowledge sharing. Learning and critical reflection through plenary workshops strengthens our collective efforts to enable women and youth to play a role as bridge builders and change agents.

This 4-year program has established an effective partnership between Dutch and Libyan NGO’s, helping to build an enabling environment for women’s participation and empowerment and support strong, resourceful women and men to meaningfully participate in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, protection, relief and recovery.

The main goals of the program are:

1. To enhance human security with a specific attention for women’s safety.
2. To contribute to reducing harmful, underlying gender norms & values and practices in women and men’s lives.
3. To provide opportunities for women and men to participate meaningfully and equally in various peace processes and in conflict resolution & prevention.

As part of the program, we initiated a story collection process during the kick-off workshop. The aim was to generate an in-depth understanding of the main issues that affect the daily safety in the community with specific attention to women’s safety. The study provides a unique and comprehensive insight into the everyday lived experience of Libyans at the grassroots level. The story collection also provided valuable insights on the needs of the communities, which helped develop tailor-made programs. During 2017-2020, we developed 24 program initiatives inspired by the collected information, which are currently being implemented in communities. Eleven of these program initiatives have been developed by youth leaders participating in our program.

Story collection on the everyday threats and challenges in Libya

This report draws on the 124 stories collected from October 2017 until May 2018. Stories were collected by 32 civil society activists, who represent eight women and youth-organizations from the west, east and south of Libya. The stories are from women and men in different age categories, providing us an insight into the daily realities of Libyans since the conflict erupted in 2011. The stories highlight experiences of displacement, the constant and real fear that something will happen to you, or worse, to your loved ones, and the loss of property, jobs and access to education, and the widespread presence of weapons and small arms that have an incredible impact on the life of civilians in Libya.

Each respondent was asked to provide a title to their stories. In many cases these titles make a clear reference to the loss of dreams and future perspectives. Nevertheless, the stories also express hope, resilience, and the will to overcome and to live a normal and peaceful life. Despite the continuous armed conflicts and insecurities, Libyans are very resilient, they celebrate the beauty of everyday life in the simplest yet most profound forms. This manifests itself in open air exhibitions, social activities, and the celebration of positive events such as when the football team won during the Africa Cup. We also came across an increasing number of women who became successful entrepreneurs, thus setting an example and contributing to society in many ways by making a positive difference. Libyan women clearly showed their heartening resilience and capacity to cope with the daily stress and the psychological effects of the ongoing war through their stories. Despite uplifting examples of positive narratives, most of the stories reflect how the war has negatively impacted the daily life of Libyans.

The collection and analysis of the stories, a process conducted in full partnership with our partner network, provide a *unique insight in the daily realities of Libyans and express different perspectives*. While the stories were collected in 2017 and 2018, the stories remain relevant today. With the escalation of the conflict in 2019 and 2020, many security threats described by respondents have been further exacerbated. This report looks at the underlying factors that have created such insecurity then and today.



Practicing interviewing techniques and the use of tablets during the first story collection workshop.



Partners are collectively analyzing the stories during one of the international workshops.

Methodology

The stories were collected via tablets and a virtual data collection tool (Commcare) which allows users to document and upload the stories (offline as well as online) while applying data protection principles. Prior to the story collection, all eight partner organizations received training on interviewing techniques, the use of the tablet and Commcare. The story collection started by asking respondents to share a personal story of an incident that affected the daily safety in their community. This open-ended question is accompanied by a survey with 21 questions which dive deeper into the local realities of the participants. While some sections of the survey are standardized allowing to compare results across countries and time, there are also several unique questions to better grasp the complex local situation in the different countries. The survey was developed with the input of the partners provided during the workshops.

During the workshops we also discussed the risks that participants might face after sharing their stories, as well as the risks that those collecting stories might face. Together with local partners, participants discussed ways to mitigate those risks. The workshops provided a safe space to discuss the safety and self-care of the activists in the program. This is important as members of civil society organizations are exposed to physical and emotional pressure, especially when working on sensitive projects like collecting stories. Moving around and meeting people for the first time in Libya poses a danger in the current situation. Each participant shared moments when they felt safe and secure and situations when they felt most threatened. Afterwards, participants shared methods they use to release stress and restore energy as part of the self-care process.

During and after the story collection process, we organized plenary workshops to jointly reflect on the data collected. Plenary sessions included the participation of Libyan activists that collected the stories on the ground. During those sessions, participants translated the quantitative data into graphs and percentages to visualize any salient patterns. These patterns were backed up by the actual stories, which we categorized by key themes. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods we were able to identify overarching trends across communities. In drafting this report, partners were further consulted for input on context and recommendations. This participatory process lends credibility to our analysis as it ensures that the analysis of the stories truly reflects the local realities and interpretations, and that the recommendations reflect the priorities of Libyan communities. The methodology applied was inspired by Cordaid's Women, Peace and Security Barometer (see box 1 and 2).

“The second story collection workshop was a good opportunity for our organization to learn about the many different types of violence that occur in the country.

We identified patterns of violence against both women and men. The best part of the workshop was learning from each other and reading all the stories. This also affected us, because sometimes people shared a story about unimaginable atrocities. This also made us aware that there are many people out there suffering in silence.”

Story collector and participant in the story collection workshop

BOX 2: CORDAID'S WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY BAROMETER

Women are powerful agents of change in rebuilding and reshaping communities affected by conflict. Still, women are not fully and meaningfully included in peacebuilding bodies and decision-making. One of the reasons for this deficit is that many security initiatives are based on incomplete analysis. Macro indicators focusing on state security, for example, do not measure the daily situation and quality of life at the community level and fail to present gender segregated data. Involving women and including their needs and concerns to peacebuilding initiatives leads to more effective peace building solutions where everybody can benefit.

The Added Value

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Barometer provides insights that are usually not available through existing indices or statistics. Peace indices often lack a gender lens while gender indices lack a conflict and security perspective. The Barometer fills this gap and complements existing statistics in a participatory manner with nuanced information from the ground. There are several distinguishing features of the WPS Barometer, that address the unheard voices that are not accounted for in existing policy or statistical documents:

- The Barometer consists of a *participatory process*, where the indicators are defined by local women and men themselves. This approach allows individuals to make sense of their own reality rather than being forced to think in restricted policy discourses.

- The Barometer is designed as a *continuous process*, where trends can be identified through ongoing data collection and reflections.
- The Barometer *facilitates (inter)national exchanges* between groups for active and shared learning and to develop joint initiatives. It can therefore effectively increase the influence of women in local, national and international decision-making.
- The findings of the Barometer *fosters accountability*, as local information is translated to the (inter) national level and feeds back to the local level.
- The Barometer is a *comparative tool*. The collected perspectives on peace and security can be used as benchmarks in order to conduct multiple comparative measurements at different points in time. This tool also allows for standardized principles and context-specific implementation.

The uniqueness and strength of the Barometer lies in its approach, which is based on giving women the power to define by themselves what security means and what their priorities are. Throughout the barometer trajectory, local women are involved to ensure that the data is meaningfully interpreted and appropriately translated into evidence-based lobby & advocacy and/or tailor-made programming. This tool provides a robust way of measuring, documenting and conveying the security needs and concerns of local women and equips women to share their perspectives on the daily peace and security issues in their community. It also helps bridge the information gap between (inter)national policymakers and local women and men.

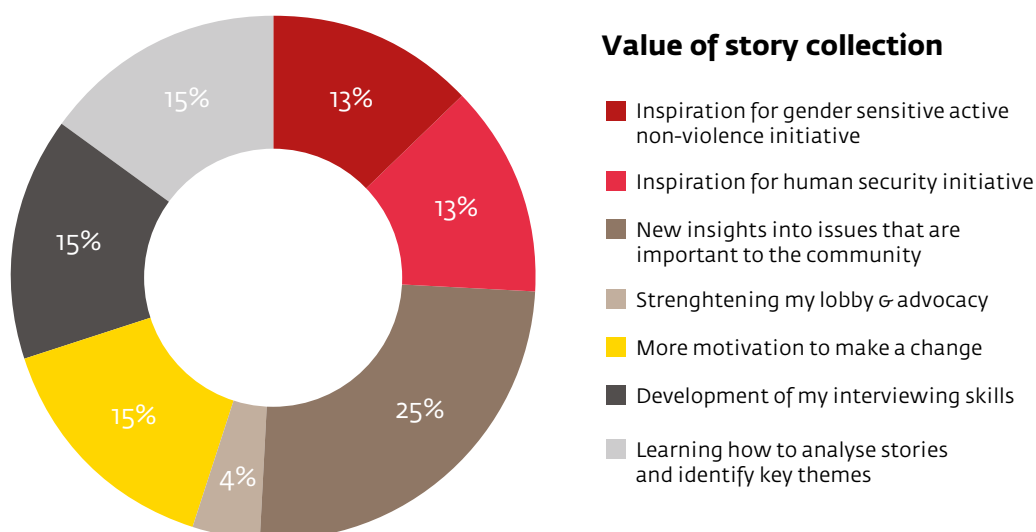
Feedback from participants on the methodology

Based on the mid-term evaluation of the program, we learned that the Libyan activists in our network, who participated in the story collection process, mostly valued the insights about issues that are important to the community (see graph 1). This shows that the story collection process contributed to the capacity of CSO representatives and activists to analyse the human security situation of local communities, with a special focus on women's safety. 26% of the respondents indicated that the stories inspired their initiatives to improve human security or to reduce harmful gender norms. 25% indicated that the story collection provided new insights into the issues that are important in the community. Other responses included that the story collection contributed to their motivation to make a change (15%). Also, the development of skills (interviewing, analysing stories and identifying key themes) was highly appreciated (29%).



Stakeholder analysis and identifying priorities on the daily safety in the community in Libya during the 3rd story collection workshop in July 2018.

GRAPHIC 1: RESULTS FROM MIDTERM REVIEW REPORT (2018) ON THE VALUE OF THE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH BY THE ACTIVISTS.



BOX 3: METHODOLOGY OF CORDAID'S WPS BAROMETER

The main principles and components of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Barometer are presented below:

1. Story Telling

With the Barometer, women express their unique concerns by sharing a story about a security incident within the last six months. The story is accompanied by a survey which allows to dive deeper into the local realities of the participants. The data is digitally collected using tablets and the secured cloud services of CommCare.

2. Participatory Analysis

After a preliminary analysis, the results are brought back to the communities to discuss the outcomes and make sense of the complex data. Through different workshops, men and women are given the opportunity to define by themselves what security means and what their priorities are. By combining women's individual perspectives and translating

them into a collective view, the data becomes a meaningful instrument for advancing women's empowerment and rights.

3. Tailormade Lobby & Advocacy and/or programming

The collective security concerns and priorities are consolidated into a multi-level advocacy strategy aiming to advance women's rights, their meaningful participation in peace processes and their security on the community level. By bringing local perceptions into national and global forums, women are gaining a voice which can shape the policy discourse and security related development cooperation.

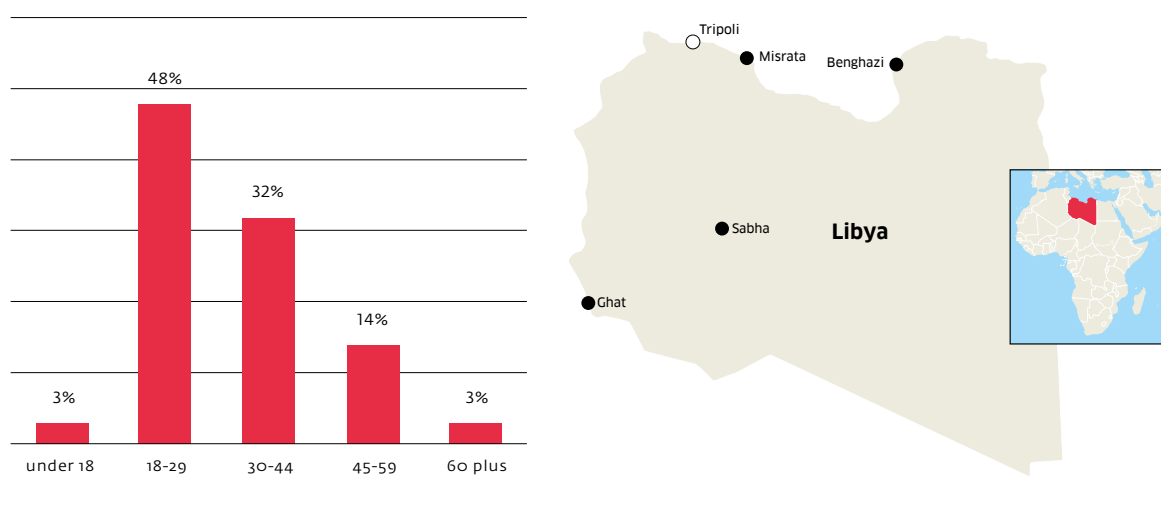
Cordaid applies this methodology in different partner countries. In Libya, the methodology has been applied to collect data on the community and personal safety from both women and men (with specific attention for women's safety). The data was collected by female and male interviewers.

3. THE DATA AT A GLANCE

The collection of reliable data in a conflict area is always challenging, but all the more meaningful when achieved. While there has been an increased level of documentation and evidence coming from Libya, these reports do not always consider the situation at grass roots level. Despite the ongoing insecurity, limited travel options, restricted access to remote communities and fear to share sensitive information, Libyan local partners were able to collect in-depth narratives in different communities throughout Libya. We are proud of the courageous and bold commitment of local Libyan partners, who participated at every stage of the research process, from the data collection to the writing of this report. Doing so renders this report unique and extremely valuable as it not only includes ‘data’, but also the interpretations, opinions and perspectives of Libyan women and men on issues related to peace and security.

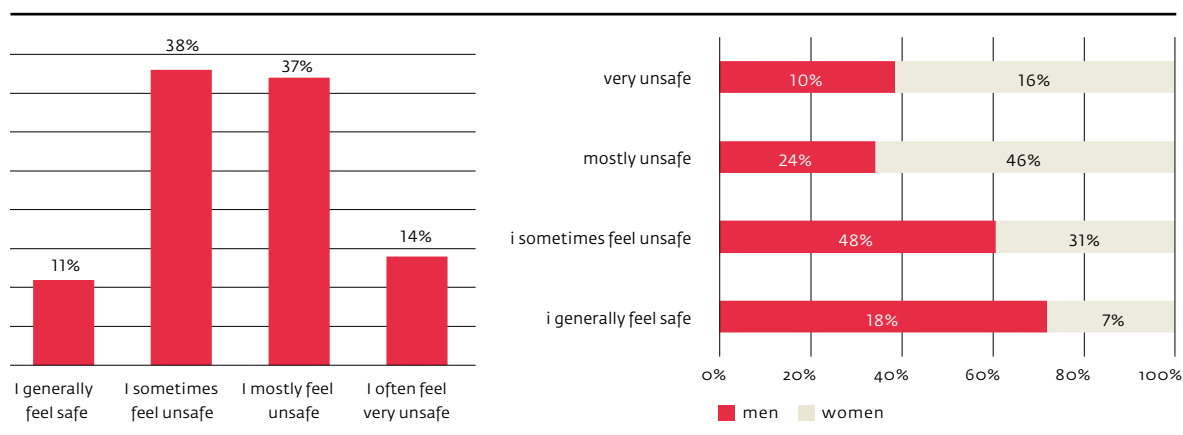
Between October 2017 – June 2018, a total of 124 stories were collected: 74 stories were narrated by women and 50 stories by men. Respondents were sampled across three geographical regions (North, South and West) and five cities (Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, Sabha and Ghat). Respondents’ ages ranged between 18 and 65 years old. Most respondents (48%) are between 18 and 29 years old. This corresponds to the demographics of Libya, where the population is relatively young.

FIGURE 1: INTERVIEWEE AGE AND LOCATION



3.1 General feeling of safety

FIGURE 2: THE GENERAL PERCEIVED FEELING OF INSECURITY (LEFT) AND THE PERCEIVED FEELING OF SAFETY SEGREGATED BY GENDER (RIGHT)



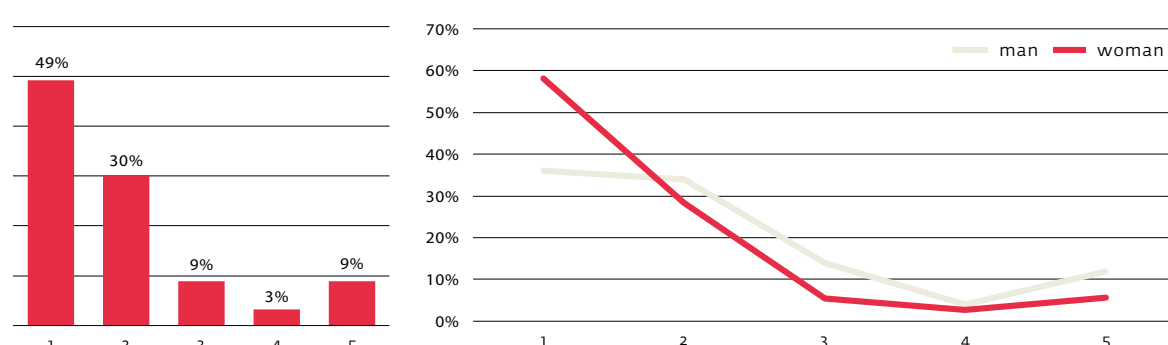
More than half of the respondents (51%) indicated that they often or mostly feel unsafe (see figure 2). Only 11% of respondents mentioned that they generally feel safe, while 38% sometimes feel safe. Women reported a higher perception of feeling insecure than men: 62% of women feel very unsafe or mostly unsafe, while 34% of men feel very unsafe or mostly unsafe. Almost half of the men (48%) indicate that they sometimes feel unsafe, while only 31% of women feel sometimes unsafe. In relation to their perceived feeling of security and safety, 18% of men generally feel safe, while only 7% of women generally feel safe.

“The general feeling of insecurity and hopelessness is a common thread throughout the stories collected. Regardless of the time in which the story takes place, the stories vividly illustrate the dire consequences of the increasingly deteriorating situation in Libya on civilians.”

Participant during the story analyzing workshop

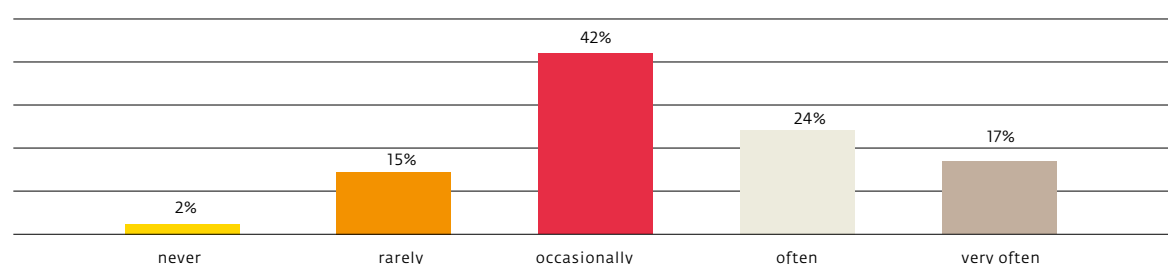
Most respondents (79%) feel that the story they shared is very negative or negative, while 12% of respondents perceive their story as positive to very positive. Women indicated to a larger extent that their story was very negative (58%) in comparison to male respondents (36%).

The stories that were perceived as positive and very positive presented challenges and difficulties. Nevertheless, the protagonist was able to overcome those challenges, which was considered as positive.

FIGURE 3: PERCEPTION THE STORIES

The table shows the perception of the stories as positive or negative. The first table (left) shows all answers, with 1 being very negative and 5 very positive. The second table segregates the data by gender (right).

Most respondents mention that the incident related to safety and security that was shared through their stories occurs often or very often (41%) or occasionally (42%). Only 17% of respondents mention that the incident shared occurs rarely or never. This provides an insight into the feeling of safety of the respondents. A majority feels that the incident that happened to them is not a random story, but happens frequently within the community.

FIGURE 4: THE PREVALENCE OF THE SHARED INCIDENTS

3.2 Which factors affect the daily safety in the community the most?

Respondents were asked to share a story about an incident in their community that affected their safety within the last year (the stories referred to the years 2016 – 2018)⁵. The story is followed by several questions about this specific incident. Respondents identified the **armed conflict (21%)** and the **lack of a functioning government (20%)** as the two main threats to the daily safety of local communities. Libya has undergone tremendous political, economic and social changes. Since Muammar Gaddafi's government was toppled in 2011, different parties are still fighting for control over the country. So far none has managed to form a stable or a broadly recognized government. Violence and armed groups deeply affect the daily lives of men, women and children throughout the country.

The stories also illustrate the prevalence of **domestic violence and sexual harassment (15%)**. In the wake of the ongoing conflict, women became particularly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). A combination of patriarchal norms, the presence of armed groups, and the wide availability of weapons are the central cause of anxiety and lack of security for women. The incidents described range from physical violence, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, and domestic violence, to abductions and rape. Many female respondents emphasized an increase in anxiety and tension due to the ever-looming threat of weapons. Mundane activities, such as going to university, shopping for groceries, or meeting friends have become an ordeal, placing women at risk of verbal and physical abuse.

Another reoccurring topic is **societal oppression of freedoms (11% of the respondents indicated that their story was mainly about discrimination and 7% about limited mobility)**. It was estimated that in 2014, Libya had over more than 1,600 active armed groups⁶. The presence and activities of these armed groups significantly affect people's daily lives. The stories illustrate cases of intimidation, threats, robbery, arbitrary imprisonment, kidnappings and illegal arrests by armed groups. One recurring theme mentioned in the stories is the presence of arbitrary checkpoints controlled by armed groups.

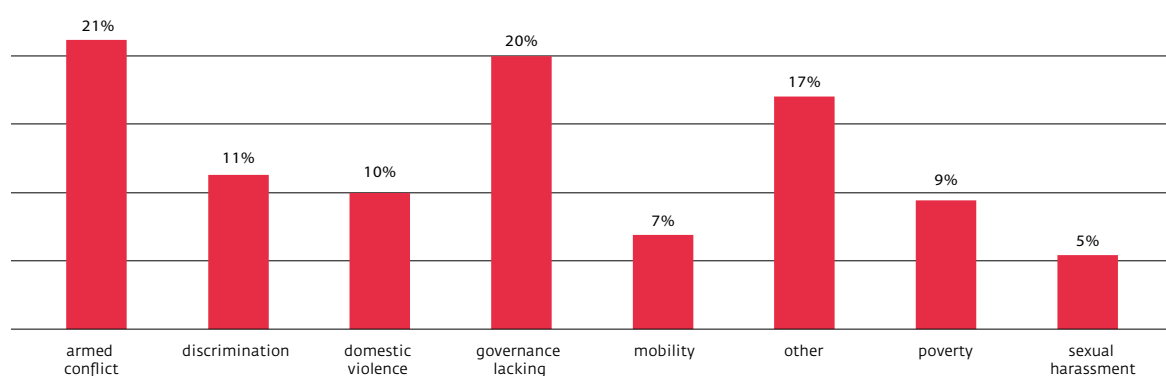
Almost one out of ten respondents indicated that their story mainly relates to **poverty, economic violence, and lack of access to income (9%)**. During the later years of Gaddafi's regime, Libya had the highest GDP per capita and life expectancy on the African continent. In addition, people could enjoy free health care and education, despite many institutions struggling with corruption. After NATO's intervention in 2011, some institutions were further debilitated and poverty rates in Libya soared: currently, 1/3 of Libyan citizens live in poverty⁷. According to the UNHCR⁸, 1.3 million people in Libya need humanitarian assistance. Necessities such as fuel, gas, safe drinking water, medication, cooking oil and food are scarce and very expensive in some areas. Oil fields are often a target of attacks, with bombardments and blockades pushing oil production to a stop. Many Libyans relied on salaries from oil revenues and many have lost their jobs. In addition, the banking system has struggled with cash flow and security threats.

17% of respondents mentioned other topics, including: internal displacement, lack of infrastructure, tribal conflict and/or extremism.

“The different themes are inextricably connected with each other. Capturing this complexity is essential to understand the ground realities”

Participant in the story analysing workshop

FIGURE 5: THE TOPICS OF THE STORIES AS INDICATED BY THE RESPONDENTS⁹



In the next section we will discuss the topics that came up most often through the story collection. As mentioned before, the different topics are strongly interconnected to each other. We will discuss the issue of poverty, economic violence and lack of access to income under the topic of 'lack of governance'.

3.2.1 Armed conflict

3.2.1.1 Armed groups¹⁰

One of the results of the 2011 overthrow of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi was a proliferation of armed groups of different affiliations and formations. By late 2011 there were 3,000 fighters registered with the fighter's committee.¹¹ This number spiked within weeks after the declaration of liberation in October 2011 and the promise to give a salary and other benefits to fighters. Registered fighters reached 8,000 people. Over the years this number continued to increase. Furthermore, fighters organized into armed groups, national guards, joint operation forces and small-scale armed forces in neighborhoods. Some of them have grown so large that they now operate their own prisons and carry out their own investigations. These groups change their affiliations and alliances frequently.

Based on a comprehensive analysis on armed groups¹², the current state of affairs arose gradually for interlocking reasons: 1) The national power vacuum required local authorities to provide security and services; 2) Government salaries were offered to those who claimed to be part of an armed group after Gaddafi's ouster; 3) Opportunities to exploit subsidies and smuggling/trafficking networks; 4) Vast supplies of arms which were readily available in Libya; 5) The strength of local, tribal and regional identities and the weakness of national institutions and narrative; and 6) Youth unemployment, the need for personal and community protection, and the personal status that militia membership confers. Today, being in an armed group in Libya is profitable, because it can be leveraged to gain preferential access to state subsidies and semi-sovereign institutions. All other activities outside the oil sector or the state's myriad patronage networks are not as profitable. This has led to a new system of incentives, in which armed groups now have a vested interest in perpetuating the current statelessness and fragmentation, at the expense of the public interest at large.

The presence and activities of these armed groups is affecting people's daily lives: from restrictions of movement through frequent checkpoints to kidnappings and forced illegal arrests, as well as torture and forced disappearances. The story collection confirmed this situation, with several stories involving armed groups. Taking advantage of Libya's security vacuum, these armed groups rob, kidnap and threaten civilians. Armed forces have free rein to arbitrarily imprison people and punish them without a fair trial.

BOX 4: ARBITRARY ARRESTS BY ARMED GROUPS

The stories of Hamed and Nouri from Misrata illustrate the arbitrary arrests conducted by militias. Hamed and Nouri were both imprisoned for 96 days by an armed Islamic group, without charge or trial. Both men had a good relationship with a female teacher, who is not a Muslim. They often discussed religious issues, which eventually led to their imprisonment:

Hamed and Nouri: "Our abductors accused us of following the lady's religious convictions. We were tortured, taken away from our homes and jailed in Tripoli. We did not receive any healthy food and the cell was overcrowded with other prisoners, not to mention verbal insults and vulgarity. We were put with others accused of various crimes, most of them were not brought before courts. They are just prisoners in hell on earth."

Jaber, a young man of 27 years old from the Om Al Araneb region in southern Libya, shared his struggles with militias as an independent taxi driver. During one of his assignments he was stopped by armed militias who pretended to be security officers. They claimed the car was reported in a violent offence and ordered him and his client to leave the car for inspection:

Jaber: "As soon as we left the car, they threatened us with their guns and obliged us to get in their cars after they covered our eyes. They took us to a farm in that area; one young man with us asked why they were taking us and what we did, so they started beating and insulting him until he fainted, and they threatened to kill us if any of us asked another question. As soon as we arrived in their shelter, they pushed us out of their cars, asked us to lay facing the ground, body-searched us, took our money and cell phones from our pockets, while another group was searching our car and they took all valuables we had. They tied us with ropes, and we stayed in that position for about one hour. One member of this gang later came with the keys of my car and told us he would take us out to the public road, and that the car became his as of that day; I was so scared that I agreed and told him to take everything he wanted provided he would let us go. He put again a band over our eyes so that we couldn't recognize the way; later when he removed the band, I was surprised he gave us the keys of the car with 10 dinars and told us the money was to refill the car, which was used up and was not suitable for their work; he also threatened us not to inform the police about what happened, and if we did, we would be killed in front of the police station; so we took the car and we were very exhausted and continued our journey; that was my last trip as a taxi driver, and now I am jobless, working small jobs here and there to find some money and cover my basic needs".

3.2.1.2 Armed population

Gaddafi's regime monitored and regulated the Libyan domestic arms trade. In addition, Libya was under international sanctions until 2003 which prohibited the legal import of arms. After the lifting of sanctions, arms began to freely flow into Libya again, supplementing a substantial government arsenal.

The intervention in 2011 tried to curb this influx of arms by introducing an arms embargo imposed by the United Nations. However, the clashes between militia groups and the support of different international actors to these groups kept the doors open for the illegal import of weapons and arms. This was confirmed by the United Nations' Panel of Experts on Libya¹³, which reported on several occasions that the embargo was violated by various actors¹⁴.



Fighter from the UN backed government shooting with an anti-aircraft gun during the clashes in Wadi Alrabie south Tripoli (September 2018).

Since 2011, the security sector (military and police) lacks control and has failed to regulate the influx of weapons. Many citizens have their own weapons and small firearms to protect themselves against crimes like robberies and kidnapping. The wide prevalence of firearms among the Libyan population has increased the likelihood of a disagreement ending in a deadly feud.

BOX 5: THE IMPACT OF HIGH NUMBERS OF ARMS AND WEAPONS IN THE PERSONAL SPHERE

The story from Akram: “During a family event the car of one of the guests was parked in front of the house to pick up his family, when another car behind it was trying to pass. I was standing there, and I tried to ask the driver to wait a little, but he was reluctant and got off the car with a weapon in his hand trying to threaten us. He then got back to his car trying to get away, but my friends and neighbours stopped him. He claimed that his father was in the hospital. But a few minutes later, he called one of the neighbouring militias to start a bigger fight. The next day, this man recognized one of my friends and made the militia go and get him at his workplace, right in front of his sister and her child.”

The story from Adel: “My neighbour borrowed my car. He left that evening, but he never came back. I kept waiting for him to come back the day after, he turned off all of his phones until I met him at night and asked him about my car when he answered me very coldly: “Your car is in a safe place”. I got really mad and asked him to bring it back, but he claimed that it broke down in front of his friend’s house and that he will fix it and bring it back. I waited for him on Saturday and in the evening, he brought the car with two damaged tires and said to me: “you gave me headaches!”. His words drove me crazy which made me yell at him and then we started a verbal argument. This idiot forgot that he needed my car and I gave it to him. I have always been the closest person to him! I asked him to go away, but he entered his house and got out with a weapon! He fired in the car’s direction and I was too close to it. He hit me in the right eye and ran quickly from the neighbourhood. My face was covered with blood. I was rescued by a passer-by who took me to the city’s hospital”.

3.2.1.3 Displacement

Due to the ongoing civil war and the state of lawlessness caused by the conflict, the Libyan population went through many waves of displacement. Throughout the years, the displacements have been caused by internal conflicts and clashes between rival armed groups. In many cases, extremist groups seized control of vast areas of the country, causing further deterioration and escalation of the displacement situation.

According to the UN Refugee Agency, “the country presents a complex displacement scenario¹⁵. The escalation of conflict and insecurity in 2014 resulted in new displacements. As of December 2019 between 301,407 and 355,672 people were displaced inside the country (IDPs) and around 447,000 people have returned home (returnees)¹⁶. Since the onset of the clashes in April 2019 alone, some 150,000 have been displaced from their homes.¹⁷ In addition, the migrant population is 654,081 people, including 46,126 registered refugees and asylum-seekers. In addition, there are more than 3,000 refugees and migrants being held in detention centers in Libya.

“Stories of displaced people because of ISIS and other extremist groups are especially daunting. Residents had to leave their homes for their safety as often they would disagree with the views held by these groups. These IDPs have expressed a continuing feeling of fear and pain of separation from their families and loved ones.”

Participant in the story analysing workshop

It is estimated that at least 6-7% of the population of Libya has suffered from displacement throughout the civil war in Libya¹⁸. Displacement is a significant issue which causes fragmentation and polarization of Libyan society, leading to worsening of the political and security situation. This has negatively impacted local and national reconciliation efforts. Furthermore, the IDP population experiences serious difficulties accessing basic services, such as healthcare and education. The unfolding humanitarian crisis has caused psychological trauma and severe post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), affecting the wellbeing of displaced populations and undermining their willingness to reintegrate.

The stories convey the experiences of displacement and being uprooted. The stories also illustrate the difficult journey of starting again somewhere else.

BOX 6: THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Nadia was living in Sebha when the conflict escalated in 2016. After several weeks living in dire conditions, she decided to flee her war-torn city. After five weeks the situation slightly improved and she returned home for a short period of time.

"The area was completely deserted and restricted. There was no life there. All the buildings and neighborhoods were empty. Only a few managed to keep their property and objects from being robbed or tampered with by mean-spirited people who use these wars to trade in anything."

There were no sounds but the sound of the wind and some gunshots from time to time just to remind you that you are in a war zone. I was extremely shocked when I entered our neighborhood which looked like being abandoned for a thousand years. When I entered the house and removed the dust from some of its corners, my cat which lost 3/4 of its weight after being left alone in the area without anything to eat or to drink rushed happily towards me...I moved around, happy to be there but also sad knowing that I would leave in a few hours... I rushed to clean what could be cleaned and to take my personal things, preparing myself to leave the house once again, like I did before... I don't know when this is going to end...I don't know whether it would be the same when I come back or part of it would be ruined...and the most important question is: will I ever come back again here? Having to leave your own house remains the bitterest thing a person could experience, and words can never describe this feeling... and the question remains: When will this war end?"

Stories of people displaced because of ISIS and other extremist groups are especially daunting. IDPs had to leave their homes for their safety as they would often disagree with the views held by these groups. These IDPs have expressed a continuing feeling of fear and pain of separation from their families and loved ones.

Anas, from Derna: "I left my city because of extremist groups. I was haunted from one place to another, which led to family separation. I'm now alone, away from my family. My first resort were my relatives, I stayed with them for several months. Then I moved to my friends' house in Ajdabiya."

Ali, from Sirte: "An ISIS member knocked on my door at 10 am, telling us that we need to evacuate the house immediately. I was alone with my younger sister and I've never felt like this before, it was a horrible feeling. I got out of my house empty handed. The only thought that I had was: is this my last day?"

The personal experiences of displacement provide a firsthand understanding of what it means to be forced to abandon your home. Internally displaced people are a highly vulnerable group, who may, yet again, experience violence in their new host communities during armed conflicts affecting those areas. Those who were forced to flee because of extremist and terrorist groups, are often stigmatized by the host communities, accused of being affiliated to those groups. The movement and relocation of IDPs impacts the hosting communities as well. The dire economic and security situation jeopardizes any stability they might seek after fleeing their towns.

3.2.2 Lack of a functioning government

Almost ten years after Gaddafi's government was toppled in 2011, the fight for control over Libya continues. Instability and violence have escalated since 2014 into multi-phase civil war. This, combined with a long legacy of corruption, mismanagement, dysfunctionality and weakened institutions, has resulted in collapse of the central government. The war has a visible physical impact on infrastructure, and the institutions that remain operational are in rapid decline and struggling to continue.

The absence of a functioning and unified government in Libya continues to challenge the country's security, humanitarian and economic situation. This situation has paralyzed the central government. More support has been given to local governance structures, but with an inadequate legal framework and small budgets, the effectiveness of municipalities is constantly in question. The stories highlight the different experiences of towns and cities, indicating multilayered small-scale conflicts within the overall conflict. Monitoring such developments on the ground is essential to understand the way in which the conflict evolves. The numerous accounts tell the stories from a personal perspective, but piecing them together provides greater insight at the dynamics at play.



September 2018: Lawlessness and chaos: Fighter under the UN backed government at the front lines during clashes in southern Tripoli.

3.2.2.1 Lack of employment

The 2011 uprisings in North Africa happened due to various reasons. One prominent cause was the high unemployment rate among youth¹⁹, who comprise nearly 60% of the population in Libya. In 2010, when the unemployment rate reached 18.6 %²⁰, the young population in Libya was severely affected.

A major challenge in the Libyan labor system is that the largest and most “stable” job provider is the government, with a significant part of the population on its payroll. This is due to the limited capacity of the private sector to create job opportunities and the creation of an employment structure that revolves around the government. As a result, the Libyan population is heavily reliant on salaries from oil revenues, which make up the majority of the national government’s income. Additionally, the employability of youth is strongly hindered by the limited access to education opportunities.

The collapse of the State and the ongoing armed conflict have created a crisis where oil fields are often a target of attacks, bombardment and blockades, putting jobs and sources of income for families in peril. At the same time, the banking system has struggled with cash flow and security threats. Libyans have to queue for days to be able to access their funds, during which they are often abused and/or witness abuse.

BOX 7: OUR BIGGEST QUESTION AS YOUTH: UNTIL WHEN...?

Salem: I am 28 years and I live in a village, in the Marzaq basin in the south of Libya, 180 km from the city of Sebha. I hold a degree in Mechanics from the High Vocational Training Institute of Sebha, which I received two years ago. Like most youth, I still have no job at the State's official institutions. I do here and there some jobs to cover my personal expenses, as most companies require impossible conditions before hiring someone, such as ten-years of experience. At the end of last year, I had debates and discussions with other youth about how we can improve conditions in our small village and the need to improve the provision of services. We tried to reach Municipality officers, some of them received us and others did not give us any consideration. We worked hard to restart the

provision of some services in our village, such as the post office which has been closed for 7 years. Why don't we open it and provide job opportunities to unemployed youth? Why don't we also reopen closed bank agencies, instead of having to travel 35 kilometers to Al Marzaq City or even 185 kilometers to Sebha and have to wait in long lines and travel across dangerous roads? The local hospital is lacking so much equipment, and healthcare services are bad. So many problems and issues that we wanted to address while looking for support, but in vain, all we got are promises to help us to improve depending on conditions. Our biggest question as youth is: until when will this situation continue?

Libyan youth (ages 15-24) unemployment in 2019 was 42%, compared with the world's average of 16% for the same year. The highest unemployment rate in Libya since 1991 was recorded in 2011 with almost 45%.²¹

The remarkably high unemployment rates of youth in Libya play into the recruitment process of armed groups, with young men especially vulnerable. In addition, the economic crisis is a crucial factor driving criminal activities such as kidnapping, smuggling and human trafficking. This is especially the case in non-urban settings where there are no alternatives to earn a living.

The following story provides a deep insight into the economic roots of smuggling, a huge trade in the country in which migrants are subjected to inhumane detainment, trafficking and exploitation. **The stories of migrants in Libya as told in the media highlight an extremely violent and unsafe environment where human rights are constantly violated**²² Smuggling is a complex issue that has economical and security dimensions. Regional and international smuggling networks operate in collaboration with local ones in Libya. The vast geographical area and the security vacuum allows these illicit activities to thrive.

BOX 8: ENGAGING IN HUMAN SMUGGLING

Anonymous story: "I'm 37 years old and I'm from Sabha. I was fired from work in 2011. Since then and after the state collapsed, I've been involved in illegal immigration by transferring African immigrants from the south to the north and sometimes between regions of the south, in collaboration with our partners. We monitor their movements and their presence within the city, and we get them out of the city through the desert with our 4x4 Toyotas. Our movements were only at night through the desert, but now nothing can hold us back, we transport them in the daylight, we only need to avoid the official gates on main roads, if any, and some of them accept a certain amount of money and let us cross the borders easily. This job has become my source of income, even someone with a university degree does not earn as much as we do. We earn 1000 dinars roughly from each trip on a daily basis, an average of 30 thousand dinars per month."

"If all Libyans were involved in such an activity, they wouldn't need oil at all. It's true that we face some difficulties sometimes; some passengers may become very disobedient in the middle of the road, but we beat them so that they get scared, and some others may fall from the car, so we just leave them in the desert because we almost never stop. Sometimes, I leave at the same time as my colleagues so that we can be together because it is safer for us, especially when the number of passengers is significant or when there are women or girls among them [...] but there are plenty of secrets that no one other than those who practice the activity could ever understand."

Unfortunately, we were not able to collect stories from victims and survivors of human trafficking and smuggling, and their voices are missing in this report. Migrants and refugees are held in illegal detention centres, where abhorrent conditions make reaching them incredibly difficult. Many are exploited for free labor or sold to smugglers to be trafficked elsewhere. As outlined by this report, Libya is embroiled in civil war and collapsing state structures. It is not safe for anyone but even less so for the most vulnerable, who, without connections or knowledge, cannot access any form of justice.



Migrants wait for medical attention on Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at Abosetta base in Tripoli, Libya.

3.2.2.2 Lack of Access to Services

The conflict, lack of central governance, and the ongoing violence have damaged Libyan infrastructure and disrupted access to public services. The impact on the health sector has been immense.

The Libyan health sector is based on a socialist system, which means that most treatments are free in public hospitals. Nevertheless, most health facilities do not function and struggle with corruption, while also suffering from shortages of medicine and equipment²³. The conflict has negatively influenced the ability of Libyans to reach health facilities and hospitals, due to security concerns such as check points, violent clashes, and militias that control the roads. The dire situation is reflected in the story of Jamila.

BOX 9: LACK OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Jamila: *"I am a nurse at the city hospital, and I've been here for about 20 years. I've moved to the nephrology service a while ago and I will talk to you shortly about the hardships that this service is suffering, from the lack of maintenance, lack of medical supplies and malfunction of some equipment which caused much suffering to the patients and which made*

us transfer them to Sabha hospital that is 200 Kms away from here. [...] We've sent many letters to the competent authorities asking them to support the hospital, especially the nephrology service, in order to attenuate the suffering of the patients, but in vain. Suffering continues and some patients even died."

Access to quality education is also a challenge. During Gaddafi's time in power, men and women were said to have equal access to education. But in reality, it has never been so simple, women and men have varying access to education depending on their social background and their ability to travel. Depending on their location and social class, women have either been forced to not seek higher education because of the mixed gendered classroom or have been persuaded to seek education for more traditional gender roles such as nurses or teachers.

Currently the lack of resources and poor governance has affected the quality of educational infrastructure at all levels and compounded on already existing inequality between men and women. Furthermore, the economic situation is so dire that for many people finding jobs became a priority over seeking higher education, which is ultimately contributing to a myriad of economic issues.

Rural areas in Libya barely provide the basics for its residents, often they are too far from the coastal capital and large cities and suffer from poor infrastructure. Respondents from large cities also shared their experiences of failed infrastructure. This failure across infrastructure sectors has created more distrust towards the government and the political process which will undermine any future political developments. The municipal level is the last remaining governing system that delivers services, but it is also crippled with a vague legal and administrative framework and a small budget that is often delayed.

The civil war and widespread availability of weapons not only affects educational infrastructure. It has also prevented children, young men and women from completing their education, resulting in an increase of early marriages and a huge number of youth withdrawing from schools and universities to join armed groups and militias as a source of better income²⁴. The following story from a young woman from the south illustrates that:

BOX 10: A DREAM TO STUDY

Malika: *"I am a young girl who had a dream. A dream to study and learn more and more. But, because of the bad security situation, most of these dreams cannot come true. However, I'm still hopeful that I can realize these dreams, although I once had an incident that made me feel bad and frustrated and that was due to the lack of security. In my city, there is no university where I can study the specialty I've always wanted to study. So, I decided to go and study it in a nearby area. I felt*

positive because my dream was about to come true. But, due to some problems that happened in that area, my family didn't allow me to go there out of fear for my life. Now, I'm studying something that I don't like or want. All of my dreams have evaporated but I still have some hope that the situation will get better and that I will succeed to make even some of my dreams come true."

Since 2014, oil production, which is the country's main source of income, began to decline. Frequent armed attacks and clashes in oil fields and ports have triggered a decline of oil production and export. The resulting financial crisis has undermined the functioning and provision of services. Many Libyans live in poor conditions with frequent power blackouts, cuts of water supply, and a shortage of funds in local banks. With higher inflation, prices skyrocketed, making it harder for Libyan families to make ends meet.

People in Libya found many ways to survive despite the challenges. Especially women have built small and medium enterprises, which has helped them become economically independent. These projects have helped women and their families survive.

BOX 11: A WOMAN'S RESISTANCE STORY

Anonymous story: "I am a Libyan woman married to a non-Libyan man for about 8 years, and we have 6 children, 4 daughters, and 2 sons. We used to live in the city of Sebha, in a small leased apartment, and my husband used to work in a shoe shop earning a little wage. Due to the high cost of rent and of living downtown, my husband decided to move to a nearby village, and we were all bound to move although I did not agree about this decision, neither did my family as I might lose my job. We moved to an old house at an affordable price, and since then my suffering started, as the house was unhealthy, and my children started to feel sick one after the other, most healthcare centers in the village had no physicians.

In spite of this I tried to adapt to the situation, and with time, the expected happened and my salary stopped to be paid to me as I was unable to justify for my absence, and I was warned to lose my job if my absence continued. I decided to move back to Sebha not to lose my job, but my husband refused, due to

increasing cases of abduction and robbery in the city. But I insisted to go back there and settle my professional situation, in addition to helping him face costs of living, especially that our first daughter was about to start school. He continued to refuse to claim that he was able to cover all costs by himself and opened a small shop to sell shoes.

Two months later, he decided to go back to his country but I did not have any valid passport, and I stayed with my children in the village; the situation got worse with the scarcity of fuel and gas, and the increase in the price of food commodities in addition to the lack of cash. I then decided to go to my parents' house in Sebha in order to improve our living conditions. Since my husband left, he never contacted us to tell at least that he arrived safely. I did receive some help and assistance from good souls, and I am trying now to get back to my work in order to raise my children because my husband may not come back."

3.2.2.3 Power Cuts

Power plants are one of the main targets of violent attacks. Cutting off electricity in certain towns or even neighborhoods is used by armed groups as a tactic to apply pressure in the conflict. In southern Libya, the copper is often stolen, impacting people's daily lives tremendously as power goes off for up to 14 hours per day. In rural areas power cuts can last longer than a day. In the stories, respondents have described the impact of such power cuts on their daily lives.

BOX 12: LIGHTS OUT

Mohammed, from South-West Libya, spoke about the consequences of armed militias who use power cuts as a tactic:

"The attacks started without prior notice using small and middle-sized arms, and sometimes armed vehicles and tanks were used. These operations have been going on sporadically for the last three years in a heavily dense neighborhood. Last winter, fights started in wintertime and there was no power supply then; the situation was really scary. Homes around us caught fire, the nearby kindergarten was smashed down, and snipers were shooting from all directions. We couldn't leave our homes as we would in the past. The situation in the home was very tense and extremely stressed until we could escape, marking a rebirth for all of us."

Hammad, a 74-year-old farmer from Kiirat village in the South of Libya, used to produce seasonal fruits and vegetables which provided him a modest revenue to take care of his entire family. Due to the armed conflict and the deliberate electricity cuts his livelihood is threatened and he faces many problems:

"The volatility of the electricity supply situation caused so much damage to the underground well pump which used to water the farm. Now, I can't afford a new pump because I don't have the means and because of the recurrent thefts of wires and agricultural equipment. We can no longer compensate for what has been stolen. There is nothing to be happy about".

3.2.3 Gender based violence and women's access to justice

In the wake of the ongoing conflict, women are particularly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). A combination of strong patriarchal norms, the presence of armed groups, and the wide availability of weapons are the central cause of anxiety and lack of security for women. By analyzing the stories through a gender lens, we are able to see how unequal power structures affect vulnerable groups, especially women. Although this chapter focuses primarily on the lived experiences of women, it is important to understand that patriarchal norms affects the lives of men as well. While patriarchy, for the most part, provides men with a whole range of privileges, it also places expectations on men and boys that are based on the glorification of violence, power, oppression, sexual objectification of women, etc. This toxic masculinity has serious effects on men and boys which in turn affects the rest of the community.

3.2.3.1 Gender based violence and sexual harassment in the public and private sphere

From the 124 stories collected, a substantial number of the testimonies provided by both men and women outline a common pattern of SGBV, ranging from physical violence, rape, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, abductions and domestic violence. When asked: "What is the most threatening element to your daily safety?", many female respondents emphasized an increase in anxiety and tension due to the ever-looming threat of weapons. Mundane activities, such as going to university, shopping for groceries, or meeting friends have become an ordeal, risking verbal and physical abuse, as illustrated by the stories of Hadia and Salwa.

BOX 13: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND OPPRESSION IN THE PUBLIC SPACE

Hadia, a young woman from Tripoli, was walking down the street on her way home in clear daylight, when a young man unexpectedly slowed his car down behind her: “He opened the window of his car and said things I did not understand. At first, I did not pay attention and acted as nothing happened, as this happens quite often. What was different this time, was that the guy left his car and followed me on foot. After some time, I thought I left him behind, but he came up from behind a tree and tried to grab my hand. I thought life stopped, and without thinking, I pushed him with all my power and continued on my way. He got ahead of me and pulled out a gun from his back pocket.”

The story from Salwa, who is from Misrata, shows that Haida's experience is not an isolated incident: “I was at University, waiting for my father to pick me up. Eventually,

a man in a car was following me, he started saying unpleasant things, such as “what are you doing here alone sweet girl?” I ignored him, but then he left his car with a knife threatening to stab me if I would not get into his car. I started to scream and told him to leave me alone. Eventually, he decided to leave”.

Women suffer from sexual harassment by armed groups on a regular basis: Khadija shares: “[...] they have the right to enter the university and walk around whenever they want just to harass female students”. Furthermore, there are no official structures to hold the perpetrators accountable and it is very difficult to address this problem: “One day two male students talked to them and asked them to stop molesting female students, but their reaction was violent, they started a physical fight that ended with injuring one of the young students in his foot.”

In addition, the alternative governing bodies, such as the Government of National Accord in Tripoli with its affiliated armed groups, the House of Representatives, and the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), contribute strongly to the prevalence of SGBV. These are patriarchal institutions themselves, who often govern based on hybrid traditional tribal laws. As a consequence, some women expressed distrust in so-called “security enforcers”.

Another pressing and recurring issue addressed in the story collection is the fear of being kidnapped. Abductions happened before 2011, with abduction mostly related to sexual violence. After 2011, women were kidnapped because they are exposed to public life due to their work as activists, lawyers or politicians²⁵. In addition, there are also stories of women being taken for revenge and ransom because they were affiliated with rivalled armed groups. Unfortunately, there has been no systematic documentation of the number of women kidnapped, because the issue is highly stigmatized.²⁶

However, the public sphere is not the only space where the threat of violence exists. Violence in the private sphere also harms women's day-to-day safety. In Libya, as in many parts of the world, domestic violence is a significant problem, although reliable statistics on its prevalence are lacking.²⁷ In some parts of the country, patriarchal traditions and harmful social norms deem the punishment of women for perceived social ‘misconduct’ or ‘misbehavior’ acceptable. This viewpoint is closely related to the notion of so-called “family honor”. In the most severe cases, girls and women are killed (femicide), in the most extreme expression of family control over every aspect of the lives of its female members.²⁸

“The culture of silence around the issue of domestic violence and abuse withholds women from speaking up about domestic violence, as it is perceived to be a private matter and brings shame and dishonor to her family.

Women also fear retaliation and rejection by their husbands and the husband's or even their own family if they raise complaints or come forward with accusations about domestic violence.”

Participant during the story analysing workshop

BOX 14: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCLUDING DEADLY CRIMES AND THE FEAR OF SPEAKING UP

Maram, who is in her 20s, suffers from extreme violence at her brother's hands: *"The last incident was when the water was cut off, which put my brother in a bad mood. He started yelling at my sister and ordered us to heat water for him. He kept giving us orders to clean the house and his room and to prepare food. When we refused to do so, he threatened us with a gun and said that he would kick us out of the house. We got through confrontations with my brother on a daily basis, which made my sister leave the house, and due to the absence of authorities and any action on the part of my relatives, I'm living in permanent instability and insecurity in my own house".*

Due to the widespread presence and use of weapons in every household, there are many cases of domestic violence escalating into a deadly crime. Laila provides yet another example of the immense impact of traditional harmful gender norms and the immense length to which some sectors of society go to control women: *"My daughter contacted the news channel Al-Jazeera, informing them of mercenaries the old regime used to repress Libyan people. This was not acceptable according to her brother and husband. She was murdered in cold blood in 2011."*

The culture of silence around the issue of domestic violence and abuse withholds women from speaking up about domestic violence, as it is perceived to be a private matter and brings shame and dishonor to her family. Women also fear retaliation and rejection by their husbands and the husband's or even their own family if they raise complaints or come forward with accusations about domestic violence. The following story shows how both society and women are internalizing the use of violence and oppression as something 'normal'.

Hana from Tripoli witnessed a case of domestic violence in a public space and no one interfered: *"I suddenly saw a man in a car, beating up the woman who was sitting next to him. I tried to stop him, but he argued that it was his wife, and no one is supposed to intervene in their issues. The oddest thing was that the woman was just sitting there without any reaction."*

3.2.3.2 Regression of rights and lack of justice for women

Sexual and Gender Based Violence goes largely unreported. Victims and survivors do not have access to supporting services and are not protected because of a weak legal framework and lack of law enforcement. Women are further discouraged to come forward and report SGBV due to the fear of stigma or having to relive their trauma and being victimized again. In the rare cases where women do report such offences, they rarely receive justice. Libyan law does not criminalize domestic violence. Personal status laws discriminate against women, especially with respect to marriage, divorce and inheritance. The penal code allows rapists to escape prosecution if they marry their victim²⁹.



A woman walks on January 13, 2020 in Libya's capital Tripoli, controlled by the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA). Residents of Libya's capital have received news of a ceasefire with a mix of relief and scepticism after more than nine months of deadly fighting on the edges of Tripoli.

The distrust in the judicial system also deters women from pursuing cases. Law No. 10 of 1984, states that a husband should not cause physical or mental harm to his wife. However, Article 63 of the Libyan Penal Code condemns violence in the private sphere, but provides that a man who merely assaults his wife without causing bodily harm shall not be punished.³⁰ In article 375 domestic violence can only be penalized if a man beats his wife or daughter “to the extent that her injuries require hospitalization”.³¹ This shows how women are not protected by the law or its institutions. Patriarchal norms and tribal culture are deeply ingrained in the Libyan judicial system. This also becomes evident in legislation against sexual harassment and rape, which are both addressed in the Libyan Penal Code as an attack on the “family honor”, rather than an attack on the female body.

Furthermore, there are many circumstances in which women are considered inferior than men in-front of the court. This is clearly illustrated by the story from Aisha, who was prosecuted for the crime of *zina*, which is penalized by Law No. 70 of 1973. *Zina* is the act of extramarital sexual relation, which also include “fornication and adultery”. Although women are supposed to have equal rights in court, in practice they are often not treated as independent and autonomous individuals before the court and face many forms of discriminations within the judiciary. As a result, women are not provided with adequate legal representation and a fair trial. A significant number of respondents disclosed a distrust in formal institutions, which is also illustrated by Aisha’s story.

There are however important initiatives addressing this issue. In December 2019, the first psychosocial hotline in Libya was launched through a partnership between the Libyan government, civil society and international donors³².

BOX 15: VIOLENT HONOR

Aisha, a female around 30 years-old, had a secret relationship with a man from whom she became pregnant. Her father took her to the police station, where she was sexually harassed, insulted and physically abused by the police officers:

“[...] Suddenly, [the police officer] slapped me so hard, I almost passed out. He kept telling me that he wouldn’t treat me in a humane manner, that I don’t deserve to live and that I brought shame to my family. He insulted me in all possible ways, but never criticized or offended my boyfriend for impregnating me. Finally, my case was handed over to the public prosecution office, where I was put in jail. In the meanwhile, my partner and his lawyer were putting pressure on me to change my statement and tell the court that he is not the father of the baby. My eldest brother came to see me too, all he did was

insult me and blame me for what happened. He said that I brought disgrace to him and tarnished his reputation. After the interrogations in the public prosecution office in (...), my case was transmitted to a court (...). The judge kept asking me if I was sure the person standing there was my partner or did anyone push me to say that he was. I kept saying that this guy was my partner and provided them with all the information they needed except one detail about him which I couldn’t remember, and which was a surgery scar on his body. [...] At the last hearing session, I altered my statement and told the judge that I wasn’t sure who my baby’s father was. I saw happiness in the eyes of my partner and his lawyer at that moment. That was a huge mistake, but I couldn’t put up with all that pressure and Sabha’s jail conditions anymore. That was the last hearing sessions. I was sentenced to one year in jail with no punishment of whipping.”

Women that are married to foreigners face specific challenges and violations to their rights as the nationality of children in Libya is linked to the father and not the mother. This means that Libyan women are unable to confer their nationality to their children. This in contrast to Libyan men, who can easily transfer their nationality to their children, regardless of the nationality of their wives. The ambiguity in Libyan law on this matter causes a lot of discrimination and marginalization to women who are married to a non-Libyan man, and their children. Those children face several great disadvantages as they lose their citizenship number, are unable to attend public schools and are deprived of certain state benefits.

“I’m a Libyan woman from Sebha, married to a non-Libyan man. [...] A code that refers to my husband’s nationality has been added to my registration number. This has affected me as a Libyan citizen, and I’m being treated like a stranger in my own country. I can no longer be part of a consumer society or participate in the elections. I’ve been denied the access to a grant. Now I’m afraid that my children wouldn’t be able to access school or enjoy their basic civil rights although they were born, raised and lived in Libya.”

Yusra

3.2.4 Societal Oppression and Freedom of Expression

During the 42-year dictatorship of Gaddafi, freedom of expression was virtually non-existent, and any dissent and opposition voiced was quickly silenced. This changed a little with the overthrow of Gaddafi in 2011, but polarization and political instability suppressed newly gained freedoms once more.

The civil war and widespread prevalence of weapons, coupled with near total impunity, has created an environment where Libyans have to be very careful in voicing opposite views or opinions. Armed groups who identify themselves as pious and more religiously conservative exercise censorship over cultural and art events if deemed to be “Western” or “non-Islamic”. Despite threats, civil society organizations continue organizing events and galleries, promoting a vibrant cultural scene. Such events shy away from dealing with political issues that might provoke armed groups and militias, but they are still able to address many of the social issues in their communities. Activists, journalists and media professionals face increased risks and are often intimidated, threatened, and physically attacked by armed groups³³.

The following story highlights the vibrant art scene organized by civil society. It also shows how the civic space is shrinking and how retaliation can be so brutal on young people.

BOX 16: REPRESSION OF PERSONAL FREEDOMS AND OF TALENTS IN LIBYA

My name is Mohamed and I am 20. I was arrested during COMICON, the cartoons conference held in October in Tripoli. I was one of the organizers of the fair. Events started on the second day when a delegation from the Ministry of Religious Affairs came to meet with the director of the fair. They expressed their disapproval of the fair and were upset when they left the site. The fair continued, but they came back and arrested the director without anyone knowing, and the exhibition was open until 6 PM when militias came and arrested visitors and members of all ages, they handcuffed them all, put them in their cars and took them to their base. Once there, they covered their eyes, took them inside, made fun of some and beat

others who were protesting. They later searched their devices and smashed some of them. Then they asked to call our parents to come and take us. They took our names, addresses and phone numbers, they also took pictures of us, then put us in their buses and brought us to a theatre where our parents would come. They also picked some of and cut their hair. A sheikh also came to give us a lesson, believing we were celebrating Halloween while our fair was an exhibition of comic strips. Once the sheikh finished his speech, we went back home while others stayed at the base for citizenship problems and the like. The fair director has not been released so far.

3.2.5 Restrictions of Mobility

Armed conflicts and violent military campaigns in Libya happen for a variety of reasons all over the country. They are fluid in nature with regards to affiliations and loyalties. In the sections above, stories have been shared on armed groups who undertake criminal activities such as kidnapping for extortion. This has made the roads in Libya unsafe, not only due to the confrontations that could erupt at any time, but also the ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ check points where Libyan citizens face a multitude of risks. The attacks on civilian infrastructure such as bridges and airports, as well as indiscriminate shelling significantly restrict the freedom of movement of Libyans inside their own country.

“I am a psychiatrist at a secondary school. I was once on the plane with my daughter heading back home from Burj Al Arab airport in Alexandria. The Libyan government required that planes coming from Egypt must land in Tobruk based on the agreement between Egypt and Libya.

When the plane landed, and before it took off to Tripoli, an armed man got on and asked to get three passengers off the plane in order to replace them with three other passengers of his relatives and friends. When the flight attendants refused this order, he threatened to use the weapon and moved towards three passengers to make them get off by force.”

Aisha

3.2.5.1 Check Points

Many stories about violence from armed forces are related to checkpoints: formal check points - meaning that they belong to an armed group identified with the government, and random checkpoints. Formal and informal checkpoints pose not only an obstruction of movement but also a threat to people's safety. Many stories shared experiences of abduction and kidnapping happening at these checkpoints. It is no longer safe to travel between cities in cars or even within certain neighborhoods in cities. Violent armed conflicts or confrontations happen on main roads or near schools and airports. This continues to affect people's access to vital locations such as hospitals, schools and workplaces and sometimes their own homes.

BOX 17: DANGER, CHECKPOINTS AHEAD

Zuhran: "[...] They started insulting and hitting us with the grips of their guns, then they handcuffed us, put us in their car and took us to a farm, where their militia was based, an old house full of dirty and dusty rooms. There were empty underground water tanks where they put their prisoners. When we arrived, they started again insulting, beating and threatening to kill us because we were from Ezzaouia. We were accused of false accusations, that we destroyed their homes in the 2011 revolution. We were not alone, there were 16 other people from Ezzaouia who were arrested at the same time and for the same reason. They put all of us in the same room, and every time they would take someone to torture him, beat and interrogate him whether we had relations with some figures of the city of Ezzaouia. They would burn us using heated spoons, and we were also electrocuted and of course beaten. We were kept there for two weeks, it was cold, wintertime, and we were freezing in the night as there were no heaters and not enough blankets, they would wake us up with water, beating, torture and insults. Most of them were under the influence of drugs. They would also give us remains of their food, some old bread and cheese. The toilet was dirty and stinking. They sometimes prevent us from using the toilet. As soon as they abducted us, they took away our phones and we were not allowed to call our relatives."

This story is from Zahra, a man from the west of Tripoli, who was abducted in 2017 after running into a militia checkpoint. He and his two colleagues were falsely accused of destroying the hometown of a militia group in the 2011 revolution. After 45 days of abduction, they were released as part of an exchange deal for 30 prisoners held in undisclosed location, including criminals, armed militia leaders and supporters of the Gaddafi regime.

The checkpoints play a role in several other stories related to arbitrary militia arrest. Abdullah, a male between 18 – 29 years old, stated that he and his brother were stopped by militias at a checkpoint in south of Libya on their way to the mosque for prayer:

"They forced us to get out of the car so that they can search it. They were uttering dirty words when searching the car. We fought a little and then one of them hit me with the gun edge and started beating me and my brother without any reason. Then, they took us to their base after taking all what we had and continued beating us there".

Hassan from Misrata was also stopped at a checkpoint run by militias. When they noticed that he was from Misrata, they deliberately gave him a hard time: "He called his friends: come over, the guy is from Misrata. They searched all the car for an unknown object, anything to charge me".

Some checkpoints are established to abduct members of rival factions and towns and to use ransom as a method to have prisoners released or send a message, like in Ahmed and Abdullah's story above. People are picked up or face worse treatments based on their identity, affiliation, or where they come from. All checkpoints, regardless of the purpose they serve, share this indiscriminate effect on civilians' lives. The lack of respect of fundamental human rights is prevalent for all actors guarding such checkpoints, including official or recognized armed groups.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The story collection process has provided valuable insights and understanding of the security issues that Libyans face in their daily lives. The information has been enriching to the joint project, to each partner organization, to local and international partners and more. Capacity building workshops and project initiatives to combat harmful gender norms or to increase human security have been based on this information. The unique aspect of storytelling not only lies in the connection to lived experience, but also in the exposure to issues otherwise unknown to people from different backgrounds.

The topics discussed in the reports are drawn from the stories collected and tackle many aspects of the Libyan conflict. Furthermore, they give concrete examples of what needs to be addressed most urgently. To recap, armed conflict and the lack of a functioning government were two of the main threats to the daily safety of local communities and need to be addressed by all stakeholders involved. Violence and armed groups deeply affect the daily lives of men, women and children throughout the country. Domestic violence and sexual harassment are also complex issues that need to be dealt with. A combination of patriarchal norms, the presence of armed groups, and the wide availability of weapons are a central cause of anxiety and lack of security for women and girls. With an estimated 1,600 active armed groups³⁴, severe limitations in mobility as well as restrictions to access health, social, cultural and economic services have significantly affected people's daily lives. Another factor affecting the human security of Libyans is related to poverty, economic violence and access to income, with 1/3 of Libyan citizens living in poverty. Other issues raised through the stories include internal displacement, lack of infrastructure, tribal conflicts and extremism.

In order to address the different threats and issues raised, a people-centred, comprehensive, multi-sectoral, human security approach is required. Strategies of action need to include strategies set up by states, international agencies, NGOs and the private sector. Human security requires systematic, comprehensive and preventive protection. Primarily states have the responsibility to provide such protection, while other actors, such as international bodies and civil society, play a key role as well. Strategies of action also need to enable people to develop their resilience as well as their capacity as individuals and communities. Such empowerment not only enables people to develop their full potential but also permits them to participate in the design and implementation of solutions to ensure human security for themselves and others.

Our call to action underlines the importance of a broad approach addressing multiple stakeholders. The findings of this participatory research show that the human security situation is continuously under pressure as the conflict has further deteriorated in the past years.



Photo Mohamed Ben Khalifa (ANP)

Libyan soldiers aim their weapons during clashes with militants on the frontline in Al Ajaylat, 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of Tripoli, Libya (February 2015).

5. CALL TO ACTION – RECOMMENDATIONS



Photo Piet den Blanken

The Libyan flag at the port of Tripoli.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- An immediate and sustained ceasefire by all fighting parties in Libya and de-escalation of all hostilities. A sustainable and comprehensive peace and future vision that is people-centered and includes a human rights and human security approach.
- All local, national and international actors involved in Libya must commit and work towards a peaceful solution to the Libyan armed conflict. They must abstain from any political or military action that can escalate the armed conflict.
- Place local actors - especially women and youth, at the heart of conflict prevention and peace building processes, as well as any local, national and international effort towards achieving peace and security in Libya.
- Encourage and support local initiatives that raise awareness and promote the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women peace and security and UNSCR 2250 on youth peace and security.
- Mainstream gender equality in all programs and interventions carried out by local, national and international actors.
- Establish a funding mechanism that provides long-term, structural and flexible funding to CSOs working primarily to promote women and youth peace and security, prioritizing funding to local women and youth organizations.
- Human Rights Defenders must be part of the peace building process. Their safety and security must always be ensured by all parties and must include a gendered perspective.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO:

1. The International Community³⁵:

■ Gender:

- a. Ensure equal representation of women in all international efforts to contribute to peace and security, including conferences, national plans, peace-building delegations, etc.;
- b. Allocate a specific budget for programs addressing gender-based violence and advance a women peace and security agenda;
- c. Support and advocate for the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2250 in Libya.

■ Security:

- a. Consistently enforce the UNSC arms embargo on Libya, and publicly hold accountable member states and third parties who breach the arms embargo – without exceptions;
- b. Advocate for and promote a nation-wide disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program and support local and national actors to implement such a program;
- c. Stop funding militias and armed groups for the protection of private interests and to control local Libyan populations, migrant populations, local leaders and authorities, as well as law enforcement bodies;
- d. Do not instrumentalize the Women, Peace and Security agenda to promote Counter Terrorism and Migration policies.

■ Public services and citizens well-being:

- a. Provide adequate technical and financial support to local municipalities to increase and improve the provision of public services in their local communities.

■ Peacebuilding:

- a. We encourage the United Nations Special Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to establish a consultative body that engages with Libyan women and youth-led organizations and consult with them on peace and security matters;
- b. Include civil society organizations in the design and implementation of formal peacebuilding processes, including monitoring peace agreements;
- c. Adopt a quota and allocate a reserved seat for women and youth in formal peace negotiations (track I)³⁶;
- d. Encourage national and local authorities in Libya to establish democratic means for representation and avoid the use of tribal and biased regional quota systems.

■ Humanitarian work:

- a. All migrants need to be protected by human rights and international humanitarian law;
- b. Provide assistance to internally displaced people (IDPs) in Libya, including psychosocial and economic support;
- c. Close all migrant detention centers and provide adequate assistance and safe passage to migrants;
- d. We urge the European Union to stop sending migrants back to Libya; to have a comprehensive and unified policy that is based on humanitarian law; to promote international cooperation on migration issues; and to protect the safety, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants.

■ International Civil Society Organizations and Donor Agencies

- a. Provide adequate, long-term, structural, easily accessible, flexible core-funding for Libyan Civil Society Organizations working on women's rights and human rights.
- b. Prioritize the needs of Libyan people by ensuring that funding strategies are determined by local voices;
- c. Invest in Civil Society Organization to strengthen their capacity;
- d. Prioritize the funding of Libyan organizations and follow their lead in terms of analyses of the situation;
- e. Facilitate the participation of local civil society activists in international fora.

2. National and Local Libyan authorities³⁷:

■ Gender:

- a. Develop a multi-sectoral national plan and strategy for the protection of women against all forms of violence³⁸, in line with obligations under national and international law;
- b. Adopt policies to prevent and criminalize all forms of sexual-based violence, as well as conflict related sexual based violence, including repealing Articles 375³⁹ and 424⁴⁰ of the Penal Code;
- c. Ensure that law enforcement agencies (e.g. judges, police) are trained on SGBV related issues, women's rights, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law and that security officers are trained to identify threats and gender-based abuses and know how to respond to them;
- d. Ensure that all allegations of (Sexual) Gender Based violence are fully investigated and prosecuted and that survivors are provided with gender-responsive protection, reparations, and psychosocial health services;
- e. Initiate programs dedicated to women's economic empowerment, while promoting gender equality in the workplace and the participation of women in decision making and senior positions;
- f. Immediately provide the National Electronic Identification Number (and other legal documents) to Libyan women married to non-Libyan men in compliance with national and international laws.

■ Security:

- a. We urge all national actors to initiate and collaborate in a nation-wide security sector reform (SSR) that builds a democratically accountable and unified national security force without bias to any region. Moreover, the SSR processes must include civil society organizations, especially women-led groups to ensure gender mainstreaming in design, implementation, and monitoring of the SSR process;
- b. Establish a nation-wide and comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program, and include Libyan civil society in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the process. The DDR program should not only target disarmament of non-state armed groups, but also private ownership of weapons and arms by individual citizens.

■ Public services and citizens well-being:

- a. We encourage national authorities and local municipalities to increase coordination and partnerships between them to enhance the delivery of public services;
- b. Collaborate and partner with Libyan civil society on matters related to improving the delivery of public services;
- c. Improve educational and health services by providing adequate resources and promoting international cooperation.

■ Peacebuilding:

- a. We demand all Libyan actors involved in the armed conflict to end the conflict, abstain from engaging in any armed escalation and engage in a peaceful solution;
- b. We demand that local and national authorities initiate and facilitate a Libyan nation-wide reconciliation process that includes Libyan civil society and women-led groups in its design and implementation;
- c. Establish formal channels of communication with Libyan civil society to facilitate direct communication and partnership;
- d. Support Libyan civil society in their peacebuilding projects and efforts;
- e. Include women and youth in official delegations when attending formal peace and political talks, while ensuring that women and youth representatives engage in all thematic debates including security issues;
- f. Adopt a national action plan to implement UNSCR 1325 on women peace and security, and national action on UNSCR 2250 in close collaboration with Libyan civil society, especially women and youth-led groups.

■ Humanitarian work:

- a. Provide immediate support to internally displaced people (IDPs) and adopt a strategy to enable their safe return to their homes;
- b. Provide humane treatment as well as psychosocial and economic support to IDPs in all regions of Libya;
- c. Close migrants' detention centers and ensure that human rights are respected and hold those who committed human rights violations towards detainees accountable.

3. Libyan civil society⁴¹:

- **Gender:**
 - a. We encourage Libyan civil society in general to promote gender equality and women's rights;
 - b. We encourage Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in Libya to seek the expertise and support of Libyan women organizations that have experience in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) through their work. This is to make sure that CSOs gain a nuanced understanding of GBV and are able to adequately address these issues at work and in society;
 - c. We encourage Civil Society Organizations, networks and coalitions to adopt a gender-sensitive approach;
 - d. Engage in reporting and monitoring the implementation of Libya's obligations towards international law and policies on gender equality;
 - e. Include women-led groups in partnerships and collaborations with national and local authorities to promote and enhance gender equality in Libya.
- **Security:**
 - a. Play an active role in promoting and advocating for a nation-wide SSR and DDR program, that includes a comprehensive gender-sensitive and inclusive approach;
 - b. Take an interest in promoting human security in Libya and prioritize the need for soft security measures in national and local efforts related to security in Libya.
- **Public services and citizens well-being:**
 - a. Conduct community-based need's assessments, to assist municipalities to better understand the needs of their local communities;
 - b. Serve as a bridge between members of local communities and their municipalities to improve access to public services.
- **Peacebuilding:**
 - a. Prioritize the creation and strengthening of local networks and coalitions across the country to foster community dialogues around reconciliation;
 - b. Promote and advocate for a national action plan on UNSCR1325 on women peace and security and UNSCR2250 on youth peace and security. Moreover, support the national authorities in the implementation of the national action plans;
 - c. Promote and advocate the need for a nation-wide reconciliation process, that would include women and youth-led groups as key actors;
 - d. Promote the recognition of the important role of civil society, particularly women and youth groups, and advocate for their full inclusion and participation in formal peace processes led by international, national and local actors.
- **Humanitarian work:**
 - a. Implement a comprehensive assessment on IDPs in Libya and provide broad support, including humanitarian support as well as access to education, healthcare, and psychosocial services and opportunities;
 - b. Monitor and evaluate the work of international humanitarian organizations in Libya, to ensure that the support provided is designed according to the Libyan context and needs;
 - c. Play an active role in documenting and reporting human rights violations taking place in migrant detention centers and advocating for their closure.

ENDNOTES

- 1 www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-SANA-BP-Tripoli-2019.pdf
- 2 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/turkey-cavusoglu-slams-german-role-eu-libya-mission-200806143023349.html>
- 3 <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2019-09/libya-7.php>
- 4 <https://www.cordaid.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2020/05/20200508-The-Engendered-Impact-of-COVID-19-in-Libya-PC-8504YV1.pdf>
- 5 The story collection was conducted in 2017 and 2018. Therefore, the stories relate to events that took place in 2016 and or 2017.
Since then the conflict in Libya has escalated and violence has increased.
- 6 https://www.landinfo.no/asset/3025/1/3025_1.pdf
- 7 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ly.html>
- 8 <https://www.unhcr.org/libya.html>
- 9 Topics that had less than 5% were merged into the category "Others"
- 10 The terms 'armed groups' and 'armed forces' are loosely used here to describe the various and different groups. Most of the armed groups are enlisted with the government. There are neighbourhood armed groups which are less organised and are established for localised protection. Gangs do not have a clear affiliation but carry illicit and criminal activities for funding.
- 11 <https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/kingdom-militias-libyas-second-war-post-qadhafi-succession-23121>
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- 19 Khalaf and Khalaf (2012) Arab Youth: Social Mobilization in Times of Risk, Al Saqi publishing
- 20 <https://tradingeconomics.com/libya/unemployment-rate>
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- 29 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/libya>
- 30 Libyan Penal Code https://security-legislation.ly/sites/default/files/lois/290-Penal%20Code_EN.pdf
- 31 Libyan Penal Code https://security-legislation.ly/sites/default/files/lois/290-Penal%20Code_EN.pdf
- 32 <https://libya.unfpa.org/en/news/launch-first-psychosocial-hotline-libya-statement-unfpa-libya-representative-ms-b%C3%A9rang%C3%A8re-b%C3%B6ell>
- 33 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/libya>
- 34 https://www.landinfo.no/asset/3025/1/3025_1.pdf
- 35 Especially: United Nations Special Mission in Libya, members states and international organisations who have played crucial roles in the country since 2011.
- 36 "Track 1 Diplomacy" is part of the 4 track UN diplomacy efforts, which focusses on formal negotiations between nations conducted by diplomats.
- 37 Local authorities are defined here as both legislative and executive bodies in the west and east of Libya, as well as municipalities and local councils:
- 38 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/054/01/PDF/G2005401.pdf?>
- 39 Article 375 of the Libyan penal code states reduced sentence for men who kill their wives for adultery and sex-related offences
- 40 Article 424 of the Libyan penal code states that if the offender marries the woman against whom the offense is committed, the offense and penalty shall be extinguished, and the penal effects thereof shall cease.
- 41 Libyan civil society includes non-profit, non-governmental organizations and associations, networks and coalitions.



Al Nour was founded in 2012 in the city of Sabha and focusses on raising awareness on human and women rights among Libyan legislative authorities. They organize workshops on women's political participation and awareness raising on Violence Against Women and the CEDAW convention. In 2013, Al Nour played a significant role in the political movement at the onset of the new political process during which they organized the Libyan Women's Conference.



Fezzan Libya Organization is an organization based in Sebha, the South of Libya. They consist of a network of activists who work together with the local community to launch initiatives to support community development. They also support women, youth, minorities and local activists to become more active in regional politics and local institutions. In addition, since 2012, Fezzan Libya Organization advocates for the protection of Libyan activists on social media and offers a connection between the South and the rest of Libya.



Goodness has Brought us Together was founded in 2014 in Al Bayda City. The organization is active in many fields but focuses primarily on humanitarian interventions and community development. By cooperating with local organizations and authorities they organize activities to build capacities of youth and women and strengthen their role in project development. Currently they have more than 50 members, both male and female.



Makers of Hope are a regional youth-led organization founded in 2013. The members of the organization are young male and female community leaders from various backgrounds, who are active in the field of human rights, environmental issues, minority rights and women's rights. The work of Makers of Hope focuses on empowering youth and increasing their role in decision-making processes at the international level in relation to UNSCR 2250.



I am Libyan, but my Child is Not is a civil rights and charity organization based in Ghat, South-Western Libya. Its goal is to defend the rights of children of Libyan women who are married to non-Libyan citizens as well as to consolidate and enforce their citizenship rights. By working side by side with NGO's, governments, and (inter)national human rights organizations, they provide support, charity, humanitarian aid and civil assistance to this group of citizens. They conduct studies and research on problems that Libyan women who are married to non-Libyans and their children face. Based on their findings they develop and implement workable and suitable solutions to eliminate all forms of discrimination within society. Currently, they have more than 400 women in their network, who also receive training to help them earn a living.



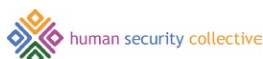
Tamazight Women's Movement (TWM) is an indigenous women's civil society organization that focuses on gender equality, youth, women, peace and security issues. These core areas are addressed through an intersectional approach in conducting research, capacity building and advocacy at the local, national and international levels. The organization has an extensive experience in engaging on the international level and in mobilizing for (intersectional) gender-inclusive peace process and implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions.



Together We Build It (TWBI) is an intergenerational non-profit organization that was founded to support a peaceful democratic transition in Libya, through empowering women and youth to participate in political life. TWBI believes in the important role of an inter-generational gender approach to formal and non-formal peace building. Since it was founded in 2011, TWBI has been working on women and youth peace and security agenda. TWBI is working on a national level through founding the 1325 Network in Libya. The organization implemented many projects relevant to different topics including: advocating women's meaningful political participation at national and international levels; preventing and raising awareness on harmful gender norms and GBV; also it contributed to studies and reports on human rights conditions as well as monitoring the implementation of women and youth, peace and security agendas in Libya.



Cordaid is an international organization for relief and development with its Global Office based in The Hague. Cordaid has been fighting poverty and exclusion in the world's most fragile societies and conflict-stricken areas for a century. Cordaid supports people in vulnerable regions and areas of conflict to build flourishing communities by creating opportunities and delivering innovative solutions to complex problems. Cordaid positions to include women and youth not just as beneficiaries, but as partners and leaders in the process of building peace, development and enhancing security within their community.



Human Security Collective (HSC) works to improve human security, human rights and human dignity. Its work specifically focuses on disadvantaged communities and people in contexts that are characterized by complex systemic conflicts, social exclusion of minority groups, and/or potential crises that may erupt as a consequence of violent extremism and lack of governance and leadership to deal with those.

ABOUT CORDAID

Cordaid is based in the Netherlands and has country offices in 11 countries. It has been fighting poverty and exclusion in the world's most fragile societies and conflict-stricken areas for a century. It delivers innovative solutions to complex problems by emphasizing sustainability and performance in projects that tackle security and justice, health and economic opportunity. Cordaid is deeply rooted in the Dutch society with more than 300,000 private donors. Cordaid is a founding member of Caritas Internationalis and CIDSE.

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