

Committee: United Nations

High Commissioner for Refugees

Chair:

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Topic: “The deadly dangers of the migration
Route through Libya: Humanitarian crisis and
regional impact”



I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a UN Refugee Agency of the United Nations that focuses on protecting the rights of people forced to leave their countries because of a conflict or persecution and seeking asylum in new countries. Its vision is to “build a world where every person forced to flee can build a better future” (UNHCR, 2025).

It was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations. It was established for a three-year term, from January 1st of 1951 to December 31st of 1953; nevertheless, since then, there have been votes to expand the terms through 1958, 1963, 1968, and 1973. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees replaced the International Refugee Organization (IRO) from 1947-1952. This organization was responsible for the refugees, looking after their well-being and supporting them. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 14th of 1950, in Geneva. This organization provides international protection to refugees with the provision of the Convention on the Status of Refugees, which was adopted in 1951 and came into force, and was confirmed by 60 countries by April 1954.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees currently has thirty offices located in strategic locations around the world, and also has representatives and correspondents. The League of Nations appointed Norwegian scientist and explorer Dr. Fridtjof Nansen as the first High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921, marking the beginning of the modern international system for refugee protection. It was created in the first place to protect and help Europeans

who were displaced by World War II, helping them to return to their homes or find a better quality of life.

The main topics that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees manage are, the refugees and asylum seeker, helping them with basic needs, also, the agency provides help to Internally Displaced people (IDPs) in their own countries and coordinating that their rights are respected, although the UNHCR is in charge of the emergency responses, this means that in a crisis, the UNHCR gives their immediate help in refugees, and coordinates humanitarian efforts to help those who are in need to get out of their country.

This committee faces issues such as the protection of human rights, the prevention of education, support for quality of life, and economic inclusion; on the other hand, the UNHCR facilitates the long-term solution for voluntary repatriation and local reintegration. The activities of this agency are guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence, and focus on the welfare of the refugees.

Nowadays with the problematic of the deadly dangers of the migration route through Libya: Humanitarian crisis and regional impact, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees plays a vital role, it has guaranteed that through the provision of basic protection and assistance services to prevent suffering and accidents, this is intended to protect refugees from deportation and seek alternatives to prevent their detention and facilitate access to faster and more effective responses outside Libya for those most at risk.

Libya is facing one of its most worrying social problems due to the dangers of migration. Its main problems center on the exploitation, physical and verbal violence, and the death that refugees and migrants face along the Libyan route. The main problem is the exploitation, violence, and death that migrants face along the Libyan route.

This situation stems from the outbreak of the Sudanese conflict in April 2023, in which a civil war erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). This resulted from a power struggle following the collapse of a transitional government.

II. HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT

Libya is one of the most dangerous routes for refugees and migrants from Africa, as it remains one of the main routes for those seeking to reach Europe in search of new opportunities and a better quality of life. Last year, UNHCR conducted a study indicating that more than 100,000 refugees and migrants entered Libya fleeing violence, persecution, and social and political conflicts in their home countries, such as Sudan, Chad, and sub-Saharan Africa. The situation Libya is facing is worsening, with an increasing number of people, both adults and children, trapped in a network of displacement, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, and exploitation. In 2024, there were more than 250,000 refugees and asylum seekers in the country, 143,000 internally displaced persons, most of whom were in unstable living situations. The journey across the Mediterranean has resulted in thousands of deaths each year, as people try to reach Europe. More than 1,200 deaths were recorded by early 2024. However, those rescued or intercepted by authorities are returned to Libya, where, upon arrival, they suffer and face further abuse in detention centers.

In 2024, UNHCR expected the arrival of refugees to be significant, as an increase in the number of Sudanese refugees in Libya was and remains very likely. In 2024, the arrival of more than 149,000 Sudanese was estimated. More than 149,000 Sudanese refugees are in Libya.

For people seeking to reach Europe via the Mediterranean route, there is no possibility that the route will ever be safe, as the dangers are overwhelming and latent. Refugees and migrants who risk making this journey face risks such as drowning, becoming victims of trafficking, or being turned back at sea.

In 2024, more than 1,200 people died or disappeared while trying to reach Europe. Those who do manage to reach Europe also face the risk of being deported back to Libya, where they are tried upon arrival and may face indefinite detention, physical abuse, forced labor, sexual violence, or starvation.

While Libyans suffer from indefinite detention, physical abuse. The conflict in Libya is an international concern because it encourages a humanitarian crisis and leaves regional and global impacts, especially in the topics of migration and trafficking of people. The instability

has made a refuge for the smuggling network and human trafficking, making the country an important source of migrants. The result of this has led to a high number of deaths of migrants at sea and an abuse of human rights in Libya.

The conflict involves different armed forces, including the government of national unity, which is supported by Turkey, and the Libyan national army, which is supported by the eastern-based House of Representatives and receives support from Russia. Turkey and Russia, such as other countries, provide support, which complicates the conflict.

Nigeria is significantly affected because of the conflict that Libya is facing the highest levels of migratory flows, especially in Europe. The conflict has led to violence and instability inside Nigeria, due to criminal groups exploiting the current situation.

During the conflict, Libya plays a central role in the conflict, a problematic role in the migratory crisis through the route of the Mediterranean, central to Europe, because first, it is worth it as a transit and destiny for refugees and migrants, most of them running away from conflicts and instability in other regions of Africa. The current crisis and the political fragmentation in Libya have created more danger for refugees due to human trafficking.

Other regions of Africa, Libya faces a lot of regional impacts, such as the deepened humanitarian crisis due to the way that migrants are exposed to suffer sexual abuse, arbitrary detention, forced labor and torture, not only this conflict has been a concern of Libya its self but it also has affected neighbors as Libya porous borders and weak security made top transit country for people going to Europe in an unsafe way which has caused thirty thousand people's death.

During the last 12 months, as a result of the hard work of UNHCR, there has been a considerable advance from states committed to relocating refugees from Libya; the Emergency Transit Mechanism established in Niger has allowed the UNHCR to bring more people to a safer via.

The conflict is the migratory crisis in Libya, where thousands of African migrants face abuse, human trafficking, and death trying to reach Europe through the route of the Central Mediterranean. The political instability and the civil war in Libya aggravate this humanitarian crisis, leaving migrants vulnerable. The migratory crisis intensified in 2011, after the fall of Gaddafi, although Libya was a point of migratory transit. Since then, the political chaos has

led to the routes being more dangerous and lethal, and this crisis has left Libya without a central government, letting militias and traffickers control migratory routes, abusing migrants in a place with no law.

III. CURRENT HAPPENINGS

Libya has been facing a crisis since the revolution of 2011, marked by political division and armed conflicts. Right now, the country is broken between the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Tripoli, recognized internationally but with limited control, and the Libyan National Army (LNA), whose leadership is by Khalifa Haftar, that dominates the east and the south. The scarcity of elections and the presence of militias, extremist groups like ISIS, and human trafficking networks contribute to instability. In addition, natural disasters like floods from 2024 have moved thousands of people, joining the 143,000 displaced internally, 250,000 refugees, and more than 725,000 migrants who face arbitrary detentions, violence, and inhuman conditions in detention centers.

During this humanitarian crisis, various organizations are helping the populations affected by the conflict in Libya. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides refuge, money, and evacuations for refugees. The International Organization for Migration facilitates volunteer returns and provides food to displaced and refugees, especially in natural disasters. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) provides medical attention and psychological support in the detention centers; meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross provides medical supplies and protects detainees. On the other hand, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and UNICEF support education, refuge, and services for kids and communities affected by the conflict and the floods.

The increase in crossings of the Mediterranean, especially through the route of the Central Mediterranean from Libya, has prompted significant changes in the migratory policies of the European Union. Balancing border security with humanitarian worries. In answer, the EU has strengthened the border management and expanded Frontex, deploying more than 3,300 officials to patrol the external borders to support the operations of search and rescue. Has also established agreements with countries in North Africa, like Libya and Tunisia, to reduce the exits, providing financial support like €1.13 billion with the initiatives of Team Europe to improve the training of the coast guard of Libya and dismantle networks of contraband.

Otherwise, the EU has introduced the Pact on Migration and Asylum to create a unified legal framework that streamlines the processing of asylum and shares responsibilities between the members. It has proposed centers of extraterritorial processing, inspired by the agreement of Italy with Albania, to accelerate the returns, but criticized for possible violations of human rights. Finally, the next European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS), programmed for 2026, looks to tighten the rules of entry for travelers exempt from a visa, addressing irregular migration through greater previous control. Despite these measures, the International Organization for Migration reported 651 deaths at sea in the first five months of 2025, marking the continued human cost and the pressure for more humane policies.

The international effort to isolate choke points in the people's movement through Libya is mainly due to the aim of using choke points on key migration paths to halt the flow of irregular migration to Europe. The EU gives funds to the Libyan Coast Guard to patrol the Mediterranean, a choke point in itself, and return migrants to Libya. The EU has given millions to Libya since 2017 to block boats from leaving coastal towns, like those in Tripoli or Zuwara, to bring down the flow of migrants crossing the sea to Italy. The United Nations and the International Organization for Migration also monitor land routes, like the crossings of the Sahara Desert from Niger to Libya, primarily to better understand the movement of migrants and fight against smuggling. However, their monitoring does not best serve to protect the migrants, who are facing abuse in detention centers. This interest, like the EU's, seeks to stop the movement as opposed to stopping the chaos of Libya, such as the civil war, militias, or anything else driving migrants. Both the UN and EU perpetuate a dangerous misconception that there is a safe legal route or permitting process, leading towards even higher danger for migrants moving through choke points.

The EU has taken a strong position and in 2023 since the determined new policies like paying the Libyan Coast Guard to stop migrants, encouraging transactionalism because they give money to local actors without giving real changes. For example, militias in Libya receive funds to patrol, but they use that money to buy weapons and exploit migrants, charging them to cross the borders.

Law enforcement and border externalization have a limited impact. There is a need for a 'whole of route' approach. Western policy towards migrant smuggling and TIP via Libya has been driven almost exclusively by a desire to reduce flows of irregular migration to European

shores. But this has also created a political reality that prioritizes stopping arrivals at all costs. There is a need to focus on conflict reduction and align policy objectives in Libya.

Looking at the range of issues that influence migrant smuggling and TIP through systems analysis in Libya reveals that a more sustained focus on conflict reduction could provide the key to more sustainable policy outcomes in the medium and long term.

Address local concerns and perceptions in policy responses

There is also a crucial need to consider the societal views of migration when developing policies and programming aimed at addressing smuggling and human trafficking in conflict-affected states.

Currently, there are many efforts to respect migrants, but tragically, the international response has been different, and the abuse is still present and inflicted by governmental entities, the military, by taking control over borders, and using their power to extort and ask for ransom from migrant families. Political figures are also key because they tend to make agreements asking for financial support to Europe in exchange for detaining migrants, and there is violence in detention centers, of lack of food, water, and basic needs.

There exists a need for a whole new route because the migrants face dangers in all their journey, from Africa to Libya and Europe. In Libya, the militias and traffickers abuse them, and crossing the Mediterranean is mortal. Helping only in Libya or Europe is not enough; we need to protect them from the beginning to the end, with safe routes and better laws, which reduce the chaos and save lives.

Libya is currently home to nearly 250,000 refugees and asylum seekers. More than 180,000 of these refugees are from Sudan. Other countries people are coming from include Eritrea, Somalia, and Syria, where they are fleeing from war and poverty. This is a serious crisis because more and more people leave their countries as a result of wars, poverty, and conflicts, such as the one occurring in Sudan, and travel to Libya, where no stable central government exists. The situation in Libya is dire, where a civil war and the prevalence of militias have

trapped migrants and asylum seekers in horrific conditions, such as detention centers where they are faced with all sorts of abuse, hunger, and loss of safe passage out. It also points to the fact that Libya is an important country as a transit for people trying to access Europe, but the conditions for refugees and asylum seekers in Libya are deteriorating. Add to the increasing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in Libya, placing a strain on local communities and national health systems already under pressure.

IV. INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

- **United Nations**

- **General Assembly:** The General Assembly calls upon States to take concrete measures to guarantee the protection of humanitarian access and to support humanitarian organizations. It proposes that the government actively participates by admitting refugees to their territory and recognizing the regulations of the Office of the High Commissioner, which states that protection is a process between States.
- **Security Council:** During the 18 June videoconference meeting, the head of the United Nations said that the Security Council must overcome its differences to find the best way for refugees to return home. However Security Council has focused on threats to international security; however, it has also expressed its concern and the importance of resolutions **1265**, **1674**, and **2417**
- **United High Commissioner for Refugees:** Since 1950, the United High Commissioner for Refugees has strictly declared a posture by providing assistance to refugees and protecting human rights, operating in 137 countries for over 74 years, restoring many futures.
- **United Nations Human Rights Office:** They had been in charge of promoting all human rights regardless of the migration situation, and help empower people in vulnerable situations, and at the same time support the government through preventing abuses
- **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs:** OCHA works with the contribution of Security Council bodies, UN agencies, NGOs, the UN, and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPS to ensure the protection of displaced people

- **IGO's**

- **The European Union:** The European Union plays a strong role in economic and political sectors, promoting the Global Compact on Refugees. The EU has political and financial support for the countries that have more forcibly displaced people ranking at the top of the list of UNHCR donors.
- **African Union:** In the 2063 Agenda of the AU, forced displacement has always been in the Agenda, and the relationship between the EU and refugee agencies has strengthened since the AU implemented different programs to create awareness of forced displacement.
- **International Organization for Migration:** IOM aims to safeguard people who are in a migration situation and their dignity, and in emergencies, basic needs are covered, from hygiene to medical attention.
- **The Libya INGO Forum:** The Libya forum advocates for INGO's position by ensuring an approach with effective delivery in Libya with the aim of better service and intervention in vulnerable situations.
- **Amnesty International:** It seeks to have human rights respected and for justice in cases of violation of human rights, and one of the main purposes is to advocate by exposing cases of human rights violations, and it is also against the detention of people who previously claimed asylum and their petition was rejected.

- **NGO's**

- **Safeworld:** It works from the perspective of the most affected people; they promote resolutions in the communities to address the real causes of conflict-related crises and threats while promoting the participation of governments to set up peacebuilding policies.
- **International Energy Foundation in Libya:** Helps displaced people with alternative energy solutions to combat lack of water and food, key points of the migration, strengthening resilience in vulnerable areas in Libya.
- **Lawyers for Justice in Libya:** Registers abuses and promotes redencion presenting communications with the CPI of crimes against migrants, , including, slavery, sexual violence in detention centres and physical abuse

- **Red Crescent Society:** Coordinates rescues in the sea with UNHCR and OIM, bringing help to intercepted migrants and refugees that were crossing the ocean, and giving capacitations to partners in rescue operations.
- **Defender Center for Human Rights:** Oversees legal and social challenges in the migratory crisis, informing about vulnerabilities of internally displaced and refugees, advocating against arbitrary detentions and exploitation.

V. BLOCK ANALYSIS

The State of Libya: Libya is the epicenter of the migratory crisis, as it serves as the main transit and departure site for migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean. In 2011, the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, along with the subsequent civil war, dismantled state structure and border management, leaving space for traffickers to operate detention centers and smuggling networks. The Libyan authorities became fragmented between rival factions, and have received significant European Union funding to strengthen the coast guard and border policing. Some solutions that have been created are the treaty with Italy and the EU to give training to the coast guard, but criticized for perpetuating abuses, with limited efforts of UNHCR to evacuate the most vulnerable. Libya lacks a functioning asylum system, and major arbitrary detention of migrants remains widespread.

The Republic of Niger: Niger is a key transit country, as migrants from West Africa to Libya have received thousands of migrants facing desert deaths and expulsions, with around 613 deported from Libya in January 2025 alone. EU-supported laws outlawing smugglers transferred the work of migrants to the desert. The solutions we see to raise awareness or provide sophisticated solutions are IOM assistance and voluntary assisted returns.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria: The poverty and the conflict with Boko Haram in Nigeria push thousands of people through the routes of Libya, suffering human trafficking. The government of Nigeria, with the support of the OIM and UE, promotes voluntary returns, awareness campaigns, and treaties for safe migrations; otherwise, the government has declared that insecurity makes the process slower.

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria: Algeria, being a stable but strict nation, is a point of transit to Libya, where migrants face desert expulsions and dangerous routes. The approach of security, financed and supervised by the EU, prioritises border control, criticised for violations of human rights. The solutions include patrols and readmission treaties.

The Arab Republic of Egypt: The financial situation in Egypt and the arrival of Sudanese refugees stress their role as a transit to Libya. The government sees the migration as a security problem and collaborates with the EU in border control; otherwise, OIM and UNHCR offer medical help and search for safe routes.

The Republic of Chad: Chad is one of the most affected countries, mostly the instability in its borders with Libya, aggravated by the Sudan conflict that promotes the traffic of migrants. The country welcomes refugees and supports Libya's stability. The OIM facilitates safe returns with reintegration, promoting treaties to reduce risks at these borders.

The Republic of the Sudan: The civil war in Sudan moves thousands to Libya, where they face mortal journeys through the sea. The interim government looks to reduce migrants. UNHCR offers medical help and advocates for safe routes, and prevents migrants from crossing the ocean. Being in Sudan, the country where migrants depart for Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

The Republic of Senegal: Regardless of it not being a primary transit state, Senegal is an important country of origin, as young migrants usually seek opportunities abroad. Migration mainly flows from Senegal to contribute to and pressure along the Libyan route. Their government has cooperated with regional organizations such as ECOWAS to address the migration drivers, and they have received international funding for community development programs. Regardless, it has limited capacity or major political power to accommodate refugees from diverse religions.

The Kingdom of Morocco: They have developed a central alternative route for migrants who aren't able to cross through Libya. With the support of the European Union, Morocco has strengthened border controls and they have developed cooperation agreements that reflect major transactional agreements like financial assistance in exchange for migration containment. Their government recognizes some asylum claims in partnership with the

UNHCR, regardless of this their system remains limited in quantity. They serve both as a partial host country for the border crisis and as a barrier.

The Republic of Mali: Affected by the political instability and jihadist conflicts, is a key point of origin and transit through Libya, where migrants face exploration and mortal risk in the desert. The government, with support of the UE and OIM, promotes campaigns of awareness and voluntary returns. The solutions include, reception centres and treaties for a safe migration, but the insecurity limits the impact.

The French Republic: The French Republic, as a key power in the EU, sees the migrations routed through Libya as a challenge that affects security and regional stability, and the arrival of migrants arriving, generates worry. Their posture balances border control with humanitarian calls, deploring abuses like slavery in Libya and supporting the Global Compact for safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. Promotes cooperation to control flows, financing patrols and political stability, while promoting legal, limited pathways and a solution of all the conflicts to reduce tragedies.

The Russian Federation: Russia's involvement in Libya has been shown mainly through geopolitical influences, with mercenary presence shaping conflict dynamics and military power. While its humanitarian contributions are low, the country uses political influence to secure leverage in broader international negotiations. They provide minimal asylum protection nationally, and they haven't been a major humanitarian actor in the migration crisis.

The Republic of Türkiye: They are both a regional power and a military actor in Libya, backing factions in the ongoing civil wars. While its presence has been motivated by political and security interests, Turkey has also positioned itself as a partner in migration management through its multiple agreements with the European Union. Nationally, they host one of the largest refugee populations worldwide, although not directly to Libya. Its policies remain shaped more by a strategic goal rather than a direct humanitarian engagement.

VI. KEY POINTS

- **Human Rights:** This concept includes basic protections connected with every person, both to protect their dignity, safety, and freedoms. Human rights are often protected in international law, and are violated in times of a crisis, which threatens vulnerable populations to rights violations.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** Relief provided to alleviate suffering and meet basic needs of food, shelter, and medical care in a time of emergency. Coordinated by other organizations, such as UNHCR, to support the affected individuals impacted by disaster or conflict.
- **Humanitarian Crisis:** Serious, life and livelihood-threatening situation due to natural disasters, armed conflicts, or widespread human rights violations. The disaster requires urgent efforts and international action that respects rights and provides the urgent assistance and protections needed for affected populations.
- **Civil War:** An internal armed conflict between organized groups within a country, usually linked to access to political power and resources. Internal conflict victimises nations, prevents governance, and exacerbates humanitarian conditions.
- **Migration Route:** Routes traveled by people to cross borders to find safety from persecution, apply for asylum in another country, or find a better economic opportunity. Migration routes and associated transit often make migrants vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and are unsafe for the traveler.
- **European Policies:** These are regulations enacted by the European Union for the purpose of managing immigration. Policies include processes related to border control, as well as asylum processes. These policies affect international flows of migration and conditions for migrants in transit countries.
- **Migrant Smuggling:** This is the unauthorized facilitation of border crossing for financial gain, with most cases involving insecure practices. Smugglers take advantage of vulnerable persons, putting their lives at risk if they don't follow their rules.
- **Trafficking:** This is the forced exploitation of individuals for purposes such as trafficking for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or other illegal activities. Trafficking networks happen across borders and generally prey upon individuals fleeing conflict or poverty.
- **Asylum Seekers:** Individuals who flee persecution or danger to seek international protection as refugees. However, their struggles for fair asylum processes and legal protections leave asylum seekers vulnerable.

- **Peacekeeping:** A group of operations directed by international organizations (i.e., UN) to manage conflict zones and safeguard civilians. Peacekeeping operations seek to uphold safety while creating an avenue for sustainable stability.
- **Peacebuilding:** Ongoing actions to address the underlying issues of a conflict, foster reconciliation, and build governance. These actions protect a sustainable peace through effective engagement in economic and social development.
- **Transactionalism:** Engages cross-border exchanges and networks that include both illegal and legal processes such as migrant flows, smuggling, and trafficking. These interactions disturb international governance and create added complexity in managing migration and the protection of security.

VII. KEY QUESTIONS

1. How can we as an international community balance border security with the protection of migrants rights along the Libyan route?
2. Should neighboring countries be bound to accept more refugees rescued from the central Mediterranean?
3. What role do neighboring countries play in sharing the responsibility of migrants trapped in Libya?
4. Are there any alternatives to detention that can be implemented in Libya?
5. How can the UNHCR cooperate more effectively to dismantle trafficking and smuggling in the networks of Libya?
6. To what extent should the European Union cooperate with the Libyan coast guard, taking into account the human rights abuses?
7. How can we, as an international committee, guarantee access in areas controlled by militias or non-state armed groups?
8. How could safe and legal migration pathways be expanded internationally as a solution, considering the current political shifts?
9. What mechanisms could ensure accountability for abuses against migrants in detention facilities taking place in Libya?
10. How can the current humanitarian crisis in Libya be addressed without ignoring the core causes of migration in origin countries?

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