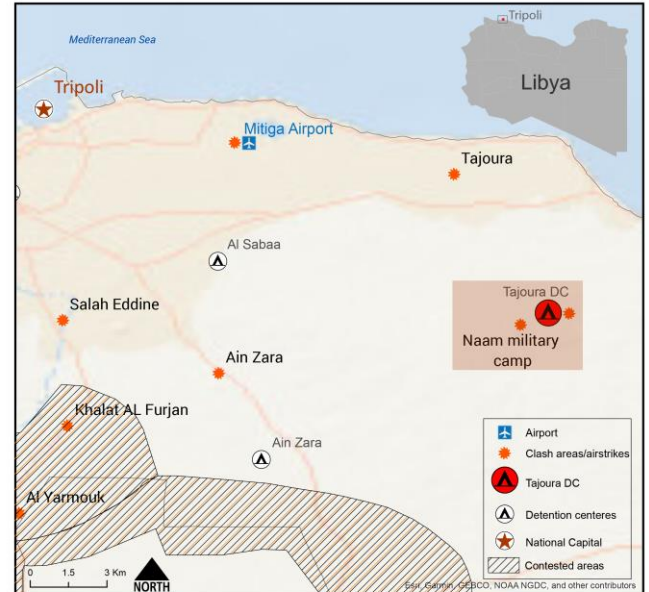


HIGHLIGHTS

- **At least 53 killed, including six children, and 130 injured in airstrike on Tajoura detention centre (DC)**
- **Approximately 500 refugees and migrants remain held at Tajoura DC, in close proximity to military base**
- **Nearly 3,800 refugees and migrants continue to be arbitrarily detained in DCs at risk from armed conflict**
- **Humanitarian actors call for the immediate release of refugees and migrants from detention centres and for relocation to safe shelter**



SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 2 July during the night, two airstrikes hit the Tajoura detention centre (DC), in which refugees and migrants are held, on the eastern outskirts of Tripoli. At the time of reporting Health Sector partners indicate at least 53 refugees and migrants were killed and 130 injured, with credible reports of six children amongst those killed. Reportedly, bodies of those killed are still being recovered from the rubble. The DC was apparently struck twice, with one missile hitting an unoccupied garage and another hitting a hanger which contained some 120 refugees and migrants. There are reports that following the first impact, some refugees and migrants were fired upon by guards as they tried to escape.

This is not the first time Tajoura DC has been impacted, due to its direct proximity to a military base and its location. Two individuals inside the DC were injured on 7 May when an airstrike on nearby GNA forces impacted the DC. Despite this, authorities have continued to transfer refugees and migrants to Tajoura DC.¹ Over 600 refugees and migrants, including women and children, were being held against their will in Tajoura DC at the time of the attack. It is to be noted that GPS coordinates of the DCs, including Tajoura DC, as well as their civilian nature, had been communicated by UNSMIL to the parties to the conflict well in advance of this attack.

¹ On 12 May, just days after the 7 May airstrike that injured two individuals being held inside Tajoura DC, 108 refugees and migrants picked up at sea by the Libyan Coast Guard were disembarked and transferred to Tajoura DC.

The attack on the Tajoura DC marks three months since the onset of this resurgence of conflict in Libya. The number of civilian casualties caused by the conflict have almost doubled as the result of this single attack. Humanitarian actors have repeatedly warned that the return of refugees and migrants to Libyan shores, and their arbitrary detention in unsafe areas, placed these vulnerable men, women and children at great risk of exactly the type of tragedy which occurred last night.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND RESPONSE

An inter-agency mission, comprising UNSMIL HRS, OCHA, UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, UNMAS and UNFPA, visited Tajoura on 3 July to ascertain information and assess the humanitarian needs and response, particularly with regard to the medical and protection needs of injured/survivors and remaining refugees and migrants at Tajoura DC. Injured have been taken to hospital and local first responders, together with IOM, IMC and MSF, are supporting the provision of medical assistance.

Humanitarian partners are working to support the survivors at Tajoura who require protection, water, food and healthcare and a second inter-agency mission to the DC is planned for tomorrow, 4 June.

However, in the wake of this attack, no general relocation of the remaining refugees and migrants from Tajoura DC appears to be at hand. According to IOM, four Nigerian migrants (three women and one child) are scheduled to be released to the Nigerian embassy tomorrow. UNHCR reports plans to evacuate 31 registered refugees (women and children) to the UNHCR General Departures Facility (GDF) in Tripoli tomorrow as well. All other refugees and migrants remaining at Tajoura DC are expected to remain within the DC at present, and the Directorate for Combatting illegal Migration (DCIM) DC managers are currently seeking to house those displaced in other hangers within the same compound, in close proximity to military targets. Thus, approximately 500 refugees and migrants will spend the night in the same degree of vulnerability and exposure to violence as when last night's attack occurred.

Refugees and migrants at risk

In and around Tripoli, humanitarian actors remain particularly concerned for the safety and wellbeing of the nearly 3,800 refugees and migrants currently held in detentions centres exposed to, or in close proximity to, the fighting. As this horrific incident demonstrates, all individuals inside these centres are at imminent risk, as they are held against their will and have no means of seeking safety on their own.

In addition to the threat posed by armed conflict, conditions in detention centres are characterised by severe overcrowding, insufficient access to health care, food, clean water and sanitation facilities. Tajoura DC is amongst several DCs where provision of food is severely lacking, with refugees and migrants receiving one meal a day. Where access allows, humanitarian partners are providing life-saving assistance to malnourished, injured and sick detainees, while maintaining that the primary responsibility to care for detained individuals remains with the Libyan government.

In this context, the fact that over 3,000 refugees and migrants intercepted at sea have been returned to Libya in 2019 is deeply troubling. This has taken place despite the clear fact that, as the UN Secretary General highlighted in a statement on 4 April 2019, “No one can argue that Libya is a safe port of disembarkation at this point.” UNHCR has evacuated over 1,000 refugees out of Libya during in 2019.

Humanitarian actors urgently call for detained refugees and migrants in Libya to be immediately released and provided with safe shelter until their asylum claims can be processed or they can be provided with safe repatriation assistance for reunification with their families. Humanitarian actors reiterate that Libya is in no way a safe port of disembarkation for refugees and migrants and urge European states to discourage the return of refugees and migrants to Libyan shores.

Humanitarian actors call on all parties to the conflict to refrain from locating military assets within or near densely civilian-populated areas, such as detention centres, and to evacuate civilian persons under their control, including persons in detention, from the vicinity of military objectives to a more secure place, and to take all possible measures to ensure that their essential needs (shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition) are met.

Finally, humanitarian actors remind all parties of the strict prohibition of indiscriminate attacks under international humanitarian law and urge all parties to avoid using explosive weapons – including by aerial bombardment or shelling – in populated areas due to their likely indiscriminate effect. Humanitarian actors likewise remind all parties of their obligations to take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects, including places of detention.