

Highlights

- Under WHO's transmission scenarios, Libya remains classified as "community transmission". Since the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Libya on 24 March 2020, a total of 15 156 people have been infected with the virus (a 60% increase since WHO's last situation update). Of this number, 13 160 people remain actively infected, 1746 people have recovered, and 250 people have died. The national case fatality rate (CFR) is 1.65%. The municipalities reporting large numbers of confirmed cases include Tripoli (5744), Misrata (2571), Sebha (1096), Zliten (1077) and Benghazi (552).
- Thus far, a total of 134 027 specimens have been tested. This number includes 83 915 in Tripoli, 18 502 in Misrata, 14 794 in Benghazi and 7541 in Sebha.
- On 26 August 2020, WHO issued a [press release](#) expressing its alarm over the rapidly increasing rates of COVID-19 in the country.
- WHO continues to experience delays obtaining the rapid release of its emergency and humanitarian supplies from Libyan customs. It has raised the problem repeatedly with the Prime Minister and the head of the COVID scientific committee, to no avail. Urgently needed items have been blocked in customs since 26 July 2020.
- WHO is expecting a large shipment of oxygen concentrators to arrive in Misrata on 4 September. There are severe shortages of oxygen across the country, and these supplies are urgently needed for COVID-19 patients. WHO has informed the national authorities that these supplies are expected shortly and has asked them to secure their speedy release.
- The WHO Representative travelled to Benghazi the week of 29 August 2020 for meetings with senior officials. She repeatedly stressed that the COVID-19 situation was critical and asked the authorities to take the necessary steps to release COVID-19 supplies within 48 hours. During her visit, supplies that had been blocked in customs in Benghazi for several weeks were released. The authorities in Benghazi have promised that future COVID-19 supplies arriving in the east will be released in less than 48 hours. A large shipment of COVID supplies is due to arrive in Benghazi on 7 September. WHO will provide an update on the situation in its next report.

Collaboration with national authorities

See under highlights.

Response

Pillar 1: Coordination

WHO:

- Continued to disseminate daily and weekly updates on COVID-19.
- Completed an action checklist for the nine pillars of the response plan for the WHO Partners Platform, an online tool that allows all countries, implementing partners, donors and contributors to collaborate in the global COVID-19 response. The platform features real-time tracking to support the planning, implementation and resourcing of country preparedness and response activities.
- Provided technical guidance to the medical unit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya on laboratory testing, preventive measures in the workplace and contact tracing.

Pillar 2: Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)

WHO:

- Provided technical support to local radio stations and civil society institutions in Tobruk that are working to raise awareness about COVID-19; helped develop messages that addressed misinformation and rumours.
- Distributed 8000 posters to COVID-19 isolation and triage centres in Tripoli, Sebha, Misrata, Zletin and Benghazi.

Pillar 3: Surveillance, rapid response teams and case investigation

WHO:

- Continued to follow up with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) on daily registered COVID-19 cases and epidemiological situation updates; supported the preparation of weekly epidemiological bulletins 33 and 34.
- Developed a new electronic application for the disease early warning and surveillance network (EWARN). On 26 August 2020, demonstrated the new application for a group of surveillance officers and asked them to identify the main gaps and challenges they faced when submitting their reports.
- Worked with the NCDC and WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) to finalize a work plan to strengthen and expand EWARN in Libya.

Pillar 4: Points of entry

- On 27 August 2020, Libyan airports reopened for all travellers flying from Turkey (previously, only Libyan returnees were allowed to return from Turkey).
- Libya is discussing arrangements for reopening overland border crossings with Tunisia and Egypt.

Pillar 5: National laboratory

- WHO is in the process of distributing 12 100 GeneXpert cartridges to COVID-19 laboratories across the country.

Pillar 6: Infection prevention and control (IPC)

- WHO disseminated guidance on considerations for quarantining contacts of COVID-19 patients and the use of masks for children in the community to health sector partners.

Pillar 7: Case management

WHO:

- Disseminated COVID-19 treatment guidelines and its Severe Acute Respiratory Infection toolkit to health sector partners in Libya.
- Agreed to support the MoH in facilitating an assessment of hospitals' experience combatting COVID-19 in Libya. Because of poor Internet connectivity, hospital directors can complete the assessment either online or manually.

Pillar 8: Operational support and logistics

WHO:

- Disseminated the latest version of its COVID-19 catalogue of supplies to health sector partners.

- Distributed the following supplies:
 - 2800 test cartridges and 244 litres of disinfectant to WHO's hub in Benghazi for distribution to the Medical Centre, Al-Kwefia laboratory and NCDC branches in Igdabya, Tazerbu and Al-Kofra.
 - 1000 test cartridges and 245 litres of disinfectant to the NCDC in Tobruk.
 - 1500 test cartridges, 400 litres of disinfectant and assorted laboratory supplies to the NCDC in Sebha.
 - 1200 test cartridges and assorted laboratory supplies to the NCDC in Tripoli.

Pillar 9: Maintaining essential health services

WHO:

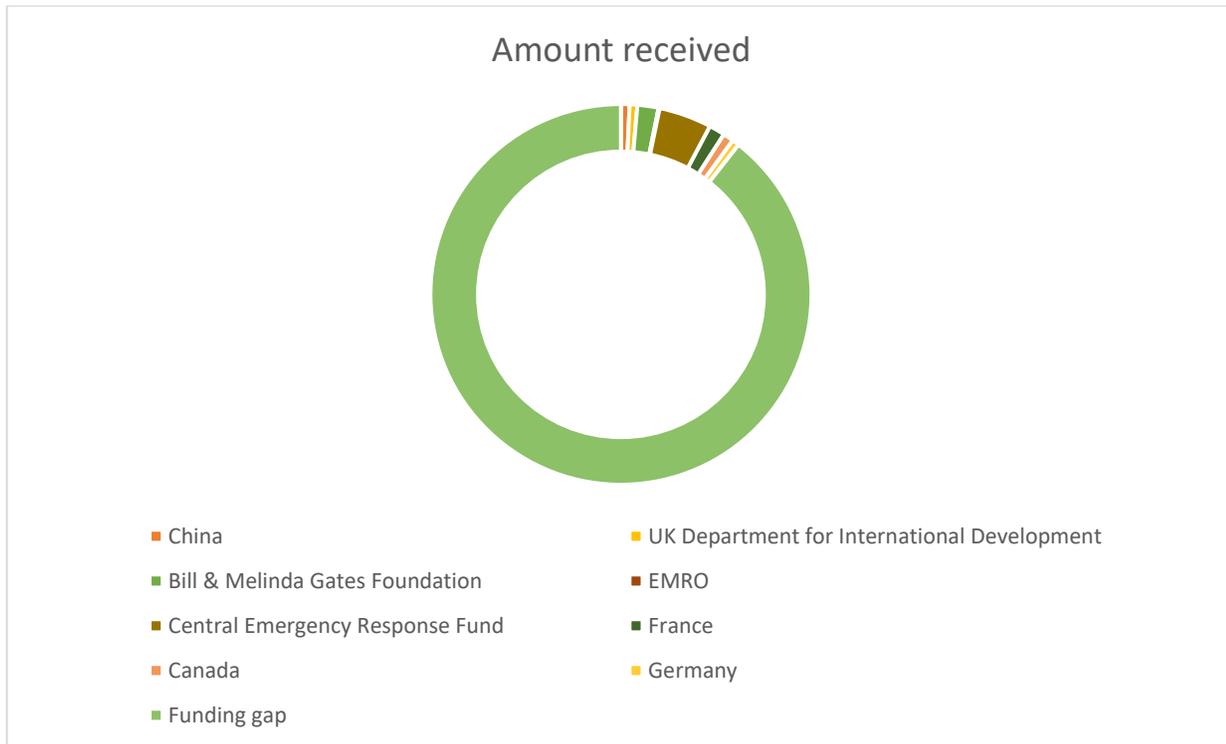
- Participated in COVID-19 advisory committee discussions on how to ensure Libya can benefit from the COVAX initiative. COVAX has been set up by GAVI to help ensure that all countries have access to a COVID-19 vaccine once it has been developed. The COVAX facility will work with manufacturers to help all COVAX member states secure critical doses of COVID-19 vaccines once they become available. Libya has signed up to the COVAX initiative but has not followed up on the formalities to be completed. The outcome of the discussion was the signature of the "Confirmation of Intent to Participate in the COVAX Facility". WHO briefed committee members on the terms and conditions of COVAX membership and shared the standard commitment agreement template with the committee.
- Finalized, together with WHO/HQ's Digital Health Innovation Unit, COVID-19 awareness campaign materials for Libya.

Training

- WHO conducted two cascade training courses on enhancing community engagement and providing home care for COVID-19 patients. A total of 65 community health volunteers in Sebha attended this training. A total of 22 community health volunteers and team leaders from 22 municipalities in the western and central regions participated in a second training course on the same topic.

FUNDS RECEIVED BY WHO

WHO has requested USD 22 300 000 to support the response to COVID-19 in Libya. Thus far, it has received USD 2 362 300 in contributions and firm pledges. It has submitted funding proposals to the African Development Bank (USD 500 000), USAID (USD 925 550) and the EU (EUR 6 million each for WHO, UNICEF and IOM).



Donor	Amount received
China	162,500
UK Department for International Development	145,000
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	400,000
EMRO	20,000
Central Emergency Response Fund	1,000,000
France	300,000
Canada	200,000
Germany	134,800
Funding gap	19,937,700