

Conflict-Sensitive Assistance to Libya

Summary of Discussions, 12 October 2017

Acropole Hotel, Tunis

The Conflict-Sensitive Assistance in Libya (CSA) forum, co-hosted by UNDP Libya and the Swiss Embassy to Libya and facilitated by the Peaceful Change Initiative (PCi), met for its 22nd meeting on 12th October at the Acropole Hotel in Tunis. The meeting was attended by 38 persons from 26 different organisations. The meeting included:

- An overview of the CSA process and its various components;
- A joint update of the shared conflict analysis;
- Presentations by Libyan speakers on conflict sensitivity issues surrounding migration and protection-related assistance, followed by plenary discussions

Overview of the CSA process

A short presentation (slide show attached) reviewed the different components of the CSA process, including:

- The meaning of conflict sensitivity;
- The role of the joint conflict-analysis forum;
- The Principles of Conflict-Sensitive Assistance;
- The role of the Leadership Group on Conflict-Sensitivity;
- Additional initiatives drawn from the CSA process (conflict-sensitivity peer review).

Summary update of analysis and recommendations

Participants reviewed and updated the joint context analysis, based on the 28 factors of UNDP's original analysis, Insecurity and Instability in Libya (UNDP Libya, December 2015).

Political pillar Analysis

- The political dialogue appeared to make progress. The dialogue committees of the House of Representatives (HoR) and the State Council (SC) conducted discussions in Tunis to amend the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). The meeting concluded with an agreement to reduce the Presidency Council (PC) from nine to three and found consensus that the prime minister should be a separate appointment.
- Participants spoke of a greater focus on reconciliation, with the UN Roadmap emphasizing this process, aiming to boost local reconciliation efforts. Participants also considered that the reduction in violence in Tripoli and other areas may mean a greater presence in 2018 and a subsequent improvement in the quality of programming.
- It was noted that there was greater intelligence cooperation between the east and the west. This was resulting in increasing levels of harassment for publically-engaged actors.
- Across political issues, it was recommended that:
 - o International assistance should be aligned behind, and support, the Libyan roadmap. International actors should support the new SRSG's efforts to unite and stabilize Libya.
 - o Assistance towards stabilization and mediation should also align behind UN-led efforts.
 - o Assistance should 'shift' to supporting national GNA institutions after two years of more concentrated focus on local governance.

Security pillar Analysis

- Around Sirte, Islamic State (IS) has attempted to reorganise, in light of pressure and defeats in the east of the country. IS were reported to have taken some 100km to the east of Sirte – Wadi Al-Ahmar – and to have set up checkpoints and kidnapped a number of people.
- Several conflict factors overlap regarding the situation in Sabratha. An Italian intervention to use the Dabbashi militia to prevent migrants from crossing the Mediterranean, allegedly in cooperation with the GNA, has contributed to clashes with rival armed groups. There have been casualties, public anger and reportedly up to 5,000 people being displaced.
- In terms of the impact that assistance providers may have on the context, participants explained how, by working with some security actors and not others, the international community could inadvertently be legitimizing some entities and de-legitimizing others.
- On security-related themes, it was recommended that:
 - o Assistance providers should not provide financial support to militias.
 - o Financial or in-kind assistance to the entities managing migrant centres should be monitored, as there are real risks that contributions are being diverted.
 - o Assistance should go towards building greater understanding of Libya's security landscape.
 - o The Security Sector Reform Working Group should consult inclusively, with a broad range of stakeholders, in its planning. The UN should be more fully engaged in its joint analysis and assessments.
 - o Assistance in this area should engage more thoroughly with local/municipal government councils.

Economic pillar analysis

- Libya's economic situation faced some challenges with respect to oil and income revenue. While oil output remained relatively high, production suffered a reduction due to violence perpetrated by armed groups at Libya's main oil fields.
- Reporting from the Central Libyan Bank covering the period 01/01/17 to 30/09/17 showed a poor performance by the Libyan economy, attributing the causes to security which is estimated to have cost the Libyan state over LD 160 billion.
- Participants recognised that inflation in Libya has caused prices to rise for basic household goods, but also for projects, making it challenging for assistance providers. At the same time, the Central Bank of Libya now expects to assess all bank transfers within Libya over \$5000.
- Across economic issues, it was recommended that:
 - o Led by the P5 and GNA, assistance targets direct utilities and services, such as water providers.
 - o The P5 + GNA consider and promote viable economic alternatives to smuggling or trafficking.

Social pillar Analysis

- It was noted that the travel ban for women has been lifted. Civil society activists in the east, meanwhile, are struggling to receive international funding due to pressures from eastern authorities.
- The increasing role of communities, tribes and other informal social groups in public affairs may mean that some groups may feel marginalized, while others feel empowered. It was also stated

that specific social groups exert influence over specific institutions, so international assistance providers should be careful not to assume the neutrality of government institutions.

- Across social issues, it was recommended that:
 - o Assistance should attempt to reach less accessible communities.
 - o Greater effort should go to strengthening data gathering and monitoring, by employing local resources such as University personnel.
 - o Assistance should help individuals and organisations work with the Civil Society Commission, to help them to comply with the required standards.

A complete overview of the updated analysis can be found by logging into the OPSECA online platform at: <https://opseca.humanidev.tech>. For a profile to make use of the platform, please contact anthony.pemberton@peacefulchange.org. Only organisations participating in the form have access to the online platform (one login profile per organisation).

Migration and Protection Assistance

Previous rounds of the CSA focused brought attention to challenges faced by the international community in delivering migration-related assistance in a conflict-sensitive manner. In particular, the last CSA meeting, on 3 August 2017, recommended: 'Review migration programming through the prism of conflict sensitivity'

One Libyan speaker described working as a civil society activist in Gharyan, engaged both at one of the camps but also assessing the city's migrant workforce. Participants were informed that it was difficult for an international agency to access the camp; it could only be accessed through having personal relations with camp managers. Conditions in the camp were worse than was being reported. The camp was not run by government officials, but instead by militia members. Conditions in the camp were described as extremely bad, with some migrants saying it was 'like a prison'. It has been hard to deliver basic services to the migrants. Some of those detained are also working for local businesses, yet receive little or no salary. In the city, it was apparent that firms use 'only migrant workers' as they cost very little. Female migrants are now also employed in local construction projects. In some camps, the speaker said, migrants are being exploited to do dangerous work like arms smuggling, or work for a militia. The speaker recommended better data collection on migrants and better monitoring of the final delivery of assistance towards migrants (since it could otherwise be diverted).

The second Libyan speaker described the migrant situation in Zawia. Migrants were not visible, like in Gharyan, but very valuable ('More valuable than gold'), since Zawia, like Zuwara, is along the human trafficking route. The speaker described how migrants are collected and sold, through traffickers, in their journey towards Europe. The recent reports of Italy's involvement engaging a militia in Sabratha to prevent migrants from crossing into Italy has created controversy among ordinary Libyans, probably inflamed by Libyan media, whose mistrust towards Italy, and the international community, has subsequently grown. The speaker recommended assistance to aid migrants through health services, for example, should also support vulnerable Libyan populations.

Subsequent plenary discussion mentioned the planned efforts to 'conflict-sensitise' the EU Migration Trust Fund. Another participant described the need for the international community to re-frame the discourse around migration as a 'human rights problem' as opposed to a 'political problem for EU member states'. Inclusive programming that accounts for broader community needs (beyond simply migrants or specific target groups) was recognised as important. It was stated that migration is politically highly controversial for Serraj and the GNA, who are easily portrayed by opponents and the media as 'responding only to the international agenda and ignoring Libya's needs'. It was recognised that we can no longer see migration purely through a humanitarian/protection 'silo'; it needs to be addressed in concert with political and security actors.