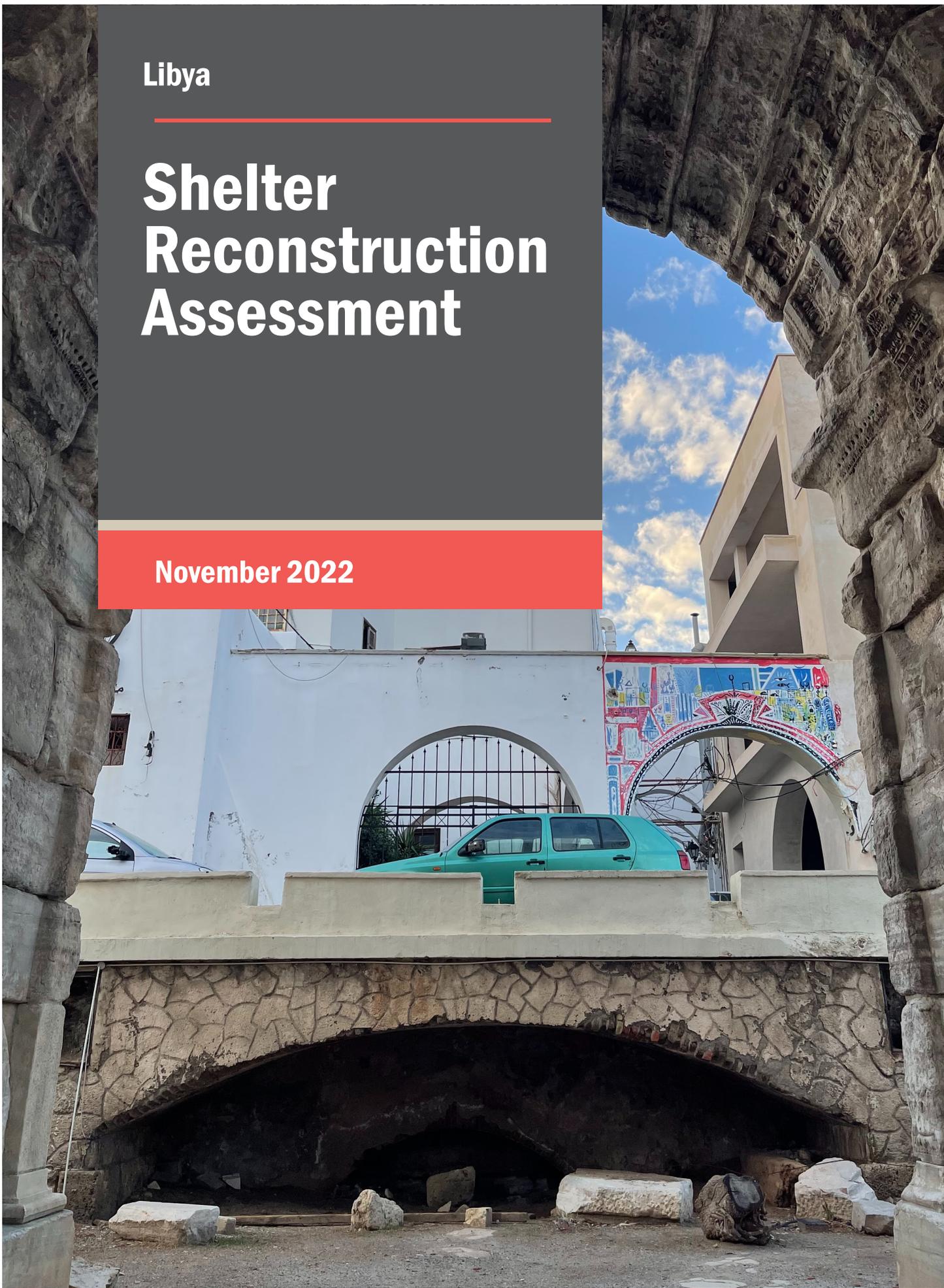


Libya

Shelter Reconstruction Assessment

November 2022



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NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

About REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information please visit [our website](#). You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter @REACH_info.

SUMMARY

Objective assessment

Crucial **information gaps** remain in Libya as to how affected populations reconstruct their damaged accommodation and the role of humanitarian actors in this process. Against this backdrop, REACH, in collaboration with the Libya SNFI sector, conducted a shelter reconstruction assessment. The aim of the assessment is to inform Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) sector partners and Libyan public and non-governmental actors about **construction practices and capacities** and the **key internal and external factors that enable or otherwise hinder reconstruction processes**. This assessment also aims to show the **vulnerabilities of the affected population**, and help actors identify the **groups most in need of assistance** in the reconstruction process. The SNFI sector, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and REACH have jointly designed the methodological approach, including the geographical scope, in consultation with relevant local and international stakeholders. Data collection and analysis tools have been developed in close collaboration with the SNFI sector, that has led the analysis and dissemination of findings with the support from REACH.

Methodology

In brief, the assessment adopted a mixed-method approach, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative components, and consisted of three separate phases. For all phases, respondents have been purposively selected in the areas covered by the assessment.

The **scoping phase** consisted of four mapping Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with governmental and non-government actors of mixed genders, roles, and affiliations. The FGDs were intended, among others, to inform the selection of assessed muhallas, and collect information about the distribution and extent of damage to private accommodations. The **first phase** consisted of 180 household surveys in six different muhallas. Households were interviewed about their experience of reconstruction (or lack thereof) and the internal and environmental factors affecting their decision (not) to reconstruct. During both the first and the **second phase** Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with community actors and construction professionals. During the first phase the aim of the KIIs was to obtain additional information on, among others, reconstruction processes and environmental factors. During the second phase, the assessment team focussed on the role of humanitarian actors, and affected populations in the reconstruction process.

Key findings

Enabling and hindering factors of reconstruction

A number of factors reportedly influence Libyan households' **ability and willingness to reconstruct their (partially) damaged accommodation**. Households' decisions to reconstruct tend to be shaped by negative (lack of financial means, extent of damage,

displacement, security and legal concerns, and a lack of infrastructure) rather than positive factors (strong support system).

The most prominent factors in a household's decision to reconstruct their accommodation are **financial** in nature. High construction costs, both in terms of labour and materials, and the strained financial situation of Libyans, are the main barriers for households to access the construction market. Financial services, like (interest-free) loans, are not commonly available, while they could potentially enable households to start the reconstruction process. The extent of the damaged areas affects a household's financial ability and willingness to construct. Repair of damage to structural components of a household's accommodation requires high-quality materials and expertise, resulting in higher reconstruction costs. Households have different coping mechanisms to deal with their lack of financial means. They sell personal valuables, use savings, resort to partial reconstruction, and use low-quality materials or unskilled workers. Partial reconstruction would allow displaced households to return to their original accommodation and therefore cut the rental costs of their substitute accommodation.

Besides financial constraints, most households tend to face **security concerns** while reconstructing their accommodation. Despite facing these security concerns, very few households indicated that these concerns negatively influenced their decision to reconstruct their (partially) damaged accommodation. The three main security concerns reported are depopulated areas, the presence of explosive hazards (UXOs), and theft, including of reconstruction materials. Households tend to cope with these security concerns by, among others, waiting for other residents to return to their baladiya of origin, relying on home security options and avoiding unnecessary movement. The Libyan government is addressing some of the existing security concerns by clearing residential areas of UXOs and addressing the issue of theft.

Related to the depopulation of certain baladiyas is the **lack of infrastructure** due to war related destruction that compels households to postpone their return and reconstruction. The lack of electricity, sewage, and water provision hinders any maintenance process and households fear that once they return they have to bear some of the costs of the infrastructure work. Libya's economic situation and the lack of governmental support to actors in charge of infrastructure related maintenance is affecting the rehabilitation of the country's infrastructure. In addition, the rehabilitation is also delayed by the unstable security situation and the presence of UXOs.

Displacement is another factor that negatively affects the ability and willingness of households to reconstruct their accommodation. Nearly 90% of the surveyed households indicated that they have been displaced since the start of the Libya conflict in 2011 and a third of them indicated that their displacement negatively impacted their ability and/or willingness to reconstruct their accommodation. During displacement households run the risk of having their accommodation in their original baladiya of residence robbed and they have additional housing related costs due to having to rent substitute accommodation. Lastly, displacement outside the baladiya of origin makes it also difficult to oversee any reconstruction process.

Legal obstacles were rarely reported to affect a household's decision to reconstruct their accommodation. Households rarely reported facing legal constraints potentially due to the lack of enforcement of Libya's law number 4/1987. This law dictates that ownership of the land of houses and apartments built on public land returns to the government once a building is destroyed. This law, if enforced, could affect households whose accommodation is completely destroyed. In addition, loss of documentation (primarily property documents) during the process of displacement is also a common issue and may contribute to ownership disputes.

Lastly, across all locations, family and friends are the most prominent **support network** – the main factor that positively affects households' ability and willingness to reconstruct their accommodation. Support networks provide loans, labour, in-kind support, connections, and emotional support. INGOs are the second most referred to support network, particularly popular in East Libya.

The process of reconstruction

During reconstruction processes, households tend to rely mainly on **hired labour**, or a combination of hired labour and the work of household members. Households recruit their unskilled labour informally through *mahattas* (labour stations) and hire skilled labour through their social networks and communities. The prices of construction materials tend to be unstable and are heavily affected by parallel markets and the fluctuation of the Libyan Dinar (LYD) and United States Dollar (USD) exchange rates. Different external insulation methods are used depending on the costs, construction stages, and locations. Households who repaired their accommodation did that for 18.960 LYD on average. When it comes to **"building back better,"** there is room to improve the recycling and transportation of construction waste. Currently, waste products are mostly dumped in landfills, seashores, while only sometimes reused in the reconstruction of roads.

Impact of reconstruction on quality of life

Households who initiated or completed the reconstruction of their accommodation indicated that this **positively affected** their children's education, household members' mental health, and overall feeling of safety. Households who did not reconstruct their accommodation referred to the same dimensions but in a different order. The decision not to reconstruct negatively affected the household members' mental health, feeling of safety, education of children, and livelihoods.

Humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian aid and damage mapping are the two main types of assistance currently available to affected populations. While both international and local non-governmental organizations engage in reconstruction processes, the needs still exceed the available services. Mapping exercises, conducted by the government in collaboration with local aid providers, do not always directly lead to households receiving financial assistance to reconstruct their accommodation.

Community members are interested in **taking part in both reconstruction processes** (from removal of debris to participation in need assessments) and in regular consultations to influence the decision-making processes of aid organizations. Local organizations should have an important role in leading the consultations and act as interlocutors and mediators between international organizations and affected populations. To encourage participation, participants would like to receive some kind of capacity building (that goes beyond the skillset for reconstruction processes) and financial compensation. During project-based reconstruction interventions, the community should be engaged at the beginning and end of every project cycle through workshops and community meetings.

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List of acronyms

DTM	Displacement Tracing Matrix
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEC	General Electricity Company
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
iNGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LIBAID	Libyan Humanitarian Relief Agency
LRC	Libyan Red Crescent
LYD	Libyan Dinar
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
SNGI	Shelter and Non-Food Items
USD	United States Dollar
UXO	Unexploded Ordinances

Geographical classifications

Admin level 0	Country
Admin level 1	Province – Libya has 3 provinces
Admin level 2	Mantika – Libya has 22 mantikas country wide
Admin level 3	Baladiya – Libya has 100 baladiyas country wide
Admin level 4	Muhalla

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INTRODUCTION

The Libyan state's current political and economic situation is a result of numerous socio-political events, including armed conflicts throughout the past decade. In February 2011, inspired by revolts in other Arab countries, especially neighbouring Egypt and Tunisia, violent protests broke out in Benghazi and spread to other cities. The protests led to escalating armed clashes and the NATO-led intervention that culminated in the fall of Libya's leader, Muammar Ghaddafi, in the October of the same year. Libya has since then struggled to fully rebuild its institution and governance. An increasingly protracted conflict has affected all regions of the country (West, South, and East), expanding over the years to almost all Libyan major cities, namely Benghazi, Derna, Sabha, Sirte, and most recently in Tripoli¹. Armed conflict breaking out in highly populated regions inevitably resulted in massive internal displacements. As a result of the continued fighting, the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Tracing Matrix (DTM) estimates that at the end of April 2022 around 159,996 people are still internally displaced². The Humanitarian Needs Overview on Libya estimates that approximately 1.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2022³.

According to the Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI) sector in Libya, **damaged housing and infrastructure is a key barrier to return** for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). In addition, among households who returned to their baladiya of origin, over 80% returned to their original houses but faced the burden of reconstructing their damaged accommodation and re-establishing themselves in the community, often with little support. Economic hardship results in substandard or partially completed repairs, leading to unsafe, unhealthy and undignified living conditions⁴. While displaced populations remain in need of immediate shelter support, longer term support for rehabilitation and reconstruction of dwellings is also a priority. Despite this, according to the Global Shelter Cluster, assistance from the humanitarian sector within the first year after a major conflict is likely to support no more than one out of five households in repairing or reconstructing their damaged accommodation. In the vast majority of cases, the **cost and responsibility for the repair of their damaged accommodation is borne by the owners themselves**. Therefore, assistance from the humanitarian sector should be seen as the exception rather than the principal path to recovery⁵.

In a context of highly localized and severe damage to private buildings due to protracted conflict, crucial information gaps remain in Libya as to how affected populations reconstruct their damaged accommodation and the role of humanitarian actors in this process. In addition, humanitarian actors do not all have a shared understanding or consensus on what the reconstruction processes look like. Due to a lack of centralized oversight and consistent

¹ BBC News "Libya profile – Timeline" March 2021 (web page), available [here](#)

² International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix. Libya — IDP and Returnee Report 41 (February - April 2022), July 2022, available [here](#)

³ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) "Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022", December 2021, available [here](#)

⁴ SNFI Sector - Libya "Strategic Operational Framework" October 2021, available [here](#)

⁵ Global Shelter Cluster, Promoting Safer Building Culture Work Group, "Overview" (web page), available [here](#)

governmental policies, humanitarian coordination efforts are limited and remain restricted to the scope of individual projects and grants.

Against this backdrop, REACH, in collaboration with the Libya SNFI sector, conducted a shelter reconstruction assessment. The aim of the assessment is to inform SNFI sector partners and Libyan public and non-governmental actors about **construction practices and capacities and the key internal and external factors that enable or otherwise hinder reconstruction processes**. This assessment also aims to show the **vulnerabilities of the affected population**, and help actors **identify the groups most in need of assistance** in the reconstruction process.

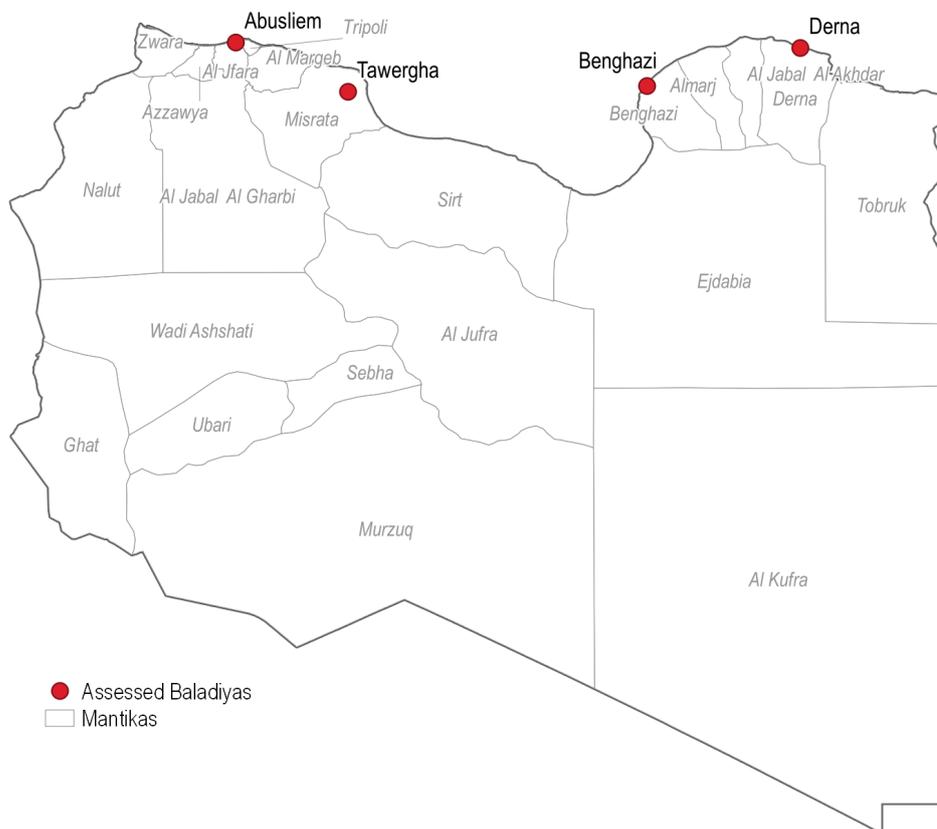
The SNFI sector, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and REACH have jointly designed the methodological approach, including the geographical scope, in consultation with relevant local and international stakeholders. Data collection and analysis tools have been developed in close collaboration with the SNFI sector, that has led the analysis and dissemination of findings with the support from REACH.

METHODOLOGY

Geographical scope

This assessment targets Libyan returnee and non-displaced populations across four baladiyas (administrative level 3) in the Western and Eastern region of Libya, namely Abu Salim and Tawergha in the West and Benghazi and Derna in the East. To provide more granular data, within each baladiya, the assessment focusses on six muhallas. The muhallas are Al Husain and Al Mashrou Zirai in the baladiya of Abu Selim, Bin Masoud in Tawargha, Al Sabri and Benghazi Al Jadida in Benghazi and lastly Maghar in Derna. The specific muhallas have been determined by means of consultation with relevant local and international stakeholders, as well as through a scoping exercise that was conducted ahead of data collection.

Map 1: Geographical coverage



Data collection methods

The assessment adopts a mixed-method approach, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative components, and is structured as follows:

First, **a scoping phase** took place in December 2021 (in the East) and March 2022 (in the West), ahead of the data collection. The SNFI sector, its partners, and REACH, communicated the content, scope, and objectives of the assessment to the relevant municipalities, and initiated,

wherever possible, a collaborative process with local public actors. Applying a participatory approach, this assessment aims to foster the active engagement of municipalities in the different phases of the research cycle. The municipalities therefore were involved in the identification of locations and potential respondents to the assessment, the discussions of key findings, and the dissemination strategy. In every baladiya one mapping Focus Group Discussion (FGD)⁶ was conducted with municipal actors, government employees, and local non-government actors of mixed genders, roles, and affiliations. The FGDs were intended to inform the selection of assessed muhallas, collect contextual information about the distribution and extent of damage, understand more about the displacement dynamics in the baladiya, supplement secondary data review on areas for which information is scarce, and contribute to informing the selection of respondents and Key Informants (KI).

Following the scoping exercises, the assessment entered its **first phase** of data collection. During this phase the assessment team interviewed non-displaced and returnee households who had had their accommodation damaged. The households were interviewed about their experience of reconstruction (or lack thereof) and the internal and environmental factors affecting it⁷. The assessment team conducted a total of 180 **household surveys** in 4 different mantikas and six different muhallas: 28 in Al Husain and 32 in Al Mashrou Zirai in Abu Selim, 30 in Bin Masoud in Tawergha, 32 in Al Sabri and 30 in Benghazi Al Jadida in Benghazi and lastly 28 in Maghar in Derna. The household interviews were conducted between December 2021 and May 2022.

Table 1: Number of household surveys per baladiya and muhalla

	Alhusain	Almashrou Zirai	Bin masoud	Al Sabri	Benghazi Al Jadida	Maghar	Grand Total
Abu Selim	28	32					60
Tawergha			30				30
Benghazi				32	30		62
Derna						28	28
Grand Total	28	32	30	32	30	28	180

In addition, the assessment team conducted **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with members from the municipal councils and community leaders (referred to as community actors later in the report) and construction professionals. Through the KIIs the assessment team gathered additional information about reconstruction processes and environmental factors from a broader perspective, as well as identified groups most likely to be unable to reconstruct their damaged accommodation⁸. The assessment team conducted a total of 45 KIIs - 11 KIIs in Abu Salim, four in Tawergha, 20 in Benghazi, and 10 in Derna. In the East both community actors and construction professionals were interviewed, whereas in the West only community actors.

⁶ Semi-structured data collection tool # 1 *Mapping FGDs for scoping exercise (Phase 0)*

⁷ Structured data collection tool # 1 *Survey with households collecting household level data (Phase I)*

⁸ Semi-structured data collection tool # 2 *KIIs with municipal actors, community leaders and construction professionals (Phase I)*

The KIIs took place in January and February 2022 in Benghazi and Derna, in March 2022 in Abusalim and in May 2022 in Tawergha.

Preliminary analysis of data collected during the first phase has informed the **second phase** of data collection. This phase identified potential areas of intervention to strengthen factors that enable reconstruction, mitigate negative factors, and inform actors about vulnerable groups most in need of assistance, and how to assist them. Moreover, the second phase investigated the extent to which the population is willing to actively participate in reconstruction projects led by development and humanitarian actors and local communities. This phase consisted of semi-structured data collection only. The assessment team conducted a total of 36 **Key Informant Interviews** – eight KIIs in Abu Salim (community actors), 18 in Benghazi (10 community actors and 8 construction professionals), and 10 in Derna (5 construction professional and 5 community actors). No successful KIIs were conducted in Tawergha. The KIIs took place in March and April 2022 in Benghazi, March 2022 in Derna, and May 2022 in Abusalim.

For both phases, respondents have been purposively selected in the areas covered by the assessment. Data collection took place in person, in line with COVID-19 safety protocols, as outlined in IMPACT's SOPs for Data Collection during COVID-19, and in consideration of the security situation in the assessed locations.

Challenges and Limitations

There are five primary limitations of the results of the assessment related to the sampling and delays in the authorization of data collection in West Libya. The **sampling** of the household survey was not representative, and therefore the results are only indicative of the situation in the assessed locations. In addition, nearly 89% of the head of households who participated in the survey were male, and 11% female, causing a gender bias in the available data. Moreover, about 87% of the households are returnees and 13% has never been displaced. Therefore the experiences of non-displaced households are underrepresented in this assessment. **Authorization to conduct the KIIs and FGDs in West Libya was delayed** and therefore the qualitative data collection postponed. This delay, in combination with a relatively volatile context, has caused a reduced comparability between the different data sets from the West and the East. Lastly, due to this delay, there were no KIIs conducted with construction professionals in the West.

FINDINGS

Enabling and hindering factors of reconstruction processes

In this chapter positive and negative factors that affect households' ability or willingness to reconstruct their accommodation are discussed. The households who did (partially) reconstruct their accommodation were asked about both the internal and external positive and negative factors that shaped their decision to reconstruct their accommodation. Households who did not reconstruct, were asked about the internal and external factors that made them decide not to start the reconstruction process. Hereafter, the most important factors that influence the decision whether or not to reconstruct, as mentioned by both the interviewed households and KIs, are discussed in more detail.

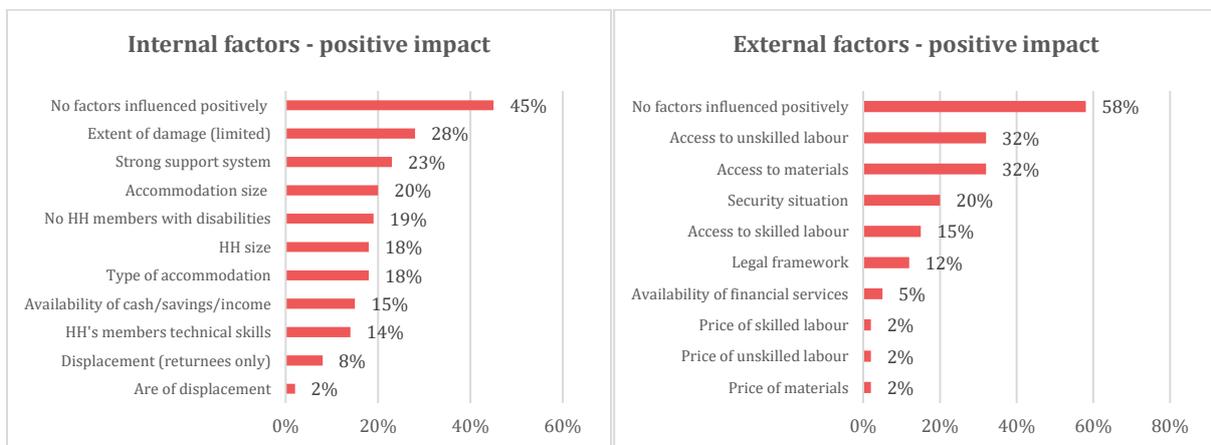
Households who reconstructed their accommodation

Overall, respondents who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation were more likely to report **negative rather than positive factors** affecting their willingness or ability to reconstruct their accommodation. Around half of the respondents stated that no internal (45%) nor external (58%) factors had had a positive impact on their willingness or ability to reconstruct (their accommodation).

Among the internal factors reported having a positive impact on the reconstruction process, the limited extent of the damage, the availability of a strong support system, and the accommodation size were most commonly mentioned. Among households who reconstructed their accommodation, support systems refer to family and friends, followed by international organizations. Access to materials and unskilled labour (i.e., access to markets) and the security situation were the external factors most prominently mentioned.

Graph 1: Factors that had a positive impact on decision to reconstruct

Proportion of respondents reporting positive impact on their willingness or ability to reconstruct, by factor (internal and external) – households who (partially) completed the reconstruction process

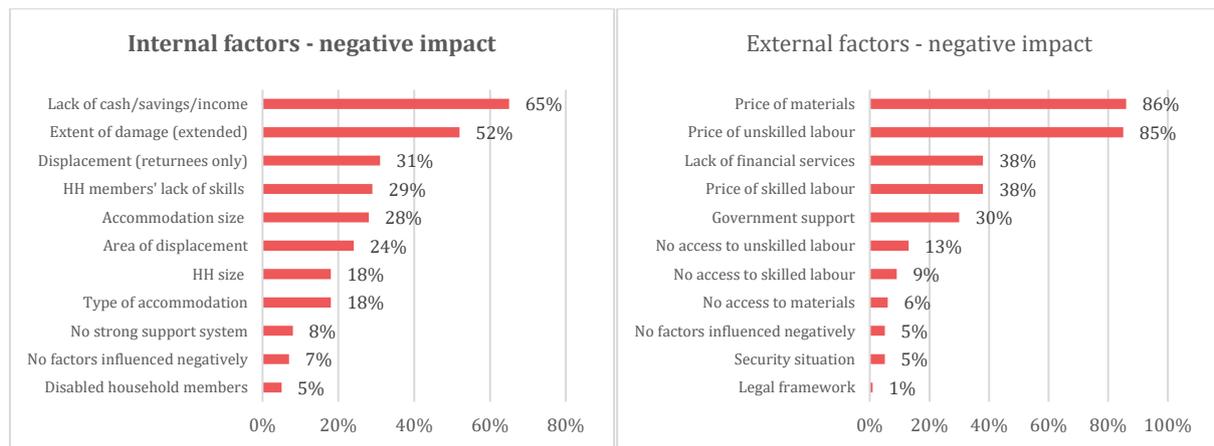


Households most frequently mentioned the lack of cash, savings, and/or income, the extent of damage, displacement status, and lack of relevant skills among the household members as internal factors having a negative impact on the reconstruction process. As for the

characteristics of the environment, the households mentioned that the price of materials and of skilled and unskilled labour, and the lack of financial services are the most important external factors affecting their decision to reconstruct their accommodation. This highlights the importance of access to finance in the reconstruction process. Only a minority of the households reported that no internal (7%) or external factors (5%) negatively influenced the reconstruction process.

Graph 2: Factors that had a negative impact on the decision to reconstruct

Proportion of respondents reporting **negative** impact on their willingness or ability to reconstruct, by factor (internal and external) – households who (partially) completed the reconstruction process.



These findings were echoed in the interviews with KIs, where hindering factors were more frequently mentioned compared to enabling factors. In this latter category, KIs included having household members with construction skills, sufficient income, limited extent of damage to the accommodation, and enjoying support from family and friends. However, KIs overall mentioned that these factors are not particularly common among the population. As for factors having a negative impact on the reconstruction process, most KIs agreed that financial factors (income, availability of cash, and prices of labour and materials) together with the significant extent of damage to the building are important obstacles to reconstruction for many households in their community. A notable regional difference was observed with regards to the impact of security concerns. This was the most reported hindering factor in the West, yet only mentioned by three KIs in the East.

When asked to **rank the different factors** influencing affected households' willingness or ability to reconstruct, most KIs mentioned that financial factors (including the lack of liquidity in banks, the delayed payment of salaries, as well as the high prices of materials and labour on the market) are among the most important issues. They also highlighted the important role played by infrastructural issues (particularly relevant as they fall outside of the household's capacity to address them), security and social support. Some KIs also spontaneously mentioned psychological issues, which are reportedly overlooked, "*since our society does not give this aspect any attention*" (Benghazi, community actor). The provision of psychosocial support was consistently reported throughout the KII as one important type of needed assistance. In particular, one KI stressed that there is a psychological barrier for residents to return to areas

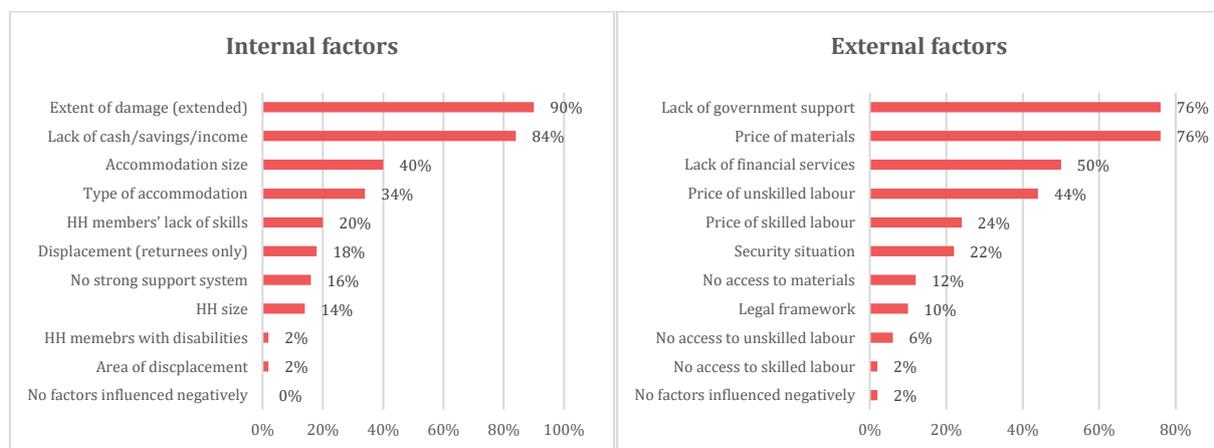
that were destroyed, especially in cases where complete reconstruction of the house is needed, as this is perceived as financially heavy and 'tiring' for the family.

Households who did not reconstruct

The majority of the households who did not reconstruct their accommodation indicated that the primary internal factors leading to that decision are the extent of damage, the lack of financial means, and the size of the accommodation. The most important external factors are related to the absence of governmental support in the reconstruction process, the price of materials, and the lack of financial services to finance the reconstruction process.

Graph 3: Factors that had a negative impact on the decision not to reconstruct

Proportion of respondents reporting **negative** impact on their willingness or ability to reconstruct, by factor (internal and external) – households who did not reconstruct.



The ranking of different internal and external factors by households who did not reconstruct their damaged accommodation presents some interesting deviations compared to the results of the same exercise by households who reconstructed, presented in the previous section.

Households who did not reconstruct more commonly mentioned the prominent role played by the **extent of damage**, which was reported by 90% of respondents from this subset, as having had a negative impact on their willingness and ability to reconstruct (as opposed to 52% of households who did reconstruct). The extent of the damage therefore represents the main factor that reportedly influenced a households' decision not to reconstruct. A second difference is the **absence of support by the government or the municipality** as an important negative factor hindering reconstruction (reported by 76% of respondents from this subset, as opposed to 30% of households who did reconstruct).

Financial factors were found to play an important role in steering the decision of both types of households. From the point of view of both subsets the lack of financial capacity by the family and the adverse environment (characterized by high prices of labour and materials and lack of financial services) negatively affected households' willingness and capability to reconstruct.

Factors influencing the decision to (not) reconstruct

To better understand the implications of the different factors on the households' ability and willingness to reconstruct, the following sections will look at them separately, relying on the information collected through both the household survey and the KIIs conducted with community actors and construction professionals.

Financial factors

Overall, the overwhelming majority of respondents to the household survey who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation mentioned **financial inaccessibility of materials** (86%) and **unskilled labour** (85%) as the key external factors hindering the reconstruction process. Financial inaccessibility is influenced by the high prices of materials and labour, on the one hand, and the lack of liquidity, on the other. Similarly, **lack of cash, savings or income** was the internal hindering factor second most commonly reported by households who did not reconstruct their accommodation (mentioned by 84% of respondents – first most commonly reported reason not to reconstruct is the extent of damage).

KIs stressed that **high construction costs**, which are driven by increasing prices for labour affecting all construction professions, and materials, together with the population's strained financial situation, which reflects the **general economic decline** and find its specific manifestation in the dramatic delays in salary payments, represent the **main barriers to accessing construction markets**. Together with the instability of the Libyan dinar, the liquidity crisis and the black market-led increases in transaction costs, the high costs of construction and materials and households' financial strain contribute to the reduction of households' ability to reconstruct their accommodation.

In response to such financial constraints, KIs stressed that the **availability of financial services**, from easy loans to digital transactions, is a key enabling factor: *"Under the current circumstances and the liquidity crisis, the loan provides a financial value that is not available to affected families. These financial and digital transactions make it easier for the affected person to provide all the required financial dues"*. (Benghazi, community actor) In particular, financial services would ease a household's access to the construction market, which in turn contributes to rapid maintenance of the accommodation. In addition, loans would contribute greatly to households' ability to carry out maintenance work in full, and not in bits and pieces, without taking on debt. Moreover, loans provide an additional income that allows the household to afford reconstruction without compromising its basic consumption needs. This would be particularly relevant for displaced families, as their financial resources have been depleted by the fact that they have to spend their savings to pay for rent in the baladiya of displacement. Therefore, one KI specifically highlighted the importance of providing interest-free loans to families affected by conflict and displacement, offering them a special treatment to compensate for the crises they have been exposed to. According to the same informant, this could contribute to increase the pace of returns to areas of origin.

However, despite the important role that financial services reportedly play in the reconstruction process, they do not seem commonly available and accessible in most

baladiyas. Indeed, 82% of survey respondents who (partially) completed the reconstruction stated that **there are no formal or informal institutions in their city providing savings or credit services that can be accessed for financing reconstruction** (a proportion rising to 93% in the case of Derna and 100% in Tawergha). Of the small subset who reported the availability of such institutions in their municipality, 67% (respectively 4 households) reported having applied for financing and only

Interestingly, the majority of respondents to the HH survey who reported having initiated or completed reconstruction stated that financial services are not available in their city. 55% of them mentioned that they had to resort to borrowing money in order to secure funding for reconstruction. This information should most likely be interpreted in the light of the importance of social support by family and friends mentioned elsewhere in the survey (see section 'Social support' below) and may therefore refer to informal loans provided by these networks.

half of these households reportedly managed to secure funding. According to KIs, housing loans are the only form of financial services that the population can benefit from. While it is reportedly easy to apply for these loans, they are not continuously available and can entail considerable commissions (up to 40%); in addition, they may require complicated procedures, for example for families to obtain a sponsor. Therefore, while many KIs reported that relying on loans and advances provided by commercial or saving banks is a common strategy to cope with lack of or insufficient financial resources, they also pointed out that this strategy is not available to households who do not have any collaterals and may further have the implication of reducing the household's income in the medium period, due to repayments and interests.

Coping strategies

In the face of economic difficulties and the reported obstacles to accessing financial services, the **financial coping strategy** most commonly reported was the sale of valuables (mentioned by 58% of households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation). Selling valuables or using savings is a quick solution, easy to apply and with limited negative implications. This would include selling the (USD) Visa cards that are provided by the Libyan government as a form of assistance, which can be traded on the black market, taking advantage of their higher exchange rates. The second most reported coping mechanism to secure reconstruction funds, reported by 55 percent of the households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation, is borrowing money.

When looking at reconstruction specifically, **partial reconstruction** was mentioned by 57% of the households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation and KIs as a common and effective coping strategy to deal with difficulties (internal and external to the household) experienced during reconstruction. In addition, partial reconstruction allows households to get rid of renting costs while saving on the reconstruction ones. Families would choose to only repair the essential rooms in the house, while postponing the remaining works until their financial situation has improved. Partial reconstruction was mentioned by 92% of the households in Tawergha versus 39% in Abu Salim.

"In this case, the basic room in the house, such as the living room, the bedroom and the bathroom, is maintained and the rest of the other maintenance work is left until liquidity,

municipal support or bank loans are available, so that the construction process is completed and the house is completed in a safe way." (Derna, construction professional)

Using **low-quality materials or saving by relying on unskilled workers** were reported by 56% of the households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation as well as by the KIs as common coping strategies. According to KIs, reducing the quality of materials and work is the most damaging coping strategy, as it may significantly compromise the safety and efficiency of reconstruction and have implications in terms of future maintenance (see below). As one KI in Benghazi stressed, *"they do the work themselves to save money for other basic services, but this may affect the quality of maintenance. A professional who specializes in his work is certainly better than family members."* (Benghazi, construction professional) Compromising on the quality and standards of the reconstruction was mentioned by 76% of the households in Tawergha versus 26% in Benghazi.

Recommendations

Overall, the majority of KIs recommended that potential humanitarian and/or development assistance should target the financial barriers experienced by households who try to reconstruct their damaged accommodation from different angles:

- to cope with the lack of income or liquidity, provision of direct financial assistance through cash, coupons, credit cards or direct payment of rent was recommended by many KIs. This is recommended because the possibility of opening bank loans may not be available to many families, as their income might not be sufficient to repay these loans
- in addition, respondents recommended the provision of material assistance, including by engaging directly in maintenance, giving affected families temporary accommodation until the maintenance of their destroyed homes is completed, and providing quality labour at lower prices
- KIs also mentioned facilitating access to banks and loans (including to real estate loans and interest-free and affordable loans) by the municipality and local government, in cooperation with government banks and real estate banks. One KI mentioned specifically that the municipality should provide consultations and support the improvement of the provision of financial services to affected families
- finally, a few KIs recommended that the government increases its control over the construction market, by lowering, standardising and monitoring the prices

Security threats

Only 5% of the households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation indicated that the security situation negatively affected their decision or ability to reconstruct while 90% of that same subset did indicate that they had faced **security concerns** throughout the process.

The majority of KIs across all locations reported that security problems represent an important issue as they affect households' safety and have financial implications. Both interviewed households and KIs agreed on the presence of three main security issues: **lack of population in the area** (reported by 56% of respondents), **presence of explosive hazards** (52%) and **robberies** in the house (38%). In particular, insecurity (apart from explosive hazards) was reported as both a cause and a consequence of the lack of population in the area. Residents' inability to maintain their houses, as well as the presence of Unexploded Ordnances (UXOs), causes the area to be empty and therefore eases the spread of theft, as well as a generalised sense of insecurity. General feelings of insecurity in turn have a negative impact on the residents who returned and play an important role in influencing the decision of displaced households to return. One KI stressed that the intention of the displaced populations to come back to their areas of origin and reconstruct their accommodation should be the first matter to be addressed by (non) governmental actors, as this would eliminate negative phenomena such as theft.

Lack of population, presence of UXOs and widespread theft, including of construction materials, reportedly affect households' ability and decision to reconstruct their damaged accommodation in the baladiya of origin. In particular, insecurity was reported to impact heavily on both the availability of labour and households' financial conditions:

"Theft has exacerbated the problem by stealing doors, windows, and sanitary fixtures and electrical materials from most of the damaged and undamaged houses [...] When a person brings materials or workers, and the second day they do not find them, this naturally negatively affects the maintenance work. In addition, the price of those stolen materials is lost, so it becomes a psychological barrier for the person, fearing that those materials will be stolen again. Also, if the workers are robbed or beaten, it may be difficult for them to return to the neighbourhood" (Benghazi, community actor).

Similarly, the presence of UXOs creates fear among workers, thus contributing to reduce availability of labourers. According to KIs, the most common course of action for households living in areas with explosive hazards would be to seek governmental support and postpone all reconstruction work until the area is cleared by military engineering teams, with a consequent negative impact on returns.

In the case of insecurity in general, households reported that the most common **coping strategies** are to wait until residents return to

the area (62% overall and 100% in Tawergha), rely on home security options (36%), avoid unnecessary movements (29%) and to ensure that a few members of the household remain in the accommodation at all times (22%). However, respondents in Benghazi, Abu Selim and

Ignoring the threat posed by UXOs can not only have life-threatening consequences, but also severely affect the reconstruction process. This was stressed by a KI, who recounted having witnessed a case where explosive hazards were discovered in a building upon completion of repairs. The explosive had to be triggered for safe disposal, causing more damage and calling for a second round of repairs not only to the building affected but also to the surrounding ones.

Tawergha highlighted that the security situation has improved recently, thanks to government interventions in the area (Tawergha) to clear it from UXOs and address the issue of theft.

Displacement

31% of the returnee households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation reported that **displacement** had a negative impact on their ability or willingness to reconstruct. Similarly, 24% of households from the same subset mentioned that displacement out of original baladiyas had played a negative role. Most KIs (across all locations and profiles) agreed with this. This would be related, on one hand, to the security problems in the area of origin, as displaced households, especially if displaced for a long time, run a high risk of being robbed of their accommodation and properties. On the other hand, displacement increases the financial burden on the household due to the need to pay for rent, while the distance from the area of origin makes it difficult to tend to or follow up on the construction process. In addition, KIs mentioned that the area of displacement has a notable impact on the ability to reconstruct, as households displaced to other regions face more obstacles to reconstruct their accommodation compared to those who are displaced in the same baladiya. The former group would also be overall less likely to return, as the distance makes it more difficult for them to access assistance and support, while at the same time forcing them to rebuild their life elsewhere (finding a new accommodation, enrolling children in different schools, etc.). One KI in Benghazi further reported that some displaced households (especially those who moved to the West) may face the risk of being banned from returning for political reasons.

Overall, most KIs reported that the return of displaced households is hindered by the large extent of damage to the public infrastructures, which may result in entire streets in a city being closed. Other factors are financial barriers, including the non-affordability of materials and labour, the lack of cash availability and the lack/difficulties to access loans to finance construction. This would be compounded by the fact that many affected households would be "financially exhausted" as most of their income and savings were spent during displacement to pay for rent. KIs also mentioned the presence of explosive hazards, either in the street or in the houses themselves, insecurity/lack of residents, as well as the presence of rodents, garbage and rabid dogs as additional factors preventing returns.

Suggestions from KIs

- Security: KIs stated that local authorities should provide security services, such as patrols (especially in remote areas and construction sites), including by activating police stations in the municipality, providing them with the means to follow up on citizens' reports and raising awareness among citizens on their services and the mechanism of reports and complaints through the media. In addition, all actors should participate in demining efforts and coordinate with the competent demining authorities/actors, including by conducting comprehensive surveying of remaining UXOs.

- Services and infrastructures: KIIs mentioned re-establishment of services (especially educational, health and sanitation ones), as well as cleaning the area from rubble, debris, and rodents, repairing infrastructures (mainly electricity, sewage and roads) and supporting the reconstruction.
- Financial support: KIIs stressed that compensation and financial support should be provided to the affected community members.

Type of accommodation

KIIs' opinions differed as to whether it is easier to reconstruct houses or apartments, although the answers in general seemed to favour houses over apartments in terms of likelihood of repair. Overall, it was argued that houses have the advantage of being independent, both from the point of view of ownership (the household can make a fully independent decision as they do not have to negotiate with other dwellers) and of water, sewage, and electricity systems. The complexity of these networks running through multiple units can complicate the decision making-and the reconstruction process of apartments. The entire building can be affected by localised damage to a few apartments only. In addition, repairing apartments located at upper floors can entail additional costs because materials need to be lifted from the ground level. On the other hand, however, houses tend to be more exposed to potential damage and therefore more likely to be damaged and their bigger size compared to apartments is likely to make repair considerably more expensive.

In general, KIIs agreed that the **type or size of the accommodation plays a lesser role on the reconstruction process than the extent of the damaged area and the location of damage**. Repair of damage to any structural components requires high quality materials and expertise (both resulting in higher reconstruction costs). This type of damage is also more likely to negatively impact the overall structural integrity of the building.

Infrastructures

All KIIs agreed that the lack of **infrastructures** has a significant impact on households' ability to maintain their accommodation. One informant reported that this is particularly relevant in Benghazi due to the huge collapse of infrastructures inside the city. While it was reported that, in general, the lack of infrastructures such as functional roads, sewage, water and electricity systems leads to a deterioration of living standards, KIIs identified three specific implications on the reconstruction process. First, the lack of infrastructures affects the decision to return to the affected area, which is often postponed waiting for the restoration of services and the functionality of public networks. The lack of infrastructures also affects the decision to reconstruct due to concerns about additional costs and the hardships that the household will endure during the process. A few KIIs mentioned that restoration of services and infrastructures often acts as a pull factor, encouraging the displaced households to return to the area of origin. Second, the lack of infrastructures was reported to hinder the reconstruction process itself as, for example, no electric machinery can be used, the house cannot be connected to the sewage

system, and no water is available to be used for construction and maintenance. To partly overcome this problem, households would be forced to look for alternative resources, such as generators and water trucks, which would increase the cost of reconstruction. Finally, in the absence of a systematic public intervention, families who decide to return or remain in areas that bear the consequences of the conflict would not only have to provide for the reconstruction of their house, but also for the maintenance of the infrastructure network at their expenses, to "bring life back to their area". Indeed, when asked about how the population copes with this problem, the majority of KIs in the East reported that households tend to pool resources for repairing the damaged infrastructure, in the case of delayed/no maintenance by the state:

"What the society can do is to find temporary solutions such as community solidarity or the contribution of neighbourhood members to the creation of some drinking water networks and the provision of electricity and sewage services on a temporary basis." (Benghazi, community actor)

However, this solution was reported to be limited and to have financial implications on the families. A few KIs mentioned that the most reasonable course of action would be to postpone the return to the affected areas and to continue renting an accommodation somewhere else. Compared to KIs in the East, KIs in the West were more likely to recommend that the community cooperates with the authorities by not doing any informal maintenance, but rather supporting the public works with some minor contribution, such as electrical work. The work should be allocated to specialised companies such as the Libyan Water Company or the General Electricity Company (GEC).

Despite these regional differences, KIs across the assessed locations agreed that the main barrier hindering the repair of infrastructures is the general economic situation and the lack of governmental support to public companies and institutions in charge of the maintenance. In particular, the political and economic situation of the state was reported as the main obstacle to any improvements in areas' infrastructure. There are delays in the budget approval and allocation, while *"instability and officials' inability to make decisions on budget disbursements have been combined with ongoing political disruptions"*. (Benghazi, community actor). An example mentioned was the non-allocation of the budget for the Derna Reconstruction Fund.

KIs also mentioned the unstable security situation and the presence of UXOs (especially in Tawergha), as well as the extent of damage as the main barriers preventing maintenance of the areas' infrastructure. In particular, one KI in Benghazi reported that reconstruction is severely hampered by the major collapses that have occurred in the affected areas, especially the Sabri and central regions, whose narrow streets and old buildings are dilapidated, making it particularly difficult to maintain them.

Suggestions from KIs

In terms of recommended actions for national and international actors to tackle the infrastructural issues, a few KIs mentioned:

- conducting technical assessments/periodic evaluations and support planning, including by providing environmental advice and organising workshops. International actors could evaluate the functionality of the infrastructure network, collect the residents' opinions, and discuss infrastructure problems with governmental agencies, with the objective to facilitate the return of displaced families
- allocating work and resources to specialised companies and conducting direct maintenance (rapid rehabilitation of essential infrastructures - connecting water, sewage and electricity networks, and paving roads to facilitate the return of families to their homes)
- one KI mentioned that international organisations could activate and contribute to initiatives in favour of solar power? as an alternative source of energy

Legal constraints

Very few households (3.8%) who had (partially) reconstructed their accommodation reported that the process had been hindered by **legal obstacles**.

When probed on this topic, KIs across all locations reported that the most prominent legal constraint that can affect returnee households and households who intend to reconstruct their accommodation are ownership disputes between the state and the residents. This is a consequence of **Law number 4 of 1987**, which differentiates ownership of the building from ownership of the land it is built on and provides that owners of buildings constructed on public land lose any ownership over their house/apartment in case the building is destroyed. Loss of documentation (primarily property documents) during the process of displacement was also mentioned as a common issue, which may contribute to the reported problem of ownership disputes (including in relation to inheritance) between private citizens. Unlawful occupation of buildings was also mentioned and one KI in Mgar (Derna) reported it specifically with reference to historical buildings in the neighbourhood, which have been occupied despite being under conservation.

While KIs more often mentioned legal issues as potential hinderances for reconstruction, there is no discrepancy between the KIs' and households' sets of answers. The majority of KIs agreed that the mentioned **legal complications tend to be ignored** by households who intend to reconstruct. Indeed, only a minority of KIs mentioned that households would register their case with the authorities, to flag the potential legal issues and seek support, and postpone the reconstruction work. Most KIs highlighted that repairing the accommodation despite the existence of legal issues does not have repercussions on the household. Repairing or

reconstructing housing units without seeking authorisation can lead to random construction (thus affecting urban plans) and overloaded infrastructures.

Overall, KIs reported that the government has not actively enforced regulations on the population, nor provided any legal facilitation. The only governmental actions reported with regards to the problem of damage were damage mappings, conducted by the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Social Affairs, the clearing of UXOs, rubble and debris and the partial restoration of infrastructures in some areas.

Suggestions from KIs

- Among the actions that could be undertaken by the government to support the resolution of legal issues, KIs mentioned the resuming of the registry of property deeds, to allow households who have lost their deeds to replace them.

Social support

23% of households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation mentioned that **social support** had a positive impact on their ability and capacity to reconstruct. This percentage was particularly high in the East, where 32% of respondents in Benghazi and 43% of respondents in Derna mentioned social support as a positive factor. No respondents in Tawergha indicated that social support systems positively influenced their ability or willingness to reconstruct their accommodation. Across all locations, **family members and friends** were the most reported support networks by 80% of the households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation. Family and friends reportedly assist the affected households with loans and donations (including financial support to pay for the rent while the household is still unable to live in their damaged property), labour (provision of maintenance work such as plumbing, electrical work, and painting) and in-kind support (e.g. food and medicines). In the East, **international organisations** were also consistently mentioned as providing support with reconstruction (reported by 21% of respondents in Derna and 26% in Benghazi), while governmental institutions were mentioned by less than 7% of respondents in all locations.

KIs confirmed these findings, by reporting that social support is very important, as friends and family can help with **contacts with contractors, providers, financial institutions**:

"Families that have excellent social relationships may benefit from multiple privileges that provide some materials at affordable prices compared to people who don't have those social relationships [...] if you have a relative or a friend who works there, the bank will facilitate certain procedures for you, such as acquiring the cash that others may find difficult to obtain."
(Benghazi, community actor)

Some KIs also mentioned that social support has a **positive psychological impact**, because it makes people feel the solidarity from their community:

"Social support for war-affected families, whether it be for the damage to their homes or the loss of one of their children [...] is very important, as it improves the psychology of the affected family and may sometimes help them to face the difficulties of life, whether by supporting them, or lending the affected families money to live with during the period of displacement from the home." (Benghazi, community actor)

KIs reported that this type of support is important throughout the process, but especially in the early stages (e.g., debris removal, house cleaning and damage assessment). On the one hand, it motivates the family and strengthens its capacity to maintain its home and, on the other, it provides assistance in what is considered the most difficult stage of reconstruction, as it requires more effort and money than at any other phase. Support in the early stage of reconstruction is also important for psychological reasons:

"Return is difficult when streets are empty. Social support is very important for the family's first steps to return, because this stage is psychologically difficult and requires motivation and encouragement to make the journey and continue with maintenance." (Benghazi, community actors)

However, certain KIs caveated that while social support is important, it is not enough to overcome all difficulties, especially the financial ones. There are many factors (in primis, financial and security ones) that may have a negative impact on the reconstruction process even in the presence of strong support by friends, relatives and neighbours.

Suggestions from KIs

According to KIs, if social support is not available, national and international organisations, in collaboration with the authorities (in primis the Ministry of Social Affairs) should step in to provide:

- psycho-social support, including by supporting households through awareness-raising sessions and social communication with the community, encouraging new ties and supporting community initiatives. According to one KI, awareness-raising targeting the youth should also be specifically conducted on the importance of social support. In addition, the role of social support should be included as a subject in educational curricula, especially in the light of the political crisis that in the past years has torn the social fabric of Libyan communities.
- material or financial assistance for families lacking social support. For example, housing and maintenance, material assistance, support to pay the rent of their temporary accommodation, as well as compensation for families who lost their livelihoods should be provided.
- Support to initiatives by/coordination with national and local actors, including by establishing and activating social solidarity plans and by encouraging the formation of various social and youth associations. Government agencies and international organizations can also establish and support networks and relationships through

seminars and meetings, and contribute to the establishment of funds (e.g., the Family Fund or the Tribe Fund).

Process of reconstruction

Overall, most households reported having their **accommodation damaged or destroyed in either 2015 or 2019**. Answers varied considerably across the assessed locations, reflecting the geography of the Libyan conflict. In Tawergha all respondents reported that their accommodation had been damaged in 2011. Respondents in Abu Selim clearly connected the damage to their accommodation to the most recent wave of armed conflict in 2019, as 92% reported that the damage had been inflicted in 2019. Households in the East were more likely to report that the damage had happened during the central period of the conflict; more specifically, 2015 in Benghazi (72% of respondents) and 2018 in Derna (55% of respondents). Among the households who reported having reconstructed their damaged accommodation, most reported that the reconstruction had happened in 2018 or later (2020 and 2021 in the case of Abu Selim).

A regional difference can be observed in the **patterns of decision making** when it comes to reconstruction. In the West (Abu Selim and Tawergha) the majority of respondents (65% and 60% respectively) reported that the decision to reconstruct had been taken jointly by all adults in the household. In Derna and Benghazi, a noteworthy proportion of respondents (67% and 41% respectively) mentioned that the decision had been made by the head of household, without the involvement of other household members.

Labour and materials

Across all the assessed locations, it appears that **households tend to rely mainly on hired labour** for the necessary repairs (61% of households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation). Only a minority of respondents declared that almost all repairs were done by household members, without recurring to hired labour (3% overall of the same subset). Around a third of respondents reported that they relied on both hired labour and the work of household members, the latter primarily for electric and plumbing work, windows and doors installation, and painting.

These findings were echoed in the KIIs conducted in Benghazi and Derna with construction professionals, who mentioned that unskilled or undertrained individuals can perform tasks related to fixing doors and windows, painting and simple plumbing or electric repairs/replacing of damaged components. KIIs also mentioned removal of rubble, transportation of materials and even building/tearing down small walls as tasks that can be performed by non-professionals. However, the KIIs stressed that comprehensive repair or replacement of networks requires the intervention of professionals. In particular, damage to the water or sewage network would be difficult to identify, therefore, in such cases it is recommended to establish a new network, rather than repairing the existing one. Similarly, KIIs stated that any damages to structural components require specific procedures to be addressed safely and is therefore a type of work that cannot be undertaken by untrained individuals.

Overall, 93% of households who reconstructed their accommodation reported **having hired professional labour** to complete all or some of the reconstruction work. Hired labour was reportedly employed for all types of work, including work on the building's structure, on networks and finishing work. According to KIs, it would be the complexity of repair, rather than the type of repair, to determine the decision to hire labour. Recruitment was reported to happen mainly informally, either through a *mahatta* (labour station) (67% of respondents from the mentioned subset) or recurring to contacts from family or friends (42%). KIs further detailed this information, by stressing that households resort to *mahattas*, or congregation areas when looking for non-skilled labour, while social networks (or social media) and, to a lesser extent, contractors are more effective when it comes to hiring skilled labour.

The table below shows the median prices for different types of work, based on the KIs conducted in Benghazi and Derna.

Table 2: Types of construction work, price per unit

Type of work	Unit	Price per unit (LYD)
plastering	per m2	8.75
painting	per m2	9
electrician (set up electric system)	per point	22.5
electric work	per m	137.5
electric work (unskilled labourers)	per day	112.5
concrete works	per m2	150
tiling (basic)	per m2	13.5
tiling in porcelain or marble	per m2	27.5
plumbing (kitchen)	work	400
plumbing (toilet)	work	500
roofing (concrete)	per m3	190
finishing kitchen	work	350

When it comes to the **construction materials** used by the households, sand, water and cement were reported by almost all respondents, followed by gravel and wood (around 60% of respondents), and tiles and marble slabs (50%). In addition, KIs reported that steel rods (used for concrete reinforcement) and aluminium for windows and doors are also in high demand. The table below shows the reported median price for different construction materials. Market prices for construction materials were reported by KIs to be unstable and to be heavily affected by parallel markets and the fluctuation of the LYD-USD exchange rate, as markets are not regulated by the government. Since 2011, prices in the construction market (as it is the case for other markets) would reportedly have increased dramatically. Additionally, after 2016 and with the liquidity crisis, the choice of the payment method started to affect the prices, causing their further rise. However, one KI reported that the stabilisation of exchange rates has had a positive impact on the fluctuation of prices.

Table 3: Materials, price per unit

Material	Unit	Price per unit (LYD)
Low quality Cement	50 kg bag	14
High quality cement	50 kg bag	16.5
Steel	per kg	3.5
Sand	per m ³	22.5
Gravel	per m ³	42.5
Wood boards	per m ²	1400
Beams	per m ³	1700
Water	per 1000 Lt.	120
Tiles	per m ²	27.5
Kitchen sink	per piece	425
Aluminium for windows and doors	per m ²	270
Toilet fixtures	per set	1250

The average cost for reconstruction of the damaged accommodation across the four assessed locations was found to be 18,960 LYD (calculated for the subset of respondents who reported having reconstructed their accommodation fully). The construction professionals interviewed estimated considerably higher prices, taking as an example a house of 200 square metres and based on different levels of damage:

Table 4: Price of reconstruction for a house of 200 m², per extent of damage

Minor damage	30,375 LYD
Major damage	60,000 LYD
Severe damage	113,333 LYD

In the case where the building needs to be demolished and rebuilt, the construction work was estimated to cost on average 130,000 LYD for rebuilding the skeleton only, and 177,917 LYD for complete rebuilding; higher prices were reported in Benghazi. As for **payment modalities**, KIs reported that these can vary, but instalments tend to be the most common type of agreement – with repairs being broken down into different stages and payments made upon completion. For smaller jobs, payment was reported to be made once the work is completed. All KIs reported that non-cash payment modalities exist and are accepted by most contractors, mentioning in particular bank cheques, e-payment services and bank transfers. However, the KIs stressed that such payment methods entail additional costs, adding up to 25% of the transaction (the percentage reportedly varies based on the parallel market and on the bank providing the service).

In terms of **quality of repairs**, the majority of KIs stressed that it depends, on the one hand, on the quality of the materials used for reconstruction and, on the other hand, on the experience of the workers and, where necessary, the supervision of a trained engineer. Existing defects in the building itself (such as leaking plumbing), its age, and the presence of any undetected damage would also affect the effectiveness and quality of repairs. The poor quality of repairs can manifest itself in cracks running through the walls, humidity visibly leaking through the structure, or the degradation of plastering or the paint. To avoid this, the construction professionals interviewed recommend using high quality materials, hiring skilled and experienced labour and engineers to supervise structural repairs, and to insulate the building from the outside after the completion of reconstruction. In addition, households should not seek to cut construction costs when rebuilding or maintaining the building's structure. Saving is possible when selecting materials (e.g., tiles, windows, doors) as they do not affect the integrity and safety of the building.

Building back better

Construction waste

Around half of professionals interviewed reported that **construction waste is usually disposed of in public landfills** such as the Ganfouda swamp and the Tablino and Al-Salmani dumps in Benghazi. All KIs in Derna specified that construction waste is dumped on the seashore, while three KIs in Benghazi mentioned that rubble from construction waste can sometimes be used to fill tholes in unpaved streets or foundation holes in other construction projects. KIs agreed that construction waste disposal in the municipality can be improved by incorporating recycling and by introducing better transportation practices, such as cleaning and transporting rubble waste periodically from construction sites (encouraging same-day disposal), the use of tarpaulins for trucks when transporting the waste and establishing regulations and activating oversight bodies to monitor these operations. In Derna, KIs also suggested sorting iron and metal materials from the waste to be disposed of on the seashore and standardising the price for transporting the waste by the Public Cleaning Company.

Insulation

Different external insulation methods are reportedly used according to cost, construction stages and locations. The majority of KIs reported that the use of **external insulation is crucial and worth the price**, especially for coastal regions where houses are exposed to high winds and humidity. KIs however agreed that insulation products used after the construction work is completed or on existing buildings (rubber paint, tar or Sika products⁹) are quite expensive. When insulation materials are mixed with construction materials (cement) during the reconstruction and building phase they can be more affordable. Other reasonably priced insulation techniques mentioned by KIs were '*battouta*', i.e., building a slanting roof so that water does not accumulate on top of the building, a Sika product is then poured and a propeller is used to block pores that could cause leaks. Lastly, the practice of putting slabs around the perimeter of the roof to prevent leaks is common. In addition, a few professionals

⁹ Sika AG is a Swiss chemical company that supplies solutions used to keep water in or out of long-lasting structures.

in Benghazi recommended using sealing products and then painting the building from the outside to create a smooth surface which would prevent water absorption. Torching roofs¹⁰ was also presented as a possible option, albeit a more expensive one (the cost is reportedly around 45 LYD per square meter).

Energy

In Benghazi, almost all KIs reported that **small and medium generators** are commonly used, affordable and efficient. In Derna two KIs pointed out that families have to save for some time in order to be able to afford them. One professional mentioned that large generators are expensive and are only used by those that can afford them, like shopkeepers. Another informant further stressed that generators are a source of environmental pollution and of noise disturbance, especially in the case of shared housing. In addition, maintenance is expensive, as the quality of the generators in the market is poor, and some electric appliances may not operate using these generators. Most KIs reported that using inverters or batteries is not a common practice - these cannot efficiently function as a secondary source of electricity as their low capacity does not cover the average household power needs. More than half of KIs mentioned that alternatively powered appliances are not commonly used because of the high cost of installation, reportedly due to the lack of supply and the monopolisation of the market by a few companies. KIs in Derna mentioned that solar powered lamps, in particular, are not commonly available in the municipality's markets.

Impact of reconstruction on the quality of life

In this chapter the impact of the decision (not) to reconstruct a household's accommodation is discussed. Households who did (partially) reconstruct their accommodation were asked how this positively influenced the households members lives on a number of dimensions. On the contrary, households who did not reconstruct their accommodation were asked how this decision negatively influenced the household's members lives.

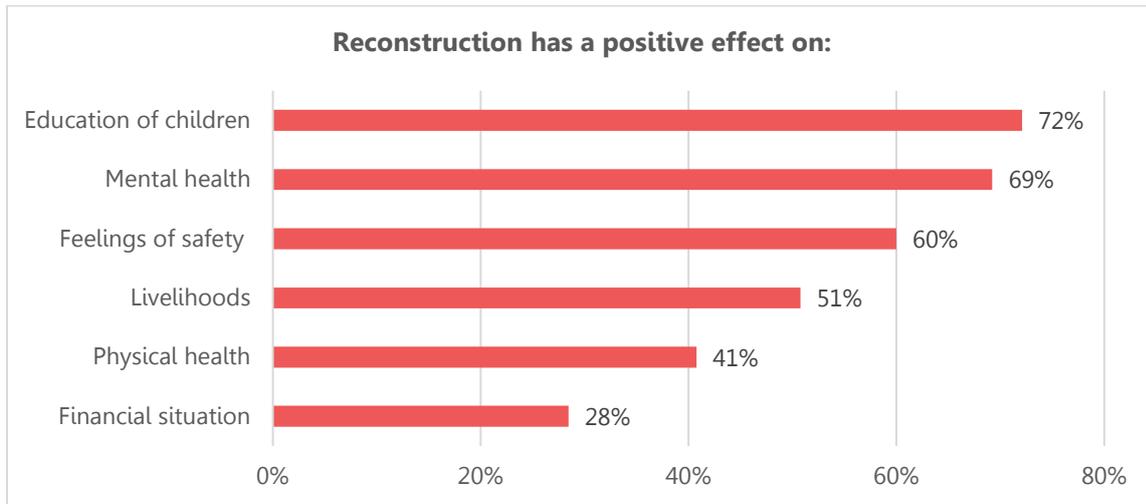
Households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation

Overall, households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation reported that the reconstruction of their damaged accommodation had a **positive impact on their life**, primarily when it comes to education of their children, mental health and their overall feeling of safety, as shown in the table below. The only dimension on which reconstruction was reported by the majority of respondents as having had a (very) negative impact was the household's financial situation (55%).

¹⁰ A procedure during which a roofing professional uses a hand-held propane torch to heat modified bitumen and adhere it to any surface.

Graph 4: Positive impact of reconstruction

% of respondents reporting that reconstruction had a **positive or very positive** impact on their life, by dimension.

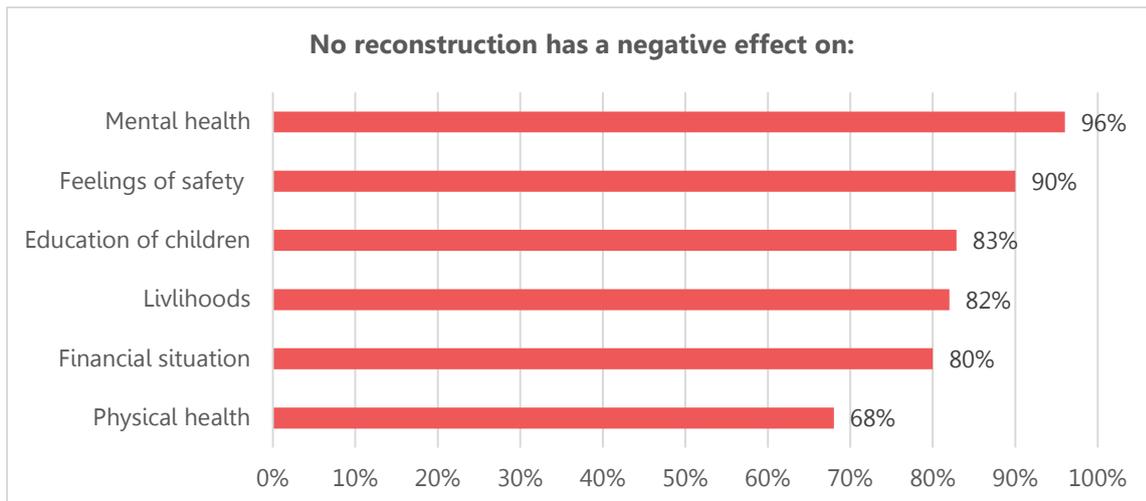


Households who did not reconstruct

Households who decided not to reconstruct their damaged accommodation were asked to evaluate whether this decision had any **negative implications on the living conditions** of the household members. Overall, the information collected through this question and showcased in the graph below seem to highlight a considerable negative impact of the lack of reconstruction on the household’s living conditions. More than 90% of respondents reported that lack of reconstruction had a negative or very negative impact on their mental health and overall feeling of safety.

Graph 5: Negative impact of no reconstruction

% of respondents reporting that lack of reconstruction had a **negative or very negative** impact on their life, by dimension.



Humanitarian Assistance

In this chapter the availability and shape of humanitarian assistance is discussed. Based on the data obtained through the KIIs, the chapter presents the assistance currently available to households who had their accommodation damaged, the ways affected populations can participate in the design and provision of humanitarian aid, and lastly what kind of households are particularly vulnerable, and thus most in need of assistance.

Existing assistance

According to KIIs interviewed in both the West and the East, two main types of assistance are currently available for affected populations.

- **Humanitarian assistance** in the form of food and non-food items, such as blankets or medication, and cash-based assistance. Respondents in the East further mentioned that international non-governmental organizations (iNGOs) have engaged in reconstruction activities, but the size of the assistance was not enough for the assessed neighbourhoods (Al Sabri and Mgar) to recover. In the East specifically, KIIs mentioned the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and ACTED as active iNGOs, and the Libya Red Cross and Libyan Humanitarian Relief Agency (LIBAID) as active local organisations.
- Governmental assistance in the form of **damage mapping** as the first step in providing financial compensation for damaged buildings. According to a few KIIs in Tawergha, no financial assistance is usually provided after the mapping stage. Mapping would be conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Bureau of Accommodation and Facilities. Some KIIs in the East mentioned that the municipalities have assigned their crisis committees to conduct damage mapping, with support from LIBAID.

Damage and affected population mapping is conducted by encouraging affected households to register their damaged accommodation for assistance purposes, providing proof of ownership, residency and damage. Registration is done through LIBAID, the Libyan Red Crescent (LRC), social affairs offices or local municipalities, who then forward data to the mapping committees. The committees then proceed to visit the site and assess and document the damages. Mapping data are shared with local and international actors providing assistance, who would then scan the database to identify potential beneficiaries. According to a few KIIs, the system is set to prioritize widows, divorcees, and disabled heads of households, but does not restrict the provision of assistance only to these groups. However, some KIIs stated that assistance is not accessible to the majority of the affected population in their baladiya.

Suggestions from KIs

When it comes to assistance provided by iNGOs specifically, KIs recommended that these:

- Provide financial and technical aid to both governing entities and affected populations.
- Provide psychosocial support and humanitarian assistance to war-affected communities.
- Engage with national and local authorities to bring the interest of the affected population to the government's attention and to encourage compensation initiatives. In addition, they can support local institutions on emergency response, strategic planning and community and stakeholder engagement, by providing training and sharing experience and knowledge.
- Support economic recovery and livelihoods, by fostering community-led initiatives and targeting affected populations with vocational training.

Participation by the affected population

KIs mentioned that the activities in which the affected population might want to participate in are the removal of debris, cleaning of streets, including by waste and rodents, and simple handwork. In addition, they can participate in assessments (conducting damage assessments, identification of affected families, etc.) and public discussions with aid providing actors *"to convey their voice, needs and additional information about their area"* (Benghazi, community worker). Logistical support in coordinating procurement and transportation of materials and machines was also reported by a few KIs.

Overall, KIs stressed that the affected population (especially the youth and the individuals active in civil society) would be willing and interested in taking part in regular **consultations** (provided that these are useful, touch on their problems and respect their time availability). People want to participate *"because they are stakeholders in this crisis"* (Benghazi, community worker), to make their voices heard, influence the decision-making process and thus make the intervention more targeted and effective. However, a few KIs in the East mentioned that this can be hindered by a general lack of credibility of and trust in (international) assistance providers, due to the fact that they are strangers to the community. One KI stressed that, to ensure the participation of all people, sessions and panel discussions should be led by people from local organizations. Lastly, *"there is a sense on the part of the community that these sessions are a waste of time, as they have participated in several panel discussions before and received no support"*. (Benghazi, community worker)

According to KIs, to encourage participation, provision of **capacity building** (and participation certificates), especially to the youth, would be the best measure, together with financial support. Capacity building should not only target skills necessary for reconstruction, but also provide abilities and knowledge that can support access to livelihoods, especially for vulnerable groups (e.g., women in economically affected areas). It was also recommended to

establish a good coordination with actors in the municipality, to encourage participation and target the greatest number of people through these capacity-building exercises.

KIs also mentioned the importance of providing **child-friendly spaces** (e.g. children clubs, including for children of participants to the capacity building activities) and of recreational activities for both adults and children. One KI recommended the maintenance of halls in the area where the discussion forums are held, such as a school theatre or the headquarters of a local council, as well as the maintenance of mosques, as they provide a place for discussion groups.

KIs recommend that international organizations and actors engage with the community to get **information and feedback** about any project related to the reconstruction of damaged buildings through workshops and community meetings. Conducting assessments and surveys and hiring dedicated focal points were also mentioned as additional ways to collect feedback. KIs reported that engaging with the community every three months would be suitable, and always at the beginning and at the end of reconstruction projects, mainly through surveys and open discussions. One KI also recommended that a specific team from the same region could be trained to collect feedback from the community, while another respondent mentioned social media platforms as a suitable way to maintain communication with the affected population. KIs emphasised the importance for both government and international organisations to maintain regular contact with the community, to obtain updated information to inform urban and reconstruction planning, keeping into due consideration the specific problems of the affected households.

KIs were also asked which actors would be best placed to act as **interlocutors and mediators** with international organisations. Overall, civil society organisations were identified as the main interlocutors. The Libya Relief Agency and the Libyan Red Crescent, in particular, were reported as the actors best suited to represent the community vis-à-vis international actors. These actors were identified due to their experience in assisting the affected population and knowledge of the context; their being closer to the affected population because they provide them with in-kind assistance that meets some of their daily needs and their having greater freedom and ability to access and communicate with government and concerned authorities. Furthermore, these actors are concerned with the affairs of displaced persons, and have clear and accurate databases. KIs also mentioned community leaders and authorities, such as the Social Affairs Office, the municipality and the local councils as interlocutors and mediators between the population and international organisations. Overall, it was reported that the interlocutors should have engineering and management experience. However, one KI reported that most of the affected families have lost confidence in mediators between them and international organizations, such as representatives of the Crisis Committees, mayors or community representatives.

Vulnerable groups

There is a consensus among the KIs in both the East and the West that **female-headed** households, households headed by a **person with a disability**, and **low-income** households tend to face most challenges when wanting to reconstruct their accommodation. In Abu Salim

a significant number of KIs also mentioned the vulnerability of non-Libyan families who do not have any documents and might reside illegally in Libya. In the West a small number of KIs mentioned the vulnerability of child-headed households, internally displaced families, and households whose accommodation is completely destroyed.

Female-headed households and households headed by a person with a disability tend to be more vulnerable because they experience difficulties dealing with workers and contractors. In addition, they face more financial obstacles (when accessing reconstruction markets) because their salaries tend to be lower than their male counterparts. Female-headed households did indeed report lower incomes over the past thirty days prior to their participation in the household survey. 35% of the female-headed households versus 17% of the male-headed households reported earning 848 LYD or less during the past thirty days. In June 2022 the medium expenditure basket was reported to be 907 LYD for the whole of Libya¹¹. In addition, female-headed households are more likely to rely on government subsidies (30% of the female headed households versus 10% of the male headed households).

Households with low incomes, that can drop to only 200 to 300 Libyan Dinar a month according to the KIs, face challenges due to rising prices. During the household assessment, no one indicated earning less than 350 LYD monthly, and eleven households indicated not wanting to share their generated income during the past thirty days. The KIs indicated that vulnerable groups can be best assisted through financial and psychosocial support.

¹¹ REACH. "Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative" June 2022. Available [here](#).

CONCLUSION

Positive and negative factors that influence reconstruction processes

About half of all households **who (partially) reconstructed** their accommodation indicated that there are no internal nor external factors that positively influenced the reconstruction process. Households who did mention the existence of positive factors, primarily referred to the absence of extensive damage followed by a strong social support system of friends and family and the size of the accommodation as having enabled the reconstruction process. When it comes to external factors enabling the reconstruction process, households reported having had access to unskilled labour and materials, and that the security situation was relatively favourable. The main hindering internal factors for this subset are a lack of financial means, extensive damage, and displacement. The main external negative factors are high prices of materials and unskilled labour, and the lack of financial services available to finance the reconstruction process.

The majority of the households who **did not reconstruct** their accommodation indicated that the primary internal factors leading to that decision are the extent of damage, the lack of financial means, and the size of the accommodation. The most important external factors hindering households' willingness or ability to reconstruct are related to the absence of governmental support in the reconstruction process, the price of materials, and the lack of financial services to finance the reconstruction process.

What are the typical local reconstruction practices?

The decision-making processes within households to decide whether or not to reconstruct damaged accommodation looks different in the West and the East. In the West the decision to reconstruct had been taken jointly by all adults in the household whereas in the East the decision had been made by the head of household, without the involvement of other household members.

Nearly all households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation reported having hired labour to complete all or some of the reconstruction work. It is the complexity of repair, rather than the type of repair, that determines the decision to hire labour. Recruitment of labour tends to happen either through a *mahatta* (labour station), a household's social network, or contractors.

Across the four assessed locations, households who fully reconstructed their damaged accommodation paid on average 18,960 Libyan Dinar. The construction professionals interviewed estimated considerably higher reconstruction prices.

As for payment modalities, instalments are the most common type of agreement. For smaller jobs, payments are made once the work is completed. Non-cash payment modalities exist and are accepted by most contractors, but this payment method might entail additional costs.

Impact of reconstruction

Overall, households who (partially) reconstructed their accommodation reported that the reconstruction of their damaged accommodation had a positive impact on their life, primarily when it comes to education of their children, mental health, and their overall feeling of safety. Nearly all households who did not reconstruct their accommodation reported that this decision negatively affected their mental health. After mental health, the decision not to reconstruct had a negative impact on household's feeling of safety, education, and livelihoods.

Vulnerable population groups

Female-headed households, households headed by a person with a disability, and low-income households tend to face most challenges when (wanting to) reconstruct their accommodation. Female-headed households and households headed by a person with a disability tend to be more vulnerable because they experience difficulties dealing with workers and contractors. In addition, they face more financial obstacles (when accessing reconstruction markets) because their salaries tend to be lower than their male counterparts. Households with low incomes, that can drop to only 200 to 300 Libyan Dinar a month, face challenges due to rising prices. Vulnerable groups can be best assisted through financial and psychosocial support.

Focus of humanitarian actors

INGOs were mentioned as potential providers of four different kinds of (humanitarian) support. Firstly, iNGOs can provide financial and technical support to both affected populations and governing entities. Financial and technical support are needed to reconstruct both private property of residents and public infrastructures. In fact, the absence of functioning infrastructures discourages households from returning to their baladiya of origin and reconstructing their accommodation. Secondly, they can provide psychosocial support and other humanitarian support to affected population. Psychosocial support is something that is reportedly often overlooked and not given its due attention. This kind of support is particularly important for war-affected and returnee households, as returning to destroyed areas is emotionally challenging. Thirdly, iNGO can support local institutions on establishing their emergency response strategic planning, and community and stakeholder engagement, by providing training and sharing experience and knowledge. Lastly, they can support economic recovery and livelihoods, by fostering community-led initiatives and vocational training. Libyan civil society organisations, like the Libya Relief Agency and the Libyan Red Crescent, would be the ideal interlocutors between iNGOs and communities in need of assistance. These actors have knowledge of the context, are closer to the affected population because they provide them with in-kind assistance, and have greater freedom and ability to access and communicate with government and concerned authorities.

Building back better opportunities

The disposal and processing of construction waste can be organized and improved to prevent materials from being disposed in landfills and dumps. To improve the processing of construction waste, recycling programs, more frequent transportation and standardized transportation prices, and the establishment of an oversight body to monitor recycling and

transportation activities are suggested by KIs for implementation. Different insulation methods are used and differing according to cost, construction stage, and location. The use of insulation methods is crucial, especially for houses in the coastal regions due to being exposed to high winds and humidity. Lastly, in terms of households' electricity supply, small and medium generators are commonly used, affordable, and efficient.

ANNEXES

Maps

Legend

Spread of damage

- Localized: Half or less of the public buildings/facilities have been damaged, facilities operational (minor effect).
- Widespread: The majority of public buildings/facilities have been damaged, stopped operating (disruptive effect).

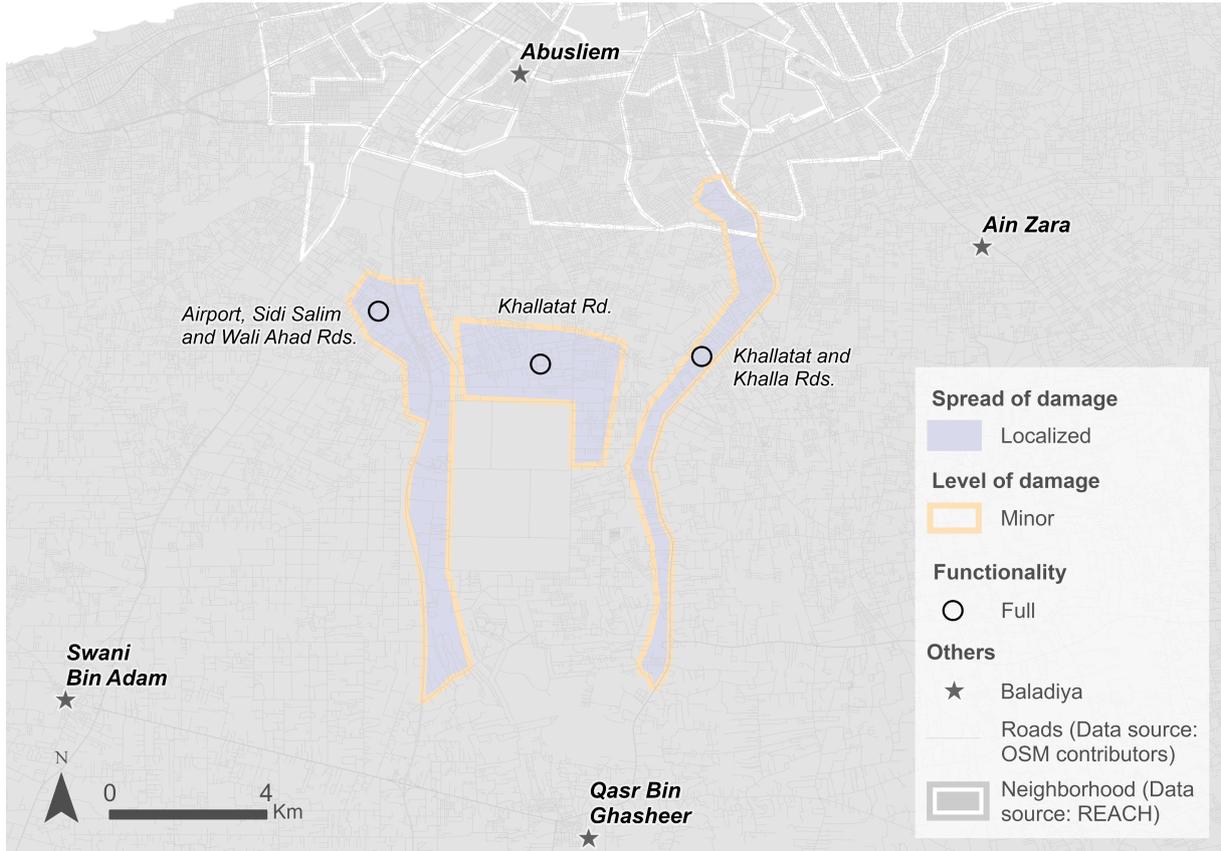
Level of damage

- Minor: Superficial cracking; no observable deformation of structural elements OR Limited mortar and shell perforations to walls.
- Major: Extensive shell perforation or damage to non-bearing walls, partially inhabitable unit; No damage OR light damage to structural elements (No observable deformation of structural elements, OR few repairable cracks to columns, slabs, loadbearing walls).
- Severe: Structural damage involving several loadbearing members; however, it could be repaired (significant cracking with observable permanent deformations of foundation, loadbearing walls, columns, and slabs).
- Destroyed: Totally in rubble (only foundation or debris remains) OR at least 60% of the structure of the building is destroyed OR Complete failure of two or more major structural components OR Imminent threat of collapse due to damage or confirmed imminent danger OR Extensive cracking or loss of material with gross local or overall deformations.

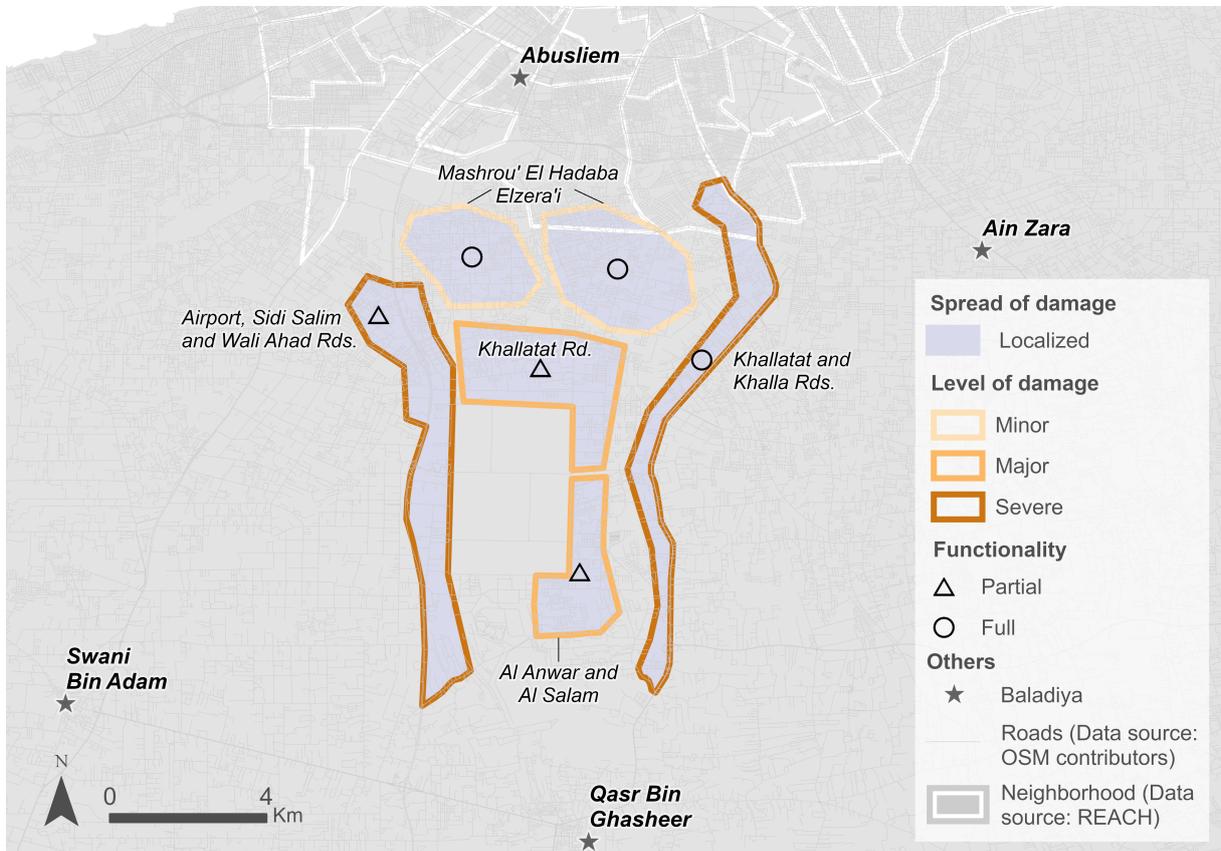
Functionality

- Full: Good capacity; Providing most services; Attending to most of the service needs.
- Partial: Low capacity; Providing some services; Attending to some of the service needs.
- Disrupted: Poor capacity; Providing few services; Attending to few of the service needs.
- Offline: Services not provided.

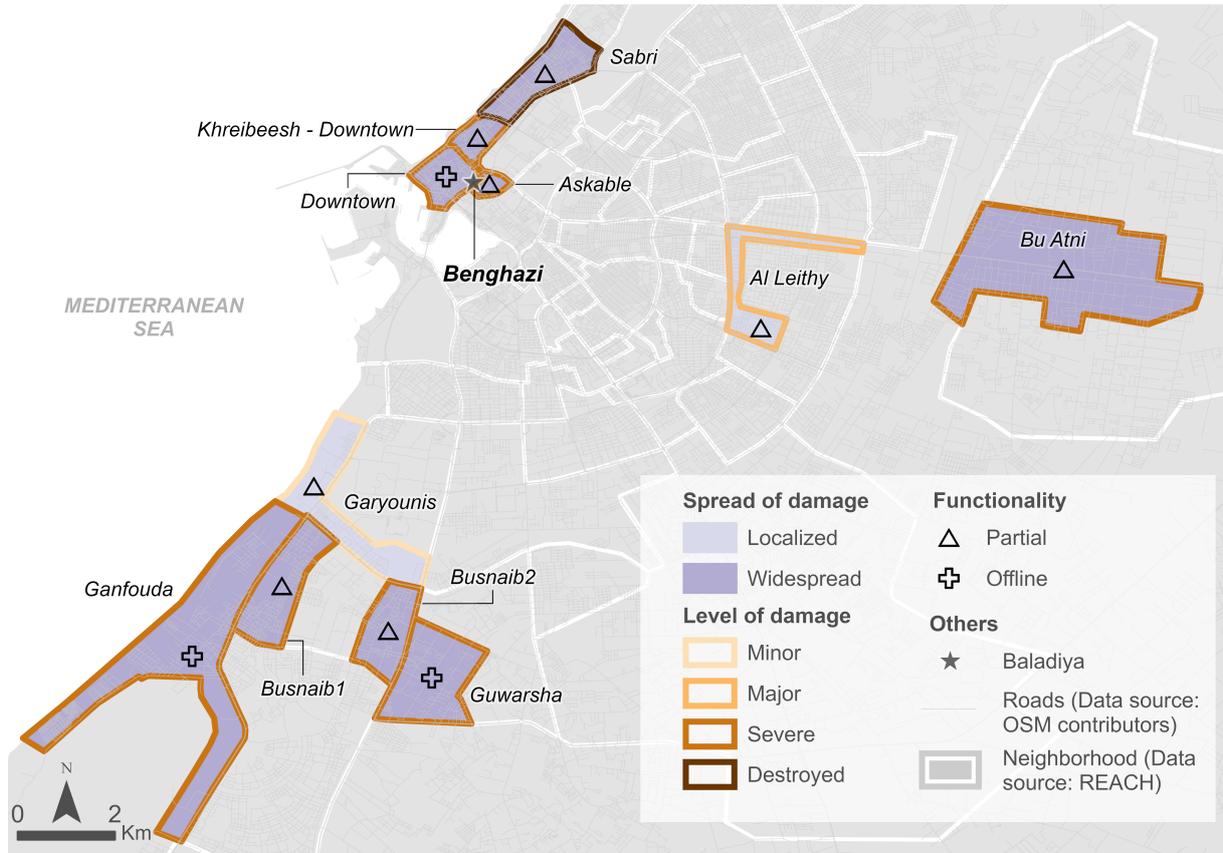
Annex 1 Abu Salim infrastructure



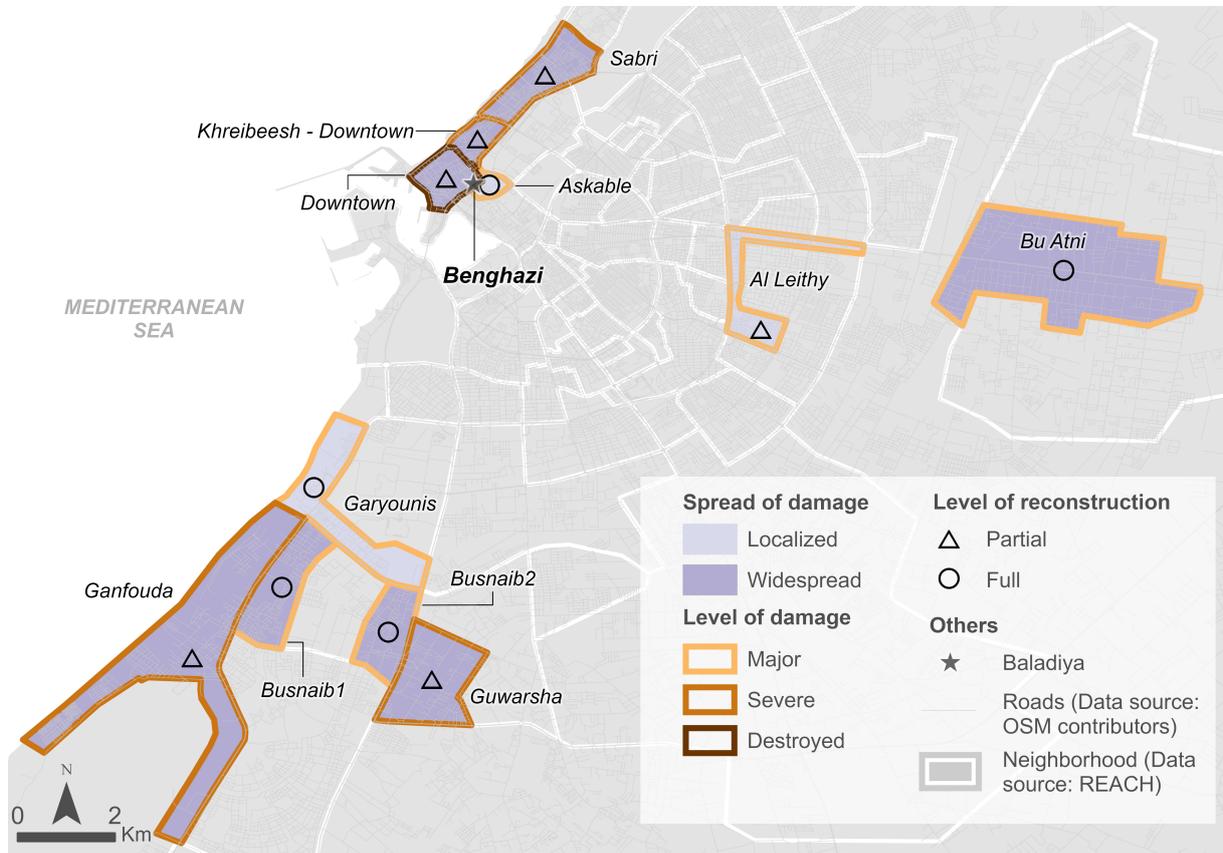
Annex 2 Abu Salim private accommodation



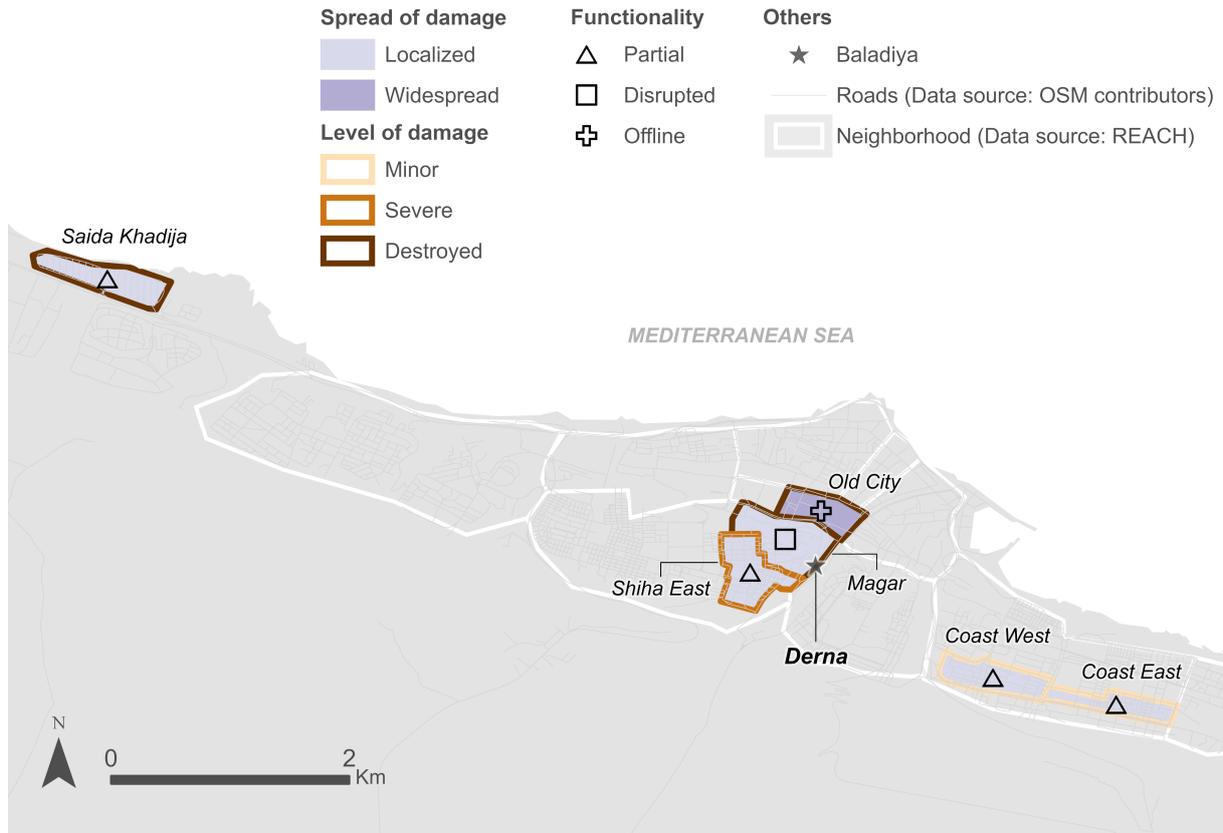
Annex 3 Benghazi infrastructure



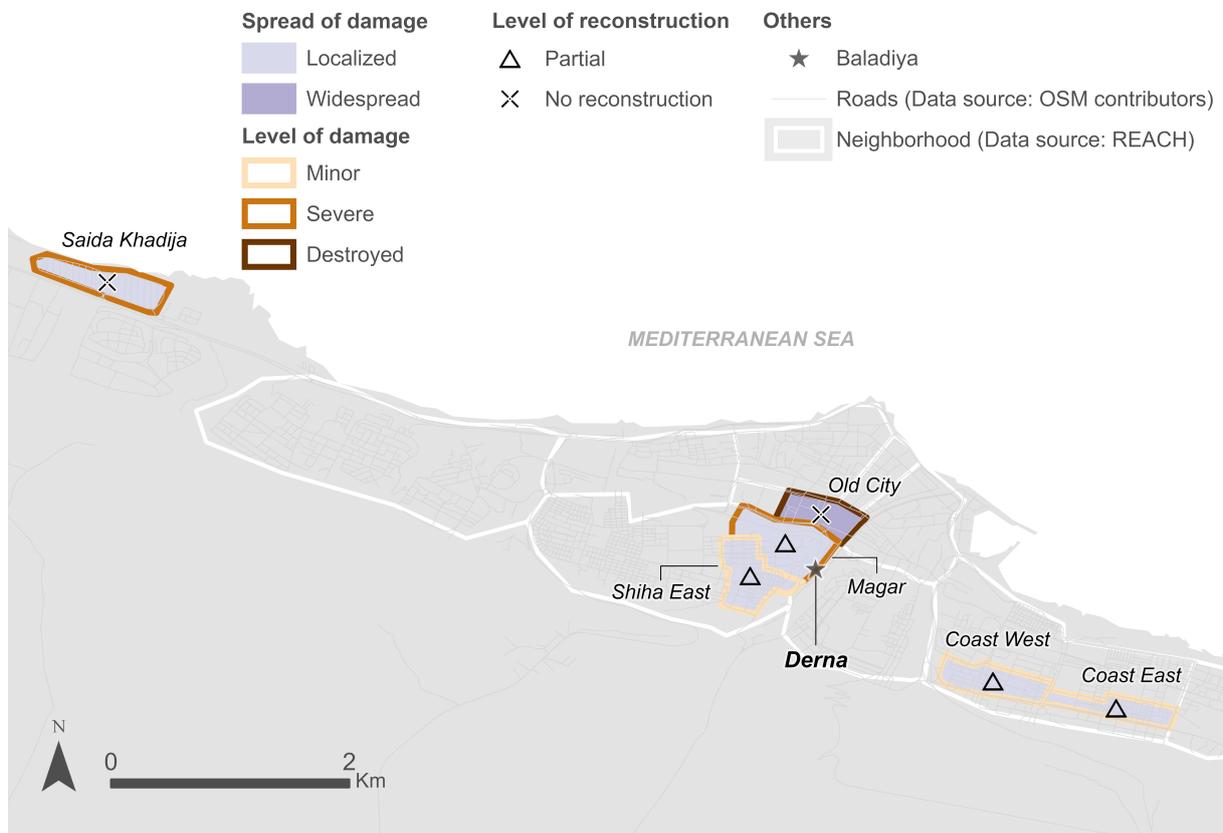
Annex 4 Benghazi private accommodation



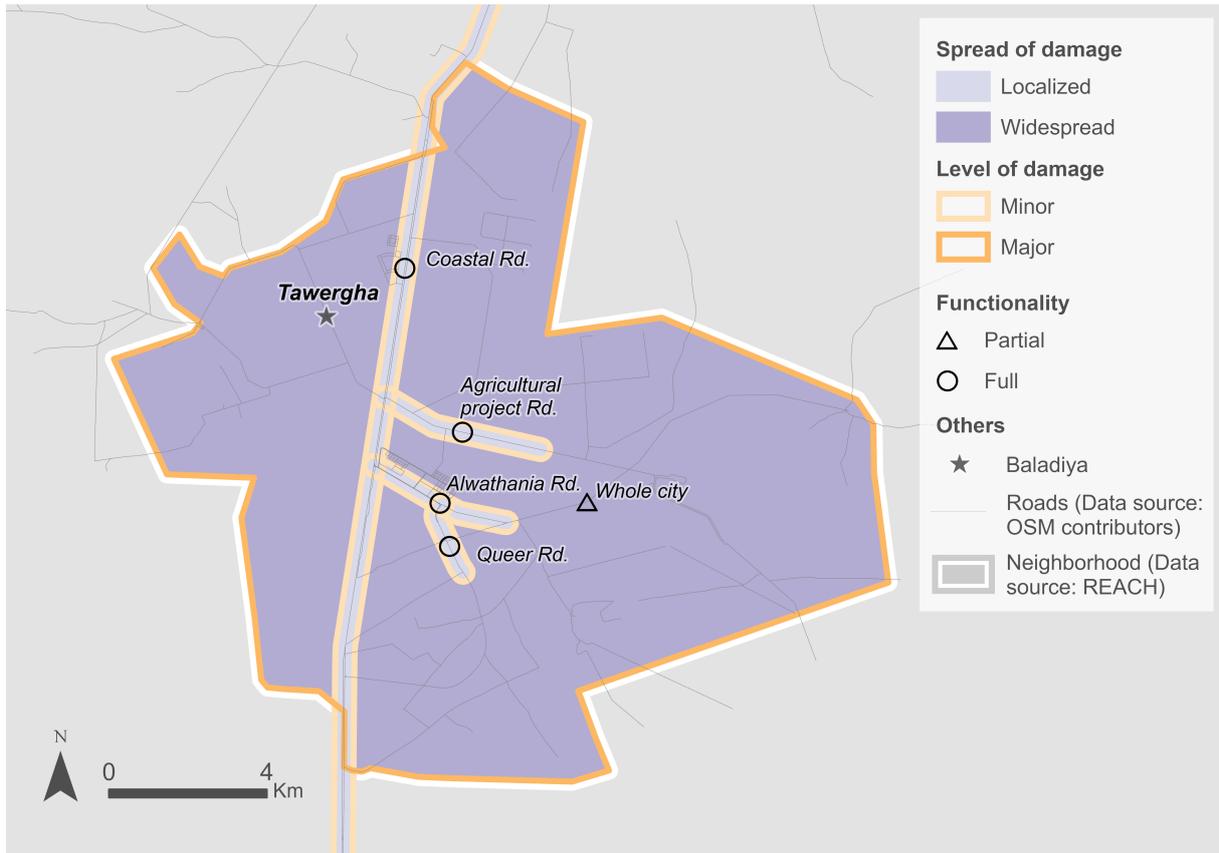
Annex 5 Derna infrastructure



Annex 6 Derna private accommodation



Annex 7 Tawergha infrastructure



Annex 8 Tawergha private accommodation

