

**\*\*MEDIA RELEASE\*\***

**Caritas agencies respond to devastating flooding in Libya**

13 September 2023

Caritas agencies are responding to the devastating flooding in Libya, where over 5,300 lives have been lost and over 10,000 people are missing.

Heavy storms from Cyclone Daniel caused two dams to burst, sweeping entire neighbourhoods from the city of Derna into the sea. The storms also caused severe weather conditions including strong winds and sudden heavy rainfall, causing widespread damage to homes and infrastructure.

“The situation in Libya is disastrous, with reports of entire neighbourhoods being swept away in some areas. People impacted by these floods will have immediate need of emergency shelter, access to clean drinking water, food and medicine. Caritas agencies are working to assess the damage and get help to those who need it most,” said Melville Fernandez, Caritas Australia's Humanitarian Emergencies Associate Director.

Telecommunications have been interrupted, roads have been destroyed, and electricity towers have toppled, hampering rescue efforts and causing further hardship for survivors. There are reports from Derna of no clean drinking water and a lack of medical supplies, with the city's hospital overwhelmed with dead bodies.

Pope Francis expressed his “...heartfelt spiritual closeness to the injured, to those who fear for their missing loved ones and to the emergency personnel providing rescue and relief assistance.”

Libya has been in a state of civil war since 2011, which has led to a significant loss of life and has forced many people to flee from their homes and become displaced. Despite a ceasefire since 2020, there is still political instability, as well as damage and disruption to infrastructure.

Libya is also a transit country for migrants and asylum seekers, with numbers increasing recently due to the conflict in Sudan.

The flooding emergency will make an already dire situation worse, while increasing the vulnerability of thousands, as scarce resources are pushed beyond breaking point.

Immediate needs include getting essentials like food, clean water, emergency shelter and medicine to families affected by the flooding, while preparing for the long-term needs of people who no longer have homes to return to.

Caritas agencies in the region are assessing the scale of the damage and are coordinating with local authorities and other organisations to see how they can best assist. Your generous support can help provide emergency relief to help families recover and rebuild from disaster.

Visit <https://www.caritas.org.au/libya> or call 1800 024 413 toll free to provide much needed support to families affected by the Libya floods.

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