

Guidance Note

Essential Household Items (EHIs/NFIs/CRIs) as Life-Saving Humanitarian Assistance

1. Introduction

This guidance note has been written in response to the arbitrary detention of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees which that started on Friday 1st October 2021. The guidance is specifically for the distribution of NFI in detention centres (DCs) and is not intended as wider guidance for the use of NFI in other contexts in Libya.

It references the Principled Framework for intervention in Detention Centres¹, [SPHERE guidelines](#), the SNFI sector's own [NFI SPHERE Guidance](#) note and the sector's [NFI Technical Guidance](#).

The purpose of the document is to examine the life-saving relevance of NFI provision in DCs and provide guidance on the minimum package. The guidance has been written by and approved by the SNFI Strategic Advisory Group².

2. Existing Guidance

Page 20 of the Principled Framework for intervention in Detention Centres, sets out guidance for each sector's agreed lifesaving activities in detention centres for humanitarian actors in Libya³. In 2019, the sector agreed that the following package is life-saving – *blanket, mattress and solar-lamps*.

The guidance also references SPHERE. The SPHERE standard for household items (NFI) is:

Individual item assistance supports restoring and maintaining health, dignity and safety and the underlying daily domestic activities in and around the home

The key indicator related to mattresses and blankets is:

ii. People have sufficient and appropriate quality items for safe, healthy and private sleeping

This indicator, along with four others (including **i. People have sufficient and appropriate quality clothing**) is used to assess whether the standard is met. Food is usually provided in DCs and so indicators (iii, iv, and v.) covering cooking and cooking fuel are not relevant.

The sector's NFI technical guidance includes clothing as a seasonal top-up and not part of the basic kit. Instead, mattress and blanket are supplemented with jerrycans and solar lamps to form the basic kit - these items are not essential in a DC setting. Considering many of those in detention are recused at sea or arrested without warning, a spare set of clothing (in-line with the SPHERE indicator) is considered essential.

¹ As prepared by the Migrants and Refugees Platform, Policy Paper 3/2019, Endorsed 2019-09-27

² SAG consists of DRC, IOM, NRC and UNHCR

³ Full text is included at the end of the document.

3. Key Considerations

- Basic NFIs (mattress, blanket and clothing) is a pre-condition to receiving life-saving support and so are essential items that contribute towards sustaining life.
- Impact assessment of basic NFIs must be seen as part of larger assistance package and their impact not assessed in isolation.
- Limited access dictates that basic NFIs should be provided now, rather than when climatic conditions worsen.
- Assessing whether an intervention is lifesaving needs to recognise that in Libya, detention can last weeks or months during changing conditions,
- Those in detention should not be seen as a homogenous group and often they have been rescued at sea. Many arrivals can be in extremely poor health, malnourished and dehydrated and so mattress, blanket and spare clothes are essential and life sustaining.
- Basic NFIs are central to dignity and can contribute significantly to safety while in detention. Lack of sleep can have significant impact on mental and physical health.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The SAG endorses the 2019 guidance that a minimum NFI package should be considered as life-saving and an essential first-line response but recommends an amendment to the contents replacing solar-lamp with 1 set of clothing:

The package is:

- mattress
- blankets
- spare set of clothing

Annex A: Full Text from Principled Framework for intervention in Detention Centres

The sector has agreed on the minimum package to be provided by humanitarian actors in detention centers. The sector is concerned that there is very little/limited post-assistance monitoring of NFI assistance in detention centers and this needs to be highlighted within the redlines. The sector does not have a clear modality or harmonized tool to determine need on how and when to distribute NFIs in detention centers. The sector is aware that some interventions might be cross cutting with the areas of intervention of other sectors and as such would like to ensure that minimum levels of shelter services be agreed by the relevant sectors, especially health and WASH. The sector coordination recommends that the sector adopt SPHERE and Mandela rules as minimums.

The sector reiterates the concerns of the health sector that there is a need to ensure that all humanitarian actors working in detention centers coordinate their interventions to reduce duplication, measure its outputs accurately and to strengthen the negotiations on access to a detention center by humanitarian actors by acting as one.