

Floods Kill Thousands In Libya

Reasons Behind Libya's Catastrophic Flooding

Why In The News?

- The Libyan Red Crescent Said That The **Death Toll** In Libya's Coastal City Of Derna Has Soared To **11,300** As The Search Efforts Continue. However, Local Officials Suggested That The Death Toll Could Be Much Higher Than Announced. More Than **3,000 Bodies Were Buried** By Thursday Morning.
- Experts Suggest Three Key Factors **Extreme Weather, Vulnerable Geography, And Crumbling Infrastructure** Coalesced Into One Catastrophe, Causing The Most Devastating Floods To Have Hit North Africa In Almost A Century. We Take A Closer Look.

B B C NEWS

Libya flood: Satellite images and aerial photographs show destruction

Extreme Weather

- The Flooding Has Occurred In **Libya's Eastern Region**, Which Witnessed Extreme Rainfall From Sept 10 To 11. Take The **City Of Al-Bayda**, Located Near Derna, For Example. Usually, It Receives About Half An Inch Of Rain In Sept And About **21.4 Inches Of Rain In An Average Year**.
- But From Sept 10 Night Till The Next Day, The City Reported **A Record Rainfall Of 414.1 MM** More Than 16 Inches According To The World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
- Similarly In Derna, Where Average Monthly Rainfall In The Whole Of September Is Under 1.5 MM, **Rainfall Exceeded 150 MM** In About Two Days. The Rains Were Accompanied By **Strong Winds Of Up To 80 Kph**.

- Above All **Cyclone Daniel** Formed In Greece, The Storm Is Also Responsible For Causing Floods And Deaths In Spain, Turkey And Bulgaria Earlier This Month. The **Storm Became Stronger** As It Drew Energy From The Abnormally Warm Waters.



Vulnerable Geography

- The Floods Seem To Have Caused The Most Destruction In Derna A Coastal City With An Estimated 100,000 Inhabitants. So Far, Derna Alone Has Recorded The **Death Of More Than 5,300 People**. Videos On Social Media Show Submerged Buildings, Schools And Houses.
- One Reason Behind The City's Widespread Damage Is Its Location. It Is Situated At The **End Of A Valley And Bisected By The Wadi Derna, A Seasonal River** That Flows From Mountains To The South (Towards The Sea) And Is Normally Protected From Flooding By Dams.
- **Derna Has Two Dams**. The First One Is About 12 Km Upstream From The City Where Two River Valleys Converge And The Second One Sits On The Southern Edge. After Breaching The First Dam, The **Floodwater Probably Continued Downstream** Along The Canyon And Then **Swept Off The Second Dam**.



Crumbling Infrastructure

- The Collapse Of The Two Dams In Derna Highlights The Dilapidated Infrastructure Of Libya. The Country Has Been **Gutted By A War Between Two Rival Factions** For More Than A Decade.
- **In Tripoli, PM Abdul Hamid Dbeibah Leads** Libya's Internationally Recognised Government. **In Benghazi, The Rival Prime Minister, Ossama Hamad, Heads** The Eastern Administration, Which Is Backed By Powerful Military Commander **Khalifa Hiftar**.
- In The Tussle For Power, Focus On Socio-economic Issues, Including Maintaining And Developing Infrastructure Has Been Put On The Backburner. Moreover, As Flooding Is Quite Rare In The Region, **Libya Wasn't Prepared To Face The Calamity**.
- There Are **No Flood-resilient Structures** Or Roads In The Country, Especially In Derna. Any Sort Of **Early-warning System** Regarding Such Disasters Also Doesn't Exist.

