

August 2017 Ghat, Libya – The World Health Organization (WHO) responded to an urgent appeal from mothers and civil society in Ghat city, southwest of Libya, who were calling for much needed medical assistance to save the lives of mothers and children in Ghat.

A social media campaign was initiated by civil society after several mothers died due to lack of medical staff to serve people in Ghat. Raising the Hashtag #SaveMothersInGhat on Twitter and Facebook the community called for help to improve the poor health conditions of Libyan women who have been delivering their babies in unsafe and unhealthy conditions, unattended by doctors or trained health workers.

Najjia*, a Libyan pregnant woman living in Ghat, was waiting impatiently to deliver her baby when she gave birth in the hospital without doctors available to attend to her. During the delivery she suffered from a very severe bleeding and uterine rupture. Her parents rushed to Sabha Medical Centre however she died on the way. Najjia and other three pregnant women lost their lives during delivery.

There is only one hospital in Ghat supposed to serve more than 30 000 local residents, along with a number of displaced people from other parts of Libya. In recent years, there has been a high incidence of deaths in Ghat among pregnant women and infants because of the lack of medical staff. There is no accurate data about number and causes of deaths in the hospital. Some patients lose their lives before reaching the hospital or while being transferred at late stage to the nearest medical centre in Sabha, about 460 km from Ghat hospital.

Ghat hospital has been suffering from acute shortage in medical staff in all, specially after a Korean medical crew left the country four years ago as a result of insecurity leading to a deterioration in the health care services situation. With WHO supporting and covering the cost of bringing medical staff for all main specialities, the situation is improving at least for the coming 6 months.

The severe shortage of medical supplies is another problem WHO is addressing by sending medical kits enough for 500 treatments for the only hospital in the city.

*Not a real name

Friday 19th of April 2024 06:15:37 PM