

International Dialogue on Migration 2012
13 and 13 September 2012

Migrant Voice from Chad
Ms. Achta Ankori Mahamat

**Chadian Migrant who was assisted by IOM to Return Home following
the Libyan Crises.**

- My name's Achta Ankori Mahamat, I was born in Mossoro, Chad, in 1975 where I grew up and spent most of my life before migrating to Libya in the year 1990 following a very critical social and financial situation that I suffered along with my family as I was divorced and a mother of 3 children.
- As many Chadians at that time, I decided to migrate to Libya to find a job, a better life and earnings to support my family, especially my little girl. I had to leave my father and mother behind in a very desperate situation.
- When I first arrived in Libya, it was very difficult for me, as for many other female Chadians, to find a job. It takes some time to speak the Libyan Arabic and to learn the Libyan attitude and the way of life, but at the end everybody gets a job to survive out of it since Chadian migrants had certain privileges in Libya compared to other nationals.
- Like many other Chadian migrants, I visited many regions when I was looking for better job opportunities for improving my living conditions and earnings, but somehow I never thought about returning to Chad until the Libyan crisis that started in February 2011.
- As many other Chadian migrants, for various reasons we never thought about coming back to Chad one day since we were happy in Libya, as Chadian migrants in Libya were transferring a good portion of their income to support their family and their communities in their villages in Chad.
- When the Libyan crises first started I happened to be in Benghazi. We woke up one normal morning from a very loud sound in front of our house. All of sudden we saw a group of armed civilian on board of several vehicles heading towards our house and trying to set it on fire. They kicked us out of the house. Some of them went beyond that to mistreat us and curse us, asking us to leave their country or they are going to kill us. They claimed that as Chadians we are big supporters of Ghaddafi and our community is full of mercenaries that were sent by the Government of Chad to help Gaddafi.
- A large group of Chadian migrants, predominantly women and children - since men were chased away by the militias - decided to leave Benghazi to a safer place. We headed towards Tripoli, using the same routes we used to travel; however, because of the insecurity along the road it took us one week instead of only one day to get to the destination. We had very little food and water with us and were very worried about the uncertain future.

- At this point, the majority of the Chadian migrants in Libya started to be convinced that the situation was not going to end soon and that we had to return home. The International Organization for Migration and the Government of Chad were there to provide necessary humanitarian assistance and evacuation.
- IOM staff has risked their lives for the evacuation of a lot of Chadian migrants, either from the Libyan border with Tunisia and Egypt or directly from inside Libya out of Sabha and Tripoli. The majority of Chadian migrants in Libya were evacuated by road onboard of lorries through an arduous journey in the desert with very little food, water and medicines before arriving to the Chadian borders.
- IOM was always there to provide humanitarian assistance including food items, non food items, psychosocial and medical assistance and onward transportation to all the migrants until their final destination in the country.
- On behalf of all migrants that have fled the war in Libya, I would like to use the occasion to thank IOM staff that have risked their lives to evacuate us from the very risky places of war to safer ones and reunite us with our families.
- To conclude my statement, I would like to appeal for help for the hundreds of thousands of returnees that have come back from Libya and found themselves with no jobs who became themselves a burden to the families that they were initially supporting.