

هلنا دانتة؟



Investigative report on the humanitarian catastrophe in Derna, Libya

Hurricane Daniel (not the only culprit!)

Written and supervised by: Akram Al-Najjar

Graphics and technical development:

Loujain Najmi bin Hassan

Reporter: Mohamed Ahmed

Information checker: Rabie Dago

Investigative report on the humanitarian catastrophe in Derna, Libya Hurricane Daniel (!not the only culprit)



The morning of the tenth of September **2023** was unlike any other day, as Libyans opened their eyes to a disaster that befell the city of Derna in the far east of the country, when the rainwater that came from the valley overlooking the city flooded, passing through its heart, which was beating with life, to sweep away buildings, people, stone and trees, and crush in minutes about **20,000** thousand souls as of writing these words, and demolish **891** out of **1,500** damaged buildings, flooding an area estimated at **6** square kilometers of the city and throws everything we mentioned into the sea.

Everyone remained in a state of shock. How did this happen? What were those waters and what size were they to completely uproot a -12storey residential building and sweep it into the sea (Social Security Building) and also sweep away three bridges linking the east of the city to its west? One of these bridges rises about 48 meters above the bottom of the valley, and how did the two dams protecting the city collapsed in this way, meaning why it was not partially washed away.



We are well aware that it is too early to launch an investigative report that clarifies what happened, and seeks to determine who is responsible for this humanitarian catastrophe, but our precedents and experiences with the political authorities that Allah has destined to rule this earth make us not miss any detail of the beginnings that may disappear with the passage of time, and our tragedy in Derna does not make us forget the right of the victims over us, their right to know who is responsible, and not to hold their souls to fate, despite our acceptance of it,) However, we believe that there are human causes that made the disaster this magnitude, and our role is to identify such causes, before it is enveloped in oblivion, between the friction of dust of the luxury offices and the upcoming (reconstruction of Derna) deals.

(Hurricane Daniel), according to the scientific description,

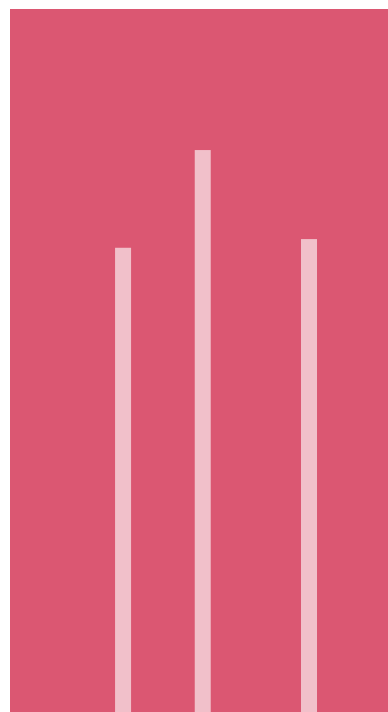
appeared as an area of low air pressure over the Ionian Sea, the temperature of which contributed to the production of the moisture necessary to form the storm. On September 8, the storm then moved landward over the Balkan Peninsula which led to heavy rains falling onto the area.

The next day, the hurricane made landfall in Al Jabal Al Akhdar, Libya as a tropical storm on September 10, then continued to move inland before becoming a depression with dry air. (This text is from Wikipedia).



What is necessarily known is that the geography of Al Jabal Al Akhdar in Libya consists of about 95 valleys from the area extending from Al Marj city all the way to Derna; of these valleys, there are 15 valleys that end in the Derna Dams, as they are the final estuary. It was very expected that this rain-laden storm would be as stated in the description of its condition that it will lead to the dam filling with large amounts of water, which may exceed its ability to endure, and the normal course of things says that its collapse is very likely.

To be precise, we derived the details of the construction of the dam and the circumstances it went through during the past years from the briefing provided by the **Libyan Attorney General (Asidiq Asur)**, in front of the journalists, after his arrival in the city of Benghazi, during which he announced the formation of an investigation committee into what happened in Derna; he stated that the first dam was built by a Yugoslav company in the **1970s**. This dam, Bu Mansour Dam, has a capacity of **2.5** million cubic meters and is located **13** kilometers from the city. **1998** also witnessed cracks in the dam, and at that time the Libyan authorities commissioned an Italian consulting company to assess the **damage to the two dams (dam Boumansour and the country's dam)**. The company confirmed at the time the presence of cracks, and even recommended building a third dam to protect the city, according to what the Libyan Attorney General, Asidiq Asur, reported in his briefing. The Attorney General also confirmed that in **2010**, a Turkish company began restoration procedures for the dam, and the restoration process stopped with the Libyans' uprising in February. **2011**.



Who Is Responsible For evacuating Citizens In Derna?



following the end of the first day of the tragedy and until the beginning of writing this investigation, we collected more than **35** video and audio testimonies from citizens who survived the devastating flood, and most of them were talking about the warnings that came from the local authorities were related to the possibility of sea water entering the valley stream in the center of the city, and the directives were to evacuate the area near the end of the valley and facing the sea, and the rest of the neighborhoods received instructions to stay in their homes and to not leave them.

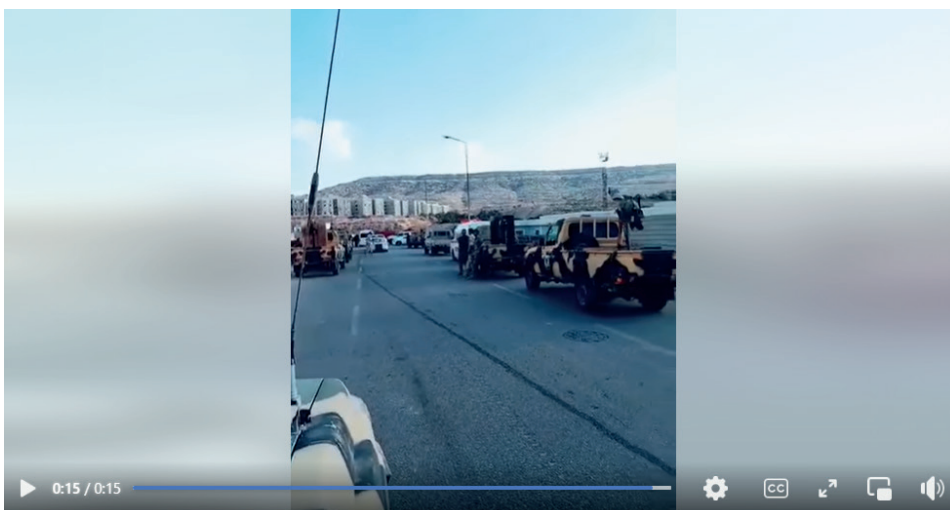
On 10.9.2023, the steering Council of Municipality of Derna published a video clip of the Chairman of the Steering Committee, Director of Security of Derna District, and the General Attorney (it is clear that it was released on 2023/9/9), in which he announces the formation of an emergency committee within the city, and transfers all relevant powers of this committee to the Director of Derna Security Directorate (Major General Embarak AlBarassi) to take all measures required to confront the depression (according to his description). He also stated that this step (meaning the formation of an emergency committee) came after consulting the specialists and advisors concerned with this matter, and the head of the management committee in the municipality stated that there are areas within the municipality of Derna that must be evacuated of its citizens, namely (Al Bilad neighborhood - Ajbela - Asayida Khadija neighborhood - Wadi Al Naga).



These areas mentioned in the aforementioned video were completely affected by the flood and were almost completely destroyed. Here we give ourselves the right to ask: Why were the citizens not evacuated from these areas? Which was clear that it might be exposed to floods, especially since all this information was available to the local authorities concerned with the matter, and from the video recording that we talked about previously, the director of Derna Security Directorate became the authorized to take these measures, and evacuations took place in Benghazi for some areas in anticipation of Daniel Hurricane.

Why didn't the same happen in Derna?

Although its situation is more dangerous in light of the existing data, including the collapse of the dam, and the fact that it is the estuary of many valleys in Al Jabal Alakhdar.



هذا المقطع يوم 10/9/2023 فالصبح حي السيدة خديجة / درنة الجيش ومديرية الأمن يحاولو يخلو في مناطق درنة اللي عالبحر والكارتة انه المواطنين اغلبهم استهترو وقالو

Our correspondent in Derna tried to communicate with the entities that make up the emergency room, but it was not possible to reach them. The Libyan government in the east of the country, led by Osama Hammad, hastened to dismiss the head of the management committee in the municipality of Derna, referred him to investigation, and assigned his deputy to manage the affairs of the municipality, after which the steering council was completely dissolved.



At the same time, there was a military force in the city of Derna under the name (166th Battalion) affiliated with the Head of Military Units led by Brigadier General (Saddam Khalifa Haftar), which, according to the information provided to us by our correspondent in Derna, lost approximately 100 soldiers in the flood that swept Derna. The battalions and military brigades were in the east of the country, the same authority had implemented evacuation procedures in areas where the hurricane was likely to pass.

The 20/20 Division, affiliated with the 106th Brigade, evacuated areas in the city of Benghazi, especially those overlooking the sea, including

areas inhabited by the displaced people of Tawergha in the city. At the same time, forces affiliated with the same brigade evacuated some homes in the mountainous city of Al Bayda, especially those overlooking the valleys, and those that were built inside some dry valleys, where water had not moved for many years, in anticipation of the hurricane that would hit the region.



According to the information provided to us by our correspondent in the east of the country, quoting citizens in the cities of Benghazi and Al Bayda, the military force that carried out the evacuation forced some citizens who did not agree to leave their homes to take coercive measures against them by evacuating, and whoever did not find a place to stay, the military authority provided them with some hotels and schools until the effects of the devastating hurricane subsided.

The strange thing, which we noticed during our investigation, is that these measures were not taken in Derna, where the military force that we mentioned earlier and present in the city merely used loudspeakers through which it requested the evacuation of some neighborhoods in the city, this appeared in a very short video clip explaining these appeals (in **Asayida Khadija neighborhood**), where we did not monitor during our investigation any testimony of any citizen in Derna who stated that there were measures taken similar to what was done in Other cities in the east of the country, especially since Derna is known for its dam crisis, the information received about the storm and its strength shows that it will be loaded with heavy rain, which is likely to flow most of the valleys in Al Jabal Al Akhdar region, the situation that inevitably lead to the arrival of this water to its final estuary (**Derna Valley**); therefore the question remains strongly present, why decisive measures were taken to evacuate citizens living in areas near Derna valley???



Money allocated to maintain the destroyed dam, where did it go?

The people of Derna and Al Jabal Al Akhdar in general know very well what the Derna Valley flood means. Over the past hundred years, the city has been exposed to about six floods during (- 1982 - 1968 - 1955 - 1941 2011 - 1986), the last three of which were after the construction of the two dams that collapsed in the last flood. In this attempt, we explained how the structural problems in the Sidi Mansour Dam were discovered years ago, and in this part we will try to find out where the defect was in the delay in the restoration and repair of the Derna Dams.

59% 11:21 م 19 ديسمبر

web.whatsapp.com

- تقاعس الوزارة باتخاذ الإجراءات اللازمة حيال المشاريع المتوقفة والتي لم تبدأ بالمخالفة لنص المادة (103) من لائحة العقود الإدارية.

- تقاعس الوزارة باتخاذ الإجراءات لتجديد مدة الخطابات الضمانية أو المطالبة بقيمتها قبل انتهاء مدة الضمان بوقت كافي بالمخالفة لنص المادة (169) من لائحة الميزانية والحسابات والمخازن، حيث بلغ إجمالي الدفعات المقدمة كما ورد بكشف متابعة خطابات الضمان للعام المالي الجاري 2021م مبلغ وقدره 25,339,939 دينار بينما بلغ إجمالي المبالغ المخصصة من الدفعات المقدمة عن فترة الفحص والمراجعة مبلغ وقدره 9,665,988 دينار أي بلغ رصيد الدفعات المقدمة (المتبقي) مبلغ 15,663,951 دينار، نذكر منها على سبيل المثال لا للحصر ما يلي:

ت	اسم المشروع	قيمة خطاب الضمان	رقم خطاب الضمان	تاريخ إنتهاء صلاحية خطاب الضمان
1	صيانة وإعادة تأهيل سدي درنة وأبو منصور	2,286,358 يورو	TF-08136-30188	2020/12/31م
2	الإشراف على صيانة وإعادة تأهيل درنة وأبو منصور	197,850 دينار	20667	2020/12/31م
3	إنشاء سدي أبو شيبه والرمان	2,151,637 يورو	TF-06155-30160	2020/6/29م
4	مشروع تجميع مياه وادي درنة المرحلة الثانية	1,317,558 دولار	32304	2020/12/31م
5	دراسة ظاهرة البحر للمياه في السياجات وبحيرات السدود	39,789 دينار	8666/43/15/80007	2020/12/31م
6	حفر بئر اختياري انتاجي بالقرطاس	133,619,250 دينار	12342	2020/12/31م

- تقاعس الوزارة باتخاذ الإجراءات الإدارية والقانونية اللازمة حيال المشاريع المتوقفة والتي لم تبدأ بالمخالفة لنص المادة (103) من لائحة العقود الإدارية رقم (563) لسنة 2007م، فضلاً عن ذلك فقد لوحظ انتهاء مدة سريانها مع طلب

During our research of the matter, we came across a journalistic investigation published on the Al Aarabi Al Jadid website on July 2018 ,16. The investigation examines the random state in which dams were built in Libya, and here I am quoting in text what was stated regarding the Derna dams



(the dams in Libya were designed in a random manner, especially in the eastern region, as explained by the professor of geology at Omar Al Mukhtar University, Muhannad Asaheli to “Al Arabi Aljadid”, who said that faults and cracks in the ground on which dams are built, resulted in the leakage of the retained water, as happened in the dam of the city of Derna, located in northeastern Libya, which was built in 1986 on land with caves and gaps, noting that the area is not qualified to build a water dam due to soil erosion, which has caused continuous water leakage since the construction of the dam until now. He wondered at the same time, “Where are the geological studies of the earth’s layers in the region and where is that topographic and geotectonic studies of rock properties?!,

The result is now clear.” However, the Director of General Administration of Dams at General Water Authority, Engineer Omar Almagribi, told Al Arabi Al Jadeed that the leakage does not exceed 5 kilometers, and the water leaking from the dam goes to the groundwater reserve, adding that the problem of dams currently is limited to The lack of money and resources required to maintain them, in addition to the frequent power outages, which hinders the process of transferring water from bottom to top through submersible pumps and also hinders the operation of water depth measuring devices. Some dams require 10 million Libyan dinars (equivalent to 7,27\$ million) to carry out annual maintenance, but the financial allocations do not exceed half a million dinars (364\$ thousand) according to Almagribi, however Al Mahdi Al Mijbri revealed that the financial budget allocated for the maintenance of dams has not been spent for five years due to the economic conditions that the country is going through, after the budget for maintaining and operating the dams amounted to 500 million dinars (equivalent to 363 million dollars), according to the latest budget disbursed by General Water Authority in 2012, according to Al Mijbri’s testimony.(Al Arabi Al Jadeed).



The executive authority here, in the words of its representative, is well aware that there has been a leakage in the Derna Dam for years, and it has given the excuse that it did not obtain sufficient funds to restore it, and this naturally led us to search for the path that the executive authority took during the past years in dealing with the problem of the dams. We found in the Libyan Audit Bureau's report of **2021/2020** published on the Bureau's official website, specifically at the end of page No. **(383)** to half of page No. **(384)**, the following text (Transformation budget - The total expenditures from the transition budget for the current fiscal year for the period from **2021/1/1** to **2021/31/12**, as stated in the final summary of the Ministry of Water Resources **202/199** ,12 dinars, while the disbursed funds for the period amounted to **459,420,000** dinars, and the following is noted regarding it –

- 1.** The beginning balance of the transition account appeared, carried forward from the fiscal year **2020**, at a value of **53,568,986** dinars, while an amount was liquidated for new projects for the current year **2021** based on the Ministry's request.
- 2.** The Ministry's failure to take the necessary measures regarding suspended projects that did not begin in violation of the text of Article **(103)** of the Administrative Contracts Regulations.
- 3.** The Ministry's failure to take procedures to renew the duration of the eight letters or to claim their value sufficiently before the expiry of the guarantee period, in violation of Article **(169)** of the Budget, Accounts and Stores Regulations, as the total payments made, as stated in the follow-up list of letters of guarantee for the current fiscal year **2021**, amounted to **25,339,939** dinars. While the total amounts allocated from the advance payments for the inspection and review period amounted to **9,665,988** dinars, meaning the balance of the advance payments (remaining) amounted to **15,663,951** dinars.

Our correspondent in Derna tried to communicate with the entities that make up the emergency room, but it was not possible to reach them. The Libyan government in the east of the country, led by Osama Hammad, hastened to dismiss the head of the management committee in the municipality of Derna, referred him to investigation, and assigned his deputy to manage the affairs of the municipality, after which the steering council was completely dissolved.



At the same time, there was a military force in the city of Derna under the name (**166th Battalion**) affiliated with the Head of Military Units led by Brigadier General (**Saddam Khalifa Haftar**), which, according to the information provided to us by our correspondent in Derna, lost approximately **100** soldiers in the flood that swept Derna. The battalions and military brigades were in the east of the country, the same authority had implemented evacuation procedures in areas where the hurricane was likely to pass.

The Ministry's failure to take the necessary measures regarding suspended projects that did not begin in violation Article (103) of the Administrative Contracts Regulations.

The Ministry's failure to take measures to renew the term of the guarantee letters or to request their evaluation before the expiry of the guarantee period in a sufficient time, in violation of Article (169) of the Benefits, Accounts and Savings Board, as the total payments made, as stated in the follow-up statement on letters of guarantee for the current fiscal year 2021, amounted to 25,339,939 dinars, while the total amounts deducted from the advance payments for the examination and review period amounted to 9,665,988 dinars. The balance of the advance payments (remaining) amounted to 15,663,951 dinars, of which we mention, but are not limited to, the following:

The Ministry's failure to take the necessary administrative and legal measures regarding suspended projects that did not begin, in violation of Article (103) of the Administrative Contracts Regulations No. (563) of 2007. In addition, it was noted that its validity period had expired.



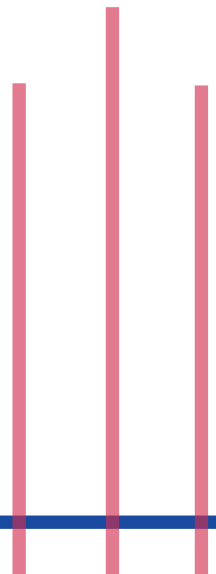
Since February 2021, the Ministry of Water Resources, which is headed by **Mr. Tariq Abdusalam Bouflika**, and before that the Financial Resources Authority headed by Mr. Abdallah Asunni, has had the opportunity to make a radical change in the course of events that Derna and the entire Libyan people are suffering today, it is clear in the Audit Bureau report that inaction is the characteristic that accompanied this entity during 2021/2020 despite the presence of funds attached to letters of guarantee. Indeed, corruption and negligence have reached the stage of not following up on procedures, to renew letters of guarantee, or to terminate the contract with the companies and parties concerned with the projects described. In the table attached to the report, which includes **(maintenance and rehabilitation of the Derna and Abu Mansour dams)**.



We tried to communicate with any official from the aforementioned authorities, to clarify the matter, but our attempts failed, as there is (phobia) between the Libyan official and the people's right to access information!!



This simple effort is only the beginning through which we document what happened in the first days of the disaster. With the formation of an investigation committee by the Public Prosecutor, we must provide everything we can to this committee or others, and say out loud that there is someone responsible for what happened. Here we are not in a position of judgment other than that we are demanding that responsibility be determined accurately, and that more than ten thousand lives were lost as a result of failure to take the following –



- The director of Derna Security Directorate and the official of the 166th Battalion located in Derna, and after them the official (**military units of the Libyan army**) could have taken urgent measures to evacuate people and provide places for them, even in schools within the city, which would have contributed to reducing Loss of life, sparing the city that disaster.



- The head of the management committee of municipality of Derna did not make any tangible and real effort towards finding a solution, even partially, to the situation of the two dams in Derna, especially since there were financial allocations that had been disbursed to the municipal council amounting to **400** million dinars. He also did not make a clear effort to escalate the problem of the two dams in Derna to public opinion, and did not There was no effort in this context.



- The executive authority, through Ministry of Water Resources, is directly responsible for the collapse of the Derna dams, as it could have restored and repaired the dam as a first stage to protect the city, especially since the funds had been allocated, and due to the lack of follow-up, the dam was neglected, the repairs were not carried out, and the disaster occurred...

The matter will not end here, but now it has begun, the sound of the screams of the people of Derna haunting everyone who lives on this land unless the perpetrator is punished, and there is no good in us if we are satisfied.

Many details of what happened will remain untold, because only Derna knows what happened!!

References

Wikipedia / Alarabi aljadid

35 video and audio testimonies from citizens

who survived the devastating flood / Libyan Audit Bureau website

Derna Municipal Council (Facebook page)

<https://rb.gy/eutb1>

<https://rb.gy/wj21w>