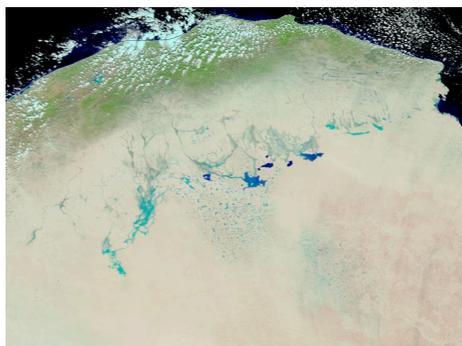


How can Libyan floods offer hope for the future?

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A satellite map from NASA showing water deposits after a severe storm in the Mediterranean.

Jacob Sagers – Recent catastrophic flooding in [Libya](#), caused by the collapse of two dams, has resulted in at least 11,300 deaths and a slew of international attention. The town of Derna – near Benghazi – suffered the brunt of the damage. Decades of neglected maintenance caused the dams to collapse after being hit by an unusually heavy storm accredited partially to climate change. The tragedy coincides with years of conflict in the country. Libya has been entrapped in a civil war since the downfall of Gaddafi during the Arab Spring in 2011, hindering maintenance of infrastructure. A recent ceasefire has stalled conflict; however, the recent disaster has changed the way territories and boundaries are set in the country.

[Boundaries](#) are the way people and states construct territories through visible demarcations. During times of war, opposing groups will seek to expand their boundaries through conflict to ultimately change existing territory. Boundaries are maintained through various means, such as flags or walls, but sometimes boundaries are difficult to distinguish. Libya's civil war has a largely internationally recognized interim government based in the west of the country, operating out of Tripoli. Meanwhile, an opposition government, rebels, and various tribes control the eastern and southern portions of Libya. This has made boundaries murky, as no national consensus has been reached. It also divides the country and makes operating in the region difficult, with no official government or boundaries being set, worsening the effects of disaster's like Derna's.

The disaster still provides hope for peace and future solutions. Amid international aid from the Red Cross, World Bank, and various countries pouring into Derna, the interim government from Tripoli has sent aid, supplies, and manpower to assist in relief efforts. This provides a fascinating nuance to how times of emergency, war, and natural disaster can drastically change the ways territory and boundaries are created. While Derna still largely falls under opposition groups control, the arrival of help from an 'enemy', and rebel groups allowing the flow of aid, shows how humanity can band together and put aside conflict. Even if this is at a minor scale, the gesture raises questions to how Libya's future will look, and if the country can eventually rebuild and move on from war. Hopefully with a future that can avoid preventable disasters like Derna's.

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