The devastation wreaked by floods in eastern Libya is nothing less than apocalyptic. In Derna where two dams burst after torrential rains, a wall of water deluged the city and sliced out the land from beneath its inhabitants. Entire neighbourhoods were swept into the sea, which is now dumping bodies along the shore. More than 6,000 have died there, and 10,000 people are said to be missing, but because entire families were washed away, there may be no survivors to report some losses. With other towns and settlements inundated, too, tens of thousands are displaced. The horror and despair of Libyans is matched by their fury at the rival governments that have split the country and pursued power and profit while ignoring the people's needs. Storm Daniel is a natural disaster, wrote Elham Saudi, the director of Lawyers for Justice in Libya, but the ensuing catastrophe "is manmade: corruption; lack of infrastructure; impunity; shutting down frontliners in civil society ... Be angry at a system that has enabled this tragedy." It is too soon to say whether, or how far, Storm Daniel's terrifying impact is related to the climate crisis. But it is clear that global heating is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including flooding. In the last fortnight alone, Hong Kong has seen its heaviest rainfall since records began in 1884, with metro stations inundated, and in Greece, torrential rain triggered landslides and infrastructure collapse. These scenes, like the summer's extreme rainfalls in China, the US and Spain among others, are a warning of what awaits many more of us, and highlight the need for mitigation measures as well as slashing carbon emissions. Libya shows the disastrous consequences when governments not only fail to protect their citizens but also put them into greater danger. Muammar Gaddafi's corrupt regime has been followed by more than a decade of revolution, civil war and political deadlock. Essential infrastructure has not only been neglected - one of Derna's dams had reportedly not been maintained since 2002 - but also plundered by the powerful and their cronies.

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