

Tunisia

01 April - 30 June 2017

Tunisia is a country that has maintained an **open-door policy to people fleeing conflict and persecutions**.

In Tunisia, UNHCR's priorities are to support the **development of a national asylum system and build national capacities** and to **protect and assist refugees and asylum seekers**.

Together with Tunisian authorities and its partner ADRA, UNHCR assists registered urban refugees and asylum seekers **to become self-reliant**.

Priorities

- Support Tunisian authorities into establishing a national asylum system and progressively assuming refugee protection functions;
- Provide protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia and support them to become self-reliant;
- Build national capacities to prepare and respond to refugee emergencies, in a context of mixed migration.

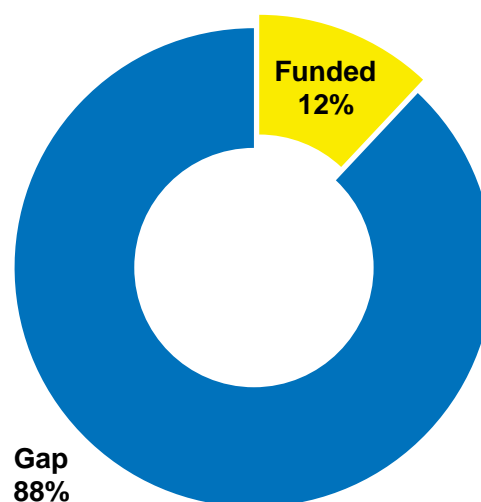
Key figures

- **68** most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers received financial assistance in June 2017.
- So far in 2017, **27** refugees signed working contracts and **28** benefited from vocational trainings.
- **177** people were rescued at sea off Tunisian coast so far in 2017. So far, 14 among them have approached UNHCR to claim asylum in Tunisia.



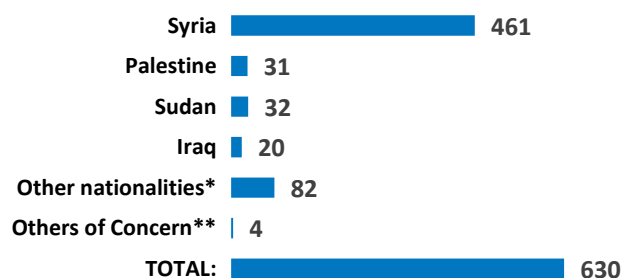
FUNDING REQUIREMENT (AS OF 7 AUGUST 2017)

USD 5.8 M requested for Tunisia



POPULATION OF CONCERN TO UNHCR

Countries of origin



(Figures as of 30 June 2017)

* Other nationalities (17)

** Others of Concern: specific groups of persons not normally falling under the mandate of UNHCR, but to whom extends protection and/or assistance.

Update On Achievements

Operational Context

- Pending the adoption and implementation of an asylum law in Tunisia, UNHCR is the sole entity conducting refugee status determination in the country. UNHCR therefore focuses on ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers are registered, provided with UNHCR certificates, and protected against *refoulement*. UNHCR's overall objective is to support Tunisia in creating a comprehensive national protection system. Since 2011, UNHCR has supported the drafting of a national asylum law and continues to carry out advocacy and capacity building initiatives in order to help Tunisian authorities finalize the text.
- The protection and operational environment in Tunisia remains favorable, despite the challenging political, socio-economic and security challenges in the country and in the region. There was a high turnover of governments, with seven government reshuffles since 2011, the latest of which at the end of 2016. The delicate socio-economic situation, high unemployment rate, frequent social protests, especially in southern Tunisia, and national security concerns dominate the political agenda.



On the occasion of World Refugee day, UNHCR posted a streamer during the African Cup Football Match on 17 June 2017. © UNHCR

Achievements



PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

- From April to June 2017, UNHCR Tunisia registered 23 new cases (55 individuals). So far in 2017, 42 families (80 individuals), mostly Syrian, Iraqi and Yemeni nationals, claimed asylum in Tunisia.
- **Two boats with 177 people on board were rescued off Tunisian coast and disembarked in Tunisia.** These were the first rescue at sea incidents in Tunisia since August 2015. In another, unrelated incident, 31 persons were arrested in Sfax for attempting to irregularly cross to Italy; apart from 14 Tunisian nationals, the group included 16 Ivoirians and one Cameroonian.

A first boat with 126 passengers was rescued and disembarked in Zarzis governorate on 27 May, in the south of the country; a second with 51 people on board was disembarked in Sfax governorate in June. In line with the Standard Operating Procedures developed for rescue at sea incidents, authorities, NGOs and international organizations cooperated to provide basic assistance, such as medical checking, water and food, and information to survivors. UNHCR and partners conducted screening to identify those in need of international protection. 14 people (from Mali, Nigeria and Sri Lanka) sought asylum in Tunisia; they are temporarily hosted in UNHCR shelter in Medenine. In addition, and upon the request of partners, UNHCR is also hosting a group of 48 women in a vulnerable situation, including women travelling alone, single head of household, pregnant women and medical cases) while the rest of the migrants are hosted in a Tunisian Red Crescent's shelter.

- UNHCR assistance to persons rescued at sea includes providing them with **information on the risks associated with irregular movements by sea**. UNHCR also provides **psychosocial support**, to give them the opportunity to reflect on their experience and on safe and legal alternative options. In previous rescue at sea incidents in 2014 and 2016, UNHCR noted some of the people rescued at sea, sometimes after an harrowing journey, were returning back to Libya within days to make another attempt to cross the sea.
- On the occasion of World Refugee Day, UNHCR and its partners organized several events. In Tunis, the Tunisian scouts welcomed 150 refugees and their families for an Iftar evening, together with representatives from Tunisian authorities, civil society and media. Performances by a Syrian refugee singer and Tunisian artists entertained guests. In Medenine, a similar event was organized by UNHCR's partner the Arab Institute for Human Rights on 23 June and gathered 35 refugees, civil society activists and representatives of local and international organizations. A media briefing was organized in the capital Tunis on the topic "Is there a need for a law on asylum in Tunisia?"



EDUCATION

Achievements and Impact

- For the school year 2016-17, 107 refugee children enrolled in schools received grants to cover the purchase of books and school supplies. Refugee children have access to **the Tunisian public education system**.

- **Recreational and cultural activities** are organized for refugee and Tunisian children. On 4 May, refugees participated in Werghema, a cultural festival organized in Medenine, with the support of UNHCR's partner the Tunisian Red Crescent: a Syrian family settled in Zarzis cooked typical Syrian food and Eritrean women presented various hairstyles.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Refugee children face difficulties because of the language barrier or gaps linked to interrupted education. Continuous tutorial classes are needed to ease refugee children's integration into the Tunisian curriculum.



HEALTH

Achievements and Impact

- In the first quarter of 2017, 75 vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers were assisted with health bills. Refugees have **access to public medical facilities** in Tunisia and UNHCR is covering the costs of primary and emergency healthcare through its partner the Tunisian Red Crescent (TRC).



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

Achievements and Impact

- So far in 2017, 27 refugees signed **Tunisian work contracts**. In addition, 28 are currently attending **vocational training**, mainly in hair dressing and pastry. UNHCR's partner the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is supporting self-reliance of refugees through various modalities: creation of micro-projects, access to professional schools, and assistance to access job opportunities.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The lack of Tunisian documentation constrains refugees' access to formal employment. UNHCR is advocating for the issuance of temporary residence and work permits.

Working in partnership

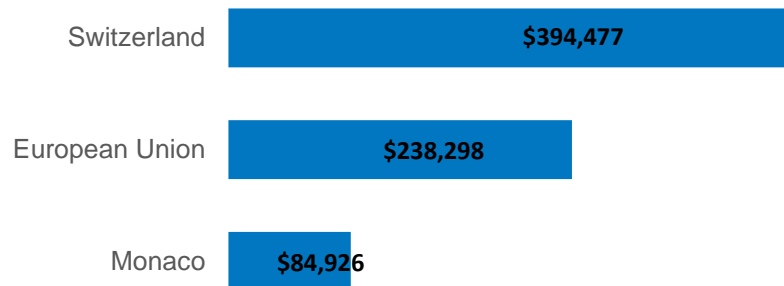
- UNHCR is working closely with the Tunisian authorities, most notably the Tunisian Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs, Women's Affairs, Justice and Employment.
- UNHCR is an active member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Tunisia, contributes to the United Nations Development Agreement Framework (UNDAF) and advocates with specific UN agencies such as ILO and UNICEF to include refugees in their programs. UNHCR is also working closely with IOM on issues related to mixed migration flows, notably contingency planning in case of an influx from Libya.
- UNHCR has four partners in Tunisia, the Tunisian Red Crescent (TRC), the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR) and the Italian Council of Refugees (CIR), in collaboration with Tunisian Refugee Council (TRC). UNHCR also cooperates with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and the Scouts.

Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **US\$ 717,701**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked fund.

Funding received (in million USD)



External / Donors Relations

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

United States of America (95 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | Norway (41 M) | Priv Donors Spain (35 M) | Japan (25 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Australia (19 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (17 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors USA (13 M) | Germany (12 M) | Priv Donors Italy (12 M) | Italy (10 M)

Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

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