

TUNISIA

Highlights

31 October 2020

Key figures

5,678

Persons of concern to UNHCR (asylum-seekers & refugees)

2,545

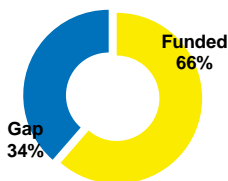
Newly registered so far in 2020 as part of an enhanced backlog clearing exercise

604

Refugees and asylum-seeker households received cash assistance

Funding

USD **12.3 M** required in 2020



USD **8.1 M** received as of 3 November 2020

As of 31 October 2020, Tunisia recorded 61,115 total cases of COVID-19; some 40,000 more than the previous month. Tunisian authorities announced new preventive measures on 28 October, including a night curfew, early closure of cafes and restaurants, suspension of travels between governorates and a two-week halt to schools, in-person university lectures, attendance at places of worship; as well as a ban on all gatherings and public events. In order to comply with those measures, most of the group activities for refugees and asylum-seekers were suspended or conducted with reduced presence, while in-office presence for UNHCR staff was limited to 50 per cent.

Following an agreement between Tunisia and Libya, the Tunisian Prime Minister authorized on 23 October the reopening of the land border crossing point of Ras Jedir, and the resumption of trade and movement of people between the two countries. Regarding sea borders, crossing attempts from Tunisia and Libya toward Europe continued. On 11 October, after a shipwreck occurred off Sfax coast, the Tunisian Coast Guard rescued seven individuals from Cameroon, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire and recovered 20 dead bodies. On 25 October, a boat with 113 individuals on board (including 65 women and 9 children), mostly from sub-Saharan Africa, was rescued by the Tunisian Maritime Guard off the coast of Sidi Mansour in Sfax Governorate.

Operational Response

In order to enhance Refugee Status Determination (RSD) capacity and therefore reduce waiting periods for asylum-seekers to have their claim processed, four additional staff members joined the RSD team in Tunis and Sfax and another two are being recruited for the Zarzis office.

On 29 October, 17 refugees travelled to Sweden on resettlement; as they faced severe protection issues in Tunisia. So far this year, UNHCR has submitted 88 persons for resettlement, with decisions still pending for 39 persons.

On 7 October, UNHCR [donated](#) and installed two Refugee Housing Units (RHU) in Djerba hospital for the screening of patients and visitors. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR has donated 14 RHUs to support the national response.

The French company BIC donated 160 school kits to refugee and asylum-seeker pupils. On 2 October, UNHCR partner Tunisian Refugee Council (CTR) organized a gathering for 44 refugee and asylum-seekers children enrolled in school in Tunis to celebrate the beginning of the school year and distribute kits.

A two-day training was organised in Sfax by UNHCR partner CTR and the Tunisian Association "MAWJOUNDIN" for the LGBTI refugee community. The training included group discussions about protection risks, discrimination, security, protection of identity online, and sexual health. COVID-19 preventive measures restricted participation to seven attendees.

Thanks to UNHCR advocacy, Gafsa Public Hospital granted free access of medical services to refugees and asylum-seekers.

On the occasion of "Pink October", dedicated to the prevention of breast cancer; a country-wide awareness campaign was conducted by UNHCR partner CTR. Information materials were distributed to refugees and asylum-seekers and sessions supported by specialized medical personnel were organized in different cities (Tunis, Sfax, Gabes, Tataouine).

UNHCR Tunisia is grateful for the support of [European Union](#) | [Italy](#) | [Luxembourg](#) | [Monaco](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [RDPP NA – EU](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [United Nations Multi-Partners Trust Fund](#) | [United States of America](#) and to those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds.



UNHCR partner CTR distribute school kits to refugee and asylum-seekers pupils in Tunis ©CTR/2020