

TUNISIA

Highlights

30 September 2020

Key figures

5,406

Persons of concern to UNHCR (asylum seekers & refugees)

2,256

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

324

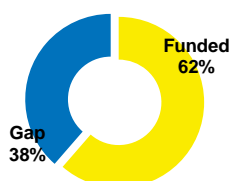
Hygiene kits distributed to refugees and asylum seekers (women and children) in southern Tunisia

156

Refugee and asylum seeker children enrolled in school for year 2020-2021 received education grants

Funding

USD **12.3 M** required in 2020



USD **7.6 M** received as of 29 September 2020

As of 30 September 2020, Tunisia recorded 18,413 total cases of COVID-19. Total cases rose by approximately 15,000 during the month, with a predominance of local transmissions. On 21 September, the Tunisian Prime Minister announced that Tunisia would not return to general confinement measures given the fragile economic situation; however additional restrictive measures on travellers coming from abroad were announced on 23 September and previously adopted preventive measures were reinforced. UN Agencies have adopted more strict hygiene and prevention measures, while working modalities remained the same (100 per cent in-office presence).

Operational Response

On 29 September, Tunisian authorities rescued a boat in distress off Ben Guerdane (Medenine Governorate). The boat departed from Libya heading to Europe, with 68 third country nationals on board. A six-year-old child died during the journey, while all the other passengers (including a new-born) were rescued and placed into a mandatory 14-day quarantine, where they received assistance from IOM. UNHCR will proceed with profiling and registration as needed after the quarantine period is over.

Between January and September 2020, UNHCR Tunisia registered 2,256 asylum seekers as part of an enhanced backlog clearing exercise. However, due to the increasing number of individuals seeking international protection in Tunisia, 1,971 people are still awaiting registration while 2,780 are waiting to access the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures. Since 2019, UNHCR Tunisia has strengthened both its registration and RSD operational capacity. In September 2020 UNHCR launched a database system to support its partner Tunisian Refugee Council (CTR) in the recording of its reception activities that will systematize waiting lists and identify and prioritize people with specific needs.



Puppet workshop organized by CTR in Sousse for refugee and asylum seekers children © CTR

On 9 September, UNHCR partner, CTR, organised a puppet workshop for refugee and asylum seeker children in Sousse. Puppets were used as a therapeutic tool to support children's self-expression in a safe environment. Individual counselling and psychosocial sessions were also provided.

Furthermore, fifteen refugee and asylum seeker children from the Ibn Khaldun and Medenine urban areas took part in a psychosocial support activity aimed at explaining the COVID-19 pandemic and helping them to adopt the necessary measures to protect themselves and others, using educational tools. Personalised masks were also distributed.

In order to help refugees and asylum seekers improve their language skills in English and French, five language clubs led by volunteers of the refugee and host community were launched in Zarzis and Sfax.

UNHCR Protection team conducted a needs assessment for twenty elderly refugees and asylum seekers with serious medical conditions. The outcome of the assessment highlighted challenges related to the reimbursement of healthcare expenses. Three home visits were conducted by the CTR doctor as a result of this need assessment.

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.