

TUNISIA

30 November 2020

Key figures

6,057

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

2,929

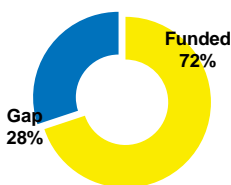
Newly registered so far in 2020 as part of an enhanced backlog clearing exercise

600

Refugees and asylum-seeker households received cash assistance

Funding

USD **12.3 M** required in 2020



USD **8.4 M** received as of 8 December 2020

Operational Context

As of 30 November 2020, Tunisia recorded 96,769 total cases of COVID-19. In the last two months, some 75,000 new cases were recorded. On 15 November, Tunisian Prime Minister extended the preventive measures in place for an additional period of three weeks, including night curfew, early closure of cafes and restaurants, suspension of travel between governorates, attendance at places of worship and a ban on all gatherings and public events; while schools and university lectures resumed as normal. Starting from 16 November, new rules for travellers coming from abroad entered into force as well. 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 is limited to 50 per cent.

Following the agreement between Tunisia and Libya over the re-opening of the land and air borders between the two countries, trade and movement of people resumed as normal on border crossing points of Ras Jedir and Dehiba from 14 November and flights resumed on 15 November. All the movements are subject to a health protocol established between the two countries. Meanwhile, UNHCR and IOM, together with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and other UN Agencies, have been supporting the authorities to improve reception capacity in case of an influx from Libya.

Operational Response

On 10 – 11 November, Tunisia hosted the first virtual Mayors' Forum on Inclusive Cities in North Africa, organized by the UNHCR Middle East and North Africa Bureau in collaboration with the Tunis Municipality. More information is available in [Tunisia's Special Update #2](#).

Following advocacy efforts conducted from UNHCR in Sfax, which hosts the second largest refugee community in Tunisia, the Department of Social Affairs agreed to systematically deliver disability cards to refugees and asylum-seekers who put forward a request. Receipt of this card will support refugees in accessing much-needed specialized services. A Palestinian refugee living in Sfax received the disability card from Tunisian authorities; the first to receive this card.

Refugees and asylum-seekers hosted in "Zeitouna" shelter in Zarzis held group discussions around the concept of tolerance, with the support of UNHCR's partner, the Tunisian Refugee Council (CTR). The participants shared their experiences of living in a country different from their own and with other people from different backgrounds and cultures. Following the discussion, participants translated their reflections into paintings. These artworks will be exposed in public places such as the local hospital, the police station, the post office, and in some cafes in order to raise awareness about asylum and divulgate the concept of peaceful coexistence.

To facilitate refugee children's inclusion in the host community and to develop their self-confidence and communication skills, six refugee children (8 – 10 years old) living in Sfax participated in a puppet theatre course organized by a local association. The first two classes were on storytelling and scriptwriting, and the course will end up with a show led by the children.

During November, UNHCR welcomed the multi-year generous contribution from the Government of the Netherlands to the Tunisia operation. Predictable funding allows UNHCR to better plan and ensure refugees and asylum-seekers are not left behind. The Netherlands contribution will strengthen Refugee Status Determination (RSD), resettlement and reception capacity, as well as provide psychosocial assistance and healthcare.

Celebrating the 16 Days of Activism against SGBV & World Children Day

On 20 November, UNHCR and its partner the Tunisian Refugee Council (CTR) organized several activities in Medenine and Sfax targeting refugee and asylum-seeker children on the occasion of World Children Day, aimed to raise awareness on children rights. Through different crafting activities, such as making puppets, collages, paintings, but also quizzes and discussions, the children learnt about their fundamental rights and about the country that is hosting them. In Gabes, CTR organized a meeting with the members of the regional platform in charge of Child Protection to discuss the protection situation of refugees and asylum-seekers living in the area.



Activities to mark the 16 Days of activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) started on 25 November, International Day for the elimination of violence against women; aimed at sensitizing against GBV as a violation of human rights. Several activities were organized by UNHCR with its partner CTR in different cities country-wide.

In Tunis, CTR and UNHCR organized a movie projection followed by a debate for refugee women, while their children were entertained with art activities.

In Sfax, an awareness session on sexual harassment was organized for Syrian children (8 -12 years old) and their mothers. CTR, in collaboration with Tunisian Association “DAMJ”, organized a raising-awareness session for the LGBTI+ refugee community about protection risks and human rights. Moreover, CTR in collaboration with other NGO such as Terre d’Asile, Medecins du Monde, the Tunisian Association of Midwives and UNHCR partner IADH conducted a raising awareness session with Ivorian asylum-seekers and migrant women on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

In Gabes, an embroidery workshop and coffee talks were organized for asylum-seeker women to facilitate debate with them around gender-based violence and women rights.

In Zarzis, a focus group discussion to map services available to SGBV survivors was organized with refugees and asylum-seeker women residing in Zarzis urban area. A self-defence workshop followed the discussion.

In Medenine, an awareness session on sexual harassment was organized for children (8 – 13 years old) and bilateral meetings with organization providing services to SGBV survivors were held aiming to set up an SGBV committee. Also, a raising-awareness session for the LGBTI+ refugee community about protection risks, discrimination, security, protection of identity online, and sexual health was organized in collaboration with Tunisian Association “MAWJOUNDIN”. A mosaic workshops for five Tuareg women was organized to support them improving their artistic skills but also their psychological wellbeing and self-esteem.

UNHCR Tunisia is grateful for the support of [European Union](#) | [Italy](#) | [Luxembourg](#) | [Monaco](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [RDPP NA – EU](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund](#) | [United States of America](#) and to those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds.