

TUNISIA

Highlights

30 April 2020

Key figures

4,447

Persons of concern to UNHCR (asylum seekers & refugees)

1,201

Newly registered persons of concern to UNHCR so far in 2020

768

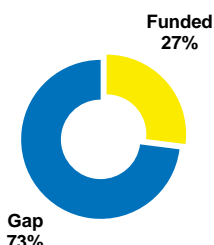
Vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers received cash assistance

110

Individuals were profiled so far in 2020 to assess their need for international protection

Funding

USD **8.8 M** required in 2020



USD **2.3 M** received as of 29 April 2020

All information related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the preventive and response measures put in place by UNHCR and partners is detailed in a dedicated report available [here](#).

Although there are no reported cases of people crossing into Tunisia from Libya to seek international protection, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated in Tripoli and the surrounding areas, as a result of intensified fighting. Emergency preparedness efforts continued with finalization of budget needs. Interagency coordination continued with several meetings held with the UN Agencies involved in the contingency planning exercise aimed at establishing division of tasks; as well as regular meetings with IOM and the UN Resident Coordinator.

Operational Response

UNHCR and its partner Tunisian Refugee Council (CTR) launched a country-wide verification and assessment exercise (using KoBoToolbox software) to confirm the presence of all persons of concern to UNHCR on Tunisian territory and to collect information on their current socio-economic and protection situation. The verification also aims to collect consent from persons of concern to share their basic biodata with the Government in view of including them in the national assistance program. As of 30 April, 390 individuals were verified.

Moreover, based on this verification, UNHCR will proceed with targeted cash assistance (initially for 1,300 individuals) to increase the social protection of those negatively affected by the current COVID-19 situation. In doing so, UNHCR aims to mitigate protection risks such as eviction, destitution, and negative coping mechanisms, which are increasingly being reported by refugees and asylum seekers across Tunisia.

During April, 478 vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers hosted in shelters and in apartments in urban areas received cash assistance in replacement of food vouchers. Moreover, 290 vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers not hosted in UNHCR-managed structures received multi-purpose cash assistance.

UNHCR finalized new Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on Emergency Cash Assistance (ECA), followed by an online training for UNHCR and partner staff. SOP and training allowed partner CTR to identify, assess, allocate and record this assistance's modality; that is particularly relevant to address the immediate needs of extremely vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in a flexible manner.

Starting from 18 April, 1,327 hygiene kits, including gloves and masks, were distributed to refugees and asylum seekers living in shelters and urban areas of Sfax, Medenine, Zarzis, Ben Guerdane, Tataouine. During the distribution, awareness sessions on preventive hygiene measures to adopt were conducted. Psychologist from partner CTR was also present to provide counselling.



UNHCR partner CTR distributing hygiene kits in southern Tunisia © CTR/Amani Saoud

The Legal Unit lawyer prepared awareness [documents](#) on the legal consequences of violating prevention measures. These have been translated into three languages and disseminated among refugees and asylum seekers.

UNHCR protection partner CTR provided individual online psychosocial counselling to 22 refugees and asylum seekers belonging to the LGBTIQ community in Tunis, who are among the most exposed to social isolation and stigmatization. CTR psychologist also conducted group support sessions in a UNHCR shelter that hosts a group of persons of concern with specific needs.

UNHCR Tunisia is grateful for the support of [European Union](#) | [Italy](#) | [Monaco](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [RDPP NA – EU](#) | [Switzerland](#) and to those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds.