

# Tunisia

1 October – 31 December 2017

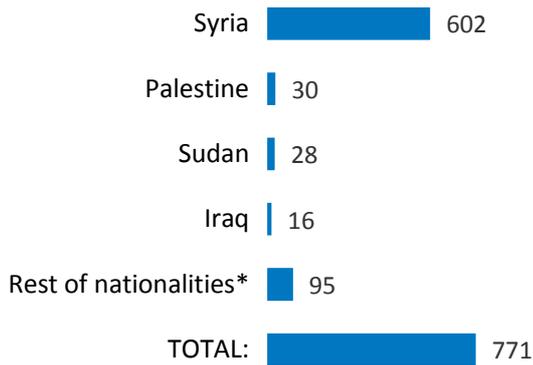
Tunisia continues to be a **transit and destination country** for refugees and asylum seekers. In 2017, UNHCR Tunisia registered 415 asylum seekers and refugees, mainly coming from Syria.

UNHCR is supporting refugees to become **self-reliant** in Tunisia: in 2017, **34** refugees signed working contracts with Tunisian employers. Thanks to this, **13** received **Tunisian residence cards** with the support of UNHCR's partner.

This winter, UNHCR and its partner the Tunisian Red Crescent distributed **blankets, mattresses and other items to 785 refugees** and migrants across Tunisia.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Countries of origin



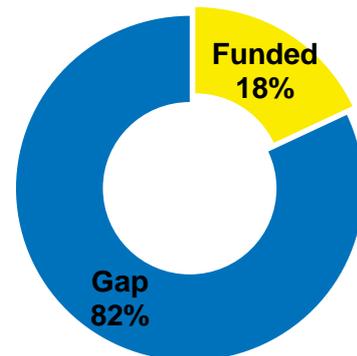
(Figures as of 31 December 2017)

\* Other nationalities (22)

## FUNDING REQUIREMENT (as of 17 January 2018)

# USD 5.5 M

Required for 2018 for UNHCR's operation in Tunisia



## Operational context

- Although Tunisia is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and adopted a new Constitution guaranteeing political asylum in January 2014, the country remains without national asylum legislation as the country awaits adoption of a law on asylum and protection. In this line, UNHCR continues its advocacy with the authorities to adopt this law to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia.
- The difficult socio-economic situation in Tunisia is a challenge for the social cohesion of the country and affects nationals, as well as refugees. Price and tax rises and lack of major economic improvement since the ousting in 2011 of President Ben Ali is fueling growing discontent with Tunisia's political elite. The Prime Minister, in function for just over a year, reshuffled his cabinet in December 2017. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> since 2011. The Prime Minister appointed to key positions figures of ruling party Nidaa Tounes and second-largest party Ennahda, to gather support and carry out difficult economic reforms, notably to address the unemployment rate (15.5%) and the public finance situation. Security concerns remain high on the political agenda, with Tunisian security forces regularly dismantling terrorist sleeping cells.



*UNHCR and its partner AIHR held a Regional Conference on Good practices in protection of Refugees and Mixed Migration's Management in Tunis on 14 and 15 December 2017 to discuss and share good practices in regards to asylum and mixed migration. © AIHR*

**PROTECTION****Achievements and Impact**

- **UNHCR registers and conducts refugee status determination** in Tunisia. In 2017, UNHCR registered 415 new asylum seekers and refugees, mainly Syrians entering from Algeria. UNHCR introduced biometric enrolment and is now replacing refugee and asylum seeker certificates with plasticized identity cards, to improve data security and prevent fraud.
- UNHCR provides basic assistance to refugees and vulnerable asylum seekers in Tunisia. During the winter 2017, UNHCR **distributed blankets, mattresses, buckets as well as kitchen sets** to 785 refugees and migrants across Tunisia, in Tunis, Sousse, Sfax and Medenine. UNHCR also distributed hygiene kits to 343 refugees and asylum seekers.
- Together with partners, UNHCR adapted its intervention to increasing irregular movements of refugees and migrants in southern Tunisia.. With the support of TRC(Tunisian Red Crescent), IOM(International Organization for Migration), and CIR (Consiglio Italiano per I Rifugiati), UNHCR is now **profiling and counseling all new arrivals**, providing them information on possible options, and referring them to relevant actors and authorities depending on their profiles, intentions, and vulnerabilities. Asylum seekers are hosted at UNHCR's reception facility in Medenine. In 2017, UNHCR assisted 1,128 individuals (refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants) with core relief items (CRIs) and hygiene kits.
- UNHCR continues to organize and support **capacity building activities on asylum and mixed migration management**. In December 2017, UNHCR's partner AIHR (Arab Institute for Human Rights) organized a Regional Conference on Good practices in protection of Refugees and Mixed Migration's Management, bringing together in Tunis various governmental and non-governmental actors across the Mediterranean. In October 2017, a delegation of Tunisian officials from the Ministries of Interior, Defense, Social Affairs, and Justice conducted a study visit to Mauritania to exchange experience and good practice. UNHCR also supported the participation of five Tunisian officials from the various ministries to the Arabic session of the San Remo course on international refugee law held from 14 to 18 November 2017.

**EDUCATION****Achievements and Impact**

- UNHCR is supporting schools accommodating refugee children with education material and furniture. UNHCR partner, the Tunisian Red Crescent (TRC), assisted 148 school-aged refugees and asylum seekers with back to school vouchers and books.
- **Recreational and cultural activities** are organized jointly with the host communities to promote co-existence. UNHCR Field office in Zarzis and its partner ADRA launched an initiative called "Maa Baadna" (together), a monthly peer support program for refugees.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- While refugee children have access to public education in Tunisia, they may face difficulties due to language barriers or gaps as a result of an interrupted education.

**HEALTH****Achievements and Impact**

- Refugees continue to have **access to public medical facilities** in Tunisia. UNHCR is covering the costs of primary and emergency healthcare through its partner the Tunisian Red Crescent (TRC).
- In southern Tunisia, UNHCR's partner CIR conducted counselling and profiling to 92 refugees and migrants hosted in UNHCR's and TRC's dormitory from July to December 2017. During the reporting period, CIR organized several recreational activities such as movie screening, painting and an end-of-year party to provide psychological support and communal activities for PoCs and migrants.

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE****Achievements and Impact**

- In 2017, **34** refugees signed formal working contracts with employers. Thanks to this contract, 18 refugees received temporary or long-term residence cards. In addition, ADRA funded 16 micro projects in 2017 and provided vocational training for 50 refugees.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- The lack of Tunisian documentation, especially work permits, constrains refugees' access to formal employment. Access to livelihood is also conceived as a support for the issuance of 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, Health, and Employment.
- UNHCR is an active member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Tunisia and advocates with specific UN agencies such as International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN Children Fund (UNICEF) to include refugees in their programs. UNHCR is working closely with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on mixed migration issues including in the development of the inter-agency contingency plan in case of 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 Italian Council for Refugees (CIR) in collaboration with Tunisian Refugee Council (TRC). UNHCR is also cooperating with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and the Scouts.

## Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **US\$ 979,066**.

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 2018 (in million USD)



### Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018

Sweden (98 M) | Norway (43 M) | Netherlands (39 M) | United Kingdom (32 M) | Denmark (25 M) | Australia (19 M) | Switzerland (15 M)

### Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018

Bosnia and Herzegovina | Canada | China | Estonia | Finland | Indonesia | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Serbia | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | UN Peacebuilding Fund | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private Donors

### CONTACTS

Zeineb Marzouk, Senior Executive Associate, [marzoukz@unhcr.org](mailto:marzoukz@unhcr.org) , Cell +21658335120