

TUNISIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

January – June 2016

KEY FIGURES

729

People of concern as of 1 of July 2016

30%

Of refugees and asylum-seekers received temporary or regular cash assistance during the first half of 2016.

26

Refugees had direct employment opportunities so far in 2016

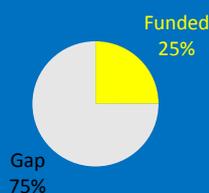
110

Journalists, civil society members and lawyers took part so far in 2016 of UNHCR' capacity building and awareness raising activities on refugee law

FUNDING

USD 5.9 million

requested for the operation (as at 27 June 2016)



PRIORITIES

- Provide expertise, tailored capacity building and awareness raising programmes on refugee and asylum related issues to relevant Tunisian authorities and NGOs
- Support Tunisia into developing a comprehensive national protection system, which would allow authorities to progressively assume their responsibilities under the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees
- Provide protection and assistance to persons of concern, using a community based protection approach

HIGHLIGHTS

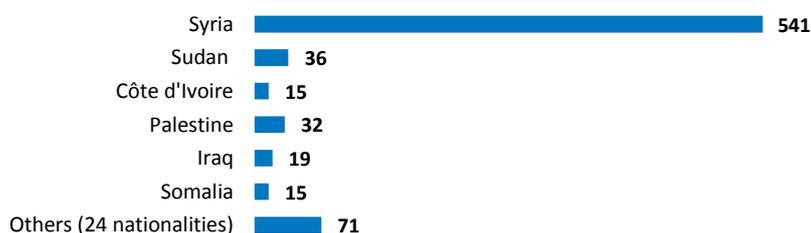
- In April 2016, UNHCR organized a **Situational Emergency Training for Tunisian authorities and partners**, to build government officials capacities and awareness on emergency preparedness. This training gathered more than 40 officials from different ministries; Interior, Defence, Health, Social Affairs, Women, Family and Childhood, Transport, Environment, Equipment, International Cooperation and Finance. The training was organized in collaboration with UNHCR Global Learning Centre and Division of Emergency Security and Supply. A similar three-day training followed in April 2016 for UNHCR staff, UN agencies and UNHCR's implementing partners, with an active attendance of 30 participants.
- On 14 June 2016, UNHCR signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tunisian Scouts**, which represents the first agreement between UNHCR and the Scout movement at national level. This MoU will further enhance the already existing cooperation between the two organizations. It foresees training sessions on refugee law for the scout leaders as well as the inclusion of refugee children in scout activities such as summer camps and recreational activities throughout the year. This will foster the integration of refugee children within their host community.
- From 18 to 20 June 2016, UNHCR celebrated **World Refugee Day** in Tunisia together with its partners. Recreational and cultural activities provided occasion for interaction between refugee families and host community members. Street sensitization campaigns on UNHCR's mandate and situation of refugees were conducted with local citizens of different ages. A closing ceremony on 20 June was attended by the Minister of Social Affairs and the Minister in charge of relations with the constitutional institutions; it gathered civil society and human rights representatives as well as government and diplomatic officials and regionally well-known artists. The event was widely covered by national and international media, with an emphasis on the necessity to adopt a national asylum law in Tunisia.



UNHCR Representative, Minister in charge of Relations with the Constitutional Institutions and United Nations Resident Coordinator holding a sign #IamWithRefugees.
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Population of concern

A total of **729** people of concern as of 1 July 2016



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

In the absence of a national asylum law in Tunisia, UNHCR conducts refugee status determination in Tunisia. UNHCR ensures that asylum-seekers and refugees are registered, issued with UNHCR certificates and protected against *refoulement*. UNHCR supports Tunisia into creating a comprehensive national protection system. Since 2011, UNHCR supports the drafting of a national asylum law and carries out advocacy and capacity building initiatives to help Tunisian authorities finalize the text. In June, the finalized draft law developed by the Ministry of Justice was shared with the Prime Minister for ministerial review in view of its adoption by the Parliament.



UNHCR Representative meets with the Tunisian Minister of Justice to coordinate and discuss on issues of mutual interest, including the national asylum law.

© UNHCR/Eikemel

Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR carried out **capacity building and sensitization activities for local authorities** to increase the protection space for refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia. Between March and May 2016, UNHCR conducted three trainings for different audience: 28 staff of the Tunisian Civil Protection were trained on refugee protection and emergency intervention in Gabes; 90 military officers, from Tunisia but also from Algeria, Mauritania, Egypt and Saudi Arabia were briefed on international protection at *l'Ecole Supérieure de Guerre* in Tunis; 50 judicial judges participated in the sessions facilitated by UNHCR during a seminar organized by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) focusing on refugee protection in Tunisia under national and international regulations. Such activities provided the opportunity for UNHCR to raise awareness among local authorities on the rights and the international protection of the refugees, as well as on UNHCR mandate and operations in the context of emergencies.
- UNHCR conducted **raising awareness and training activities for media, civil society and lawyers**. Between January to June 2016, UNHCR and IADH held four different activities for some 90 journalists and civil society members. It aimed to build journalists' reporting capacity to ensure a reliable and accurate covering on refugee related issues and events, from one hand, and at developing an advocacy strategy on refugee issues focusing on the national asylum law and the necessity of its adoption, from the other hand. A two-component advocacy action plan was developed: an advocacy plan targeting relevant ministries and a second one targeting the public and civil society. UNHCR carried out as well capacity building workshop for 23 lawyers. It aimed to build a solid networking with lawyers and to sensitize them on the necessity of the national asylum law adoption.



Education

Achievements and Impact

- Refugee children have **access to the Tunisian public education system** and have been provided with French, English and IT training by UNHCR's partners the Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) in the South and *Tunisie Terre d'Asile* in Tunis. These tutorial classes help children catch up with the local education curriculum. Since April 2016, refugees are granted transportation fees in order to ensure their regular attendance to classes.
- To support integration with the host community, refugees have access to jointly organized **recreational and cultural activities**. Such activities offer opportunities to discover new regions and traditions. From 24 to 27 March 2016, UNHCR's partner TRC organized a visit to *Festival des nez rouges* with the participation of 20 refugee children. Together with Tunisians children, they enjoyed clown face painting, mask creation, drawing and musical activities.



Coloring activity for refugee children during *Festival des nez rouges*. © TRC 2016

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Continuous tutorial French classes are needed to help refugee children overcome the language barrier and to facilitate their integration into the bilingual (French and Arabic) Tunisian curriculum.
- Difficulties in accessing education during displacement also mean some refugee children have missed years of school. Syrian children in particular have difficulties in French and mathematics. Education must therefore not only guarantee access to school but also ensure a certain level of performance and success.



Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR covers the costs of primary and emergency healthcare costs through its partner TRC so refugees can enjoy **access to public medical facilities** in Tunisia. UNHCR is working closely with the different stakeholders intervening in the healthcare of refugees to ensure a coordinated medical assistance to refugees.
- UNHCR has fully equipped an emergency coordination room in Medenine to further strengthen the capacities of the health authorities in the South and to enable them to centralize the response in the region in case of emergency.



Achievements and Impact

- Since February 2015, UNHCR and its partner ADRA are implementing an innovative programme to support refugees’ self-reliance and ability to access livelihood opportunities through tailored training aimed at improving the technical skills and employability. During the first half of 2016, some 28 refugees benefitted of various vocational trainings (such as sewing, beekeeping, baking pastry, etc.) and 26 refugees were directly employed in different companies. Furthermore, seven income-generating micro-projects were launched, benefiting to a total of 68 refugees.



Women and man refugees receiving toolkits for sewing/hair dressing/electricity in May 2016©ADRA

Identified Needs and Remaining Gap

- The lack of Tunisian documentation, especially work permits, hinders refugees’ access to formal employment. UNHCR is advocating for the issuance of temporary residence and work permits while working with partners and local authorities to find practical solutions to facilitate refugee employment.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

UNHCR collaborates closely with Tunisian authorities, most notably the Tunisian Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs, Women’s Affairs, Justice, Employment and Health. UNHCR Tunisia is working with five partners in Tunisia: the **Tunisian Red Crescent** (TRC) for registration, counselling, assistance, health and education, **Islamic Relief Worldwide** (IRW) for psychosocial support in Southern Tunisia, **Adventist Development and Relief Agency** (ADRA) for livelihoods and employment opportunities, the **Arab Institute for Human Rights** (IADH) for capacity building and advocacy for Tunisian authorities, civil society and media and the **Tunisian Scouts** for refugee children integration. UNHCR is also cooperating with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and *Tunisie Terre d’Asile*.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

End June 2016, total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 1.5 million**.

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 funds.

Funding received (in million USD)

