

## TUNISIA

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

November – December 2015

### HIGHLIGHTS

### KEY FIGURES

**757**

People of concern to UNHCR as of 1 of January 2016

**215**

Of the most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers received financial assistance in December 2015

**7**

Boats rescued-at-sea off Tunisian shores in 2015

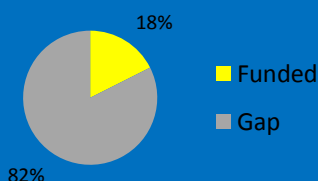
**292**

Vulnerable persons of concern received NFIs as part of the winterization campaign in December 2015

### FUNDING

**USD 6.6 million**

requested for the operation



### PRIORITIES

- Support Tunisia to develop a comprehensive national protection system, allowing authorities to progressively assume its 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.

- 16 Days of Activism against Sexually and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** On 1 and 2 December 2015, as part of the 16 Days campaign to fight SGBV, UNHCR organised an information session in Sfax for refugee women to raise awareness of their rights as refugees in Tunisia, as well as on harmful practices (early marriages, unwanted pregnancies, etc.). Fifteen refugee women participated in the session facilitated by UNHCR staff with participation by the Tunisian Ministry of Social Affairs.
- Sensitization of Tunis' students on refuge and asylum issues:** On 16 December, UNHCR and its partner the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR) met students from the University of Manouba to raise awareness on the global plight of refugees as well as those in Tunisia. This action was part of UNHCR and AIHR activities to promote a favourable protection environment for refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia, and to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of civil society.

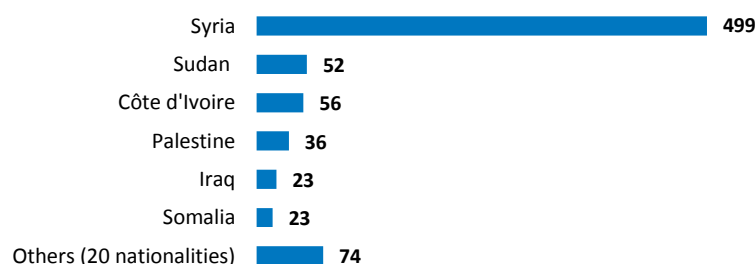


*On 16 December, students from Manouba University came to UNHCR and AIDH stand. After asking questions on the situation of asylum in Tunisia, they shared their wishes for refugees for 2016. @AIDH*

- Building the capacity of local and national NGOs on refugee issues:** UNHCR and its partner the Arab Institute for Human Rights IADH organized a three-day training for NGOs, to reinforce their capacities and knowledge on asylum issues and to identify potential future UNHCR partners in Tunisia. Among the outcomes of the workshop was the creation of a network of NGO working on refugee rights issues and the launch of a call from the NGOs to support the draft asylum law and the strengthening of the protection space in Tunisia.

### Population of concern

A total of **757** people of concern as of 1 January 2016



## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

### Operational Context

Pending the adoption and implementation of an asylum law in Tunisia, UNHCR is the sole entity conducting refugee status determination in Tunisia. UNHCR is therefore focused on ensuring that persons of concern are registered, issued with UNHCR certificates, and protected against *refoulement*. UNHCR's overall objective is to support Tunisia in creating a comprehensive national protection system. Since 2011, UNHCR supported the drafting of a national asylum law and continues to carry out advocacy and capacity building initiatives in order to help Tunisian authorities finalize the text.

### Achievements



Protection

#### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to **host survivors of rescue at sea incidents** in two dormitories in Medenine.
- UNHCR and its partner TRC conducted a winterization campaign in December. Distributed items included mattresses, blankets, gas stoves and bottles, as well as vouchers for clothes to a total of 292 vulnerable individuals in Tunisia.
- UNHCR continues to **build the capacities of local authorities to enable them to strengthen the protection space for persons of concern (POCs)** in Tunisia: In November, UNHCR delivered a series of presentations on refugee law and protection to security officers. The training events took place in Tunis, Sousse, Beja and Bir Bourragba and were organized by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the framework of its agreement with the Ministry of Interior. UNHCR presentations were practical, focusing on the legal basis for refugee protection in Tunisia and documentation issued to refugees and asylum seekers. On 22 and 23 November, UNHCR held two workshops in Tataouine and Medenine targeting local authorities. Both events gathered over 50 participants, including members of the National Guard, National Maritime Guard, and Civil Protection. UNHCR presented its mandate as well as its activities in the south. The events were an opportunity for UNHCR to further clarify questions and concerns that are regularly triggered by local authorities. Both Medenine and Tataouine Governors participated in the workshops.
- To **build the capacities of local media to objectively handle the issues of refuge and asylum**, UNHCR Tunisia held two trainings for media during the reporting period. On 20-21 November, UNHCR held a two-day training session in Djerba. Twenty-two local journalists from southern Tunisia (TV, radio and newspaper) attended the event. On 25-26 November, UNHCR and its partner IADH held a second media workshop in Tunis. These two sessions contributed to:
  - ✓ Finalization of the Code of Conduct drafted by the journalists that will guide their own work and contribution to refuge and asylum issues,
  - ✓ Creation of a network for journalists working on refugees and related issues.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is no national asylum system in place in Tunisia. UNHCR supports Tunisian authorities with the development of a national legal asylum framework, in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention & 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees to which Tunisia is a signatory. In December 2015, UNHCR signed a three-year contract with the European Union Delegation to build Tunisia's capacity in the field of asylum on legal, institutional and technical aspects.



Education

#### Achievements and Impact

- **Recreational activities** are organized on a daily basis in the UNHCR dormitories in Medenine. UNHCR partner's Tunisian Red Crescent (TRC) organized on 23 December a park excursion in Sousse for refugee children and their parents; 28 children and ten parents participated in this activity. Feedback received was positive and built trust between refugee parents, children and TRC staff.
- On 12 December, 30 refugee children and adults attending the French language courses, organized in Tunis by the NGO "Tunisie Terre d'Asile" with the support of the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, were invited to a celebration where they receive attendance certificates and prizes



*On 23 December, TRC organized an excursion for 28 refugee children to a park in Sousse. @TRC*

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- While refugee children have full access to public education in Tunisia, they may face difficulties because of language barriers. Continuous tutorial classes in French are needed to ease refugee children's integration into the Tunisian curriculum. UNHCR encouraged the initiative by NGO "Tunisie Terre d'Asile" who organizes tutorial classes in French for refugee children and adults in Tunis, and will expand this experience to reach a greater number of refugee children.



## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR supports costs for primary and emergency healthcare to refugees through its partner TRC.
- UNHCR procured equipment for an emergency coordination room in Medenine to further build the capacity of health authorities in the south and enable them to centralize the response in the region.
- Awareness raising sessions** for refugees are regularly conducted in the dormitories by UNHCR partners IRT and TRC. In November, nine refugees participated in a session on the dangers of tobacco consumption.



## Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

### Achievements and Impact

- In February 2015, UNHCR's partner ADRA started its project to support self-reliance and employability of refugees in Tunisia. As of December 2015, ADRA succeeded in advocating for eleven working permits granted by the Labor Ministry to refugees. This formal work contract approved by the Ministry of Employment, allows them to submit an application for residency with the Tunisian Ministry of Interior. While none of them have received a residency permit to date, this constitutes an encouraging step for the integration of PoCs in Tunisia.
- While UNHCR encourages self-reliance and autonomy of all Persons of Concerns throughout Tunisia, it continues to assist the most vulnerable by providing cash assistance to some 215 individuals.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The lack of documentation, especially work permits to be issued by Tunisian authorities 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 and sustainable solutions to facilitate refugee employment.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

UNHCR works closely with Tunisian authorities, most notably the Tunisian Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs, Women's Affairs, Justice and Land Affairs and Employment. UNHCR Tunisia is working with four partners: 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, and the **Arab Institute for Human Rights** (IADH) for capacity building and advocacy for Tunisian authorities, civil society and media. UNHCR is also cooperating with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), "Tunisie Terre d'Asile" and the Scouts.

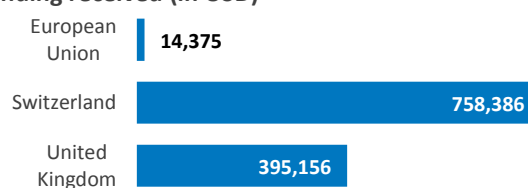
## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation in Tunisia amount to some **USD 1.2 million**.

UNHCR is grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation, and to those who have contributed to UNHCR activities with non-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds in 2015.

Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2015: United States of America (251 M) | Sweden (80 M) | United Kingdom (53 M) | Netherlands (45 M) | Priv Donors Spain (45 M) | Norway (44 M) | Denmark (28 M) | Australia (24 M) | Priv Donors Italy (19 M) | Japan (18 M) | Canada (18 M) | Priv Donors Japan (16 M) | Switzerland (16 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (14 M) | Priv Donors Sweden (13 M) | Finland (10 M)

### Funding received (in USD)



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