

TUNISIA

| Working environment |

● The context

Street protests that began throughout the country late in 2010 culminated early in 2011 in profound political changes in Tunisia. The civil war that then broke out in neighbouring Libya triggered a massive outflow into Tunisia of nearly one million people, including more than 660,000 Libyans and over 200,000 third-country nationals. It is anticipated that the deep social and political changes in this region, while presenting UNHCR with enormous challenges, will also provide unique opportunities to strengthen protection for asylum-seekers and refugees within North Africa's mixed migratory flows.

Although still recovering from its own revolution, Tunisia responded to the Libyan crisis by opening its border to all nationalities, and mounting a relief effort that was reinforced and supported by UNHCR and other partners. The Tunisian Government has since then begun to engage proactively with UNHCR and signed a cooperation agreement with UNHCR in June 2011. In addition to its long-standing collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNHCR is currently implementing projects with the Ministries of Social Affairs and Women. It is also working closely with the Ministries of Defence, Interior and Justice. UNHCR's office in Tunis hosts a number of regional technical functions.

UNHCR's operation in Tunisia targets three main populations: Libyans residing with host families in southern Tunisia; asylum-seekers and refugees of other nationalities residing in transit camps at the south-eastern border pending durable solutions; and asylum-seekers and refugees in urban areas. As of July 2011, the small but diversified urban population registered with UNHCR consisted of some 130 asylum-seekers, mostly from Côte d'Ivoire, and some 90 refugees of 21 different nationalities, concentrated primarily in Tunis. At the time of writing, the population residing in the UNHCR-run transit camp in southern Tunisia comprises around 1,470 asylum seekers and more than 2,230 refugees from 31 countries, mostly Eritreans, Somalis, and Sudanese.

While Tunisia had not previously been an important access route for people attempting to reach Europe, since early 2011 it has been at the centre of an asylum-migration debate as



thousands of Tunisians attempted to reach Italy in irregular movements across the Mediterranean.

● The needs

Since the violence erupted in Libya in February 2011, more than 200,000 third-country nationals have entered Tunisia from Libya. A transit camp was set up in Ras Djir near the Tunisian-Libyan border to host third-country nationals. While most were able to return home with assistance from their own governments, UNHCR or IOM; over 3,700 people originating mainly from war-torn countries requested asylum. Because of Tunisia's limited absorption capacity, coupled with the refusal of most refugees in the transit-camp to remain in Tunisia, UNHCR will submit as many cases as possible for resettlement before the end of 2011.

Planning figures for Tunisia

TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	JAN 2012		DEC 2012 - JAN 2013		DEC 2013	
		TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR
Refugees	Various	3,610	3,540	3,130	3,040	1,150	1,040
Asylum-seekers	Various	80	20	80	20	80	20
Others of Concern	Various	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	5,500	5,500
Total		14,190	14,190	14,190	14,190	9,190	9,190

In addition to third-country nationals, the Government of Tunisia estimates that some 90,000 Libyans sought refuge on its territory between April and July 2011. The vast majority were accommodated by Tunisian host families, although UNHCR also set up a small transit camp in Tataouine to accommodate those in need of shelter. Meanwhile, a temporary protection scheme for Libyans was *de facto* applied by the Tunisian authorities.

With the evolution of the situation in Libya, many Libyans have started to return home from Tunisia. UNHCR has closed the transit camp in Tataouine as part of the consolidation of its operations. However, almost all non-Libyans, in particular those from sub-Saharan Africa, remain in UNHCR's transit camp in southern Tunisia. This is because many sub-Saharan Africans were accused of working as mercenaries when the civil war broke out in Libya. Because of a fear of xenophobia in the post-conflict period, sub-Saharan Africans may continue to try and gain entry to Tunisia. Many others may attempt to reach Europe by clandestine means on makeshift vessels, which could result – as has been seen in 2011 – in disembarkation in Tunisia following rescue-at-sea.

UNHCR will need to maintain sufficient capacity at the border to manage the transit camp, and to respond to any new outflows from Libya, although steps have already been taken to consolidate and stabilize operations. In addition to ensuring that the basic needs of people of concern are met, UNHCR will



A distribution of mattresses funded by the IKEA Foundation to refugees from Libya in Choucha camp.

process asylum claims and, where appropriate, refer recognized refugees for resettlement. At the same time, as part of an overall effort to encourage more State responsibility in providing international protection and managing mixed migratory flows, UNHCR will raise public awareness and build national asylum capacity.

Strategy and activities

UNHCR will capitalize on the opportunities offered in post-revolution Tunisia to promote respect for the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees and to preserve the current attitudes of openness and tolerance. It will work with the Government, universities, youth groups and student organizations, as well as with civil society, and the media. The overall aim will be to ensure a more direct engagement by the

Main objectives and targets for 2012

Fair protection processes and documentation

- Reception conditions are improved.
 - ⌚ Asylum-seekers are able to access procedures.
 - ⌚ Interventions are made for individual cases.
 - ⌚ People at risk of violations of their rights are identified and individually supported.
- Access to, and the quality of, status-determination procedures are improved.
 - ⌚ Positions are provided or interventions made in judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings.
 - ⌚ Information is provided to people of concern.
 - ⌚ Government implements status-determination procedures.

Security from violence and exploitation

- The risk of gender-based violence is reduced and the quality of response to it improved.
 - ⌚ All survivors of gender-based violence receive support.
- Protection from crime is strengthened.
 - ⌚ Capacity building is undertaken and advocacy conducted.
 - ⌚ Security packages and support are provided.

Basic needs and services

- The population in transit camps has sufficient supplies of basic and domestic items.
 - ⌚ Individual/family support is provided.

Durable solutions

- A comprehensive solutions strategy is developed, strengthened or updated.
 - ⌚ Comprehensive solutions profiling of the population of concern is conducted.
- The potential for resettlement is realized.
 - ⌚ Cases for resettlement, including women and girls at risk, are identified.
- The potential for voluntary return is realized.
 - ⌚ All returnees receive guidance and return assistance.

Community empowerment and self-reliance

- Peaceful coexistence with local communities is promoted.
 - ⌚ Projects benefiting host communities and displaced communities are implemented.

Logistics and operations support

- Operations management, coordination and support are strengthened and optimized.
 - ⌚ General project management and support services are provided.

UNHCR's presence in 2012

□ Number of offices	2
□ Total staff	66
International	15
National	44
UNVs	1
Regional Hub	6

Government of Tunisia and civil society in protecting people of concern by providing the technical support and guidance necessary to develop and implement a legal and institutional framework for asylum.

Should Libyans continue to seek refuge in Tunisia, UNHCR will maintain its community-based approach, implementing quick impact projects to minimize the burden on the host population, increase absorption capacity and promote tolerance in refugee-hosting areas.

While working with the authorities to put in place a national asylum law and institution, UNHCR will maintain sufficient capacity to process asylum claims. Within the context of international solidarity, it will refer refugees in the transit camp for resettlement and, at the same time work with partners such as IOM to develop voluntary-return programmes for rejected asylum-seekers.

○ Constraints

Government institutions remain fragile, with lack of capacity to fulfil responsibilities under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Decades of restrictive asylum practice have deprived Tunisia of experience in applying international protection principles; intensive training and support is therefore required to strengthen overall understanding of refugee law. The absorption capacity of host communities is limited by high levels of unemployment and poverty.

Organization and implementation

○ Coordination

UNHCR has a longstanding partnership with the Tunisian Red Crescent, which was the first point of contact for people of

concern in urban areas. In the post-revolution environment, UNHCR will use every opportunity to expand and consolidate partnerships with grass-roots organizations. The Office is also engaging more with international organizations such as the Danish Refugee Council, Islamic Relief International and Save the Children, which are establishing their presence for the first time in Tunisia.

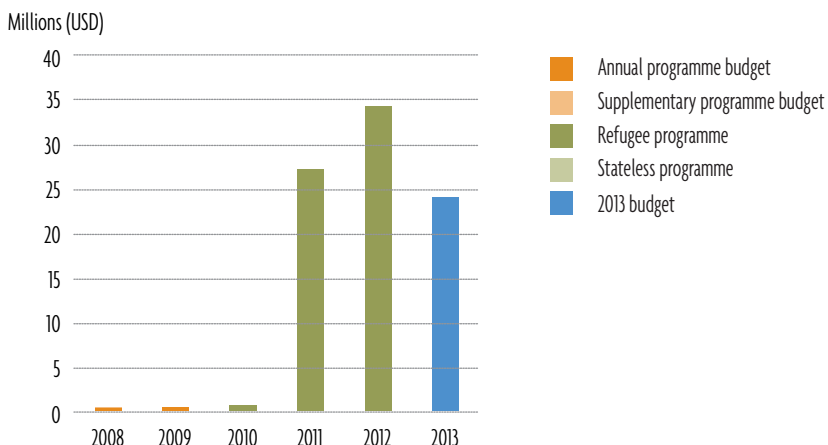
As an active member of the UN Country Team, UNHCR currently leads the humanitarian response in southern Tunisia. UNHCR has engaged with IOM since 2009 on voluntary return and reintegration, as well as in training volunteers from the Tunisian Red Crescent. UNHCR also works closely with IFRC and ICRC, particularly with regard to gaining access to people of concern in detention centres, and facilitating family reunification.

In addition, evaluations are currently taking place to determine which further two implementing partners will work with UNHCR in Tunisia in 2012.

Financial information

UNHCR has increased its budget for Tunisia significantly from less than USD 1 million at the beginning of 2011 to over USD 34 million in 2012 to open a full-fledged office in Tunis, with a hub tasked with regional coordination functions, and facilitating the creation of a legal and institutional framework in Tunisia. Another office was opened in Zarzis to manage the transit camp at the Tunisian-Libyan border, process asylum claims and refer non-Libyan refugees for resettlement. This office also provides community-based assistance in areas where Libyans are hosted and undertakes protection monitoring at Tunisia's two official border crossings.

UNHCR's budget in Tunisia 2008 – 2013



2012 UNHCR Budget in Tunisia (USD)

BUDGET BREAKDOWN	REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	TOTAL
Favourable protection environment		
Law and policy	567,520	567,520
Access to territory and <i>non-refoulement</i>	326,578	326,578
Public attitude towards people of concern	728,158	728,158
Subtotal	1,622,257	1,622,257
Fair protection processes and documentation		
Reception conditions	505,986	505,986
Identification of statelessness	175,530	175,530
Registration and profiling	1,295,986	1,295,986
Refugee status determination	1,457,406	1,457,406
Individual documentation	311,420	311,420
Family re-unification	377,324	377,324
Subtotal	4,123,652	4,123,652
Security from violence and exploitation		
Protection from crime	768,158	768,158
Prevention of and response to SGBV	1,010,483	1,010,483
Subtotal	1,778,641	1,778,641
Basic needs and essential services		
Health	2,497,406	2,497,406
Reproductive health and HIV services	155,710	155,710
Basic domestic and hygiene items	10,406,015	10,406,015
Services for people with specific needs	317,324	317,324
Education	155,710	155,710
Subtotal	13,532,165	13,532,165
Community empowerment and self-reliance		
Self-reliance and livelihoods	321,335	321,335
Subtotal	321,335	321,335
Durable solutions		
Comprehensive solutions strategy	168,662	168,662
Voluntary return	911,696	911,696
Integration	512,836	512,836
Resettlement	363,372	363,372
Subtotal	1,956,566	1,956,566
Leadership, coordination and partnerships		
Coordination and partnerships	517,324	517,324
Camp management and coordination	2,822,324	2,822,324
Subtotal	3,339,649	3,339,649
Logistics and operations support		
Operations management, coordination and support	7,797,324	7,797,324
Subtotal	7,797,324	7,797,324
Total	34,471,589	34,471,589
2011 Revised budget	27,280,848	27,280,848

PARTNERS

Implementing partners

NGOs

Islamic Relief Worldwide
Tunisian Red Crescent

Operational partners

Others

ICRC
IFRC