

# Tunisia

September 2019

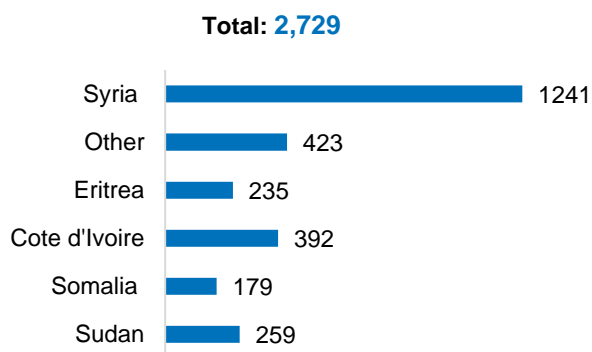
UNHCR provides **assistance and protection** to refugees and asylum-seekers, including those identified in the context of **mixed population flows**. UNHCR also supports emergency preparedness efforts in case of a **potential major influx**.

UNHCR supports the Tunisian government's continued efforts towards **saving lives through rescue at sea**, as well as its humanitarian response for **permitting disembarkation** in Tunisia.

UNHCR continues to advocate towards the **establishment of a national asylum system**, and supports **national capacity building** on protection matters for refugees and asylum-seekers.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

by country of origin

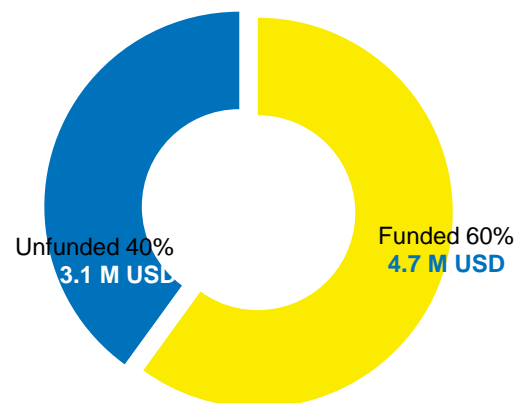


As of 30 September 2019

## FUNDING (AS OF 2 OCT 2019)

**USD 7.8 M**

requested for the Tunisia operation



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

37 National Staff

12 International Staff

### Offices:

1 Branch Office in Tunis

1 Field Office in Zarzis

Staff Presence in

Medenine, Sfax and Gabes



Syrian refugee set up her own business in Nabeul thanks to livelihood programme carried out with UNHCR partner ADRA in 2018 © UNHCR

## Working with Partners

Together with the Tunisian Government, UNHCR ensures international protection and delivery of multi-sectorial assistance to persons of concern. UNHCR collaborates closely with other UN Agencies and humanitarian actors for a coordinated and effective response. The following partners implement specific sector activities:

- **Arab Institute for Human Rights (IADH)** - capacity building and advocacy on international protection and asylum issues, including in the context of mixed movements; legal assistance.
- **Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability (TAMSS)** – livelihoods and self-reliance, support to access employment, including vocational training, micro-business and wage employment.
- **Tunisian Refugees Council (CTR)** – profiling of new arrivals; reception and shelter management; multi-sector assistance (food vouchers and non-food items, cash assistance); support to healthcare and education; individual case management and community based protection; protection and prevention against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); child protection; psychosocial support; assistance to persons with specific needs; counselling and recreational activities in the context of mixed population flows.

UNHCR is a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Tunisia and contributes to the 2015 - 2020 United Nations Development Assistance Framework's (UNDAF) planning and reporting activities.

## Main Activities

### Protection

- In the absence of a formal national asylum system, UNHCR carries out **registration of asylum-seekers** and **refugee status determination (RSD)** to ensure that persons of concern are identified and documented. This helps to prevent arbitrary arrest, detention or *refoulement*. In 2017, UNHCR introduced biometric enrolment to improve the quality of data collected and to help prevent fraud.
- Together with civil society partners, UNHCR continues to advocate for the Government of Tunisia to present the draft **National Asylum Law** to Parliament for adoption. At the request of the Government, UNHCR had provided technical guidance to the Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies during the drafting process.
- UNHCR trains border officials to raise their awareness of **asylum and protection issues in the context of mixed population flows**. Tunisian border guards frequently rescue boats in distress off the Tunisian coast, including many departing from Libya. Groups of migrants and refugees attempting irregular crossings of the Tunisia-Libya land border (travelling in either direction) are also frequently intercepted. UNHCR seeks to ensure that border management takes into consideration the protection needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.
- UNHCR uses a participatory approach to enhance **community-based protection**, building links between different service providers and increasing engagement with refugee communities. UNHCR partner the Tunisian Refugees Council (CTR) works to develop safe spaces and promoting communication with affected communities, in order to better identify and refer people with specific needs or a heightened protection risk, such as survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and unaccompanied or separated minors.

- UNHCR's partner the Arab Institute for Human Rights (IADH) provides legal counselling and legal representation to support refugees and asylum seekers seeking legal assistance.

#### **Education**

- Children who are refugees or asylum-seekers have access to primary and secondary education. To increase school attendance, UNHCR and its partners provide one time education grants for students as a contribution to help parents purchase books and school supplies.

#### **Health**

- Refugees and asylum-seekers have access to basic public health facilities, on a level similar to Tunisian nationals. UNHCR, through its partner CTR, reimburses medical expenses and medicines for basic primary health care, chronic diseases, and emergency medical interventions for vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees.

#### **Food Security and Nutrition**

- Asylum seekers and refugees hosted in shelters receive weekly vouchers to purchase food and other items of their choice. Some refugees receive multi-purpose cash assistance to support meeting basic needs.

#### **Shelter and NFIs**

- Asylum seekers and refugees have access to temporary accommodation in shelters while their Refugee Status is being processed.

#### **Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance**

- With its partner the Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability (TAMMS), UNHCR is enhancing refugees' self-reliance and livelihood opportunities by supporting their access to tailored vocational training, micro-businesses and wage employment with private companies.

#### **Durable Solutions**

- UNHCR endeavours to find solutions for refugees such as resettlement in other countries whenever possible; but also through private sponsorship, family reunification and naturalization. When conditions are suitable, UNHCR facilitates the assisted voluntary repatriation of refugees. In other cases, UNHCR supports refugees to integrate temporarily within Tunisian society and economy.

#### **Emergency preparedness**

- At the request of the Tunisian Government in cases of large influx from Libya, since 2014 UNHCR has led, together with IOM, the coordination of inter-agency preparedness efforts, in close cooperation with the Government and other partners. A collaborative revision process requested by the Government was initiated in early 2019. Sectorial preparedness plans have been developed.

## Key priorities for 2019

- Support the adoption of the draft national asylum law and, through continued capacity building, foster good practices in the interim.
- Continue profiling, registration and refugee status determination in order to identify persons in need of international protection in the context of mixed population flows.
- Promote refugees' self-reliance through supporting access to livelihoods and to basic services, as well as prioritizing direct assistance to the most vulnerable.

## Key challenges for 2019

- The comprehensive domestic legislation to establish a national protection system for refugees and asylum-seekers is still pending adoption, leaving refugees and asylum seekers in a fragile legal and socio-economic situation.
- Tunisia is significantly affected by volatile political and security situations of neighbouring countries, in particular Libya. Increased new arrivals severely challenge the limited absorption capacity of Tunisia.
- Shelter capacity to accommodate new arrivals remains a challenge. Number of asylum seekers waiting for RSD continue to accrue, in spite of enhanced staff capacity.

## External / Donors Relations

### Special thanks to earmarked donors for UNHCR operations in Tunisia in 2019

Italy (2.2 M) | United States of America (0.6 M) | Switzerland (0.4 M) | Netherlands (0.3 M) | RDPP NA – EU (0.3 M) | Luxembourg (0.2 M) | Monaco (0.08 M)

### Thanks to the major donors of softly earmarked and unearmarked funds in 2019

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### LINKS

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