

# TUNISIA

31 May 2022

## Key figures

**9,703** people of concern to UNHCR (asylum-seekers & refugees)

**508** people of concern to UNHCR registered in Tunisia in 2022

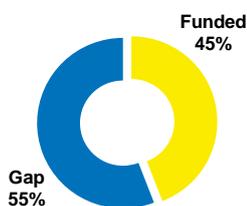
**33** individuals profiled within mixed movements in 2022

**277** refugee and asylum-seeking households received cash assistance during May 2022

**6** people departed on resettlement to third countries and **34** individual files have been submitted by UNHCR for resettlement so far in 2022

## Funding

**\$8.5 M** required in 2022



**\$3.8 M** received as of 07 June 2022

## Operational Context

As of the date of publication, since 15 April 2022 about 200 of refugees, asylum-seekers and other individuals who do not fall within UNHCR's mandate had been staging a sit-in in front of the UNHCR Office in Tunis, demanding resettlement or evacuation from Tunis to third countries. This protest followed a similar sit-in that took place in front of the UNHCR Office in Zarzis for over two months.

Between 22 and 23 May, a boat carrying 100 individuals sank off the coast of Sfax, after having departed from Zouara (Libya) with the aim to reach Europe. Tunisian authorities rescued 24 individuals and recovered one body, while all other passengers went missing. Tunisian authorities and the Tunisian Red Crescent provided emergency assistance, while UNHCR partner, Tunisian Refugee Council (CTR), conducted counselling jointly with IOM on the options available in Tunisia.

## Operational Response

UNHCR continued to meet and engage with demonstrators every day. Positive progress was made during the last round of focus group discussions, conducted between 9 and 11 May, building upon previous mediation efforts to identify common solutions to the situation. Such discussions were still ongoing at the end of the month, with the main objective of supporting the group by temporarily relocating them from the streets to a safe and secure shelter facility and by addressing urgent health needs. Moreover, UNHCR continued to engage and discuss with governmental institutions, both on the local and national level, and pursued constructive operational coordination with civil society organizations. UNHCR also held meetings with the EU Delegation in Tunisia and other donor partners, together with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM, for strategic coordination on the sit-in situation and beyond.

Three workshops organized by IOM and co-led by UNHCR were held on 17, 24 and 31 May, aimed at strengthening the protection of children on the move in Tunisia, in collaboration with the General Delegate for Child Protection and the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and Seniors. This series of workshops brought together various government ministries, international and civil society organizations working to support children on the move through the various challenges they face in Tunisia. Whereas the first two sessions primarily focused on medium and long-term solutions to reinforce access to health, education and identity rights; the last aimed to channel those conversations into formulating concrete public policy objectives.



*Awareness session with refugee women on personal hygiene and reproductive health alongside the distribution of hygiene kits ©CTR*

To mark the International Menstrual Hygiene Day, celebrated on 28 May, 75 refugee women in Zarzis and Tataouine received home visits from UNHCR, a CTR psychologist and nurse, and experts in sexual and reproductive health from the Tunisian Association for Reproductive Health (ATSR). The visits aimed to raise awareness about personal hygiene and prevention against sexually transmitted diseases. Hygiene kits were also distributed.

Several activities aimed at improving refugees and asylum-seekers' mental health were conducted during the month. Namely, two focus group discussions with a psychologist were conducted for a group of 21 refugees from Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea, with the aim of supporting them in understanding their trauma and learning healthy coping mechanisms. Three refugee women also benefitted from three art therapy sessions (dance and movements) in Medenine.

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