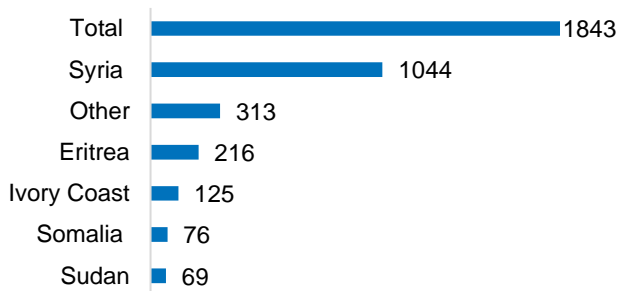# Tunisia

April 2019

UNHCR provides **assistance and protection** to refugees and asylum-seekers, including those identified in the context of **mixed migration movements**. 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.

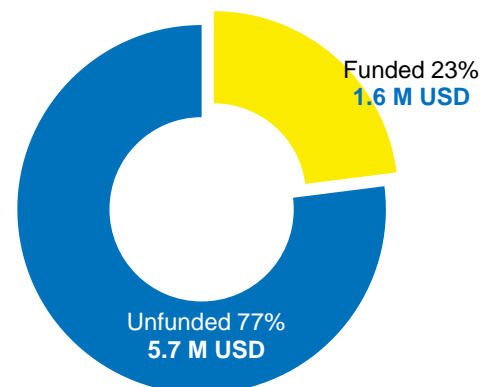## POPULATION OF CONCERN
by country of origin

Country	Value
Total	1843
Syria	1044
Other	313
Eritrea	216
Ivory Coast	125
Somalia	76
Sudan	69

As of 30 April 2019

FUNDING (AS OF 30 APRIL 2019)

USD 7.3 M

requested for the Tunisia operation

Funded 23%
1.6 M USD

Unfunded 77%
5.7 M USD

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

30 National Staff

16 International Staff

Offices:

1 Branch Office in Tunis

1 Field Office in Zarzis

Staff Presence in Medenine and Sfax

Distribution of non-food items during the winter season © 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:

■ **Tunisian Red Crescent (TRC) -** profiling of new arrivals; reception and shelter management; multi–sector assistance (food and non-food items, cash vouchers); healthcare support and reimbursements; education support.

■ **Arab Institute for Human Rights (IADH) -** capacity building and advocacy on international protection; asylum issues including in the context of mixed migration movement and legal assistance.

■ **Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability (TAMSS) -** livelihoods and support to access employment**,** including vocational trainings, micro-business and wage employment.

■ **Tunisian Council for Refugees (CTR) -** case management; 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 migration.

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 migration**. 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 Tunisia uses a participatory approach to enhance **community-based protection**, building links between different service providers and increasing engagement with refugee communities. Through the Tunisian Council for Refugees' (CTR) work developing safe spaces and promoting communication with affected communities, UNHCR and its partners can better identify and refer people with specific needs or heightened protection risks, such as survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and unaccompanied or separated minors.

Education

■ Children who are refugees or asylum-seekers have access to primary and secondary education. To increase school attendance, UNHCR and its partners provide education grants to help parents purchase books and school supplies. In some locations, refugee children also benefit from accelerated learning programmes to support their integration.

Health

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

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

■ With its partner the Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability (TAMSS), 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 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. UNHCR identifies persons with specific protection criteria, supporting refugees for resettlement to other countries whenever possible.

Emergency preparedness

■ At the request of the Tunisian Government in cases of large influx from Libya, UNHCR since 2014 has been leading the coordination of inter-agency preparedness efforts, in close cooperation with the Government, IOM and other partners. A collaborative revision process requested by the Government was initiated in early 2019. While the Government leads internal consultations, UN agencies – led by UNHCR and IOM – are initiating sectorial preparedness plans.

Key priorities for 2019

■ Supporting the adoption of the draft national asylum law and, through continued capacity building, supporting the Tunisian uptake of best practices in the interim.

■ Continuing profiling, registration and refugee status determination in order to identify persons in need of international protection in the context of mixed migration.

■ Promoting 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

■ A draft comprehensive domestic legislation to establish a national protection system for refugees and asylum-seekers was drafted in 2016, but has yet to be formally adopted.

■ While some refugees and asylum-seekers can claim rights and access livelihoods and basic services (e.g. health, education) without a comprehensive domestic legal framework, many remain in a fragile legal and socio-economic situation.

■ Tunisia is in a region significantly affected by mixed migration flows in which potentially volatile political situations could result in increased movements of people, including large influxes due to conflicts in neighbouring states

■ UNHCR Tunisia remains severely underfunded, with only 23 per cent raised of the money requested to cover basic needs for refugees, asylum seekers and other persons of concern in 2019.

External / Donors Relations

Special thanks to donors for UNHCR operations in Tunisia in 2019
Italy (2.2 M) | Switzerland (0.4 M) | RDPP - Italy (0.3 M) | Monaco (0.08 M)

Thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2019
Sweden | Norway | Netherlands | United Kingdom | Germany | Denmark | Private Donors Spain | Switzerland | Private Donors Republic of Korea | Private Donors Australia | Malta

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