



## WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2020 in Tunisia

On 20 June, UNHCR celebrates the World Refugee Day. It has been 20 years since the United Nations designated this moment to reflect on the fact that millions of families have been forced from their homes because of violence or persecution, and to honor their resilience and courage.

In 2020, we mark World Refugee Day against a backdrop of dramatic social change. Not only have record numbers of people fled their homes to find safety – but the entire world is grappling with the devastation of the global COVID-19 pandemic. This global health crisis is evolving into an economic crisis, and in turn, has exposed raw social inequalities in our societies.

Tunisia currently hosts more than 4,000 refugees and asylum seekers, most of them belonging to the most vulnerable groups in the society. They have been severely impacted by the global health crisis, the same way as Tunisian citizens. During the pandemic, we have seen how ordinary people became heroes by stepping up and leaning to help. More than 2,500 refugees and asylum seekers across 17 governorates have been reached by this solidarity coming from civil society, private companies and private citizens.

UNHCR Tunisia and its partners marked the day with festivities, sports events and debates across the main cities of the country. Refugees, asylum seekers, civil society organizations, donors, authorities and media as well as private citizens joined the celebrations and showed support, in person but also through social media.

### Virtual events

Two webinars were organized by UNHCR and the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR) on 18 and 19 June 2020 and broadcasted live on UNHCR Tunisia Facebook page and on AIHR Facebook page. The main themes of discussion were the support and the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia.

The first webinar (18 June), with the title “Support to refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia: protection, assistance and durable solutions”; facilitated by Mehdi Kattou (journalist, producer, anchor) saw the participation of representatives of the EU Delegation in Tunisia, the Embassy of the Netherlands, the Embassy of Switzerland and the Monaco Cooperation. The discussion aimed at exploring the ongoing projects supporting refugee, asylum seekers and host communities in different sectors (protection, livelihoods, essential needs, capacity building) and the way forward to widening the protection space in Tunisia.

The second webinar (19 June), with the title "Inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia, between solidarity and durable solutions"; facilitated by Amel Chahed (journalist, producer, anchor) saw the participation of representatives of the Ivorians asylum seekers in Sfax, the BAYA Association of Sfax, the Tunisian Ligue of Human Rights (LTDH) and the National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT). The discussion allowed reflection on how to further capitalize and sustain the solidarity and commitment demonstrated by the Civil Society Organizations, Tunisian citizens and the Tunisian government towards the protection of refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia.



لقاء عن بعد حول:  
**إدماج اللاجئين وطالبي اللجوء في تونس  
 بين التضامن والحلول الدائمة**  
 19 جوان 2020 بداية من الساعة 10:00 إلى 12:00

انضموا إلى اللقاء عبر  
 852 5085 9817

إدارة الحوار: الإعلامية أمل الشاهد

بمشاركة ممثلين/ات عن منظمات المجتمع المدني

Logos: UNHCR, BAYA, LTDH



À l'occasion de la Journée mondiale du réfugié  
**webinaire sur**

Le soutien aux réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile en Tunisie  
**Protection, assistance  
 et solutions durables**  
 18 juin 2020 du 10h30 au 12h00

Animé par : MEHDI KATTOU

Rejoindre via ZOOM  
 895 1980 0897

Avec la participation de :

Logos: Gouvernement Princier Principauté de Monaco, Hungary, EU, Switzerland

The events hosted around 20-25 participants each, the live broadcast was followed by more than 100 people and the events had a total social media outreach of 1,000 people.

## Sport events



Group picture after match in Tunis ©UNHCR

Sport is the best way to promote the values of WRD. This year, three football matches were organized: one in Tunis where two teams of young refugees and asylum seekers of different nationalities (Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Congo, etc.) met on the field of the Juventus Academy for a friendly competition; another one in Zarzis, where a team representing the residents of the Zeitoun shelter, including refugees from Soudan, Somalia and Cameroun met the team of the Ben Guerdane Road shelter, including Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers, in the Old Municipality stadium of Zarzis. The third one took place in Sfax, in the stadium of "Montazah al hakim". Twenty-five players of different nationalities (refugees and asylum seekers from Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, Eritrea as well as Tunisian citizens), aged from 16 to 37 years old met to celebrate friendship.

## Movie shows

Beside sports, cultural activities also took place. Namely, two movie projections were organized, one in Tunis for the French-speaking LGBTI+ refugee community and another one in Sfax for refugees and local children, with the support of the Scouts and the participation of a delegate of the Minister of Women, Family, Childhood, Elderly.

In Tunis, the movie projected was a comedy titled "Click", in which the main character has a magic remote to control time, that he starts to use to change his life as he pleases, until the moment he cannot control the tool anymore.

The discussion that followed was axed on the importance of social integration of the LGBTI+ community in Tunisia and the global challenges linked to the discrimination based on sexual orientation. The participants also discussed what they would do if they had a magic remote as the one in the movie.

In Sfax, children from different backgrounds (refugees, children from S.O.S. Village d'Enfants and locals) gathered around the projection of three short animated movies, which main topics were love, acceptance and tolerance; followed by outdoor activities with the Scouts aimed at getting to know each other and overcome prejudice.

### Activities for children and families

Recreational activities for the little ones and their families took place in Tunis, Sousse, Sfax and Gabes, between the 18 and 25 June. In Tunis, the Equestrian Center of the Belvedere hosted 30 children under 14 and their parents for a morning of games.

In Sfax, refugee and local families get together at the "Touta Garden" for an open-air breakfast sponsored by local associations BAYA and EL Mezyena, with games and clown show.

In Gabes, refugee students from Syria were awarded for their school achievements at the presence of local authorities and representatives of ministers of Women, Family, Childhood, Elderly and Social Affairs. The ceremony ended with games and clown show.



Breakfast together in "Touta Garden" of Sfax ©UNHCR

### Celebrations in refugee shelters



Children entertainment in Ibn Khaldun shelter © CTR

The biggest celebrations took place in the two main UNHCR refugee shelters, located in Zarzis and Medenine. In Zarzis "Olive Tree" shelter, the day was marked by video projections, music and refreshments; while in Medenine "Ibn Khaldun" shelter, a graffiti workshop was organized for the young and adult and a drawing workshop was organized for the children, accompanied by traditional food and DJ set.

Moreover, a Speakup! workshop for women was organized at Ibn Khaldun shelter, animated by local associations like "Afaq for the Advancement of social work" and the "Tunisian association for

women and development". The workshop was an opportunity to share experiences and to create bounds between women from different backgrounds. Twenty women of different nationalities, including refugees from Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia and Tunisian citizen participated with dances, drawings and messages calling for global women solidarity.

### Raising awareness

Raising awareness around the situation of refugees and asylum seekers was at the core of the World Refugee Day activities. On 22 June, an information day to present service providers and enhance coordination among different actors was organized by UNHCR and its partners in Tataouine at the benefit of local authorities.

Moreover, from 22 to 26 June, UNHCR Office in Sfax opened its doors to the big public. Refugees, asylum seekers and member of the host community animated the office with live wall paintings and dances.

In Medenine, local authorities, refugees and asylum seekers joined UNHCR and partners in honoring the service providers who supported persons of concern to UNHCR during COVID-19 confinement. The celebration was accompanied by a play and dances performed by refugee and host community children.

In Sousse, the Municipality hosted a celebration in "Dar Echraa" in the Medina of Sousse, to present a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants living in Sousse and the actions undertaken by the municipality for their inclusion. A new project was presented, consisting in setting up a network to defend the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Sousse and creating a listening and monitoring center for them.



*UNHCR and CTR representatives awarding service providers in Tataouine ©CTR*

### Media outreach

- UNHCR Tunisia Representative and the President of the Arab Institute of Human Rights at National Tv 1: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=561826421388524>
- Nadjia Hafsa, Head of Protection Unit interviewed at RTCI on the occasion of WRD 2020: [https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=586952121956744&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=586952121956744&ref=watch_permalink)
- Naoufel Tounsi, Assistant Field Officer interviewed at Radio Med: <https://radiomedtunisie.com/-/اخبار/تونس-اوطنية/4430-لاجئ-في-تونس-اغلبهم-من-سوريا-فيديو>
- Naoufel Tounsi, Assistant Field Officer at National TV: [https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=305828560581893&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=305828560581893&ref=watch_permalink)
- Naoufel Tounsi, Assistant Field Officer at National Radio: <https://www.facebook.com/radionationaleTun/videos/305828560581893>