

TUNISIA

31 March 2020

Key figures

4,494

Persons of concern to UNHCR (asylum seekers & refugees)

1,197

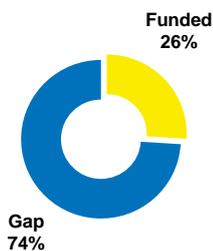
Newly registered POCs so far in 2020 as part of an enhanced backlog clearing exercise

97

Individuals were profiled so far in 2020 to assess their need for international protection

Funding

USD **8.8 M** required in 2020



USD **2.2 M** received as of 19 March 2020

Highlights

All information related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the preventive and response measures put in place by UNHCR and partners is detailed in a dedicated report available [here](#).

Despite several calls for a ceasefire in Libya to tackle COVID-19, the Libyan National Army (LNA) forces led by Khalifa Haftar continued their advance towards the border with Tunisia. Tunisian military presence was reinforced along land and maritime borders with Libya while the border remained closed. Emergency preparedness efforts continued with a joint technical UN mission (9 – 10 March) to the border area, namely to the entry points of Ras Jedir and Dehiba in addition to the location proposed by Tunisian authorities to establish a camp (Bir Fatnassia). Moreover, several meetings were held with the UN Agencies involved in the contingency planning exercise aimed at updating needs and budget to respond to an eventual influx of people seeking safety in Tunisia. Interagency coordination continued, as well as regular meetings with IOM and the UN Resident Coordinator.

Operational Response

Given the preventive measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19, registration and Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures were put on hold until further notice except for urgent cases (detention); while alternative modalities are being explored. The RSD team continued its work on pending assessments and appeal reviews, while addressing queries from refugees and asylum seekers through a dedicated email address. Resettlement travels were also suspended, while the finalization of assessments continued.

Six persons detained in the Al Wardia Reception and Orientation Center were able to access asylum procedures, be released and registered, thanks to the collaboration between UNHCR and the Direction of Borders and Foreigners (DFE).

During the first week of March, UNHCR partner Tunisian Refugee Council (CTR) organized a sensitization session on preventive and hygiene measures to adopt against COVID-19 in the Ain Zrig primary school (Gabes), frequented by Syrian refugee children. Some 500 bottles of anti-bacterial soap were distributed to all pupils.

At the start of the lockdown, more than 550 vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers hosted in shelters and urban areas of Medenine, Zarzis, Sfax and Tataouine received food vouchers until the end of March, in order to avoid further gatherings. Food vouchers will be replaced by cash assistance starting from the month of April.

Moreover, 442 refugees and asylum seekers of different nationalities received food and hygiene items from different civil society organizations across the country (Sfax, Tataouine, Djerba, Zarzis, Ben Guerdane) under the coordination of UNHCR's partner CTR, who is also mobilizing civil society in other cities (Gabes, Sidi Bouzid, Gafsa, Kebili).

On 11-12 March, UNHCR partner the Arab Institute for Human Rights organized a workshop for the representatives of the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, to brief them about the principles of international protection, the asylum context in Tunisia and to present the global livelihoods approach as well as the livelihoods programme UNHCR and its partner Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability (TAMSS) are carrying out. During the workshop, the participants developed a draft manual of standard procedures aimed at better inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in vocational training and employment opportunities available in Tunisia, that will be finalized in the coming period.

UNHCR Tunisia is grateful for the support of [European Union](#) | [Italy](#) | [Monaco](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [RDPP NA – EU](#) | [Switzerland](#) and to those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds.