

Southern Tunisia Dehiba/Remada UNHCR Update # 6



Overview

Located in Tunisia's southern governorate in Tataouine and close to Libya's Western Mountains regions, Dehiba is one of the two official border points between Tunisia and Libya. Through this point, according to the Tunisian authorities, more than 40,000 Libyan refugees who originate mainly from the Western Mountains region in Libya crossed into Tunisia since the 6th of April, citing the ongoing violence and intensified fighting in their regions as the cause for their departure.

In addition, Tunisia continues to receive and assist thousands of migrant workers and refugees through Ras Ajdir border point, with the support of the UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs. As of 4 May, 339,223 persons have arrived to Tunisia, including 33,194 Tunisians, 129,169 Libyans and 176,860 nationals of other countries.

The majority of the Libyan refugees have crossed into Tunisia through unofficial mountains routes around Dehiba area. Upon entry into Tunisian territory, they stamp their documents in order to legalize their stay in the country.

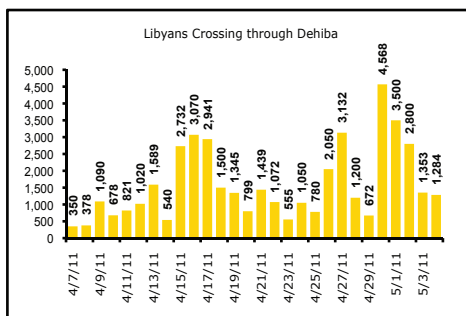
It is noticed that when Dehiba crossing point is under the control of the opposition forces, Libyans cross through the official border.

In consultation with the Tunisian authorities, on 11 April UNHCR established a camp in Remada town, 47 km north west of Dehiba, to provide shelter and assistance to the Libyan refugees. The camp, set up in a football field designated by the authorities, was initially to receive up to 1,000 people. The camp is being expanded to provide shelter to 10,000 potential new arrivals. Basic services (water, sanitation, food and protection) are available in the camp. Moreover, the UAE Red Crescent set up another camp at Dehiba town to provide shelter, food, water and health services to up to 2,000 people.

However, the majority of Libyan refugees is still being hosted by the local community in Dehiba, Remada and Tataouine areas. Youth centres, public buildings and Tunisian homes have opened their doors to the Libyan families, providing them with shelter and assistance. It is estimated that over 40,000 Libyans are now hosted by the local community.

A number of NGOs and civil society organizations are joining forces and providing shelter, food and water to the Libyan refugees through the activation of a community-based outreach network.

UNHCR is in contact with local authorities, UN agencies, local and international NGOs to coordinate the humanitarian response to Libyan refugees, including by strengthening the reception capacity of the host community.



For further information, please contact:

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Main developments

Dehiba border point

- On 5 May at 19.30 hours, military confrontations resumed on the Libyan side of Dehiba area between government and opposition forces. Shells reportedly landed on the mountains close to Dehiba. No injured were reported. The border remains under the control of the opposition forces. However, the road leading to the official crossing point with Tunisia was reportedly captured by government forces.

- On 4 May, 1,284 Libyan refugees fled to Tunisia through Dehiba border point. Up to date, 44,308 Libyans officially crossed to Tunisia. Many more Libyans are reportedly fleeing into Tunisia illegally.

Dehiba town

- 891 Libyans are hosted in the UAE Red Crescent camp in Dehiba town as of 4 May.

Remada

- 1,530 Libyans are hosted in the UNHCR camp in Remada as of 4 May.

- UNHCR is working on upgrading the living conditions in Remada camp beyond UNHCR standards, including by installing prefabricated toilettes.

Tataouine

- Reports from Tunisian authorities, local communities as well as Libyan new arrivals indicate that the number of Libyans displaced within the host communities in southern Tunisia may have exceeded 50,000 people. As the host family-based assistance network is reaching an alarming level, the local communities are calling for help. As a result, UNHCR in coordination with WFP and ICRC agreed on rapid intervention to provide immediately food and non-food items for 25,000 people in Tataouine and Medenine governorates as early as Monday.

- UNHCR established its presence in Tataouine through the deployment of three international UNHCR staff and the opening of a field office. The team in Tataouine will supervise the implementation of the distribution plan as well as registration of Libyan refugees.

- The number of individuals and Libyan diaspora communities assisting and advocating for the cause of Libyan refugees is proliferating. They are closely monitoring the level of assistance provided.

- The Qatar Red Crescent started setting up a camp for Libyan refugees in Tataouine. On 4 May, the first 50 tents were erected in a football field designated by the local authorities.

Medenine

- According to local media, the Kuwait Red Crescent has begun distributing food to Libyan refugees in Medenine through a voucher system.