

Southern Tunisia Dehiba/Remada UNHCR Update # 7



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 50,000 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 13 May, 385,057 persons have arrived to Tunisia, including 39,063 Tunisians, 164,609 Libyans and 181,385 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.

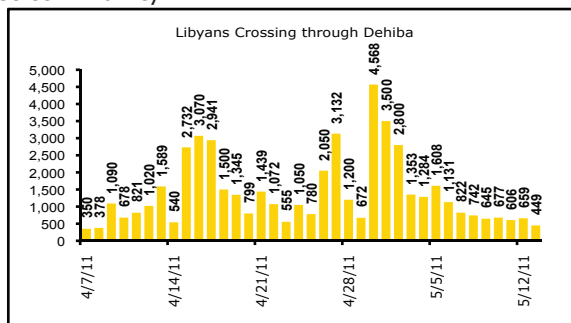
It is noticed that when Dehiba crossing point is under the control of the opposition forces, Libyans cross through the official border.

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 50,000 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.



Main developments

- UNHCR deployed a Senior Registration Officer to develop a tool to register Libyan refugees in Tunisia's southern governorates, based on the lists provided by the Tunisian authorities. Registration is due to start on 15 May.

Dehiba border point

- Over the past week, a lower influx of Libyan refugees was observed crossing to Tunisia through Dehiba border point, with an average of 657 arrivals a day. Up to date, 51,647 Libyans refugees fled to Tunisia through Dehiba border point, which remains under the control of the opposition forces.

- On 13 May, the number of Libyans crossing to Tunisia through Dehiba border point (659) almost equaled to the number Libyans returning to Libya through the same crossing point (500). According to the Tunisian authorities, while the vast majority of them are men going to check on their properties, a few families returned to Libya.

Dehiba town

- 898 Libyans are hosted in the UAE Red Crescent camp in Dehiba town as of 13 May.

Remada

- 700 Libyans (140 families) are hosted in the UNHCR camp in Remada as of 13 May.

- Following the recent arrest of two persons with explosive in Tataouine, UNHCR took a number of measures to enhance security in the camp, including by establishing entry procedures for charities and visitors in coordination with the Tunisian military and reinforcing the perimeter wall.

- UNHCR replaced the white emergency tents with more durable ones at the request of the families living in the camp.

- Norwegian Church Aid assumed responsibility to lead the WASH sector in Remada camp. It was agreed to replace VIP and chemical latrines with prefab latrines.

- Islamic Relief has begun school classes for the children in the camp.

Tataouine

- On 9 May, UNHCR in partnership with Islamic Relief started distributing food packages to an initial target of 4,000 families, including 3,500 Libyan families and another 500 Tunisian host families in Tataouine governorate. The distribution of food is ongoing.

Medenine

- A joint UNHCR-WFP-ICRC mission met with the local authorities in Medenine and Gabes to discuss distribution of humanitarian assistance for Libyan refugees. According to the Tunisian authorities, approximately 10,430 people are hosted by the local community in Medenine and another 5,096 in Gabes. UNHCR is making the necessary arrangements to start the distribution of food packages early next week.

For further information, please contact:

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