

Southern Tunisia Dehiba/Remada UNHCR Update # 8



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 54,000 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 17 May, 402,981 persons have arrived to Tunisia, including 42,119 Tunisians, 177,952 Libyans and 182,900 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.

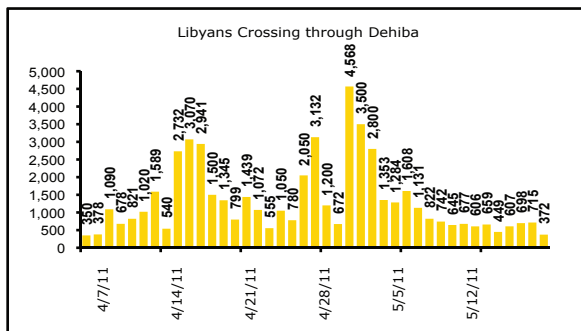
It is noticed that when Dehiba crossing point is under the control of the opposition forces, Libyans cross through the official border.

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 54,000 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 through implementing partners dispatched 6,000 food packages for Libyan refugees hosted by the local communities in southern Tunisia, including 2,000 in Medenine, 2,000 in Zarzis and another 2,000 in Tataouine. Distribution is ongoing.

- On 17 May, an inter-agency mission consisting of UNHCR, WFP and ICRC visited Douz and Kebili to assess the situation of Libyan families hosted by the local community. According to local authorities, some 2,000 families found refuge with the host communities in Douz and Kebili. UNHCR is preparing for assisting the above families.

- UNHCR received the initial lists of Libyan families from the local authorities, the Tunisian Red Crescent and UNHCR local partners in Tunisia's southern governorates. Data entry for family profiling has already begun.

- UNHCR is consolidating the already existing inter-agency assessment scheme for Libyan refugees. Preliminary findings show that the most urgent needs are food and medical assistance.

- In interviews with Libyan refugees in Djerba, UNHCR was reported that an increasing number of Libyans is waiting for a chance to flee from Tripoli due to intensified bombing in the city and surroundings, increased insecurity for the lack of law and order, kidnapping and assault of women and girls and forceful recruitment of child soldiers by the government forces. According to local relief organizations, there are some 2,700 Libyan refugees hosted by the local community in Djerba.

Dehiba border point

- On 16 May, military clashes resumed between government and opposition forces for control of Dehiba border point. Grad missiles reportedly landed as close as 500 meters from the Tunisian border. According to the Tunisian authorities, a number of ambulances carrying injured persons crossed to Tunisia. No movement to the border is permitted by the Tunisian army.

- On 17 May, 372 Libyan refugees crossed to Tunisia through Dehiba border point while another 345 returned to Libya. Up to date, 54,039 Libyans fled to Tunisia through Dehiba crossing point.

Dehiba town

- 600 Libyans are hosted in the UAE Red Crescent camp in Dehiba town as of 17 May.

Remada

- 700 Libyans (140 families) are hosted in the UNHCR camp in Remada as of 17 May.

- UNHCR is working on improving facilities and delivery of assistance for Libyan refugees in the camp, including water and sanitation facilities and food.

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