

Southern Tunisia Dehiba/Remada UNHCR Update # 9



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 55,000 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, 417,981 persons have arrived to Tunisia, including 44,781 Tunisians, 189,317 Libyans and 183,883 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.

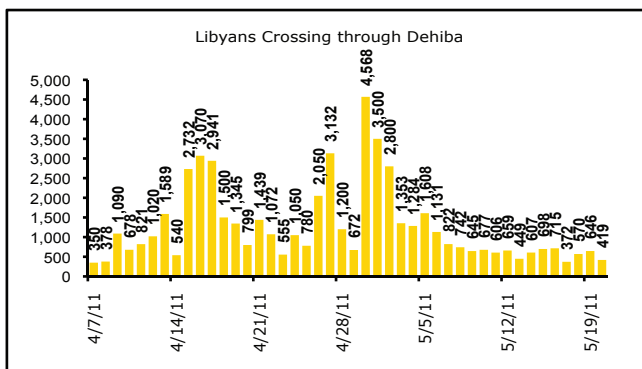
It is noticed that when Dehiba crossing point is under the control of the opposition forces, Libyans cross through the official border.

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 55,000 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 its implementing partners continues distributing food packages for Libyan refugees hosted by the local communities in Tataouine, Medenine and Zarzis. Up to date, 6,000 food packages have been dispatched to the above locations for distribution.

Dehiba border point

- On 20 May, 419 Libyans crossed to Tunisia through Dehiba border point while 424 others returned to Libya. Up to date, 55,674 Libyans fled to Tunisia through Dehiba crossing point, which remains under the control of opposition forces.

- On 19 May, military clashes between government and opposition forces for control of the border area were suspended on the Libyan side of the border. The situation is now calm but highly volatile. On the Tunisian side of the border, no movement is permitted to the crossing point by the Tunisian army.

Dehiba town

- 595 Libyans are hosted in the UAE Red Crescent camp in Dehiba town as of 20 May.

Remada

- UNHCR completed the manual registration of Libyan refugees in Remada camp. As of 20 May, 793 Libyan refugees (153 families) are hosted in the camp, including 419 females and 374 males. Among them, 340 are children. Some 40 persons with special needs have been identified, including pregnant women, persons with disabilities and medical cases. UNHCR is looking into establishing a referral system in coordination with other agencies to ensure proper monitoring of vulnerable cases. Meanwhile, registration data is being entered into an electronic database.

- MSF, lead agency for the health sector in Remada camp, established its presence in the camp to provide, among others, psychosocial counseling to Libyan refugees. It was agreed that MSF would establish a Health Working Group to coordinate the health response in the camp and better organize the health sector, which is currently over-crowded.

- The Norwegian Church Aid has also deployed a psychosocial specialist in the camp.

- The Libya al Huraa Charity donated a truck of dry food for the Libyan refugees in Remada camp.

- On 20 May, the first baby boy Libyan refugee was born in Remada hospital.

For further information, please contact:

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