

UNHCR
Southern Tunisia
Weekly Update



Background

Since 20 February 2011, 834,207 persons crossed the border from Libya to Tunisia. This includes 582,465 Libyans and 210,147 third country nationals (TCNs), including persons of concern to UNHCR who currently reside in camps near the border crossing of Ras Jdir. It is estimated that approximately 70% of the Libyans who crossed into Tunisia have returned back to Libya, with some 90,000 Libyans remaining behind according to Tunisian government's sources. Since the start of the influx from Libya, the Tunisian people and their government have mounted a generous relief effort, thereby averting a humanitarian crisis. The open-door policy of the Tunisian government and hospitality accorded to refugees has been exemplary and remains maintained. UNHCR's emergency operation in Southern Tunisia is providing protection and humanitarian assistance to third country nationals (refugees, asylum seekers and migrants) in a camp located near the Ras Jdir border and to the Libyan refugees who predominantly reside in the urban areas.

Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants

Since the start of the conflict in Libya, the vast majority of arrivals in Tunisia have been migrant workers in transit.

However, there remains behind a substantial number of people from countries in conflict and or fleeing persecution. To date, UNHCR has registered 3,650 persons of concern to UNHCR, of whom 1,464 are refugees and 2,183 asylum seekers. UNHCR is processing asylum seekers' claim and seeking durable solutions, mainly through resettlement to third countries. Currently, UNHCR provides basic humanitarian assistance to mainly refugees and asylum seekers in Shousha Camp and migrants in Al-Hayat camp.

Urban Refugees

As Libyans share strong economic, social and cultural links with Tunisia, a vast majority of the estimated 90,000 Libyans in Tunisia reside in urban areas. Around 2% (1,199 individuals) are accommodated in three camps in Governorate of Tataouine: UNHCR Remada Camp, UAE camp in Dehiba and the Qatar camp in Tataouine town. As part of its effort to assist the hosting community, UNHCR initiated a pilot project to cover the costs of water and electricity bills of Tunisians hosting Libyan refugees. In addition, UNHCR has committed over \$3 million in agreements with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women to support the refugee-hosting areas in urban centers across Southern Tunisia's five main governorates.

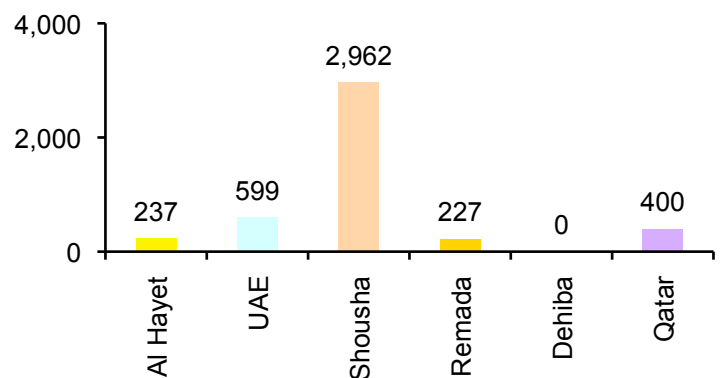
Weekly Statistics

Entry and Exit of Libyans

Days	Ras Ajdir		Dehiba	
	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit
25-Jul	5,815	5,242	1,141	994
26-Jul	5,322	6,792	1,167	1,232
27-Jul	5,207	4,430	922	1,198
28-Jul	3,858	5,312	486	1,320
29-Jul	4,758	9,972	1,057	2,224
30-Jul	2,997	NA	1,290	3,253
31-Jul	2,869	NA	919	2,408
Total	30,826	31,748	6,982	12,629
Tot Entry since 20 February	582,465			
Tot Exit since 20 February	386,765			

The opposition forces took control of Nafousa Mountains' town of Al Ghazaya, some 10 km east of Dehiba border point, on 29 July. Since then the number of Libyans returning to Libya through Dehiba crossing point has more than doubled. Over the last three days only, 7,785 Libyans (1,679 families) crossed back to Libya via the Dehiba-Wazin border. Among other reasons for their decision to return, Libyans cited the wish to spend the holy month of Ramadan at home, as well as the need to check on their properties. Some also mentioned the some level of safety in areas under the opposition as their reason to return.

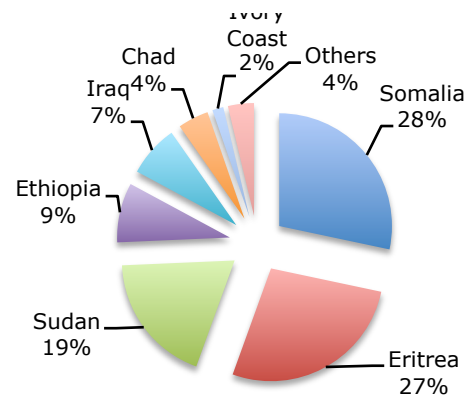
Camp populations



While Shousha camp host a stable population of approximately 3,000 asylum seekers and refugees, Al Hayet camp and the UAE Red Crescent camp also provide temporary shelter for people awaiting repatriation assistance to their countries of origin. The camps giving refuge to Libyans in Tunisia's Tataouine region are witnessing a decrease of population due to extreme heat but also the latest military victory by the opposition forces in Al Ghazaya. In UNHCR's Remada camp, out of 227 camp residents, 182 people are children, adolescent and women (80% of the total population).

Asylum seekers and refugees

Nationality	Refugees (Ref)		Asylum Seekers (AS)		Ref + AS
	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons	Persons
Somalia	239	374	557	659	1033
Eritrea	383	565	351	427	992
Sudan	94	189	443	496	685
Ethiopia	47	82	166	230	312
Iraq	61	225	21	45	270
Chad	2	2	129	159	161
Ivory Coast	4	4	54	54	58
Others	9	23	102	113	136
Total	839	1,464	1,823	2,183	3,647



As at 31 July, UNHCR registered 3,650 persons of concerns in Ras Ajdir camps, including 1,464 refugees, 2,183 asylum seekers and 3 others. Among them, 896 had already been recognized as refugees by UNHCR in Libya, while another 568 persons have been granted refugee status in Shousha camp.

Eighty-three per cent of asylum seekers and refugees in Ras Jdir camps are from Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia. To date, UNHCR conducted 686 Refugee Status Determination interviews (943 persons) and finalized 491 cases (683 persons). More than 1,000 refugees have been submitted for resettlement to 10 different countries.

Highlights of the week

Asylum seekers and refugees in Ras Ajdir area

- On 30 July, UNHCR led a one-day training on refugee protection and human rights for some 17 officers from the Tunisian army officers and National Guards, as well as members of the Moroccan Red Crescent Management staff and medical doctors from their field hospital in Zarzis, as well as the UAE Red Crescent team. UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM facilitated sessions on Sexual and Gender-based Violence prevention and response, child protection matters including unaccompanied and separated children, and counter-trafficking.
- UNHCR continues arrangements to institute accelerated Refugee Status Determination process in Shousha camp's sector E, for persons originating from low refugee recognition countries not willing to return immediately and hence seeking asylum. Asylum seekers from refugee-generating countries (e.g. Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan/Darfur) will be transferred to other sectors in Shousha camp as per their nationality/zone. Applicants recognized as refugees will stay in Shousha camp until a durable solution is found for them. Migrants willing to go back to their countries of origin are registered by IOM at Ras Jdir border point and transported to Al Hayet camp for evacuation.
- UNHCR continued its counseling activities, with the highlights of the week being the counseling of refugees whose cases have been submitted for resettlement to Portugal, Finland, Ireland, Denmark and those accepted by Sweden. The counseling efforts are designed to reduce the frustration among the refugees *vis-a-vis* long wait for solutions.



© UNHCR/Rocco Nuri. Distribution of Ramadhan food package to Libyan refugees in Tataouine.

Libyan refugees

- On 29 July, UNHCR along with WFP, UAE Red Crescent, Islamic Relief, Al Tawoon, Secours Islamique France, Tunisian Red Crescent, Secours Populaire Francais, Wafa Relief and Libyan Relief Committee, commenced the distribution of Ramadan food packages for over 55,000 Libyan refugees in Medenine, Tataouine, Sfax, Gabes and Kebili. The food package, consisting of more than 15 items, will be distributed to each family over the holy month of Ramadan. This donation was possible thanks to the remarkable coordination efforts by UNHCR and WFP, the Tunisian authorities and all the above-mentioned partners. The sports stadium in Medenine, where some of the the food boxes had been packed, has been offered free of charge by the Municipality of Medenine.
- As of 31 July, as part of the household-based registration, UNHCR distributed 5,832 ration cards (out of 10,667 registered families) to Libyan refugees in southern Tunisia. The above exercise is ongoing, and includes persons not listed previously in the UNHCR database but incorporated following registration. De-registration of departed families will be systematized as per standard procedures instituted in the "continuous registration" exercise for urban refugees.
- On 27 July, UNHCR and WFP conducted a joint needs assessment targeting 394 families in Tataouine, including 50% staying with host families.
- In Remada camp, as part of the "summarisation" efforts, a total of 12 large capacity air conditioners have been set up in communal centres.
- On 27 July, Handicap International conducted an awareness session on mines and UXOs in Remada camp.



For more information, please contact:

Rocco Nuri
External Relation Officer
UNHCR Southern Tunisia

Mobile: +216 559 685 15
Email: NURI@unhcr.org

UNHCR Website: www.unhcr.org