

# TUNISIA

## Operational highlights

- The thousands of people who fled into Tunisia to escape the violence that erupted in Libya in February 2011 received life-saving assistance from UNHCR that reinforced the Tunisian authorities' relief efforts at the border. Over a period of six months following the start of the insurgency in Libya, some 200,000 third-country nationals transited Tunisia before being evacuated to their countries of origin by UNHCR, IOM and other actors.
- UNHCR recognized more than 3,000 refugees and assisted them in the Shousha transit camp. Most were referred to resettlement countries.
- Some 80,000 Libyans residing with Tunisian host families received community-based support from UNHCR.
- UNHCR's participation in the relief effort provided an opportunity to initiate new partnerships with several Tunisian ministries and to strengthen collaboration with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice.
- In June 2011, almost four decades after it first began working in Tunisia, UNHCR signed a cooperation agreement with the Government.
- UNHCR engaged the Tunisian authorities in a more formal dialogue on asylum issues, including the development of national asylum legislation.

## Working environment

The year 2011 brought social and political upheaval to Tunisia, followed by profound change. The collapse of the former regime in January led to the establishment of a national unity Government in March. However, just as the country was struggling to make its own transition to democracy, close to a million people (including Tunisians, Libyans and third-country nationals) flooded into the country to escape the violence in Libya. At the same time, economic hardship prompted thousands of Tunisians to try to cross the Mediterranean for destinations in Europe.



UNHCR sought to reinforce the Government's unprecedented generous relief efforts by providing life-saving assistance in transit camps, facilitating the evacuation of third-country nationals (in collaboration with IOM) and mobilizing community-based assistance for Libyans hosted by Tunisian families. By the end of the emergency in October 2011, Tunisia was hosting more than 3,000 refugees from 30 countries in the Shousha transit camp. Large groups of Libyans returned home, but the number of cross-border movements remained high, with many Libyans re-entering Tunisia to gain access to basic public services.

## Persons of concern

Type of Population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
<b>Refugees</b>	Somalia	1,000	1,000	19	15
	Sudan	800	800	14	18
	Eritrea	600	600	16	14
	Various	700	600	40	23
<b>People in a refugee-like situation</b>	Libya	1,000	1,000	45	30
<b>Asylum-seekers</b>	Côte d'Ivoire	160	20	-	-
	Sudan	150	150	24	21
	Various	250	210	19	16
<b>Returnees (refugees)</b>	Various	10	10	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,670</b>	<b>4,390</b>		

The new Tunisian Government's support for human rights allowed UNHCR to engage in a constructive dialogue about ways to promote a more favourable refugee-protection environment. Similarly, Tunisia's budding civil society offers promising potential for new national and local partnerships to protect and assist refugees.

## | Achievements and impact |

### • Main objectives and targets

Given the sudden and unforeseen change in dynamics in the North Africa subregion at the beginning of 2011, the objectives set out in the Global Appeal 2010-2011 and its 2011 Update do not reflect the objectives pursued in Tunisia throughout the year. The revised priority objectives focused on supporting Tunisia in meeting the needs of the mass influx of people from Libya and in finding durable solutions for those refugees in the Shousha transit camp.

### Favourable protection environment

- Importantly, Tunisia kept its borders open to the influx of people fleeing the conflict in Libya, although periodic restrictions were applied. To ensure that this favourable protection environment was sustained, UNHCR made a commitment to assist in finding durable solutions for recognized refugees living in Shousha transit camp.
- Libyans benefited from *de facto* temporary protection in Tunisia and had full freedom of movement and access to basic public services.
- Through sustained advocacy with the Tunisian authorities, UNHCR was able to engage and maintain the interest of the new Government in the development of a national asylum law.

### Fair protection processes

- UNHCR deployed a team of international experts to review refugee status determination (RSD) claims. RSD was conducted for more than 3,000 asylum-seekers in Shousha transit camp, including some 100 unaccompanied minors. Accelerated procedures were introduced and all individuals in the transit camp received refugee certificates.

### Security from violence and exploitation

- Women made up a fifth of the population in Shousha, while 5 per cent of the families there were headed by women. UNHCR identified more than 40 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), who were given priority for RSD and resettlement processing. A referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking was also established. UNHCR facilitated the resettlement or family reunification of 78 minors stranded in the camp.
- To alleviate the burden of the influx of people from Libya, UNHCR donated equipment, particularly for health care centres, to the local authorities and implemented quick-impact projects for local communities, especially those hosting Libyans. The Office also helped the Ministry of Women to set up two community centres in southern Tunisia and a mobile clinic for Libyan and Tunisian children. In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNHCR launched a microcredit project aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in the community of Ben Guardene that neighbours Shousha transit camp. This project disbursed more than 400 microcredit loans and supported nearly 30 small- and medium-sized enterprises.



Men wait in line for food at one of three food distribution points at Shousha transit camp, just 8 km north of the Tunisian border with Libya.

UNHCR / J. TANNER

## Basic needs and services

- The four transit camps along the Tunisia-Libya border set up by international humanitarian actors received some 200,000 third-country nationals. However, by the last quarter of the year Shousha was the only transit camp remaining, with some 3,000 refugees and asylum-seekers.
- UNHCR distributed more than 14,000 tents and emergency shelters and over 7,500 metric tonnes of food and non-food items (NFIs) to all families in the transit camps. The Office also built the infrastructure in Shousha necessary to provide access to potable water and sanitary facilities.
- A number of organizations gave medical assistance to people fleeing Libya during the first nine months of 2011, but following the stabilization of the situation and the reduction in the number of those in need of assistance, UNHCR and its implementing partners provided most of the services in Shousha. In the last quarter of 2011, UNHCR conducted more than 8,000 medical consultations and arranged for 200 referrals.
- UNHCR provided food to more than 40,000 Libyans living with Tunisian families and supported some host families by reimbursing a portion of their utility bills. Most of the Libyans returned home after the summer.

## Community participation and self-management

- As a result of the high number of people fleeing Libya, as well as several security incidents, the transit camps along the Tunisian-Libyan border were reorganized many times. As the situation stabilized, however, all refugees and asylum-seekers were transferred to Shousha, where the population was organized by area based on nationality and family composition. Three community groups were formed involving community leaders, women and youth. These groups participated in weekly coordination meetings with UNHCR.

## Durable solutions

- UNHCR encouraged and supported the resettlement of non-Libyan refugees from Tunisia and Egypt. More than 15 countries responded favourably or introduced alternative procedures.
- Between February and December, some 3,500 refugees were registered and recognized by UNHCR, all of whom were processed for resettlement. Of these, 150 refugees were evacuated to the Emergency Transit Centre in Romania prior to resettlement and 407 departed for resettlement, while 566 were still waiting to depart at the end of 2011. In addition, 294 refugees were able to leave as a result of private sponsorship programmes.

## External relations

- UNHCR deployed staff to southern Tunisia to provide updated information on a weekly basis for reporting and media purposes. Donor representatives participated in regular inter-agency coordination meetings.
- In Tunisia, UNHCR organized regular information-sharing meetings with other agencies participating in the

emergency response; liaised with the Ministry of Social Affairs, which had been appointed to lead the response at the Government level; and organized inter-agency donor briefings.

## Logistics and operational support

- The global freight agreement activated during the emergency allowed 20 flights of humanitarian cargo to reach Tunisia. Relief items were procured both locally and internationally, and were complemented by in-kind donations.

## Constraints

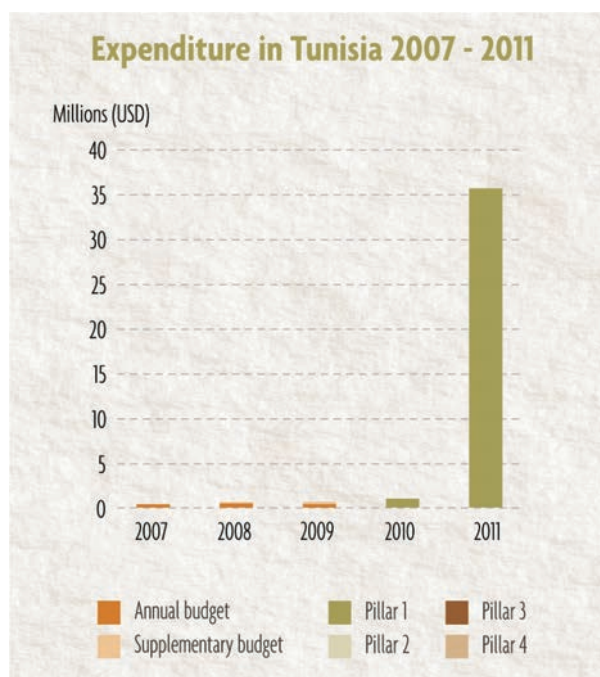
Security around Shousha transit camp was a significant challenge. The local population benefited from employment opportunities in the transit camp, but tensions rose at the end of the emergency when UNHCR began downsizing the operation and the workforce.

## Financial information

The initial budget of about USD 1 million covered a small office in Tunis assisting some 110 refugees and asylum-seekers. This budget was raised to USD 45.7 million in the course of 2011 in order to support an effective response to the evolving situation. The level of funding allowed UNHCR to cover some 78 per cent of the overall financial requirements.

## Organization and implementation

UNHCR maintained a Country Office in Tunis, where it also established a regional hub to provide technical support for its operations across North Africa. A Sub-Office was opened in Zarzis at the Tunisia-Libya border in order to support the Office's response to the influx from Libya. A temporary presence was also established in Tataouine from April to September 2011 in order to assist Libyan refugees living in urban areas in southern Tunisia.



## | UNHCR's presence in 2011 |

□ Number of offices	2
□ Total staff	74
International staff	13
National staff	59
UNVs	1
Others	1

## | Working with others |

In addition to working with its long-standing partner, the Tunisian Red Crescent, UNHCR partnered with 11 international and local NGOs.

In the context of coordinating the humanitarian response with other UN agencies and IOM, the IFRC and the Tunisian Government, UNHCR led the working groups on protection, camp management and contingency planning. It also spearheaded the inter-agency contingency planning process in March and April 2011.

## | Unmet needs |

Needs decreased towards the end of the year with the consolidation of camp activities and the return of most of the Libyans. However the remaining unmet needs included the following:

- There was insufficient clothing to meet the needs of all refugees in Shousha.
- There was no assessment of Tunisian border management needs and training of border authorities.

## | Overall assessment |

UNHCR was highly responsive to the Government of Tunisia's request for support to address the sudden population movements in response to the Libya crisis. The swift mobilization of resources to reinforce the relief effort in coordination with other international agencies enabled UNHCR to provide life-saving services to those fleeing Libya. At the same time, all migrants wishing to return home were evacuated within weeks, thereby reducing pressure on communities in the southern part of the country.

In addition to helping to avert a humanitarian crisis, UNHCR's quick response was a decisive factor in consolidating relations with the new Tunisian Government. Indeed, the authorities showed more interest than ever before in working with UNHCR on the development of a national asylum system.

Partners
<b>Implementing partners</b>
<b>Government agencies:</b> Ministries of Social Affairs and Women's Affairs
<b>NGOs:</b> <i>Association de l'Entraide et de la Solidarité Sociale, Association Tunisienne de la Santé de la Reproduction, Danish Refugee Council, International Medical Corps, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Lutheran World Federation Switzerland, Norwegian Church Aid, Save the Children, Secours Islamique France, Tunisian Red Crescent, Union tunisienne de solidarité sociale</i>
<b>Operational partners</b>
<b>Government agencies:</b> Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Health and Justice, Municipality of Tataouine
<b>NGOs:</b> Caritas, <i>Médecins Sans Frontières</i> , Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>Others:</b> ICRC, IFRC, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNDP

## Budget, income and expenditure in Tunisia | USD

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	Total
<b>FINAL BUDGET</b>	<b>45,742,856</b>	<b>45,742,856</b>
Income from contributions	14,181,171	14,181,171
Other funds available	21,469,324	21,469,324
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>35,650,495</b>	<b>35,650,495</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN</b>		
<i>Favourable protection environment</i>		
National legal framework	149,822	149,822
National and regional migration policy	76,392	76,392
Cooperation with partners	76,925	76,925
Emergency management strengthened	1,370,352	1,370,352
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,673,491</b>	<b>1,673,491</b>

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	Total
<i>Fair protection processes and documentation</i>		
Reception conditions	532,031	532,031
Registration and profiling	795,289	795,289
Access to asylum procedures	150,043	150,043
Fair and efficient status determination	500,486	500,486
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,977,849</b>	<b>1,977,849</b>
<i>Security from violence and exploitation</i>		
Impact on host communities	4,483,605	4,483,605
Gender-based violence	315,598	315,598
Protection of children	364,964	364,964
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>5,164,167</b>	<b>5,164,167</b>
<i>Basic needs and essential services</i>		
Nutrition	3,202,558	3,202,558
Water	363,046	363,046
Shelter and other infrastructure	8,015,037	8,015,037
Basic domestic and hygiene items	3,498,921	3,498,921
Primary health care	370,719	370,719
HIV and AIDS	41,051	41,051
Education	160,113	160,113
Sanitation services	595,214	595,214
Services for groups with specific needs	92,939	92,939
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>16,339,598</b>	<b>16,339,598</b>
<i>Community participation and self-management</i>		
Community self-management	652,466	652,466
Self-reliance and livelihoods	146,364	146,364
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>798,830</b>	<b>798,830</b>
<i>Durable solutions</i>		
Durable solutions strategy	146,385	146,385
Voluntary return	300,085	300,085
Rehabilitation and reintegration	95,159	95,159
Resettlement	425,498	425,498
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>967,127</b>	<b>967,127</b>
<i>External relations</i>		
Public information	232,799	232,799
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>232,799</b>	<b>232,799</b>
<i>Logistics and operations support</i>		
Supply chain and logistics	3,331,912	3,331,912
Programme management and coordination	1,533,942	1,533,942
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4,865,854</b>	<b>4,865,854</b>
Other objectives	860,192	860,192
Balance of instalments with implementing partners	2,770,588	2,770,588
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,650,495</b>	<b>35,650,495</b>