

Southern Tunisia Dehiba/Remada UNHCR Update # 10



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 59,000 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 26 May, 433,633 persons have arrived to Tunisia, including 47,414 Tunisians, 203,778 Libyans and 185,441 nationals of other countries.

When the influx of refugees from Libya started, the majority of Libyans crossed into Tunisia through unofficial mountain routes around Dehiba area. Upon entry into Tunisian territory, they used to stamp their documents in order to legalize their stay in the country.

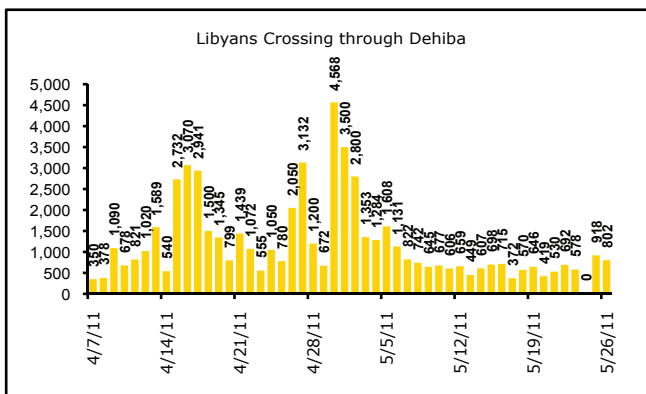
It is noticed that when Dehiba crossing point is under the control of the opposition forces, Libyans cross through the official border.

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 59,000 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 in coordination with local partners started a second round of food distribution for Libyan refugees hosted by the local community. One thousand food packages will be distributed in Tataouine in the next 24 hours.

- On 27 May, Director of UNHCR MENA Bureau Yacoub El Hillo paid a visit to Dehiba, Remada and Tataouine to assess the situation on the ground and review the needs and gaps in the assistance and protection of Libyan refugees.

Dehiba border point

- On 26 May, 802 Libyans crossed to Tunisia through Dehiba border point while another 429 others returned to Libya. Up to date, 59,294 Libyans fled to Tunisia through Dehiba crossing point, which remains under the control of opposition forces.

- As of 27 May, no military activities were reported between government and opposition forces on the Libyan side of Dehiba border. However, the situation remains highly volatile.

Dehiba town

- 709 Libyans are hosted in the UAE Red Crescent camp in Dehiba town as of 26 May.

Remada

- As of 26 May, 664 Libyan refugees are hosted in the camp, including 365 females and 299 males. Among them, 294 are under eighteen. Since 12 May, some 175 Libyans (32 families) have left the camp, mainly to move to private accommodations in urban areas.

- UNHCR in partnership with local NGO Al Tawoon has been undertaking a number of measures to enhance security in Remada camp, such as the construction of a perimeter wall -which has been completed along with two vehicle entry gates- and refurbishing of stree and toilette lighting.

- UNHCR met with US-based Libyan diaspora association Libya Humanitarian Action (LHA) to discuss cooperation vis a vis assistance to Libyan refugees. LHA is willing to provide fifteen 100-liter cold-water dispensers for the camp population.

- Local association Dhikra, which has been volunteering with Libyan children in the camp over the last three weeks, is now working on a proposal in coordination with UNHCR to implement activities for children in a more structured and systematic manner, especially for children between 0-5 years and 14-17 years.

- Norwegian Church Aid in coordination with UNHCR conducted awareness session on hygiene promotion for 22 Libyan children between 8 and 10 years.

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