HIGHLIGHTS

- On 24 December, UNHCR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia organized a seminar on arrivals by sea in Tunisia to discuss the issue of rescue at sea with all actors concerned.

- On 19 December, UNHCR and its partner Tunisian Red Crescent launched a winterization distribution, which benefited some 1,000 refugees and asylum-seekers.

- UNHCR organized a media workshop from 18 to 20 December in Hamamet for some 15 journalists covering refugee issues.

- UNHCR supported the 3rd edition of the Human Screen Festival, a human rights film festival held in Tunis from 16 to 20 December. A “UNHCR awards” was given to the documentary “Island 36” directed by Asli Özarslan, which talks about the fate of a group of asylum-seekers in Germany.

- From 8 to 14 December, Tunis welcomed the annual session of the San Remo Course in Arabic, organized by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (San Remo) in cooperation with UNHCR. This high-level course on humanitarian law gathered a number of officials from Arabic-speaking countries, notably Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Egypt, Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

- On 19 December, UNHCR and its partner Tunisian Red Crescent launched a winterization campaign, which benefited some 1,000 refugees and asylum-seekers.

Population of concern

A total of 1,134 people of concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context
Pending the adoption and implementation of the asylum law in Tunisia, UNHCR is the sole entity conducting Refugee Determination Status in Tunisia. UNHCR is therefore focused on ensuring that persons of concern to UNHCR are registered, issued with UNHCR certificates and protected against refoulement. UNHCR’s overall objective is to support Tunisia in creating a comprehensive national protection system. UNHCR supported the drafting of the draft asylum law and continues to be involved in various capacity building initiatives in order to finalize the text.

UNHCR was officially established as a Representation in 2011 after the signing of the Cooperation Agreement with the Tunisian authorities. However, UNHCR has been active in Tunisia since 1957.

Achievements

Protection

Achievements and Impact

- In Tunisia, UNHCR is in charge of registration, refugee status determination (RSD) and protection interventions in case of detention or risk of refoulement. This includes persons rescued at sea or arriving by land or air. In November and December 2014, 221 people applied for asylum in Tunisia and were registered with UNHCR.
- In December, UNHCR donated material and IT equipment to four local NGOs (Amal, Beity, Association Tunisienne des Femmes and Association Sebil), as well as a governmental reception center (Zahrouni), which are involved in receiving vulnerable cases, such as women at risk and unaccompanied minors.
- As part of the international campaign ‘16 days of activism against gender violence’, UNHCR organized several events in Tunis and in Southern Tunisia. This included awareness-raising sessions on Gender Based and Sexual Violence for men, women and for staff, but also sports events, such as football games, handicraft activities and a concert.
  - On 24 December, UNHCR organized a seminar on rescue at sea, which gathered high-level officials from different ministries, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Interior, Justice, Social Affairs and Health, and other relevant actors, most notably the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Tunisian Red Crescent and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Participants discussed the issue of rescue at sea, in light of Tunisia’s experience since 2012, and provided comments on the draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) drafted in 2013 by UNHCR and IOM to set a standard response for rescue at sea incidents.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is not yet an established system in place for rescue at sea response in Tunisia. With the financial contribution of Switzerland, UNHCR is supporting Tunisian authorities in developing a predictable response mechanism for rescue at sea incidents. The seminar organized on 24 December was part of this initiative. Follow-up activities will be organized in 2015.
- The verification exercise conducted in 2014 indicated that there is a lack of professional opportunities for most of the persons of concern to UNHCR. In addition, the living conditions of Syrian families, which represent half of the population registered with UNHCR in Tunisia, appear to be particularly precarious.
Education

Achievements and Impact

- Two refugee children enrolled in Southern Tunisia schools, with the support of UNHCR’s partner Islamic Relief, received appreciation certificates for their good marks. Refugee children have access to tutorial classes.
- In November, Islamic Relief initiated recreational activities in the Community Development Center of Ben Guerdane to allow for after school educational activities.
- In December, three excursions were organized for children during the holidays, to Djerba, Matmata and the Douz Festival. Some 40-refugee kids participated along with their Tunisian peers.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- While refugee children have full access to public education in Tunisia, they may face difficulties because of language barriers or interrupted education. UNHCR is offering tutorial classes for refugee children, through its partner Islamic Relief.

Health

Achievements and Impact

- Refugees continue to have access to public medical facilities in Tunisia. UNHCR covers primary and emergency care through its partner Tunisian Red Crescent.

Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- In December, UNHCR and its partner the Tunisian Red Crescent organized a winterization distribution, which benefited to some 1,000 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR throughout Tunisia. The campaign provided beneficiaries with heaters, quilts, mattresses and coupons for gas and warm clothes.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

Achievements and Impact

- Refugees were consulted for the programming of activities for 2015. UNHCR is looking for ways to improve and target its assistance strategy to better fit refugees’ needs, to help them achieve self-reliance.
- UNHCR’s partner Islamic Relief organized a “Business management workshop” in Zarzis on 19-20 December for 12 potential beneficiaries of the micro-project scheme. The workshop included training on business management and accountability rules, to familiarize refugees with what to expect when starting a micro-project and how to make it successful.
- Thirteen refugees are participating in English and IT courses at Islamic Relief’s Community Development Center in Ben Guerdane. In addition, 13 refugees have started a program in a private center in Medenine, to follow English, French and IT classes.
- Six refugees (of which four teenagers) are currently following an apprenticeship program in Ben Guerdane to become car mechanics, hairdressers, electricians or heating/air conditioning technicians.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The lack of Tunisian documentation, especially work permits, represent a constraint for refugees to access formal employment. UNHCR is advocating for the issuance of temporary residence and work permits while working with partners and local authorities to find practical solutions to facilitate refugee employment.
Contingency planning

Achievements and Impact

- Upon the request of the Governor of Medenine, UNHCR donated some light projectors to be used by authorities at the border with Libya. This is part of the preparedness measures aiming at reinforcing the capacities of authorities in case of an emergency.
- From 17 to 20 November, UNCHR organized a Camp Management and Coordination (CCM) training, jointly with the Tunisian Red Crescent, to bring humanitarian actors together to develop shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, international protection principles, standards in terms of humanitarian response, etc.
- UNHCR has prepositioned relief items, such as blankets, mattresses or kitchen kits, to be distributed in case of an influx of refugees and asylum-seekers from Libya.
- UNHCR continues to ensure a regular presence at the pre-registration container offices installed close to the two official border points with Libya, Ras Jedir and Dehiba.

Working in partnership

- UNHCR is working closely with Tunisian authorities, most notably the Tunisian Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs, Women Affairs, Justice and Human Rights and Employment.
- UNHCR has two implementing partners in Tunisia, the Tunisian Red Crescent and Islamic Relief. Coordination meetings are organized regularly both in Tunis and Zarzis.
- UNHCR is also cooperating with the Arab Institute for Human Rights (IADH), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and France Terre d’Asile (FTDA).

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation in Tunisia amount to some USD 1.5 million.

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds in 2014.

Funding received (in million USD)

Switzerland 650000
European Union 612000

Contacts: Julia Gouyou Beauchamps, External Relations Officer, gouyou@unhcr.org, Tel: +21671963383, Cell +21658335124
Links: www.unhcr.org