



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

Interim Report to Italy Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Enhancing Response Mechanisms and Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants in Tunisia

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| Executing Agency | International Organization for Migration (IOM) |
| Project Identification | IOM Project Code: RR.0262 |
| Grant Reference ID | |
| Geographical Coverage | Tunisia |
| Beneficiaries | Vulnerable and stranded migrants in Tunisia |
| Partner(s) | Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Women, Family, Children and Seniors, Ministry of Social Affairs, private sector, NGOs and service providers working with vulnerable migrants |
| Management Site | Tunis, CO, TUNISIA |
| Relevant Regional Office(s) | Cairo, RO, EGYPT |
| Project Period | 1 March 2022 – 29 February 2024 |
| Reporting period | 1 September 2022 – 28 February 2023 |
| Date of Submission | 31 March 2023 |
| Total Confirmed Funding | EUR 3,118,812.000 |
| Total Funds Received to Date | EUR 3,118,812.000 |
| Total Expenditures | |

IOM Tunisia

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I. Summary of Key Achievements during the Reporting Period

The project supports the Tunisian authorities and local civil society, in the provision of protection services to stranded migrants. The project aims to bring added value by strengthening the provision of shelter, direct assistance in the form of food and non-food items (NFIs), and other individualized services, including Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) to those unable or unwilling to remain in Tunisia, while adhering to IOM policies and guidelines including the Return, Reintegration and Readmission policy. In December 2022, in response to increased needs, the donor approved IOM request for a 1MEUR top-up to the project, which allowed to increase the target of returns under the project from 400 to 750, and the target for reintegration from 250 to 455. These new targets are reflected in the present report. During the reporting period, in response to needs that continued to increase, IOM agreed with the donor to submit a request for a second top-up to the project.

During its second six months of implementation, the project contributed to the operations of three shelters providing emergency accommodation and services, which benefited a total of **245** migrants in vulnerable situations (**192** men, **30** women, **20** boys and **3** girls). A shelter in Medenine responded to the needs for emergency accommodation of women, children, and families. The shelters in Zarzis and Tataouine accommodated men. The operation and maintenance of the shelters was cost shared with other programming, including the Netherlands funded “Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions”, and the EU funded “EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration” North Africa window” and “Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration in North Africa”.

A total of **570** migrants stranded in Tunisia (**374** men, **122** women, **38** boys, **36** girls) returned to their countries of origin during the reporting period, bringing the cumulative number of migrants assisted to return since the start of the project to **904**, hence already exceeding the current target of 750 returns by a total of 154 departures. In the countries of origin, IOM provided reintegration assistance to **338** migrants (**210** men, **85** women, **24** boy and **19** girls), bringing the cumulative number of reintegration assistance beneficiaries since the start of the project to **347**. Where reintegration assistance in countries of origin was available through other sources such as the EU IOM Joint Initiative, the project only covered the costs of travel and pre-departure assistance. This complementarity enabled the project to assist more beneficiaries with return assistance, in response to higher need, while also guaranteeing that all had access to reintegration assistance.

Following a new approach to irregular migration adopted by the Tunisian authorities in February 2023, with corresponding instructions to line ministries, the increase in the need for return assistance is expected to continue into the next reporting period..

II. Progress Made towards Realizing Outcomes and Outputs

Outcome 1: Access to short-term humanitarian assistance and to protection is available to the most vulnerable migrants in Tunisia.

In 2017, together with civil society partners and in coordination with Tunisian authorities, IOM established Migrant Resource and Response Mechanisms in three regions of Tunisia: Tunis, Zarzis and Sfax. The project aims to contribute to the updating of these mechanisms, once in each region, to ensure a coordinated response to the protection and assistance needs of the target group. During the reporting period, one coordination meeting took place in Tunis. The meeting was an opportunity to touch base with stakeholders in Tunis, but given that each are engaged in parallel processes, the mechanism was not yet updated.

Output 1.1: Migrants in vulnerable situations in Tunisia are provided with emergency assistance, vulnerability screening and information on options available, including AVRR.

IOM Tunisia, with the Tunisian authorities, and local civil society partners, provided short-term emergency assistance to vulnerable migrants. The project supported technically and financially **3** facilities in Southern Tunisia providing emergency accommodation and services. IOM was present at the port on **7** occasions, **5** times at the Benguardene port in the Medenine governorate, and **2** times in the Kerkennah islands in the Sfax governorate, assisting a total of **328** migrants rescued at sea. All boats had departed from Libya. Out of these, the project contributed to the post disembarkation assistance in the context of three operations, two in the Medenine governorate and one in the Sfax governorate. In the context of these three operations, IOM provided **158** migrants (**110** men, **15** women, **30** boys and **3** girls) rescued at sea with food, and non-food items.

286 vulnerable migrants benefited from emergency assistance and information on durable solutions, including **245** shelter beneficiaries in Medenine, Zarzis and Tataouine (**192** men, **30** women, **20** boys and **3** girls), and **41** migrants rescued at sea assisted in Sfax, (**23** men, **8** women, **8** boy and **1** girl)¹. The support included emergency accommodation, food, and non-food items. The assistance also included access to health services, which were provided under other IOM Tunisia programming. IOM counselled all cases admitted to the shelters on the longer- term options available to them, including to seek asylum or apply for AVRR. Since the start of the project, a total of **1027** migrants have benefited from emergency assistance and information on AVRR.

During the reporting period, there were less requests for assistance to migrants rescued at sea than before, likely owing to reduced operations related to boats in distress in Tunisian waters following departure from Libya. This, together with progress with AVRR of shelter beneficiaries, reduced the number of migrants at the shelters, and thus helped with follow-up

¹ Other migrants rescued at sea assisted under the project were assisted in Southern Tunisia and provided with shelter, hence already included in the total of migrants benefiting from emergency assistance and information on AVRR.

and monitoring. There was also progress with recruitments of shelter staff to ensure daily presence following the transition from partnership with Tunisian Red Crescent to IOM managing the shelter directly. As result, the situation at the shelters in Medenine, Tataouine and Zarzis was thus calmer than during the previous period, with no further security incidents.

The shelter operation and maintenance, and assistance to shelter beneficiaries was cost shared with other programming, including the Netherlands funded “Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions”, and the EU funded “EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration” North Africa window” and “Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration in North Africa”.

For gender, age, and country of origin breakdown of beneficiaries, please refer to the below tables.

Table 1: Migrants rescued at sea assisted during the reporting period

| Assistance to migrants rescued at sea September 2022 -February 2023 | | | | | |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Country of Origin | Men | Women | Boys | Girls | TOTAL |
| Egypt | 50 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 69 |
| Sudan | 21 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 24 |
| Syria | 10 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 23 |
| Nigeria | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Pakistan | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Benin | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Libya | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Cameroon | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Mali | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Guinea | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Central African Republic | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Mauritania | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Burkina Faso | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Gambia | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Morocco | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 110 | 15 | 30 | 3 | 158 |

Table 2: Beneficiaries assisted with shelter, food and NFI during the reporting period

| Shelter beneficiaries Medenine, Tataouine, Zarzis (new cases) September 2022 -February 2023 | | | | | |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Country of Origin | Men | Women | Boys | Girls | TOTAL |
| Bangladesh | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 58 |
| Egypt | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 52 |
| Cameroon | 18 | 14 | 13 | 2 | 47 |
| Nigeria | 12 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 20 |
| Sudan | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 6 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 10 |
| Chad | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Guinea | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Sierra Leone | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Senegal | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Mali | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Ethiopia | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Gambia | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Touareg | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Niger | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Mauritania | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Burkina Faso | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Central African Republic | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ghana | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Pakistan | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Morocco | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 192 | 30 | 20 | 3 | 245 |

Outcome 2 Stranded migrants in Tunisia have access to durable solutions including Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration assistance.

In December 2022, the donor approved IOM request for a 1MEUR top-up to the project, which increased the target of returns under the project from 400 to 750, and the target for reintegration from 250 to 455. While this allowed to meet an increased need during the reporting period, the need for AVRR continued to increase due to continued increase in cost of living and challenges in access to labour market. IOM hence agreed with the donor to submit a request for a second top-up. The request was being finalized at the end of the reporting period. On (omissis), the (omissis) made a statement at a meeting with the (omissis), declaring (omissis) in (omissis) as a threat to the (omissis) identity and security. The (omissis) was followed by instructions to line ministries, after which many (omissis) lost both their homes and employment as a result. This led to an immediate further increase in migrants approaching IOM for assistance, return assistance in particular, a trend that is expected to continue during the next reporting period.

Output 2.1: Migrants are provided with durable solutions including return and reintegration assistance from Tunisia to their countries of origin.

The requests for IOM assistance to migrants, including with arrivals of migrants from Algerian borders, and from Morocco (through Libya) to seek IOM assistance in Tunis, continued. This, together with challenges for migrants to generate income in Tunisia, resulted in an even higher demand for AVRR. During the reporting period, a total of **570** migrants stranded in Tunisia (**374** men, **122** women, **38** boys, **36** girls) returned from Tunisia to their countries of origin.

Out of the migrants who had returned to countries of origin with IOM assistance under the project, IOM provided reintegration assistance to **338** migrants (**210** men, **85** women, **24** boys and **19** girls). Where reintegration assistance in countries of origin is available through other sources such as the EU IOM Joint Initiative, the project only covers the costs of travel and pre-departure assistance for the beneficiaries in question. This complementarity enables the project to assist more beneficiaries with return assistance, while guaranteeing that all had access to reintegration assistance. This brought the cumulative number of migrants provided with return assistance since the start of the project to **904** (**602** men, **129** women, **55** boys and **41** girls) and that of migrants benefiting from reintegration assistance to **347** migrants (**219** men, **85** women, **24** boy and **19** girls).

For a gender, age, and country of origin breakdown of beneficiaries during the reporting period, please refer to below tables.

Table 3: Departures from Tunisia

| Departures from Tunisia under the project September 2022 -February 2023 | | | | | |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Country of Origin | Men | Women | Boys | Girls | TOTAL |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 108 | 94 | 26 | 23 | 251 |
| Chad | 65 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 68 |
| Guinea | 31 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 46 |
| Sudan | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| Cameroon | 25 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 29 |
| Egypt | 23 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 25 |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | 11 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 22 |
| Morocco | 10 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 16 |
| Gambia | 14 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 16 |
| Sierra Leone | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Senegal | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Mali | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Liberia | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Nigeria | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Ghana | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Pakistan | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Congo | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Jordan | | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Comoros | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 374 | 122 | 38 | 36 | 570 |

Table 4: Implemented reintegration plans

| Reintegration assistance beneficiaries September 2022 – February 2023 | | | | | |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Country of Origin | Men | Women | Boys | Girls | TOTAL |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 72 | 68 | 24 | 19 | 183 |
| Chad | 78 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 78 |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | 11 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Sierra Leone | 21 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| Gambia | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Guinea | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Mali | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Nigeria | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Ghana | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Liberia | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Pakistan | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sudan | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Congo | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Angola | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Benin | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 210 | 85 | 24 | 19 | 338 |

Progress Made towards Incorporating Cross-cutting Themes

Gender related needs of beneficiaries were taken into consideration. Pregnant and lactating women and their children were prioritised in the follow-up and referrals. In the operations of the shelters, IOM took into account differing needs of men, women, boys, and girls, including in the procurement of NFI (clothes, hygiene items).

III. Progress Achieved Compared with the Indicators in the Results Matrix

| | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Baseline</i> | <i>Target</i> | <i>Data source and collection method</i> | <i>Progress made during reporting period</i> | <i>Cumulative progress</i> |
|--|---|--|-----------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| | Objective: Enhancing the protection and assistance of migrants in vulnerable situations in Tunisia. | | | | | |
| | Outcome 1: Access to short-term humanitarian assistance and to protection is available to the most vulnerable migrants in Tunisia. | # of coordination meetings held # of MRRM updated | 0.00 3.00 | Workshop reports | 1 | 1 |
| | Output 1.1: Migrants in vulnerable situations in Tunisia are provided with emergency assistance, vulnerability screening and information on options available, including AVRR. | # of beneficiaries receiving direct assistance and information on durable solutions such as AVRR (disaggregated by sex, age and country of origin) | 0.00 1100.00 | IOM Beneficiary Database, Activity reports | 286 | 1027 |
| | | # of IOM co-managed shelters operating in Tunisia | 3.00 3.00 | Monitoring reports | 3 | 3 |
| | Activities that lead to Output 1.1 | | | | | |
| | 1.1.1 Ensure counselling, vulnerability screening, case management and referrals as relevant of migrants hosted in IOM shelters or other migrants in vulnerable situations in compliance with IOM standards and procedures. | | | | | |
| | 1.1.2 Identifying and responding to needs as per situation, including through referrals in the area of health and psychosocial support. | | | | | |
| | 1.1.3 Support to running and operations of shelters in Médenine, Zarzis and Tataouine. | | | | | |

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| | 1.1.4 Provision of humanitarian needs to shelter beneficiaries. | | | | | |
| Outcome 2: Stranded migrants in Tunisia have access to durable solutions including Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration assistance. | | | | | | |
| Output 2.1: Migrants are provided with durable solutions including return and reintegration assistance from Tunisia to their countries of origin. | # of migrants provided with return assistance from Tunisia to countries of origin or family reunification under the project. | 0.00 | 750.00 | IOM Beneficiary Database | 570 | 904 |
| | # of migrants provided with reintegration assistance in countries of origin under the project. | 0.00 | 455.00 | IOM Beneficiary Database | 338 | 347 |
| | # of unaccompanied migrant children assisted through family tracing and BID panels. | 0.00 | 10.00 | IOM Beneficiary Database | 2 | 2 |
| | Activities that lead to Output 2.1 | | | | | |
| | 2.1.1 Pre-departure travel assistance on a needed basis, including Best Interest Determination (BID) for children and risks assessment for other migrants in vulnerable situations | | | | | |
| | 2.1.2 Provision of travel allowance | | | | | |
| | 2.1.3 Coordination for travel to country of origin and/or onward travel assistance, if required | | | | | |
| | 2.1.4 Provision of transit assistance, if required | | | | | |
| | 2.1.5 Provision of operational or medical escort to assist with travel, if required | | | | | |

IV. Challenges Encountered and Actions Taken

Throughout the reporting period, IOM continued to encounter challenges in providing assistance to beneficiaries in Tunis from Algeria and Morocco due to lack of shelter. Consequently, migrants continued to camp outside of IOM office waiting for interviews and processing of their requests for AVRR. The needs of migrants in Tunisia, including for AVRR, started to increase further in February 2023, following a new approach to irregular migration adopted by the Tunisian authorities. As an immediate response, IOM Tunisia increased the efficiency of its workflow and intake mechanism through working also in the weekends. The second top-up, possibility of which was discussed with the donor during the reporting period, will help to meet the additional need for AVRR in the short term. In the new situation however, the needs are expected to further increase during the third reporting period of the project, and new targets will be met sooner than initially foreseen.

Conclusion

The project implementation continued with **286** migrants benefiting from information on durable solutions, including AVRR, and from emergency assistance, including shelter, food and non-food-items. A total of **570** migrants were assisted to return from Tunisia to their countries of origin, and **338** migrants received reintegration assistance in their countries of origin. As more migrants found themselves stranded and opted to seek IOM assistance to return to their countries of origin, IOM agreed with the donor to submit a second request for a top-up to meet the increased demand. During the next reporting period, the rapidly changing political situation with attention on migrants, following the changing approach to irregular migration adopted by the Tunisian authorities, is expected to further increase the needs for assistance, including AVRR.

V. Expenditures and Resource Utilization

Not to be reported at this stage.

VI. Annexes

No annexes.