



Interim Report to Italy Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Enhancing Response Mechanisms and Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants in Tunisia

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 – 28 February 2025
Reporting period	1 March 2023 – 31 August 2023
Date of Submission	16 November 2023
Total Confirmed Funding	-
Total Funds Received to Date	
Total Expenditures	-

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. The AVRR programme adheres to IOM policies and guidelines including the Return, Reintegration and Readmission policy. In June 2023, in response to increased needs, the donor approved IOM's project revision request for project budget and duration extension and update to the workplan and results matrix.

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 grew during the reporting period.

A total of **446** migrants in Tunisia (**319** men, **90** women, **15** boys, **22** girls) were assisted to return to their countries of origin during the reporting period bringing the cumulative number of migrants assisted to return under this project thus far to **1,353**. 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 project start date to **347**. In cases where reintegration assistance in countries of origin was available through other funding 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 migrants had access to reintegration assistance.

During the reporting period, the project contributed to the operations of three shelters that provided emergency accommodation and services to a total of **803** migrants in vulnerable situations (**603** men, **121** women, **60** boys and **19** 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 “Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration in North Africa”.

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, 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, as assistance requests kept increasing, IOM convened key partners such as *Médecins du Monde*, *Terre d'Asile Tunisie*, UNHCR, among others to foster information sharing and identify gaps to adequately respond to growing needs.

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 made it possible to finance and equip **3** facilities in southern Tunisia with technical expertise to provide emergency accommodation and services.

Vulnerable migrants benefited from emergency assistance and information on durable solutions, including **803** migrants who were also accommodated in shelters in Medenine, Zarzis and Tataouine (**603 men, 121 women, 60 boys and 19 girls**), and **118** migrants rescued at sea assisted in Sfax, (**87 men, 6 women, 22 boy and 3 girl**)¹. IOM worked jointly with local authorities and the Tunisian Red Crescent to ensure border referral of vulnerable migrants. The support included emergency accommodation, food, and non-food items. The assistance also included access to health services including psychosocial support, which was provided through other IOM Tunisia programming. IOM counselled all cases registered 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 **1,830** migrants have benefited from emergency assistance and information on AVRR.

IOM was present at the port on **5** occasions - **3** times at the Benguardene port in the Medenine governorate, and **2** times in the Kerkennah islands in the Sfax governorate- assisting a total of **178** migrants (**146 men, 6 women, 23 boys and 3 girls**) rescued at sea. All boats had departed from Libya. In the context of these five operations, migrants rescued were provided with humanitarian assistance including food, medical assessments, and thermal blankets.

Additionally, IOM provided **294** migrants (**158 men, 76 women, 38 boys and 22 girls**) with direct assistance (food, non-food items) as part of the needs noted through case management.

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.

The shelter operation, maintenance, and assistance was cost shared with other programming, including the Netherlands funded “Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions”, and the EU funded “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 March 2023 – August 2023							
Nationalities	Men	Women	Boys	Boys (UASC)	Girls	Girls (UASC)	Total
Bangladesh	18	0	0	0	0	0	18
Egypt	77	3	7	9	2	0	98
Ethiopia	9	0	0	0	0	0	9
Morocco	4						4
Pakistan	4			2			6
Palestine	1	1					2
Senegal	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sudan	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
Syria	26	2	5	0	1	0	34
Grand Total	146	6	12	11	3	0	178

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

Shelter beneficiaries Medenine, Tataouine, Zarzis (new cases) March 2023 – August 2023							
Nationalities	Men	Women	Boys <18	Girls <18	UASC- Male	UASC- Female	Total
Bangladesh	51	0	1	0	0	0	52
Benin	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Burkina-Faso	165	0	9	0	0	0	174
Cameroon	15	9	1	2	0	0	27
Central Africa	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chad	40	0	0	0	0	0	40
Cote D'Ivoire	37	21	8	1	0	0	67
Egypt	22	0	1	0	0	0	23
Eritrea	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ethiopia	3	0	6	0	0	0	9
Gambia	57	0	13	0	0	0	70
Ghana	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Guinea	40	6	4	2	0	0	52
Kenya	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberia	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Mali	20	1	3	0	0	0	24
Morocco	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Niger	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Nigeria	88	50	3	6	0	0	147
Pakistan	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Senegal	21	0	3	0	0	0	24
Sierra Leone	25	32	7	8	0	0	72
Somalia	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sudan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	603	121	60	19	0	0	803

Table 3: Migrants provided with direct assistance as part of case management (NFIs, clothes, Food vouchers...)

Direct assistance case management March 2023 – August 2023					
Nationalities	Men	Women	Boys <18	Girls <18	Total
ALGERIA	0	1	0	0	1
ANGOLA	1	0	0	0	1
BENIN	2	0	0	0	2
BURKINA FASO	10	0	1	0	11
CAMEROON	17	5	8	1	31
CHAD	4	0	1	0	5
COMOROS	0	1	0	0	1
CONGO, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE	3	4	0	0	7
CÔTE D'IVOIRE	22	40	3	14	79
GAMBIA	16	0	3	0	19
GHANA	1	0	0	0	1
GUINEA	31	3	10	1	45
LIBERIA	3	0	0	0	3
MALI	9	0	3	0	12
NIGERIA	11	6	2	1	20
SENEGAL	6	2	0	0	8
SIERRA LEONE	20	7	6	3	36
SOMALIA	0	2	1	0	3
TUNISIA	2	5	0	2	9
TOTAL	158	76	38	22	294

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

In June 2023, the donor approved IOM's request for additional project funding, which increased the target of returns under the project from 750 to 1,450, and the target for reintegration from 455 to 1,155. While this allowed IOM to meet an increased need during the reporting period, the need for AVRR continued to increase due to ongoing deterioration of living conditions impacted by higher costs of living, challenges in accessing the labour market and the adoption of a new approach to irregular migration by the Tunisian authorities in February 2023. This led to a larger caseload approaching IOM for assistance, particularly for return. During the reporting period, IOM strengthened its cooperation with embassies and consular authorities to support return of their stranded nationals including Cameroon and Guinea.

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

The requests continued for IOM assistance from migrants, including those arriving from Tunisia's border with Algeria and Libya, and from Morocco (through Libya) to seek IOM assistance in Tunis and Zarzis. This coupled with income generation challenges for migrants resulted in an even higher demand for AVRR. During the reporting period, IOM ensured compliance with its internal procedures including due diligence process in supporting a total of **446** migrants stranded in Tunisia (**316** men, **88** women, **18** boys, **24** girls) to return from Tunisia to their countries of origin. IOM Tunisia followed a rights-based approach aligned to international human rights frameworks with the aim to mainstream protection across its activities. IOM Tunisia applied its Data Protection Principles and guidance from the IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance for Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse as measures to support migrant protection. Through case management activities, IOM monitored human rights impact which informed migrant protection activities, to best respond to migrant needs. Additionally, IOM worked closely with OHCHR and organizations such as World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) to report any violation of human rights and refer victims of torture.

During reporting period, IOM coordinated with embassies to speed up issuance of emergency travel documents and strengthen referral mechanisms of vulnerable migrants. Some consular authorities even dedicated a space within their embassies for IOM to conduct migrant registrations and interviews.

Of the migrants who returned to countries of origin with IOM assistance under the project, IOM provided reintegration assistance to **287** migrants (**133** men, **117** women, **21** boys and **16** girls). Additionally, IOM in the countries of origin is currently finalizing the assistance to an additional **384** migrants (**329** men, **53** women, **1** boy, **1** girl) for a sum total beneficiaries to **671** assisted.

Most assistances consisted of initiating income generating activities such as poultry farms, moto taxis, or commerce shops.

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

Table 4: Departures from Tunisia

Departures from Tunisia under the project March 2023 – August 2023					
Country of Origin	Boys	Girls	Men	Women	Grand Total
Chad	1		74		75
Congo		1	4	1	6
Congo, The Democratic Republic Of The	2	1	43	18	64
Côte Divoire	12	19	54	62	147
Egypt	2		7	1	10
Guinea	1	1	122	4	128
Liberia			3		3
Morocco			4		4
Senegal		2	1	2	5
Sierra Leone			4		4
Grand Total	18	24	316	88	446

Table 5: Ongoing reintegration plans

Ongoing reintegration assistance beneficiaries March 2023 – August 2023					
Country of Origin	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
Angola	0	1	0	0	1
Benin	1	1	0	0	2
Cameroon	7	0	0	0	7
Chad	78	2	0	0	80
Comoros	1	1	0	0	2
Congo DRC	60	21	0	1	82
Côte d'Ivoire	34	0	0	0	34
Gambia	15	1	0	0	16
Guinea	66	12	1	0	89
Liberia	6	2	0	0	8
Mali	1	2	0	0	3
Nigeria	3	0	0	0	3
Pakistan	2	0	0	0	2

Sierra Leone	22	10	0	0	32
Sudan	33	0	0	0	33
TOTAL	329	53	1	1	384

Completed reintegration assistance beneficiaries March 2023 – August 2023					
Country of Origin	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
Cameroon	9	2	0	0	11
Côte d'Ivoire	103	111	20	16	250
Egypt	2	0	1	0	3
Gambia	1	0	0	0	1
Jordan	0	2	0	0	2
Liberia	3	0	0	0	3
Mali	1	0	0	0	1
Morocco	0	1	0	0	1
Sierra Leone	14	1	0	0	15
TOTAL	133	117	21	16	287

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 shelter operations, IOM accounted for differing needs of men, women, boys, and girls, including in the procurement of NFIs (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	0	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	1,400.00	IOM Beneficiary Database, Activity reports	1,215	2,242
	# 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.					

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	1.1.3 Support to running and operations of shelters in Médenine, Zarzis and Tataouine.					
	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	1,450.00	IOM Beneficiary Database	446	1,353
	# of migrants provided with reintegration assistance in countries of origin under the project.	0.00	1,155.00	IOM Beneficiary Database	384	671
	# of unaccompanied migrant children assisted through family tracing and BID panels.	0.00	21.00	IOM Beneficiary Database	5	7
	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 Tunisia arriving from Algeria and Morocco due to lack of shelter. Consequently, migrants continued to live rough outside of IOM office waiting for interviews and processing of their requests for AVRR. The needs of migrants in Tunisia, including AVRR, started to increase further in 2023. As an immediate response, IOM Tunisia increased the efficiency of its workflow and intake mechanisms. Weekly meeting with consular authorities also took place to further assess gaps, advocacy, and potential solutions.

Conclusion

The project implementation continued with **1,215** migrants benefiting from information on durable solutions, including AVRR, and from emergency assistance, including shelter, food and non-food-items. A total of **446** migrants were assisted to return from Tunisia to their countries of origin, and **384** migrants started receiving their reintegration assistance in their countries of origin. During the reporting period, the rapidly changing political situation with attention on migrants, following the changing approach to irregular migration adopted by the Tunisian authorities, further increased the needs for assistance, including AVRR.

V.Expenditures and Resource Utilization

Not to be reported at this stage.

VI.Annexes

No annexes.