



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

Executing Agency	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Project Identification	IOM Project Code:
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
1 March 2022 -	1 March 2022 – 31 August 2022
Date of Submission	30 September 2022
Total Confirmed Funding	EUR 1,980,198.000
Total Funds Received to Date	EUR 1,980,198.000
Total Expenditures	-

IOM Tunisia

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I. Summary of Key Achievements during the Reporting Period

Without sufficient access to emergency assistance and information about their rights and options available to them, migrants stranded in Tunisia are at higher risk of exploitation, abuse and loss of life in the context of onward movement by sea under precarious conditions. The project supports the Tunisian authorities and local civil society, in the continued provision of assistance to and protection of stranded migrants, including to further increase the availability of AVRR to those unable or unwilling to remain in Tunisia. 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), other individualized services or referrals for protection and assistance, and/or AVRR, in response to both the increase in rescue at sea operations in Tunisian waters, and increased requests for return assistance, while adhering to IOM policies and guidelines including the Return, Reintegration and Readmission policy.

During its first six months of implementation, the project contributed to the operations of three shelters providing emergency accommodation and services to vulnerable migrants, which assisted a total of **631** vulnerable migrants (**573** men, **17** women, **35** boys and **6** girls). A shelter in Medenine responded to the needs for emergency accommodation of women, children, and families, and shelters in Zarzis and Tataouine, those of men. All new beneficiaries during the reporting period were migrants rescued at sea.

A total of **334** migrants stranded in Tunisia (**228** men, **67** women, **17** boys, **22** girls) departed from Tunisia to their countries of origin under the project. Of these, **9** migrants (**9** men) also received their reintegration assistance in countries of origin. Where reintegration assistance in countries of origin was 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 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.

The support to shelters was cost shared with other programming, including the Italian Africa Fund and Migration Fund projects “Enhancing protection of vulnerable migrants in Tunisia through emergency assistance and support to health surveillance and service providers” and “Enhancing access of stranded migrants in Tunisia to protection and assisted voluntary return and reintegration”, the Netherlands funded “Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions”, and the EU funded project “EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration” North Africa window”.

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, coordination was initiated for the updating of the mechanisms in Sfax and in Tunis. The meetings with stakeholders are planned for the next reporting period.

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 liaised with the Tunisian authorities, and local civil society partners to provide short-term emergency assistance to vulnerable migrants. The project supported technically and financially 3 facilities in southern Tunisia providing emergency accommodation and services to migrants. All cases admitted to the shelters in in Medenine, Zarzis and Tataouine during the reporting period were migrants rescued at sea, as IOM responded to requests from the local authorities for assistance post disembarkation. During the first reporting period of the project, IOM was present at the port on **15** occasions, **12** times at the Djerba and Benguardene ports in the Medenine governorate, and **3** times in the Kerkennah islands in the Sfax governorate, assisting a total of **791** migrants rescued at sea (**717** men, **15** women, **56** boys, **3** girls). Out of these, the project contributed to assistance in the context of two operations, one in the Medenine governorate and one in the Sfax governorate. In the context of these two operations, IOM provided **110** migrants (**106** men, **3** women, and **1** boy) rescued at sea with post disembarkation assistance, including food, and non-good items.

During the reporting period, **741** vulnerable migrants benefited from emergency assistance and information on durable solutions, including AVRR, including **631** shelter beneficiaries in Medenine, Zarzis and Tataouine (**573** men, **17** women, **35** boys and **6** girls), and **110** migrants rescued at sea assisted in Sfax, (**106** men, **3** women, **1** boy)¹. The support provided 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 shelter on the longer- term options available to them, including to seek asylum or apply for IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration assistance.

The project also supported the works of a new Zarzis shelter, to shift the shelter in Zarzis from one premises to another given extensive maintenance needs of the first. The works were completed, and the move took place in July. The former premises of the shelter, which had

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.

been opened in 2019 to meet an urgent need, did not meet SPHERE² standard and had been constructed on a swampy terrain, which presented risk of a landslide.

The support to shelters, and assistance to shelter beneficiaries, was cost shared with the Italian Africa Fund and Migration Fund projects “Enhancing protection of vulnerable migrants in Tunisia through emergency assistance and support to health surveillance and service providers” and “Enhancing access of stranded migrants in Tunisia to protection and assisted voluntary return and reintegration”, the Netherlands funded “Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions”, and the EU funded project “EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration” North Africa window”.

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

Table 1: Migrants rescued at sea assisted under the project

Assistance to migrants rescued at sea March-August 2022					
Country of Origin	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
Bangladesh	51	0	0	0	51
Egypt	20	0	1	0	21
Syria	11	0	0	0	11
Pakistan	10	0	0	0	10
Yemen	5	0	0	0	5
Cameroon	5	0	0	0	5
Mali	1	1	0	0	2
Sudan	2	0	0	0	2
Palestine	0	2	0	0	2
Morocco	1	0	0	0	1
Total	106	3	1	0	110

² identified a set of humanitarian standards to be applied in humanitarian response

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

Shelter beneficiaries Medenine, Tataouine, Zarzis March-August 2022					
Country of Origin	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
Bangladesh	250	0	1	0	251
Egypt	188	0	28	0	216
Pakistan	46	0	0	0	46
Morocco	20	1	2	2	25
Syria	18	0	0	0	18
Sierra Leone	2	4	2	2	10
Senegal	5	4	0	0	9
Cameroon	2	4	1	1	8
Eritrea	7	0	0	0	7
Ethiopia	7	0	0	0	7
Sudan	6	0	0	0	6
Yemen	5	0	0	0	5
Gambia	4	0	0	0	4
Nigeria	1	2	0	1	4
Guinea	2	2	0	0	4
Burkina Faso	3	0	0	0	3
Guinea-Bissau	3	0	0	0	3
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1	0	0	0	1
Côte d'Ivoire	0	0	1	0	1
Niger	1	0	0	0	1
Ghana	1	0	0	0	1
Mali	1	0	0	0	1
Total	573	17	35	6	631

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

The increase in 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, increasing cost of living³ and challenges for migrants to generate income in Tunisia, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, led to a higher demand for assisted voluntary return and reintegration. During the first reporting period of the project, a total of **334** migrants stranded in Tunisia (**228** men, **67** women, **17** boys, **22** girls) returned from Tunisia to their countries of origin. The beneficiaries included two unaccompanied migrant children, for whom bid panels were conducted and escorts assigned for their movement.

³ According to the National Institute of Statistics, inflation went from 7% to 8.6% from March to August 2022.

Out of the migrants who returned to countries of origin with IOM assistance under the project, IOM provided counselling on reintegration assistance to the first **127** migrants (**106** men, **18** women, **2** boys and **1** girl), approved reintegration plans to **66** beneficiaries (**55** men, **10** women and **1** girl) and out of these, finalized economic reintegration assistance to **9** migrants (**9** men from Chad). 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.

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

Table 3: Departures from Tunisia

Departures from Tunisia to countries of origin					
March - August 2022					
Country of Origin	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
Côte d'Ivoire	41	37	14	11	103
Guinea	34	4	0	1	39
Democratic Republic of the Congo	26	8	1	1	36
Chad	33	0	0	0	33
Sierra Leone	18	9	1	2	30
Gambia	17	0	0	0	17
Morocco	12	1	0	4	17
Nigeria	10	0	0	0	10
Senegal	6	2		1	9
Bangladesh	9	0	0	0	9
Cameroon	6	0	0	0	6
Liberia	2	1	1	1	5
Ghana	1	2	0	1	4
Mali	3	0	0	0	3
Congo	3	0	0	0	3
Egypt	3	0	0	0	3
Comoros	1	1	0	0	2
Benin	1	1	0	0	2
Angola	0	1	0	0	1
Niger	1	0	0	0	1
Guinea-Bissau	1	0	0	0	1
Total	228	67	17	22	334

Table 4: Approved Reintegration plans

Approved Reintegration plans March - August 2022					
Country of Origin	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
Chad	30	0	0	0	30
Democratic Republic of the Congo	10	4	0	0	14
Sierra Leone	9	3	0	1	13
Guinea	3	1	0	0	4
Benin	1	1	0	0	2
Liberia	1	0	0	0	1
Angola	0	1	0	0	1
Comoros	1	0	0	0	1
Total	55	10	0	1	66

Table 5: Implemented reintegration plans

Implemented Reintegration assistance plans March - August 2022					
Country of Origin	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
Chad	9	0	0	0	9
Total	9	0	0	0	9

Progress Made towards Incorporating Cross-cutting Themes

Gender related needs of beneficiaries were taken into consideration, such as ensuring that pregnant and lactating women and their children are 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). To ensure that all staff, including third party contracted, have an awareness of gender issues, 15-minute discussions / briefings on these topics with security guards were done by trained case workers, combined with observation of interaction, and advise as appropriate. This was done to ensure that security staff, often the first who beneficiaries meet when approaching IOM office in Tunis, are guided on these matters, and hence to limit the risk of any migrant approaching IOM for assistance being discriminated based on gender or expressions of gender identity. Suggestion boxes were also installed in each shelter to ensure feedback and complaint mechanism, to enhance assistance, or make it possible to anonymously report any form of exploitation or abuse

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	0
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	0	741
	# 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	400.00	IOM Beneficiary Database	0	334
	# of migrants provided with reintegration assistance in countries of origin under the project.	0.00	250.00	IOM Beneficiary Database	0	9
	# 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

As IOM responded to requests from the Tunisian authorities for assistance to migrants rescued at sea, shelters in Medenine, Zarzis and Tataouine operated at full capacity, even exceeding their capacity. Tensions in the shelters, especially Medenine, due to behaviour from side of some of the beneficiaries whose period of assistance had ended and who refused to leave the shelter, added up to these challenges. IOM managed to agree on exit of assistance, and the individuals in question left the shelter after finding other options for their accommodation. This helped to calm the situation at the shelter, allowing IOM to resume normal activities in assistance to beneficiaries.

The operation of the shelters in Medenine and Zarzis suffered from challenges relating to partnership with IOM long-term implementing partner, the Tunisian Red Crescent. The partnership suffered from challenges from side of the Tunisian Red Crescent management to meet its administrative requirements, including reporting deadlines to IOM and payments to Red Crescent staff and volunteers working at the shelters. Such delays took place in the context of a long-standing internal lack of co-operation between the Red Crescent at the central level in Tunis (formal counterpart of IOM for shelter activities), and the regional delegation in the Medenine Governorate, where the shelters of Medenine and Zarzis are located. As attempts to coordinate with the central level did not produce the expected result, IOM ended the partnership with the Tunisian Red Crescent in March 2022. IOM is now in charge of the day-to-day operations of all three shelters (Medenine, Zarzis and Tataouine), and has initiated recruitment of staff to increase day-to-day presence at the shelters.

IOM encountered challenges in providing assistance to newly arrived beneficiaries in Tunis from Algeria and Morocco due to lack of shelter and approval for Government to open one. Consequently, migrants started camping outside of IOM office waiting for interviews and cases to be processed for AVRR. As a response, IOM Tunisia reviewed its workflow and intake mechanism, recruiting additional staff to speed up AVRR cases when possible.

In addition, security incidents faced by UNHCR Tunisia where more than 200 asylum seekers organized a sit in for 3 months in front of the office also impacted the work of IOM Tunisia. Vulnerable asylum seekers also protested in front of IOM Tunis office, requesting food, medical and accommodation assistance. IOM coordinated closely with UNHCR on the matter as well as with Tunisian authorities to ensure police protection to IOM premises, to guarantee safety of staff and beneficiaries.

Conclusion

The project implementation began with **741** migrants benefiting from information on durable solutions, including AVRR, and from emergency assistance, including shelter, food and non-food-items. A total of **334** migrants were assisted to return from Tunisia to their countries of origin, of which **9** also with reintegration assistance under the project. IOM observed an increase in need for AVRR, as more migrants found themselves stranded and opted to seek IOM assistance to return to their countries of origin. To improve IOM capacity to meet these needs, IOM submitted to the donor a request for a 1MEUR top-up to the current project, which would allow to increase the target of returns under the project from 400 to 750, and the target for reintegration from 250 to 400.

V.Expenditures and Resource Utilization

The total expenditure for during the project was **EUR 348,394.33**.

VI.Annexes

No annexes.