

## 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 September 2023 – 29 February 2024
Date of Submission	22 May 2024
Total Confirmed Funding	EUR 6,150,000
Total Funds Received to Date	EUR 6,150,000
Total Expenditures	N/A

## 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.

Following a new approach to irregular migration adopted by the Tunisian authorities in February 2023, with corresponding instructions to line ministries, IOM Tunisia noticed an increased need for return assistance during the reporting period. In October 2023, IOM Tunisia led multiple field missions to the Sfax region, in the area of Al-Amra, where a few thousands migrants were stranded in the olive groves in proximity of the coastal area. As many remained stranded during the reporting period, IOM received an increased number of requests for assisted voluntary return.

A total of **91** migrants in Tunisia (**47** men, **29** women, **8** boys, **7** girls) were assisted to return to their countries of origin during the reporting period, bringing the cumulative total of migrants assisted to return under this project thus far to **1,444**. In the countries of origin, IOM completed reintegration assistance for **160** migrants (**119** men, **35** women, **4** boy and **2** girls), bringing the cumulative total of reintegration assistance to date to **507 migrants**. In cases where reintegration assistance in countries of origin was available through other funding sources such as the Migrant Protection Return and Reintegration (MPRR) programme, the project only covered the costs of travel and pre-departure assistance. This complementarity enabled the project to continue assisting more beneficiaries with return assistance, in response to higher need, while also guaranteeing that migrants had access to reintegration assistance. Further, the project contributed to supporting reintegration of migrants having voluntarily travelled from Tunisia through their embassies between March and April 2023.

During the reporting period, the project contributed to provision of **744** types of direct assistance to **658** beneficiaries (**412** men, **118** women, **105** boys and **23** girls). The three IOM-run shelters provided emergency accommodation to **1,646** migrants in vulnerable situations (**1,416** men, **117** women, **91** boys and **22** girls). The shelters' operational and maintenance costs were 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" projects.

## 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 (MRRM) in three regions of Tunisia: Tunis, Zarzis and Sfax. The project aims to contribute to updating these mechanisms in each region to ensure a coordinated response to the protection and assistance needs of the target group. During the reporting period, as requests for assistance kept increasing, IOM met with key UN agencies to discuss growing needs in the regions of Medenine and Sfax and formalized the coordination through the creation of an asylum and migration working group.

***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 **1,646** migrants who were also accommodated in shelters in Medenine, Zarzis and Tataouine (**1,416 men, 117 women, 91 boys and 22 girls**), and **125** migrants rescued at sea assisted in Zarzis port, (**121 men, 4 women, 1 boy**)<sup>1</sup> with food, medical assessment and thermal blankets. IOM worked jointly with local authorities and the Tunisian Red Crescent to ensure referral of vulnerable migrants identified at borders. 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. All beneficiaries at IOM-run shelters were provided with counselling 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.

Additionally, IOM provided **658** migrants (**412 men, 118 women, 105 boys and 23 girls**) with direct assistance (food, non-food items) as part of the needs noted through case management.

The shelter operations, maintenance, and assistance were 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”.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

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

Assistance to Migrants Rescued at Sea September 2023 – February 2024							
Nationalities	Men	Women	Boys	Boys (UASC)	Girls	Girls (UASC)	Total
Bangladesh	33						33
Cameroon	3						3
Egypt	19						19
Ethiopia	1						1
Ghana	1						1
Côte d'Ivoire	2						2
Mali	2	1	1				4
Nigeria	17	3					20
Pakistan	8						8
Senegal	3						3
Somalia	1						1
Sudan	10						10
Syria	20						20
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>				<b>125</b>

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

<b>Shelter beneficiaries Medenine, Tataouine, Zarzis (new cases) September 2023 – February 2024</b>					
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
Bangladesh	47	0	1	0	48
Benin	30	3	1	1	35
Burkina Faso	358	0	28	0	386
Cameroon	15	5	0	2	22
Chad	91	0	2	0	93
Egypt	62	0	3	0	65
Gambia	395	0	25	0	420
Ghana	5	1	0	0	6
Guinea	69	20	7	2	98
Guinea Bissau	1	0	0	0	1
Ivory Coast	68	18	9	2	97
Mali	113	12	4	1	130
Nigeria	51	35	3	6	95
Niger	5	0	0	0	5
Liberia	1	1	0	0	2
Pakistan	13	0	0	0	13
Senegal	87	0	3	0	90
Sierra Leone	3	22	5	8	38
Togo	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1416</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1646</b>

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

**Direct assistance case management  
September 2023 – February 2024**

<b>Destination Country</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys (UASC)</b>	<b>Girls (UASC)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Guinea	48	15	2	3	9	0	77
Sierra Leone	37	27	3	4	3	0	74
Gambia	69	0	1	0	2	0	72
Chad	46	1	0	0	21	0	68
Côte D' Ivoire	18	29	6	6	0	0	59
Cameroon	19	14	9	1	6	0	49
South Sudan	30	5	1	2	10	0	48
Nigeria	20	6	5	2	1	0	34
Congo, The Democratic Republic Of The	16	9	5	3	0	0	33
Burkina Faso	23	3	0	0	1	0	27
Bangladesh	26	0	0	0	0	0	26
Somalia	11	0	0	0	6	0	17
Mali	10	2	0	1	3	0	16
Pakistan	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
Senegal	7	1	0	0	0	0	8
Egypt	6	0	1	0	0	0	7
Central African Republic	3	1	0	0	1	0	5
Eritrea	1	0	0	0	4	0	5
Ghana	4	1	0	0	0	0	5
Liberia	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
Benin	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Sudan	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
Tunisia	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Comoros	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Congo	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Iraq	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mauritania	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Palestinian Territories	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sweden	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Togo	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>658</b>

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

In October 2023, IOM Tunisia led several field missions to the Sfax region, in the area of Al-Amra, where a few thousand migrants were living in the olive groves in close proximity to the coastal area where sea departures take place. As many remained stranded in this area, IOM received increased number of requests for assisted voluntary return. While the project allowed IOM to meet the increased needs during the reporting period, the number of AVRR requests continued to increase due to ongoing deterioration of living conditions and the increased number of migrants stranded in the area. This led to a larger caseload approaching IOM for assistance, particularly for voluntary return.

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

IOM continued to receive requests for assistance from migrants in Tunis, Sfax and Zarzis, including those arriving from Tunisia's border with Algeria and Libya, and from Morocco (through Libya). During the reporting period, IOM supported a total of **91 migrants (47 men, 29 women, 8 boys, 7 girls)** with voluntary return and reintegration to their countries of origin. IOM Tunisia followed its due diligence process ensuring protection safeguards were put in place for all returns from Tunisia. This translated into thorough vulnerability screening to determine eligibility for return and request for migrants' exact location of return, risk assessment in coordination with IOM in the country of origin to assess possibility of return and safeguards to be put in place. If safe return was not possible, IOM Tunisia referred beneficiaries to UNHCR.

IOM procedures follow a rights-based approach aligned to international human rights frameworks with the aim to mainstream protection across its activities. 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 the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) to report any violation of human rights and refer victims of torture.

During the reporting period, IOM worked alongside the Tunisian authorities to access migrants in need of assistance, especially in the Sfax and Al-Amra area. IOM ensured close coordination with consular authorities of migrant countries of origin o, some of which even dedicated a space within their embassies for IOM to conduct migrant registrations and interviews to facilitate AVRR.

During this reporting period, IOM provided reintegration assistance to **160 migrants (119 men, 35 women, 4 boy and 2 girls)**. Additionally, IOM is currently finalizing the assistance to an additional **384 migrants in their countries of origin (329 men, 53 women, 1 boy, 1 girl)** bringing the sum of migrants assisted under this project to date to **731**.

Most assistance consisted of initiating income generating activities such as establishing poultry farms, moto taxis, or commerce shops. Additionally, top up funds have been provided in the case of extreme vulnerability to be used for medical or food assistance upon arrival.

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

**Table 4: Beneficiaries of AVRR**

<b>Beneficiaries of AVRR September 2023 – February 2024</b>					
<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Congo</b>	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>	20	15	6	4	45
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	22	15	2	2	41
<b>Ghana</b>	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Morocco</b>	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>91</b>

**Table 5: Ongoing reintegration plans**

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Cameroon</b>	12	4	0	0	16
<b>Chad</b>	27	0	0	0	27
<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>	7	2	0	0	9
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	45	53	3	5	106
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>160</b>

During the report period, IOM Tunisia led a monitoring mission to Côte d'Ivoire to monitor the implementation of the reintegration assistance to AVRR beneficiaries. The visit focused on 20 returnees from three different regions of Côte d'Ivoire. Interviews showed a satisfaction rate of 100% of beneficiaries with the process of implementation of reintegration assistance. They mentioned having been in close contact with IOM Côte d'Ivoire throughout the process and made informed decisions regarding their business plans. 64% of the participants stated that the reintegration partially met their needs compared to 21% who stated that it fully satisfied their needs and 15% replied that the assistance did not address their needs. The main reason provided for the 15% was linked to the amount provided which was deemed insufficient to sustainably respond to both basic needs of beneficiaries and running of a business. Two suggestions were proposed by the interviewees on top of increasing the overall amount for reintegration: enrolling returnees into business training and increase the frequency of monitoring missions from IOM to assess the progress and results of the reintegration assistance for beneficiaries.



**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>
	<b>Objective:</b> Enhancing the protection and assistance of migrants in vulnerable situations in Tunisia.					
	<b>Outcome 1:</b> 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
	<b>Output 1.1:</b> 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	1,646	3,888
		# of IOM co-managed shelters operating in Tunisia	3.00 3.00	Monitoring reports	3	3
	<b>Activities that lead to Output 1.1</b>					
	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.					

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

	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.					
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Stranded migrants in Tunisia have access to durable solutions including Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration assistance.						
<b>Output 2.1:</b> 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	91	1,444
	# of migrants provided with reintegration assistance in countries of origin under the project.	0.00	1,155.00	IOM Beneficiary Database	160	731
	# of unaccompanied migrant children assisted through family tracing and BID panels.	0.00	21.00	IOM Beneficiary Database	5	7
	<b>Activities that lead to Output 2.1</b>					
	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 encountered challenges in providing assistance to beneficiaries in Sfax region due to the lack of shelter and increased number of people requesting assisted voluntary return, 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 **1,646** migrants benefiting from information on durable solutions, including AVRR, and from emergency assistance, including shelter, food and non-food-items. A total of **91** migrants were assisted to return from Tunisia to their countries of origin, and **160** migrants started receiving their reintegration assistance in their countries of origin. During the reporting period, the rapidly changing migration situation with attention on the Sfax region, 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

Annex 1 – Marcelle’s reintegration story.

Annex 2 – Janette’s reintegration story.