

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN TUNISIA

10/05/2022-24/05/2022

- On 14 May 2022, the Tunisian Navy intercepted [81 people](#) who departed from Libya. They were then transferred to the Tataouine shelter of IOM. On 11 May 2022, the Tunisian Coast Guard rescued [99 people](#) in distress in front of the Libyan coast. A few days before, Tunisian authorities intercepted [250 people](#) and retrieved three bodies in different operations. 10 of them are Tunisian nationals, the others are from different African nationalities.
- African women living undocumented in Tunisia are among those migrants who decide to [take to the sea](#) because they can't leave Tunisia in a legal way. Many are from the Ivory Coast and are able to enter Tunisia visa-free and stay for three months. But often, they find themselves in situations of forced labour, working as domestic workers for Tunisian families who do not pay them. After the three months expire, if they do not leave immediately, they are fined for everyday of illegal stay in the country. Therefore, undocumented migrants find themselves with a huge debt to the Tunisian state that must be paid if they want to leave the country. This pushes many to leave irregularly and risk their lives in the Mediterranean crossing.

05/04/2022-10/05/2022

- Tunisian organization FTDES [issued a call](#) for the decent burial of migrants. Bodies of migrants recovered in Tunisia end up in Sfax hospitals "amid reluctance to expedite their burial, a reluctance justified by the unavailability of vacant spots or the high cost of burial procedures". FTDES calls on "relevant authorities to take legal and medical measures that will later allow families to identify the bodies and to check identities and calls on municipalities of the governorate of Sfax to express their solidarity and to ensure that the bodies are buried in appropriate and decent places and in full respect of human dignity".
- Migrants in Tunisia keep [protesting](#) from Zarzis to Tunis against the UNHCR lack of protection and assistance. In Tunis, more than 200 people have settled in front of the building of the UNHCR since 16 April 2022 demanding to be resettled to a safe third country. In Zarzis, the protests had already started from February, when people voiced their concerns against the

UNHCR decision to expel them from their shelters in Medenine and have since then occupied UNHCR's building.

- [Four boats](#) shipwrecked off Sfax in the end of April, leading to the death of at least 17 people while Tunisian authorities could rescue 98 people.
- On 10 April 2022, Tunisian authorities [reported](#) two shipwrecks in which at least 13 people lost their lives and 12 went missing. Among the dead bodies found there were [six children](#).

22/03/2022-05/04/2022

- On March 21, at least [25 bodies](#) of migrants attempting to reach Europe were washed ashore off the coast of northeastern Tunisia, according to a report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- In collaboration with Lawyers Without Borders and ASGI, the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights [FTDES](#) published this report last March on the conditions of stay and the trajectories of Tunisian migrants repatriated from Italy. <https://ftdes.net/rapports/rapatriesitalie.pdf>

08/03/2022 - 22/03/2022

- On March 19, the [death toll](#) from the sinking of a migrant ship off the coast of Tunisia rose to 20, most of them Syrians, as they tried to reach Italy, according to a civil protection official.
- Between Friday 18 and Saturday 19 March, the bodies of 25 people washed up on the beaches of Nabeul. The boat they were traveling on reportedly departed from the Tunisian coast several days ago and counted 60 people on board according to [IOM Tunisia](#).
- Since 8 March 2022, Alarm Phone was [alerted](#) of 2 boats in distress off Tunisia with around 60 and 24 people on board. Authorities refused to provide information. The two groups went missing and the biggest fear is that the two boats [shipwrecked](#). On 19 March 2022, [17 bodies](#) were washed ashore on the coasts of Hammamet. According to authorities, the people were from sub-Saharan countries and Syria.
- Sub-Saharan women continue to be victims of racism and discrimination in Tunisia, explains this report by [France 24](#) published on March 10

22/02/2022-08/03/2022

- On 28 February 2022, a [shipwreck](#) occurred off Tunisian coasts. Nine people were rescued, and at least nine others drowned.
- EuroMed Rights drafted Input for the Special Rapporteur's report on human rights violations at international borders: trends, prevention and accountability, available on [this link](#).

- Student and worker associations note an increase in acts of racism and targeted arrests of black people. Le Monde on February 22. NGOs such as the Tunisian Association for the Support of Minorities (ATSM) have denounced these "arbitrary arrests" which reportedly concern nearly 300 young Sub-Saharanans.
- The bodies of four sub-Saharan migrants were found dead in east-central Tunisia, not far from the border with Algeria, regional authorities said Thursday.

08/02/2022 - 22/02/2022

- In the past weeks, migrants have been [protesting](#) in the city of **Zarzis** against the decision by UNHCR to evict them from shelters and diminish assistance. As reported by [Infomigrants](#), they were given an eviction notice to leave the accommodation they had occupied, provided by the UNHCR, in 15 days. In exchange they would receive 250 dinars per month for three months, in order to find accommodation on their own. On 14 February, about 150 Sub-Saharan migrants started a [sit-in](#) in front of the UNHCR offices in Zarzis to demand evacuation from Tunisia. They have been in Tunisia for 3-5 years and have no way to regularize their status.
- In the beginning of February, the Tunisian Coast guard rescued [163 migrants](#) off the coasts of **Sfax**. They had departed from Sfax and were trying to reach Italy.

25/01/2022 - 08/02/2022

- On 31 January 2022, the Italian National Preventive Mechanism Against Torture [monitored](#) the return of 13 Tunisian citizens to Tunisia.
- On 26 January 2022, a [shipwreck](#) was recorded off Tunisian coasts. The boat, with 70 people on board, had departed from Libya and capsized close to Tunisian coasts. Tunisian authorities were able to rescue 34 people, found 6 bodies on board, but more than 30 people remain missing and are feared to be dead. On the same day, [34 people](#) left from Sfax in Tunisia, and alerted Alarm Phone. However, authorities did not have information about the people, and their fate remains unknown.
- The Independent [published](#) an article that analyses the migration of young Tunisians across the Mediterranean. More and more people leave Tunisia as they have no hopes for the future and are ready to attempt the Mediterranean crossing as many times as it will take to reach Italy.
- The Tunisia Forum for Economic and Social Rights published the report *The Covid-19 pandemic and the evolution of migration intentions among Tunisian households*. The report is available [here](#).

11/01/2022 - 25/01/2022

- A [shipwreck](#) took place off Tunisian coasts, 21 people were rescued but 11 lost their lives. They were all Tunisian citizens and among the victims is a 10-year-old girl.

14/12/2021 - 11/01/2022

- The Tunisian Navy was involved in a [pull-back](#) of 70 people who were stranded on a Shell oil platform in the Maltese SAR zone. Despite being informed, Maltese authorities did not intervene.
- Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio [stressed](#) the importance of Tunisia in fighting irregular migration, after a visit to the country in the end of the year. Tunisian President Kais Saied also highlighted the will to have a closer relationship with Italy in the future, also in the field of irregular migration.
- Tunisia's president Kais Saied [announced](#) a constitutional referendum next July 2022 and parliamentary elections at the end of 2022.
- Avocats Sans Frontières published the report 'Deconstruct the myth of Tunisia as a "safe" country'. Find the report [here](#).

30/11/2021 - 14/12/2021

- The recent case of [Abdel Latif](#), a Tunisian citizen who died on 28 November 2021 in Italy while waiting for deportation, shed light on the continuous deportations of Tunisian citizens to Tunisia. After an agreement in August 2020 between Italy and Tunisia, over 2,000 migrants were repatriated to Tunisia in 2020 and about 1,600 in 2021.
- IOM Tunisia and the Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists [strengthened](#) partnership aiming to "encourage a more balanced and evidence-based media reporting on migration issues".

16/11/2021 - 29/11/2021

- On 21st of November 2021, Tunisian authorities said they intercepted over [200 migrants](#) in nine different operations. According to the Tunisian organisation FTDES, Tunisian authorities intercepted about 19,500 migrants in the first nine months in 2021.
- [Gabriel Attal](#), the spokesperson for the French government, said during an interview that Tunisia is cooperating in the refoulement of its citizens, contrary to other Maghreb countries which actively oppose it.

25/10/2021 - 15/11/2021

- **UN experts** condemn Tunisia for [collective expulsions](#) of migrants and asylum-seekers to **Libya**. As reported by the UN human Rights Council, dozens of migrants are pushed to the border with Libya by Tunisian

authorities and not allowed re-entry in the country. Tunisian authorities also threatened and beaten the migrants. The expulsions are in breach of the non-refoulment principle and most of the migrants are from sub-Saharan Africa and face severe violations and racism in Libya.

- According to the NGO Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (**FTDES**), France and Tunisia are into talks to [accelerate](#) the forced return of Tunisian citizens to Tunisia.
- The [Missing At The Borders](#) project is gathering testimonies from missing migrants' families, such as Bilal Khaled's family. He's been missing since the 6th of September 2012. Despite the family's effort to contact the authorities, and trying to find answers on their son's destiny, to this day they have not received any results. They also gathered the testimony from Salim Benbekai's family, who has been missing since the 17th of April 2007. He is originally from Algeria and tried to cross the Mediterranean but was intercepted by Tunisian authorities and later arrested. Since then, the family has not received any information about their son.
- On the 8th of November, the Council of the European Union released the [Action Plan](#) for Tunisia. Overall, the Plan underlines the support that the EU has provided to Tunisia and will continue to do so to foster Tunisia's path to democracy, its response to the pandemic and to economic challenges. The EU monitors closely the evolving of the political situation in Tunisia and the Plan repeatedly states that EU's support is conditional on Tunisia's adherence to democracy, human rights, gender equality, and good governance.

05/10/2021 - 25/10/2021

- On 17 October 2021, a [shipwreck](#) off Mahdia and Monastir left 22 people missing and 2 dead. 7 people were rescued.
- On 13 October 2021, Alarm Phone [alerted](#) that 97 migrants were on a boat in distress at sea off Tunisia.

23/09/2021 - 05/10/2021

- Several organisations [denounced](#) the current inhumane practices of **deportations of migrants from Sub-Saharan countries from Tunisia to Libya**. On 27 September 2021, seven boats, four with people from Sub-Saharan African countries on board and three with Tunisians on board, who had left Kerkennah, off Sfax, were intercepted by the Tunisian authorities and brought back to Tunisia. According to the organisations, the Tunisian people were released while the ones from Sub-Saharan African countries, around 100 people, were brought to the Libyan border. One group of migrants was kidnapped in Libya and currently held in private houses.

Another group was arrested by Libyan authorities. One of these groups has been deprived of food and assistance for five days, while several sub-Saharan women have denounced being raped in Libya.

- In a [statement](#) on 1 October 2021, the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES) raised deep concern on the escalation of violence and abuses against migrants in Tunisia - as a result of the EU border externalization policies - including systematic forcible deportations on the Tunisian-Algerian and Tunisian-Libyan borders.

6/09/2021 - 22/09/2021

- On 9-10 September 2021, High Representative Josep Borrell went on his [first official visit](#) to Tunisia.

5/07/2021 - 27/07/2021

- According to the Tunisian Red Crescent, on 21 July 2021, at least 17 Bengali migrants [drowned](#) off Tunisia. They had departed from Libya to Italy. 380 others were rescued by the Tunisian coast guard.

21/06/2021 - 05/07/2021

- On 4 July 2021, at least **43 migrants**, who had departed from **Libya**, are feared to have [drowned off Tunisia](#) in a deadly shipwreck. 84 others were rescued.
- On 28 July 2021, a deadly [shipwreck](#) off **Sfax**, Tunisia, caused at least 4 deaths, 19 missing people. 12 people were rescued.
- On 25-26 June 2021, [according to Alarm Phone](#), around 100 people who were in distress in international waters were pushed back to Tunisia and at least two people died.