

# REPORT **December 2022**

**705**  
Migrants

**17**

Collective protests

Cases of suicide  
and attempted suicide

**Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux**

2, Avenue de France Imm Ibn Khaldoun (la Nationale),  
2ème étage Apt325-Tunis Bab Bhar 1000

TEL. : (+216) 71 325 129 FAX : (+216) 71 325 128

contact@ftdes.net www.ftdes.net

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# December 2022 report on social protests

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## Introduction

In a climate of confusion and disappointment, the public space has been invaded by protests and violence against others and oneself, which have been shaped by the daily sufferings of the population, whether or not they have participated in these events. Although the number of protests has decreased, the grounds are growing more urgent and the modalities of the protests are becoming increasingly pressing.

Despite the denial of the economic and political crises that the country is going through, the repercussions of these crises are felt on a daily basis. It is then undeniable for the fringes of the population that suffers its effects, namely the most economically vulnerable people. The vital and immediate needs that Tunisians claim directly by demonstrating in the streets or indirectly through self-inflicted violence or violence against others are of great relevance, despite the failure of the media or the government to address these expressions.

The denial of the seriousness of the crisis could induce in Tunisia a state of "deliberate depression" that creates quasi-chronic rifts in the social and economic fabric. The signs of this condition can be seen in the state of impotence and disappointment of which the Tunisians speak and in the liminal and trapped state in which the country finds itself politically.

This report is presented by the Tunisian Social Observatory created by the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES) that is committed to providing tools for monitoring and analyzing social movements, violence and suicides. This report will describe and introduce an analysis of the political-socio-economic situation in December, discuss the expressions of the continuing malaise, and try to understand the possibilities of halved resolution that are being offered.

## Contextual dynamics

### Political Dynamics :

The most significant event that took place during the month of December in Tunisia seems to be the first round of legislative elections on December 17, 2022. This event, which aimed to elect the new members of the Assembly of People's Representatives of Tunisia, was marked by a significant abstention rate by Tunisian voters. The 11.22% participation in the elections is a dramatic deviation from previous elections that the country has gone through. This boycott indicates a failure and an inability to break the political deadlock in an inclusive manner for citizens. The result is a political disappointment for the ultra-presidentialist regime of Kais Saied, which was counting on acquiring popular legitimacy through these long-awaited elections.<sup>1</sup>

The media and the fallen political elite let these elections slip by, without giving them importance and without investing in the event in any major way, whether through debate or reflection or efforts to capture the public's attention. This near indifference would explain the lack of votes and the non-investment in the election by voters and observers. On the public side, the boycott was spontaneous. Refusing to be part of yet another election to elect deputies who will have limited power and a marginal and powerless parliament, they simply decided not to participate.

The requirements presented in the new electoral law seeming difficult to meet have implied that the Tunisians could not vote for a single candidate in several districts <sup>2</sup>. The consequences of this disenchantment with the elections go hand in hand with the popular disenchantment with politics in Tunisia, despite the president's attempts to deny it by downplaying the results of the first round and insisting on waiting for the second round before judging the electoral process<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>France 24. After the failure of the legislative elections, Tunisia plunged into a political impasse, December 20, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20221220-apr%C3%A8s-l-%C3%A9chec-des-l%C3%A9gislatives-la-tunisie-plong%C3%A9-dans-une-impasse-politique>

<sup>2</sup> Middle East Eye. Legislative elections in Tunisia: an atypical election that reinforces presidential power, December 17, 2022, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/decryptages/tunisie-legislatives-scrutin-atypique-renforce-pouvoir-presidentiel-kais-saied-parlement-opposition>

<sup>3</sup> France 24. Tunisia: very low participation in the legislative elections boycotted by the opposition, December 17, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20221217-tunisie-participation-tr%C3%A8s-faible-aux-l%C3%A9gislatives-boycott%C3%A9es-par-l-opposition>

The political void and the absence of alternatives is what serves the confusion and the lack of clear discourse on the part of social actors. Both on the side of the opposition and on the side of the presidential camp, this vacuum persists. It would explain the inability to face the current state, in dialogue or protest. Through this void, the presidential legitimacy remains difficult to question. The impasse has multiple faces, including the legal impasse that stems from both presidential actions and speeches, as well as a systemic factor, which is the new constitution that poorly provides for mechanisms that can challenge presidential power. This influences the social movements that have been identified, which are struggling to become visible and empowered because of the lack of a counterpart to whom they can turn.

The inability to listen or respond to protests influences the ways in which people internalize and learn about powerlessness. The decline in the number of social movements and the increase in the number of violent incidents reflect the frustration with the lack of political horizons.

Along with the denial and authoritarian "laissez-faire", threats to freedom of expression are revealed from the detention and complaints to the courts following the implementation of the Decree-Law No. 2022-54 of September 13, 2022, on the fight against offenses related to information and communication systems. The broad interpretation of this presidential decree could allow the pressure and oppression of journalists, whistleblowers and Tunisian citizens in general<sup>4</sup>. The prosecution of Ayachi Hamami illustrates the repressive possibilities, following the simple formulation of criticism of the justice system in place <sup>5</sup>.

In general, the political situation in Tunisia continues to be marked by the gap between socio-economic reality and political fantasies. This discrepancy in the discourse on politics and economics would indicate the inability to manage the concrete conditions. Faced with the continuity of this discrepancy and this feeling of powerlessness, we observe a self-censorship on the part of the population which is demonstrated by the decrease in the number of social

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<sup>4</sup> France 24. Tunisia: press freedom in danger, December 18, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/fr/vid%C3%A9o/20221218-tunisie-la-libert%C3%A9-de-la-presse-en-danger>

<sup>5</sup> Jeune Afrique. Tunisian lawyer Ayachi Hammami prosecuted for criticizing justice, January 4, 2023, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1405880/politique/lavocat-tunisien-ayachi-hammami-poursuivi-pour-avoir-critique-la-justice/>

movements, the refusal to participate in elections and the daily frustrations demonstrated by violence, vandalism or provoked death.

### **Socioeconomic Dynamics:**

With the ongoing political uncertainty period, socio-economic issues continue to threaten and weaken the Tunisian state, still caught in monetary negotiations and still prey to a decline in the standard of living of its citizens. The economic indicators announce a complicated situation and the state of political confusion is not relieving the situation. Indeed, since November, consumer prices have risen by 0.1%. The rise in transportation charges of 2.6%, clothing products of 1.5% and food prices of 0.2% explain this increase. Winter clothing needs and the implementation of new transport fares are the main factors for this price change.

In addition, the inflation rate increased to 10.1 percent in December 2022, up from 9.8 percent in November. Food prices increased by 14.6% in one year, due to the increase in prices of egg, sheep meat, edible oils, beef, and fresh vegetables. The increase in the prices of these products, which are part of the eating habits of Tunisians, would imply the change of this eating culture, and the deterioration of the quality of the products purchased, which would have consequences on the physical and mental health of citizens in the long term. In addition to the primary human need that is nutrition, the prices of manufactured goods have increased by 10.2% due to the increase in prices of building materials, clothing products, and products for routine household maintenance. Prices for other services, including transportation, hospital services, and restaurants, also increased.<sup>6</sup> Fuel prices have also increased five times during the year 2022. Inflation thus affects all the priority spheres of the daily life of Tunisians. Sometimes, shortages precede or accompany price increases. During December, these shortages affected basic foodstuffs such as milk, flour, coffee, sugar and oil, as well as medicines, some of which are prescribed for chronic illnesses requiring continuous care.

The economic crisis continues to suffocate the Tunisian population, while the politicians wait for an intervention and a loan that has been postponed

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<sup>6</sup> National Institute of Statistics Consumer Price Index, December 2022, <http://www.ins.tn/publication/indice-des-prix-la-consommation-decembre-2022>



repeatedly. The population reacts to this crisis in different ways, anchored in suffering and deprivation. Several cases of violence and theft have been documented during this month, as well as cases of vandalism where precarious groups resort to the only way available to them. What happened in the poor neighborhood of Lakanya, where a group of residents attacked a crashed truck carrying beer to take what was on board, illustrates the frustration of the masses and the drama behind an act of forced public consumption that defies social norms.

The 2023 finance law, with its restrictive measures, adds another layer to the blockage of administrations and companies and reinforces the structural factors of the crisis. Predicting a deficit of nearly 7.5 billion dinars in 2023, this law would announce according to experts the end of Tunisian institutions, since it would force the state to borrow money from Tunisian banks to finance its institutions. The secretary general of the Tunisian General Union of Labour (UGTT), Nouredine Taboubi, stated that "this law is a tax law and it will contribute to further impoverish the Tunisians. (...) This government is swindling Tunisian people".<sup>7</sup> Several social actors with varying degrees of expertise have criticized this law, which is marketed as a tool to defend the most vulnerable groups of the population.

In a daily quest for "khobza", the Tunisian population is caught up in events of protests, violence directed against the other and self-inflicted. In the following, the manifestations of events that took place in December will be described and analyzed.

## **Social Movements**

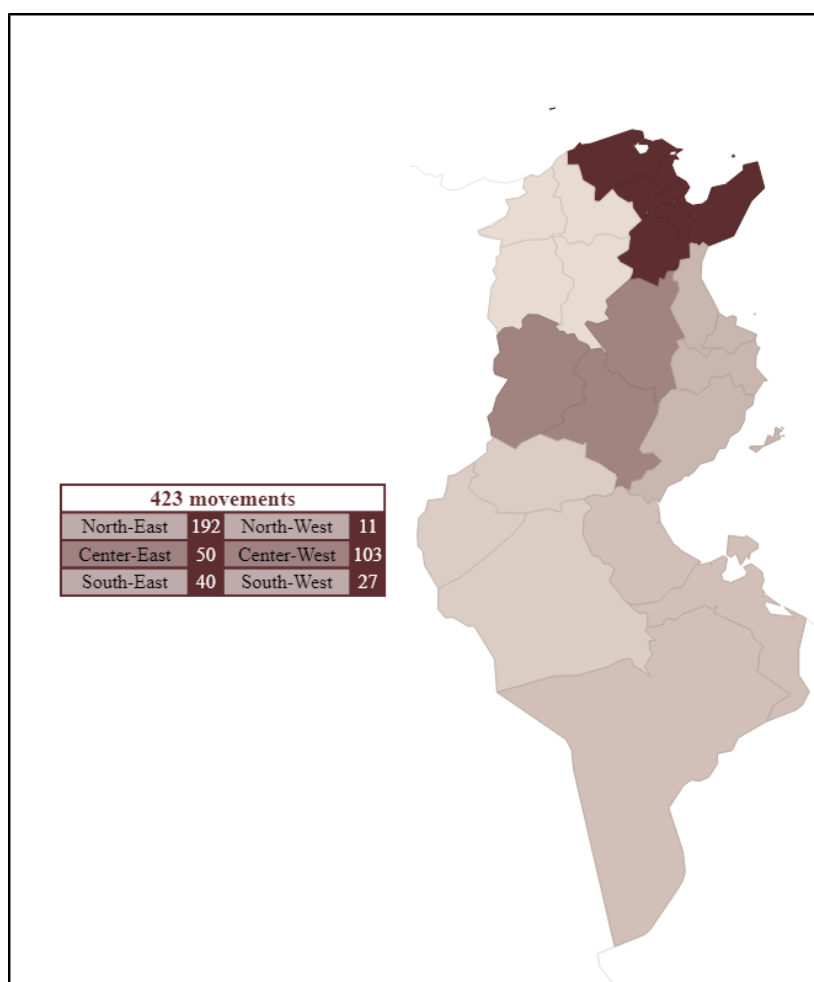
The social movements that took place during December were affected by the political and socio-economic climate that the country is experiencing, as well as by contextual factors. This month, which has been announcing the beginning of protests for a decade, undergoes in 2022 a turn towards a relative calm, which would be as significant and telling as the most radical riots.

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<sup>7</sup>La Presse. Finance Law 2023 | Expert Opinion: More tax pressure, December 31, 2022, <https://lapresse.tn/147761/loi-de-finances-2023-avis-des-experts-encore-de-la-pression-fiscale/#:~:text=Selon%20la%20loi%20de%20finances,%C2%BB%2C%20a%20d%C3%A9clar%C3%A9%20Ezzedine%20Sa%C3%AFdane>.

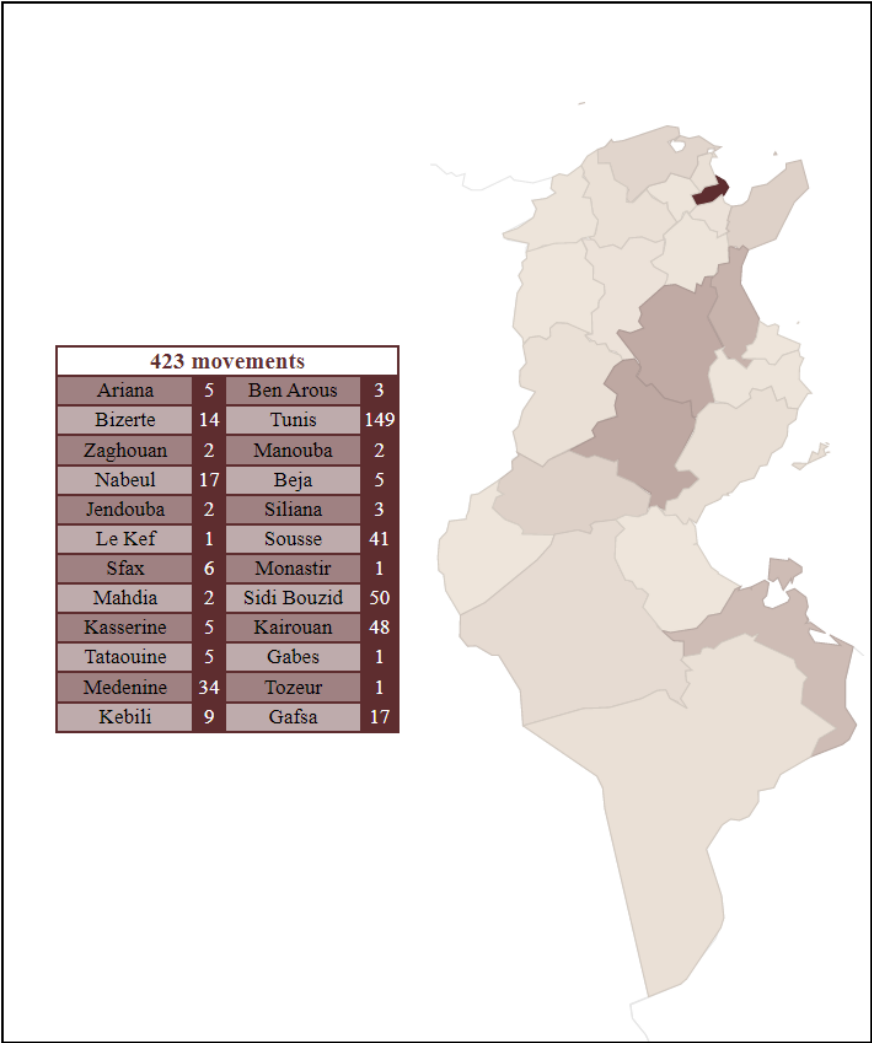
## 1. Geospatial Distribution

There were 423 protest movements in December 2022, down from 591 in November 2022 and 889 in October 2022. The downward curve of protest movements is established as a new norm following months of decline, despite the participation of various actors including teachers on strike and demonstrating. The regions with the highest numbers are the northeast, which recorded 192 protests, and the central-west, which recorded 103, followed by the central-east, which recorded 50. The mapping of protests thus remains stable, compared to the present months. The continuity of the logic of the protests could be noted, considering the exhaustion of the latter under the weight of time and militant fatigue.



As for the cities that recorded the highest numbers of protests, Tunis is in first place, as it recorded the majority of movements, ie 149. Sidi Bouzid, Kairouan,

Sousse, and Medenine also recorded significant numbers, while other cities such as Kef, Jendouba, Monastir, Gabes, and Tozeur recorded reduced numbers, compared to previous months.



## 2. Gendered Distribution

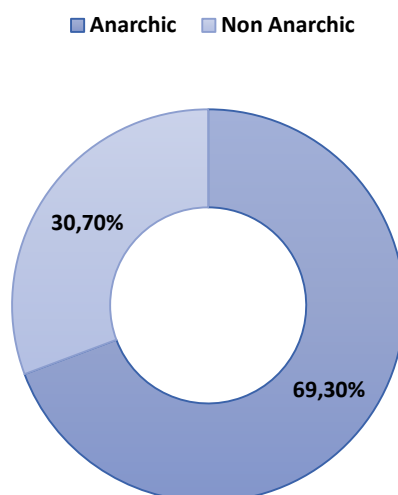
The majority of the protests were gender inclusive. 85.6% were attended by both women and men, while 13.7% were exclusively for men and 0.7% were exclusively for women.



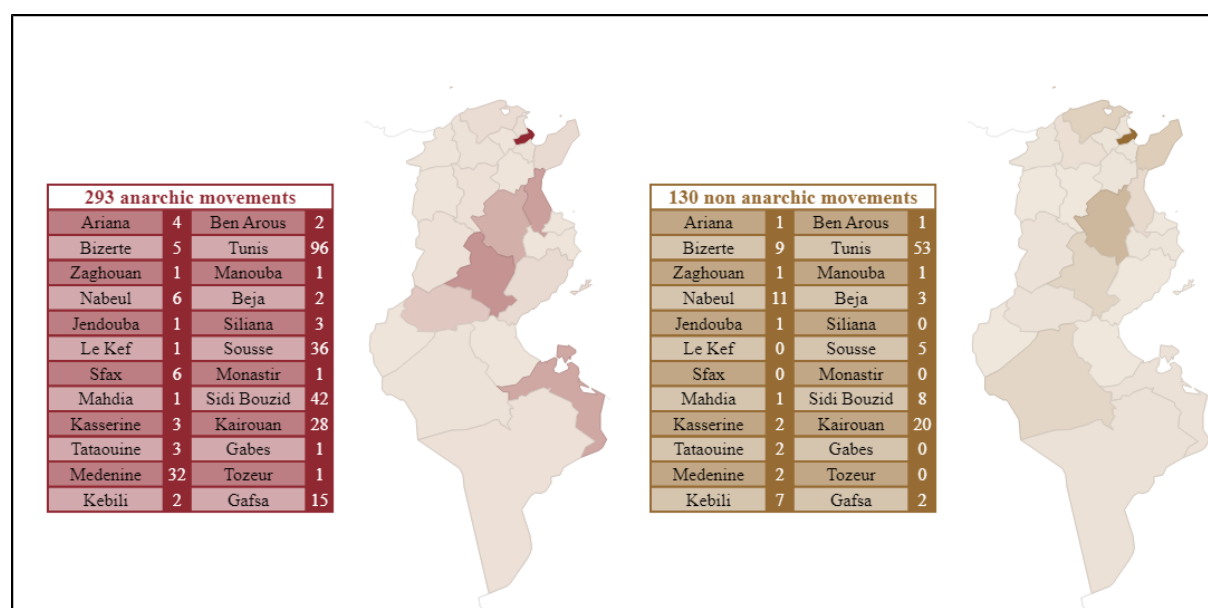


### 3. Anarchic" vs. "non-anarchic" movements

69.3%, namely 293 of the recorded movements can be described as anarchic, while 30.7%, namely 130 protests can be considered non-anarchic.

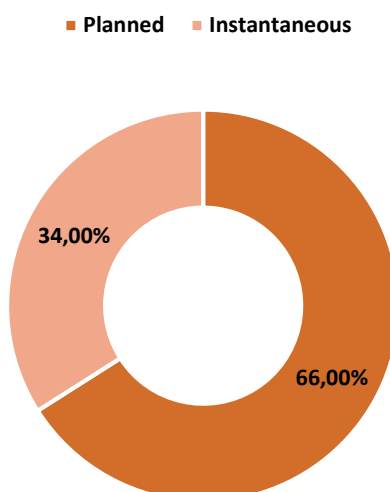


Regarding the governorates where these movements took place, the governorates of Tunis, Sousse, Sidi Bouzid and Medenine have recorded the highest number of "anarchic" movements, while Tunis, Kairouan, Bizerte, Sidi Bouzid have recorded that of "non-anarchic" movements. A movement of repetition is therefore observed, where the same governorates take the lead according to the particularities of their claim scene.

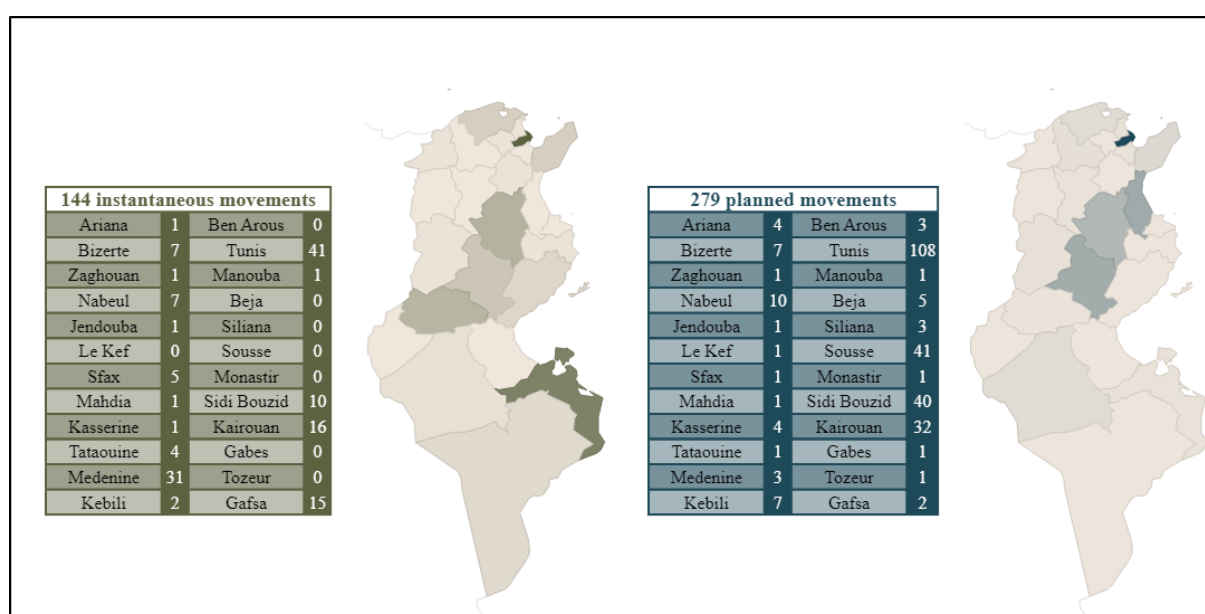


## 4. Planned vs. instantaneous movements

In December 66% or 279 social movements were planned in advance, while 34% or 144 were triggered instantly. The number of planned movements is decreasing compared to the previous months, which indicates the rise of movements that are ignited quickly and instantly, under the weight of popular anger.



The instantaneous movements were recorded mainly in the governorates of Tunis with 41 protests, Medenine with 31 protests, and Kairouan with 16. As for the planned movements, they took place in Tunis with 108 protests, Sousse which recorded 41 protests, and Sidi Bouzid where 40 protests took place.



## **5. The actors**

The social actors who participated in the social movements of December 2022 are mostly workers represented by 22% of the total actors, 19% by residents, 14% by journalists, 12% by unemployed, and 8% by students. Other diverse figures also took part in the December protests, namely people with special needs, parents, traders, activists, youth, farmers, cab drivers and private drivers, construction workers, teachers, lawyers and security agents, etc.

## **6. Grounds for the protests**

The majority of the protest demands, that is 40% of the total number, involve workers' rights, of which 9% are for the improvement of working conditions, 10% for regularization, and 10% for protesting against the non-implementation of previously agreed agreements. 15% are motivated by the manifestation of public support for a person, 20% involve protesting against a presidential or ministerial decision. The reasons for the protests were also motivated by demands related to the environment, infrastructure, public services, the education system and agriculture.

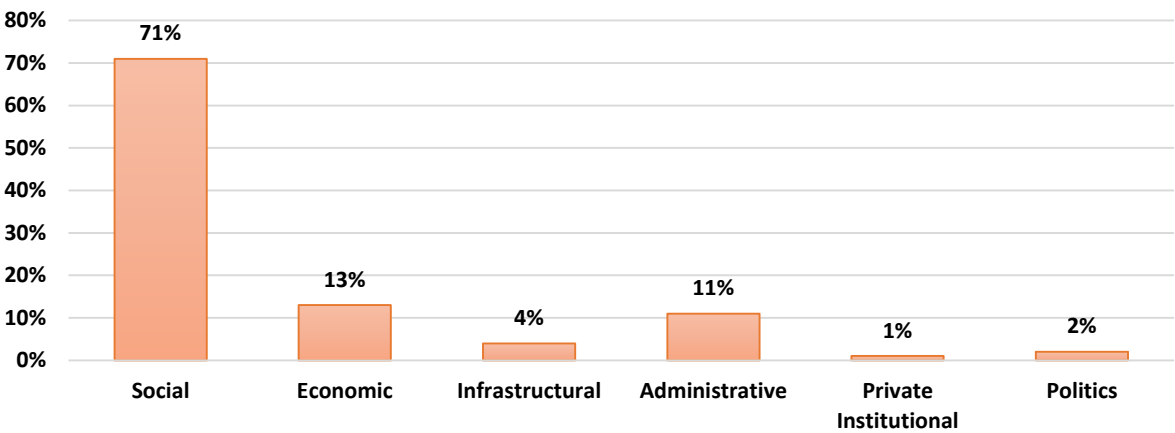
## **7. Targets of the protests**

As in previous months, the primary target of the protests is the central authority, to which 66% of the demands are directed. The instances of this central authority are targeted in different proportions. The presidency of the government records 10% of the trails targeted by the protests, while the government records 49% (Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry, etc.). Among other targets, 4% of social movements target private organizations, 4% are directed against employers, and 6% target educational institutions.

## **8. Targeted Sectors**

Of all the sectors targeted by social movements recorded in December, 71% of the protests are social in nature, 13% are economic, 4% are related to infrastructure, 11% are administrative, 1% are related to private institutions and 2% are political. The primacy of movements of a social and economic nature are indicators of the importance of these issues for Tunisian citizens, during the current situation. The needs that drive the protests are increasingly turned to

daily survival, in the context of a socio-economic crisis that is becoming more widespread.

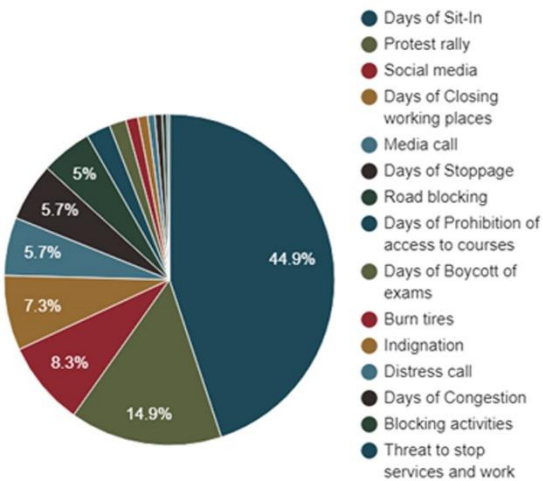


The impacted sectors were the public sector, which accounted for 36 percent of protests, the private sector, which accounted for 20 percent, the legal sector, which accounted for 17 percent, and the education sector, which accounted for 14 percent. Other sectors were also affected, including health with 5%, security with 5%, access to water with 2%, the agricultural sector with 4%, and transportation with 2%. As in previous months, the public sector is the target of its employees' demands, due to the high prevalence of employee movements in the public sector. The decline of the teachers' movement has changed the mapping of social movement sectors. Nevertheless, the same concerns are present among a significant number of the population.

### 9. Forms of protest

As usual, most of the protests took the form of sit-ins, that is, more than 190 sit-ins in days and more than 47 sit-ins in total number.

44.9% of the protests were sit-in days, 14.9% protest rallies, 8.3% movements observed on social networks, 7.3% days of closure of work premises, 5.7% media calls, 5.7% strike days, 5.7% road blockades, and 5% days of banning access to classes. Other protests included



boycotting exams, burning tires, outrage, distress calls, congestion days, blocking activities, and threats to suspend services and work.

## **10. Spaces of protest**

The spaces of protests were diverse. 22% were in the workspaces, 22% on the roads, 13% in public spaces, 11% in educational institutions, 11% on social networks, 11% at the Kasbah, 9% in front of the headquarters of administrations, 7% in front of the presidential palace, 5% on the media, 3% in front of the seats of government and 2% in front of those of delegations. The municipal theater, the headquarters of ministries, the headquarters of the presidency, security posts, legal institutions, hospitals, public services and Habib Bourguiba Avenue were also locations of choice for the protests in December.

# Irregular Migration in December 2022



Irregular immigration attempts usually decrease during the month of December due to climatic factors. Nevertheless, the month of December 2022 was exceptional, as 705 immigrants of Tunisian nationality arrived on the Italian coast. The Tunisian nationality is ranked second worldwide this year in terms of irregular arrivals to the Italian coast.

Despite strict security measures on the Tunisian coast, whether by land or sea, attempts at irregular migration are increasing. Tunisian authorities have thwarted 185 crossing operations, representing an increase of 115% compared to December 2021, including 77.25% by sea and 22.75% by land. 142.3% of irregular migrants have been prevented from crossing, 61.76% of which are non-Tunisian nationals and 38.24% Tunisian nationals.

The governorate of Sfax remains the first exporter of irregular migration operations, where 38.35% of crossing operations were thwarted, the governorate of Monastir comes in second place with a rate of 18.62%, and the governorates of Mahdia and Nabeul with a rate of 17.64%, and the rest of the operations thwarted are distributed on the Tunisian coast at about the same rate.

The Tunisian Naval Guard uses violent means to conduct its operations to prevent migrants from crossing, which puts their lives at risk. Surviving migrants post successive videos on social networks documenting the dangerous maneuvers of the naval guards during pushback operations, which overlap with the naval guards' stories in recent years "about the resistance of migrants to pushback by violent means." During 2022, the Tunisian Naval Guard and Navy thwarted the arrival of more than 38372 immigrants into the European space via the central Mediterranean Sea route.

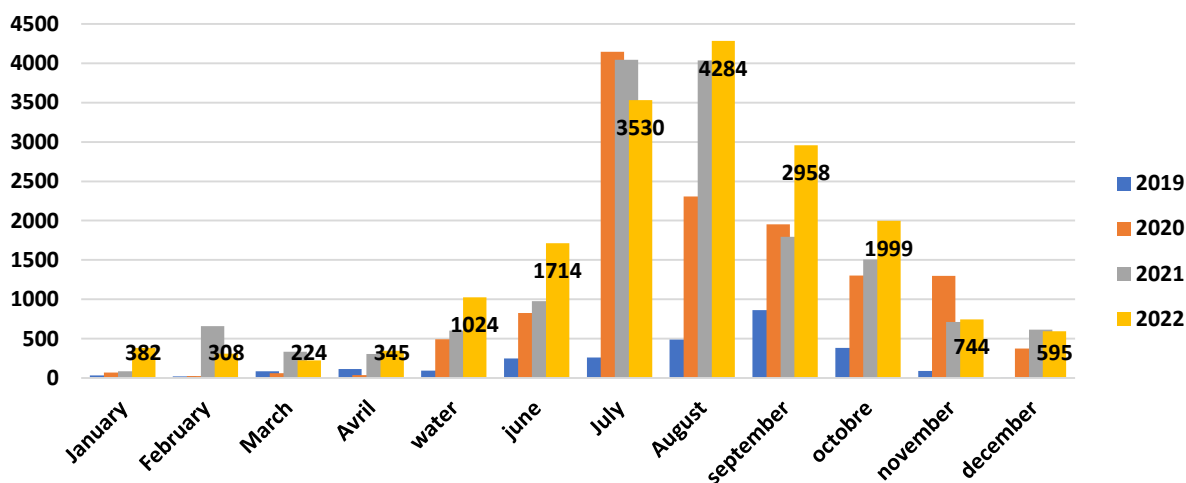


## Comparison In the same period during the years 2019–2020–2021 - 2022

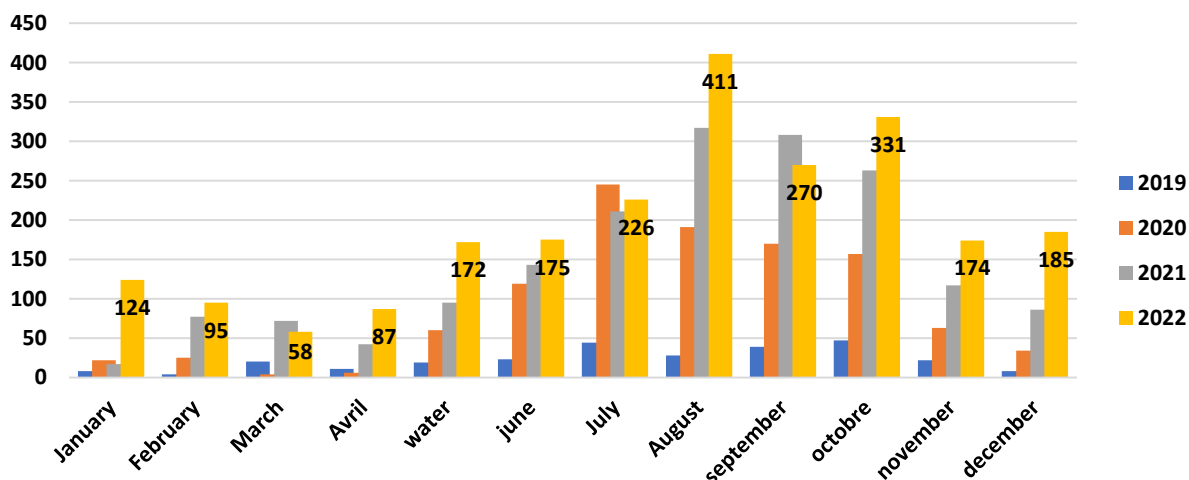
2022			2021			2020			2019			the month
Number of passersby suspended	Number of frustrating passes	The number of arrivals to Italy	Number of passersby suspended	Number of frustrating passes	The number of arrivals to Italy	Number of passersby suspended	Number of frustrating passes	The number of arrivals to Italy	Number of passersby suspended	Number of frustrating passes	The number of arrivals to Italy	
1155	124	382	463	17	84	316	22	68	177	8	31	January
1036	95	308	1273	77	660	571	25	26	46	4	21	February
886	58	224	882	72	334	137	4	60	323	20	85	March
1515	87	345	409	42	307	99	6	37	166	11	116	Avril
2658	172	1024	2487	95	601	1243	60	494	249	19	94	water
2086	175	1714	2120	143	977	1611	119	825	254	23	249	june
3226	226	3530	2993	211	4044	2918	245	4145	608	44	262	July
5713	411	4284	5582	317	4035	1621	191	2306	515	28	489	August
3882	270	2958	3199	308	1796	2035	170	1951	500	39	864	septembe
5584	331	1999	2739	263	1504	1349	157	1300	750	47	381	octobre
4034	174	744	1969	117	713	849	63	1298	501	22	90	november
3734	185	595	1541	86	616	717	34	373	88	8	8	december
2863	595											data*
38372	2903	18148	25657	1748	15671	13466	1096	12883	4177	273	2690	The total

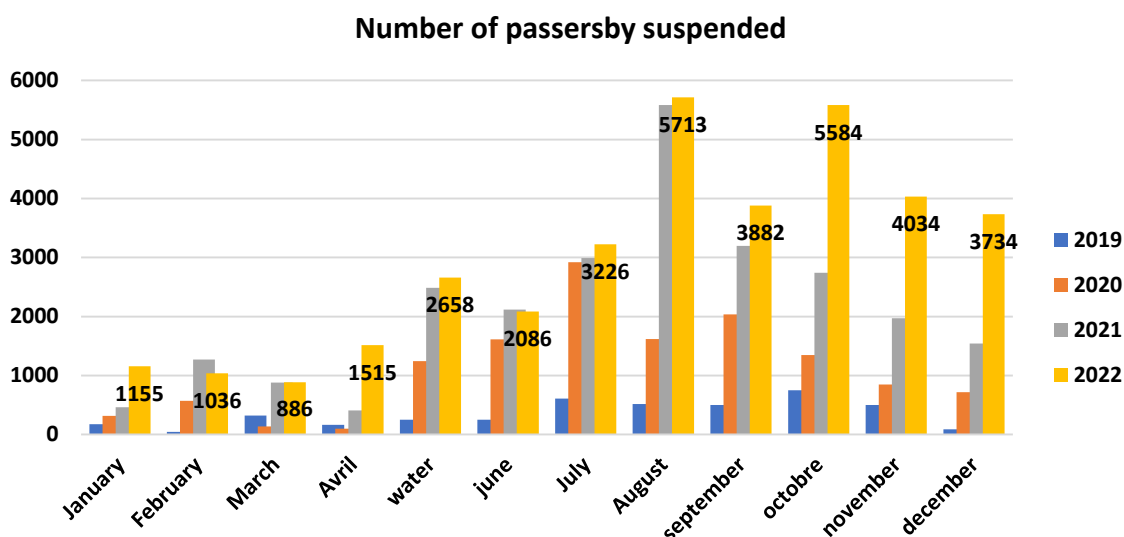
\* Statistics received by the spokesperson of the National Guard and not monitored by the FTDES

### The number of arrivals to Italy

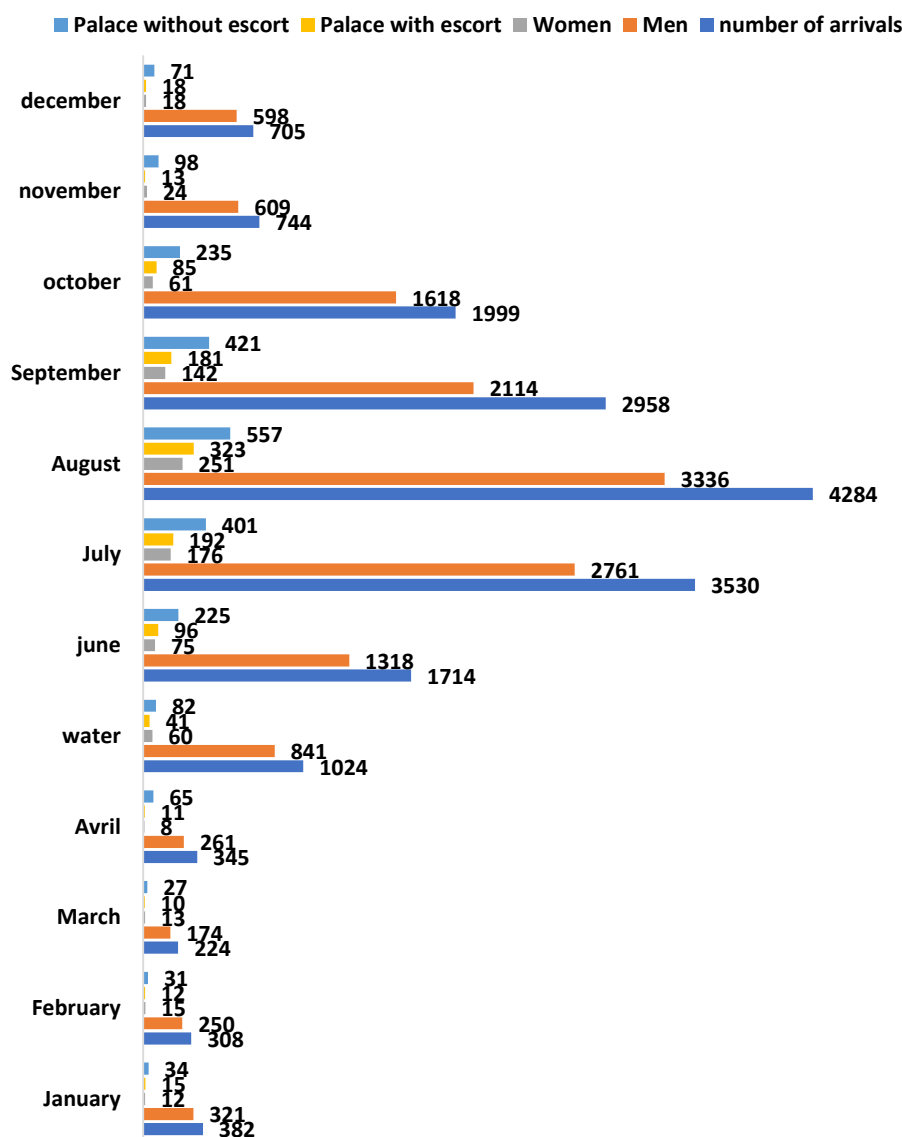


### Number of frustrating passes

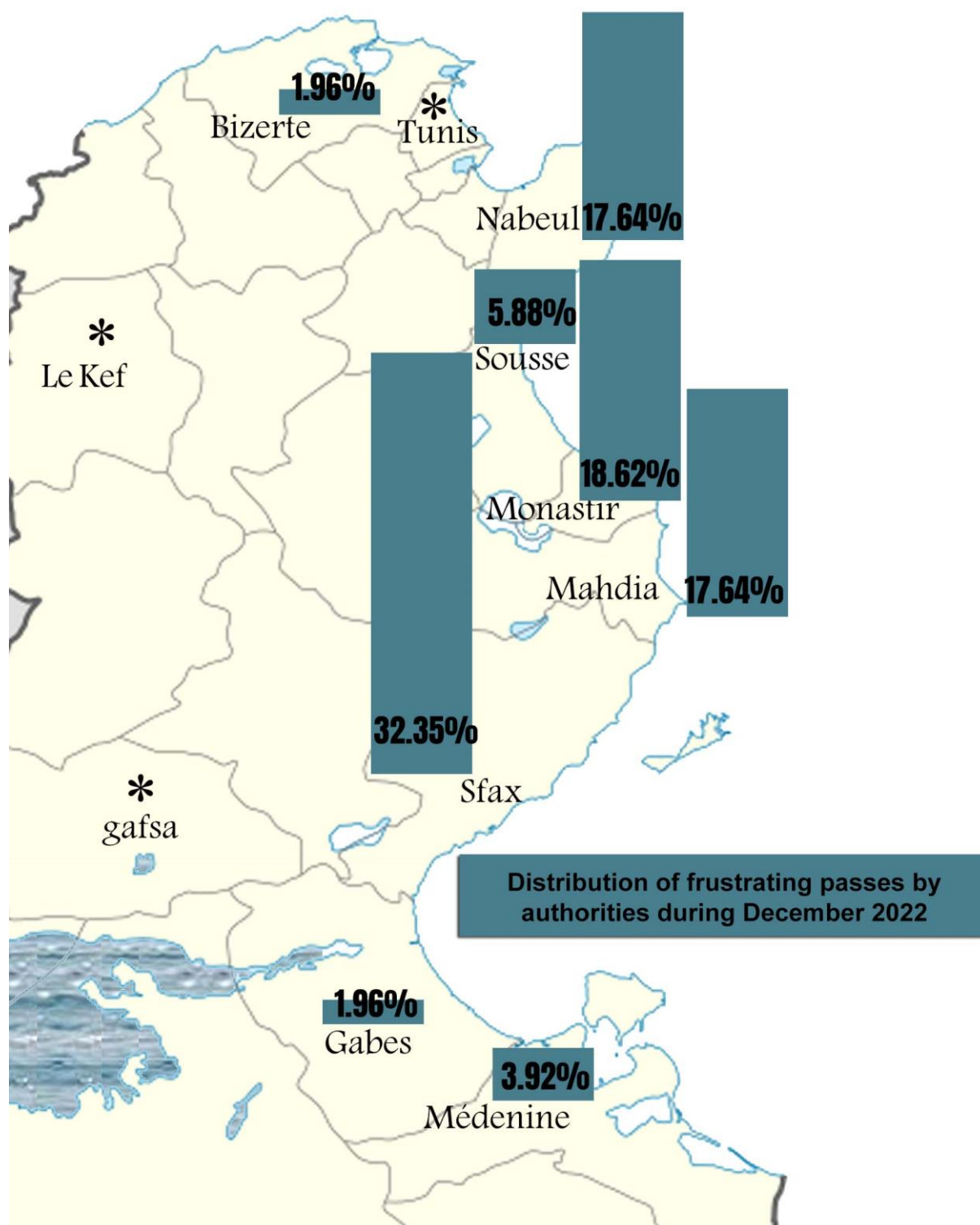




### Distribution of arrivals to Italy by months during 2022

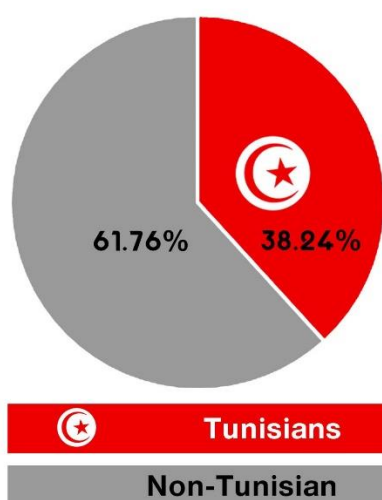


## Distribution of frustrating passes by authorities during December 2022

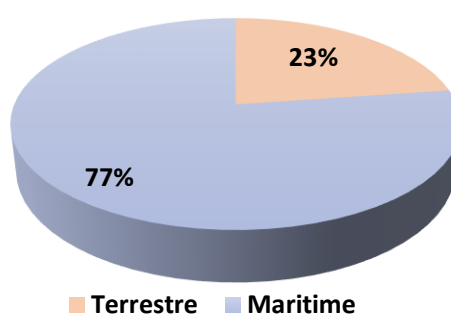


\*The presence of this sign does not mean that these authorities do not witness crossings, but the official data published in the notifications did not include frustrating crossings in these bodies.

## Distribution of passers-by by nationalities During december2022

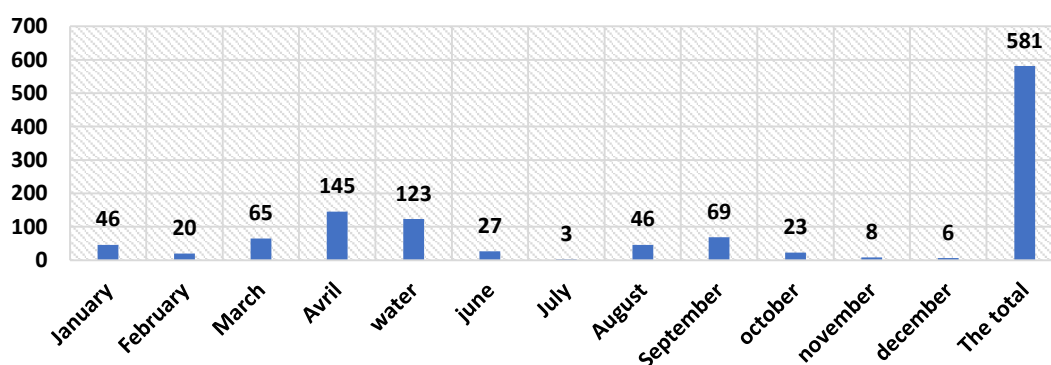


## Distribution of frustrating passes during 2022



## The tragedies of irregular migration on the Tunisian coasts during2022

### The number of victims and missing



The number of dead and missing on the Tunisian coast during 2022

**581**

The number of dead and missing in the Central Mediterranean Basin during 2022

**1360**

During this month there was talk of a clear decrease in the number of social movements. The absence of any targets that are able to absorb the claims and the ambiguous nature of the presidential and governmental decisions are causing impotence to set in. The protests are now perceived as incapable of changing the socio-economic and political reality, which explains the lack of interest of the population in December. The choice between desertion and protest is leaning towards "letting go" and desertion of individuals<sup>8</sup>. The issue on which attention is now focused is the vital and immediate needs of the inhabitants who are seeking to be satisfied, in a state of economic crisis that is difficult to deny<sup>9</sup>.

Pressing issues such as the environmental situation are absent from the discourse, and consequently solutions seem difficult to find. Environmental and climate-related protests in the country receive little media attention and the claims made by environmental activists are neglected. The scarcity of rain and the conditions of the agricultural season, which are reported by activists and farmers, have been the motives for the protests, which remain marginal. Public policies for environmental preservation in the face of climate change seem to be lacking and the state doesn't seem ready to be confronted with such a situation.

The same treatment persists for workers' movements such as the movement of casual and construction workers, protests in factories in different cities such as Beja, Ben Arous and Zarzis and the teachers' movement which made its return to the public space towards the end of December. The return of this significant movement was announced as a result of the impasse that lasted for months despite negotiations, promises and agreements signed between the ministry, the union and representatives of the group of substitute teachers.

The silence that accompanies social movements has been met with a climate of parliamentary elections and general distrust on the part of decision-makers. For the first time since the revolution, December did not resonate with a rise in the number of social movements. On the contrary, we saw a remarkable decline. The disappointment in the protest climate and the return to repressive practices should alarm observers and social actors.

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<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. "A Brief Note on the Antinomia of Collective Protest." *Comments on the Political Field* (2000): 90.

<sup>9</sup> Zollmann, Elisabeth. "Protesting in times of crisis: social movements in Germany." *Germany Today* 4 (2014): 244-256.

## December Report on Violence



Continuing on the same path of progressive ascension, the violence recorded during the month of December 2022 was distinguished by a protest significance that serves as an indicator of frustration and anger among the population, whether it be the individuals who perpetuate the violence or those who suffer it and demand a form of justice in the face of its escalation.

### Geospatial Distribution

The acts of violence recorded are unevenly distributed in the various Tunisian governorates. As in previous months, Tunis is the location where the majority of violent acts are observed with a rate of 30%. The other governorates where violence was observed are Kairouan with a rate of 15%, Ben Arous with 10%, Jendouba with 10%, and Medenine with equally 10% of the cases observed by the Tunisian Social Observatory.

L'Ariana	5%	Ben Arous	10%
Bizerte	0%	Tunis	30%
Zaghuan	0%	La Manouba	0%
Nabeul	5%	Béja	0%
Jendouba	10%	Siliana	5%
Le Kef	0%	Sousse	0%
Sfax	0%	Monastir	5%
Mahdia	5%	Sidi Bouzid	0%
Kasserine	0%	Kairouan	15%
Tataouine	0%	Gabès	0%
Medenine	10%	Tozeur	0%
Kebili	0%	Gafsa	0%



### Gendered Distribution

47.4% of the victims of violence are men, 42.1% are women, and 10.5% are agender groups.

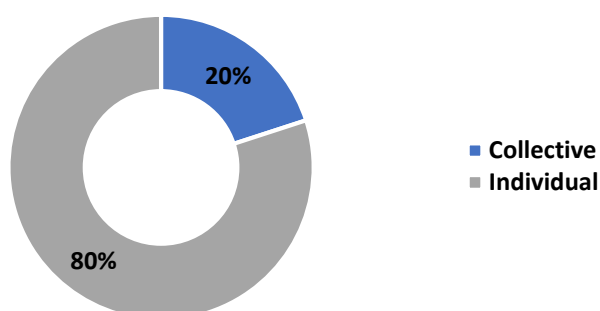
As for the actors of the violent acts, the majority are men (85%). 5% are women and 10% are mixed groups.





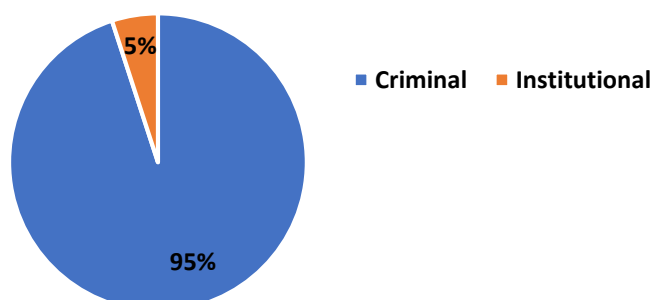
## Spheres of violence

Violence occurred in both the public and private realms. 80% were acts of inter-individual violence and 20% were collective. The interpersonal character of the violence is noticeable in continuity with the month of November, when the proportions were reversed. This indicates the accentuation of violence in the private domestic space and the inversion of violent tendencies towards oneself.



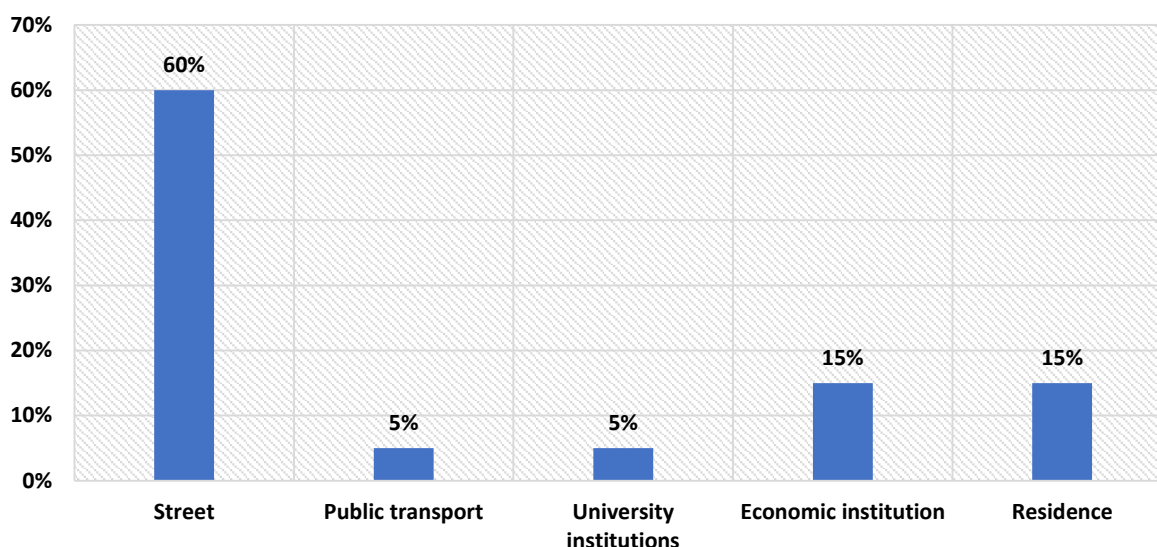
## Typology of violence

The diversity of the types of violence dissipated during this month, giving way to classic criminal forms. 95% were of the "criminal" type and 5% were institutional violence.



## Spaces of violence

The spaces where violence was exerted were social and related to daily occupations. 60% were exerted in the streets, 5% in public transport, 5% in academic institutions ( colleges, hostels), 15% in economic institutions, and 15% in the homes of individuals directly targeted by this violence.



The fluctuating pattern of violence during December 2022 was characterized by an increase in the incidence of violence against women and children, as well as growing insecurity in public spaces. On the one hand, the violence suffered by women and children is exercised in an interpersonal mode in the domestic sphere, where the aggressor is often someone close to the person suffering the violence. It was often a spouse, a father or a neighbor. On the other hand, criminal violence in the public space is an outlet for frustrations or utilitarian acts that are expressed in theft, kidnapping or physical violence.

The cases of violence against women recorded during December were mostly marital and perpetuated by men, a recurrent situation for women that can be explained by male domination <sup>10</sup>. The attempted murder of a lawyer by her former fiancé, mimicking the Egyptian scandal of the girl who was killed by a man she rejected, is a testament to culturally embedded male domination. The murder of a woman stabbed by her husband in front of her four children is also an indicator of the terror that is exerted on women's bodies and the psyches of

<sup>10</sup> Smyth, Ailbhe. "Feminist resistance to male violence against women. What perspectives?", *New Feminist Issues*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2002, pp. 76-92.

child witnesses. Other rapes and attempted rapes have been documented. The violent events suffered by women in Tunisia are nevertheless often absent from public debate. Gender-based violence is explained by the systemic subordination of women, particularly those who are socioeconomically vulnerable. The discussed failure of strategies to combat violence against women and girls is therefore to be considered and remedied according to the increasingly telling observations.

With respect to children, the Tunisian Social Observatory team documented the pedophilic rape of a special needs child in a mosque, as well as the murder of a baby and a kidnapping and ransom. The traumatic impact of this violence<sup>11</sup> should be a pressing concern for policymakers and government security officials. Children facing violence are the most fragile link in the chain of violence that affects the population in a state of rising insecurity. Security needs must therefore be addressed, prioritizing the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Other events included robberies, vandalism, mutilation, patricide, and a murder motivated by religious extremism, among others. These events that took place in public space are urban violence that mark a state of disorder and crime. The spatial projection of social relations in the urban space results in these cases of violence that is becoming increasingly difficult to manage.

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<sup>11</sup> Salmona, Muriel. "The psych traumatic impact of violence on children: The traumatic memory at work." doss. "Child Protection," The School & University Health Review 4.19 (2013): 21-25.

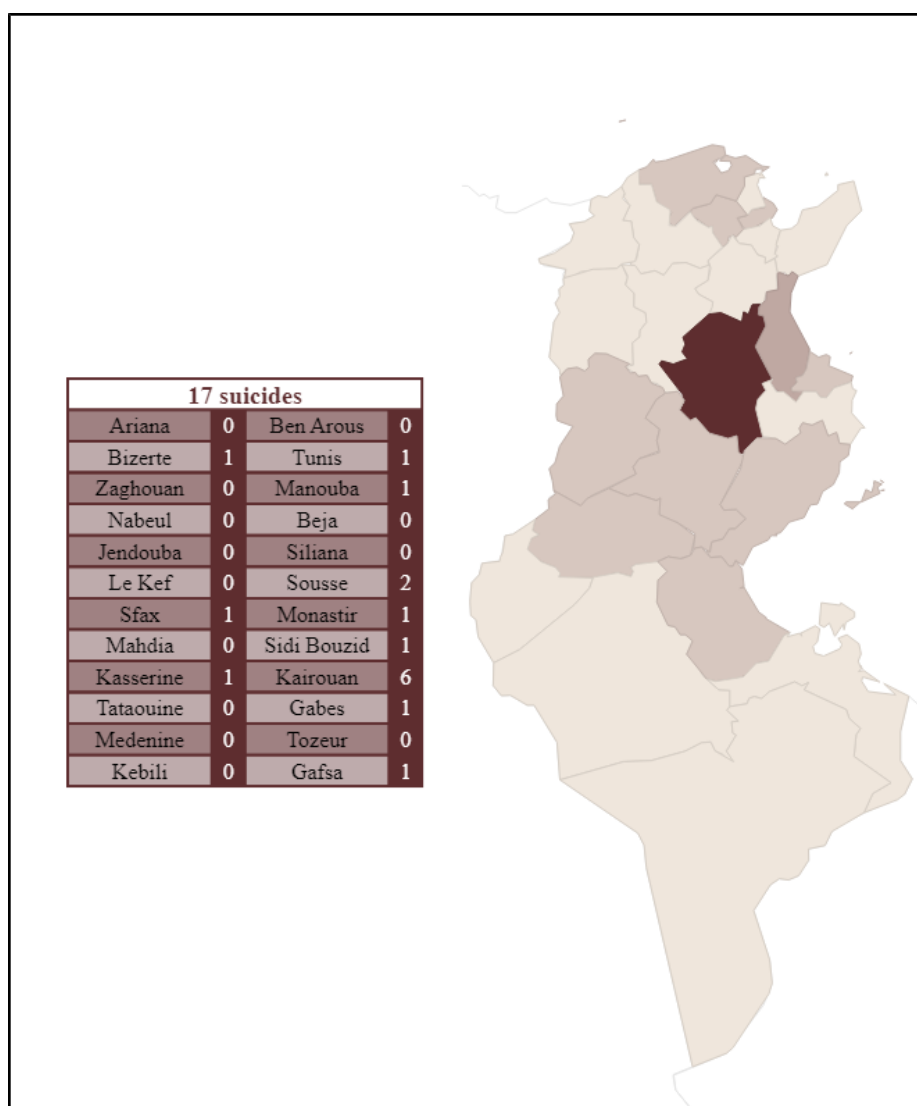
# Suicide and attempted suicide



7 suicides and suicide attempts were recorded during December by the Tunisian Social Observatory team. Based on the observation of the media coverage of these events on the official and unofficial media, the census concerns the most publicized events of the month, hence their significance.

## Geospatial Distribution

Most suicidal events were observed in Kairouan with 6 suicides and attempted suicides. Two suicides or suicide attempts were documented in Sousse, one in Bizerte, one in Sfax, one in Kasserine, one in Tunis, one in Manouba, one in Monastir, one in Sidi Bouzid, one in Gabes, and one in Gafsa.



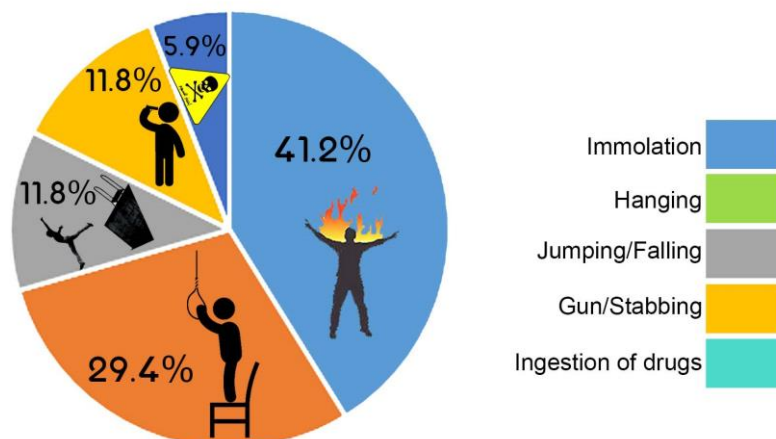
## Gendered Distribution

Men are still predominant among suicidal people with a rate of 94.1%, while women are represented by 5.9% of victims of self-inflicted violence.



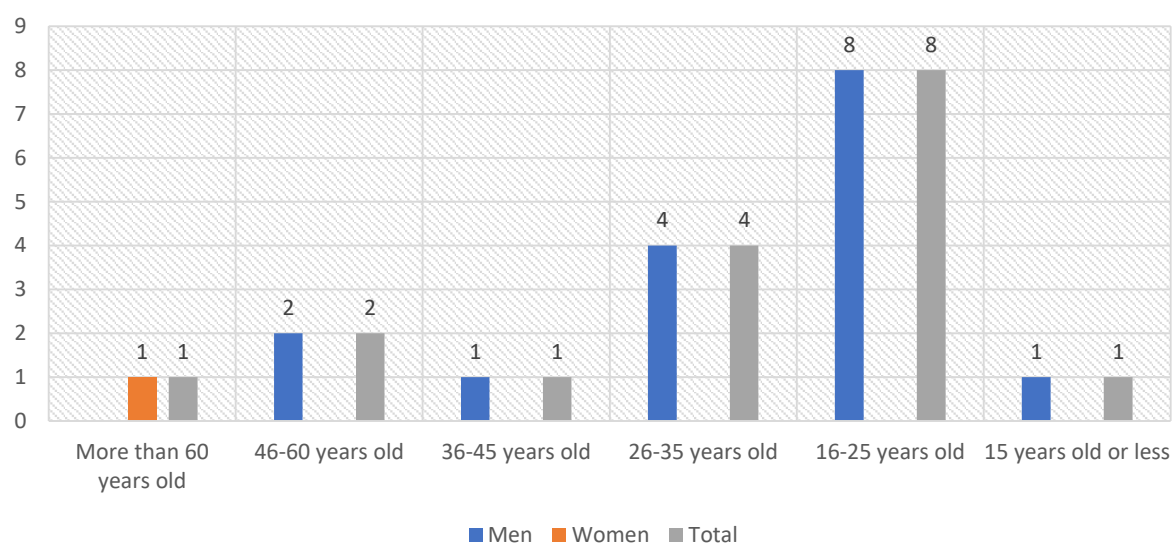
## Typology of the suicides

Among the suicides recorded, 41.2% were suicides or attempted suicides by immolation, 29.4% were suicides or attempted suicides by hanging, and 11.8% were suicidal behaviors by jumping or precipitation, 11.8% were carried out with the use of knives or firearms, and 5.9% were committed by ingesting drugs. As in the previous month, the suicidal technique by immolation was dominant, with a resurgence of other tools and methods of suicide that were absent in the previous months. The claim significance of these behaviors is therefore increasingly remarkable.



## Ages of suicide victims

The majority of suicidal individuals during this month, eight in all, were between the ages of 16 and 25. These individuals are young adults, students, workers or unemployed, who are beginning to face the difficulties of life in terms of relationships, social, economic and political. In addition, four men, aged between 26 and 35, have committed or attempted suicide. The same goes for a boy under 15 years old and a man between 36 and 45, two men between 46 and 60 and a woman over 60.



The highest number of suicidal behaviors was observed in Kairouan. Generally described as suicides of protest. This governorate, which is often at the top of the list regarding violence and suicides, continues to show symptoms of distress, resulting from social and economic difficulties, the anxiety-inducing political experience, as well as the absence and lack of public mental health policies, often centralized in the capital and overlooking the interior regions such as Kairouan<sup>12</sup>.

The suicide of a 72-year-old woman in Sousse is also an indicator of the neglect of the population in Tunisia, where the state plays no role in assisting the elderly and leaves it to the local family circle to care for them without supervision. The

<sup>12</sup> UNDP. National multisectoral adolescent and youth health promotion strategy 2022 - 2030, 2019, [https://tunisia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/strategie\\_sante\\_ado\\_jeunes.pdf](https://tunisia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/strategie_sante_ado_jeunes.pdf)



lack of community intervention plays a catalyzing role that could increase the number of elderly suicides in a changing social context.<sup>13</sup>

In rural areas, suicidal behaviors involve hanging, as in the case of a young man and a 14-year-old teenager<sup>14</sup>. Suicidal behavior in rural areas by agricultural professionals could result from poor living conditions, climatic injustices, and family conflicts, in a context where the family is over-invested. The development gaps between urban and rural areas could motivate acute states of distress<sup>15</sup>. Untreated and trivialized depression for rural men is an element that could then explain the reported suicidal behaviors.

Another young person tried to commit suicide by rushing from the top of a building, another threw himself into a sewer and a student tried to commit suicide by cutting his veins. This desperation of young people who commit or attempt suicide is striking, given the phase they are going through, which is characterized by changes in the rhythm of life and growing interpersonal concerns.

Besides, a worker in the regional cab station in Kairouan tried to commit suicide following the refusal of his superior to regularize his professional situation and a suicide was recorded in front of the direction of the social affairs in Feriana. These behaviors are part of an impulsive context where the act was motivated by frustration related to a feeling of powerlessness and injustice. They are sometimes the means to exert a pressure in order to obtain success as for their claims and sometimes a means to express the suffering not taken in charge by professionals.

Suicides have taken place in public spaces, such as the case of a young adult who self-immolated in a national guard station protesting inflation and food prices. The clarity of the wording of the suicide motives indicates the prevalence of protest suicide, where those who cannot flee the country kill themselves within the country. Given the frequently public location of suicides and suicide

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<sup>13</sup> Saïas, T., L. Véron, and V. Lapierre. "Suicide prevention in the elderly: the place of community interventions." *Psychological Practices* 19.2 (2013): 103-117.

<sup>14</sup> Previtali 1, Clement. "The conditions of suicide among agricultural professionals." *Plural Thinking* 1 (2015): 105-121.

<sup>15</sup> Creighton, Genevieve, et al. "'You've gotta be that tough crust exterior man': Depression and suicide in rural-based men." *Qualitative Health Research* 27.12 (2017): 1882-1891.

attempts, it is possible to affirm that this location is designated as the culprit, since it is considered a space where oppression and injustice are exercised<sup>16</sup>.

Suicide prevention is increasingly becoming a major public health issue. The continued rise in suicide risk in the country should be alarming to policy makers and mental health professionals. Paying attention to the suffering expressed by the population, paying attention to the influence of inequalities on the health of individuals, and implementing programs and strategies supported by the state and its agencies could be ways in which suicides could be reduced.

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<sup>16</sup> Surault, Pierre. "13 - Mental health in the field of social inequalities in health: the limits of public health policies," Christophe Niewiadomski ed, Fighting social inequalities in health. Public policies and professional practices. Presses de l'EHESP, 2008, pp. 239-251.

## Conclusion

The events of December 2022 are distinguished by the decrease in the number of social movements and the increase in the number of violence and suicides. The mapping of protests the inversion of the usual curve of historically revolutionary months, while that of violence and suicides is characterized by continuity and gradual increase in the numbers recorded. This indicates a state resulting from the social and political unease observed in the previous months.

This socio-economic and political context is that of a crisis that has been going on for months. The movements are still reacting with a growing loss of hope. The legislative elections and the speeches and actions of the current government continue to fuel this crisis, with a decision-making nonchalance that leaves the population hungry and capable of lending itself to other violent movements and transgressions.

## **Monitoring methodology for irregular migration:**

The totality of the data contained in this report represents what the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights has been able to gather from various sources and by the available means. The digital data remains incomplete, not detailed and subject to updating and may not fully reflect reality, but in the absence of detailed and updated information from the Tunisian official side (number of passes - number Passengers - their distribution according to age groups and gender - defining where they come from - their social status - the number of missing persons...) These data may contribute to a clearer understanding of migration dynamics and significant transformations.

- **Frustrating Passes:** Reliance is placed on the Ministry of Interior's communiqués and the statements of the spokesperson of the National Guard in the various media. Most of them do not contain detailed data (sex, age groups, the parties from which the immigrants come...)
- **Arrivals to European coasts:** Many structures that emit digital data about arrivals to Europe, such as UNHCR, IOM, European countries' ministries of the interior and the European Coastal Control Agency.

The figures provided remain approximate and require continuous updating according to figures from official and civil structures that may be issued in subsequent reports but provide a reading of the evolution and change in the dynamics of irregular migration.

**Invisible numbers:** It's the number of migrants arriving in Europe across different routes without passing through local authorities or international structures does not have any effect on the census, which is important and varies according to the tactics of migrant smuggling networks. It also includes departures from the Tunisian coasts, which succeed in evading strict security controls, or those that are prohibited from passing them without issuing or without being announced.