



Introduction

According to the results of the watch on the usual supports of the Tunisian Social Observatory, the month of February 2020 saw a daily average of about 24 protest movements. Despite this frequency of collective protests in various regions, no reaction from local, regional or central authorities was observed.


Indeed, a logical explanation for this lack of interaction during the month of February may lie in the fact that it was a month of government transformation per excellence. During this month, the interim government was carrying out its duties and the focus of expectations was rather on the political concertation about the creation of a new government after about 4 months of the national elections.

This situation is unquestionably incompatible with what those in charge, both at regional and central level; claim about "the continuity of the State", a concept that is completely contrary to the reality of the institutions that experienced great disorder throughout the month of February.

In EL Mdhila, for example, the sit-in of the unemployed has resumed since 10 February and phosphate production has been suspended at the second largest production station in the mining basin due to the lack of commitment of the authorities to implement the agreement signed with the sit-inners since May 2018.

There has been no reaction from the authorities to this production interruption, except for the judicial summons of sit-inners under the accusation of impeding the freedom to work, which is the charge under which the authorities are prosecuting social movement activists and demonstrators in various regions, believing that the trials could resolve the current state of social tension.

The educational institutions also experienced a period of protest and disruption of classes throughout the month of February due to the protests of substitute teachers on the grounds that their professional status had not been regularized under previous agreements.



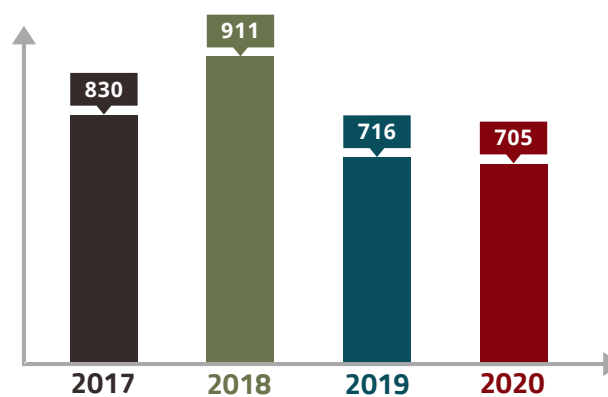
This protest movement has generated large movements of parents and fuelled the phenomenon of school violence by increasing hostility and aggression between students and the educational framework on the one hand and between parents and the educational framework on the other. This has prompted the educational framework to initiate protest movements in several regions in order to stop this wave of school violence.

Politics reflected on the course of the ordinary life of Tunisians and what has been described as the "continuity of the State" was interrupted, through the disruption of political consultations on the creation of the government. Administrative work was interrupted in the ministries and in regional administrations while awaiting the outcome of this political situation and the new appointments of ministers. This was evidenced by the absolute lack of interaction with the protests of citizens in various regions, despite the magnitude of their demands.

Protest movements in February

It should be noted that the volume of social protests in February 2020 (705 protest movements), despite its relative decrease compared to February 2019 (716 protest movements) has experienced a qualitative variation in the sense that demonstrations characterized by violence, increased significantly from 144 protest movements in February 2019 to 168 protest movements in February 2020.

February	Volume
2017	830
2018	911
2019	716
2020	705



Nature of collective social movements (February 2020)



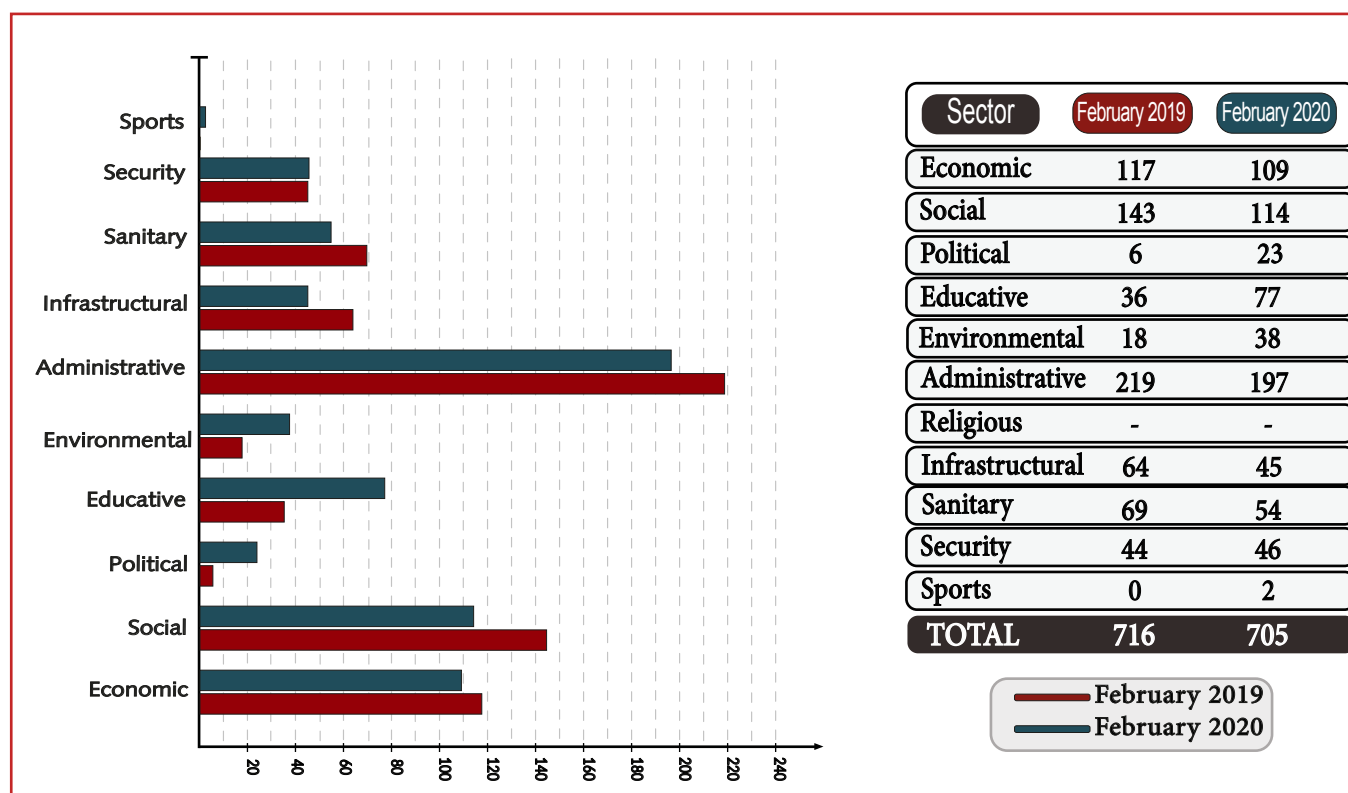
The educational institution was therefore at the heart of the social discontent that broke out in February, when the official abandonment of the regularization of the professional status of substitute teachers and the failure to fill vacant posts made it impossible for a large number of pupils from different regions to study certain disciplines or prevented them from attending all classes altogether. This situation has had a negative impact on the school and its surroundings, since there has been an increase in violence in the educational environment and great tension in the relationship between the educational framework and parents.

The number of protest movements recorded during the month of February 2020 reached 705 protest movements of which about 11% (77 protest movements) were in the education sector, knowing that the demonstrations in this same sector in February 2019 were of the order of 5% (36 protests).

Protest movements of economic and social origin also accounted for a large proportion of the February demonstrations, with around 31.6% of the total number of observed demonstrations. Most of these protests were led by families, residents or the unemployed, as also by workers seeking to regularize their situations, to demand employment or to improve health services, transport, and protection of the environment or basic services that represent the very essence of human rights.

In Gabès, for example, the lack of cancer drugs has caused social stress, especially since the state of health of these people does not allow a frequent movement to Sfax to get the drugs.

Distribution of protest movements by sectors



In Jendouba, which is one of the most important regions where surface water (i.e. dams and mountain lakes) is available, the state of social thirst denying congestion is increasing. We refer to the thirst march of the women from El-Rouaiyi in Ain Draham to the Berber dam pump and the protests of the region of El-Houaydia in Tabarka also against the thirst and the state of pollution that has affected the source of drinking water due to the exploitation of the nearby stone quarries.

In the region of Aouled Ayyar north of Jendouba, parents prevented their children from going to school to protest against the lack of drinking water.

We mentioned in the January 2020 report that this form of protest, which consists of preventing children from going to school, is on the increase and that child students have become human hostages of their parents to protest against the many deficiencies and to express their demands.

Instant protests	Sector	Economic	Social	Political	Educative	Environmental	Administrative	Religious	Infrastructural	Sanitary	Security	Sports
	February 2019	50	61	3	18	11	102	-	39	40	21	0
	February 2020	43	39	10	31	19	84	-	24	27	22	1
Spontaneous protests	Sector	Economic	Social	Political	Educative	Environmental	Administrative	Religious	Infrastructural	Sanitary	Security	Sports
	February 2019	43	47	2	13	4	75	-	8	21	14	0
	February 2020	47	46	9	21	10	70	-	7	14	12	1
Violent protests	Sector	Economic	Social	Political	Educative	Environmental	Administrative	Religious	Infrastructural	Sanitary	Security	Sports
	February 2019	24	35	1	5	3	42	-	17	8	9	0
	February 2020	19	29	4	25	9	43	-	14	13	12	0

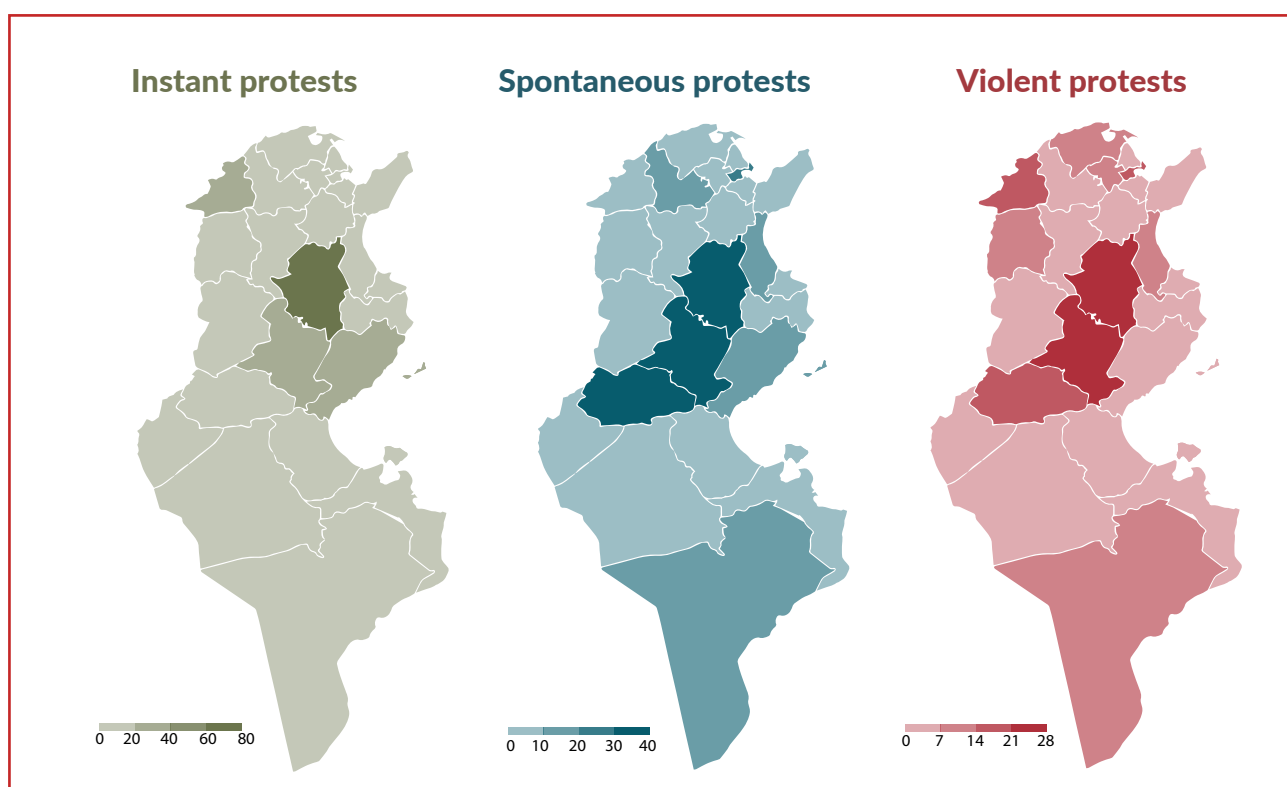
Also in the governorate of Kairouan, the inhabitants of the Khat El-Hojje region had to demonstrate to contest a month-long power outage. Moreover, the region was not exempt from thirst protests. We recall the protests of the city El-Kordya and Ain El-Kodya in the Khit El-Oueddi region in Haffouz against thirst and the protest of the inhabitants of Taksim El-Aroussi 14 in the center of Kairouan for a connection to drinking water.

The cut-off of drinking water and thirst has been going on for about two years in the regions of El-Qamboura, El-Hindi El-Omri and El-Athmany and El-Harrig of the delegation of El-Oueslatya, which prompted the residents to demonstrate and enter a state of social chaos. Moreover, in El-Oueslatya, the inhabitants protested for the protection of the waterfalls of Sidi Rimani, which has turned into an anarchic dump for the margine.

At the school of Ouled Ahmed, in the Cherbene delegation of the governorate of Mahdia, the educational framework protested and signed a petition addressed to the regional delegate of education and the representative for child protection to denounce the humiliating snack presented to the students of the school without any interaction during the month of February.

Geographical distribution of protests (February 2020)

Instant protests				Spontaneous protests				Violent protests			
Bizerte	6	Monastir	7	Bizerte	8	Monastir	7	Bizerte	8	Monastir	0
Tunis	11	Mahdia	11	Tunis	22	Mahdia	7	Tunis	19	Mahdia	4
Ariana	0	Sfax	20	Ariana	4	Sfax	18	Ariana	2	Sfax	2
Manouba	6	Kairouan	71	Manouba	0	Kairouan	40	Manouba	9	Kairouan	28
Ben Arous	4	Kasserine	11	Ben Arous	0	Kasserine	9	Ben Arous	0	Kasserine	4
Zaghouan	0	Sidi Bouzid	34	Zaghouan	0	Sidi Bouzid	32	Zaghouan	0	Sidi Bouzid	21
Nabeul	5	Gabes	5	Nabeul	2	Gabes	0	Nabeul	5	Gabes	0
Jendouba	20	Medenine	0	Jendouba	7	Medenine	0	Jendouba	19	Medenine	0
Beja	10	Tataouine	10	Beja	10	Tataouine	11	Beja	0	Tataouine	10
Kef	12	Gafsa	27	Kef	6	Gafsa	30	Kef	8	Gafsa	15
Seliana	4	Tozeur	8	Seliana	4	Tozeur	6	Seliana	0	Tozeur	4
Sousse	16	Kebili	2	Sousse	12	Kebili	2	Sousse	10	Kebili	0



Inhabitants with 24% of the total represented the most present actors of the protest movements observed throughout the month of February, followed by the unemployed and unemployed graduates with 22%, the educational framework with 14%, most of whose protests concerned the rejection of violence directed against them, the improvement of the situation in the educational institution and the regularization of the professional situation of teachers and substitute teachers and citizens with 12% of the total number of actors.

As for locations, educational institutions represented an important scene of protest, with 18% of all the protest locations recorded, not forgetting the media, with 16% of the most prominent spaces of the demonstrations.

Spaces of protests		actors initiating the social movements	
Educational institutions, Media, Roads, Professional spaces,	★★★★	inhabitants, Teachers, Unemployed, Unemployed graduates	★★★★
Delegations, Governorates, Administrative headquarters	★★★	Parents, Employees, Workers	★★★
Municipalities, Public spaces, Hospitals	★★	Agricultors, Activists, Precarious workers, Doctors and paramedical staff	★★
Judicial institutions, Ministers, The presidential headquarter	★	Taxi drivers, Collective taxi drivers, Journalists, fishermen	★

In terms of the forms of protest, protest rallies (44% of the observed forms of movement) accounted for the largest forms in which protesters participated, followed by strikes (14%), roadblocks (11%) and sit-ins (10%).

Forms of protests		subjects of protests	
Protest gatherings, Strikes, Distress calls through the media	★★★★	Municipalities, Gouvernorates, Delegations, Educational institutions	★★★★
Road blocks, Sit-in, boycotts of courts, Burnt tires	★★★	SONEDE, STEG	★★★
Petitions, Blocking administrative spaces , Forced entry to administrative headquarters	★★	Ministry, Head of government, Hospitals	★★
Red armband wearing, Mass immigration, Peaceful march	★	Judiciary authorities, Presidency of the Republic	★

The mapping of protest movements

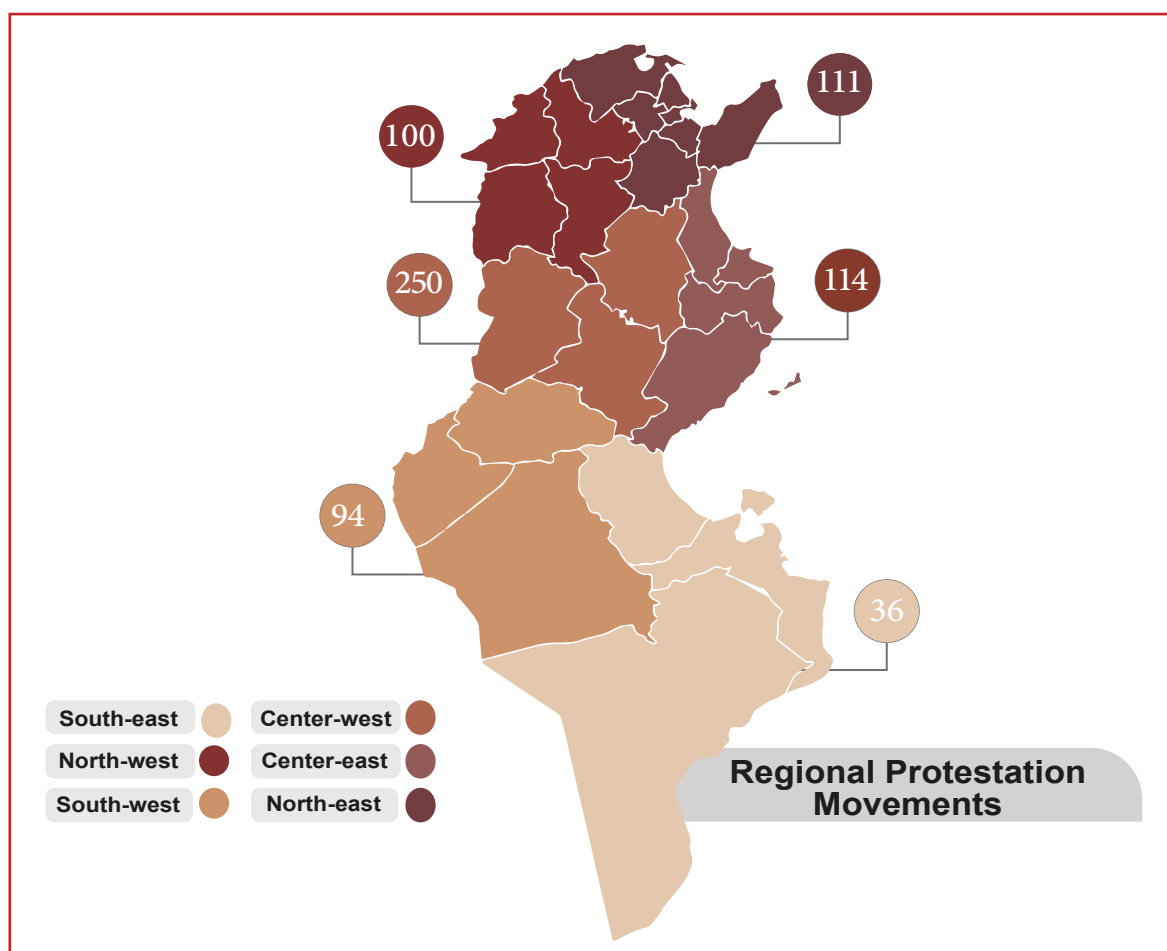
The mapping of protests did not change in February 2020 since Kairouan is still the governorate recording the most protest movements in 2020 (139 protest movements) with an increase compared to February 2019 (110 protest movements).

Demonstrators in this region are raising demands related to the regularization of work situations, environmental protection, improvement of infrastructure and the provision of basic services such as drinking water and electricity. The governorate of Gafsa comes in second place (72 protest movements) and employment represents the most important protest claims in the region, followed by claims relating to education and health.

The first square of the main regions witnessing social congestion is completed by the governorates of Sidi Bouzid and Jendouba. The most important demands have concerned basic services such as drinking water supply, fodder supply and other demands of an economic and social nature. It is clear from the map that the western line of the country is still experiencing a series of shortages that have been difficult to correct by all successive governments because social justice has not been achieved, equity in development and equality in health and education have not been achieved. However, thirst has prevailed and the living conditions of the population have deteriorated to the point of disrupting basic services. Is it possible for a rational person to accept a total power cut for a whole month without any interaction from the regional authorities?

The mapping of protest movements

Gouvernorate	February 2019	February 2020	Gouvernorate	February 2019	February 2020	Gouvernorate	February 2019	February 2020
Bizerte	16	22	Beja	4	20	Kasserine	38	24
Tunis	26	52	Kef	24	26	Sidi Bouzid	58	87
Ariana	0	6	Seliana	33	8	Gabes	0	5
Manouba	4	15	Sousse	26	38	Medenine	42	0
Ben Arous	0	4	Monastir	21	14	Tataouine	25	31
Zaghuan	6	0	Mahdia	24	22	Gafsa	95	72
Nabeul	71	12	Sfax	22	40	Tozeur	12	18
Jendouba	59	46	Kairouan	110	139	Kebili	0	4

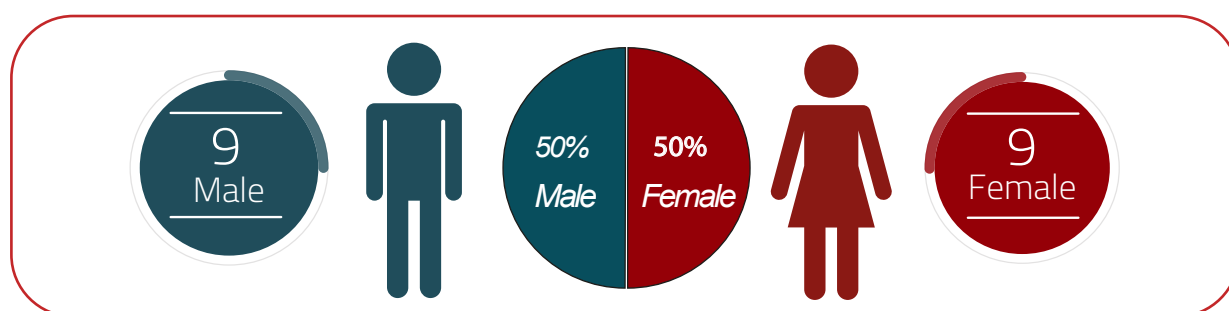


Acts and attempts of suicide

As far as suicide cases and attempts are concerned, the month of February 2020 witnessed 18 cases of suicide and attempted suicide to be divided equally between the two types.

Suicide cases and attempted suicides in the 16-25 age group increased in comparison to February 2019. The 46-60 age group also experienced an increase in acts of suicide and attempted suicide compared to February 2019 from 13% in February 2019 to 28% in February 2020.

Suicides and attempts of suicide by gender



A case of suicide of a 65-year-old woman was recorded in the governorate of Gabes, knowing that in February 2019 no case of suicide or attempted suicide was recorded among the over-60s.

Suicides and suicide attempts by age group

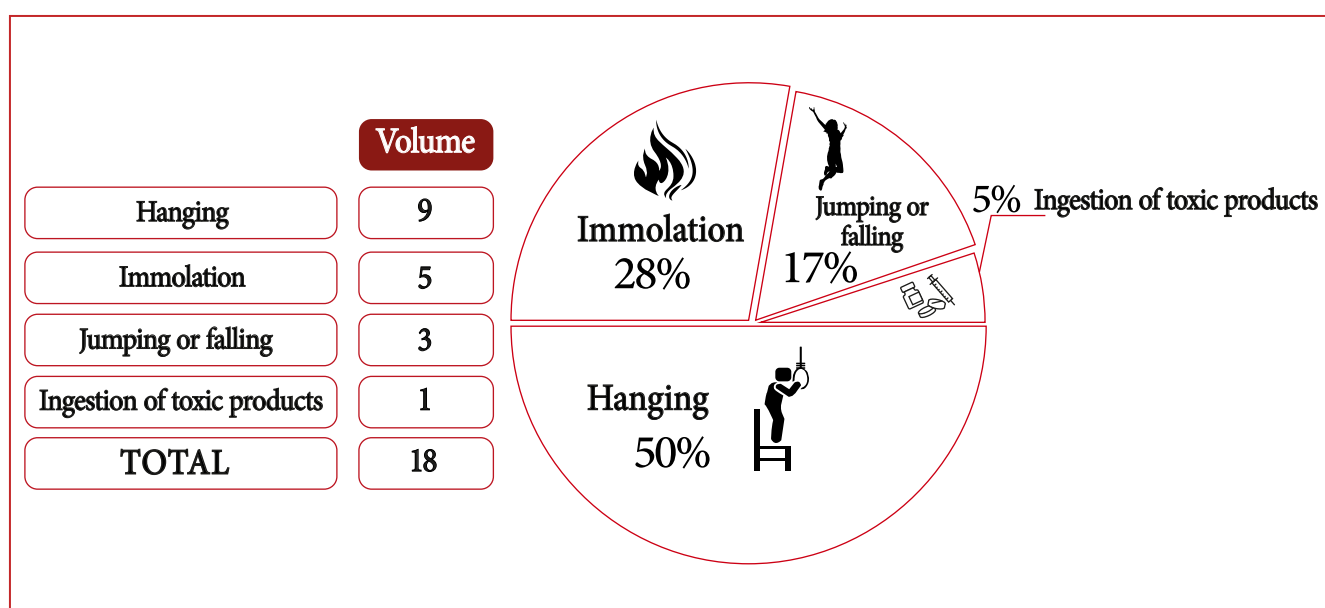
February 2019							
	Under 15 years	16 - 25 years	26 - 35 years	36 - 45 years	46 - 60 years	Over 60 years	TOTAL
Male	2	1	4	1	1	0	9
Female	2	1	1	2	1	0	7
TOTAL	4	2	5	3	2	0	16

February 2020							
	Under 15 years	16 - 25 years	26 - 35 years	36 - 45 years	46 - 60 years	Over 60 years	TOTAL
Male	0	2	2	2	3	0	9
Female	0	3	3	0	2	1	9
TOTAL	0	5	5	2	5	1	18



Suicide by hanging was the most important means of suicide observed with 50% of cases, followed by suicide by immolation with 28%, jumping and falling from high buildings or in deep wells with 17% and ingestion of drugs and toxic products with 5%.

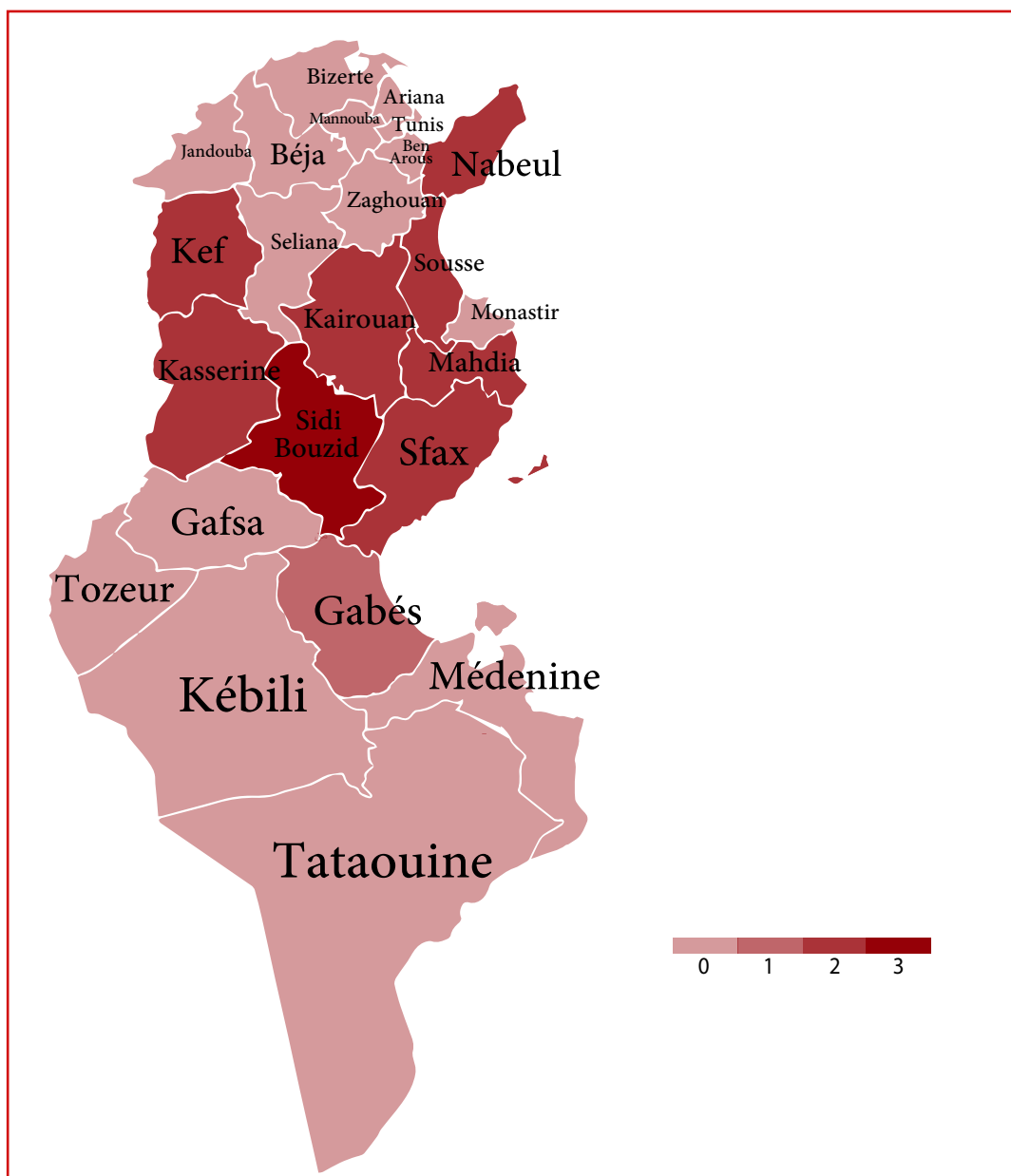
means of suicide (February 2020)



Nine governorates witnessed cases of suicide and attempted suicide throughout the month of February 2020, namely the governorate of Sidi Bouzid with three cases of suicide and attempted suicide, followed by the governorates of Nabeul, Kef, Sousse, Mahdia, Sfax, Kairouan and Kasserine with 2 cases respectively. Only one case was noted in the governorate of Gabes.

Suicides and attempts of suicide by governorate

Governorate	Bizerte	Tunis	Ariana	Manouba	Ben Arous	Zaghouan	Nabeul	Jendouba
Volume	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Governorate	Beja	Le Kef	Seliana	Sousse	Monastir	Mahdia	Sfax	Kairouan
Volume	0	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Governorate	Kasserine	Sidi bouzid	Gabes	Medenine	Tataouine	Gafsa	Tozeur	Kebili
Volume	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0



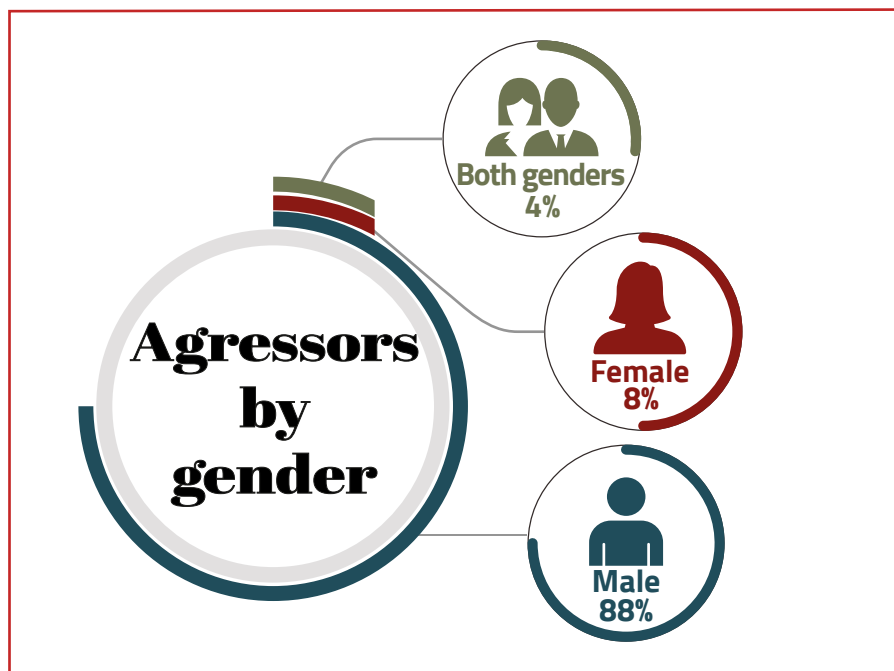
Violence


According to the watch's results throughout February, individual and collective violence were at about the same level. Violence in its individual form accounted for 45% compared to 55% of violence in its collective form.

cases of violence



As in previous months, men were the most involved in assaults of all kinds, accounting for 88% of the perpetrators of recorded violence, compared with 8% of female actors, and the rest occurred in mixed forms of violence.





Violence remains in its criminal forms, the most frequent type in the monitoring sample of the Tunisian Social Observatory team for the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights, which includes all the most important daily and weekly newspapers, websites and social networks. Indeed, criminal violence during the month of February 2020 accounted for nearly half of the cases of violence recorded with a percentage of about 48% of all recorded cases of violence.

Despite the apparent regression of violence in the education sector during February 2020, it remains one of the initiators of protest movements and rumblings within educational institutions in more than one occasion. These protests have often led to the suspension of classes in a number of schools, colleges and high schools and have been part of a series of practices such as physical aggression, threats and verbal violence against students, educators and semi-educational staff.

Educational spaces and their environments were the scene of 20% of the violence recorded.

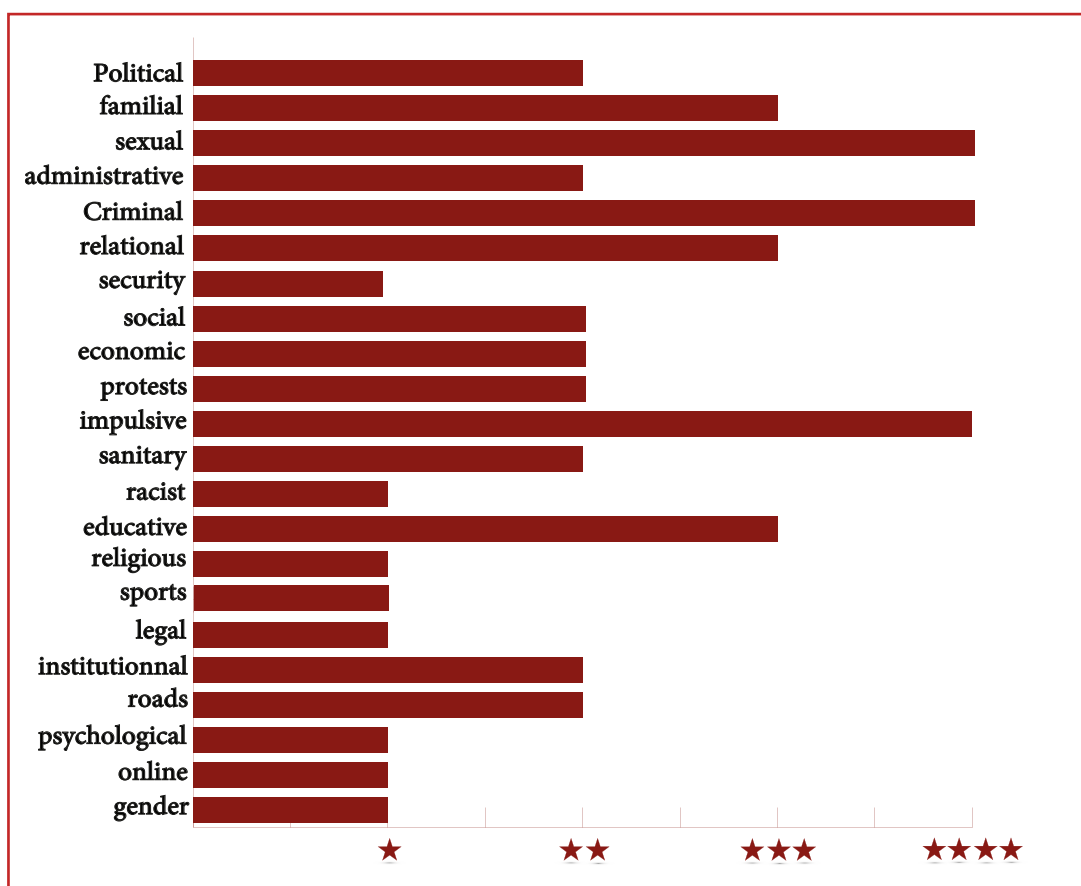
In addition, the month of February 2020 witnessed an increase in sexual violence, which accounted for 22% of all violence recorded. Children and minors were the most important victims of this type of violence.

It can be said that, despite the scale of violence in its impulsive form in February 2020, it maintained the same frequency as in the previous months, where it accounted for 23% of the violence observed.

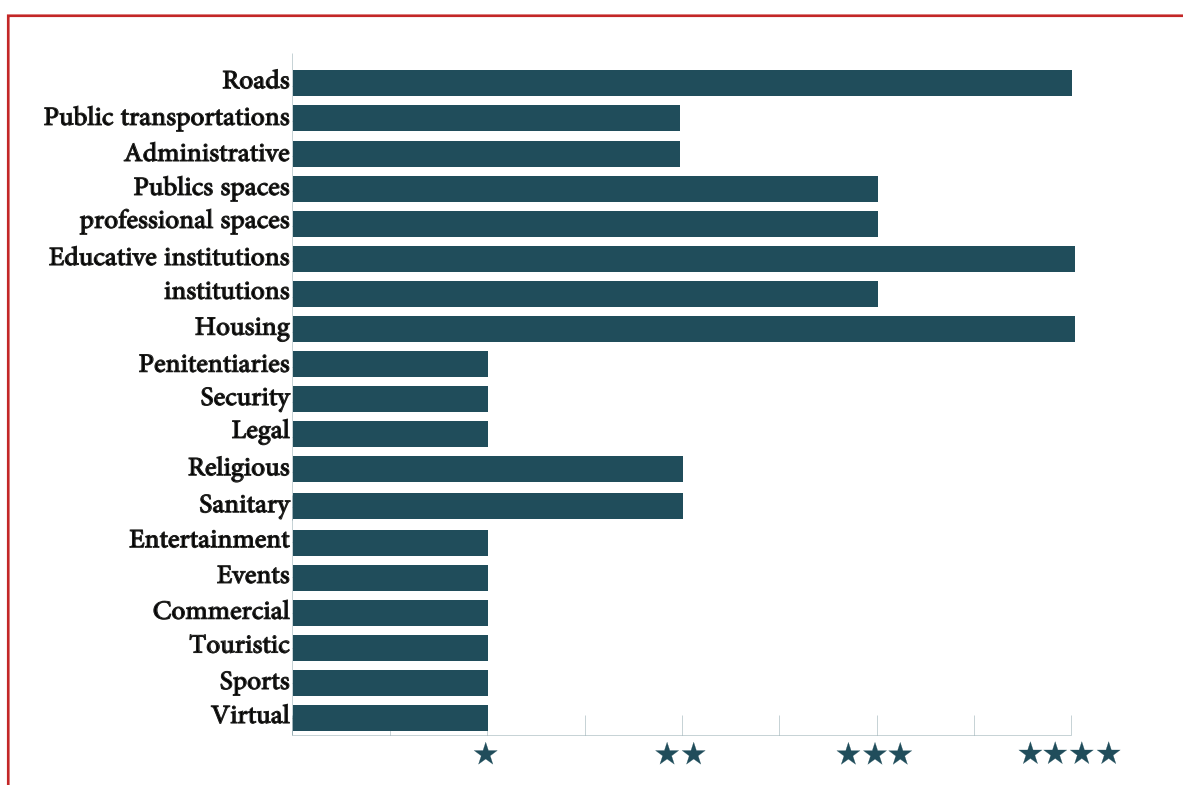
Relational, domestic and family violence were less frequent and together they accounted for about 11% of the violence incidents observed in February 2020.

The results of the monitoring carried out by the Tunisian Social Observatory showed that the road space was the most frequent setting for violent incidents of different types and nature accounting for 27 per cent of the violence recorded during the month, followed by the family residential space with 23 per cent of recorded acts of violence, followed by the educational space with 20 per cent, and then the public space with 12 per cent of recorded cases of violence.

Forms of violence



Intensity of violence by space



The work space also witnessed violent incidents with 3% of the violence observed. The same applies to public transport in 2% of the violence recorded. Exceptionally, violence in religious spaces accounted for 5% of the total violence recorded in February 2020.

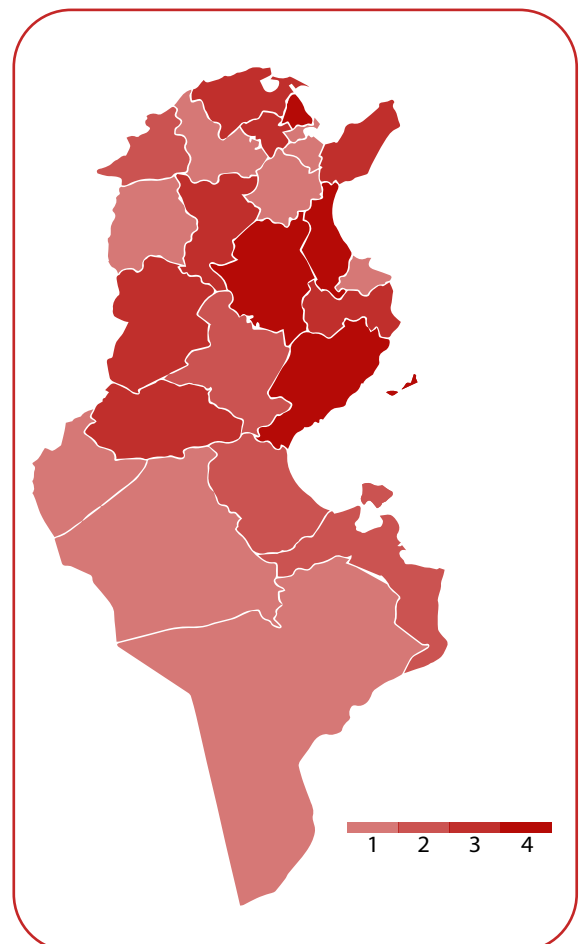
The rates of violence observed during the month of February 2020 have confirmed once again the necessity of giving the necessary attention to the school space and to the educational system as a whole, through its actors, and through sociological studies able to dissect the problem of the high level of violence within this space. This would make it possible to put in place mechanisms to overcome this problem, which endangers, on a daily basis, managers, pupils and educational establishments.

The figures, reported testimonies and the nature of the victims (children) also acknowledge that sexual violence is at an alarming and critical level and cannot be ignored or eradicated without effective monitoring, guidance and efforts to reduce it.

Intensity of violence by space

A reading of the mapping of violence at the national level shows that the various governorates of the Republic have been affected by this phenomenon of violence in its various forms and in varying proportions.

As in previous monthly reports, the governorates of Kairouan, Tunis, Nabeul and Sousse (the big cities) remain the regions that are most affected by the phenomenon of violence since they collectively monopolize nearly half of the violent incidents recorded in February 2020.





Conclusion

This was the result of the month of February during which the performance of the administration was disrupted and apprehensions prevailed pending the forming of the government. This month also constitutes the opening to March, which in turn represents a season for protest movements, according to the watch of the last three years (with about 25 protest demonstrations daily).

Based on the monthly results of January and February 2020, it is reasonable to expect the first six months of the new year to be quite eventful, with 1836 protests during the two months mentioned above, which is a rate of more than 30 protest movements per day.

Moreover, this quarter also begins with the month of Ramadan, known as the consumption season in Tunisia, and in view of the continuing deterioration in the standard of living and continuing price inflation, it is expected that the beginning of the second quarter will also be hot and that most of the demands will be of an economic and social nature in order to improve the living situation, respond to economic and social rights and the application of the clauses of the Constitution on fundamental rights, the most important of which would be social justice.