

Number 80

حاجبي و من حقي اعيش... لا للتهميش

Report of the month May 2020

Social movements, Suicides and Violence

516 collective protests and **36** cases of suicide and attempted suicide



Introduction


Tunisians experienced a total interruption of most economic activities and public life due to the comprehensive containment decided by the authorities from 22 March to the end of April. As expected, the month of April 2020, was the beginning of a strong return of the pace of social mobilization due to the worsening of the economic and social crisis. The monitoring results of the Tunisian Social Observatory for the month of May 2020 indicate a 100% increase in the number of demonstrations compared to the statistics of the April demonstrations.

The month of May was marked by a gradual return to the rhythm of economic life according to a targeted containment strategy decided by the government, starting on the 4th, and continued throughout the month of May.

This return was accompanied by an increase in the pace of social mobilization due to the serious repercussions of the total disruption of activities due to the Corona pandemic in a number of sectors, mainly textile factories and the tourism sector, whereby many factories and hotel workers did not receive their financial entitlements for March and April and started a series of protest movements, according to our organism's watch.

Several social movements announced their return to protest in demand for employment and recruitment in parallel with the gradual return of economic activity.

The general climate of this return has been characterized by new complications in the economic and social crisis, in a context of a predicted regression in the pace of national economic growth to less than 4% this year and a tense political context in which hate speech and violence have predominated, even going as far as the call for a return to the "sit-in of departure 2" and the "dissolution of the People's Representative Assembly" and "Changing the political system". This movement carries a political motivation and the social network Facebook was its main scene of mobilization at the end of May.



As for the demands raised throughout the month of May 2020, they were mainly related to thirst, access to basic services through the implementation of realistic procedures and measures in proportion to the volume of losses suffered by workers in the transport sector, the coffee sector and other sectors affected by the total closure due to the pandemic, especially since the social help announced "was not sufficiently transparent and had several irregularities", according to the slogans of the demonstrators.

The demand for employment was not absent from the movements of May 2020, despite the depth of the economic crisis and the country's entry into an economic recession that makes it difficult to discuss the creation of new job opportunities.

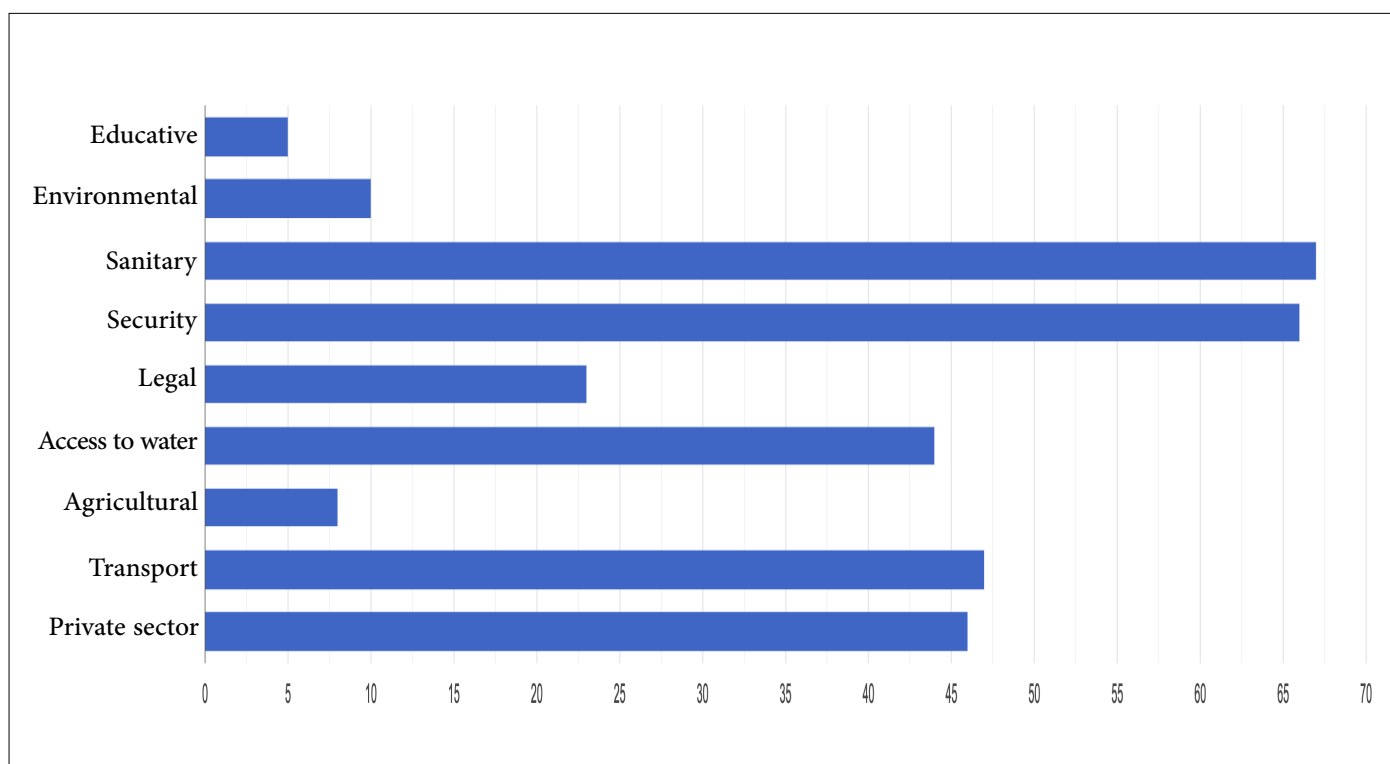
What was striking about the May 2020 protests was that violent demonstrations were the largest type of protests, accounting for more than 50% of all protests, and this violence was not necessarily committed against the protesters, but also self-inflicted violence, such as a number of attempted suicides by immolation as a form of protest, especially among coffee shop employees in order to seek to resolve their social situations and enable them to provide government-approved assistance.

Protest movements during May 2020

The momentum of social mobilization returned during the month of May 2020, as predicted by the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights, with the features of a large social explosion that could occur in the coming weeks or months in conjunction with the repercussions of the Corona pandemic that affected thousands of jobs and blocked the door to employment due to the expected losses in economic growth exacerbated by the fiscal crisis.

The number of social protests recorded throughout the month of May 2020 increased compared to the number of protests observed in April 2020 by more than 100% as the number of protests in May reached 516 protest movements of which more than half were violent protests while the overall number of protests in April reached 254 protests.

Distribution of protest movements by sectors



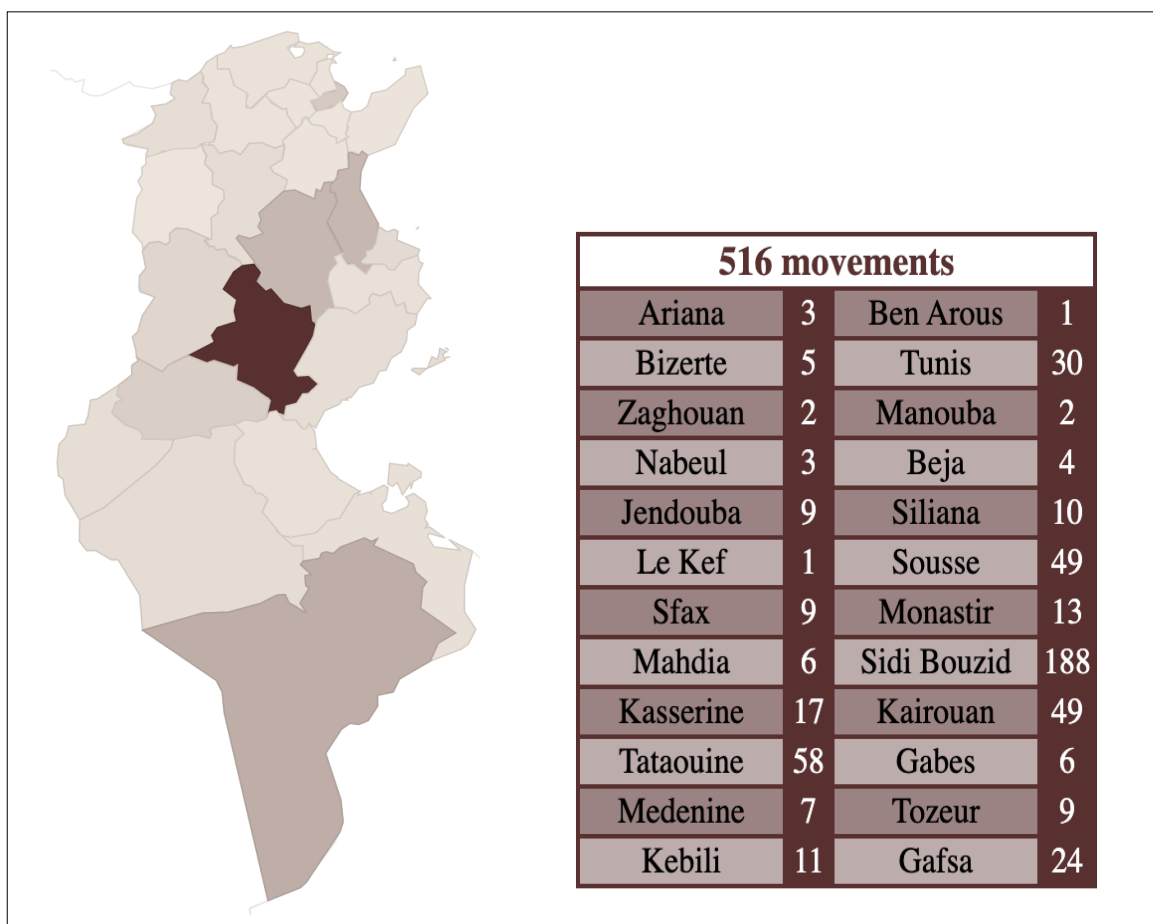
It should be noted that the mapping of the protest movement is being reconfigured regionally, as is the profound nature of the social movement undergoing change and reconfiguration as well.

We mention that we have identified specific protest movements in many villages, in a number of areas of a legal nature such as the demand for the dismissal of several governors because of the lack of equitable distribution of social assistance. This demand is of a civil rights enforcement nature and constitutes a new emerging landscape in these regions.

Voices were also raised calling for the release of two young men, arrested for a publication on the social network Facebook, in the region of Ettouensya, in Aouled Brahim, of the El-Hichriya village, in the delegation of Sidi Bouzid Ouest, in which he was defending freedom of expression.

It was also noted that the nature of social mobilization in the governorate of Kairouan has evolved to become an organized movement and far from any tendency towards random and violent protest.

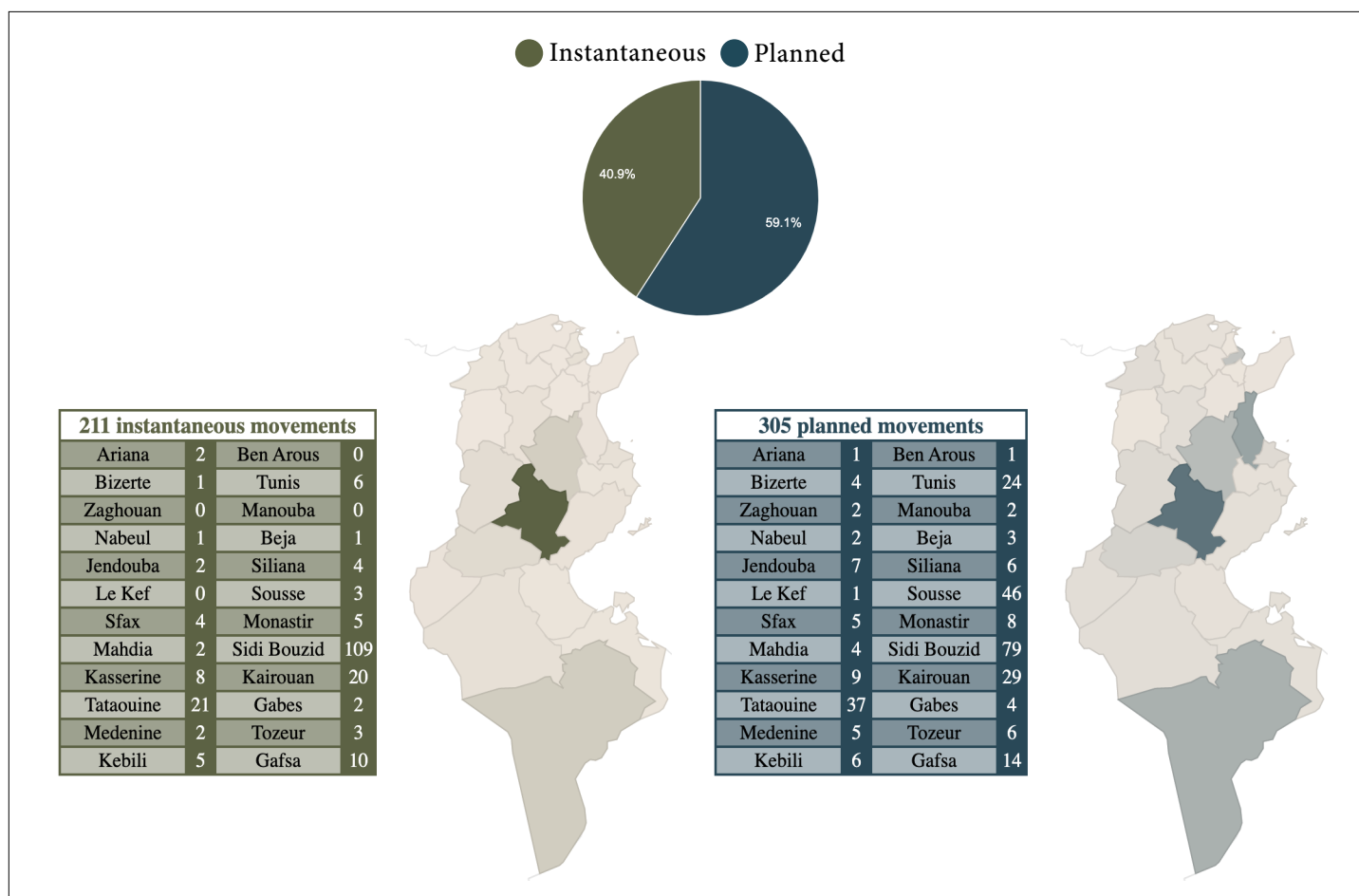
The mapping of protest movements by gouvernorate (May 2020)



Once again, the governorate of Kairouan regresses from the first rank in terms of the number of protest movements observed and once again the governorate of Sidi Bouzid dominates the protest zones for the second consecutive month with 188 protest movements out of a total of 516 protest movements observed throughout the month of May 2020, which means that about one third of the protests were recorded in Sidi Bouzid Alone.

Most of the demonstrations noted in the region had a socio-economic context, including the protests of phosphate workers in Meknessi whose movement evolved throughout the month of May through the blocking of the rails of a train from the Gabes chemical group and the requisitioning of a phosphate transport truck to unload it on the main road between Sfax and Gafsa, after having received information indicating the assignment of a limited number of workers out of a total of more than 160 workers.

Nature of protest movements (May 2020)



About 100 women workers at a factory in the region also protested that they have not received a salary for three months in addition to the total suspension of work. These workers demanded that work be resumed.


The governorate of Sidi-Bouzyd has also lived on the impact of a national movement of workers in the field of private transport such as taxis and "hire" cars in order to activate the implementation of effective measures that would take them out of the vicious circle of losses due to the total cessation of their activity due to the Corona pandemic. The "24 December" movement in the Menzel Bouzaïene announced the resumption of its protests demanding employment.

Sidi-Bouzyd has also experienced protests among a number of farmers seeking to activate the pandemic fund due to the disasters suffered by their agricultural activities as a result of natural factors.

Among the specific demonstrations that were registered in Sidi-Bouzyd, three elderly citizens and holders of disability cards went to the headquarters of the A.R.P. and the presidency of the government to demand that they be saved from precariousness and hardship.


Spaces of protests		actors initiating the social movements	
Governorates, Roads, Professional spaces	★★★★	Inhabitants, Workers, Doctors and paramedical staff	★★★★
Public spaces, Hospitals, Railroads	★★★	Citizens, Tradespeople, Taxi drivers, Collective taxi drivers	★★★
Delegations, Municipalities, Media	★★	Agricultors, Unemployed, Unemployed graduates	★★
Judicial institutions, Administrative headquarters, Educational institutions, Social media	★	Activists, Security Agents, Students	★

The governorate of Tataouine came in second place with 58 protest actions, most of which were demonstrations with an economic and social motivation demanding regional development and employment by activating what was stipulated in the Camour agreement as well as calling for an end to thirst, because the inhabitants of "Tounekt" in the region resorted to the requisition of company cars of the National Company for the Exploitation and Distribution of Water (SONEDE) until the hour of breaking the fast in order to protest against the continuous interruption of drinking water.



The governorates of Sousse and Kairouan come in third position by registering respectively 49 protest movements throughout the month of May, during which various demands were raised, most of them with an economic and social context, such as the protest of employees in the tourism sector in Sousse denouncing the non-payment of their salaries in March and April. But thirst, both of the citizens and of the plantations, was the master of the claims during the protests of the inhabitants of Kairouan during the month of May and the details were as follows:

- Demonstrations by Haffouz farmers against anarchic deep wells which have direct consequences on their surface wells.
- The demonstrations of the inhabitants of Douar Aouled Dkhil in the village of village de Essarja, delegation of Hajeb El-Ayoun, due to the continuous interruption of drinking water for two consecutive weeks
- The inhabitants of Ouslatya protested because of the frequent interruption of drinking water.
- The citizens of the El-Malalsa region in the village of Sidi Ali Ben Salem, delegation of Chbika, protested against the interruption of drinking water for 4 days without prior notice.
- The inhabitants of Al Msaeed demonstrated in South Kairouan by blocking the road linking the region of Chbika and Kairouan and burning wheels in order to claim drinking water.
- The inhabitants of Marg Ellil in the delegation of El-Alaa, protested by blocking the road and burning wheels in order to demand drinking water.
- The inhabitants of the Echouechi region of Hajeb El-Ayoun protested by cutting off the agricultural road to the village in order to quell their thirst.
- The inhabitants of El-Hcheychia of the village of Chraytia-North, delegation of Bouhajla, asked that they be connected to the drinking water network after the completion of the project of connecting and extending the canals since last year, without allowing them to make their individual meters, knowing that the
- A young man from Ain El-Kedia the Hafouz delegation began his walk towards the Palace of Carthage, denouncing thirst, poverty, unemployment and marginalization.

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- Protests against the lack of drinking water for 10 years were noted in the delegation of Omar Bouhajla.
 - The protest of the inhabitants of the Dkhila region in Sbikha, refuting thirst.
 - The inhabitants of the south of Jehina in Bouhajla, protesting against thirst.

Also in Kairouan, the inhabitants of Bir Hamad, in Bouhajla, demanded the dismissal of the mayor because a number of people with special needs had not received any assistance or help. A young man sewed up his mouth to protest against the failure to obtain the social assistance allowance estimated at 200 dinars. Stone quarry workers protested because they had been demobilized by the Northern Transport Company without receiving their financial entitlements.

The semolina shortage crisis has not ended; the inhabitants of the El Houfia region have entered into a protest movement to demand semolina.

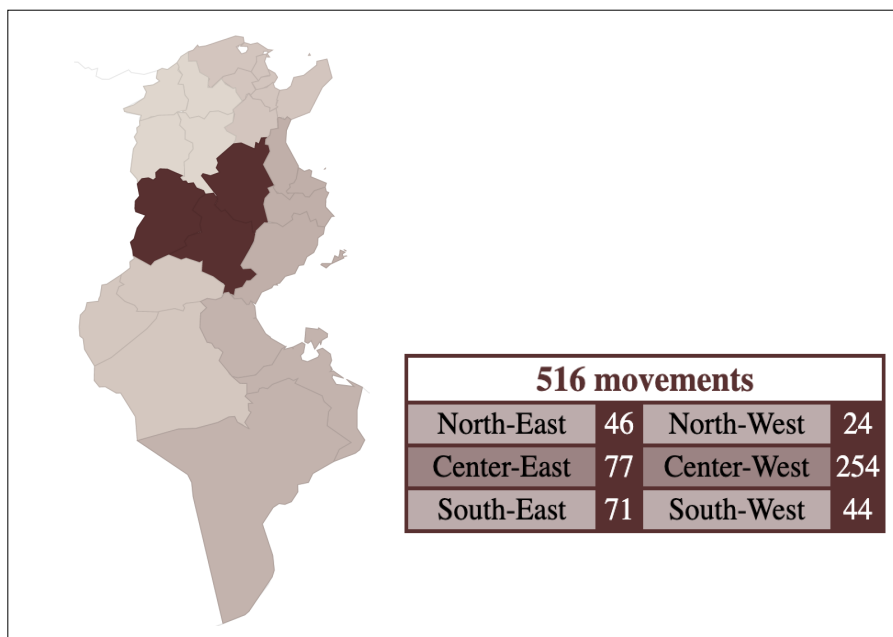
Moreover, the lack of accessibility to basic services in the region does not stop at the lack of drinking water and the lack of basic health services since some of the demonstrations that were noted called for the provision of lighting, such as the protest of the inhabitants of El-Quouedrya in the Chbika delegation and the inhabitants of Aouled Bousseta 2 in the Romdhanya region of the Bouhajla delegation.

It should also be noted that the momentum of the social movement returned in the governorates of Jendouba and Kasserine because the two regions were on the first place for the most angry regions during the years 2014 and 2015 to retract later and during May 2020, they returned with 9 protest movements in Jendouba (most of them related to the thirst crisis, lack of irrigation water and mismanagement of surplus agricultural production) and with 17 protest actions in the governorate of Kasserine, we mention the protests of the beneficiaries of the "Mechanism 16" to obtain their financial rights, the protests of the employees of the cafes, taxi and rental owners, as well as the protests of the inhabitants of Khanguet El-Jezia, in Hassi El-Farid (home to 5 thousand inhabitants), denouncing thirst and announcing the resumption of the protests of the coordination of the movement "El Intideb Hakki" demanding employment.

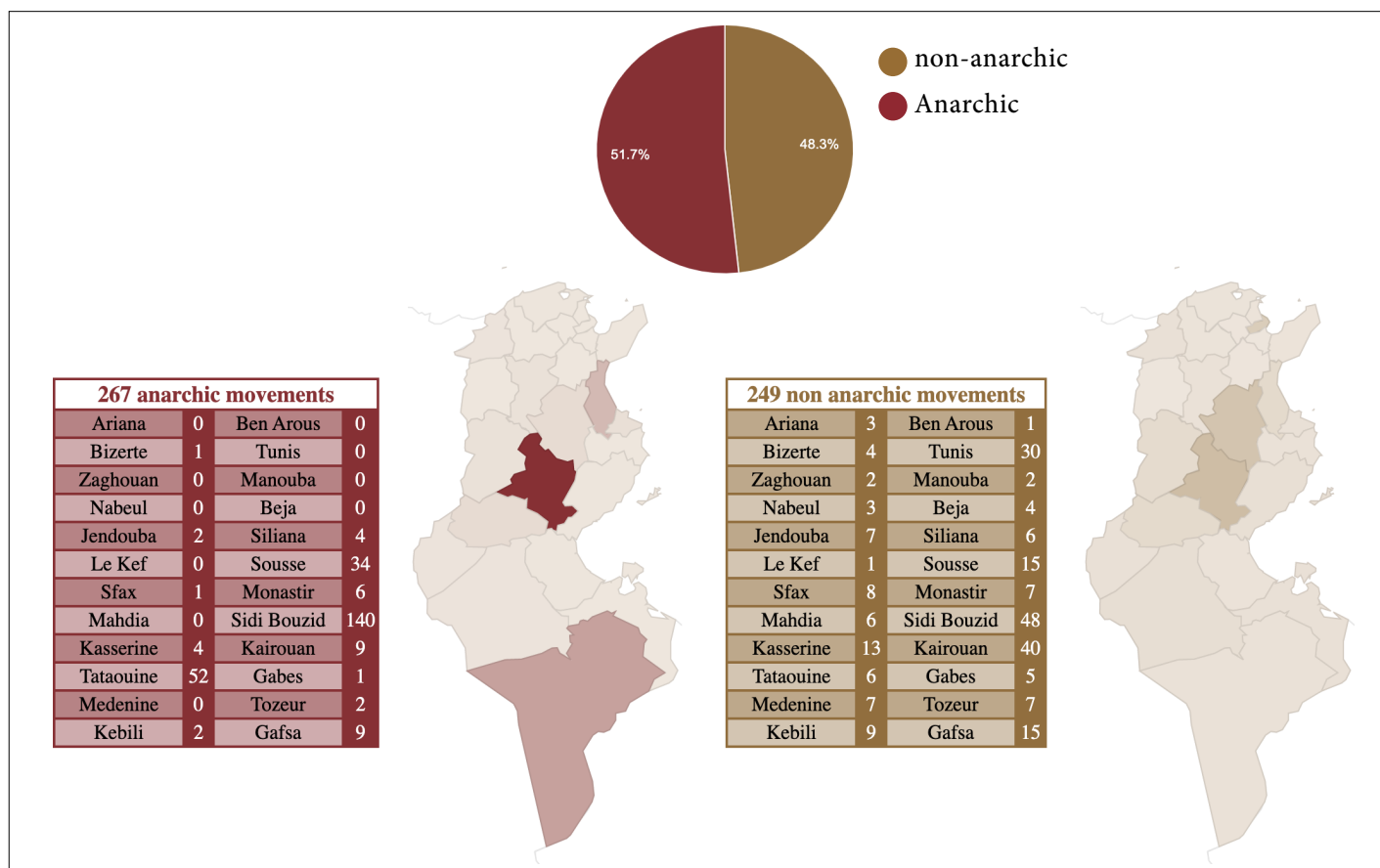
In Gafsa governorate, which is ranked fifth in terms of the number of social protests observed, phosphate production has come to a standstill almost entirely in the mining area due to the return of protests calling for recruitment into the Gafsa Phosphate Company.

The Central-Western region is first among the regions with the most citizen protests with about 49% of the total movements registered in May 2020, followed by the Central-Eastern region with 77 protest movements, the South-Eastern region with 71 protest movements, the North-Eastern region with 46 protest movements, the South-Western region with 44 protest movements and the North-Western region with 24 protest movements.

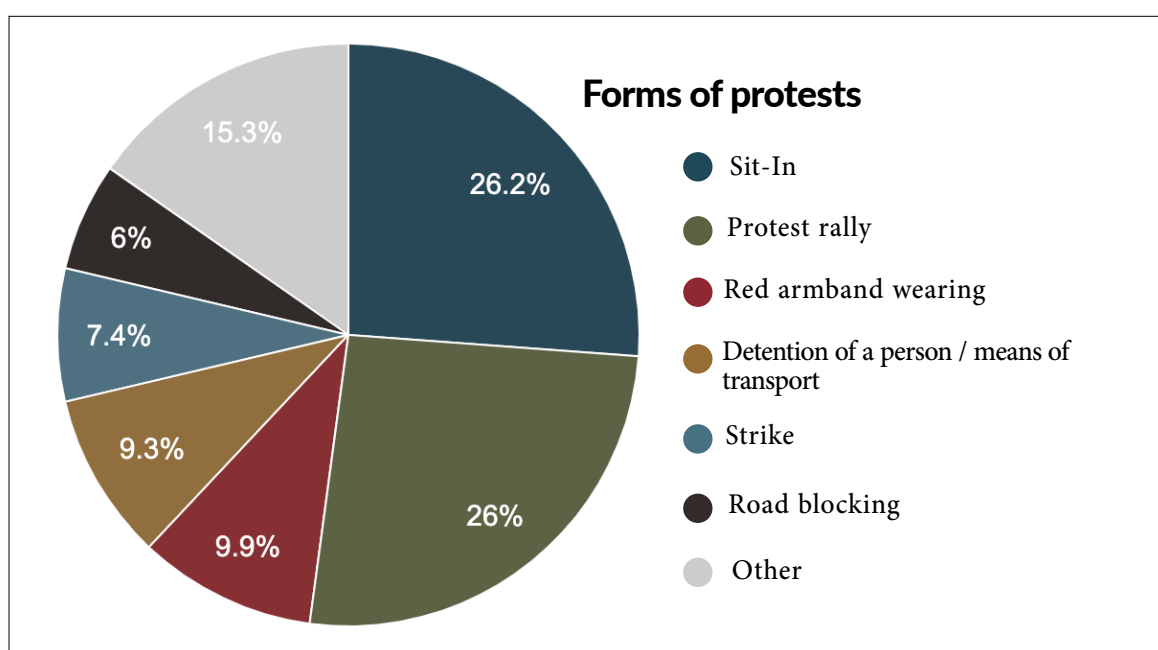
Regional protestation movements



The number of violent protest movements reached 267, of which 140 were recorded in Sidi Bouzid alone, 52 violent protest movements were recorded in Tataouine, in Sousse, 34 violent protest movements took place and in Gafsa, 9 violent protest movements were recorded. These are demonstrations that slide into violence or contain some kind of violence.



Protest rallies and sit-ins were the most important forms of protest, accounting for 26% and 26% respectively, followed by various forms such as road blockades (6%), strikes (7.4%) and the forcible detention of a person or means of transport (9%).

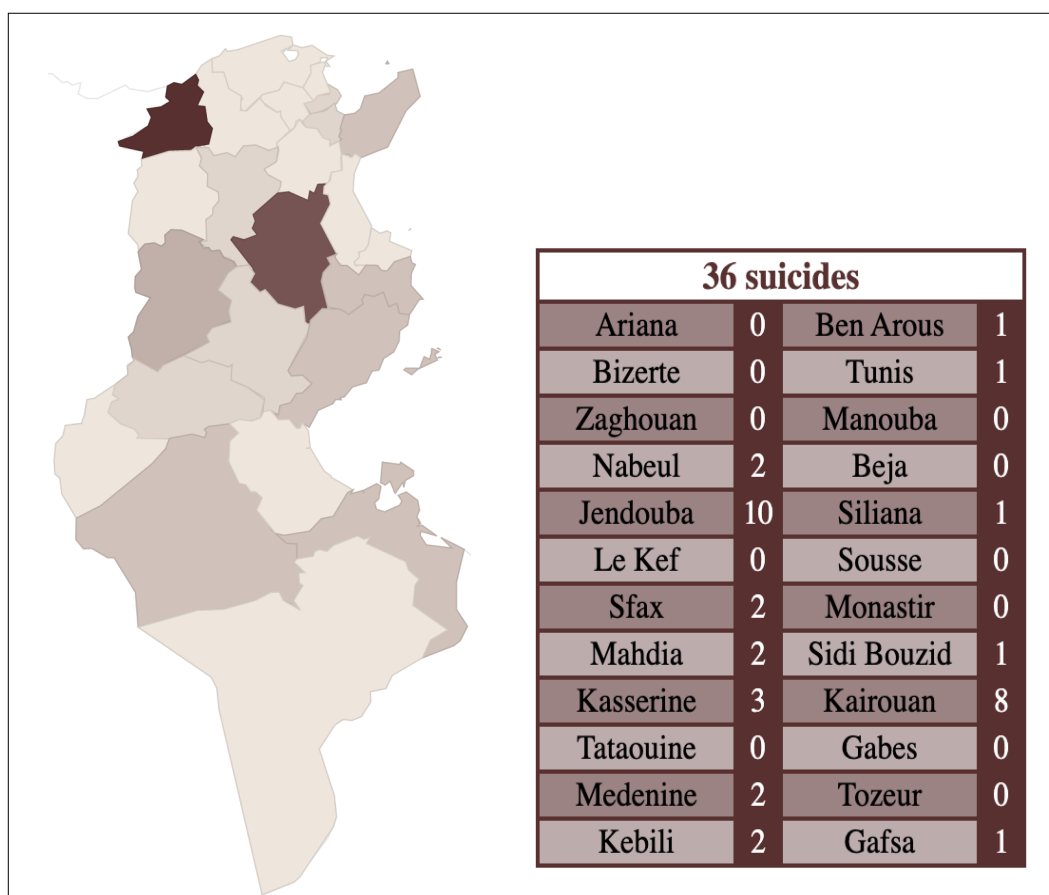


Acts and attempts of suicide

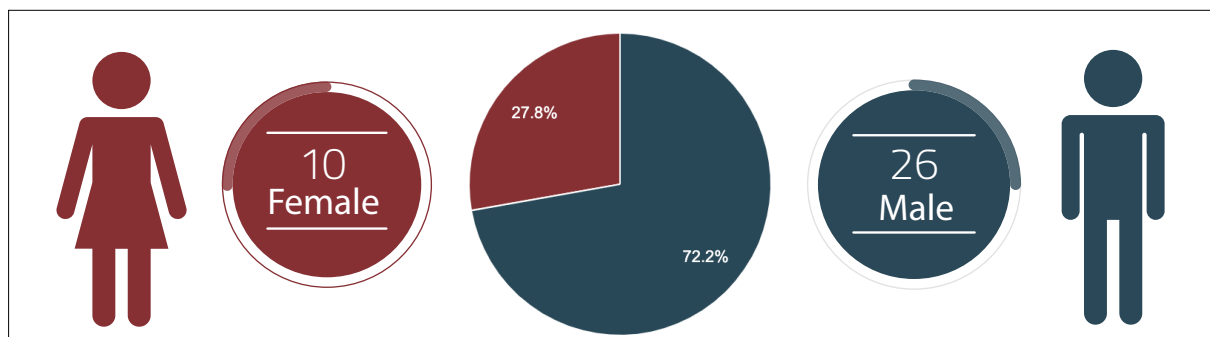
Many suicide attempts and threats of suicide have taken the form of protests in an attempt to reject the deteriorating economic and social situation, such as the suicide attempts of some café employees.

The number of acts of suicide and attempted suicide during the month of May 2020 has reached 36 and the governorate of Jendouba comes first with 10 cases, followed by Kairouan with 8 cases, then Kasserine with 3 cases, followed by Medenine, Nabeul, Kébili, Mahdia, Medenine and Sfax with respectively two cases for each governorate and finally one case in each of the governorates of Ben Arous, Tunis, Seliana, Sidi Bouzid and Gafsa.

Suicides and attempts of suicide by governorate

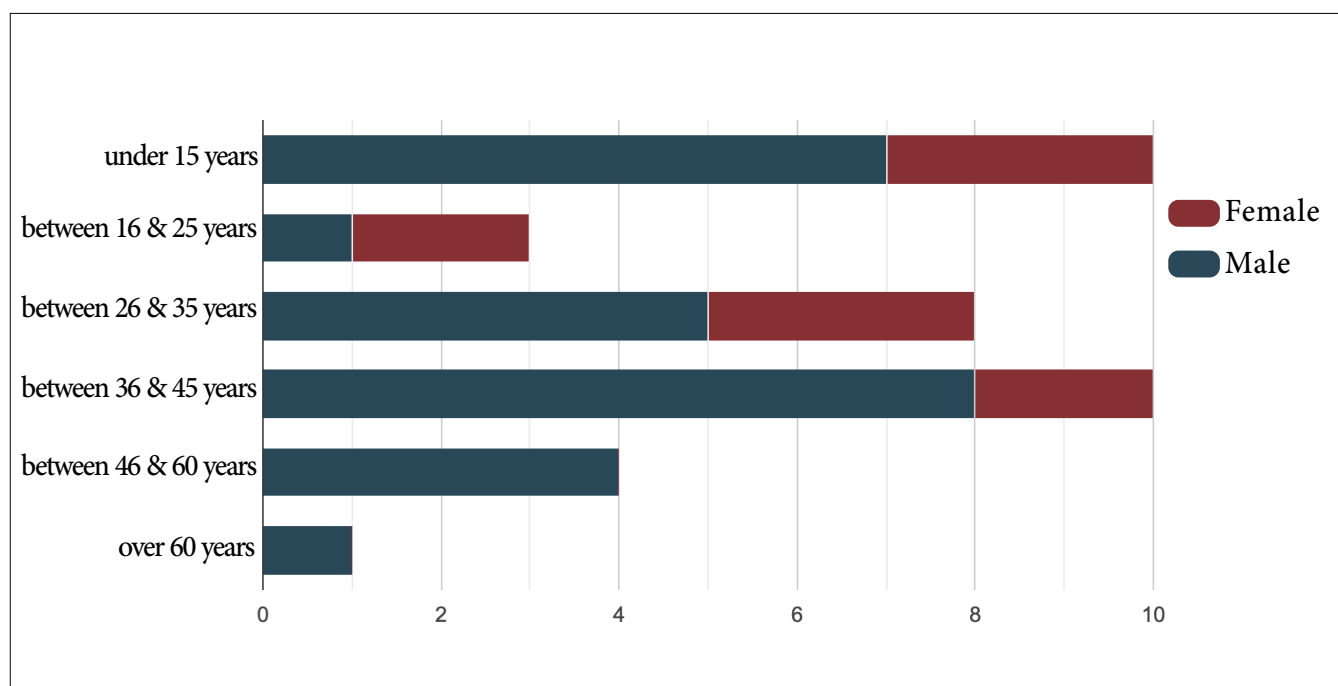


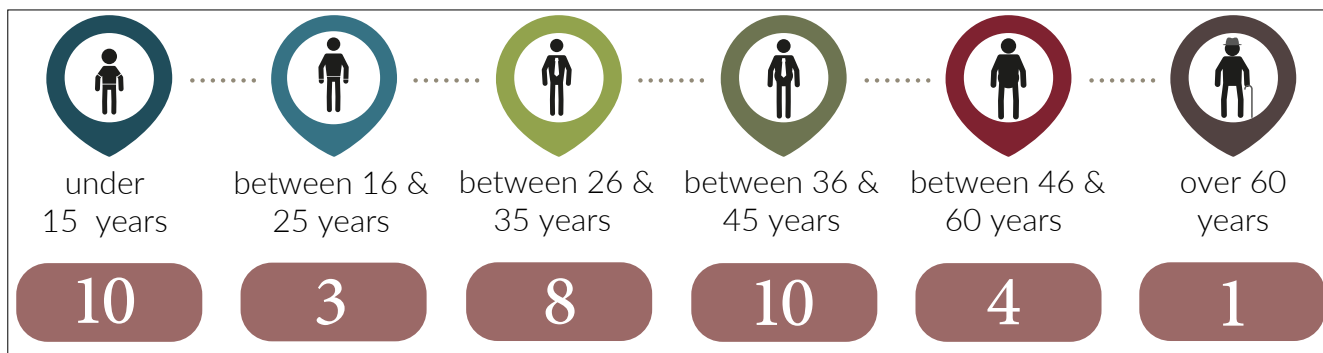
Suicides and attempts of suicide by gender



The male gender constituted the majority of victims in these cases with 72%, of the total recorded with 26 cases against 10 of the female gender. The 36-45 age group and children under 15 years of age represented the age group that experienced the most suicides and attempted suicides with 28%, followed by the 26-35 age group with 22%. An act of suicide by a person aged 77 years was also detected in Sfax.

Suicides and suicide attempts by age group

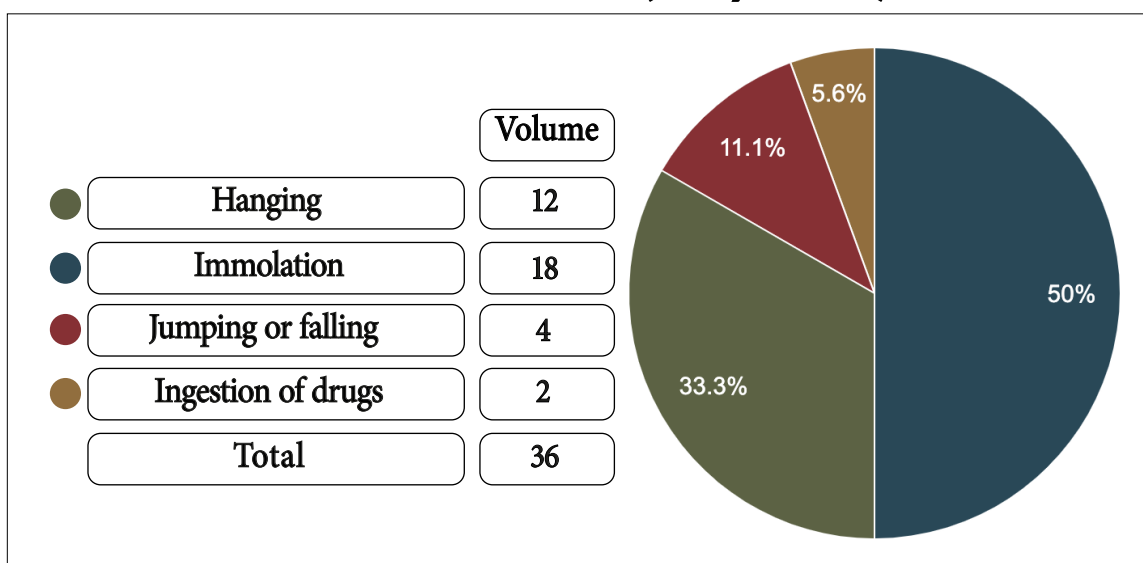




Suicide and attempted suicide by hanging represented the most recurrent means with 33% as well as suicide by immolation (was 50%). This form is associated with the protest movement, where citizens express their anger by threatening to immolate themselves in order to claim the fulfillment of their demands for support to overcome the social crisis suffered and caused by this pandemic as well as the disruption of their activities.

In addition, suicide by ingestion of toxic substances was noted in 5.6% of acts of suicide and attempted suicide and jumping and rushing in 11.1% of cases.

means of suicide (May 2020)





Violence

The level of violence did not diminish during May 2020, despite our passage in the context of the Covid 19 virus crisis that the country has been going through since last March, from the stage of total containment to the stage of targeted containment, with which it can be said that life has returned to its almost normal rhythm.

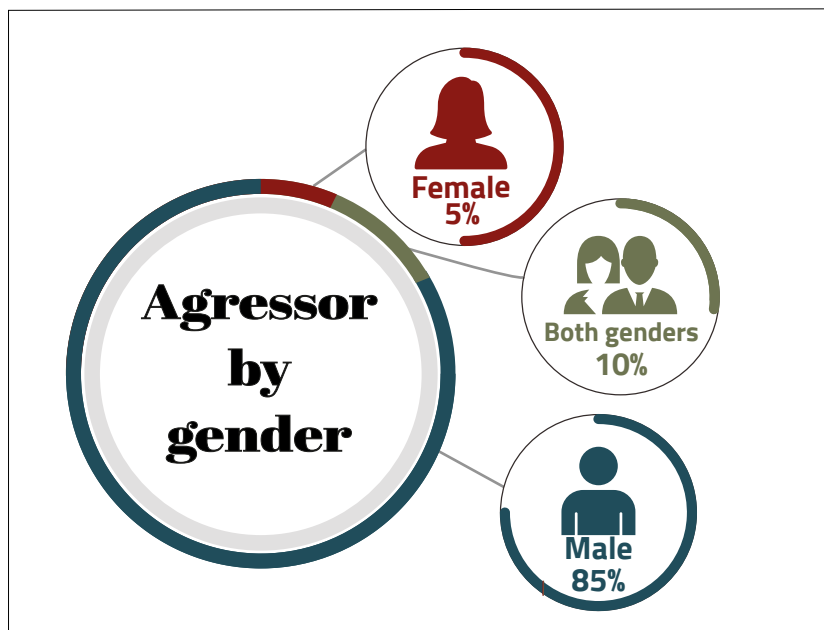
The results of the work of the Tunisian Social Observatory team at the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights concerning acts of violence largely reflect the repercussions and effects of the economic and social crisis on the Tunisian population, since the figures confirm the continuation of criminal, domestic and sexual violence.

According to our May 2020 statistics, violence in its criminal form, such as robberies, robberies and premeditated assaults, violent crimes and murders, accounted for more than 55% of the total violent incidents observed in our organization's monitoring sample of a number of daily and weekly newspapers, websites and social media pages.

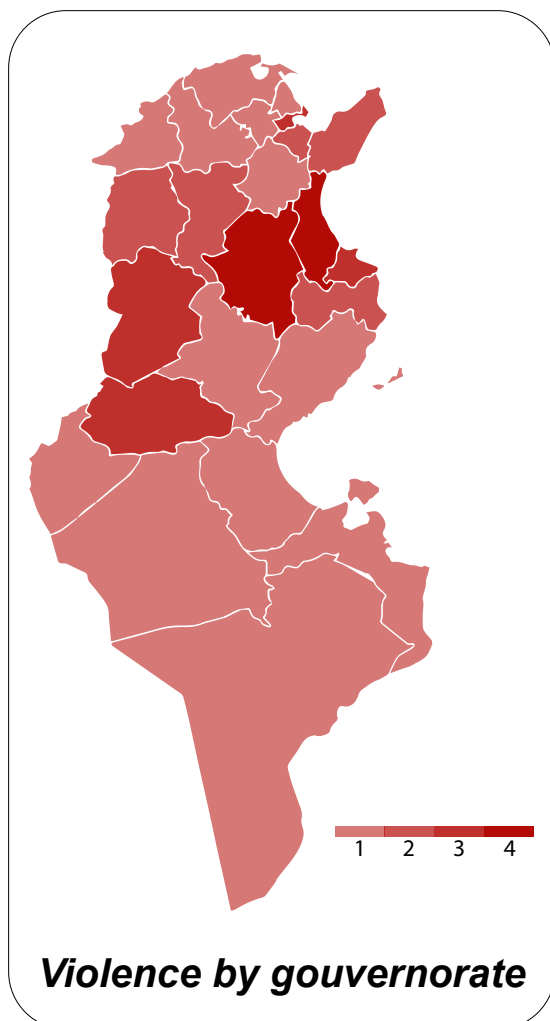
Violence in its impulsive form, which is an unthinking reaction, came in second place, accounting for about 22% of the total violence observed, followed by domestic violence, which accounted for about 20% of the violence observed.

As in previous months, sexual violence was the most important form of violence observed, accounting for 15% of the violent incidents recorded in May 2020.

On the other hand, residential space was the one that experienced the most important part of the violence observed during the month of May 2020, followed by public spaces and roads.

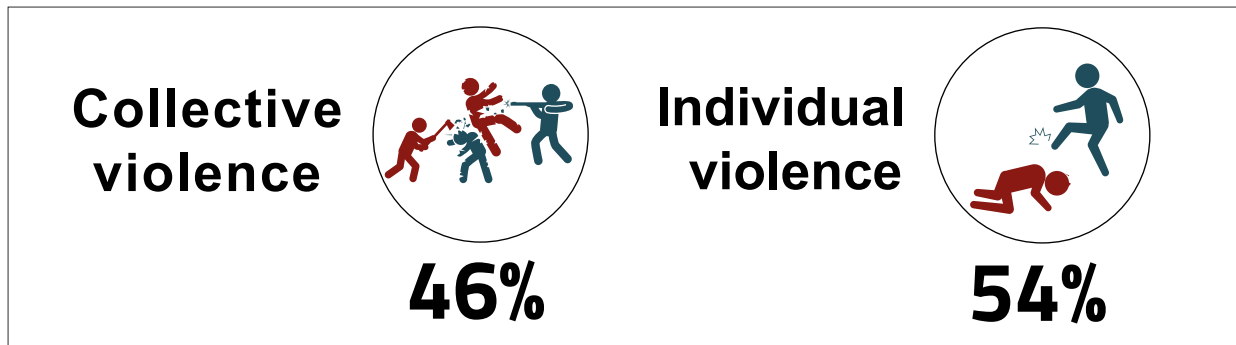


The cases of violence that occurred in May 2020 are almost equally divided between individual and collective violence.



The governorate of Sousse ranks first in the cases of violence observed during the month of May 2020 alone with more than 15% of the total number of recorded cases of violence, followed by that of Kairouan, witnessing nearly 14% of the total number of recorded violence, to reach each of the governorates of Kasserine and Monastir in third place with 8%, followed by the governorates of Tunis and Gafsa with about 7%, then the governorate of Mahdia and the governorate of Nabeul with 6%.

cases of violence



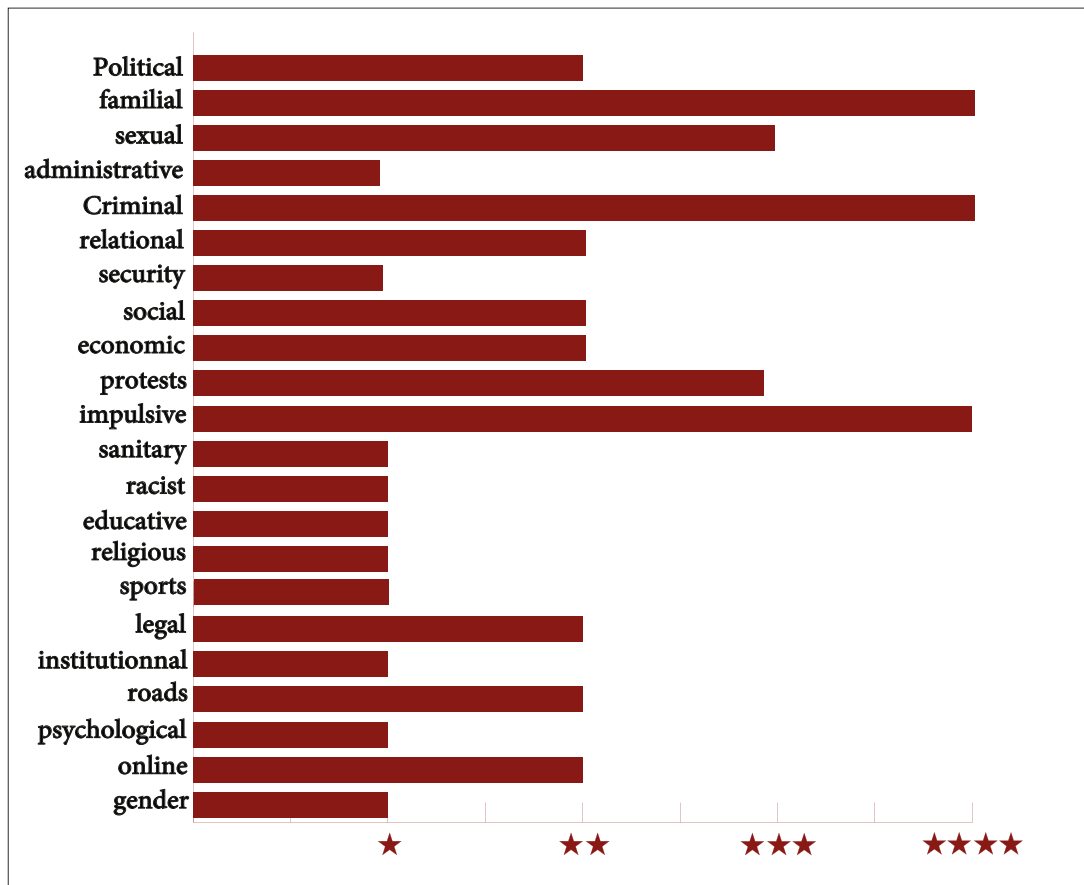
According to the writings and approaches published by sociological researchers at the national and international levels, the economic crisis, and specifically the decline in growth and per capita income levels and an increase in unemployment and poverty rates, will expose the groups most vulnerable to its repercussions (such as unemployed young people or people with little schooling or the most

Add to this the increase in economic pressures, sociologists expect to see a trend among individuals towards violence and illegal and/or illicit behavior ... and even if the impact of the economic crisis on crime is not immediate - meaning that the extent of crime takes time until the groups most vulnerable to crime respond to economic pressures - it is natural that a period of total or targeted containment will see an increase in the level of family violence, criminal violence and relationship violence...

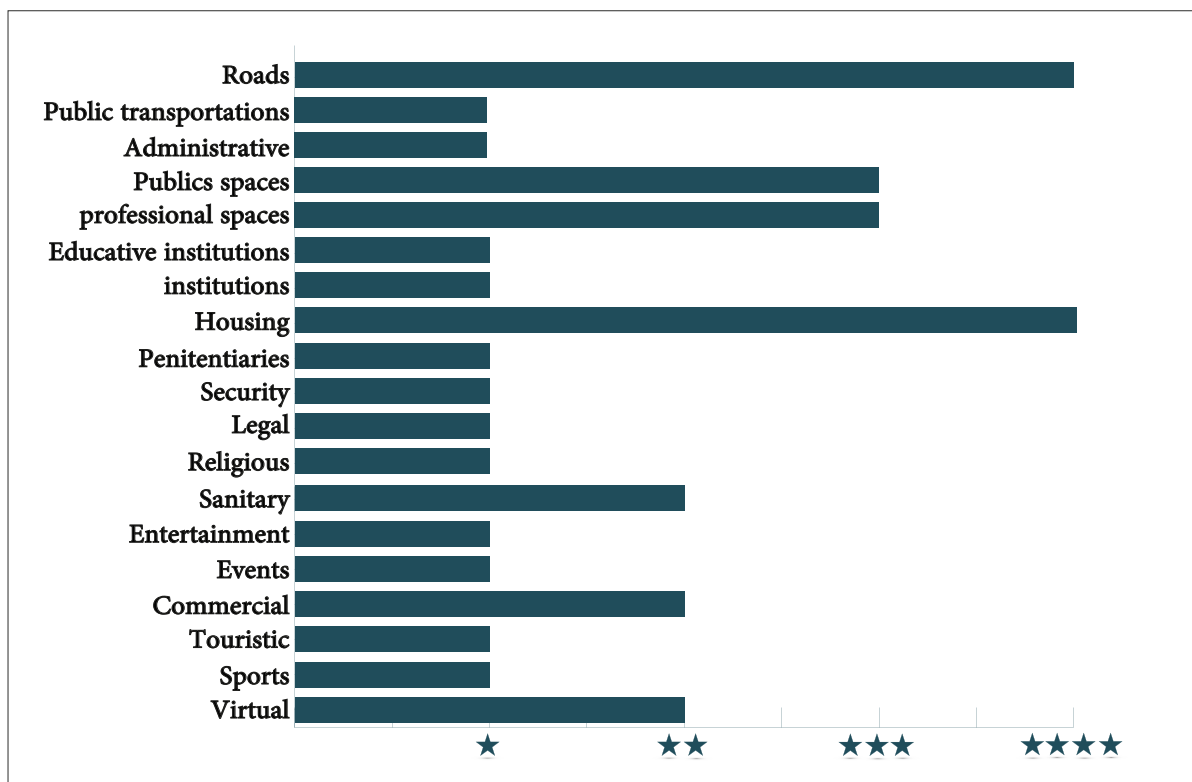
A reality that is expected to continue beyond the mid-life period and is primarily related to the magnitude of the continuing economic crisis and the effects it will have on various social groups.

In proportion to the worsening of the socio-economic crisis goes, sociology hypothesizes that the level of crime will increase and, consequently, in theory, it is predicted that the coming period will see an increase in crime rates with various forms of criminal, family and impulsive violence and sexual violence.

Forms of violence



Intensity of violence by space





Conclusion

In conclusion, the social situation does not seem to be reassuring for the coming weeks and months. It is linked to the extent of the evolution of the economic and social crisis in the country and to the effectiveness of the government's recovery and reform strategy to overcome this crisis.

The social situation remains open to new developments with the end of the targeted containment and the extent of losses in all economic sectors due to the total suspension for one and a half months of economic and social life in the face of the Corona pandemic.

New scientific calculation methodology:

As of March, the Tunisian Social Observatory of the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights has adopted a new methodology of scientific calculation, the bases of which are as follows:

Definitions:

Instantaneous movements: characterized by the surprise and speed of movement resulting from the anger of the crowd and the rumble it generates but are limited in time and space. This type of movement seeks to mobilize attention and social mobilization and is characterized by its peaceful nature. However, these movements vary in the parameters of protest development, including the use of violence.

Planned movements: movements which were essentially immediate but which changed and developed mechanisms of action in time and space and were able to acquire the capacity to organize and prepare for and seek to develop counter-mobilization but remain essentially peaceful. They are distinguished by their organizational means and their capacity to ensure its continuous action and mobilization for the same reasons.

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Violent movements: these are movements that make use of counter-violence as one of their mechanisms of action and are often direct reactions employing all means for confrontation and the achievement of their objectives, but they often lack clear organisational elements, programs and means.

The methodology of Calculation:

The uniqueness of a movement is defined by a mode of action, a place and a day.

A protest taking place in several places will be counted as several movements.

A movement taking place over several days will be counted each day.

A protest using different action modes will be counted once for each action.