

REPORT **MAY** 2022



947
Migrants

586
Collective protests
9
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

May 2022 report on social protests and mobility, suicide and suicide attempts



For the fifth consecutive month, the curve of protest movements continues to fall, with a difference of about -51% between January and May 2022. This decline confirms what we have previously mentioned in our monthly reports, namely the decrease in the expectations of the citizen towards the state institutions and its evolution towards the search for alternative solutions to the crises in terms of employment, basic services, and a set of rights that the state institutions should ensure and facilitate access to for all citizens.

During election years, and especially as the election date approaches, there is an upsurge in social protests aimed at pressuring and prioritizing demands on the negotiating table with candidates. There is a clear difference between the harvest of the first five months of this year and the same period in 2019, a year that witnessed the organization of general elections to elect a new president and a new parliament. At a time when the first five months of 2022 saw a decline and a drop in social mobilization of almost half, this same period of 2019 recorded a relative increase in social mobilization, the difference between the results of January and May is about 5%.

Here, the social actor and social movements would face two hypotheses: either they are in a phase of exhaustion due to the uncertainty about the party to which to submit their demands. Or it is a state of despair regarding the way state institutions interact with their demands.

Both hypotheses point to a possible explosion. This social explosion can be manifested in the insistence of the demands or in the unprecedented return in force of social mobilization in the streets and squares. It can also be reflected in a strong shift towards alternative solutions to meet these demands: namely, the tendency to smuggle, unregulated migration, suicide, witchcraft, and the use of networks of interests and pressure networks. So many solutions that constitute

an alternative to the lawful society, and therefore it is also an explosion, not in the streets, but rather in the collapse of the lawful society and the disintegration of the state caused by its inability to meet the demands of the people.

This situation is fueled by a difficult economic, social, and political climate and is prone to surprises.



Discourses of violence and hatred fuel social tensions and increase the distance between the social actor and the political actor. Today, this discourse, which has become dominant, is based on stigmatization, intimidation, defamation and incrimination, thus breaking with involvement as the main value and the basis of a safe environment for political pluralism and the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression. Often, this political climate has social repercussions, one of the most striking indicators of which is the state of retreat of the social movement, not under the pretext of finding solutions to the demands of the demonstrators, but rather to express anger at the indifference of the authorities to the demands, and therefore, find an alternative to the state institutions that do not respond. This is more or less the current situation of the social mobilization.



Farmers' protests that erupted in early May after the sharp increase in feed prices by importing companies confirmed that those in charge today are adopting the same previous strategies. This tendency not to break with previous choices is resulting in a failure of agricultural and trade options and policies.

These choices do not guarantee food sovereignty and do not save the national production system. Moreover, they entrench food dependency and increase the cost of production, which has repercussions on price levels and the deterioration of citizens' purchasing power. At a time when events are accelerating at the international level and governments around the world are busy formulating programs and developing plans to ensure their food sovereignty following the

crisis of rising food prices worldwide due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, the issue of food sovereignty does not appear to be a priority in Tunisia today. This can be explained by the development path adopted years ago. Indeed, in recent years, the authority has moved towards the signing of a free and comprehensive trade agreement with the European Union, which is an unfair agreement targeting new sectors, the most important of which is the peasantry. This agreement will end the local agricultural system. Without the vigilance of civil society, this agreement could have had major economic and social repercussions, including an increase in the number of irregular migrants.

The current government, like its predecessor, suffers from a crisis of vision and a crisis of diagnosis, which have direct repercussions on its policies and options and are reflected in its ability to respond to the demands of the protestors. However, the state has a duty to respond, especially with regard to basic rights such as the right to food security and the right to access quality services in health, transportation, etc.

In terms of the general economic climate, the month of May saw the adoption by the Central Bank of an increase in the interest rate of 75 points, after recording a continuous increase in the rate of inflation, which amounted to 7.2% during March and 7.5% during April. The increase in the key rate has direct repercussions on the increase in the prices of banking services, and consequently the move towards higher production costs and its impact on the level of purchasing power of citizens.

The government shows no clear plan to manage this crisis, nor to manage others. Moreover, its lack of transparent communication with the media and public opinion undermines the citizen's right to access information. It does not provide answers on all the issues, foremost among which is the social issue: the circle of precariousness that is widening in the country and the ever-increasing percentage of the poor, whose invisible number is close to 5 million, in addition to other black figures on the reality of violence in the country. It is an invisible violence to which the State does not express itself.

Thus, the current policy and options of the current government has not made a break with previous policies and options, but rather is moving towards structural reforms of which it keeps their details secret and only shows the gradual removal

of subsidies with the promise that they will be granted to those who deserve it, which the Minister of Economy said in one of the foreign channels, but the government has not yet explained how this will be done and without clarifying the criteria used to determine who is eligible for assistance, given the profound social changes due to the sharp deterioration in purchasing power caused by rising prices and the persistence of a high inflation rate (7.8% recorded during the month of May, according to the National Statistics Institute). These variables have affected the middle class and the increase in the number of poor people (according to estimates, there are about four million poor people, knowing that the number of poor children after the pandemic is about 900 thousand children, according to figures from the Ministry of Women). According to the figures of the Ministry of Women in its latest reports on the situation of children in Tunisia, 380,000 children are undernourished due to the increase in poverty rates.



900 thousand poor children

from the Ministry of Women

The prices of non-subsidized products, in turn, are experiencing large overruns due to the inability of the Institutions of economic control to control the distribution channels and stop smuggling, knowing that the Ministry of Commerce is able to control this situation if willing. The proof is that its decision to ban the export of vegetables and fruits during the month of Ramadhan has contributed to the decline in the price of peppers (exorbitant prices found) in a few hours, dropping the price per kilogram of about 9 dinars to only two dinars, recording a rate of decline of about 450%.

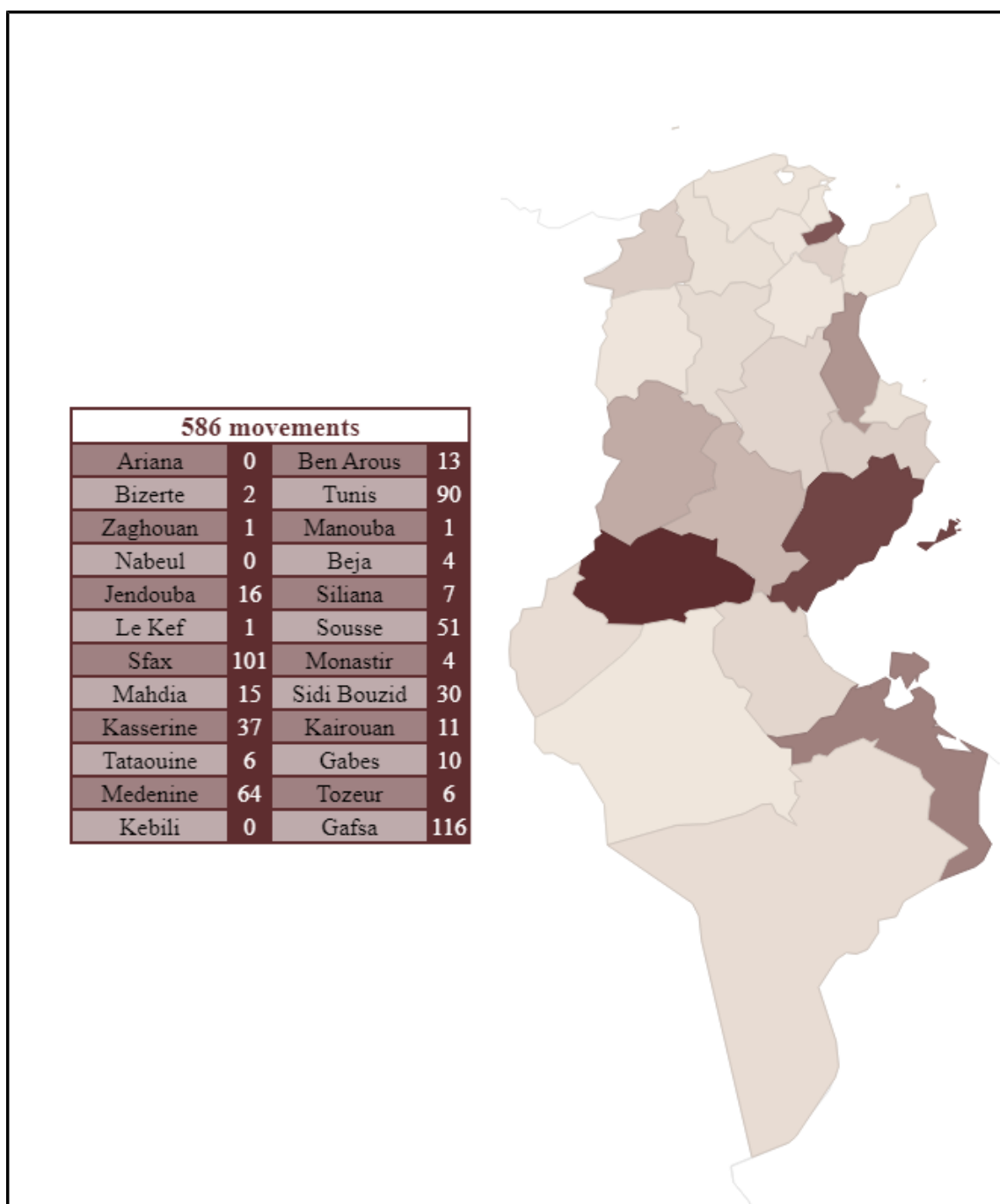
The government, like its previous counterparts, does not seem to have a crisis management strategy, including urgent crises such as the thirst crisis in several regions, especially since we are on the verge of the summer season, which often experiences a significant rise in temperatures coinciding with the interruption of drinking water for days and weeks, as well as the lack of drinking water for areas that do not yet benefit from a connection to the network of the Company of Exploitation and Distribution of Water (SONEDE). The latter continues to this day

to adopt the policy of inequitable distribution of drinking water by adopting the same unequal distribution network.

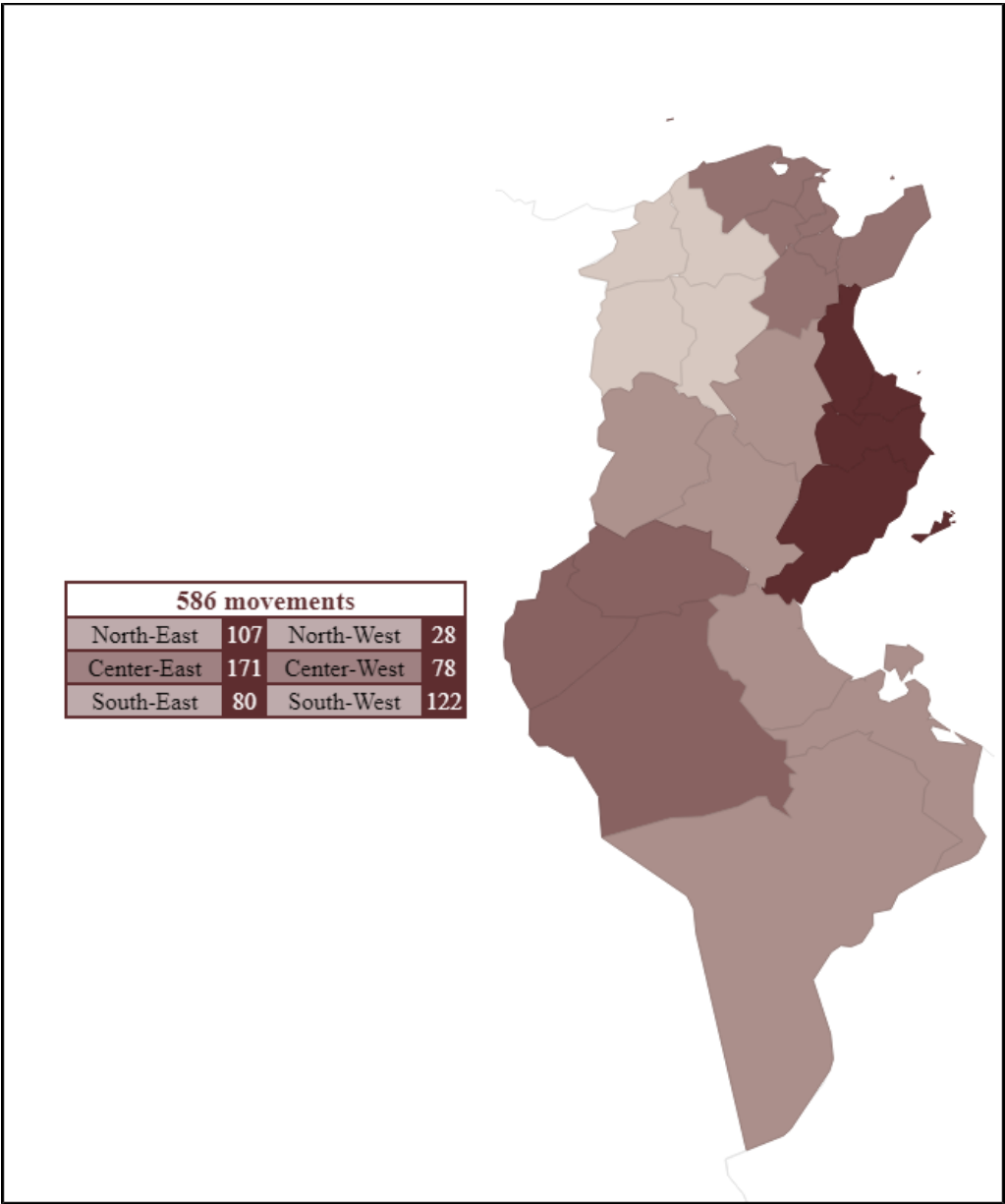
May Protests:



586 protest movements were followed throughout the month of May and the number of demonstrations exceeded 100 in Gafsa and Sfax and exceeded 50 in Tunis and Medenine.



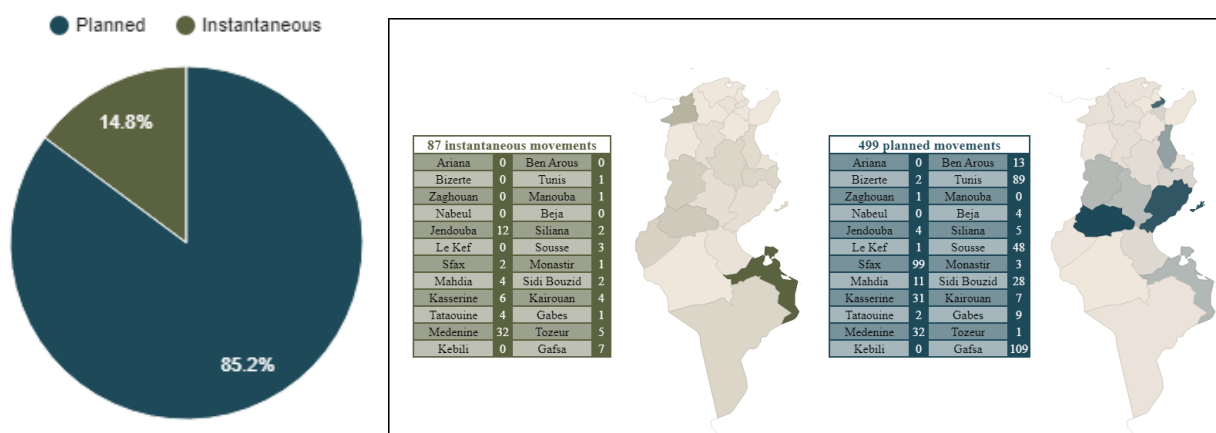
The month of May has seen a slight inflection of the protest movement, the Center-East region (governorates of Sfax, Sousse, Monastir and Mahdia) leading the pack with 171 protest movements, or about 29% of the total observed. It is followed closely in the south-west (governorates of Gafsa, Tozeur and Kebili) with 122 movements. Then comes the Northeast Province (Tunis, Ben Arous, Manouba, Bizerte and Zaghouan) with 107 protest movements.



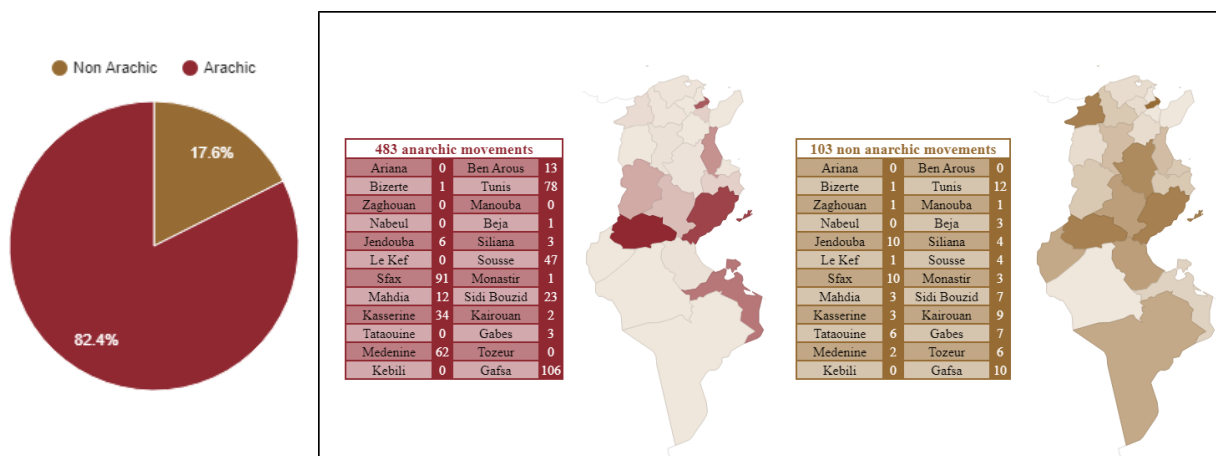
The protest map shows the pole position of the governorate of Gafsa in the protest movement with 116 movements, a traditional position for this region where employment is often the first of the claims raised, without this not provoking any reaction from the authorities. The situation is such that the

previous and current governments have failed to resolve the social file in the region and find alternative solutions that would provide jobs and develop the region in various sectors, not limited to the phosphate - originally a blessing for this region, but today is closer to the curse.

The governorate of Sfax is ranked second in terms of the most congested areas throughout the month of May, with 101 demonstrations, followed by the governorate of Tunis with 90 movements, then Medenine with 64 contested movements.



The percentage of anarchic protests amounted to 82.4% of the total protests recorded, while organized protests amounted to 17.6%, which is an important indicator of the extent of change experienced by the social actor. This is an important indicator of the extent of the change experienced by the social actor. While he tended to organize his protests, he is now moving more and more towards destruction.

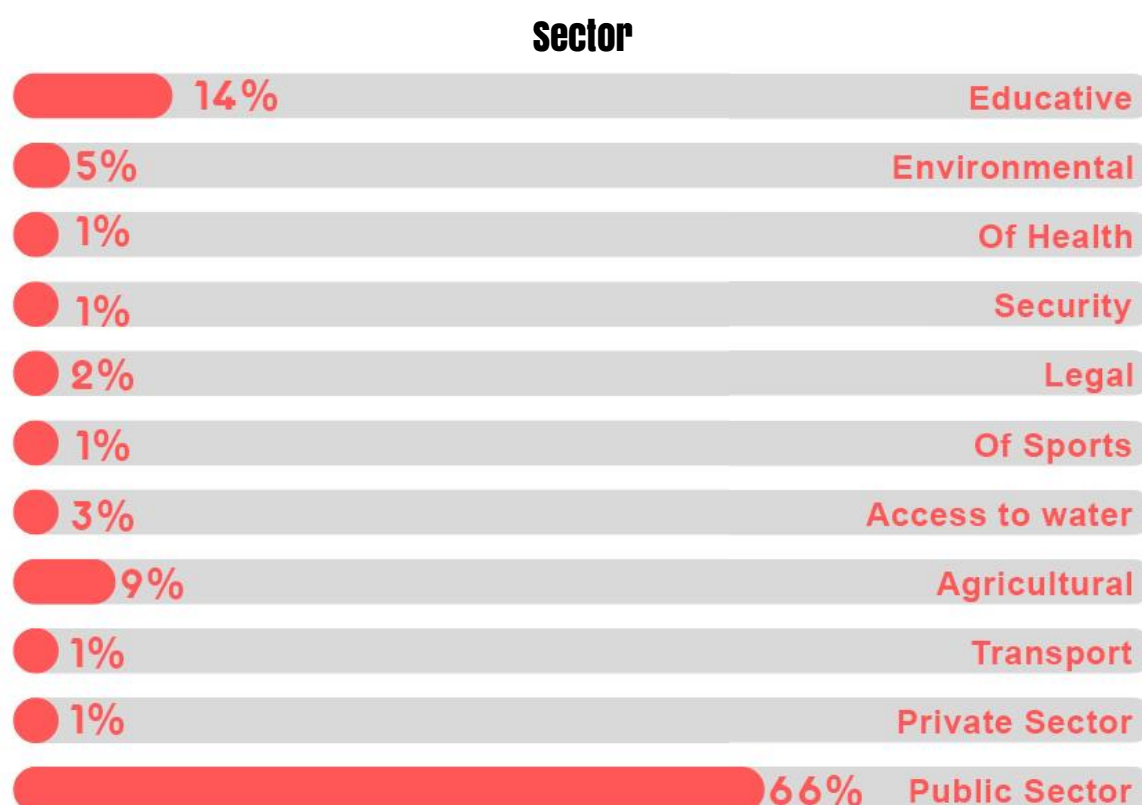


What is striking in the first four governorates on the map of demonstrations in May, is that the rate of lawless movements was 91.3% in Gafsa, 90% in Sfax, 86.6% in Tunis and 96.8% in Medenine. The rate of lawless demonstrations in the governorate of Gafsa was about 37.5% in May 2020, it rose to 85.9% in May 2021 and in Sfax, the rate of lawless demonstrations rose from 11% in May 2020 to 81% in May 2021. These figures give some indication of the state of mind of the demonstrator. Indeed, the protester is now escalating his protests and shifting them to blocking roads and shutting down institutions to apply pressure and to get the attention of the media and the authorities. It demands interaction and this is the repercussion of the policy of exhaustion and non-interaction adopted by successive governments, including that of Najla Boden.

The proportion of mixed protests amounts to 89.6% of the total registered protests, which means that damage is frequent and so are the demands. The proportion of protests led by men is estimated at 10.2%.

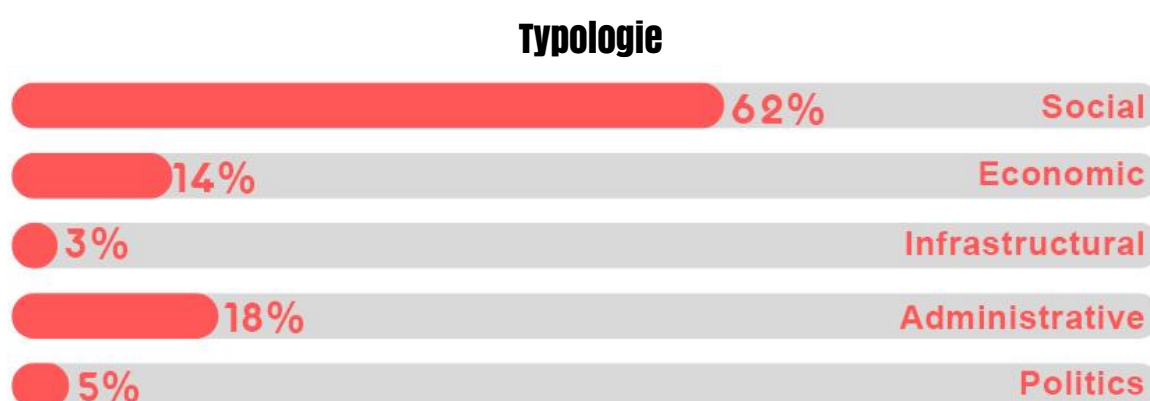


66% of the protests were related to the public sector, which confirms the depth of the rift between the social actor and state institutions. His expectations of state institutions have decreased, and he has entered a phase of undeclared civil disobedience in terms of non-interaction with these institutions. 1.4% of the May protests were related to the education sector, 5% to the environmental situation, and 9% to the agricultural sector, following the outbreak of protests by livestock breeders after the announcement of a sharp increase in the price of a ton of compound feed amounting to 300 dinars, and their protests continued until the Ministry of Trade announced the abandonment of these increases.



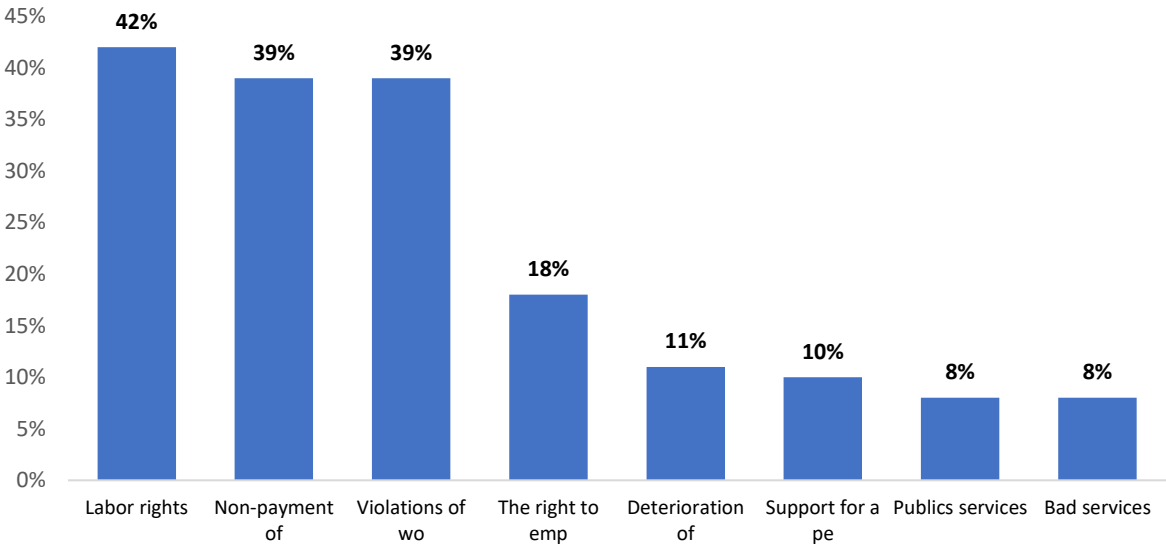
Demands and forms of protest

Protests with an economic and social context accounted for 76 percent of the total protests recorded, followed by demands related to the administration at 18 percent, demands related to the political context at 5 percent, and demands related to infrastructure improvement at 3 percent.



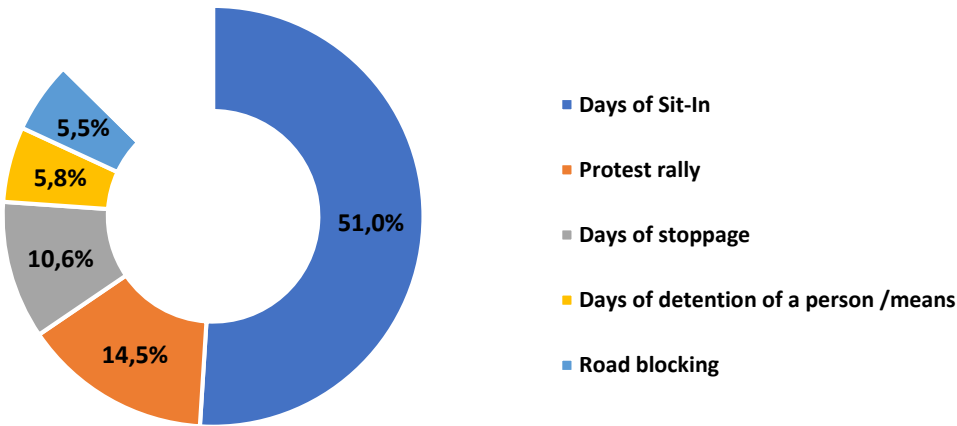
The demands of most of the protests were related to the labor rights of workers, including monthly wages and the end of labor violations, which is the most important title of the May protests, with rates of about 42%. It also concerned the right to work with a rate of 18%, followed by protests related to the

deterioration of social conditions, accounting for 59 protest movements out of the total protests noted and 8% of protests were related to public facilities and deterioration of services, 6% to the right to water and 4% to the high cost of production.



During the month of May, there were no protests calling for development, as well as protests due to the failure of negotiations and the absence of these protests necessarily means the absence of negotiations.

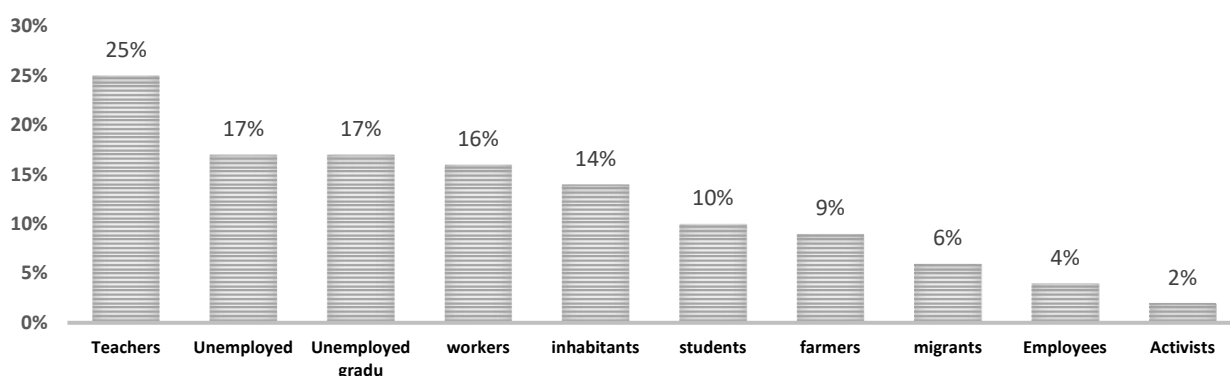
The sit-in remains the most important form of protest adopted by the demonstrators in their expressions, with 51%, followed by protest rallies with 14.5%, strikes with 10.6%, detention of a person or means of transport with 5.8% and road blockades with 5.5%.



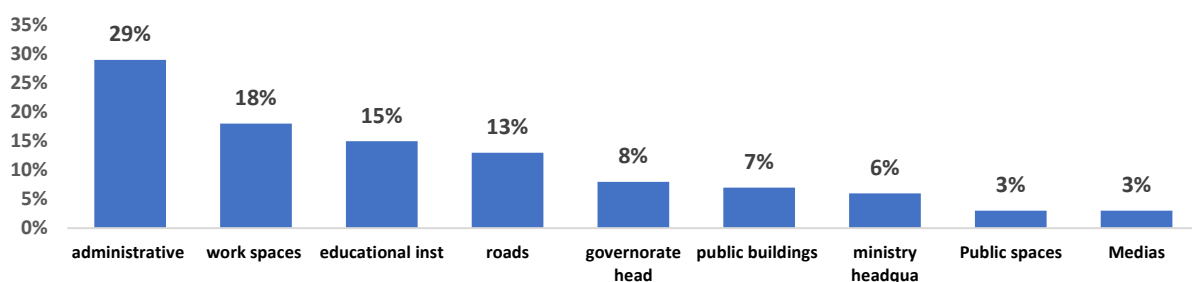
Protest Actors :

Teachers were the most visible actors in the May protests, with a percentage of 25%, followed by the unemployed with 17%, representing 99 protest movements. Unemployed graduates participated in 98 actions.

The workers come third with 16% of the total number of demonstrators, followed by the population with 14%, that is to say, the inhabitants of villages and cities who were in the demonstrations for demands related to the provision of services and improving their quality and for the right to water and consumption, adequate infrastructure and other demands. They are followed by students with 10%, farmers with 9%, or about 51 protests, migrants with 6%, employees with 4%, and urban construction workers with 2%, or about 7 protests.



Administrative headquarters represented the most important spaces of protest with 29%, followed by workplaces with 18%. Educational institutions also represented the scene of protest movements, with a percentage of 15%, roads to the tune of 13%, followed by seats of sovereignty, such as governorates (8%) and ministries (6%). Among the spaces also invested by the demonstrators are the media (3%), the prison space also (1%) which recorded three movements of protest.

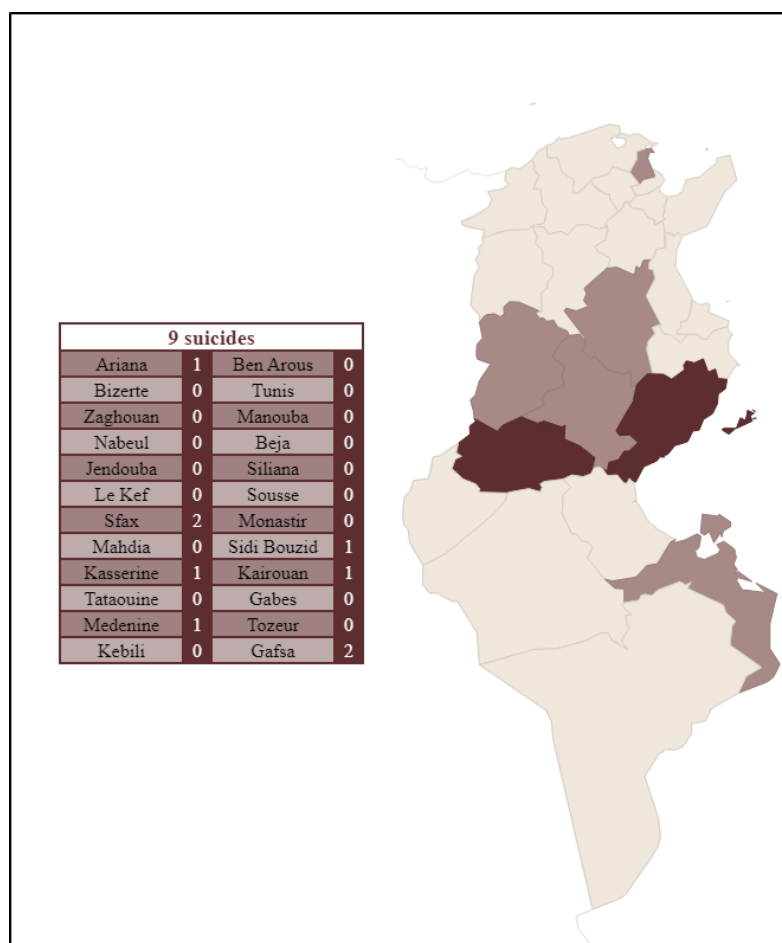


suicide and suicide attempts:

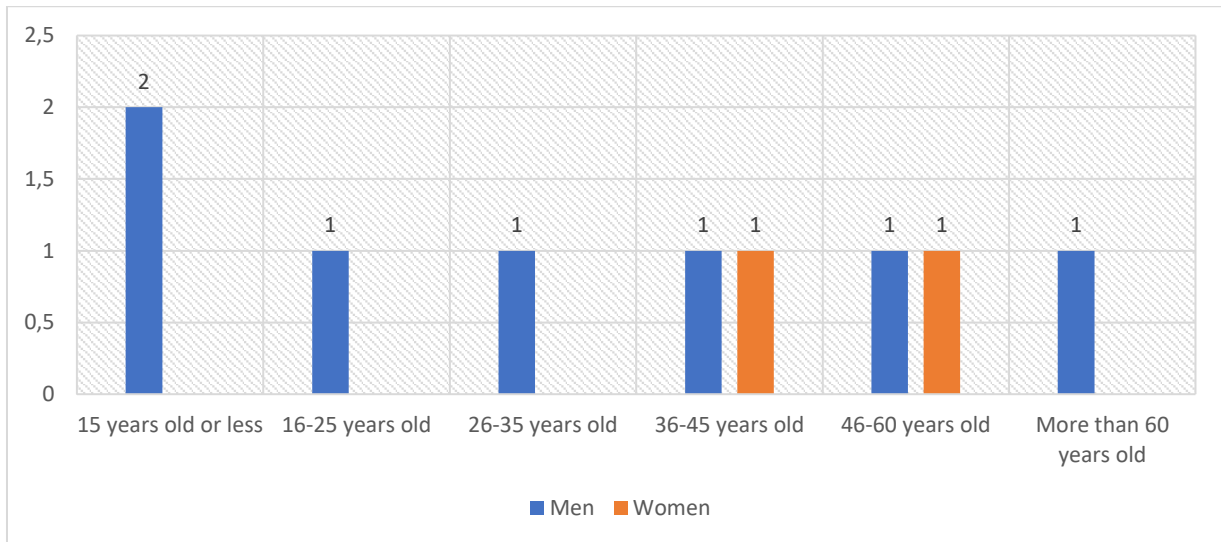


What must be remembered and emphasized is that suicide is a form of protest and violence directed against oneself, i.e., the victim puts him/herself in situations of self-endangerment. This is no different from those who engage in smuggling and drug use/selling, as well as those who migrate in an irregular manner. These are all mechanisms adopted by victims out of desperation. They are dangerous individual solutions that the victims resort to after the absence of collective solutions and the loss of support mechanisms from the family and/or the environment.

Nine cases of suicide and attempted suicide were recorded throughout the month of May, as follows: two suicides in Gafsa and Sfax, one in Ariana, one in Kasserine, one in Medenine, one in Kairouan and one Sidi Bouzid.

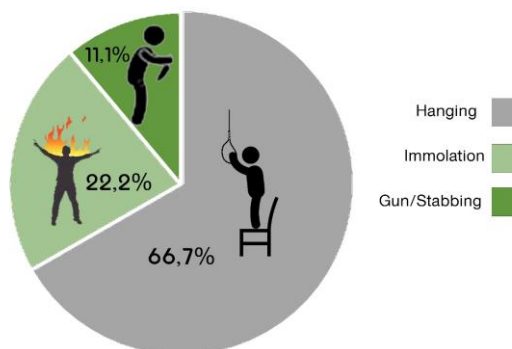


Among the victims, there were two children under 15 years, while the 26-45 age group accounted for about a third of the total victims.



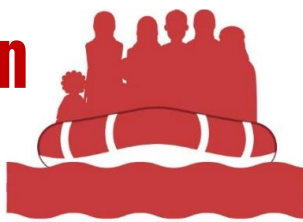
The percentage of female victims is estimated at 22.2% of the total.

Suicide by hanging was the most observed form, with a percentage of 66.7%, followed by suicide by immolation with a rate of 22.2%, by knife or firearm with a rate of 11.1%.

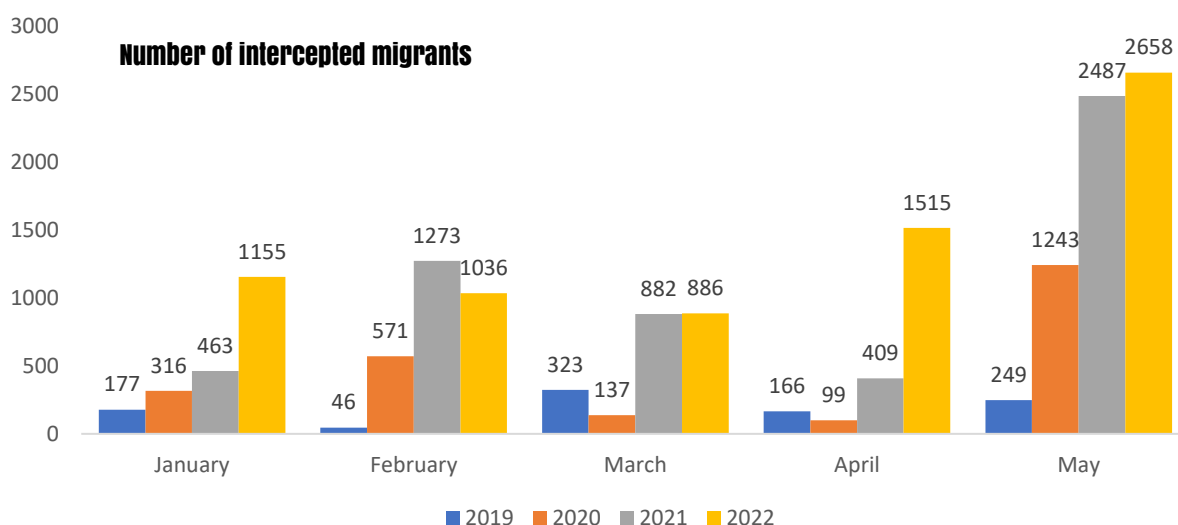
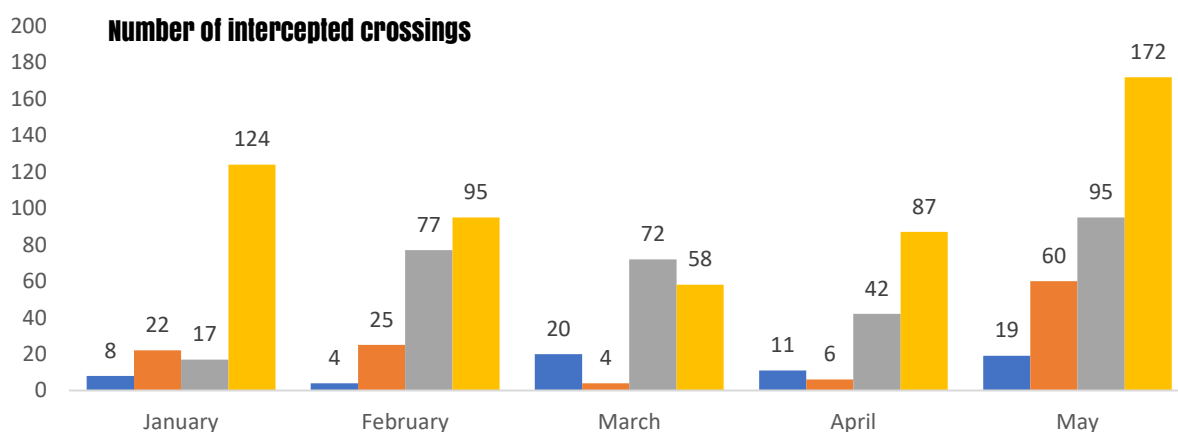
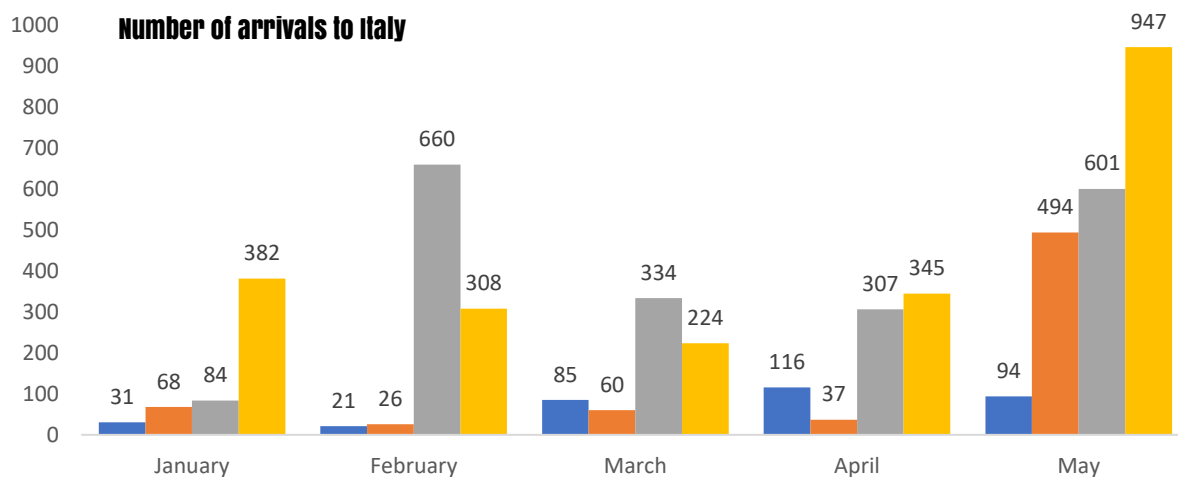


These figures do not necessarily reflect the reality of cases of suicide and attempted suicide in society, as we have noted the lack of media coverage of many cases of suicide and attempted suicide. Indeed, these were covered by a relay through photos and videos and published on Facebook pages. In short, this is citizen journalism.

Irregular migration during May 2022



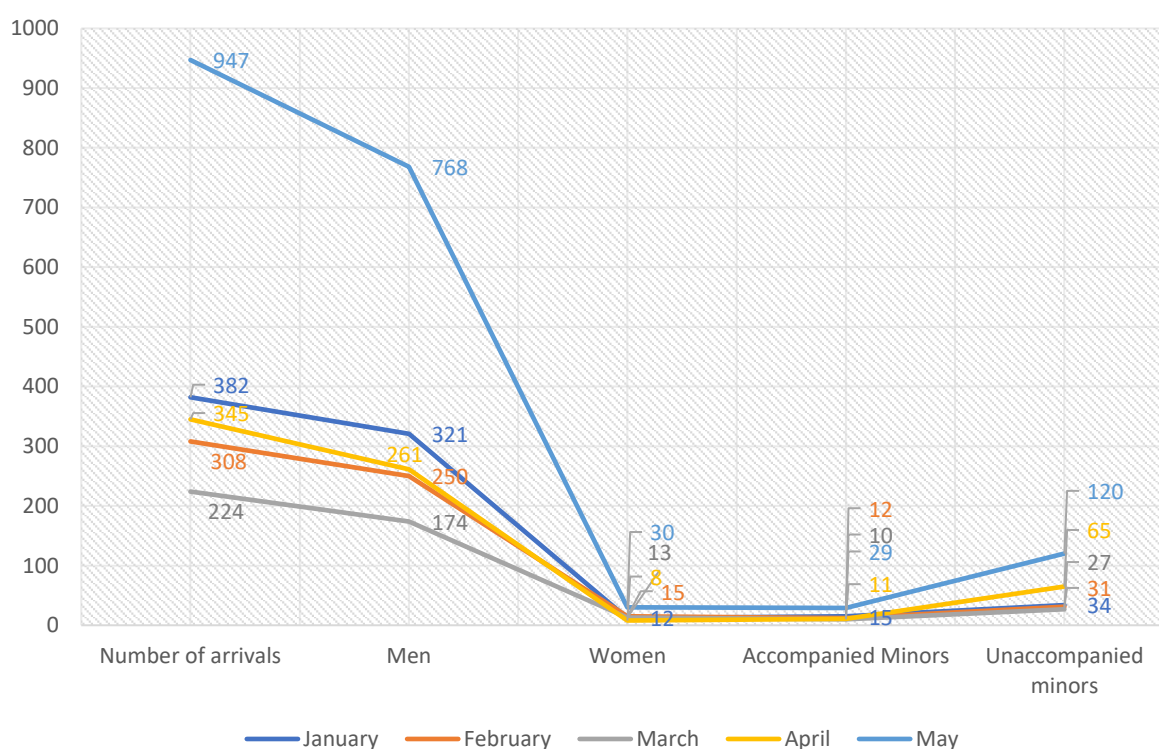
Comparison of the same periods during 2019-2020-2021-2022



	2019			2020			2021			2022		
Month	Number of arrivals to Italy	Number of intercepted crossings	Number of intercepted migrants	Number of arrivals to Italy	Number of intercepted crossings	Number of intercepted migrants	Number of arrivals to Italy	Number of intercepted crossings	Number of intercepted migrants	Number of arrivals to Italy	Number of intercepted crossings	Number of intercepted migrants
January	31	8	177	68	22	316	84	17	463	382	124	1155
February	21	4	46	26	25	571	660	77	1273	308	95	1036
March	85	20	323	60	4	137	334	72	882	224	58	886
April	116	11	166	37	6	99	307	42	409	345	87	1515
May	94	19	249	494	60	1243	601	95	2487	947	172	2658
Total	347	62	961	685	117	2366	1986	303	5514	2206	536	7250

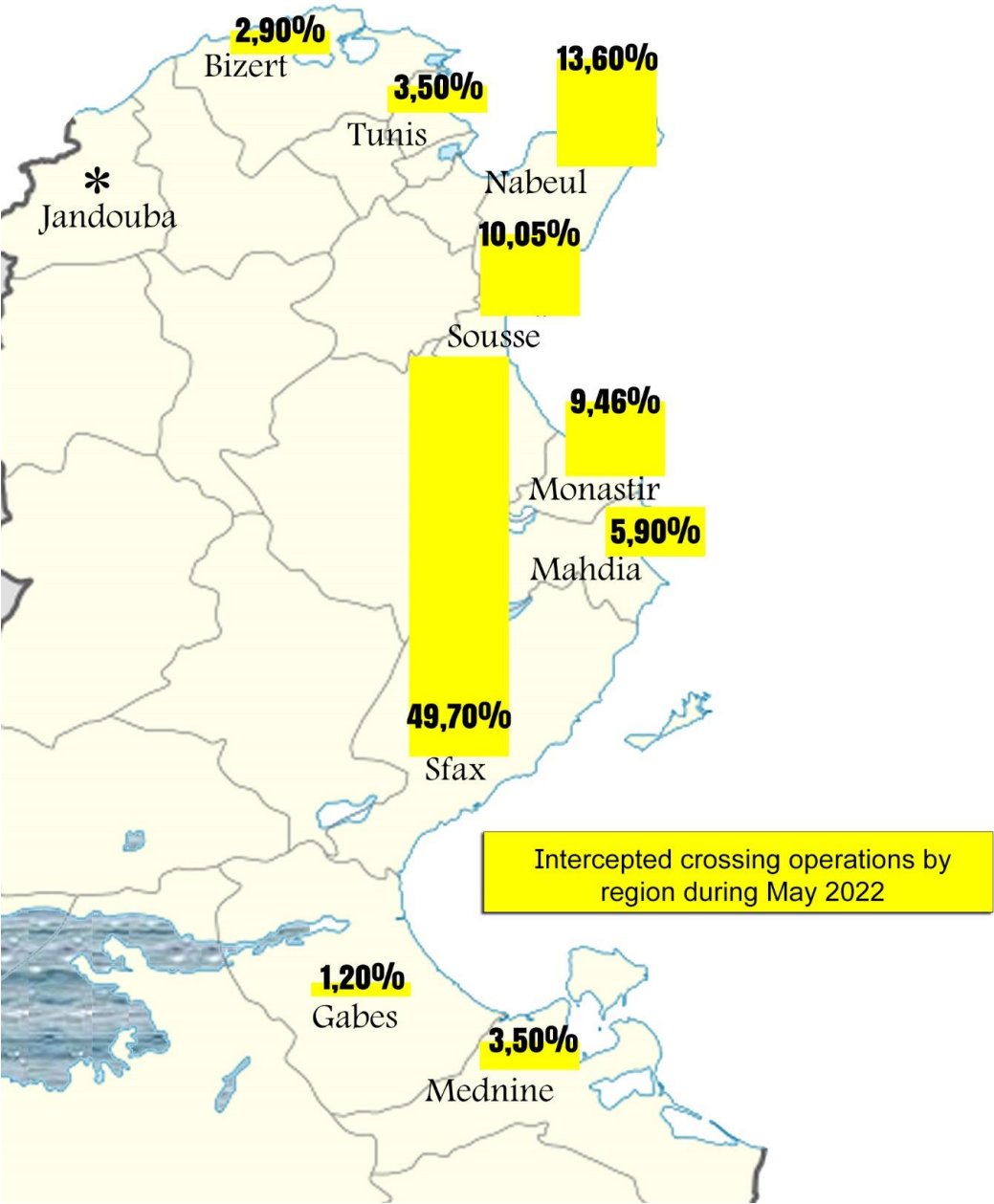
The number of Tunisian migrants arriving in Italy from January 1 to the end of May reached 2206, representing 11% of total arrivals in Italy and ranking second behind the Egyptian and Bengali nationalities. The month of May 2022 recorded an increase of 57.5% in the number of Tunisian arrivals compared to the same period in 2021. The intercepted crossings have also increased since the beginning of the year to 536 crossings, an increase of 76.8 percent compared to the first five months of 2021. The number of intercepted migrants has increased since the beginning of the year to 7250 migrants, an increase of 31.4% compared to the same period in 2021. These indicators show that an upward wave of migration has begun despite the increase in intercepted crossings, and this wave may peak in the coming month of July due to several factors.

Arrivals on the Italian coasts by month: May 2022



The number of minors arriving on the Italian coasts reached 354, i.e. 15.63% of the total Tunisian arrivals. The number of women arriving since the beginning of the year has reached 77, or 3.47%.

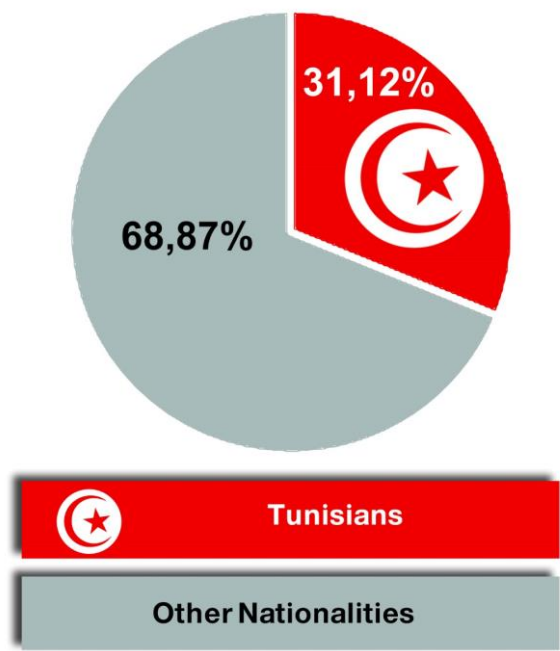
Intercepted crossing operations by region during May 2022



* The presence of this mark does not mean that there are no operations in these areas, but rather that the official data published in reports did not include operations intercepted in these areas.

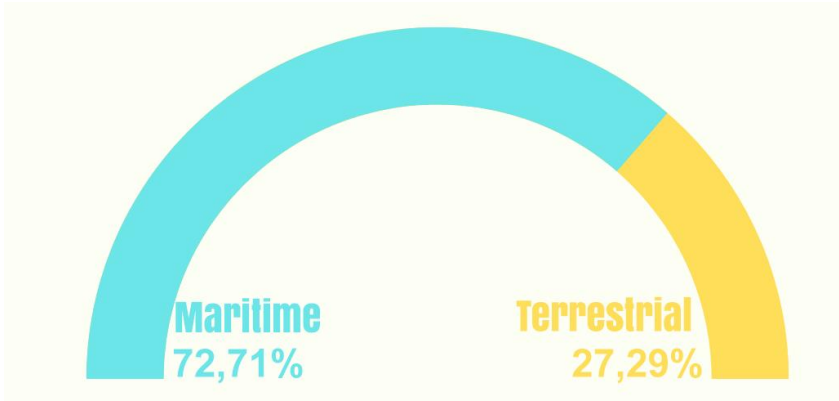
The operations intercepted from Sfax accounted for 49.7% of the total number of irregular migration operations, while the governorate of Nabeul was in second place with 13.6%, and the governorate of Sousse experienced an increase in the number of intercepted passages that amounted to 10.05%.

Arrivals by nationality during May 2022



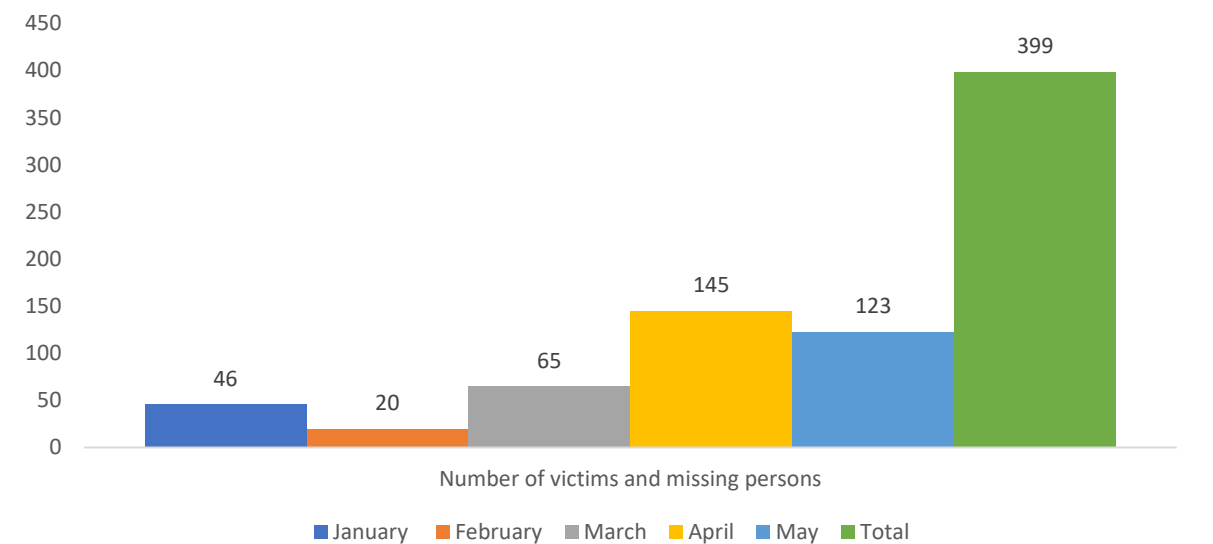
Tunisian migrants accounted for 31.12% of the total number of migrants impeded from crossing the Tunisian territory, while the rest of the nationalities accounted for 68.87%

Intercepted crossing operations during May 2022



The intercepted crossings at sea amounted to 72.71%, a figure that refers to the extent of technical and logistical resources allocated to surveillance and prevention at sea, as a direct consequence of Tunisian-European cooperation.

Tragedies of irregular migration on the Tunisian coast in 2022



There is no effect of the technical and logistical means allocated to surveillance in terms of preventing deaths at sea, since the number of missing persons and victims amounted to 399 individuals.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that the monitoring conducted by the Department of Migration faces difficulties, given that the reports of the Ministry of Interior are not characterized by frequency and information on all operations, and they lack precision and detail, not to mention that the reports of the Ministry of Defense have changed their formulation methods and no longer provide details to determine the exact location of interception or rescue, nor the departure location of the boat. Therefore, these figures remain approximate and depending on what has been identified, they remain open to updating whenever new sources become available.

May 2022

Violence Report



The shadow of the global crisis that the country is going through is getting wider and wider. The major social repercussions produced by the economic crisis have crushed the precarious and deprived groups. These are poverty, misery, the collapse of purchasing power, school dropout, addictions, and other negative social phenomena. They are on the way to create an uncontrollable current of violence in the country.

This violence begins with violence against oneself: suicide is a violence against oneself, and it was amplified throughout the month of May. Moreover, we find all the forms of violence, physical, psychological, and symbolic, nourished by the state of psychic fragility that has become the shadow of this crisis.

The state of tension of the political discourse and the return of violence and hate speech, on the public scene and through the social network Facebook - used by more than seven million Tunisians, according to data from the site - exacerbate the severity of these social repercussions.

Violence today invades all private and collective spaces, affects all age groups in various regions and feeds on the symbolic violence that the State now practices against its citizens and which may experience new developments.

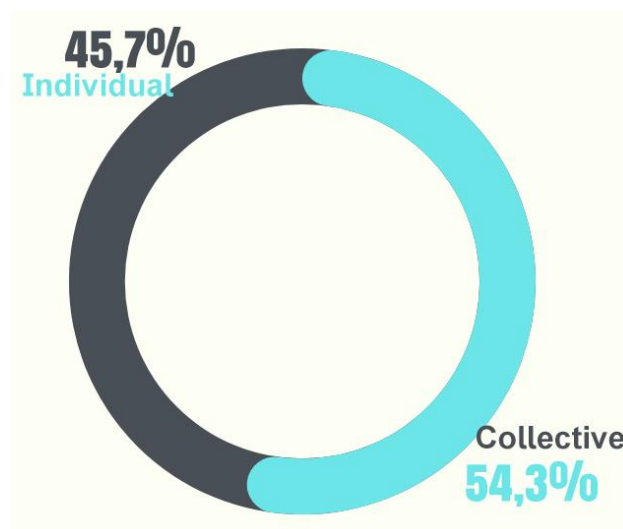
It is not only the lack of interest in law enforcement and the application of equality before the law. It is also the absence of a clear and effective strategy to deal with all the problems. Indeed, the absence and deterioration of health services and the lack of specialized doctors in many areas without forgetting the lack of connection to the sewerage system and the drinking water network and the interruption of drinking water also constitute a violence practiced by the State.

The violence practiced by the State is manifested by long weeks of indifference to the suffering of citizens in many areas, but also by the lack of realistic plans and programs to generalize the right to entertainment, the right to quality education, quality services, the right to reform for delinquent children ... these are all types of violence perpetrated by the State against the citizen.

Prisoners in Tunisia are limited to the sentence and do not benefit from any reform to be reintegrated after their release. For this reason, the individual will turn to alternative solutions, such as addiction, organized crime, resorting to witchcraft and working in the parallel sector. In this way, he or she moves away from the lawful society and into an environment in which violence grows and spreads. Perhaps the story of the charlatan Belkacem, accused of treating women against "love djinns", according to him, to better exploit them sexually, is one of the illustrations of the new doors that have opened to commit violence and crimes without the state demonstrating a capacity for transparent management of these crises. On the contrary, the Tunisian state is only concerned with calming the fire without identifying or treating the causes of this fire. It does not give importance to awareness and education, to preventive solutions to avoid crises, the main one of which is to prevent violence and protect society from crime and anarchy.

Violence during the month of May

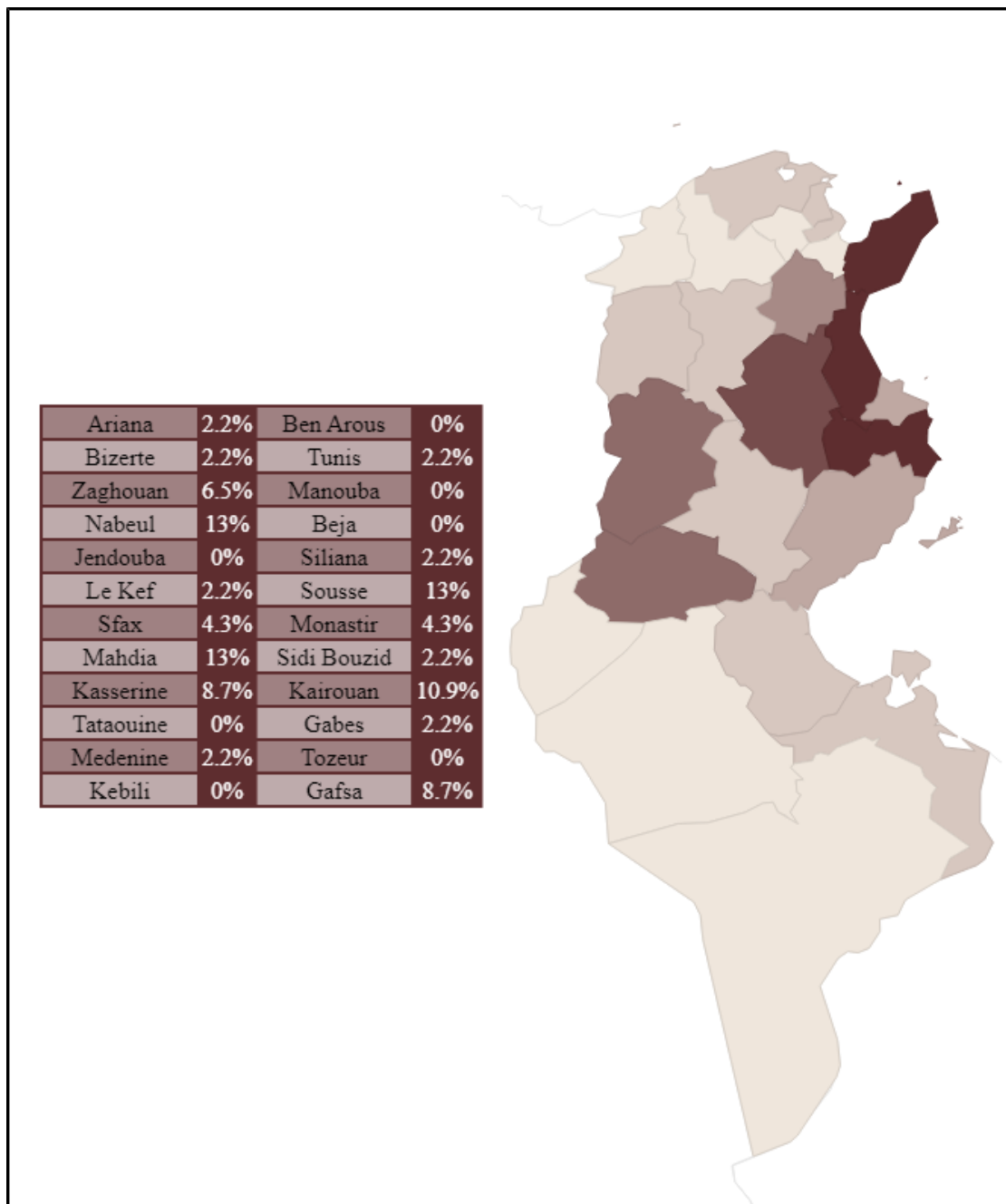
The percentage of criminal violence reached 87% of the total cases of violence observed during the month of May, through a monitoring sample composed of various written, audio and visual media, as well as websites and Facebook.



This number is an indicator, and the number may in fact be much higher due to the increase in violence and crime, the multiplicity of its causes, the growing state of psychological and social fragility, the ongoing economic crisis, its social dangers and repercussions, the state of uncertainty in the public arena and the lack of trust in state institutions.



Institutional violence comes second with 10.9%, followed by protest violence with 2.2%.



The governorates of Mahdia, Sousse and Nabeul lead the country's most violent regions, with 13% for each region, followed by Kairouan with 10.9%, then Kasserine and Gafsa with 8.7% for each region, then Zaghouan with 6.5%.

The proportion of males and females in the total victims of violence during May was similar, amounting to 40.9% each, while males accounted for 75.6% of the total perpetrators of violence and 8.9% of the perpetrators were female.

The streets represented a major scene of violence at 54.3%, with victims exposed to physical violence, robbery, theft, hijacking, and other types of violence.



Minors were involved in murders, such as the murder of a cab driver in Sfax after he was stabbed in the thigh by a 17-year-old minor following an argument between him and the murderer's friends in a café.



Educational institutions represented a 19.6% violent scene and administrative seats a 6.5% violent scene.

The home represented a space of violence to the tune of 8.7%, to arrive in third place and we had indicated in our previous reports that the family space was transformed into a space of violence under the weight of the economic and social crisis and the collapse of the purchasing power of millions of Tunisians. The official figures published during the month of May by the Ministry of Women, Children, and the Elderly in the national report on the situation of childhood in Tunisia 2020-2021, confirm our warnings, since 60% of the violence committed against children, according to the report, came from the home, that is to say, the family space. The violence also took place in spaces of health with 6.5% and spaces of tourism and entertainment with 2.2%.

The Tunisian Social Observatory and behind it the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights renew the alert on the danger of continuing the path of this violence and its dangerous social repercussions, especially as we approach the summer season and the lack of educational and recreational activities for adolescents, youth and children, which exposes them to the danger of drug addiction and delinquency and attracts them to violence, in the absence of a clear vision for the management of the crisis of violence in the country. Minors and adolescents will face three scenarios in the next three months, all of which fall under the category of violence: first, staying at home without any entertainment, training or projects means losing their activities and therefore entering into emotional reactions and increasing the level of violence against them at home (60% of violence against children comes from the home, according to the latest figures from the Ministry of Women) Secondly, their exit from the home to the unknown in the street and the unknown means a social polarization towards violence, crime, drug addiction and unregulated migration. Third, and finally, the possibility of entering seasonal work to fill their free time and thus exposing them to economic exploitation. It does not seem that the state institutions concerned with children and their right to entertainment and culture are ready for these three scenarios.

conclusion

In sum, the features of a return to the experience of a new political construction, similar to the experience of construction that the country had in the first years of the revolution and behind all this societal drama, are confirmed. Without any rescue or economic reform program or change of development trajectory, the same economic risks and financial crisis are maintained. This situation has strongly affected the quality of services provided to the citizen and through them the preservation of the same social risks, including the spread of negative social phenomena such as witchcraft, crime, drug addiction, irregular migration, as well as religious extremism without forgetting the recourse to individualism and the search for alternatives outside the framework of the State. The indicators of the current situation predict a new social explosion if this economic and social drama continues. All age groups in Tunisia are now in danger: childhood is in a bad position and suffers from poverty, malnutrition, abandonment and exposure to violence of all kinds, in addition to being deprived of a quality education and good health, except for those who have the financial means to do so.

Women are the most vulnerable links, strongly affected by unemployment even if they have a university degree, by fragility, discrimination and inequalities common in the professional environment, whether in the public or private sector.

They are also weakened by poverty and unemployment: they turn to individual solutions, all of them violent against themselves, in the absence of clear perspectives.

On the contrary, the state of confusion of the government is noticeable today in several areas, such as its inability to interact positively with the demands of the demonstrators and social movements, or its shortcomings in terms of security and justice. We have an example during the arrests operated among the supporters of the Club Africain after their demand for justice in the case of the supporter Omar El-Abidii and the end of impunity, as well as the trial of the movement Aguerb accused of "criminal association" on the background of protests against the reopening of the discharge of el Gonna.

The elderly are also affected by the violations, as price inflation affects, in the first place, their basic rights in terms of availability of medicines, food and basic necessities. Damage to the family's financial resources also particularly affects them.

This situation requires a strategy to deal with this global crisis and it certainly does not need a discourse of violence and hate or intimidation, stigmatization, exclusion, or closed rooms to write a new constitution.