

Report of the month October 2020

Social movements, Suicides, Violence and Migration

871 collective protests, 18 cases of suicide and attempted suicide and 1328 Migrants

Number 85



Introduction

The general climate that prevailed in the country throughout the month of October was characterized by the continuation of the global crisis in various areas: health, politics, economy, social, security and communication, in particular the failure of the government to adopt a reassuring communicative discourse explaining the situation to the general public and developing proposals for solutions.

This situation has been described as "unprecedented" by observers of the political landscape, since the country has not experienced this severity in the economic recession and this internal and external inability to mobilize financial resources for the complementary budget law of 2020, which poses a threat to the 2021 budget. A situation that economists call "bankruptcy".

In terms of health :

The severity of the spread of the collective infection by the Covid 19 virus has increased bringing the number of new infections during the month of October to 41394, an increase of more than 100% compared to last month.

The number of victims of the virus increased to reach 1108 new deaths throughout October, an average of 35 deaths per day.

This health situation as well as the successive distress calls from health experts and members of the scientific committee for the fight against Covid 19 have caused the Tunisians to experience a state of panic translated by the excessive demand for vitamins and drugs to treat certain symptoms such as fever. This demand has opened the door to crisis speculators, for example, the price of vitamin "C" varies from 0.800 to more than 4 dinars. The market for medical, paramedical and protective supplies has also experienced a disruption in supplies and price inflation: for example, alcohol and the disinfectants that dentists use in their work have been disrupted.

At the level of analysis laboratories, the high affluence has doubled the price of Covid analysis, increasing the price of analysis from 209 dinars (determined by the State) to more than 400 dinars.

The month of October also witnessed complaints and severe criticism against the services of the Covid 19 line, as many were unable to reach the service they requested, the main part of which was the visit of a team of ambulance attendants specialized in Covid to inspect the suspicious case and also to carry out the necessary analyses.

The delay in carrying out the tests and the date of announcement of the results also led to strong criticism of the Ministry of Health's strategy to deal with the epidemic.

This tense health scene was not violence-free as the Rabta Hospital emergency department witnessed an incident of violence represented by a group of people assaulting emergency department staff, breaking resuscitation equipment, terrorizing patients, and violently assaulting a nurse and resident doctor because a patient failed to respond to resuscitation. This incident shows a pattern of behavior that reflects the seriousness of the tension that the Tunisian is experiencing due to the delicate health situation and the deterioration of health services aggravated by the confusion of the Covid crisis.

The month of October 2020 has also recorded a shortage of medicines, including life-saving drugs due to the re-emergence of the crisis of the balance of the central pharmacy whose fees to the health insurance and public health structures amount to 1148 MD.

Although the drug shortage crisis was resolved in 2019, it is strongly resurfacing in the current year due to the imbalance of the central pharmacy to the point of reaching a 14-month delay in the payment of fees to its suppliers. The shortage of medicines has led to protest movements in some regions, such as Douar Hicher in the capital, where patients with chronic diseases supported by civil society activists demonstrated in the dispensary and in front of the delegation's headquarters demanding an acceleration of the resolution of the drug shortage crisis.

In economic terms :

The country has reached a critical stage that economists have called "bankruptcy" because the government was unable to internally mobilize financial resources for the complementary budget law for the year 2020 after the Central Bank refused to intervene and directly finance the budget deficit by buying treasury bills directly from the government on the grounds of non-compliance with the Bank's laws. The internal and external inability to mobilize financial resources means for economists the bankruptcy of the state. On the ground, productive sectors such as phosphate and oil extraction continue to be hampered by the accumulation of mismanagement. In addition, the return of production after full containment remains low in the fourth month after the release of containment.

In addition and throughout the month of October no indicators appeared to confirm the orientation of the government towards serious work and discussions with experts in economics to develop clear scenarios regarding the possible evolution during the coming months of the national economy which has experienced a 21% decline during the two months of containment and will be around 12% by the end of this year, according to economists because of the repercussions of the Corona crisis.

During the month of October 2020, a number of protests by cafe and restaurant owners have been recorded, challenging the exceptional measures announced by the governors of the capital region, as well as the governor of Sfax to remove chairs and tables for two weeks to prevent the spread of infection.

On the political and social level:

The tension in the political climate and the increase in hate speech and violence under the dome of the People's Representative Assembly contributed to the tension in the general climate in the country and the escalation of violence, crime and social tensions throughout the month of October 2020.

Indeed, the turbulent political discourse weakened the prestige of the state and thus weakened the prestige of the law by becoming permissible for some.

And it is in this context that a culture of impunity has developed that justifies the use of a violent reaction to reclaim what some individuals judge to be their "right" from others, such as what happened during the exchange of violence between delinquents at Burj Louzir in Zahraa (Ben Arous governorate), which resulted in the death of a 10-year-old victim due to the extreme state of fear she experienced. A group of delinquents from a neighboring district also attacked a house in El Mourouj¹.

This collective violence undoubtedly reflects the socio-psychological repercussions of the global crisis that the country is going through. The impulsive reactions can be explained by a feeling of frustration towards the political class.

People, for example, switched to meeting their vitamin and analgesic needs on their own in the face of the Covid pandemic due to a lack of confidence in the availability of health services but also switched to retaliation by opponents due to impunity and lack of confidence in law enforcement.

The government of El Mechichi seems to be aware of the social situation and this was evident through its eagerness to try to extinguish the existing social fires during the month of October.

First of all, an agreement was, therefore, signed concerning the regulation of the status of urban construction workers, but this solution was not equitable for 30000 urban workers. Secondly, the positions of one thousand substitute teachers were also regularized. Thirdly, the government hastened to dismiss regional officials following the murder of Abderrazek Khachnaoui following the demolition of a kiosk in Sbeitla at dawn on October 13, 2020 as part of a preventive operation to avoid any social shock that might follow this tragic incident.

Similarly, the Ministry of Sports quickly intervened to settle the conflict between the Football League and the young supporters of Hillel Chebba, especially since the young Hilal supporters threatened mass migration to the Italian coast as a protest against the dissolution of their sports club. Given all this, one wonders whether these attempts to extinguish the fires will hold up if a social fire breaks out in January.

This global crisis has been accompanied by a communications crisis that has caused the government to miss the opportunity to develop its discourse and convey reassuring messages to the streets in revealing the truth about the country's financial situation, the government's programs and its immediate and long-term rescue plan for the national economy. This is a situation that has a strong impact on the level of social tension that occurred throughout the month of October as the number of protest movements increased by 15.9% compared to September 2020 despite the physical distancing orders imposed by the authorities to prevent the spread of the infection.

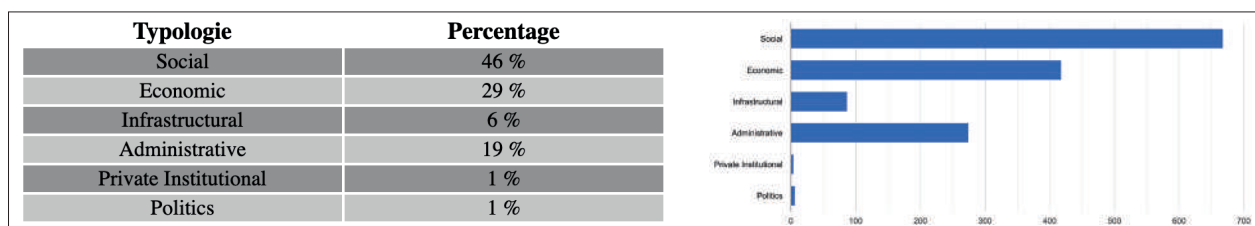
The mapping of Social Movements

The number of protests recorded throughout October 2020 reached 871 demonstrations, an increase of almost 16% compared to September 2020. Most of these protests (86.8%) tended towards the use of violence as they were anarchic demonstrations (756 protest actions). This increase is worrisome in terms of the magnitude of the capacity to circumvent social tensions in the coming weeks.

The curve of anarchic manifestations took an ascending form after the total confinement reaching its maximum during the month of October 2020.

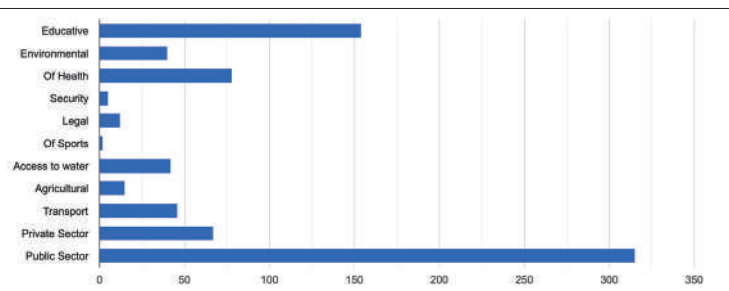
| 2020 | Social Movements |
|-----------|------------------|
| September | 751 |
| October | 871 |

Economic and social demands were the main motivation of the demonstrators throughout October 2020, with 75% of all protests recorded.



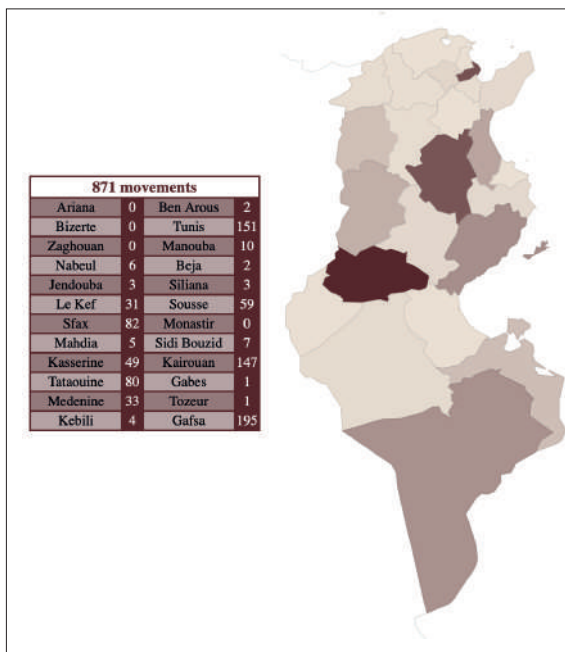
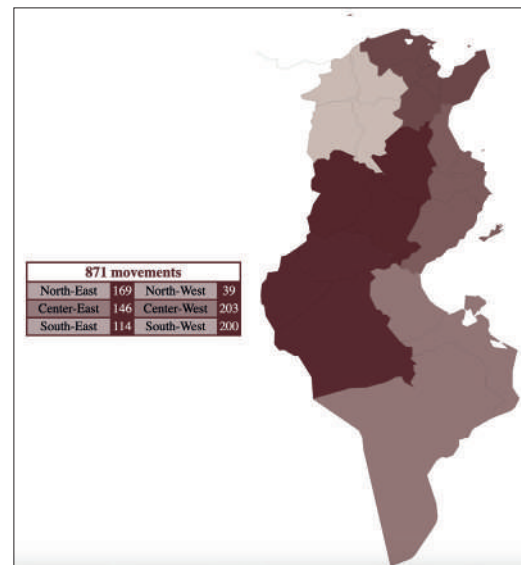
Employment, improved working conditions and better living conditions such as infrastructure, transportation, sanitation services as well as access to drinking water, irrigation water, medicines and fertilizers for the agricultural season and the availability of seeds were the major demands of the demonstrators in various regions. These demands were shared between urban and rural residents, since some neighborhoods in the cities live in the same isolation due to the lack of road infrastructure. We mention the demonstrations in the neighborhoods of El-Amal, Aouled Ben Aouen, El Kalaa Essoghra which entered into a protest movement by blocking the roads with burnt tires to demand the elimination of waste, road construction, rallying the neighborhood to the sewage canals, public lighting and the opening of passages. In the region of Zouatnia, Tarza delegation in Kairouan, citizens protested against their isolation which disrupted their administrative and economic interests and resulted in their children's reluctance to study by demanding the repair of agricultural roads.

| Sector | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------|
| Educative | 20 % |
| Environmental | 6 % |
| Of Health | 11 % |
| Security | 1 % |
| Legal | 2 % |
| Of Sports | 1 % |
| Access to water | 6 % |
| Agricultural | 2 % |
| Transport | 6 % |
| Private Sector | 9 % |
| Public Sector | 41 % |



The lack of infrastructure also extended to the workspaces and contributed to the state of tension. We recall the protests of the sailors of Sfax who demanded to double the port road inside the sea so that they can reach their boats in better conditions since they are obliged every day of the year to enter the sea on foot to reach their boats that they accost far from the shore due to the low sea level on the shore. This situation has resulted in many health problems, especially with the cold, they said.

As for the mapping of the protests, it has almost maintained the same distribution with the Center-West leading the most protesting regions with a monthly result of 203 protest actions, followed by the South-West with 200 protest movements, then the North-East with 169 protest actions, the Center-East with 146 protest movements, the South-East with 114 protest movements and the North-West with 39 protest actions.



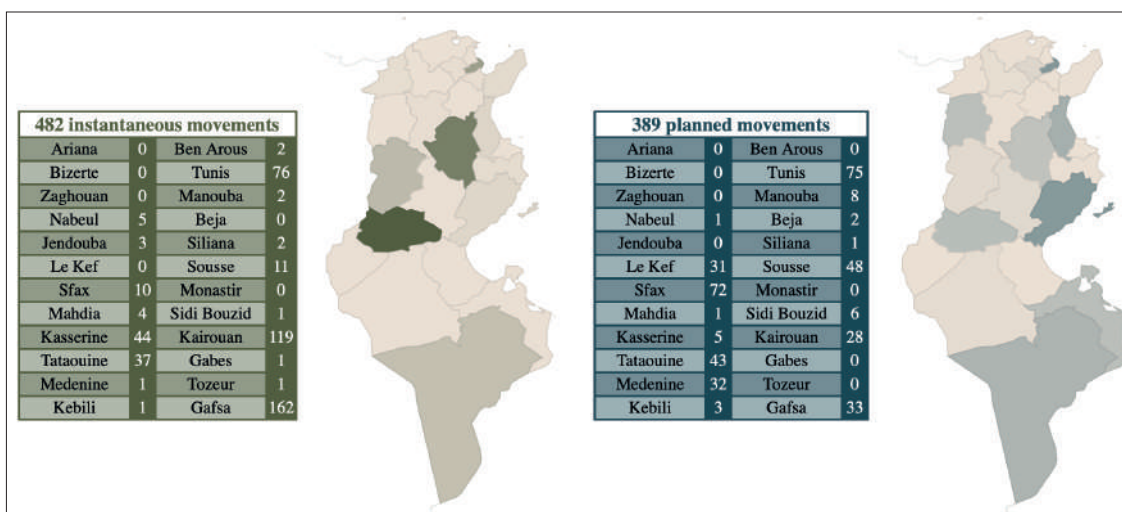
The governorate of Gafsa came first among the most protesting regions throughout October 2020 with 195 protest movements registered, followed by the governorate of Tunis (151 protest movements), Kairouan (147), Sfax (82), Tataouine (80) and Sousse (59).

It should be noted that the increase in protest movements recorded during the month of October took place in the governorate of Tunis.

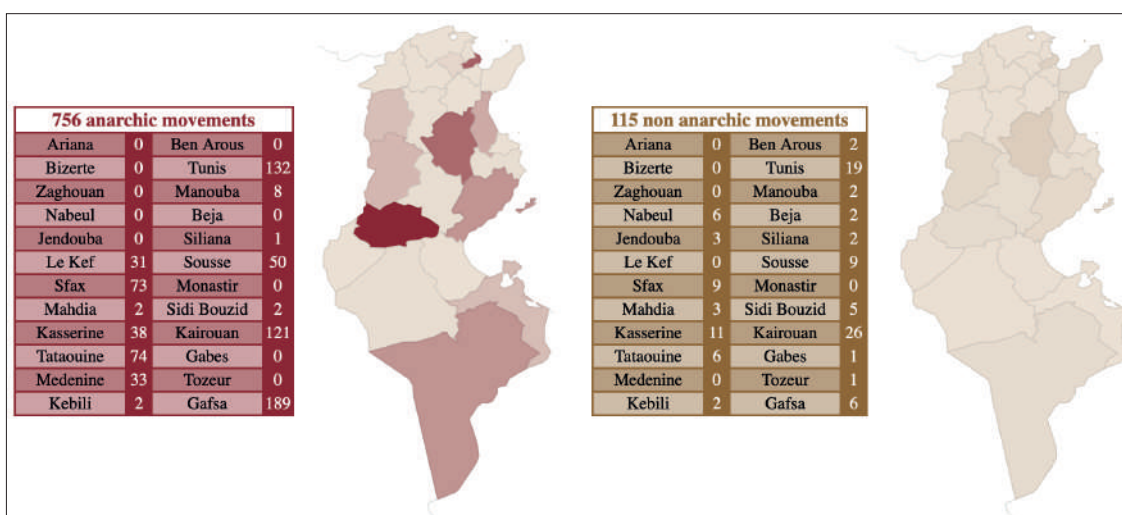
The number of planned protests was 389, representing approximately 45% of all citizen protests during October 2020. These planned protests constituted the totality of protests in the governorate of Kef, 50% in the governorate of Tunis and the majority of movements in the governorates of Sfax, Kebili, Tataouine, Beja, Sidi Bouzid and Manouba.



During the month of October 2020, 482 spontaneous protests were recorded, i.e. 55% of all monthly protests, the majority of which took place in the governorates of Ben Arous, Nabeul, Jendouba, Mahdia, Kasserine, Kairouan, Gabes, Tozeur and Gafsa.

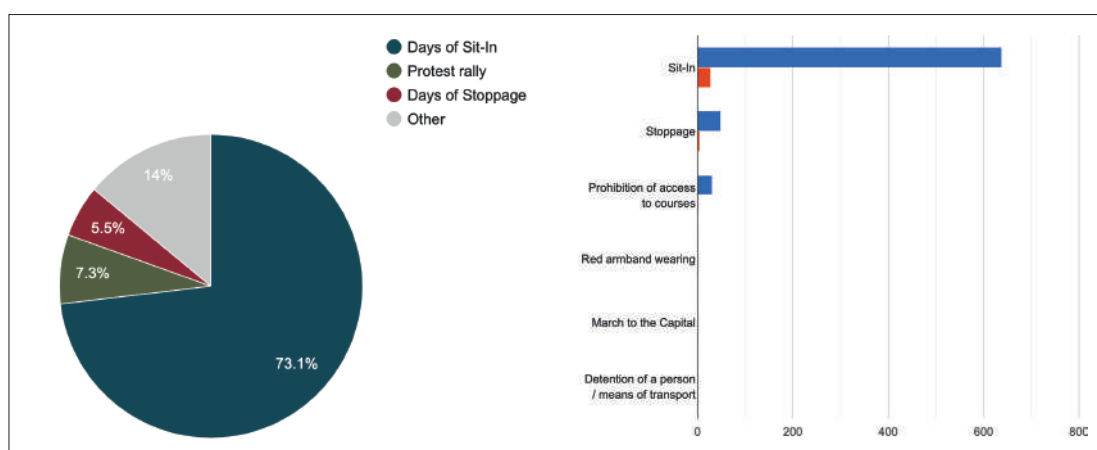


According to what was observed, the number of anarchic movements in the governorate of Gafsa reached 189 demonstrations, followed by 121 anarchic movements in Kairouan, 132 anarchic movements in Tunis, and 74 protest movements in Tataouine.



In addition, the month of October 2020 saw 23 sit-ins, some of which have continued since the previous months due to the lack of government interaction with the demands of demonstrators such as the sit-in of unemployed doctoral students and graduates of youth animation and others announced and entered into action during the month of October bringing the number of days of sit-ins to 637 days (based on the calculation method adopted which considers each day a sit-in as a protest movement).

The sit-in was the most important form of protest adopted by the demonstrators throughout the month of October, with a rate of approximately 73%, followed by protest rallies with 7.3% and the strike with 5.5% of the total means of protest used by the citizens.



As for the main spaces of the demonstration movements, the seats of dissent represented the main destination of the demonstrators up to 21%, followed by roads with 20%, then the Gafsa Phosphate Company with 14%, educational institutions up to 13% and administrative headquarters with 12%.

The main actors of the protest actions were the unemployed (30%), workers (20%), citizens (13%) and civil servants (9%).

| The initiating social actors movements | |
|--|------|
| Citizens | 13 % |
| Youth | 8 % |
| Parents | 8 % |
| inhabitants | 3 % |
| urban workers | 9 % |
| workers | 20 % |
| students | 9 % |
| Doctors | 4 % |
| Drivers | 5 % |
| Unemployed | 30 % |

| Protest spaces | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Public buildings | 21 % |
| Governorate headquarters | 3 % |
| Médias | 7 % |
| Educational institutions | 13 % |
| Roads | 20 % |
| Administrative headquarters | 12 % |
| Headquarters of Delegations | 4 % |
| Ministry Headquarters | 4 % |
| CPG | 14 % |
| Railways | 4 % |

Irregular emigration during the month of October 2020

Comparative data for the months of October 2018 - 2019 - 2020

| | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Arrivals on the Italian coasts | 1328 | 381 | 323 |
| Interception Operations | 157 | 47 | 14 |
| Intercepted migrants | 1349 | 750 | 84 |

Despite the gradual decline in the number of Tunisian migrants arriving on the Italian coast during the month of October 2020, this situation remains exceptional compared to the same period in recent years, since 1328 migrants arrived in Italy in a non-regulatory manner during the month of October, an increase of 180% compared to the year 2019. Intercepted crossings also doubled by more than ten times compared to the same period in 2018.

Comparative data for the period January 1 to October 31, 2020

| | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|------|
| Arrivals on the Italian coasts | 11212 | 2592 | 4849 |
| Interception Operations | 999 | 243 | 314 |
| Intercepted migrants | 11900 | 3588 | 3974 |

The figures for the year 2020 remain exceptional, both in terms of the number of arrivals and the number of operations intercepted, due to multiple driving factors that have been exacerbated by the economic, social and political crises. More than 11212 non-regulatory immigrants arrived on the Italian coast in ten months, not to mention the ban on the arrival of 11,900 immigrants in 999 intercepted crossing operations.

Monthly arrivals on Italian coasts in 2020

| Month | Unaccompanied minors | Accompanied Minors | Females | Males | Total |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| January | 12 | 10 | 4 | 42 | 68 |
| February | 5 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 26 |
| March | 17 | 0 | 1 | 42 | 60 |
| April | 6 | 2 | 1 | 28 | 37 |
| May | 42 | 3 | 6 | 443 | 494 |
| June | 28 | 19 | 23 | 755 | 825 |
| July | 371 | 100 | 99 | 3575 | 4145 |
| August | 333 | 98 | 72 | 1803 | 2306 |
| September | 279 | 76 | 60 | 1508 | 1923 |
| October | 198 | 65 | 42 | 1023 | 1328 |
| Total | 1291 | 373 | 308 | 9240 | 11212 |

Although the wave of migration was predominantly male because it included mostly young age groups, the presence of women was noticeable and their numbers are 308. However, most of them are part of family migration. Therefore, the institution of marriage, the obligations it imposes and the circumstances surrounding it contribute to the emergence of the migration project among women who participate in migratory journeys. The number of minors, especially unaccompanied minors, is increasing and in light of the current restrictions, especially the doubling of forced mass expulsions from Italy, the candidates for migration will essentially become minors.

Intercepted operations by region

| | Jendouba | Bizerte | Tunis | Nabeul | Sousse | Monastir | Mahdia | Sfax | Gabes | Medenine |
|---------|----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|-------|----------|
| October | 0 | 4.76% | 16.66% | 13.09% | 0 | 4.76% | 15.47% | 27.38% | 4.76% | 13.09% |

The Greater Tunis region has continued to grow in importance in terms of the number of thwarted crossing operations, mainly through the ports of Rades and La Goulette. The insistence of migrants to use these points for departure and the high number of thwarted operations may lead us to the conclusion that some succeed in crossing these points despite government denials and the emphasis on the impossibility of passing through the strict controls. It should be noted that this geographical distribution is based on intercepted operations and the distribution may change if successful operations, not currently available, are adopted for counting.

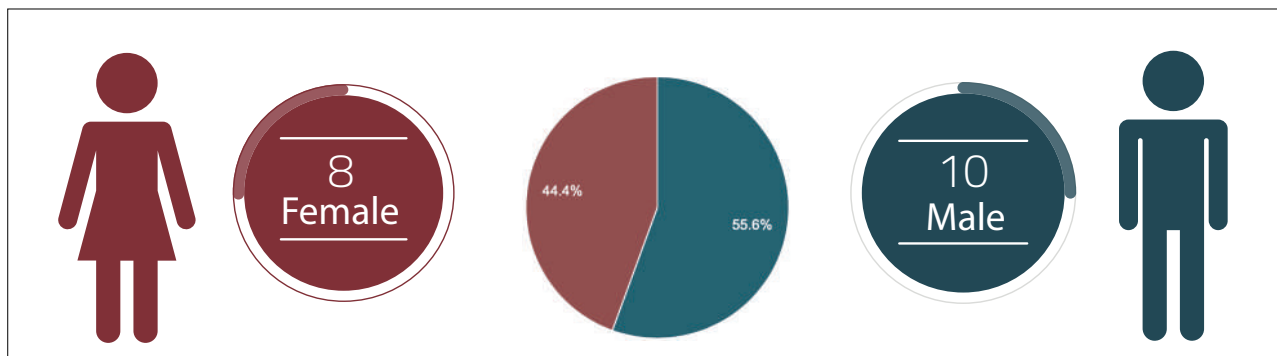
| Migrants by nationality | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| | Tunisians | Other nationalities |
| October | 75.9% | 24.1% |
| January 1st to October 31 | 73% | 27% |

While the percentage seems stable for non-Tunisian migrants, in number, it is recorded for the first time, which means that more than 3,000 non-Tunisian migrants passed through this year.

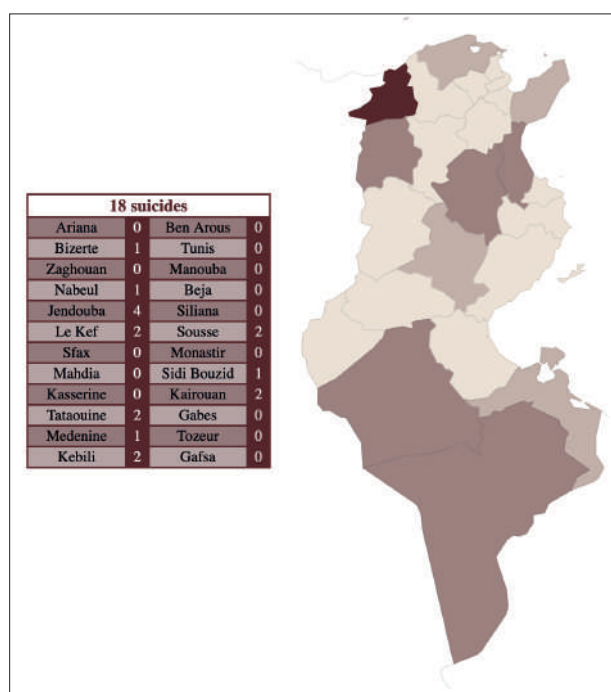
In addition, and in light of recent changes, the coming period could witness the presence of non-Tunisians in migration processes from the Tunisian coasts.

The next stage will see significant changes in non-regulatory migration, not only due to climatic factors but mainly due to political factors in the region, in particular the repercussions of the Nice terrorist incident and the increasing pressure on Tunisia to sign readmission agreements.

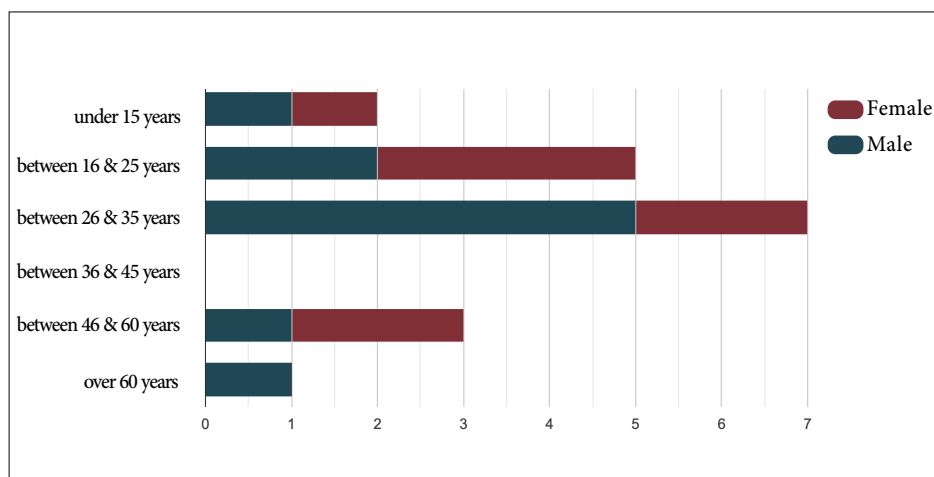
Suicide and attempted suicide during the month of October 2020



As for suicides and attempted suicides, 18 cases were reported and about 72% of the victims were in the age range of 16 to 35 years (13 victims).



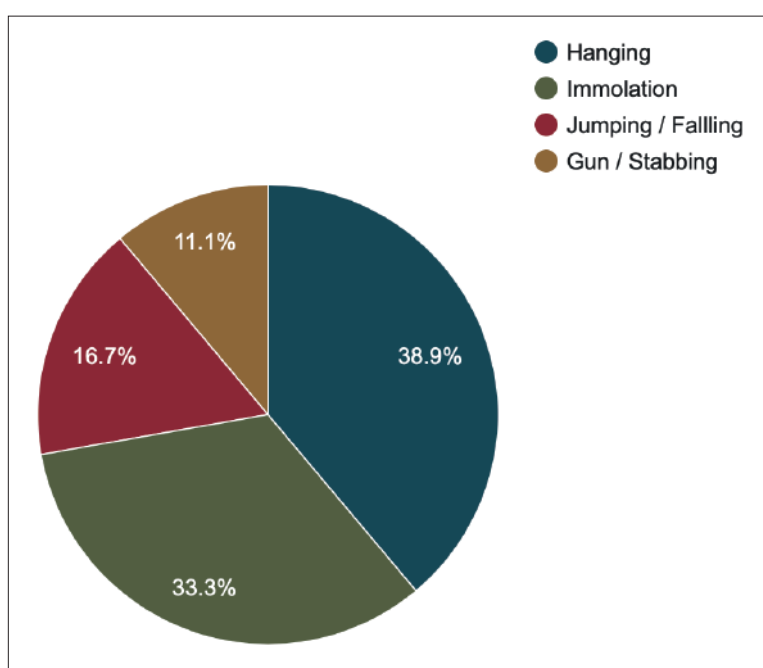
The geographical distribution of cases of suicide and attempted suicide was as follows: 4 cases in the governorate of Jendouba, 2 in the governorates of Kef, Tataouine, Kebili, Kairouan and Sousse, and 1 case each in the governorates of Bizerte, Medenine, Sidi Bouzid and Nabeul.



| | under 15 years | between 16 & 25 years | between 26 & 35 years | between 36 & 45 years | between 46 & 60 years | over 60 years |
|--------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Male | 1 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Female | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 2 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 1 |

Men accounted for 55.6% of all victims of suicide and attempted suicide (10 cases). Two suicides were recorded in the under 15 years old age group as well as one suicide in the over 60 years old age group.

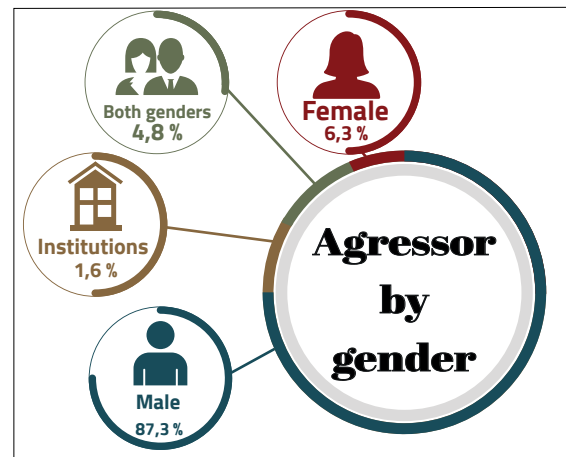
Suicide by hanging was the most common method with a rate of about 39%, followed by suicide by immolation with a rate of 33%, then by jumping or rushing with 16.7% and by knife with 11%.



Violence Report of August 2020

The level of violence continued to increase during October 2020 as this month was the scene of collective and extreme violence during which a number of neighborhoods in the capital witnessed violent clashes with a number of participants sometimes reaching 800 people of different ages. One of these events in the southern suburbs resulted in the death of a young girl under the age of ten as a result of the fear and panic she felt.

This form of collective violence is not considered an emerging form of violence because a number of regions of the country are experiencing its impact as the latest in the governorate of Manouba, preceded by Kebili and preceded by the Sened delegation from the governorate of Gafsa.



During the same month, the pace of crime intensified, particularly violence in its criminal form, such as looting, robberies, robberies, physical attacks against women and heinous murders.

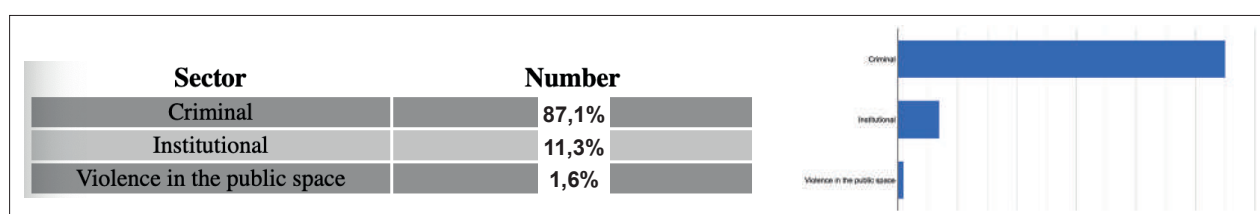
According to sociological researchers, this upsurge in violence goes beyond the cause and economic motive to reflect a deeper issue that includes the security system because crime, according to many readings, is also linked to the climate, context and public policies through which the country passes.

The state of uncertainty and lack of clarity about the future imposed by the epidemic situation and the continued spread of the new Corona virus, school dropout and failure, lack of family control, imbalances in the education system and political instability are all causes and frameworks that contribute to the growth and development of crime.

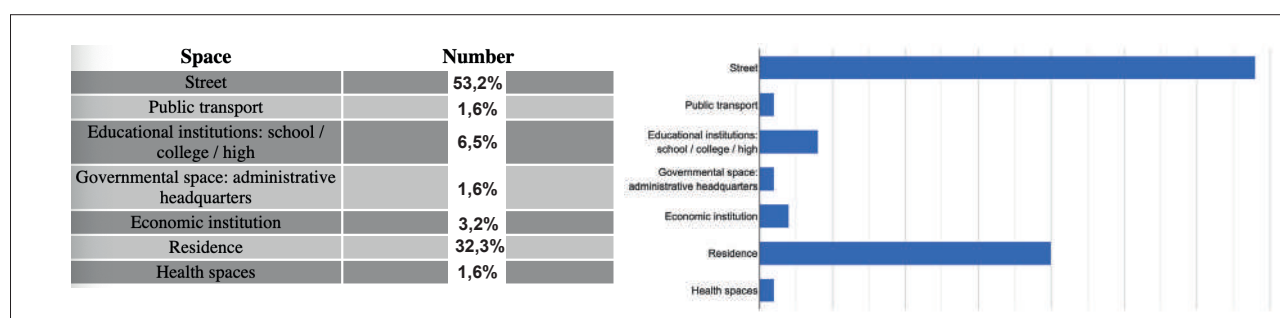
Experts warn of the dangers of excluding the marginalized classes, which would lead to an increase in the rate of violence and crime, due to the feeling of social resentment and anger against policies of discrimination against them.

The stifling economic crisis has increased the state of popular discontent, especially among the marginalized and unemployed, over the failure of successive governments to keep their promises, create new jobs and distribute development equitably.

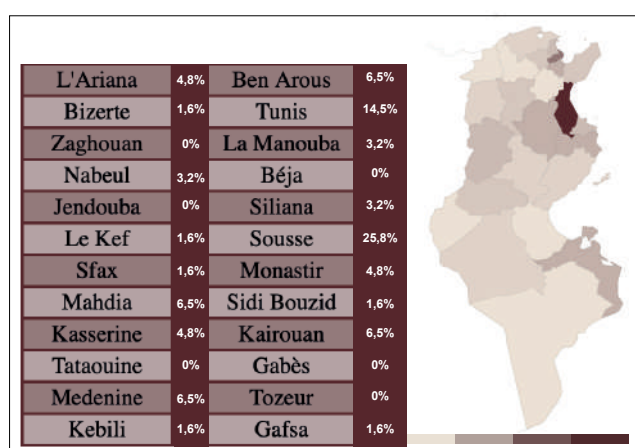
As in previous months, criminal violence occupies the first place during the month of October, with recorded events exceeding 87% of the incidents of violence recorded by the Tunisian Social Observatory team and the monitoring sample which includes daily, weekly and web media.



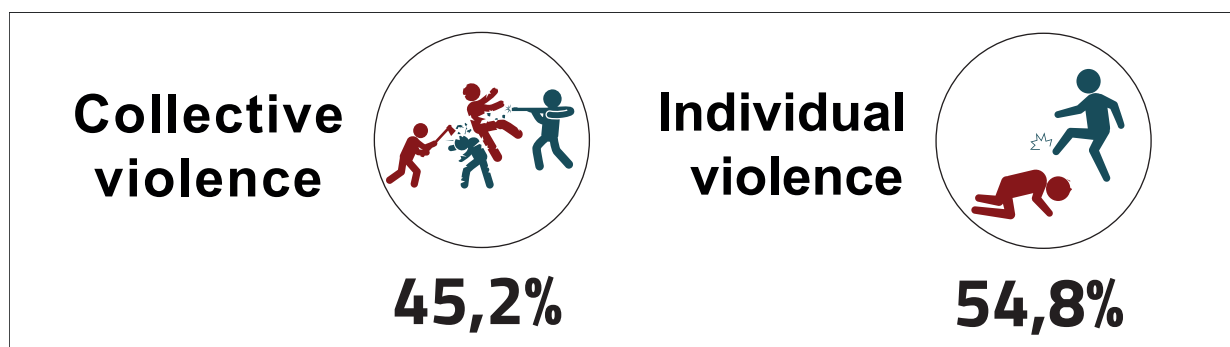
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The governorate of Sousse is at the forefront of the regions that experienced violent incidents during the month of October with a rate of 25.8%, followed by the governorate of Tunis by 14.5% of the overall total, in addition the level of violence was relatively close in the rest of the regions, such as Ben Arous, Kairouan, Medenine and Mahdia.



The level of violence during the month of October 2020 was 45,2% collective and 54,8% took the form of individual violence.



Men were responsible for 87.3% of the violent incidents during the month.

On the other hand, women accounted for 39% of the victims of reported violence, and the same is true for 47.2% of male victims.

On the whole, the violence occurred in its physical, not moral, form.

Civil society organizations and researchers in sociology and social psychology are calling for more attention to be given to these acts of violence through study and monitoring. They also warned of the danger of creating a new generation of crime and felt that the time had come to address the issue through scientific approaches that provide a starting point for unravelling the problem and finding ways to contain it and reduce its spread.

Conclusion

It should be noted that the suicide by immolation of a young man from Oued Meliz in the governorate of Jendouba in protest against the withdrawal of his license to sell fodder after committing transgressions, after being imprisoned and despite the death of the victim, did not cause social congestion in the streets contrary to what happened previously in terms of social scolding against the backdrop of similar suicide incidents (such as the suicide of young Ridha El Yahyaoui in Kasserine in January 2016).

Similarly, the assassination of Abderrazek Khachnaoui in Sbeitla, following the implementation of the decision to demolish an illegal kiosk, did not raise any social shock, unlike previous incidents (the events in Tabourba in 2018).

According to our interpretation, this change in the group's reactions to the incidents, is the product of the social tension and the state of exhaustion that the citizen has reached due to the worsening economic and social crisis and the security crisis, so that the concern for security (in terms of securing and avoiding chaos in the protest) has become a priority for the group and an urgent collective need. This situation will accompany the social tension in the coming weeks and could affect its trajectories, either by reducing the size of the protests or perhaps going to extremes with a social explosion.

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.

Methodology for monitoring irregular migration

- **Interception Operations:** The watch is based on reports from the Ministry of the Interior and statements by the National Guard representative in the various Medias. In most cases, they do not include detailed information (gender, age groups, and the immigrants' countries of origin).
- **Arrivals on European coasts:** Several structures issue digital data on arrivals to Europe, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the Ministries of Interior of European countries and the European Coastal Surveillance Agency.
- **The figures presented remain approximate and require continuous updating** according to data published by official and civil structures, which may be edited in future reports, but which provide a reading of the evolution and change in the dynamics of irregular migration.
- **Invisible figures:** are the numbers of migrants who reach European coasts without going through local authorities or international structures and are not included in a census. These are important figures and differ according to the tactics of migrant smuggling networks. They also include departure operations from the Tunisian coasts that manage to escape strict security checkpoints or those whose passage is intercepted without issuing reports or without announcing them.