

# Report

## **OCTOBER** 2023

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# INTRODUCTION

**The Israeli war in the Gaza Strip had an impact on the social scene in Tunisia throughout October. Popular sympathy for this just cause influenced the scale and forms of social protest. The month of October was marked by a significant drop in the number of protests observed, with a rate of 19% compared with the previous month.**

**The curve of protest movements since the beginning of the second half of this year shows a sort of stability, with a slight decrease compared to July: 234 protest movements during July, 223 protest movements during August and September, and 180 protest movements during October.**

This kind of relative stability in the social mobility curve can be explained by various factors, the most important of which are climatic, social, economic, but also political, represented by the general state of anticipation in the street as to the solutions that the authorities will propose to alleviate the economic and social crisis that is beginning to weigh heavily on the citizen's wallet, their purchasing power, as well as on the public services provided to citizens and basic services such as drinking water, food and medical care.

This state of anticipation was also linked to the anticipation of the start of the parliamentary or political year, but this was accompanied by the war in Gaza, which occupied public opinion.

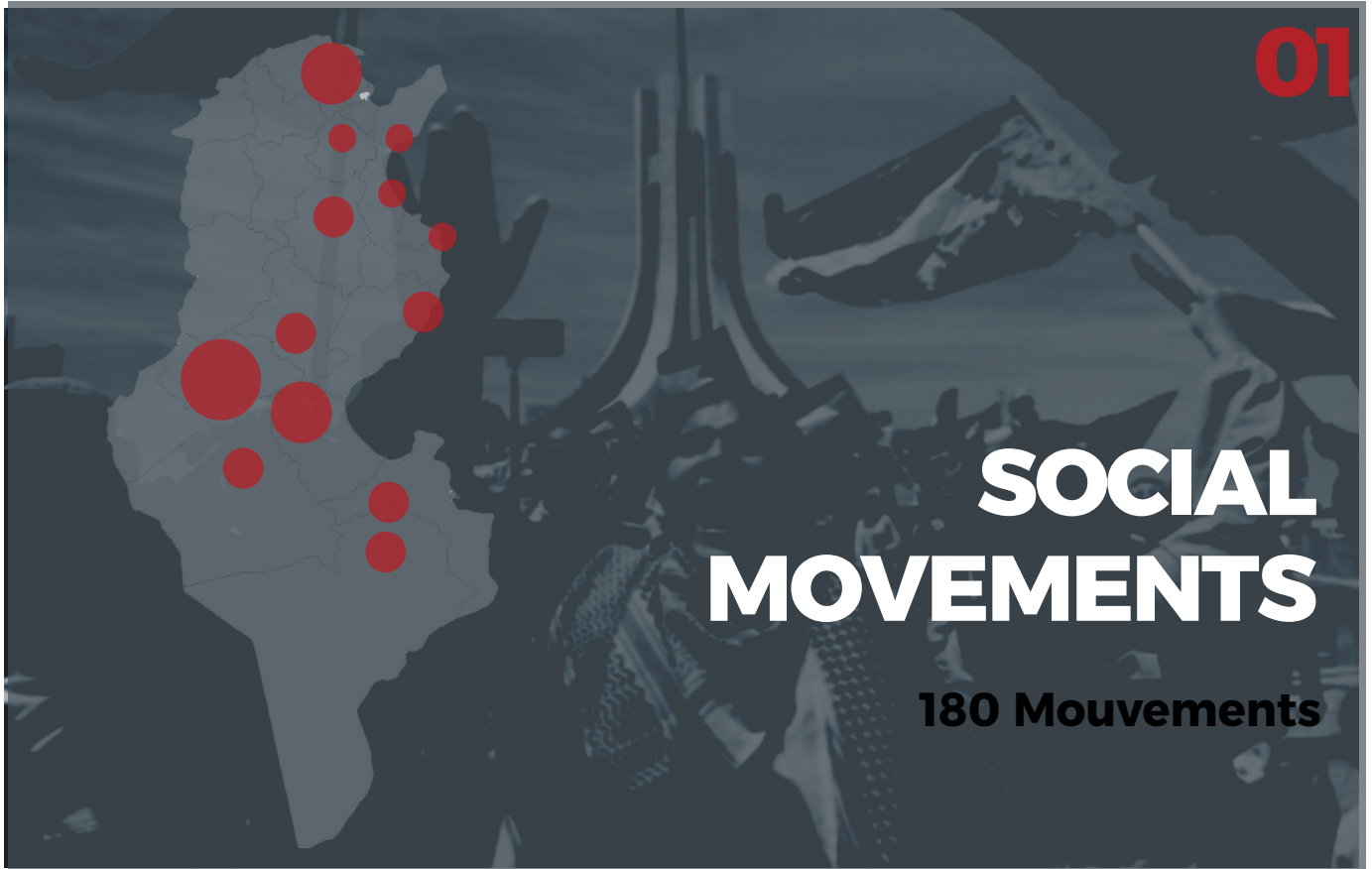
Arguably the most significant protest movement recorded, whether through protest rallies or social networks, is the call for Parliament to vote in favor of the law criminalizing normalization: a call that comes in the context of what has occupied public opinion throughout the month of October.

However, this concern does not mean abandoning other major demands raised

by demonstrators in various regions throughout the month of October, foremost among them the right to work, the regularization of professional situations and obtaining financial allowances, which accounted for 31% of the total number of protests observed in October.

As well as the education system and the crises that accompanied the start of the new school year, such as school transport, the protection of pupils and the provision of appropriate teaching conditions in terms of carrying out refurbishment work in certain educational establishments, as well as the allocation of teachers for certain subjects and guaranteeing equality of learning among pupils. The percentage of these demonstrations reached 10% of the October protests.

Thus, the map of protests observed for the month of October was faithful to the fixed demands that are usually raised during the month of October in relation to the situation of the education system. However, as mentioned above, the war in Gaza had a direct impact on the protest scene.



There are crises often associated with the month of October, leading to social tensions and protests that take different forms of expression of anger and protest.

Although these expressions do not appear in the map of demonstrations monitored during the month of October, given that the sample on which we are working, made up of print, audio and visual media, was busy covering the events of the war in Gaza, they are nevertheless listed and confirmed by statements from the officials concerned.

For example, the start of the agricultural season is facing the same problems as last October, because with a dry

autumn threatening the agricultural season, a state of congestion has arisen among growers and farmers in various agricultural areas, seeking to supply the irrigation water needed to germinate cereal grains, and meet other production needs. This opens the door to protests with the start of the agricultural season next month.

Fishermen also experienced a state of tension in various areas for reasons linked to their professional status and sea fishing conditions, according to the press releases.

As for the protests that appeared on the map followed throughout October, they concerned the social and professional

status of workers, including demands for wages and financial allowances. The number of protests organized by workers represented around a third of all protests observed.

For the second month running, workers remain a major player in social protests, with 124 protest movements in August and 51 in October.

Gafsa topped the list of protest areas with 36 movements. It should be noted that Gafsa is a traditional protest zone which has started to become the most

angry zone since last June.

The October protest map shows a transformation in traditional protest zones: Kairouan, for example, was outside this classification in June and July, but returned to it in October, with rates reaching 8.88%.

As the pace of protests and demands evolved, other traditional zones emerged, such as Tataouine, Sfax and Grand Tunis, and other new zones that were not known as traditional protest zones, such as Nabeul and Manouba.

## 1.1 Protest Forms & Demands

Economic and social demands accounted for 48% of total protest demands in October, which took the form of sit-ins (27%) and vigils (26.6%). During October, the hunger strike, which had disappeared from the protest scene for many months, reappeared as the third most popular form of protest. This is an extreme form of protest which protesters resort to when they lose confidence in other forms of protest, such as vigils, complaints, sit-ins, etc.

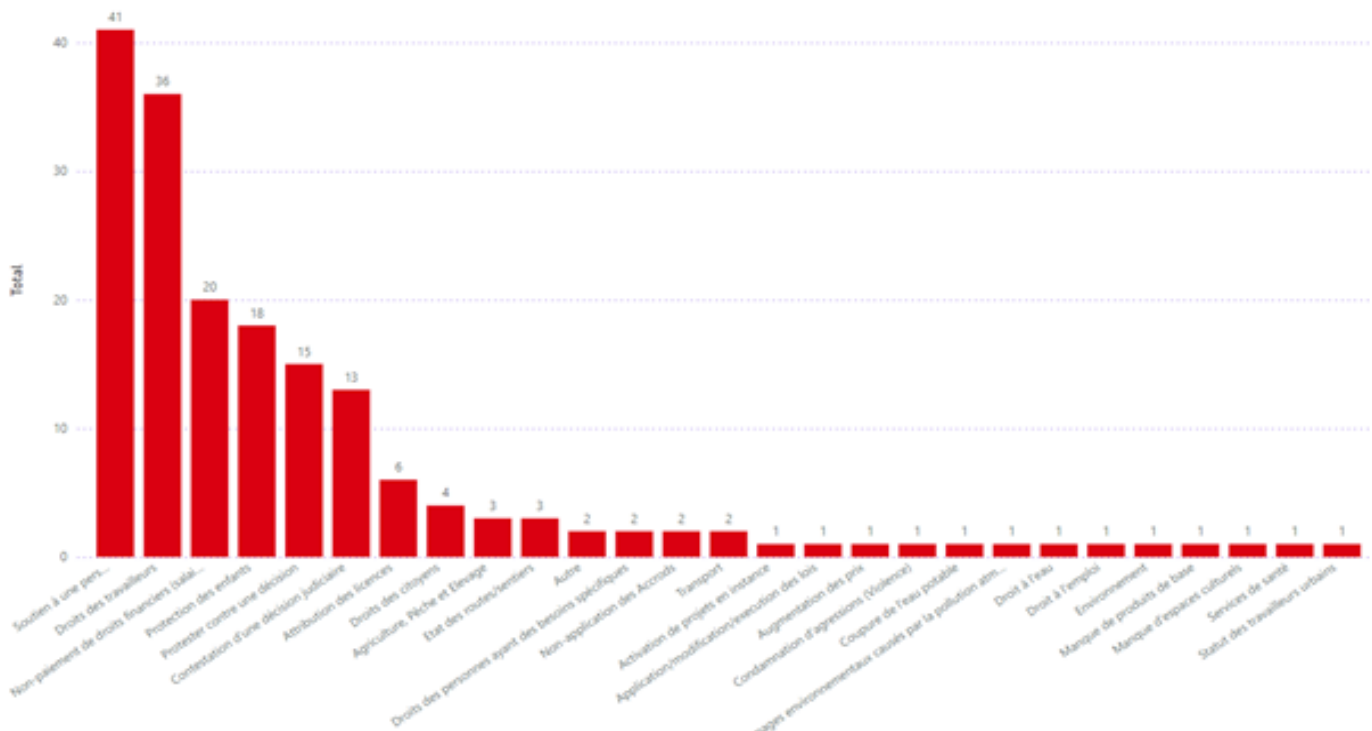
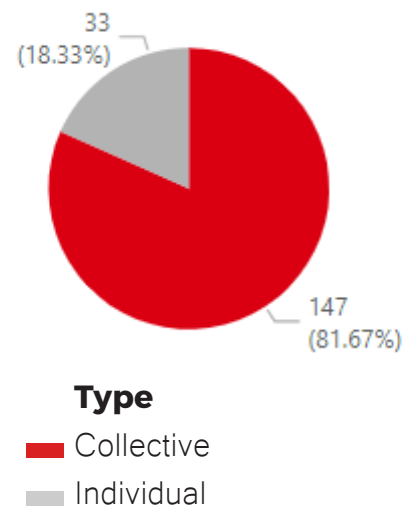
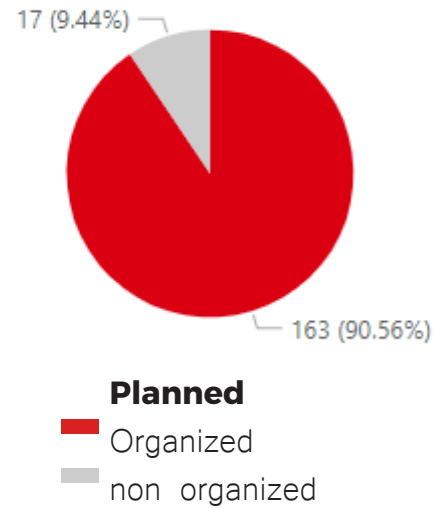
Manner	Total
Sit-In	49
Protest rally	48
Hunger-strike	20
Stoppage	17
Appel médiatique	13
Prohibition of access to courses	10
Peaceful march	9
Statement	5
Appel de détresse	4
Road blocking	2
Burn tires	1
Detention of person/means of transport	1
Protest gathering	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>

This form of protest represents an individual or collective adventure with the aim of drawing the attention of the party concerned, imposing demands or opening up a space for negotiation.

This form of protest is adopted when the bearer of demands feels his or her horizons are blocked in relation to the realization of his or her objectives. It is generally considered a dangerous form of protest, as it carries the risk of death.

The re-emergence in force of this form of protest during the month of October can be explained by the lack of interaction on the part of the opposing party and the absence of any horizon in terms of employment, regularization of professional status and the provision of basic services.

The October protests also included demands relating to education, in connection with the continuing deterioration of the education system in the public sector: a collapse linked mainly to the budget crisis and also to a strategic crisis in the reform of the education system. The demand for the right to drinking water is a constant and renewed demand every month in various regions.



## 1.2 Actors & Spaces

51 protest movements during the month of October were labor movements, around 60% of which were recorded in the Gafsa phosphate company. Workers' movements were also observed in varying numbers in Tataouine (10), Kebili (6), Zaghouan and Nabeul. The Société des Phosphates de Gafsa, the governorate headquarters, workplaces and the media were the major theaters of these workers' movements.

Strikes, sit-ins (46 sit-ins) and protest vigils were the most striking forms of protest observed in the workers' movements, in defense of workers' rights, denouncing the non-payment of wages and demanding the payment of financial indemnities.

Activists came in second place as protagonists of the October demonstrations, in Tunis (16 movements), Kairouan, Mahdia, Medenine, Beja, Sousse, Sidi Bouzid, Gabes and Gafsa. These movements were recorded in public spaces such as the capital's main street, rue Habib Bourguiba in front of the Théâtre Municipal, as well as in streets, administrative headquarters, public places, in front of the House of Representatives, etc.

Most of the movements took the form of protests, with 20 protests out of a total of 29 led by activists, in support of a person or institution and to protest against a decision or an environmental context, or to defend the rights of disabled people, as well as the lack of cultural spaces and other demands.

They were followed by parents with 16 protest movements to defend a number of de-

Space	Total
CPG	31
Medias	23
Prison	20
Roads	17
Governorate headquarters	15
Municipal Theater of Tunis	14
Work spaces	13
Educational institutions	13
Public spaces	12
Ministry headquarters	9
Administrative headquarters	6
Judicial Institutions	4
Headquarters of delegation	1
Public building	1
Representative assembly of the people	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>

mands linked to the education system and students' rights, in Kairouan (9 movements), Zaghouan (2), Sousse (2), Sidi Bouzid (2) and Medenine (1). The most important forms of protest were preventing pupils from attending classes, organizing demonstrations, seizing means of transport, burning rubber tires, blocking roads and launching appeals through the media.

Educational establishments were the scene of these demonstrations, in addition to protests in the streets, at the governorate headquarters and also through the media.

Cab drivers were also a key player in these demonstrations in Sfax, Tunis, Sidi Bouzid, Medenine, Tataouine, Gabès and Gafsa, demanding the issue of permits and the regularization of professional status, as well as against decisions relating to the profession. Their pro-

tests took the form of strikes and demonstrations in public places, on the roads and in front of administrative headquarters.

Citizens are another important player, but the percentage of their protests in October was down on previous months. Prior to October, citizens represented the second most important actor on the protest scene, seeking to improve living conditions and meet citizens' rights, including the supply of drinking water, electricity, processing and basic materials, as well as environmental protection and the rehabilitation of infrastructure, such as rural roads and footpaths. Throughout October, protests by active citizens took the form of demonstrations, media appeals, protest rallies and road closures in Mahdia, Sidi Bouzid, Ariana, Tunis, Jendouba, Zaghuan, Sfax, Gafsa, Medenine and Nabeul.

In conclusion, this relative drop in the pace of protest movements cannot be a prelude to social appeasement, especially in the last quarter of the year, when purchasing power continues to plummet despite official figures published by the National Institute of Statistics showing a fall in the inflation rate to around 8.6% in October, compared with over 10% previously.

The inflation rate is linked to price rises, and the declared fall does not necessarily mean a fall in those prices, which citizens do not feel in terms of their ability to meet their basic needs comfortably and without any financial pressure, without resorting to borrowing and bank debt. In principle, there is no sign of any improvement in the economic and social indicators for the end of this year, but the financial solutions proposed to secure the budget for the new year include more fiscal pressure, which means more pressure on wage earners, fewer investment and employment opportunities,

pressure on employers to limit recruitment, a clogged social scene in search of solutions for individual salvation.

Two factors are exposed on the social scene: the deterioration in living conditions, the sharp drop in purchasing power, the deterioration and collapse of basic services such as the education and health systems and the public transport system, growing protests and social anger due to thirst and frequent power cuts, further aggravating the crisis in the organization of agricultural production and exposing the population to the dangers of thirst. These two indicators point to persistent social tensions in the weeks ahead.

<b>Actors</b>	<b>Total</b>
Workers	51
Activist	29
Parents	16
Taxi drivers	14
Resident	12
Prisoners	12
Family	8
	6
Traders	5
Farmers	4
Teachers	4
Employees	3
Fishermen	3
Lawyers	3
Students	2
Supporters	1
Journalists	1
Louage drivers	1
Medical service employees	1
Public service doctors	1
Unemployed graduated people	1
Urban workers	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>

# IRREGULAR

## Migration

### 1672 Tunisian migrants arrived on Italian coasts during the month of October 2023

In October 2023, the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights recorded the arrival of 1,672 irregular Tunisian migrants in Italy, down 16.36% on October 2022. Thus, the number of Tunisians arriving irregularly in Italy since the beginning of the year has risen to 15769, down 5.57% on the same period last year. Tunisian nationality comes third in the number of arrivals in Italy, with 11%.

The number of minors (accompanied and unaccompanied) arriving in Italy has reached 4248 since the beginning of the year, an increase of 32.79%. The number of Tunisian immigrant women arriving irregularly in Italy also recorded a 50% increase on the previous year, reaching 1212 immigrant women since the be-

ginning of the year.

The Tunisian authorities have foiled 353 sea border crossings and prevented 3407 migrants from reaching the Italian coast, bringing the number of migrants prevented from crossing since the start of the year to 75923, according to non-detailed data from the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior.

The Tunisian authorities are continuing to implement a security plan which involves sealing off the city of Sfax in order to keep sub-Saharan migrants away from potential departure zones, and also relies on a punitive measure against anyone attempting to migrate irregularly and who is intercepted at sea, by expelling them to the Algerian or Libyan border.



# 1.1 Comparison In the same period during the years 2020-2021-2022-2023

The month	2020				2021				2022				2023			
	The number of arrivals to Italy	Number of frustrating passes	Number of passersby suspended	The number of arrivals to Italy	Number of frustrating passes	Number of passersby suspended	The number of arrivals to Italy	Number of frustrating passes	Number of passersby suspended	The number of arrivals to Italy	Number of frustrating passes	Number of passersby suspended	The number of arrivals to Italy	Number of frustrating passes	Number of passersby suspended	
January	68	22	316	84	17	463	382	124	1155	341	85	2322				
February	26	25	571	660	17	1273	308	95	1036	770	177	5147				
March	60	4	137	334	72	882	224	58	886	774	241	7494				
April	37	6	99	307	42	409	315	87	1515	1047	170	4081				
May	494	60	1243	601	95	2487	1024	172	2658	497	180	4057				
June	825	119	1611	977	143	2120	1714	175	2086	770	123	3528				
July	4145	245	2918	4044	211	2993	3461	226	3226	1769	37	848				
August	2306	191	1621	4035	317	5582	4284	411	5713	3196	127	4427				
<b>October</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>1349</b>	<b>1504</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>2739</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>5584</b>	<b>1672</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>3407</b>				
<b>Total FTDES</b>	11212	999	11900	14342	1545	22147	16699	1949	27741	15769	1971	44092				
<b>Total MI*</b>											<b>5962</b>	<b>75923</b>				

\* Les données ont été fournies dans les déclarations du ministère de l'intérieur et n'ont pas été détaillées.

## 1.2 Distribution of arrivals to Italy by months during October 2023

The month	Number of arrivals	Men	Women	Accompanied children	Unaccompanied and separated children
January	341	295	8	10	28
february	770	576	51	37	106
March	777	492	52	53	180
Avril	1027	734	62	70	181
May	497	390	25	27	55
June	770	366	52	51	91
July	1769	1160	121	140	342
August	3196	2190	232	282	492
<b>September</b>	<b>4814</b>	<b>3088</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>932</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>1672</b>	<b>1083</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>322</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15769</b>	<b>10309</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>1304</b>	<b>2944</b>

## 1.3 Distribution of passers-by by nationalities During October 2023

The month	Tunisian	Non-Tunisian
January	19.18%	80.82%
february	15.58%	84.41%
March	5.5%	94.5%
April	19.79%	80.2%
May	22.18%	77.82%
June	16.89%	83.11%
July	20.92%	79.07%
August	20.51%	79.48%
<b>September</b>	<b>14.89%</b>	<b>85.10%</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>40.56%</b>	<b>59.43%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.12%</b>	<b>77.87%</b>

## 1.4 Distribution of frustrating passes by authorities during October 2023

Mois	Médenine	Gabès	Sfax	Mahdia	Monastir	Sousse	Nabeul	Tunis	Bizerte
Octobre	0.50%	0.28%	41.64%	17%	9%	7%	23%	1.62%	*

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

## 1.5 Distribution of frustrating passes during October 2023

The month	Land	The Sea
January	11.76%	88.24%
february	21.46%	78.53%
March	13.64%	86.36%
April	11.18%	88.83%
May	37.73%	62.27%
June	11.72%	88.28%
July	40.55%	59.45%
August	8.66%	91.33%
<b>September</b>	<b>13.98%</b>	<b>86.01%</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>19.54%</b>	<b>80.45%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.95%</b>	<b>79.04%</b>

## 1.6 The tragedies of irregular migration on the Tunisian coasts during 2023

The month	The number of victims and missing
January	28
february	7
March	92
April	373
May	34
June	114
July	22
August	55
<b>October</b>	<b>3</b>
Données*	523
<b>Total</b>	<b>1293</b>

\*The data was provided in statements from the Ministry of Interior and has not been detailed.

The number of dead and missing on the Tunisian coast during 2023	The number of dead and missing in the Central Mediterranean Basin during 2023
1293	1293

# FOR IRREGULAR MIGRATION

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

## FRUSTRATED PASSES

Reliance is placed on the Ministry of Interior's communiqués and the statements of the spokesperson of the National Guard in the various media. Most of them do not contain detailed data (sex, age groups, the parties from which the immigrants come...)

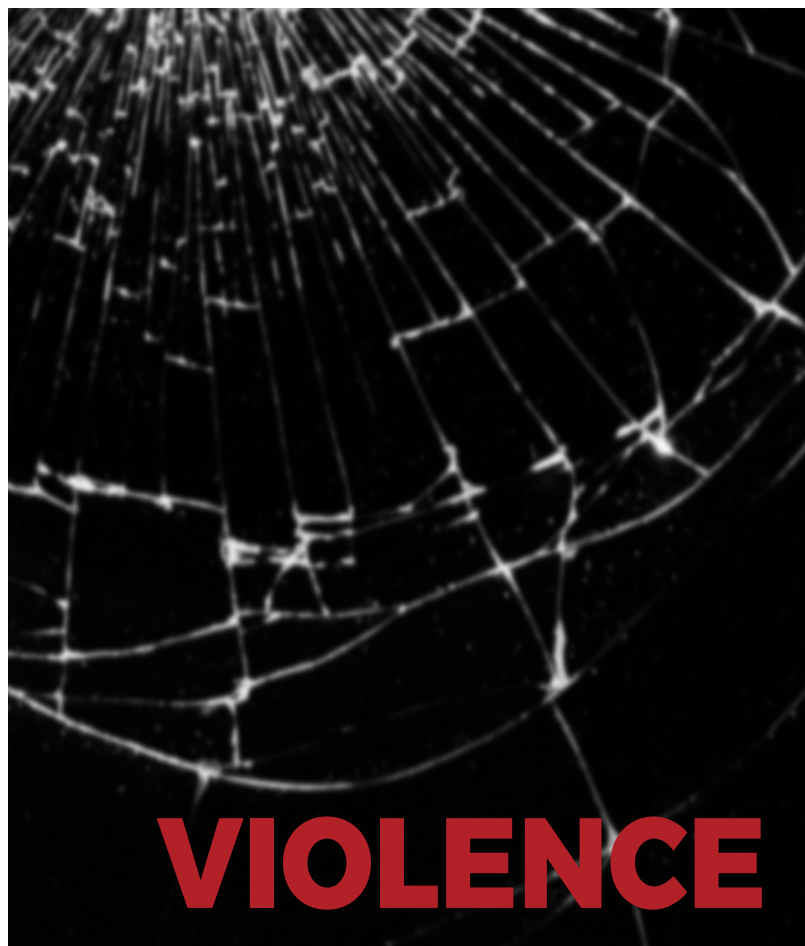
## RRIVALS TO EUROPEAN COASTS

Many structures that emit digital data about arrivals to Europe, such as UNHCR, IOM, European countries' ministries of the interior and the European Coastal Control Agency.

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

## AINVISIBLE NUMBERS

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



**The aggression and destruction broadcast daily from Gaza, and the scenes of death and repression that affected all groups, including children, women and men, provoked a general feeling of anger, injustice and dissatisfaction among a large proportion of Tunisians after October 7, the start of the Al-Aqsa flood events.**

The popular uprising was widespread, and the month of October saw several large-scale demonstrations denouncing what was happening in the Palestinian territories. The movements were full of anger and violence, and on more than one occasion demonstrators tried to break into Israel-supporting embassies and expel the ambassador.

The state of anger that dominated the whole month of October affected the pattern and incidence of recorded violence, creating cases of tension and psychological exhaustion that were evident on social networks and in public spaces. This situation is exacerbated by the economic crisis, the high cost of living

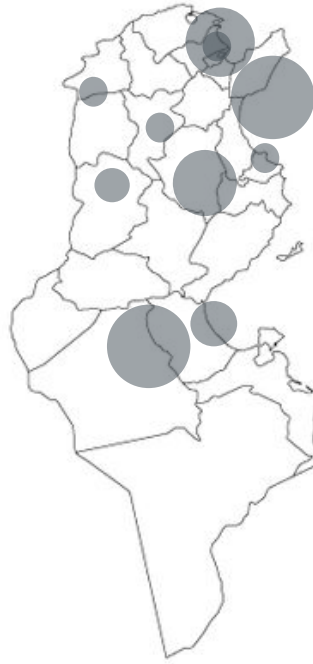
and the scarcity of foodstuffs from which Tunisians have been suffering for some time now.

The types and forms of violence observed by the Tunisian Social Observatory team were varied and included robberies, murders, acts of vandalism, thefts and violent attacks on women, children and men.

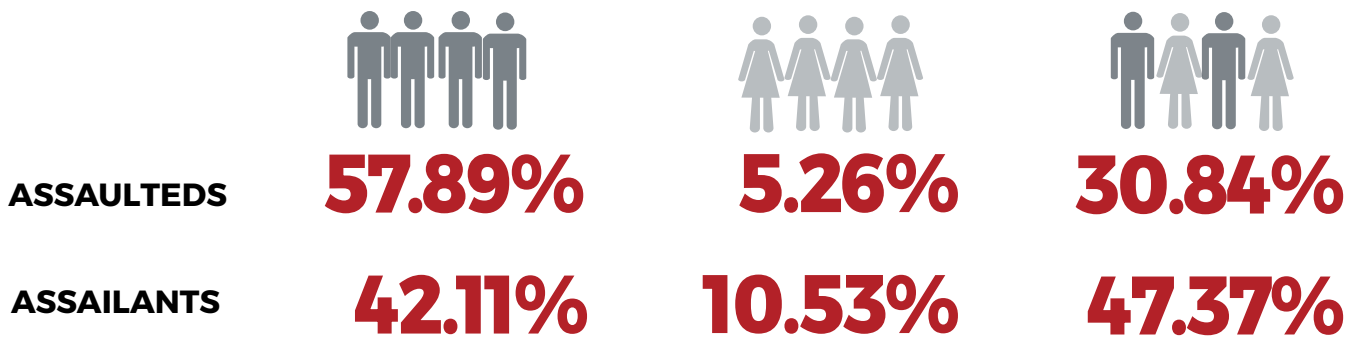
On the other hand, the month of October 2023 saw a convergence in the number of recorded suicide cases and attempts, compared with September, and a drop in the number of recorded cases compared with August.

### 3-1 Geospatial distribution of violence

During October, Tunis remained at the top of the list of violent incidents recorded, followed by the governorates of Nabeul, Ariana and Kairouan. These were followed by Kasserine, Siliana, Ben Arous and Jendouba.



### 3-2 Gendered Violence



Women were the victims of 10.53% of violent incidents observed in October, whereas they were responsible for 5.26% of recorded violence. Men were the victims of 42.11% of incidents and cases of violence, whereas they were responsible for 57.89% of cases.

47.37% of violent incidents involved women as victims of violence, compared with 36.48% as aggressors in incidents of mixed violence. During the month of October, violence was divided between individual violence, which accounted for 52.63%, and collective violence, which accounted for 47.37%.

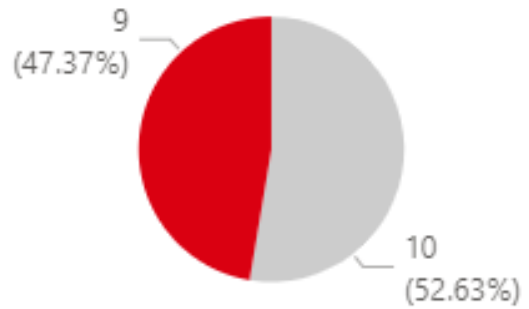
### 3-3 Forms & spaces

The violence concerned all ages and was divided between criminal violence, violence against children, violence against young people, school violence, protest violence, violence against citizens, death threats, murders... during which physical assaults, use of knives, chemical pollution, stone-throwing and mutual violence were used.

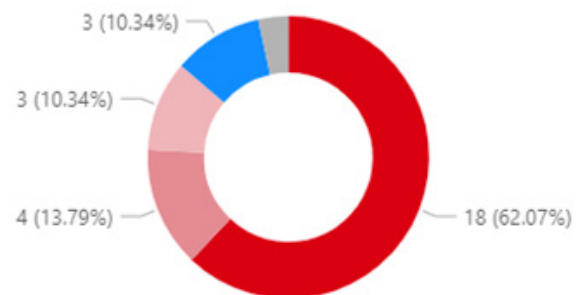
Over 62% of violent incidents recorded in October were related to criminal violence. 27.59% of these took the form of homicides, while acts of vandalism accounted for 13.79% of the violence observed, and the same percentage took the form of robberies. Robberies decreased to 10.34%.

The other forms of violence recorded were violence against citizens, which amounted to 10.34%, and violent assaults, which accounted for 6.9%, while violence in schools was around 3.45%, with the same percentage recorded as violence against young people and children.

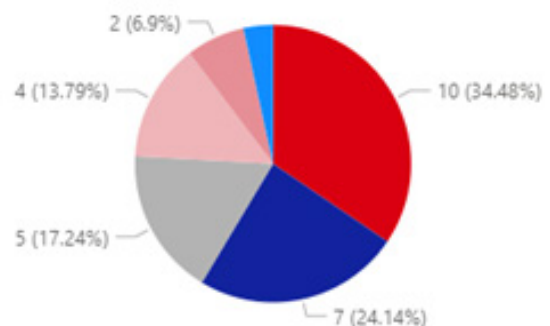
The street accounted for 34.48% of the violence recorded in October. Schools were the second most common setting for violence, with a rate of 24.14%, followed by private spaces, mainly the home, with 17.24% of violence recorded. Means of transport accounted for 13.79% of observed violence, followed by economic institutions and tourist and entertainment venues.



**Category**  
■ Collective  
■ Individual



**Sector**  
■ Criminal  
■ Violence in the publicspace  
■ Institutional  
■ Protestant  
■ Economic



**Space**  
■ Street  
■ Educational institution  
■ Residence  
■ Public transport  
■ Economic institution  
■ Tourist and leisure space



# SUICIDE & SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

9 cases of suicide  
and suicide attempts



The month of October saw 9 cases of suicide and attempted suicide, an increase of one (1) over the previous month, September, which saw 8 cases of suicide and attempted suicide.

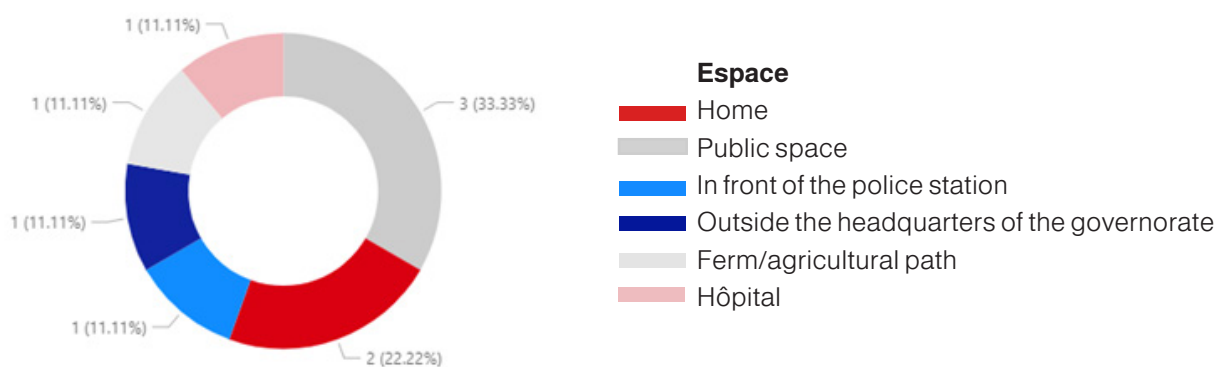
The governorates of Sfax and Sidi Bouzid each saw two cases of suicide, while the governorates of Mahdia, Beja, Kasserine, Tunis and Sousse each witnessed a single case.

## 4-1 Gendered distribution



100% of those who committed or attempted suicide during October 2023 were men. 44% of them were rescued, while the rest died.

## 4-2 Spaces



3 cases of suicide and attempted suicide were recorded in public spaces, one case of suicide was recorded in a hospital, another case was recorded in front of a police station, one case was recorded in front of a governorate headquarters and another in a village. Two cases of suicide and attempted suicide were recorded in private homes.

## 4-3 Age Groups of Victims

Suicides and attempted suicides during the month of October mainly involved groups of young people and the elderly, and consisted of attempts to burn oneself, hang oneself, throw oneself away, or take drugs and pesticides.

Perpetrators ranged in age from 20 to 50. The team recorded 3 cases of suicide in adults, and also documented 5 cases of suicide in people aged between 20 and 30, and one case of suicide in a 40-year-old Tunisian worker.

Age	Total
50	3
30	2
	1
20	1
23	1
40	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>