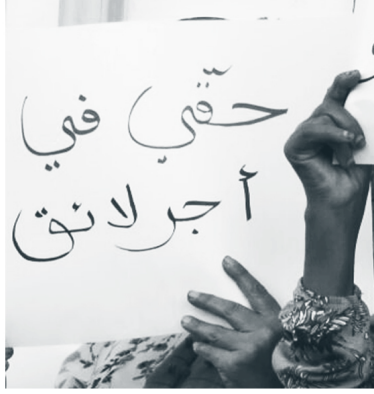


**SOCIAL
MOVEMENTS**

475 Protests



N°128

JANVIER

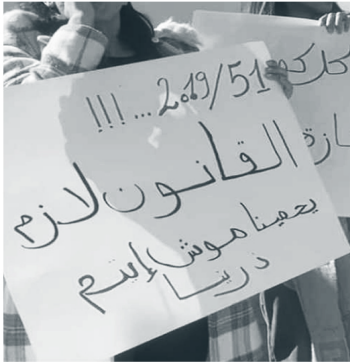
OST
Department

Tunisian Social Observatory

QUARTERLY REPORT

**JANUARY - MARCH
2024**

2024

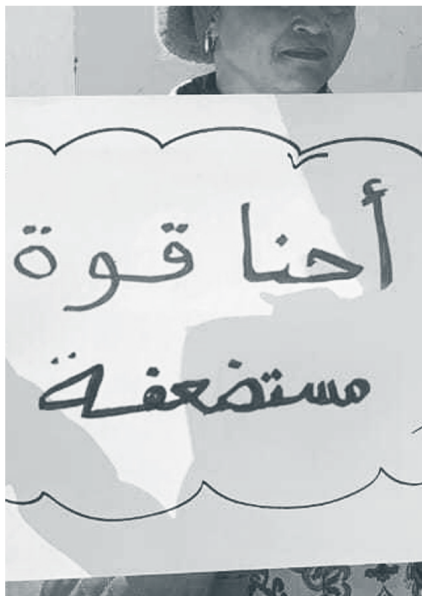


FEVRIER



**IRREGULAR
MIGRATION**

1371 migrants arrived on the Italian coasts during the first quarter of 2024



**38
CASES**

**SUICIDE
AND SUICIDE
ATTEMPTS**

MARS

QUARTERLY REPORT JANVIER JANUARY MARCH 2024

2024

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INTRODUCTION

The start of 2024 confirms the assumptions made in previous reports. Social movements continue to disinvest in the unprecedented rise in violence and suicides. This historically significant drop in the first few months coinciding with the start of the revolutionary process is the first since the Revolution of Dignity. We are now witnessing a general demobilization, despite the interest of the social movements that persist and make concrete demands on the powers in place. The logic behind this demobilization is inspired by the fragmentation of opposition, the strategies of those in power to attenuate the scope of demands, and the processes of recuperation put in place by the latter. Disinvestment is therefore a reaction to the perceived futility of protest efforts, in the face of a government that recuperates, ignores or silences the people. The convergence between the players and the spirit of solidarity is nevertheless striking. In the face of urgency and repression, actors – once in opposition or in silence – are rallying around common demands. During this first quarter, this convergence continues to be documented in the figures available.

As for violence, it is becoming more widespread in an atmosphere of impunity and trivialization. With the media and the general public no longer shocked by the violence, shared events are limited, despite the predominance of public spaces as places where violence is practiced. Violent acts are increasingly adopting a gendered curve, with more and more aggressors being men and more and more victims being women.

On top of this, suicides are on the increase compared with previous months. Affecting young people and taking place in private spaces, they are the last cries of distress and despair. In their own way, they are a means of protest against a life that is refused and to which disappearance is preferred.

At the Tunisian Social Observatory, we are continuing our mission of documenting the loss of momentum of social mobilizations in their usual form, and other manifestations of popular distress, to take account of Tunisian realities and the stakes of power and resistance. While the genocide carried out by the Zionist entity strikes the Palestinian people, while Tunisians – minors and adults – die in the Mediterranean or suffer from the violence of reception policies, while marginalization increases and purchasing power falls, this task – which the FTDES Tunisian Social Observatory has set itself – is increasingly urgent.



On the

POLITICAL FRONT

The political situation is stabilizing, while retaining its instability. The power of President Kais Saied is taking shape, with the opposition struggling to come up with alternatives. The current president's term of office will end in October, in a context marked by the reign of one person and the imprisonment of leaders of rival political parties. The president continues to enjoy popular support, with 23.7% of voting intentions in his favor, double that of his successor, Safi Said.

Freedom of expression and of the press continues to decline, with more and more fears and restrictions being put in place, as well as the harassment of journalists on social networks. Cyber-harassment of public figures is also becoming increasingly normalized in the country.

Questions of patriotism are put forward to control the crisis and create a political discourse to counter the economic disaster in the country. Meanwhile, sub-Saharan migrants continue to play the role of risk and fear. Some 20,000 migrants are living in camps set up in olive groves at El Amra in Sfax, following their expulsion and repression by the authorities.

2

On the

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FRONT

Tunisia begins the year with a gloomy economic picture, marked by high unemployment, economic recession and constant, recurring shortages. Indeed, the Tunisian economy remains vulnerable to international geopolitical unrest and the slowdown in Europe. The expected slowdown in the tourism sector should be taken into account for its likely impact on trade and Tunisians' purchasing power. The effects of drought and climate change are increasingly being felt, presenting major risks for the agricultural sector.

In the first quarter of 2024, inflation stood at 7.8% in January, then 7.5% in February and March. The stabilization of the inflation rate is due to the maintenance of the same rate of increase in the prices of food products. However, the rate of increase in "Housing, water, gas and electricity" prices accelerated (4.3% in March vs. 3.8% in February). This acceleration was offset by a slowdown in furniture and household goods prices. Between January and February, consumer prices rose by 0.2%, before increasing by 0.7% in March. The instability of these rates and the fluctuating curves of economic indicators are not dissimilar to those of the country's political context.



01

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

475

Protests

during the 1th quarter of 2024

During the first quarter of 2024, the Tunisian Social Observatory recorded 475 protest movements: 137 in January, 159 in February and 179 in March. We continue to see a decline in the number of protests, and an increasingly marked gap. The drop is remarkable compared to 601 movements during the last quarter of 2023, 680 between July and September 2023, 894 during the second quarter and 1262 during the first quarter of 2023. There is no doubt that we are witnessing a real disinvestment in protest spaces.

Regional disparity points to the isolation of social actors and difficulties in organizing themselves in a viable way, while militant fatigue can be seen in the exhaustion of certain movements before agreements are reached or demands met. Precariousness and deprivation remain at the heart of the demands made. They remain linked to socio-economic life and the difficulties associated with it. Workers continue to lead the majority of actions, and the media continue to be the means of reporting and protesting in a way likely to carry the voice and relatively achieve the objectives of the struggle.

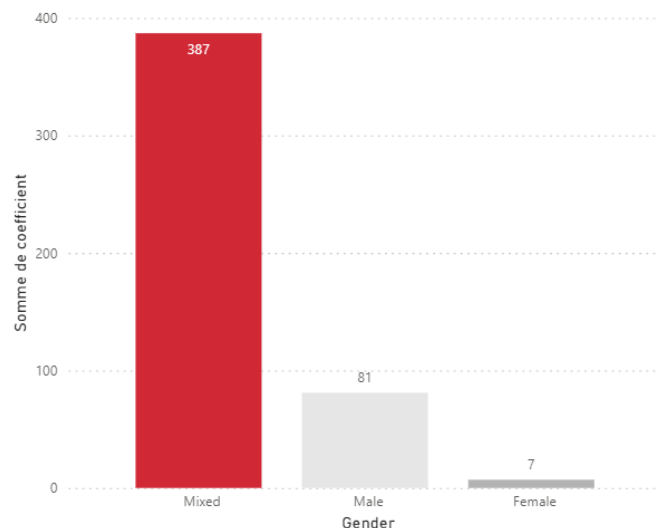
1.1 DISTRIBUTION GEOSPATIAL

Protest movements continue to be recorded in regions where a workers' movement is present, and to be limited in regions where trade union shortcomings have been highlighted in recent reports. Gafsa recorded 101 movements, Tunis 95, while Bizerte and Nabeul registered 37 protests respectively. The explanation for this lack of protests is organizational, since marginalization in these governorates remains strong in comparison with other regions of the country.

Governorates	Total
Gafsa	101
Tunis	95
Bizerte	37
Nabeul	37
Sfax	34
Jandouba	24
Sousse	22
Kasserine	16
Medenine	14
Sidi Bouzid	14
Kairouan	13
Mahdia	10
Tataouine	10
Béja	9
Kef	9
Siliana	9
Gabès	5
Ben Arous	3
Kebili	3
Ariana	2
Manouba	2
Monastir	2
Tozeur	2
Zaghouan	2
Total	475

1.2 DISTRIBUTION GENDERED

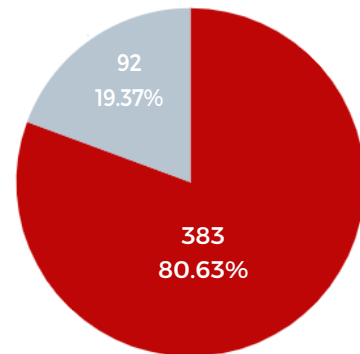
Protests in Tunisia are not gendered. Demands are shared between men and women, and both social categories protest together because they are affected by the same social issues. Nevertheless, women act and protest in spaces considered safe, such as social networks or the media, to avoid confrontation with the repressive apparatus.



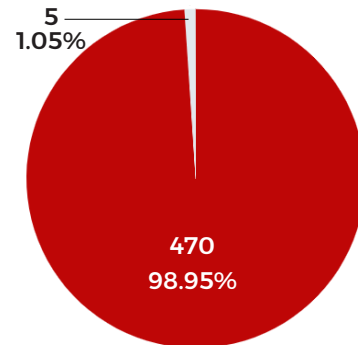
1.3 EMERGENCE AND NATURE MOVEMENTS SOCIAL

Increasingly fewer protests are individual. Collective protests account for 98.95% and only 1.05% are individual. The last quarter of 2023 was therefore exceptional, and protests continue to have a collective complexion, consisting of shared demands.

As regards the organized or spontaneous nature of protest movements, the same trends persist, despite a drop in the rate of organized movements compared with last quarter. The current rate is 63.58%, compared with 86.52% for the period from October to December 2023. The rate of spontaneous movements has therefore risen to 17.89%. This increase is indicative of more events of anger and indignation among residents, compared with the rest of the organizational and trade union movements, which remain in the majority.

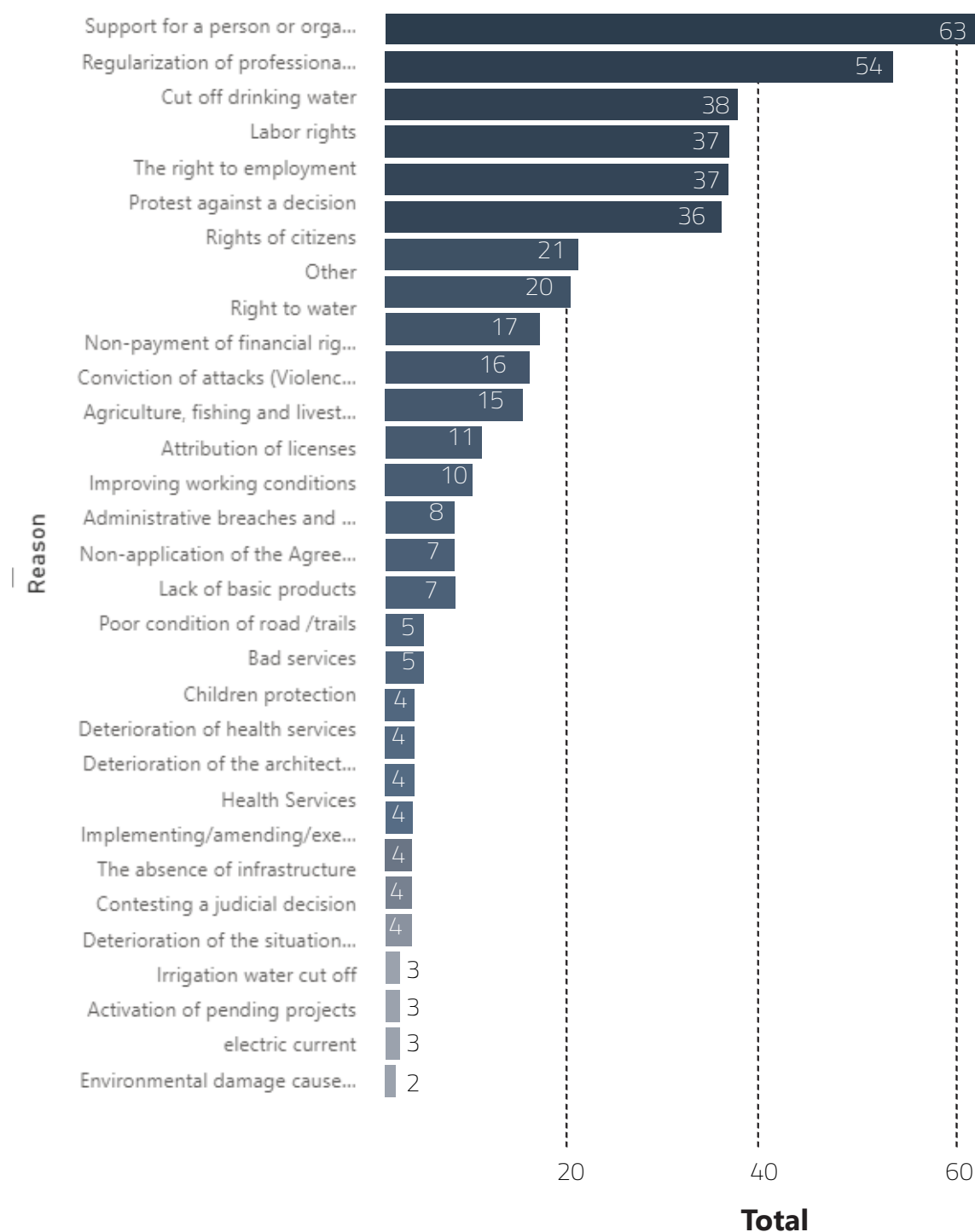


Planned
Organized
Unorganized



Type
Collective
Individual

1.4 THE DEMANDS AND THE ACTORS



During this quarter, the aim and technique of the protests changed, in comparison with previous months. Nonetheless, the demands focus largely on support for individuals and organizations, followed by regularization of professional status, protests against drinking water cuts, employment and workers' rights, protests against decisions, and then rights relating to access to public services such as water in underserved rural areas.

As in previous months, the profiles of those involved in these movements remain diverse. Students play a lesser role in these protests. Residents, civil servants and activists are now the most represented among protesters. Next, workers and the unemployed put forward demands linked to their working conditions, farmers protested against agricultural policies and lack of access to resources, shopkeepers against shortages and prices, lawyers denounced political decisions and medical service employees against the disastrous state of the public hospital and their working conditions. The unchanging nature of the demands and the sociological profiles of the players involved are a sign of the failure of policies and the failure to meet demands that are nonetheless simple, important and concrete.

1.5 SHAPES & SPACES PROTEST

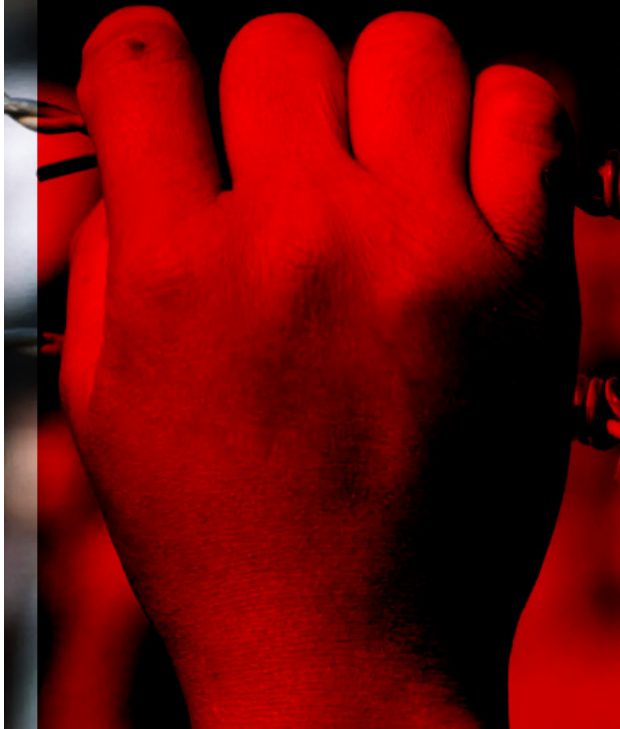
Protests varied during this quarter. We continue to witness a renewal in the techniques of struggle employed by social actors. Following stabilization in the education sector, blockades and boycotts have relatively ceased. They gave way to protest rallies, sit-ins, media appeals, declarations, strikes and peaceful marches. We recorded 16 road-blocking events by regular social actors.

The media hosted 91 protests, workspaces in general hosted 71, the premises of the Phosphates company of Gafsa 62, protests on the roads 50, 3 took place in administrative headquarters. Other protests took place in educational institutions, government headquarters, municipal headquarters, judicial institutions, and delegation headquarters.

Space	Total
Media	91
Workspaces	71
CPG	62
Public spaces	58
Roads	50
Head offices/administrative offices	37
Educational institutions	26
Governing seats	13
Municipality seats	11
Judicial institutions	9
Seats of delegations	8
Hospitals	7
Social networks	7
Ministry headquarters	6
SONEDE	5
Municipal Theater of Tunis	4
Avenue Habib Bourguiba	3
Public buildings	3
Kasba Square	2
People's Representative Assembly	1
Security post	1
Total	475

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

JANUARY-MARCH 2024



1371 migrants arrived on the Italian coasts during the first quarter of 2024

In March 2024, 673 irregular Tunisian migrants arrived on the Italian coast, representing a slight decrease of 13.38% compared to the previous year, bringing the number of arrivals during the first quarter of 2024 to 1,371 Tunisian migrants. Tunisians ranked third among arrivals in Italy, accounting for 12% of total arrivals on the Italian coast this year.

171 crossings were blocked, most of them by sea, accounting for 90.46%, and 5,404 irregular migrants were prevented from reaching the Italian coast, most of them of non-Tunisian nationality, accounting for 86.92%, bringing the total number of blocked crossings since the beginning of the year to 8,517 migrants.

The tragedies are continuing on the Tunisian coast without any action by the State to reduce them, since 63 victims and missing persons were recorded during the month of March, bringing the total for the first quarter of 2024 to 167 victims and missing persons. This pattern suggests that the human tragedy on the Tunisian coast will continue, given a security and logistics system that gives priority to prohibition rather than prevention.

2.1 Comparison In the same period during the years 2022-2023-2024

The month	2022			2023			2024		
	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	382	124	1155	341	85	2304	258	76	1630
February	308	95	1036	770	177	5147	440	64	1478
March	224	58	886	777	241	7494	673	171	5424
Total	914	277	3077	1888	503	14945	1371	311	8532

2.2 Distribution of arrivals to Italy by months

The month	Number of arrivals	Men	Women	Accompanied children	Unaccompanied and separated children
January	258	187	15	24	32
February	440	281	22	24	113
March	673	483	34	58	98
Total	1371	951	71	106	243

2.3 Distribution of passers-by by nationalities

The month	Tunisian	Non-Tunisian
January	20,56%	79,44 %
February	17,45%	82,54 %
March	13%	86,92%
Total	17%	82,96%

2.4 Distribution of frustrating passes by authorities

Mois	Médenine	Gabès	Sfax	Mahdia	Monastir	Sousse	Nabeul	Tunis	Bizerte
March	%1,16	*	%94,73	%0,58	%1,75	*	1,16%	*	*

2.5 Distribution of frustrating passes

The month	Land	The Sea
January	38,46%	%61,53
February	17,18 %	82,81 %
March	9,35%	90,46%
Total	21 ,68%	78,28 %

2.6 The tragedies of irregular migration on the Tunisian coasts

The month	The number of victims and missing	
January	37	
February	67	
March	53	
Total	157	
	The number of dead and missing on the Tunisian coast	The number of dead and missing in the Central Mediterranean Basin
	157	338

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.

03

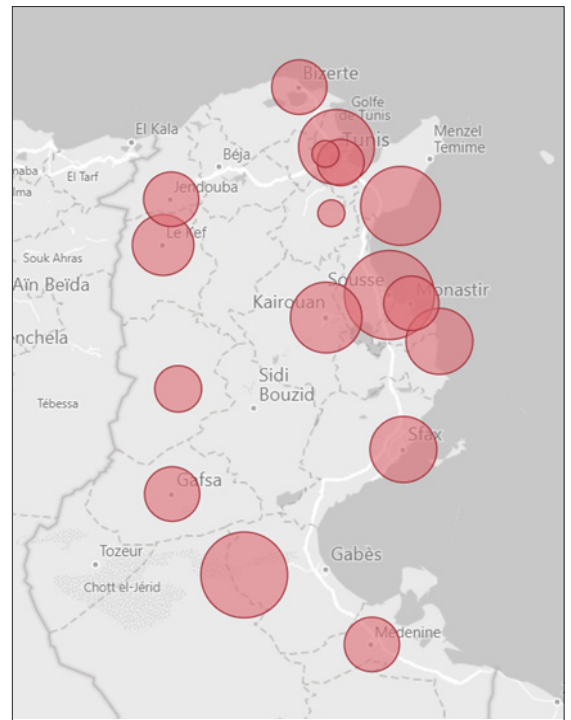
VIOLENCE

How can we describe the violence taking place in Tunisia's public and private spheres, against the backdrop of declining protests? There are two possible explanations: on the one hand, the increasing violence is a visible sign of growing frustration among the population. On the other, it could be a means of defence and protest against the impotence learned from the failure of other methods of expressing popular discontent and anger. This section of the report is structured along these lines. Violence is approached here as a dysfunctional manifestation of popular anger, which might in other contexts have been directed against the power that creates this anger and reinforces the powerlessness that becomes the facilitator of obedience.

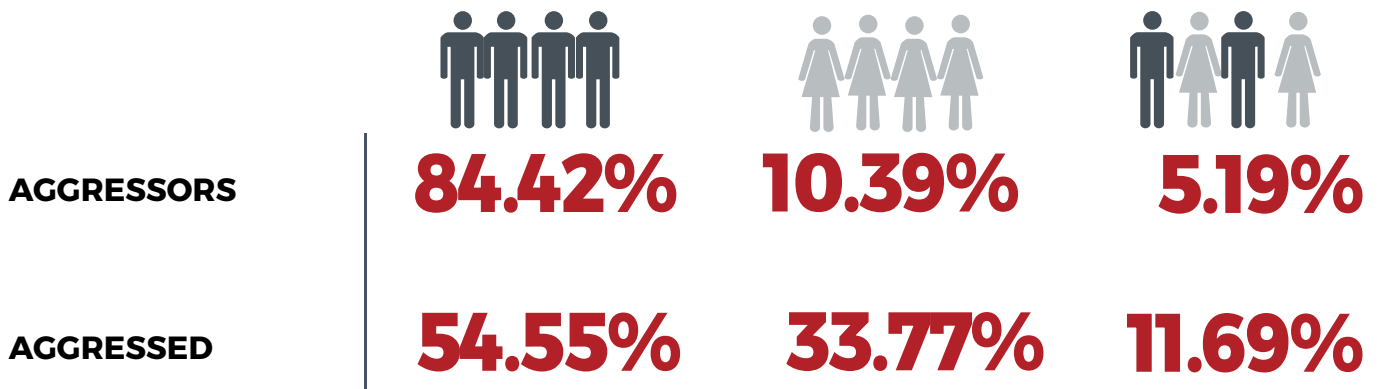
During this first quarter, violence has been widespread in all governorates, multi-factorial and affecting distinct identities of aggressed and aggressors. This is due to socio-economic factors that oppress without exception, impunity and the failures of the legal system. Affects of hatred and the desire for revenge can be interpreted through testimonies and the nature of the acts recorded. Often, the target of violence is in a weak position, and acts as a vent for the aggressors. The result is a mass effect that reinforces the trivialization of the situation.

3-1 DISTRIBUTION GEOSPATIAL

Violence is spreading throughout Tunisia. No town or rural area is spared. It's a trend we've become accustomed to over the last few months. The curve remains unchanged. The proliferation of violence, however, remains in those regions where social inequality is greatest, motivating frustration and therefore violent action. During this quarter, regions such as Tunis, Nabeul, Sidi Bouzid, Kairouan and Sousse recorded the highest rates.



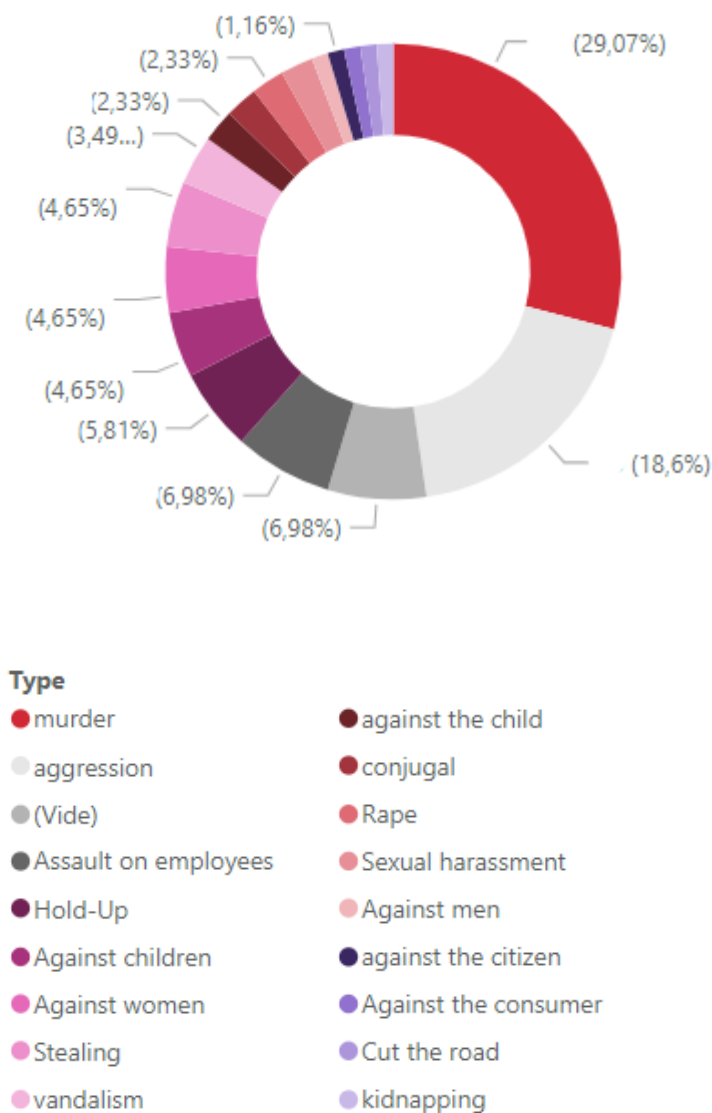
3-2 PROFILES ACTORS



Aggressors : The majority of aggressors were men, as usual: 84.42% versus 71.84% in the last quarter of 2023. Violence perpetrated by hegemonic masculinity is on the rise. This is a sign of the strengthening of patriarchy and violent masculinity. Only 10.39% of violence was perpetrated by women, and 5.19% by mixed groups of men and women.

Aggressed: Among victims of violence, 54.55% are men, which is almost the same as last quarter. 33.77% are women, compared with 26.21% last quarter. This increase in the female rate of assault victims is indicative of the continuation and reinforcement of violence against women. We also recorded a rate of 11.69% of mixed victims during acts of collective violence.

3-3 TYPES OF VIOLENCE

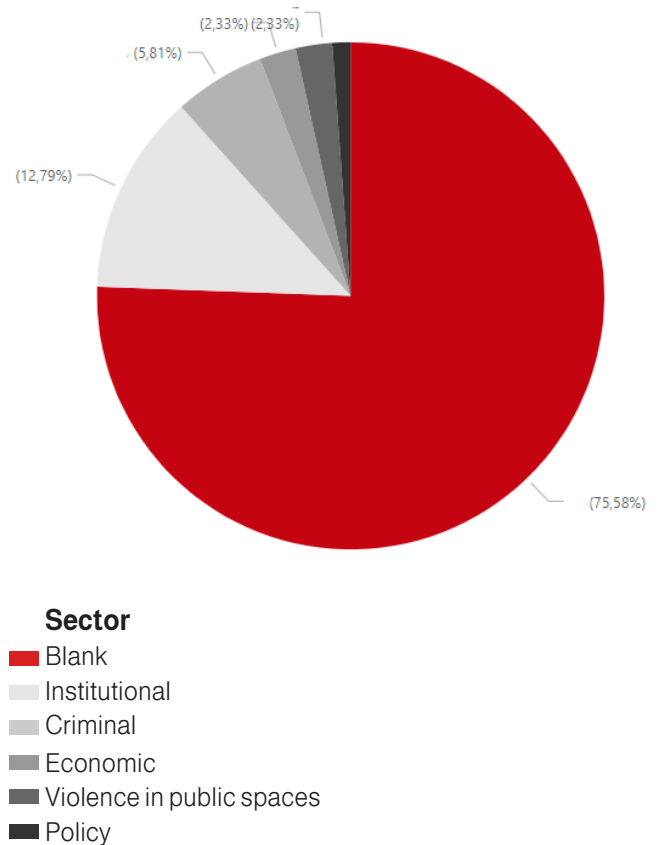


As regards the types of violence recorded during this quarter, a large proportion were murders, i.e. 29.07%. 18.6% were assaults, an increase on last quarter. Other types of violence were also documented, including assaults on employees, robberies, violence against children and women, theft, vandalism, domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape and so on.

3-4 AREAS OF VIOLENCE

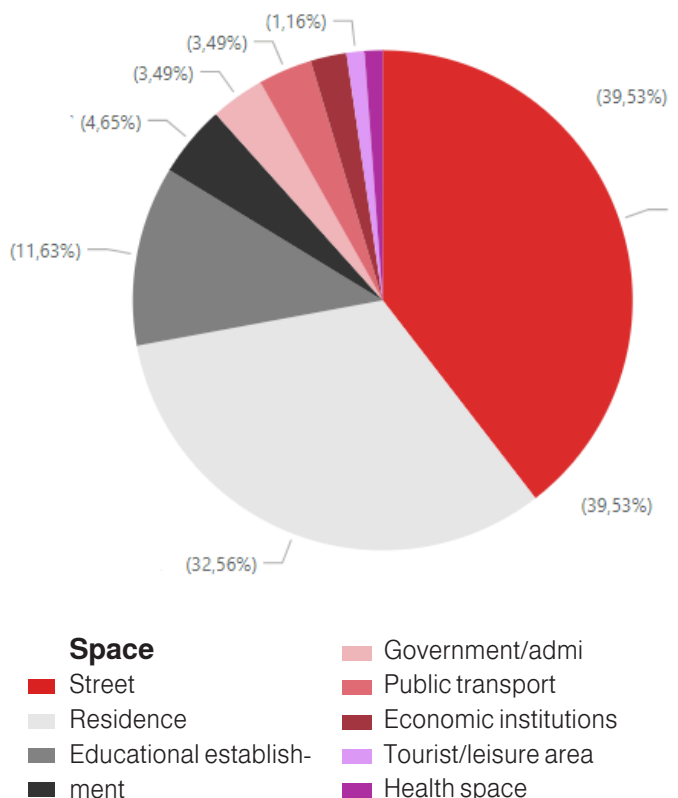
Documented violence during this quarter varied between individual and collective, with violence between individuals predominating at around 52% of the total rate of violence recorded.

Violence during this first quarter was predominantly social in nature, with a rate of 75.58%. 12.79% was institutional. 5.81% was criminal violence, 2.33% was economic violence, 2.33% was spectacular violence in the public space and 2% was political violence. This is a sign of the widespread nature of violence, which has become commonplace in society. Few acts of violence are of a political nature, a sign of adaptation to the current political context.



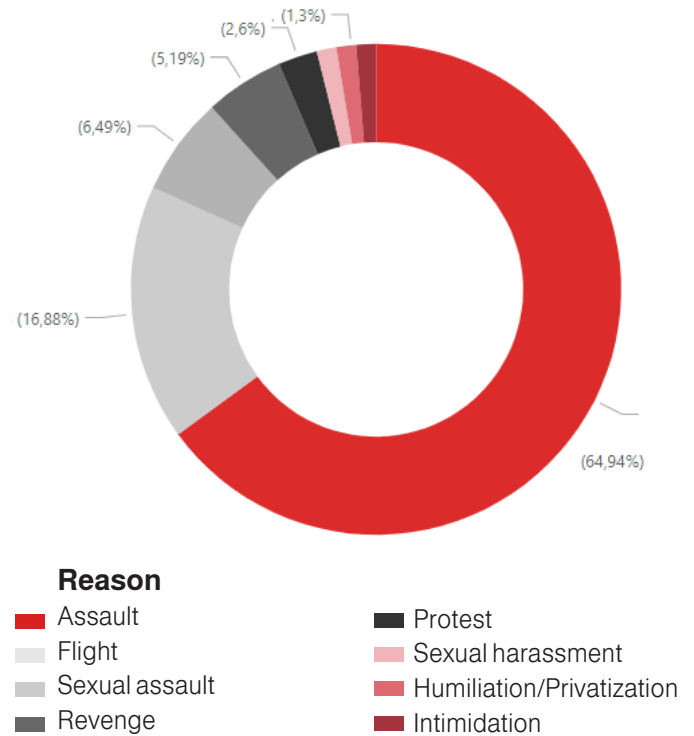
3-5 SPACES OF VIOLENCE

Once again, the majority of violent acts take place in the street, accounting for 39.53% of the total. 32.56% take place in people's private homes. 11.63% take place in educational establishments (e.g. schools, colleges, universities). 4.65% took place in health-care facilities, 3.49% in administrative headquarters, 3.49% in public transport, 2.33% in economic institutions, 1.16% in tourist and leisure facilities and 1% in prisons or detention centers.



3-6 REASONS FOR VIOLENCE

Compared with the previous quarter, the trend in the reasons for violence has changed relatively. 64.9% of violent acts are simple assaults, i.e. with no utilitarian motive behind them. 16.88% were economically motivated acts, i.e. theft. 6.49% were sexual assaults, with the aim of domination. 5.19% were motivated by revenge, 2.6% by protest, 1.3% by sexual aggression, 1.3% by humiliation and deprivation, and 1% by intimidation.



04

SUICIDE & ATTEMPT OF SUICIDE

**31 cases recorded duringat
the first quarter of 2024**

Suicidal behaviors documented by the Tunisian Social Observatory have resumed their upward trend, following a relative drop compared with the previous quarter. This quarter, they reached 38 suicidal behaviors. The study of suicidal behaviours cannot be carried out without putting the ambiguity and taboos of the census on the table in order to discuss this phenomenon, which constitutes an indicator of the dangers to the public health of citizens.

The behaviours recorded mark the inaction of public policies in the field of mental health. People continue to be killed by this inaction, and they remain the indirect actors of this destruction, even if looking at the scene from afar might lead us to think that they are the main actors. This is due to a lack of funding for public structures, poor recruitment and training of mental health staff, and a lack of awareness of mental health issues.

Among the acts of suicide recorded during this quarter, death stalked the majority, with a death rate of 78.95%, while only 21.05% survived suicide attempts. It seems that these acts are increasingly leading to death, and that the aim of these actions is no longer protest, but the erasure and definitive self-destruction of the people who commit these acts of self-inflicted violence.

4-1 GEOSPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

This quarter saw a varied distribution across the country's major regions. This is in line with usual trends, despite some changes. During the quarter, we recorded 6 suicides in Kairouan, 5 in Gabes, 4 in Kasserine, 3 in Monastir, 3 in Nabeul, 2 in El Kef, 2 in Bizerte, 2 in Jendouba, 2 in Sousse, 2 in Sidi Bouzid, one in Ariana and one in Mahdia.

Governorates	Total
Kairouan	6
Gabès	5
Kasserine	4
Monastir	3
Nabeul	3
Bizerte	2
Jendouba	2
Kef	2
Sidi Bouzid	2
Sousse	2
Ariana	1
Ben Arous	1
Mahdia	1
Medenine	1
Sfax	1
Siliana	1
Tunis	1
Total	38

4-2 GENDERED DISTRIBUTION



28 CAS
OR
73.68%

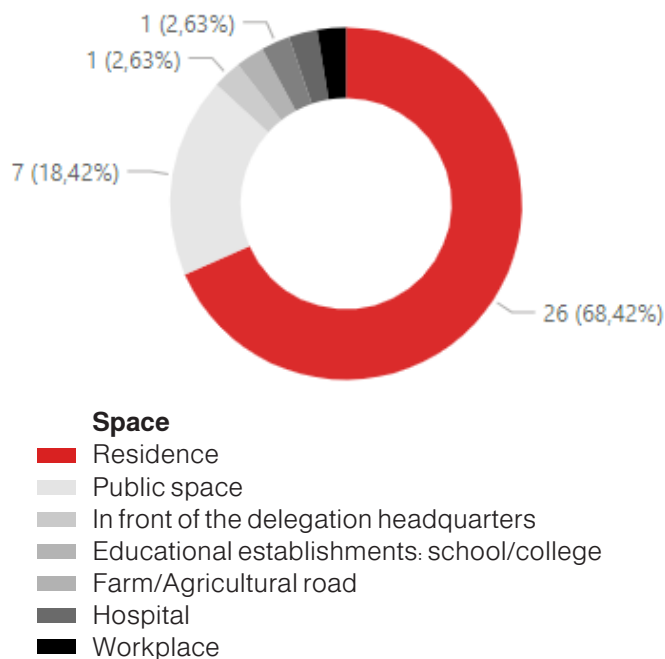


10 CAS
OR
26.32%

Taken from a gender perspective, the trends in suicidal behavior can be analyzed as an effect of the pressure on men to access social or mental health services, due to shame and the desire to preserve a valued social image as a man. The gendered difference is increasingly marked, with 73.68% of suicide victims this quarter being men and 26.32% women.

4-3 SUICIDE LOCATIONS

Suicides and attempted suicides took place in a variety of locations. 68.42% took place where the victims lived, 18.42% in public spaces, 2.63% in front of delegation headquarters, 2.63% in schools, 2.63% on farms or agricultural land, 2.63% in hospitals and 2.63% at the victim's place of work.



4-4 BIOGRAPHICAL CATEGORIES OF SUICIDE VICTIMS

Diversification continues to be observed and has been for months. The biographical profiles of suicide victims vary, despite a predominance of gender. 42.11% of suicide victims are young people, 28.95% are adults, 18.42% are schoolchildren, 5.26% are children, 2.63% are elderly and 2.63% are blue-collar workers. These statistics confirm the hypothesis that a state of despair and learned helplessness drives young people - of an age to act and create - to inflict the violence of suicide on themselves. Suicide among students and children is an alarming variable that should be taken into account by mental health policies to put an end to this scourge.

