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Forced migration governance in Tunisia: Balancing risks and assets for state-making during independence and democratization

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ABSTRACT

What explains the variation in states' governance of forced migration? Why are some groups of forced migrants welcomed and others not? We argue that this depends on whether accommodating a particular group of forced migrants is perceived as an asset or risk to broader political developments at play. Drawing on qualitative material from Tunisia between 1950 and 2020, the paper analyses how the Tunisian state has dealt differently with the large-scale arrival of forced migrants from neighbouring countries after its independence in 1956 and throughout its democratic opening since 2011. We show that during the Algerian War of Independence, perceptions of displaced Algerians as international assets outweighed perceptions of domestic economic and political risks. This resulted in Tunisia's supportive-open approach towards the nearly 200,000 Algerians who were welcomed as *prima facie* refugees and provided humanitarian assistance. In contrast, the estimated 500,000 Libyans who arrived after 2011 have been perceived both as domestic economic and ideological assets and as important political risks – domestically and internationally. This explains Tunisia's largely laissez-faire approach, whereby state authorities initially welcomed Libyans but refrained from providing humanitarian assistance and residence permits. In both cases, Tunisian authorities had to carefully balance national sovereignty and international obligations in their forced migration governance.

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KEYWORDS Forced migration; refugees; migration policy; state-making; Tunisia

1. Introduction

This paper analyses Tunisian authorities' governance of the two most significant arrivals of forced migrants on its territory in recent history – Algerians

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in the late 1950s to early 1960s and Libyans since 2011 – and how such governance relates to Tunisia's broader state-making. Scholarship around the 'migration state' argues that governing migration is part and parcel of state-making (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020; Hollifield, 2004; Torpey, 1997; Vigneswaran & Quirk, 2015; Zolberg, 1978, 2006). For Adamson (forthcoming), migration governance 'is not simply a technical issue or policy field that contemporary states must navigate but is also the very means by which states constitute and reconstitute themselves or "perform" sovereignty and statehood'. This is particularly true for forced migration governance, which is not only linked to domestic state-making processes but has an intrinsically international dimension. It thus brings to the fore questions related to the exercise, persistence, and effects of sovereignty under globalization and highlights the tension between sovereignty and international human rights norms (Abdelaaty, 2021, p. 3).

Indeed, across the globe, managing and controlling forced migration has played a central role in post-colonial state-making and regime change (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020; Natter, 2021; Rahal & White, 2022; Sadiq & Tsourapas, 2021). Research shows, for example, how the displacement, expulsion, or reception of people – often from a particular ethnic group or political allegiance – have been central in shaping the political set-up of newly independent states (Chatty, 2010; Manby, 2018; Rahal & White, 2022). In India, for instance, authorities actively mobilized migration policies for nation-making by expelling minorities or strategically granting stay permits to religious groups such as Christians, Hindus, or Sikhs from Pakistan and Bangladesh as a counterweight to India's Muslim population (Mongia, 2018). Research on Libya and Syria further demonstrates how in civil war settings, different state and non-state actors attempt to (re)make the state and its population through practices of forcing exit, selective return, and strategic laissez-faire (Fröhlich & Müller-Funk, 2023).

Yet, what explains variations in states' governance of forced migration? Existing research about what has become known as the 'politics of forced migration' (Adamson, 2006; Castles, 2003) highlights the role of bureaucratic path dependencies, international relations, economic factors, security issues, and the capacity of host communities. Jacobsen (1996), for example, underlines the importance of bureaucratic power struggles between ministries, perceptions of national security threats potentially posed by a refugee influx, as well as relations with donors and sending countries as key factors shaping state responses to forced migration. Other scholars (Mencütek, 2018, 2022; Tsourapas, 2019) have stressed the role of rentierism, foreign policy, and securitization. They show that refugees can be perceived as assets for a state's geopolitical standing, as receiving countries might use refugees to destabilize and embarrass another country, while origin or transit countries might use refugees as a bargaining chip to secure development aid.

Research looking more specifically into international organizations (IOs) shows that while IOs explicitly aim to support vulnerable and displaced populations, they also have to cater to other audiences – such as authorities of host states or donor states – and might be subject to internal conflicts of interests that can deviate their activities from initial humanitarian intentions (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999). Indeed, depending on the economic and political interests of the host state, IOs' room for manoeuvre varies. Abdelaaty (2021), for instance, argues that countries shift responsibility for asylum procedures on their territory to the United Nations (UN) when they face conflicting incentives and pressures at the international and domestic levels. However, some states have also reacted with the absence of legislation and indifference towards refugee groups, which can be a deliberate choice – referred to by some policy researchers as 'laissez-faire' (Zolberg, 2006), 'no-policy' (Janmyr, 2016), or 'strategic indifference' (Norman, 2021).

This paper builds upon this rich literature to systematically explore what drives variation in forced migration governance in Tunisia, comparing the strikingly under-studied arrival of nearly 200,000 Algerians in newly-independent Tunisia during the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962) to the settlement of an estimated 500,000 Libyans in post-revolutionary, democratizing Tunisia since the beginning of the Libyan conflict in 2011. Interestingly, while Algerians were welcomed as *prima facie* refugees in Tunisia and multiple local, national, and international actors provided them with humanitarian support, the Tunisian state has reacted with a laissez-faire approach towards Libyans and has sought to limit the involvement of international actors such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

We argue that to understand such variation, we need to analyse whether state actors perceive accommodating a forced migrant group as an asset or a risk to broader political developments at play. We distinguish between perceptions of forced migrants as ideological, economic, or political risks and assets at the domestic and geopolitical levels, i.e. in relations between local and national states and societal actors and in relations between sovereign nation-states and IOs working under the mandate of the international refugee regime. We show that during the Algerian War of Independence, perceptions of displaced Algerians as ideological assets as well as economic and political assets at the geopolitical level outweighed perceptions of economic and political risks at the domestic level, resulting in a supportive-open approach. Displaced Libyans, on the other hand, have been perceived both as economic and ideological assets on the domestic level and as domestic and geopolitical risks, resulting in Tunisia's laissez-faire approach. We also demonstrate how, at both historical moments, the affirmation of Tunisia's national sovereignty was a key factor that shaped how Tunisian authorities used and integrated but also controlled the international refugee regime.

We do not argue that forced migration governance at critical moments of political change is fundamentally different than in 'normal' times. However, examining such key moments brings out in the open the otherwise often-hidden balancing act between ideological, political, and economic drivers at domestic and geopolitical levels. Indeed, independence and democratization are key moments when the social contract is renegotiated, national identity narratives are rewritten, and foreign policy alliances are challenged and revisited. This provides privileged insights into the delicate balancing between affirming national sovereignty domestically and securing the geopolitical standing of the state that is always inherent to forced migration governance. Tunisia thus offers an excellent case to explore what drives variations in forced migration governance, as 1956 and 2011, when Tunisia was faced with the most significant arrivals of forced migrants, were also critical moments in Tunisia's political history, namely its independence and democratization.

The following section discusses the methodology and data collection underpinning our argument. In the article's main body, we first outline Tunisia's governance of Algerian and Libyan displacement and contextualize it within the country's broader migration governance since its independence. We then compare the governance of Algerian and Libyan displacement along three core aspects: the framing of forced migrants and their mobilization as ideological assets in national identity formation; the state's delicate balancing between perceiving forced migrants as economic assets and potential political allies or as security threats; and how IOs were integrated but also controlled in negotiating the legal status of Algerians and Libyans in Tunisia. We conclude with a reflection on how this analysis may be further expanded beyond Tunisia to shed light on variations in forced migration governance across the Global South and Global North.

2. Methodology

We understand *forced migration* as the movement of people who have been displaced internally or across borders due to violent conflict, war, and persecution. By using the term forced migrants, we follow scholars who have criticized legal definitions of 'refugees' as too narrow (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018) or as too policy-dependent (Bakewell, 2008). However, we also acknowledge that the binary between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration is an artificial one and that migration happens along a continuum between these (Schewel, 2021).

Building on Zolberg (1978, p. 243), we define forced migration governance as the set of formal policies, laws, and regulations; informal administrative practices; as well as laissez-faire and the purposive absence of regulation concerning border control, entry, integration, and exit of forced migrants. Our definition thus includes not only border control and entry regulations but also opportunities to stay and gain rights in host countries. We also see the labelling

of forced migrants as part of the politics of forced migration, given that using different terms can have different implications for state reactions to forced migration (Zetter, 2007).

To uncover and analyse the drivers of Tunisia's forced migration governance in the two periods, we draw on different sets of data. For this, it is important to note that while studies on Libyan displacement are abundant, there has been very little systematic research on historical Algerian displacement in Tunisia so far (exceptions are Perret and Bugnion (2011) and Rouland and Jarraya (2020)).

Our analysis of Tunisia's reception of forced migrants in the context of the Algerian Independence War relies on original data on UNHCR's relief operation for Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco (1957–1963) from the UNHCR archive in Geneva. Given that large parts of the fieldwork took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, we received the files as scanned uncategorized documents after a long delay. These 732 documents include inter-office memoranda, monthly reports, travel reports, telegrams, letters, media articles, and notes. In addition, we conducted a media analysis of key moments of large-scale arrival and return in two major Tunisian daily newspapers with different political leanings: *La Presse de Tunisie*, published in French and founded during the French mandate as the press of the colonizers, was state-owned after independence, while *Aṣ-Ṣabāḥ*, published in Arabic and founded in 1951 with a neo-destourian leaning had the highest number of publication around independence (Souriah-Hoebrechts, 1975, pp. 55–67).

Our analysis of the Libyan case study relies on 45 expert interviews conducted with relevant stakeholders (national political actors, representatives of IOs, local and regional NGOs, and academics) between 2016 and 2020, as well as 25 narrative interviews with Libyans who experienced displacement to Tunisia, conducted in 2020 in Tunisia (Tunis and Sfax). Both types of interviews addressed how (Libyan) displacement was governed and how assistance to forced migrants was organized and experienced.[1] We included interviews with Libyans in Tunisia to better understand how a laissez-faire approach was implemented in practice and experienced by those concerned. We also draw on a media analysis (of the same newspapers as the Algerian case study), focusing on key moments of large-scale displacement from Libya in 2011, 2014, and 2019.

We analysed the archival documents and expert interviews based on three sub-questions: What key decisions on forced migration governance were taken? What dynamics and inter-actor relationships shine through? What links and references are made to the domestic political transformations at the time (independence, democratization)? The analysis of the interviews with Libyans focused on different aspects of their living conditions, such as access to work, accommodation, and health, their legal status, as well as experiences at the border and with the Tunisian administration. Through the media analysis, we aimed to understand which key actors were involved in

governing Algerian and Libyan displacement, if and when it was a salient topic in domestic and foreign politics, and how it was framed.

Despite its richness, our data certainly have limitations. Given the historical time frame of the Algerian War of Independence, it proved impossible to include oral testimonies of displaced Algerians and relevant Tunisian stakeholders in our analysis. The UNHCR archival data included detailed observations of Algerians' living conditions in Tunisia and conversations and letters of Tunisian actors to UNHCR staff, revealing their political positions and strategies. It is difficult to assess whether these accounts – filtered through the lens of UNHCR staff – were representative of all (local) Tunisian actors involved at the time. We had hoped to access the Tunisian National Archive, which turned out to be impossible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, given that the archival and media analysis resulted in similar findings, we do consider that our data offer a comprehensive account of the developments and perceptions at the time.

3. Tunisia's governance approach towards Algerian and Libyan displacement in context

Immigration to Tunisia has deep historical roots: Slave trade between North, West, and Central Africa crucially shaped population movements since the 16th century and over the 19th century migration of merchants, labourers, and farmers from across the Mediterranean accelerated. Immigration further intensified with European colonization, and in 1950, nearly 350,000 foreigners lived in Tunisia, mainly from France, Italy, Libya, and Algeria (Bredeloup & Pliez, 2005; Choate, 2010). However, the governance of such immigration was not a major concern in Tunisia until French colonial administrators introduced French immigration laws on Tunisian territory in the early 20th century (Natter, 2023).

After 75 years of colonization, Tunisia gained independence from France in 1956. That year, the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962) was already in full swing, triggering intense and bitter fighting between Algerian independence fighters and the French colonial army as well as large-scale displacement into Tunisia and Morocco. Algerians started to arrive in Tunisia in 1956 (ʿAṣūl, 2009; Perret & Bugnion, 2011, p. 723), and at the end of the war, Tunisia hosted approximately 171,000 Algerians, although these numbers were subject to continuous debate between Tunisian authorities and relief organizations as they were taken as a basis to calculate the financial relief effort. Most refugees remained in the South–West of Tunisia close to the Algerian borders, where the Tunisian Red Crescent and UNHCR erected refugee camps and support structures. Many Algerians were also accommodated privately.

The young state and its leaders knew of their limited economic capacity and know-how in offering adequate protection to Algerians. Still, they were also keen on living up to the responsibility as a newly independent state to

support those fleeing from a war of independence they had luckily avoided. This explains why Tunisia responded to this large-scale arrival of Algerians by involving the international community and highlighting the humanitarian nature of the crisis. In the words of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Secretary General at the time: '*the [Tunisian] government is willing to accept aid from any and all sources but will not tolerate independent relief actions from any agency. It takes the position that the government is responsible for the refugees and their welfare*', as '*related to this position is the question of sovereignty and the extraordinary sensitivity of the Tunisian authorities*'.[2]

To redirect international attention – which in 1956 was focused on the refugee dynamics in Europe as a result of the Hungarian uprising – to the situation unfolding at the Algerian-Tunisian border, Tunisian President Bourguiba called upon the UNHCR to intervene in a letter of 31 May 1957.[3] In response, the UNHCR and the League of Red Cross Societies, supported by the Tunisian Red Crescent, set up a large-scale humanitarian relief effort between February 1959 and July 1962, the so-called joint operation. The joint operation focused solely on humanitarian aid – providing food, clothes, housing, medicine, and to a smaller degree education. It was supported financially by the Tunisian government and the international community, principally the US and Switzerland but also France, which was eager to demonstrate commitment to Algerians, whom it continued to consider as French citizens.[4] Also the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) participated in the relief operation (Benatia, 1997; Rahal & White, 2022) to assert itself as a state-in-waiting, engaging with the UNHCR outside Algeria and coordinating humanitarian actions with the Algerian Red Crescent.

For UNCHR, the intervention in Tunisia (and Morocco) was the first outside European territory since its creation and the first after the Hungarian revolution in 1956. UNHCR staff involved in the joint operation had heightened awareness of the sensitivities surrounding national sovereignty in a post-WWII, post-colonial context. In this vein, the ad-hoc, *prima facie* recognition of Algerians as refugees by the UNHCR was not meant to initiate discussions on long-term integration or legal status of refugees in Tunisia: '*Authorities are so far not much interested in questions of legal protection*', the UNHCR Representative in Tunisia concluded.[5] Indeed, Tunisian authorities made clear that they had no capacity to think about integrating Algerian refugees structurally into Tunisian society at a moment in time when politics was focused on consolidating independent political institutions. Furthermore, the geopolitical dynamics around decolonization gave rise to optimism and reinforced the expectation that most Algerians would return in the wake of independence. How Tunisian authorities' position towards Algerian refugees would have changed in the event of a prolonged war or different outcomes (such as the continuation of Algeria under French rule) remains speculation.

In the end, Tunisia's approach turned out to be sustainable because two-thirds of the 171,000 Algerian refugees recorded in early 1962 were returned through UNHCR repatriation programmes by the time of the Algerian independence referendum on 1 July 1962.[6] Those Algerians who stayed in Tunisia seemed to be of no particular interest to the Tunisian state. While the two biggest national newspapers at the time reported extensively about the Algerian referendum on self-determination and the role of Algerian returnees from Tunisia (who had to return to vote), they remained completely silent about Algerians who potentially stayed in Tunisia. As the UNHCR reported from a press conference held by Tunisian State Secretary of the Interior on 30th July 1962: '*Today Mr Mehiri concluded that the problem of refugees with all that it entails in terms of suffering and difficulties is settled for Tunisia*'.[7]

From the mid-1960s until the mid-1990s, immigration to Tunisia remained small scale, dominated by labour migration and punctual arrivals of refugees from the Maghreb and the Middle East (Boubakri, 2004). However, immigration as such was not a field of extensive public policymaking and state engagement remained limited. Since the turn of the 21st century, Tunisia has become a destination for African workers and students, particularly from Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Mali, as well as to some extent for Europeans (Labidi et al., 2017; Mazzella, 2009). In parallel, a new regional context raised political stakes associated with immigration and its control, resulting in the securitization of irregular migration (Boubakri, 2009; Natter, 2023).

The 2011 protests against the Gaddafi regime in neighbouring Libya and the ensuing civil war fundamentally reshuffled Tunisia's immigration profile. Shortly after the Tunisian revolution toppled the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali, neighbouring Libya also went through a revolution and popular upheaval against long-time authoritarian leader Ghaddafi. Yet, while in Tunisia the regime change kick-started a democratization process, in Libya, a civil war broke out between different political factions. The intensity of fighting and the extent of political instability fluctuated over the years – with particularly heated moments in 2011, 2014, and 2019 – and the conflict is still ongoing more than one decade later. As a consequence, the Libyan crisis led to the second large-scale arrival of forced migrants in Tunisia's post-independence history. Within the first year of the Libyan crisis, 345,000 people crossed into Tunisia, including Sub-Saharan Africans (mainly Eritreans, Somalis, and Sudanese), Arab, and Asian migrant workers, Tunisian returnees, and Libyans (Boubakri, 2015; De Bel-Air, 2016, p. 8).

As with Algerian refugees in the 1950s, the exact size of Tunisia's Libyan community has been highly debated: the 2014 Tunisian census recorded 8,000 Libyan citizens, official declarations refer to 1 to 1.5 million Libyans, and estimates by scholars and respondents in the field hover around several hundred thousand (Natter, 2021). Yet, while there has been no attempt by the state to get a comprehensive record of the number of Libyans in Tunisia (in

contrast to the meticulous counting of Algerians), it is clear that Libyans are by far the largest migrant group in Tunisia today.

The Tunisian state has responded to this large-scale arrival of Libyans by pursuing a laissez-faire policy – a policy of state absence. Since 2011, Libyans arriving in Tunisia have not been framed nor recognized as refugees in political discourse: '*Libyans are not refugees*' has been a repeated statement in our expert interviews (TUNEX9, TUNEX11, TUNEX24, TUNEX27 TUNEX35, TUNEX45). Instead, Libyans are cast as brothers or neighbours whose '*de facto* protection' (TUNEX31) is guaranteed because freedom of movement between both countries theoretically existed since a 1973 bilateral agreement between Libya and Tunisia.[8] In this vein, the Tunisian state has tolerated and accommodated the presence of Libyans by granting children access to schools, not enforcing laws related to overstaying and irregular entry, and easing regulations on purchasing property. Consequently, Libyans who arrived in Tunisia after 2011 did not stay in state- or UNHCR-organized camps but were primarily housed in private homes and hotels in the South–East of Tunisia, and later on in rented accommodation in urban settings, mainly in Tunis, Médénine, and Sfax.

At the same time, however, there has been no attempt by Tunisian authorities to register or legalize the situation of Libyans by giving them refugee status or stay permits. For many Libyans in Tunisia, their legal situation remains unclear: '*now you learn the truth and how some laws are blurry, each person would give you different information and [there is] nothing official or legal that you can count on*' (LIBTUN23). Others reported that a legal residency remains practically inaccessible for Libyans (LIBTUN1; LIBTUN18; LIBTUN20; LIBTUN25). Yet, as Tunisian authorities do not fine, imprison, or deport Libyans without a regular stay permit, many do not consider it worthwhile even to try regularizing their papers (LIBTUN2; LIBTUN4; LIBTUN10).

This laissez-faire towards Libyan citizens contrasts with Tunisia's broader, restrictive immigration governance after 2011, especially towards migrants and refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa (Cassarini, 2020; Geisser, 2019). Although the Tunisian revolution in 2011 triggered societal debates about immigration and lobbying by NGOs and IOs led to small-scale improvements, such as better access to healthcare for refugees or laws against human trafficking and racial discrimination, Tunisian authorities did ultimately not reform the country's security-driven policies inherited from the Ben Ali era, and security remained the central paradigm in immigration politics (Boubakri & Potot, 2012; Natter, 2021). In contrast to Libyan citizens, most Sub-Saharan migrants fleeing the violence in Libya to Tunisia were first settled in the Choucha camp, located in the desert area between Ben Guerdane and the Libyan border, under the authority of the Tunisian army and managed by the Red Crescent, UNHCR, and IOM. Over the years, the Libyan-Tunisian border has become increasingly securitized, with Sub-Saharan migrants who flee

from the violence in Libya facing huge obstacles to legally enter Tunisia (FTDES and Migreurop 2020, pp. 51–52).

A striking consequence of Tunisia's laissez-faire policy towards Libyans is the low involvement of NGOs and IOs, which almost exclusively focus in their work on migrants and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, UNHCR is not systematically registering Libyans or providing them with legal or humanitarian support, although it opened a full-fledged delegation in Tunisia in 2011 that has been key in organizing the reception, repatriation, and resettlement of non-Libyans arriving from Libya in 2011. Only a small number of Libyans have submitted an asylum claim in Tunisia. Furthermore, while Tunisian civil society has flourished since 2011 and taken on the plight of refugees and migrants in their agenda, only two NGOs dealing with migrants also include Libyans in their protection and advocacy work (namely the Observatoire des medias and Terre d'Asile Tunisie).

As a result of this laissez-faire policy, and although many Libyans arrived in Tunisia with initially better structural conditions than Algerians in the late 1950s, Libyan interviewees narrate experiences of persecution, dispossession, and impoverishment (LIBTUN5; LIBTUN12; LIBTUN18; LIBTUN19; LIBTUN23; LIBTUN24, LIBTUN25) as the Libyan community in Tunisia faces more and

Table 1. Tunisia's forced migration governance of Algerians and Libyans.

	Algerian displacement	Libyan displacement
Moment of political transformation in Tunisia	Decolonization and independence, 1956	Revolutionary upheaval and democratization, 2011
Trigger for displacement from the neighbouring country	Algerian War of Independence: 1954–1962	Libyan Revolution/Civil War: 2011 ongoing
Tunisia's forced migration governance approach	*Framing* • Algerians framed as Arab brothers in need • Algerian displacement framed as a problem and important domestic and international issue *Political response* • Systematic emergency relief • Important involvement of IOs and INGOs • No long-term integration measures • Return operations by the UNHCR at the end of conflict *Legal status* • *Prima facie* status, no individual asylum procedures • Registration by Tunisian authorities and Algerian Red Crescent	*Framing* • Libyans framed as Arab brothers in need • Libyan displacement not framed as refugee crisis (in contrast to arrival of non-Libyans) *Political response* • Laissez-faire policy, with a few exceptions • Limited involvement of IOs and INGOs • No long-term integration measures • No return operations *Legal status* • Tourist visa or irregular status, few individual asylum procedures • No registration by Tunisian authorities

more protection needs that remain unresolved 10 years after the civil war started (TUNEX6, TUNEX20, TUNEX45, see also Mouley, 2016). Table 1 summarizes the key characteristics of Tunisia's governance of Algerian and Libyan displacement and provides the foundation for analysing forced migrants as risks or assets to the political transformation process at play.

4. Forced migrants as ideological, economic, and political assets or risks

In the following sections, we zoom in on three aspects that shaped Tunisia's forced migration governance in both cases of large-scale displacement: First, we discuss how the Tunisian state redefined itself against the inside and the outside, i.e. Europe and (North) Africa, with Algerians and Libyans being perceived as ideological assets in this process. Second, we scrutinize the delicate balancing of different state actors between security concerns and financial interests and the related perceptions of forced migrants as political and economic risks or assets. Finally, we examine how, due to such perceptions, Tunisian authorities integrated and also controlled IOs in discussions around the legal status of Algerians and Libyans. This analysis of this different balancing of economic, political, and ideological dynamics at domestic and geopolitical levels (see Table 2) explains why the Tunisian state reacted with a supportive-open approach towards Algerian refugees in the 1956–1962 period, while it adopted a laissez-faire policy towards Libyanssince 2011.

Table 2. Refugees as risks and assets on domestic and geopolitical levels.

	Domestic level	Geopolitical level	Approach
Algerian displacement	**Ideological asset**: brothers in need **Economic risk**: burden in an already weak economy **Political risk**: Algerian conflict might spill over into Tunisia	**Ideological asset**: towards Africa/ other independent countries, also towards France **Economic asset**: to channel international funds **Political asset**: to assert national sovereignty on the international stage	**Supportive-open**
Libyan displacement	**Ideological asset**: brothers in need **Economic asset**: reviving tourism; Tunisian-Libyan migration and labour relations **Political risk**: security concerns around terrorism, importing tribal conflict	**Political risks**: towards Libya (potentially jeopardising relations with the winning Libyan faction) and towards the international community (pressures of EU/ UNHCR to enshrine asylum law, step up refugee protection)	**Laissez-faire**

a. Who are we and who are they?

In both the late 1950s and since 2011, Tunisia has lived through a period of intense redefinition of the self, which reshaped how the Tunisian state approached 'the other', i.e. forced migrants arriving from neighbouring Algeria and Libya. In both cases, upholding and demonstrating national sovereignty was vital, as Tunisia redefined itself against the inside (domestically) and the outside (geopolitically) to assert its position between Europe and (North) Africa. In this process of redefinition of the self, Algerians and Libyans served as ideological assets.

After 75 years of colonization, independence in 1956 meant that Tunisian national identity and the structure of political institutions could be crafted anew. With the move from the Beylical system to a republic, the nationalist leaders – first and foremost independence hero Bourguiba – sought to revive a modern, united Tunisia. This redefinition of the self also entailed a repositioning towards the other in terms of geopolitical alliances – with a distancing from the previous colonizer France and potential foreign influences and a rapprochement with independence leaders across Africa and the Arab world (Abbassi, 2005; Camau & Geisser, 2003). The dynamics surrounding the Algerian relief effort were thus deeply politicized: Independent Tunisia had a clear position in the Algerian Independence War, given that Tunisian independence was a moment of empowerment of the Tunisian people against the French colonizer. And so in this process of redefining its political institutions and identity – against that of the colonizer and in a spirit of supporting decolonization, fostering Pan-Arab solidarity and developing an independent voice on the geopolitical level – Algerian refugees were an ideological asset.

In a similar vein, after the 2011 revolution, Tunisian societal and political leaders sought to redefine the rules of politics and the substance of national identity (Allal & Geisser, 2011; Zemni, 2016) – this time in contrast to that of the corrupt, autocratic leadership under Ben Ali (and other authoritarian regimes in the region) as well as in contrast to a xenophobic and restrictive Europe. The fact that Tunisia kick-started a regional movement of revolts and popular empowerment meant that it had to live up to its responsibility as a role model for democratization. With the outbreak of the civil wars in Libya and Syria and the return to authoritarianism in Egypt, Tunisia repeatedly presented itself as one of the few successful examples of political transformation.[9] In this context, the new Tunisian leadership sought to cut ties with repressive rulers across the Arab world and support progressive movements without however jeopardizing international cooperation with Europe, the United States, or other major investors that remain central to Tunisia's economic survival strategy. In its push for progressive politics, Tunisia had to perform a delicate

balancing act in its relations with Europe: taking a stance against Europe's securitization of migration and asylum in the Mediterranean and externalization attempts on the one hand while not missing out on economic cooperation and tourism, on the other.[10]

The strong national and regional identities of the post-independence and post-revolution periods were critical in informing how Tunisia approached 'the other' – namely Algerians and Libyans. In both periods, Tunisia's new political leadership saw it as a responsibility to host those 'brothers' in a shared fight (for independence or democracy) and with a shared cultural heritage (the Maghreb). Narratives of brotherhood, solidarity, and neighbourhood dominated public discourse – at least initially, as Algerians and Libyans were welcomed but also not supposed to stay forever. In both contexts, Tunisian solidarity efforts were geared towards humanitarian emergency relief without perceiving itself necessarily as a country of immigration or asylum. President Bourguiba addressed Tunisia's role in managing Algerian displacement in one of his weekly speeches in 1957, for example, as follows: '*Our action will, I hope, contribute to bringing closer the hour of liberation for the Algerian people* (. . .) *The government, the national organizations and the people as a whole will continue, as they have done for two years, to share with our Algerian brothers our resources and food, housing, medicines and hospital means*'.[11] Similarly, an editorial published in La Presse de Tunisie in June 2011 reads: '*And if the Libyan brothers enjoy rest and relaxation [in Tunisia], their hearts still beat with their brothers and sons on the Libyan soil where the war continues between the battalions and the revolutionaries, looking forward to happy news that may reach them about the end of the war to return to their homes*'.[12]

The fact that Tunisia had a consistent stance in the Franco-Algerian conflict in support of Algerian independence meant that Algerian refugees continued to be welcomed throughout the entire period (1956–1962) and that authorities univocally framed the plight of refugees as a 'problem'. Indeed, Tunisia had a clear view of France's role and responsibility in the war, seeing Algerian displacement as the result of France's oppression of the independence movement and its 'cleaning operations' in the border region.[13] In contrast, when it became clear that the Libyan revolution would not be as quick and peaceful as the Tunisian one, and a civil war broke out, Tunisian authorities became weary of positioning themselves too clearly on either side of the conflicting parties to avoid negative repercussions once the war would end. This meant that while Tunisia hosted Libyans with enthusiasm in early 2011, ultimately, Tunisian authorities preferred to adopt a laissez-faire approach, whereby Libyans were neither the target of politicization and exclusion nor the beneficiaries of support and integration measures.

b. Forced migrants as economic assets, political allies, or risks

In addition to this ideological dimension of hosting Algerian and Libyan forced migrants, Tunisian authorities involved in forced migration governance had to juggle different political and economic interests at the domestic and geopolitical levels. In both cases, Tunisia was in a fragile economic situation that dominated national political debates in the post-independence and post-revolution periods. However, Algerian and Libyan forced migrants were perceived very differently in that context: Media reports of the post-independence period described '*masses of people left to hunger, cold and disease' and 'an atmosphere of desolation and destitution reign[ing] over the refugee camp*',[14] emphasizing Algerian refugees' vulnerability and Tunisia's lack of financial capacities to assist them. Algerian displacement was viewed as an economic risk to the young Tunisian state, and thus authorities were also aware that without international and European support, relief would be insufficient and overly costly. This explains the pro-active involvement of international actors such as UNHCR and ICRC in refugee relief by the Tunisian state.

In contrast to such framing of Algerian refugees as poor and vulnerable, Libyan forced migrants have been perceived as economic assets in Tunisia's struggling economy after 2011. In the Tunisian print media, Libyans were sometimes even praised for reviving Tunisia's tourism: '*Thanks to the confirmation of reservations and high rate of Libyan arrivals, the tourism activity has revived in the Djerba-Zarzis tourist area and the accommodation rate is 100 per cent*'.[15] In 2016, regulations to buy property for Libyans were also eased to stimulate the real estate market. Libyans have indeed massively invested in the Tunisian economy, contributed to tourism revenues, and been welcome clients in Tunisia's private clinics before 2011 (Rouland & Jarraya, 2020). The strong economic relations between Libya and Tunisia go back to the discovery of oil in Libya in 1959, after which Libya became a significant destination for Tunisian workers. There is also a long history of (informal) cross-border trade between Libya and Tunisia, which sustained the deprived southeastern regions of Tunisia and became especially important after the 1992 UN embargo of Libya when Tunisia became Libya's economic lung (Chandoul et al., 1991). The 2011 revolution and conflict in Libya reshuffled the cards – Tunisian labourers returned, at least temporarily, and Libyans fled to Tunisia. However, given the economic importance of Libya (AfDB, 2011), Tunisians are aware that in the long term, they will be the first to benefit economically once the Libyan crisis is resolved: '*The Tunisian perception is that once the Libyan situation is resolved or improves, they will be the first ones to benefit. That's why they try to be as neutral as possible*' (TUNEX28).

Tunisian authorities have thus adopted a laissez-faire policy, preferring not to take sides in Libya's civil war and not to recognize Libyans as refugees, as

this could eventually jeopardize its future economic relations with Libya. An attempt at limiting cross-border mobility was short-lived: In 2014, Tunisia sought to introduce an exit tax for Libyans when leaving Tunisia. However, protests broke out at the two main border posts, and Libyan brigades threatened to impose an import tax on Tunisians in exchange, which would have meant the halt of cross-border trade. As a result, Tunisian and Libyan authorities and tribes have kept the Libyan-Tunisian border open over the years – for potential Tunisian emigrants to enter Libya and for Libyan forced migrants to enter Tunisia.

Next to such economic considerations of hosting Algerian and Libyan forced migrants, Tunisian authorities had to balance a set of political risks: In both situations, security concerns emerging from transnational political activities were looming in the background. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, hosting Algerian refugees was instrumental in demonstrating Pan-Arab solidarity and reaffirming Tunisia's national sovereignty on the international level. However, Tunisia was careful not to conflate refugee relief with political support to the Algerian independence movement out of fear of losing European financial and UNCHR's organizational support. Although Bourguiba declared his unlimited support for Algeria's independence, he saw the war as a danger to internal security and wanted to take on a 'conciliatory' role in pushing for peace negotiations between France and Algeria. In this vein, Tunisian authorities were keen to showcase to European and international actors that Algerian independence fighters and their families were excluded from refugee relief. As a UNHCR inter-office memorandum states: '*The [Tunisian] Ministry of Interior replied that [. . .] it was the policy of the Tunisian government that there should be no confusion between the relief action for refugees and any assistance (which might be given to the FLN, etc.) for the Algerian war effort. He emphasized the wish of the Government to keep straight lines and to avoid that any organization, Government, or the public in general give contributions to warlike purposes in the belief that they were given to refugees*'.[16]

Tunisian authorities were also afraid of the conflict spilling over on Tunisian soil as France perceived Algerian refugees in Tunisia as a security threat and felt the potential danger of a joint struggle for North Africa, with Algerian revolutionaries and Tunisian activists joining forces. In some incidences, French and Algerian military forces indeed transgressed the border into Tunisian territory. In 1958, for example, the leaders of the FLN set up a base for the National Liberation Army (ALN) in Tunisia near Sakiet Sidi Youssef, which was shortly after bombed by the French army. Bourguiba recalled Tunisia's ambassador in Paris as a result, demanding the withdrawal of French troops from all Tunisian territory (Perret & Bugnion, 2011).

Security issues were also at play in post-revolutionary Tunisia, where fears of terrorist attacks from Islamist fighters or Tunisian returnees, as well as fears

of importing tribal conflicts from Libya onto the Tunisian territory have led to the securitization of the Tunisian-Libyan border and the construction of a border wall after 2014. As the Tunisian newspaper As-Ṣabāḥ titled: '*Tunisia and Libya are between two fires, a struggle against the "counter-revolution" or terrorist crimes*'.[17] In that vein, Tunisian authorities have allegedly agreed with tribal leaders in Tunisia that they would refrain from political activism on Tunisian territory. The Tunisian Interior Ministry is also said to have blocked the granting of residence permits to Libyans out of fear of losing its discretion in controlling the Libyan community in Tunisia.

Furthermore, recognizing Libyans as refugees was perceived as a geopolitical risk in two regards: On the one hand, Tunisian authorities did not want to position themselves in the Libyan conflict by granting refugee status to Libyan citizens, as this would have implicitly meant acknowledging threats to citizens' safety by the Libyan factions in power: '*If the Tunisian state recognizes that a person is a refugee because he cannot return to his country, it means that [. . .] they recognize that the state cannot ensure the security of its citizens*' (TUNEX43). On the other hand, Tunisian authorities were weary of passing an asylum law and of formalizing the stay of Libyans given continuously high pressures from the European Union to step up refugee reception to facilitate the externalization of migration control and asylum processing: *There is still reticence on the part of the Tunisian government [. . .] because they are thinking that by setting up an asylum law they will be somewhat bound by this law and that they will no longer have the freedom to manage, so they leave this vagueness* (TUNEX44). Thus, Tunisian authorities opted for a low-engagement laissez-faire policy that would avoid politicizing the Libyan presence in diplomatic relations and international cooperation.

Ultimately, in the context of independence, perceptions of displaced Algerians as ideological assets as well as economic and political assets in the international sphere ultimately outweighed perceptions of economic and political risks at the domestic level, with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) taking a central role in registering Algerian refugees and organizing relief together with the ICRC and UNHCR.[18] In contrast, in the post-revolutionary context, although displaced Libyans have been perceived as economic assets, considerations of political risks at the domestic and geopolitical levels drove a laissez-faire - and to some extent inconsistent - policy, whereby the MoI decided to block granting residency permits and refugee status to Libyans and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) sought to keep borders open to continue tourism and business relations while also remaining weary of international cooperation with the European Union. Our analysis of this delicate balancing of economic and political interests thus showcases institution-specific priorities and inconsistencies that are well known from existing research on (forced) migration governance (Abdelaaty, 2021; Jacobsen, 1996; Natter, 2023).

c. Disputed legal definitions or the taming of the international refugee regime

In both cases, Tunisia considered it crucial to assert national sovereignty on the international level in its governance of forced migrants. This is particularly visible in the fact that Tunisian state actors were very outspoken about limiting the involvement of IOs and especially UNHCR's mandate regarding legal definitions and procedures around granting refugee status. The power dynamics around the legal status of displaced Algerians and Libyans in Tunisia illustrate how the international refugee regime was integrated, used, and controlled by Tunisian authorities in these moments, based on whether these groups were perceived as assets or risks on the domestic and geopolitical levels.

In the context of independence, Tunisia played a leading role in raising global awareness about the Algerian displacement, arguing that Tunisia had equal rights to request international support as Austria had in 1956 during the Hungarian refugee crisis. Yet, while Tunisia's government demanded international solidarity in managing displacement, it also wanted to keep the power of the relief operation and decide which IOs and foreign NGOs were allowed to operate on its territory and how: '*The [Tunisian] government does not want teams representing foreign organizations operating in the frontier districts, and they do not want any such organizations to establish more or less independent operations to assist the refugees*'.[19] For example, Tunisia repeatedly refused to allow the American NGO CARE to participate in the relief operation, leading CARE to eventually give up on receiving an invitation from the authorities in 1961. Also, while the UNHCR was the driving force behind introducing a registration process for Algerian refugees to estimate humanitarian (and financial) needs, Tunisian authorities ultimately kept the controlling hand over its implementation. A UNHCR inter-office memorandum summarized it as follows: '*Being a comparatively new country, Tunisia is inclined to be a little bit touchy and to consider as "a violation of its sovereignty" actions and situations which more firmly established countries would take in their stride. Officials are not inclined to leave matters to be worked out by the League and UNHCR. They feel that they should have the final decision, should approve and authorize*'.[20]

The most fierce negotiations between UNHCR and Tunisian authorities revolved around the definition of who was considered to be a refugee, as this was key to determining the budget for the relief operation. The UNHCR repeatedly complained that the criteria of the Tunisian authorities for refugee determination remained blurred: '*What are the criteria of the Tunisian authorities for determination as to who is a refugee? This whole question is loaded with political dynamite but may also considerably influence the question of the number of real refugees to whom our rations are being distributed*.'[21].

Tunisian (and Moroccan) authorities indeed lobbied for a broad refugee definition to maximize access to aid while keeping a controlling hand over issuing ID documents. This led the UNHCR to drop Algerian nationality as a selection criterion for material assistance in 1960. The UNHCR made it clear that this was a concession to the Tunisian and Moroccan authorities: '*The High Commissioner had already made a tremendous concession in dropping the criterion of nationality thus adopting by far the most liberal definition ever accepted by this Office*'.[22] Yet, Tunisian (and Moroccan) authorities also reacted to UNHCR's and France's worries that Algerian fighters could benefit from assistance, especially in the later phase of the conflict, and asserted that fighters were excluded from receiving assistance in an attempt to depoliticize the relief operation. A refugee was thus ultimately defined as someone who had habitual residence in Algeria, had fled to Morocco or Tunisia from Algeria since 1956 as a consequence of the events there, and was in need. Excluded were nomadic tribes, Algerians who had resided in Tunisia before the war, vulnerable Tunisians, and injured ALN fighters. However, the UNHCR also admitted that it was in practice impossible to ensure that fighters would not benefit from assistance via family members.[23]

Also in the context of the Libyan civil war – and especially in 2011 – international organizations were key actors in assisting people fleeing Libya to Tunisia, but Tunisian authorities decided which groups would ultimately benefit from assistance and legal protection. As mentioned before, consequently, IO's work in Tunisia since 2011 largely focused on migrants and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa, while Tunisian authorities relied on pre-existing, temporary arrangements regarding Libyan citizens, allowing for the mobility of Libyans into Tunisia without, however, developing new policies that would allow or facilitate long-term integration. In this context, authorities emphasized that the historical (1973) free mobility agreement with Libya provided Libyans with a 'de facto protection status' that did not necessitate further regulation.

Indeed, Libyans can legally enter and stay on Tunisian territory for 3 months, after which they need to exit (and re-enter) Tunisia. While Libyans could have applied for refugee status with the UNHCR or a work permit with the Tunisian Ministry of Labour, only a few have done so (TUNEX44). Those few Libyans who did register at the UNHCR as asylum-seekers have been individual persecution cases who neither feel safe in Tunisia nor in Libya (for instance, related to homosexuality, high-profile journalism or activism) or who are in a particularly vulnerable economic situation (LIBTUN3, LIBTUN5, LIBTUN12, and LIBTUN13). Allegedly, Tunisian authorities have prevented the UNHCR from recognizing Libyan asylum-seekers as refugees: '*So in fact UNHCR had almost no right to issue refugee cards to Libyans (. . .) They can apply for asylum, so they can be asylum-seekers, but they will never have the card, the*

refugee status in Tunisia. This is a political issue' (TUNEX43). As a result, most Libyans reside in Tunisia irregularly or with a temporary tourist status. Yet, those without papers are neither fined nor deported but tolerated by Tunisian authorities, reinforcing the overall laissez-faire approach towards Libyan displacement.

Another, complementary explanation for Libyans' exclusion from UNHCR refugee status is related to geopolitical dynamics around forced migration across the Mediterranean. In contrast to the 1950s, when UNHCR's mission was purely humanitarian and did not (yet) entail the goal of advancing national asylum legislation and capacity building across the globe, after 2011, the UNHCR actively worked with Tunisia's Ministry of Justice towards a draft asylum law. Once the draft asylum law passes, all refugees recognized by the UNHCR would automatically receive refugee status from the Tunisia state (TUNEX38) – so granting Libyans access to UNHCR's refugee determination procedure could have important consequences in the future. While there was some enthusiasm to develop a national asylum system within the Tunisian administration in 2011–2012 and in 2014 after the ratification of the new constitution, the draft has been shelved since 2016 for both domestic and geopolitical reasons (Natter, 2021): In fact, Tunisian authorities would have to legitimize such an asylum law in front of an electorate – which is split between supporting an asylum law in the spirit of the revolution and highlighting the need to address Tunisians' fears of new influxes from Libya. Over time, Tunisian authorities and civil society also grew increasingly weary and more critical of a genuine partnership between Europe and North African countries, which was accelerated by externalization attempts by the European Union, including suggestions such as extra-territorial processing of European asylum claims in North Africa. Safeguarding and affirming national sovereignty is thus as salient in today's international governance of forced migration as it was in the early years of its establishment in the context of decolonization.

5. Conclusion

This paper analysed Tunisia's response to the large-scale displacement of Algerians and Libyans at critical moments of state-making, namely independence from France in 1956 and the post-2011 democratization process. It showed that to understand forced migration governance, we need to assess whether hosting the group of forced migrants in question is an asset or risk to the political transformation process at play – at the domestic and geopolitical levels, which has important implications for the involvement of international actors.

Our analysis shows that displaced Algerians were perceived as ideological assets for newly-independent Tunisia both domestically, where they were framed as 'brothers in need' of support in their fight for independence, as well as geopolitically, where hosting Algerians showcased Tunisia's pan-Arabism and support for the decolonization movement. Claiming responsibility for Algerian refugees on its territory and coordinating the relief effort was also a political asset, as it allowed Tunisia to assert its national sovereignty towards its formed colonizer France and the international community more generally. However, domestically, hosting Algerians was politically risky, as Tunisia had to carefully balance its position towards the Algerian conflict and was keen to avoid it spilling over into Tunisian territory. For the domestic economy, Algerians were also perceived as a risk, although this was partially alleviated by the intervention of UNHCR and international funding for the relief effort.

Like Algerians, Libyans were domestic ideological assets, as supporting Libyans meant showcasing Tunisia's determination to be a leader in a regional democratization trend. Like Algerians, Libyans were also perceived as domestic security risks, with Tunisian authorities fearing terrorist attacks and importing Libyan tribal conflicts into Tunisian territory. However, in all other dimensions, Libyans were perceived very differently: Economically, they were considered assets in Tunisia's difficult economic situation, given their presence revived for instance tourism and the housing market. In addition, accommodating Libyans was also perceived as geopolitically risky in two ways: Tunisian authorities did not want to position themselves in the Libyan conflict not to jeopardize relations with the future winning Libyan faction, and thus preferred to tolerate but not regulate Libyan citizens' stay in Tunisia. Also, Tunisian authorities were weary of passing an asylum law and formalizing the stay of Libyans given the potential long-term legal responsibilities this might entail in the context of continuously high pressures from the European Union to step up refugee reception.

Perceptions of displaced Algerians as ideological, geopolitical, and economic assets thus outweighed perceptions of risks at the domestic level, resulting in a supportive-open approach in the 1950s–60s. In contrast, displaced Libyans have been perceived as ideological and economic assets on the domestic level but as political risks at the domestic and geopolitical, explaining Tunisia's laissez-faire approach since 2011. This analysis highlights how the combination of three aspects – the redefinition of national identity, the balancing of state actors' political and economic interests, and the integration and also control of IOs – can explain variation in forced migration governance. Although existing research has highlighted the relevance of each of these drivers, we believe that speaking in terms of risks and assets to the political transformation process provides us with analytical tools to explore the imbrication of domestic and geopolitical processes to

understand different state responses to forced migration, including laissez-faire or no-policy.

Ultimately, while the nature of this case study by definition limits its immediate generalizability, we believe that the framework of identifying risks and assets at different levels has potential to understand variations in forced migration governance. First, while this paper focused on the two most significant arrivals of forced migrants on Tunisian territory in recent history, the same type of analysis would allow to grasp the underlying factors of Tunisia's current restrictive approach towards Sub-Saharan migrants and the active involvement of IOs.

Second, while we have focused here on key moments of political transformation, we do not think that forced migration governance is fundamentally different in 'normal' times. Quite the contrary. Political transformation is an always-ongoing process that is not limited to those few (often retroactively identified) turning points. A focus on those key moments, however, allows us to bring out in the open the otherwise often-hidden balancing act between ideological, political, and economic drivers inherent in the governance of forced migration at domestic and geopolitical levels.

Third, while many of the insights are Tunisia-specific, the broader economic, political, and ideological interests and considerations that Tunisian authorities had to reconcile when faced with Algerian and Libyan forced migrants are also at play in other countries. Crucially, our framework is not static but has the potential to explain why states shift in their governance approach over time as perceptions of forced migrants as risks or assets evolve at the domestic and geopolitical levels. In particular, we believe that our framework of risks and assets would be a fruitful approach to understanding forced migration governance in both South–South and North–North forced migration contexts, such as governance approaches to Venezuelan displacement in Latin America, Syrian displacement in the Middle East or Ukrainian displacement in Europe.

Notes

1. All interviews were anonymized and are quoted with codes: LIBTUN = narrative interviews with Libyans in Tunisia who left Libya in the context of the conflicts: TUNEX = expert interviews.
2. UNHCR archive: Mr. Dunning to Mr. Lindt, 19 September 1959.
3. UNHCR archive, Mr. Bourguiba (Tunisian Prime Minister) to High Commissioner, 31 May 1957.
4. In official documents, France speaks of 'French Muslims of Algeria' to refer to Algerian refugees, see: UNHCR archive: Interoffice Memorandum, Mr. Björnberg to High Commissioner, 31 March 1960.

5. UNHCR archive: Interoffice Memorandum, Mr. Rorholt to High Commissioner, 12 January 1961.
6. UNHCR archive: UNHCR Tunis to UNHCR Geneva, 1 August 1962.
7. UNHCR archive: UNHCR Tunis to UNHCR Geneva, 1 August 1962.
8. Establishment Agreement with Libya, 6 June 1973.
9. La Presse de Tunisie, 'Les deux voies du printemps arabe', 5 June 2011.
10. La Presse de Tunisie, 'Notre eldorado contre la citadelle Europe', 3 April 2011.
11. La Presse de Tunisie, 'L'allocution hebdomadaire de M. Bourguiba', 31 May 1957.
12. Aṣ-Ṣabāḥ, 'Yasmīn al-Ḥammāmāt: 620 Libyans in hotel' [English translation], 28 June 2011.
13. La Presse de Tunisie, '2.000 réfugiés d'Algérie ont afflué hier à Souk El Arba', 27 and 28 May 1957.
14. La Presse de Tunisie, 'La semaine de l'étudiant algérien: Visite des réfugiés algériens à Ain Draham', 9 November 1957.
15. Aṣ-Ṣabāḥ, 5 August 2014.
16. UNHCR archive: Interoffice Memorandum, Mr. Rorholt to High Commissioner, 9 March 1961.
17. Aṣ-Ṣabāḥ, 2 August 2014.
18. UNHCR archive: Memorandum, Mr. Schaeffer to Mr. Read, 26 March 1959.
19. UNHCR archive: Mr. Björnberg to Mr. Lindt, 2 October 1959.
20. UNHCR archive: Interoffice Memorandum, Mr. Rorholt to High Commissioner, relations with authorities, 12 Jan 1961.
21. UNHCR archive: Mr. Jamieson to UNHCR Tunisia, 6 Feb 1961.
22. UNHCR archive: Interoffice Memorandum, UNHCR Morocco to UNHCR Geneva; criteria for material assistance, 29 Oct 1960.
23. UNHCR archive: Mr. Beer to Mr. Schnyder, 18 February 1961.

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