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ANNEX

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe

Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding Tunisia

1. IDENTIFICATION

Action: **Continued support to Tunisia's efforts in the areas of counter terrorism and prevention of radicalisation**

Action Reference: NDICI CR 2021 / 46

Cost: EUR 6 000 000 (European Union contribution).

Budget Line: 14 02 03 10

Duration: Maximum 18 months. The authorising officer responsible may decide to extend this period twice by a further period of up to six months, up to a total maximum duration of 30 months, under the conditions laid down in Article 23(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947.

Lead service: FPI

2. ACTION SUMMARY

This action aims to provide continued support to policy planning and implementation of the Tunisian Counter-Terrorism Strategy building on a previous measure, financed under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace. It will ensure continued provision of counter-terrorism expertise to the Tunisian authorities, with a focus on preventing violent extremism and mitigating drivers of radicalization.

The assistance includes support to the Tunisian institutions in administering disengagement and socio-economic reinsertion programmes of detainees in line with international standards. The action will build the capacity of state actors to contribute to an evidence-based policy for the prevention of radicalisation and disengagement for already radicalised people. Strengthening terrorism related investigation, prosecution, adjudication, penitentiary management and reinsertion programmes in line with international standards will also be an important activity. Capacity building of the police and justice services will be addressed relating to cooperation between Tunisia and its neighbours, (including the EU), with EUROPOL and other central intelligence services across EU member states.

The support also includes actions aimed at improving the relationship between the State and civil society organisations on the prevention of extremism, including action on fighting disinformation.

3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3.1 BACKGROUND

Tunisia is currently facing multiple challenges, such as a deteriorating socio-economic situation, the COVID-19 pandemic and political instability. In July 2021, Tunisia's President Kais Saied announced the dismissal of the Prime Minister as well as the suspension of the Parliament. Despite being announced as a temporary measure, the suspension is still in effect raising apprehensions in many quarters, both about the political crisis and the general situation in the country. Youth unemployment remains high, with young people facing economic insecurity, social exclusion and political marginalisation. Furthermore, detainees are being released upon completion of their sentences with limited measures in place to facilitate socio-economic reinsertion. These are all potential drivers of radicalisation towards violent extremism and hence represent an imminent challenge both for Tunisia and its neighbourhood.

As demonstrated by terrorist attacks in Tunisia in 2019 and 2020ⁱ, terrorist groups remain able to recruit and operate. Radicalization of the population, especially of the youth, is a growing concern and the expected return of a sizable number of foreign fighters and impending release of detainees charged with acts of terrorism add to the challenging environment. The border between Tunisia and Libya is volatile, marked by trafficking and infiltration by militias and foreign mercenaries.

In this context, continued cooperation between Tunisia and the EU to counter the common terrorist threat in line with democratic principles, fundamental freedoms and human rights is needed.

This action will, therefore, support the Tunisian institutions in administering disengagement and socio-economic reinsertion programmes of detainees. It will contribute to an evidence-based policy for the prevention of radicalisation and disengagement and further build the capacity of the justice and security services concerning judicial processes relating to terrorism. At the same time it will provide support to improve the relationship between the State and civil society organisations on the prevention of extremism and social conflict. Accompanying socio-economic initiatives and conflict prevention measures will aim to mitigate the exposure of vulnerable groups in Tunisia to violent extremism. A social media and context monitoring exercise to fight disinformation is also foreseen in close consultation with the National Counter Terrorism Commission.

3.2 RATIONALE FOR CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIONS UNDER THE RAPID RESPONSE PILLAR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT

To support Tunisia in the fight against terrorism and prevention of radicalisation, it is necessary to address some of the remaining challenges the country is facing. Foremost among the challenges are the need to support the reinsertion mechanisms for those charged with acts of terrorism and to continue to strengthen terrorism related investigation, prosecution and adjudication in line with international standards. Further efforts are equally needed to address the socio-economic drivers of violent extremism and to increase the resilience of vulnerable

groups through prevention initiatives, constituting an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4) of the NDICI Regulation. An adequate response cannot be provided under any other European Union Instrument due to the urgency with which the funds are required and due to available resources already being firmly committed.

Annex IV, paragraph 1, second paragraph, points (d), (h) and (n) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 specifically provides for the use of the NDICI Rapid Response pillar to provide (d) support for the development of democratic, pluralistic state institutions, including measures to enhance the role of women in such institutions, effective civilian administration and civilian oversight over the security system, as well as measures to strengthen the capacity of law-enforcement and judicial authorities involved in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and all forms of illicit trafficking; (h) support for civilian measures related to the demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants and their families into civil society, and where appropriate their repatriation, as well as measures to address the situation of child soldiers and female combatants; (n) support for measures to promote and defend respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, and the related international instruments.

3.3 ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

ASSUMPTIONS

- The security situation in the neighbouring countries does not deteriorate further and does not spill over into Tunisia.
- The political context does not further deteriorate.
- The political will to engage in security sector reform remains present at all levels, from a high political level to operational and technical counterparts.
- The intelligence services manage to keep the terrorist threat in the country under control.
- The economic situation does not further deteriorate triggering social unrest, especially in marginalised regions, often coinciding with border areas.
- The experts to be deployed under this measure will be allowed to work with Tunisian structures.

RISKS

Risks	Likelihood	Mitigation measures
Unwillingness of national and local authorities hamper the implementation.	Low	The present action has been developed at the request of the authorities and will be further designed in close consultation with the relevant authorities.
Negative attitude toward the EU or international partners	Low	Continuous conflict analysis and do-no-harm enquiry will

due to renewed political tension in Tunisia.		be carried out pro-actively and made available by the implementing partners, who will communicate regularly with the EU.
Ability to implement reforms is hampered due to protracted political deadlock.	Medium	Close coordination with the government and other EU actors will be ensured to facilitate implementation.
Implementation of activities is hampered due to deteriorating political context and potential escalation of demonstrations.	Medium	Planned actions are designed in a flexible manner to enable rapid adaptation.
The COVID-19 pandemic affects implementation of the action.	Medium	The implementation of the action will follow national and international sanitary guidelines and ensure a high level of operational flexibility.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the programme is to support the strengthening of Tunisia's capacity to prevent and to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

4.2.1 To support Tunisian institutions in administering disengagement and socio-economic reinsertion programmes of detainees;

4.2.2 To mitigate exposure of vulnerable populations in Tunisia to violent extremism;

5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

This exceptional assistance measure will have two components.

The main expected results/outcomes include:

Expected Result (1):

Expected result (1): Tunisian authorities' capacities in the area of counter terrorism and prevention of radicalisation are improved.

Activities (indicative):

1.1 Support to the implementation of the counter terrorism strategy through technical assistance to security services or governmental bodies (National Counter Terrorism Commission) according to international standards;

1.2 Technical assistance to the Security Pole (centralised intelligence centre) and enhanced decision making in counter terrorism-related areas;

1.3 Support the strengthening of counter terrorism investigative methods and caseload management in compliance with the rule of law and human rights;

1.4 Provide technical assistance to the Tunisian prison authorities to establish detection and rehabilitation programmes inside prisons and upon release

1.5 Advise and mentor the concerned institutions, focusing on holistic approaches to implementing the national strategy to prevent radicalisation, in particular by engaging ministries of education, culture, religious affairs, justice, interior, social affairs, economic affairs, etc.;

1.6 Use the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Centre of Excellence to promote exchange of best practices between practitioners in Tunisia and in the EU to deliver effective counter radicalisation measures.

Expected Result (2): Exposure of vulnerable groups in Tunisia to violent extremism is mitigated and their resilience is increased.

Activities (indicative):

2.1 Working with State institutions, including the National Counter Terrorism commission, and civil society organisations in order to improve their relationship on the prevention of extremism and social conflicts.

2.2 Using socio-economic, political and cultural initiatives and wider conflict prevention measures to mitigate the exposure of vulnerable groups to violent extremism and increase their resilience.

2.3 Conduct social media and context monitoring exercises to fight disinformation, focusing on the prevention of violent extremism in close consultation with the National Counter Terrorism Commission.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures^[1].

^[1] www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website, it is the OJ version that prevails.

6.1.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

As per the specific objective 4.2.1 the implementing partners will support the Tunisian institutions in administering disengagement and socio-economic reinsertion programmes of detainees

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The type of applicants targeted are non-profit organisations and private companies.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because **the action entails crisis management aid as referred to in Article 195(a) and as defined in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation** at the date of the Financing Decision.

6.1.2 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

As per the specific objective 4.2.2 the implementing partners will mitigate the exposure of vulnerable groups in Tunisia to violent extremism;

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The type of applicants targeted are non-profit organisations and private companies.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because **the action entails crisis management aid as referred to in Article 195(a) and as defined in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation** at the date of the Financing Decision.

6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET

The total European Union contribution under this Financing Decision **will not exceed EUR 6 000 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

Indicative budget breakdown

Components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Expected result (1): Tunisian authorities' capacities in the area of counter terrorism and prevention of radicalisation are augmented		
6.1.1 – Direct grant (direct management)	3 000 000	N/A
Expected Result (2): The exposure of vulnerable populations in		

Tunisia to violent extremism is mitigated and their resilience in increased.		
6.1.2. – Direct grant (direct management)	3 000 000	N/A
Total	6 000 000	N/A

6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The action shall be implemented under direct management for Expected Results 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. It will be devolved and sub-delegated to the **European Union Delegation in Tunisia**, with the support of the Commission for the conclusion of the contracts implementing the action.

6.4 PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS MONITORING AND REPORTING

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and a final report. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

6.5 EVALUATION

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.6 AUDIT

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.7 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

Acknowledging that activities financed under this action will be politically sensitive and/or may constitute a security risk for the implementing partner/beneficiaries, the communication and visibility plan for this measure should develop a differentiated approach to satisfy the requirements from the legal obligations to which EU external funding is bound to without putting at risk the actions supported by this measure.

7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

This measure is fully complementary to other ongoing and planned EU-financed actions in the areas of i) security and justice sector reform and ii) countering violent extremism. In particular, the measure complements a number of regional programmes funded under the long term component (CT-MENA, CT INFLOW)ⁱⁱ of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, as well as the comprehensive security sector modernisation (PARMSS)ⁱⁱⁱ and justice sector reform (PARJ)^{iv} programmes financed by the European Neighbourhood Instrument, which also includes activities relevant to counter-terrorism. The action will also seek to benefit from the Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of excellence funded under the Internal Security Fund.

An exchange of experiences and good practices between this and other ongoing or planned actions will be actively sought. Furthermore, the experts working under this programme will, to the extent possible, be involved in the necessary coordination and identification of further needs under other ongoing and planned programmes.

Coordination with other stakeholders and notably EU Member States and other international partners in Tunisia will be ensured by the EU Delegation to Tunisia.

ⁱ March 2020 against police near the US Embassy in Tunis, September 2020 against Tunisia's National Guard

ⁱⁱ Commission decision C(2015)5209, Commission decision C(2019)7495 amending decision C(2018)7425

ⁱⁱⁱ Programme d'appui à la modernisation du secteur de la sécurité, Commission decision C(2015)5527

^{iv} Programme d'appui à la justice, Commission decision C(2014) 7273