

# Tunisian remains prove 100,000-year human presence

September 15 2016

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The National Heritage Institute in Tunis

Tunisian and British researchers have unearthed Stone Age tools showing humans lived in southern Tunisia nearly 100,000 years ago, they said Thursday.

The discovery could help explain the spread of *Homo sapiens* who appeared in eastern Africa 100,000 years earlier and emerged out of the

continent around 65,000 years ago.

After a year and a half of digging near Tozeur, in southwestern Tunisia, researchers had identified a "promising" site of around 6,000 square metres (65,000 square feet), said researcher Nabil Guesmi.

The artefacts are the oldest evidence of human activity ever discovered in Tunisia, and include [flint tools](#) similar to those [early humans](#) in other areas used for hunting.

The researchers, from Tunisia's National Heritage Institute (INP) and the University of Oxford, also found tools from the Middle Stone Age that attest to the presence of Homo sapiens, said Guesmi.

"We have found bones that indicate the presence of savannah animals—rhinoceros, zebras—and therefore fresh water," he said.

Guesmi said a technique called thermoluminescence had shown that some of the tools were as much as 92,000 years old.

The oldest human remains in North Africa were uncovered in Temara, northwest Morocco, and are thought to date back some 160,000 years.

The INP says the new site could yield evidence of early human "passageways" through the region.

"We can imagine going further, because the site is relatively large," said Guesmi.

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Citation: Tunisian remains prove 100,000-year human presence (2016, September 15) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-09-tunisian-year-human-presence.html>

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