

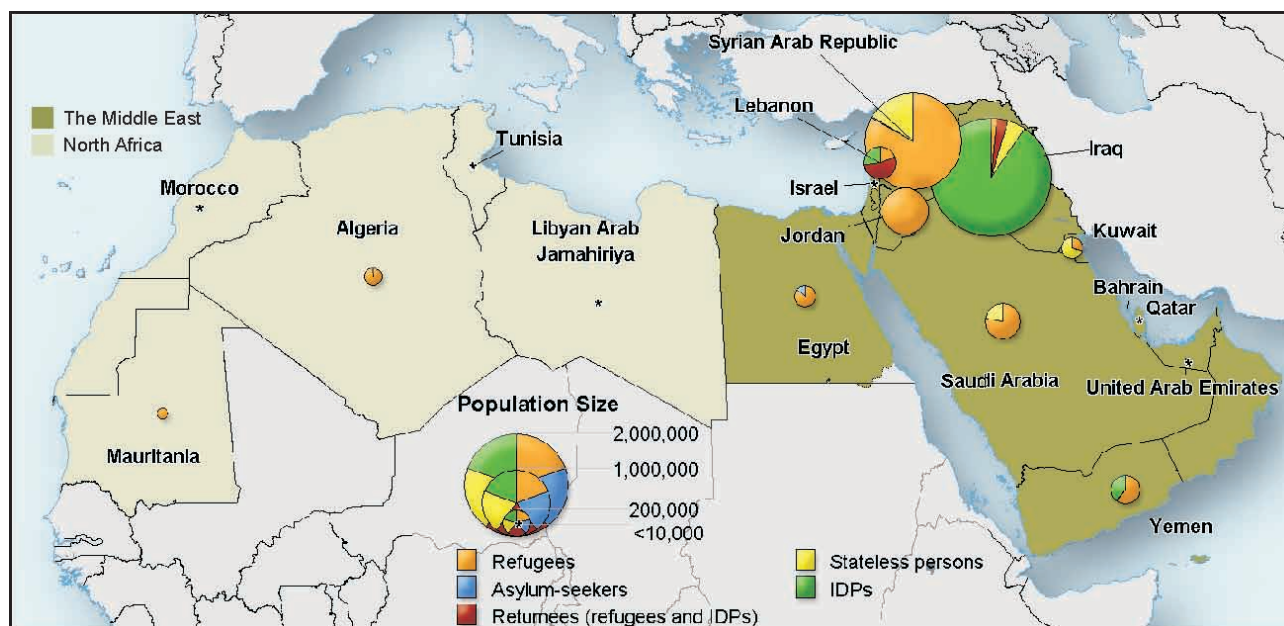
Middle East and North Africa

North Africa
The Middle East

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget
Middle East and North Africa overall	Denmark	12,175	0
	Iceland	0	73,113
	United States	960,000	55,800,000
	Sub-total	972,175	55,873,113
Total		972,175	55,873,113

Note: Contributions shown exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes.

Middle East and North Africa



Working environment

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region produces, and hosts, a large number of refugees and other displaced people. It is prey to social and political turmoil, and security concerns dominate government policies and practices. Nonetheless, change in the region may also create opportunities to improve the situation of the displaced.

Developments in Mauritania are particularly encouraging in this regard. Mauritanian refugees are repatriating voluntarily to their country, while the Government has adopted a national refugee law and established national asylum procedures.

The continuing displacement of Iraqis is having a serious impact on Iraq and other countries in the region. No solutions are in sight for the protracted Palestinian refugee situation either. The asylum systems and socio-economic fabrics of the region's main refugee-hosting countries are feeling the strain.

The dire situation of more than two million internally displaced Iraqis and a large number of Iraqi refugees in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic is of great concern to UNHCR. Numerous women and children within this displaced population are victims of sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation, including trafficking, survival sex and child labour.

The countries hosting Iraqi refugees have shown considerable hospitality and respect for the right to asylum. The international community's support in dealing with the crisis has also had a positive impact on the protection climate for Iraqi refugees.

However, the burden on the main Iraqi-receiving countries, Syria and Jordan in particular, is immense. The presence of massive numbers of Iraqi refugees—in addition to hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees—is placing a heavy burden on the economies and social services of these countries.

Although the conditions prevailing in Iraq are not yet conducive to massive organized voluntary repatriation, many Iraqis are repatriating spontaneously. This has prompted the Office to adopt a new individual case management policy that enables it to provide basic assistance to those returning. Slow but steady improvements in security in Iraq and the growing frustration among Iraqi displaced over their deteriorating humanitarian situation are likely to propel higher rates of returns in 2009.

Egypt is host to refugees and asylum-seekers from Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and other sub-Saharan countries. Asylum-seekers from African countries continue to cross from Egypt into Israel in search of protection and better economic opportunities. This is affecting the protection climate in Egypt, where in June 2008 the authorities detained or *refouled* a significant number of Eritrean asylum-seekers.

In Yemen, UNHCR cares for some 100,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly from Somalia. The Government of Yemen has traditionally maintained an open-door policy towards Somalis, granting them refugee recognition on a *prima-facie* basis. However, the situation is complicated by the increase in mixed migration movements to Yemen. In addition, the internal conflict that broke out in northern Yemen in 2004 has left some 77,000 people displaced or directly affected within the country, posing additional challenges for the Government and aid agencies.

The mixed migration of people originating mostly from sub-Saharan African countries continues to be a major feature in North Africa. Although many of those within mixed movements may be in need of international protection, the majority are believed to be in search of better economic opportunities. The absence of national and regional strategies to deal with the issue makes it difficult to ensure protection for those who need it.

The lack of a political solution in Western Sahara poses persisting challenges in the way of durable solutions to this protracted refugee situation. UNHCR continues to provide basic assistance for Western Sahara refugees in the Tindouf camps in Algeria. In cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and the Moroccan and Algerian authorities, UNHCR implements the Confidence Building Measures project. This facilitates personal contact between the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps and their family members in Western Sahara.

Strategic objectives

- **Taking steps to bridge existing protection gaps, thereby ensuring that people in need of international protection moving in mixed migration flows are protected according to international law and standards**

UNHCR intends to foster partnerships in the region to build national capacities to address migratory movements in line with international standards. The aim is to balance refugee protection with States' security and migration management interests. UNHCR's 10-Point Plan of Action, which was piloted in North Africa and envisages activities elsewhere, including in sub-Saharan countries, is a strategic framework for refugee protection in the context of mixed migration movements.

Enhancing the capacities of governments in the region, thus promoting the establishment of an international protection regime, including responsive asylum systems consistent with international standards

The Office is implementing an asylum capacity and institution-building strategy targeting government structures, civil society institutions and regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Organization of Islamic Conference. This strategy aims to create awareness on refugee matters, promote institutional engagement with



Displaced Iranian Kurds have been living in temporary shelters in Iraq for many years.

refugees and asylum-seekers, and expand asylum space in the Arab world. The strategy includes the provision of technical support, advice and training.

- **Ensuring that the basic needs of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Yemen, as well as refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR in North Africa, are met**

UNHCR's strategy aims at providing basic humanitarian assistance, including care and maintenance and self-reliance opportunities, to refugees and IDPs while searching for durable solutions for them. The Office is also working to strengthen legal frameworks, protection and assistance by enhancing partnerships with the relevant governments and civil society institutions.

In Yemen, UNHCR is working with WFP and other partners to assist IDPs. However, the country's worsening socio-economic situation and growing population of refugees and migrants could weaken its protection climate and threaten its open door policy towards refugees.

- **Ensuring that the basic needs of refugees and IDPs inside Iraq as well as Iraqi refugees and other people of concern to UNHCR in the Middle East are met through the provision of material, medical and other assistance as well as support to the refugees' host governments**

Continuing instability in Iraq has prompted the Office to focus on the provision of protection and assistance to refugees outside Iraq. The Office will also search for durable solutions for refugees in Iraq and Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries. UNHCR is trying to persuade the international community to share more of the burden, and is soliciting more support for the States hosting Iraqi refugees, particularly Syria and Jordan. In addition, in the expectation of increased returns of refugees and IDPs during 2009, UNHCR has put in place mechanisms to deal with the reception and reintegration of returnees.

- **Strengthen external relations with Gulf States for fundraising purposes—directly or through State sponsored NGOs and associations—and with regional intergovernmental organizations and civil society to promote the rights of refugees and stateless people in the Arab world**

UNHCR has embarked on a strategy of comprehensive partnership with the Gulf States aimed at securing their

political and humanitarian support as well as financial contributions. Partnership agreements with prominent NGOs, civil society institutions and societies such as the Saudi Red Crescent and the *Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani Foundation* are being established. Additionally, UNHCR is building on partnerships for advocacy and protection with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

- **Design and implement a situational approach to monitor developments related to statelessness, identify protection gaps affecting stateless people, and advise governments on how to reduce statelessness**

UNHCR is developing plans to address statelessness in the region. The Office will provide training on statelessness issues to its staff, besides encouraging government authorities to address statelessness in their countries.

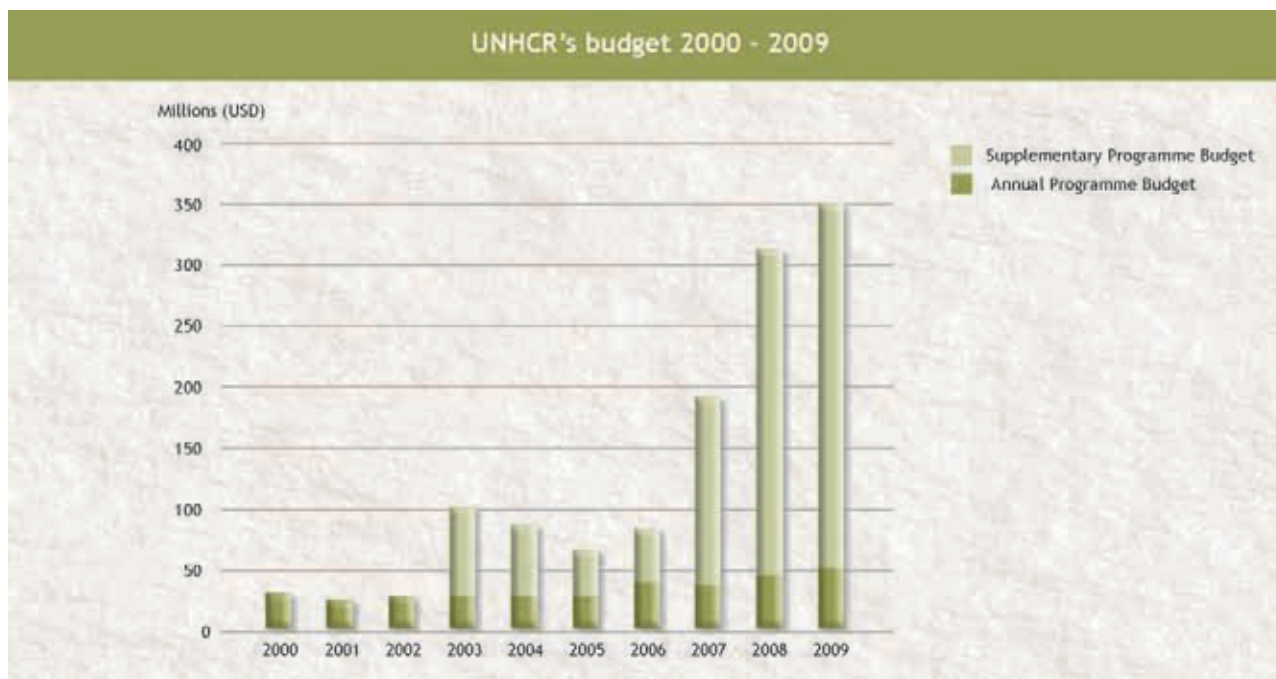
Challenges

Reconciling refugee protection with States' national security interests is a key challenge for UNHCR in the region. Protection is hampered by an absence of national asylum systems, coupled with overwhelming concerns about security. An increase in extremist activities, the volatile situation in Iraq and the long-standing Palestinian issue also raise difficulties in refugee protection and humanitarian work. The growing phenomenon of mixed migration, particularly to North Africa and the Gulf of Aden, is another major challenge for UNHCR operations in the region.

Financial information

UNHCR's requirements in the region have increased considerably during the past three years as a result of the growing number of displaced Iraqis, both inside Iraq and in the surrounding countries. UNHCR's requirements for the Iraq situation are presented in a supplementary budget that covers eight countries, Headquarters and regional activities for some USD 299 million in 2009. The Office also has supplementary programmes for the repatriation of Mauritanian refugees, IDPs in Yemen, confidence-building measures for Western Sahara, and mixed migration movements in North Africa.

UNHCR's budget 2000 - 2009



Budget (USD)

Countries	2008			2009		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Algeria	4,900,313	1,091,014	5,991,327	6,031,156	0	6,031,156
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1,314,586	248,989	1,563,575	1,428,123	0	1,428,123
Mauritania	897,903	6,577,750	7,475,653	921,425	6,491,602	7,413,027
Morocco	1,202,897	384,138	1,587,035	1,375,049	0	1,375,049
Tunisia	406,312	236,326	642,638	448,519	0	448,519
Western Sahara	0	3,294,729	3,294,729	0	4,025,311	4,025,311
Regional activities	0	1,982,393	1,982,393	0	0	0
Subtotal North Africa	8,722,011	13,815,339	22,537,350	10,204,272	10,516,913	20,721,185
Egypt	5,002,166	2,798,471	7,800,637	5,920,580	3,867,787	9,788,367
Iraq	632,337	51,189,623	51,821,960	666,701	75,806,938	76,473,639
Israel	723,075	0	723,075	2,176,844	0	2,176,844
Jordan	1,266,529	50,884,309	52,150,838	1,846,833	44,966,843	46,813,676
Lebanon	3,019,565	6,548,991	9,568,556	2,650,476	6,566,945	9,217,421
Saudi Arabia	2,286,449	300,000	2,586,449	2,430,997	394,909	2,825,906
Syrian Arab Republic	1,750,058	128,807,716	130,557,774	2,088,608	127,714,185	129,802,793
United Arab Emirates	3,220,876	0	3,220,876	3,205,263	0	3,205,263
Yemen	6,713,913	6,553,946	13,267,859	18,930,355	13,441,080	32,371,435
Regional activities ¹	0	5,571,625	5,571,625	0	17,415,886	17,415,886
Subtotal Middle East	24,614,968	252,654,681	277,269,649	39,916,657	290,174,573	330,091,230
Total	33,336,979	266,470,020	299,806,999	50,120,929	300,691,486	350,812,415

¹ Includes regional support activities for procurement and stockpiling, as well as durable solutions.

Note: Supplementary programme budgets exclude 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.