

Middle East

Kilo Arbo Wi Nus, an outlying district of Cairo, Egypt is home to many Sudanese refugees.

Bahrain
Egypt
Iraq
Israel
Jordan
Kuwait
Lebanon
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Syrian Arab Republic
United Arab Emirates
Yemen





| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- In the countries neighbouring Iraq, UNHCR worked to maintain and expand the protection space. In general, the principle of *non-refoulement* continued to be respected in these countries, where the Office registered a total of 50,000 new Iraqi refugees in 2009.
- UNHCR strengthened its ability to protect and assist people of concern in Iraq by expanding its presence there. The Office's shelter programme, particularly in Diyala and other conflict-affected areas of the country, played a critical role in the initial reintegration of returning internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- In Yemen, a six-year-old conflict between the Government and the Al Houthi movement escalated into open hostilities in August 2009, bringing the number of internally displaced persons to 250,000, many for the second and third time. UNHCR helped the Government to protect and assist the displaced populations, including by coordinating protection responses in the governorates where access was possible.
- In Egypt, UNHCR registered all those who approached its office in order to determine their international protection needs and provide them with documentation.



Working environment

As economic and political instability increased in Yemen, the situation in the country became a concern for its neighbours. Saudi Arabia deployed its army to the Yemeni border to counter cross-border incursions by armed people from Sa'ada.

The continuously rising trend of new arrivals affected Yemen's ability to balance its international and human rights obligations against security concerns and the need to protect the country from illegal entry. The policy of arresting Ethiopians and Eritreans on arrival was reinforced in 2009. Until early 2010, UNHCR was regularly denied access to detained Ethiopians, the vast majority of whom are deported without access to asylum procedures.

The year 2009 witnessed an improvement in the overall security environment in Iraq, although the threat to some groups remained high. The number of generalized attacks diminished, but a wave of bombings underlined the tenuous character of recent progress. UNHCR took this window of opportunity to expand its presence in Iraq significantly, doubling the number of its national staff and reinforcing its international presence in Baghdad, Basra, Erbil and Mosul. Despite ongoing security restrictions which provide significant challenges for operational agencies, UNHCR was able to access most areas of Iraq through national staff.

Achievements and Impact

In the Middle East subregion, UNHCR ensured that people in need of international protection moving in mixed migration flows were protected in accordance with international law and standards. The Office also made sure that the basic needs of refugees and IDPs in the subregion were met by providing them with material, medical and other assistance and giving support to the hosting governments.

UNHCR strengthened its relations with Gulf States with the aim to foster support for the Office and its mandate, either directly or through State-sponsored NGOs and associates. It also worked with regional inter-governmental organizations and civil society to promote the rights of refugees and stateless people in the Arab world. The Office monitored the statelessness situation by identifying protection gaps affecting stateless people and advising governments on how to reduce the phenomenon.

In January 2009 a training workshop on statelessness was organized for UNHCR staff working in the region on statelessness issues.

Constraints

The absence of national asylum systems and related administrative procedures remained the major constraint

for UNHCR as it endeavoured to carry out its mandate activities in the subregion. Furthermore, the sensitive political environment in certain parts of the region limited UNHCR's ability to intervene on behalf of people in need of international protection, whether they were to be found in mixed migration flows or in detention. The protection space remained weak, with arrests for illegal entry and lack of residence permits, which at times led to deportation and *refoulement* in some parts of the subregion.

| Operations |

UNHCR's operations in **Egypt** and **Yemen** and related to the **Iraq Situation** are covered in separate chapters.

Until recently, **Israel** received a small but steady number of asylum-seekers each year. However, since 2006 there has been a surge of primarily African asylum-seekers crossing the southern border with Egypt. The number of these new arrivals had reached 18,000 by the end of 2009.

New asylum-seekers continued to arrive in Israel at an estimated rate of 500-700 per month in 2009. Although the Government expressed concern about the high numbers of new arrivals, Israel generally maintained a receptive policy toward asylum-seekers.

In **Jordan**, UNHCR continued to protect and assist refugees by reinforcing the capacity of Jordanian institutions to bear the burden of large numbers and by pursuing resettlement and, in a limited number of cases, voluntary repatriation. UNHCR's overall objectives in the country were three-fold: to maintain and expand the protection space in Jordan by ensuring that Iraqis continue to be able to access national facilities, such as health and education services; to provide safety nets in the form of cash, medical services and legal assistance; and to find durable solutions for the most vulnerable.

At the end of 2009, some 220 refugees and 3,000 asylum-seekers of different nationalities were registered in **Kuwait**, mostly from Afghanistan, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In **Lebanon**, the non-Palestinian refugee population was estimated at 50,000 Iraqis, of whom some 10,000 were registered with UNHCR. Another group of some 1,000 refugees and asylum-seekers were from other countries, mainly Somalia and Sudan. Given the multi-faceted protection challenges, the operation in Lebanon is labour-intensive, with teams dealing with detention, legal aid, registration, community services and resettlement. In Lebanon, UNHCR hosts a Resettlement Hub for the Middle East and North Africa, as well as other regional functions.

In the **Syrian Arab Republic**, the total number of Iraqi refugees registered with UNHCR reached nearly 161,500. Of these, 35,500 were registered in 2009 through the UNHCR registration centre in Douma, the office in Aleppo and mobile registration teams that provide similar services in the governorates. The protection situation in the Syrian Arab Republic has improved and the assistance programme has been expanded. Both were facilitated by the generous attitude of the Government towards refugees.

UNHCR's operations in **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** are managed by the Regional Office in Riyadh.

In **Saudi Arabia**, the Office's engagement with regard to the cross-border operation with Yemen had a positive impact on the overall protection regime in Saudi Arabia.

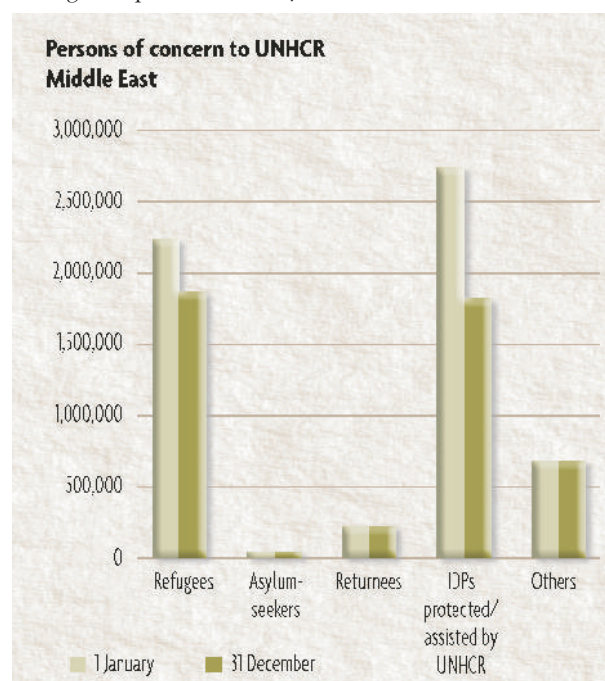
The Saudi authorities cooperated fully both in Riyadh and the Field in facilitating the transit of convoys carrying non-food items (NFIs) from Saudi Arabia into Yemeni territory for the IDPs in northern Yemen. As a result, UNHCR's office Riyadh organized three convoys with NFIs for 750 IDP families living in northern Yemen.

The Office was also able to monitor protection concerns, particularly during the hostilities in northern Yemen. In addition, UNHCR and the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences launched a Comparative Study, *The Right to Asylum between Islamic Shari'a and International Refugee Law*. The study emphasizes the asylum concept in the Islamic traditions and in Shari'a law.

In the **UAE**, the Office continued to carry out refugee status determination (RSD). UAE authorities have sought the help of UNHCR in the cases of asylum-seekers held at the airport and detention centres. In 2009, the UAE made its highest contribution ever to UNHCR to assist the IDP population in Pakistan.

| Financial information |

UNHCR's operations in the Middle East were well funded in 2009, with contributions increasing by 75 per cent over 2008 to USD 262.6 million. Continued contacts and enhanced cooperation with governments of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as NGOs and Foundations, yielded fruitful results in response to UNHCR's appeals. Increased flexibility in implementing UNHCR's operations was also possible due to donors giving over USD 170 million to the entire subregion; up from USD 21.4 million in 2008.



Budget and expenditure in the Middle East (USD)

Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Egypt	6,147,767	4,025,921	10,173,688	5,476,620	2,429,014	7,905,634
Iraq	778,680	165,009,467	165,788,147	643,017	88,754,209	89,397,226
Israel	2,363,257	0	2,363,257	2,043,430	0	2,043,430
Jordan	2,175,897	44,966,843	47,142,740	1,869,945	38,894,590	40,764,535
Lebanon	3,185,885	6,566,945	9,752,830	2,870,450	6,182,668	9,053,118
Saudi Arabia	2,340,498	394,909	2,735,407	2,209,077	215,328	2,424,405
Syrian Arab Republic	1,985,415	127,714,185	129,699,600	1,865,727	95,578,527	97,444,254
United Arab Emirates	2,166,144	79,132	2,245,276	1,905,099	79,132	1,984,231
Yemen	22,639,710	19,097,988	41,737,698	16,289,812	14,328,121	30,617,933
Regional activities ¹	950,000	17,415,886	18,365,886	646,281	1,589,565	2,235,846
Total	44,733,253	385,271,276	430,004,529	35,819,458	248,051,153	283,870,612

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

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the 'New or additional activities-mandate-related'(NAM) reserve.

Voluntary contributions to Middle East (USD)

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Middle East subregion	Canada		1,347,826	1,347,826
	Ireland		654,008	654,008
	Norway		434,512	434,512
	Private donors in Spain	128		128
	Private donors in the USA	600		600
	Sweden	3,771,131	1,814,044	5,585,176
	Switzerland		566,580	566,580
	United Kingdom		2,719,298	2,719,298
	United States of America	5,800,000	153,450,000	159,250,000
	Middle East subtotal	9,571,859	160,986,268	170,558,128
Egypt	European Commission	210,644		210,644
	Netherlands	6,606		6,606
	United States of America	1,502,553		1,502,553
	Egypt subtotal	1,719,803		1,719,803
Israel	The Center for International Migration (Israel)	91,042		91,042
	Israel subtotal	91,042		91,042
Iraq	Australia		1,187,226	1,187,226
	Australia for UNHCR		1,055	1,055
	European Commission		4,917,039	4,917,039
	France		366,142	366,142
	Germany		1,830,709	1,830,709
	HQ Online Donations (Switzerland)		1,867	1,867
	Netherlands		2,735,294	2,735,294
	Sweden		2,415,584	2,415,584
	United Kingdom		193,070	193,070
	United States of America		30,690,000	30,690,000
USA for UNHCR		10,519	10,519	
	Iraq subtotal		44,348,506	44,348,506
Jordan	Australia		948,980	948,980
	European Commission		2,086,287	2,086,287
	Saudi Arabia		1,534,500	1,534,500
	Sweden		603,896	603,896
	United Kingdom		85,870	85,870
	United States of America	216,047		216,047
	Jordan subtotal	216,047	5,259,533	5,475,580
Lebanon	Australia		1,988,477	1,988,477
	European Commission		539,557	539,557
	United States of America	167,427		167,427
	Lebanon subtotal	167,427	2,528,034	2,695,461
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia	309,325		309,325
	Saudi Arabia subtotal	309,325		309,325

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Syrian Arab Republic	Arab Gulf Programmes for UN Development Organizations		153,450	153,450
	Australia		2,797,728	2,797,728
	Belgium		1,351,744	1,351,744
	European Commission		3,668,987	3,668,987
	Germany		1,902,359	1,902,359
	Japan Association for UNHCR		54,948	54,948
	Saudi Arabia		3,115,500	3,115,500
	Spain		979,635	979,635
	Sweden		1,207,792	1,207,792
	United States of America	17,361		17,361
Syrian Arab Republic subtotal		17,361	15,232,143	15,249,504
Yemen	Cartier Middle East & South Asia (UAE)	12,077		12,077
	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)		1,772,898	1,772,898
	Denmark	463,679		463,679
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO (Germany)</i>		112,048	112,048
	European Commission	1,861,787	553,358	2,415,145
	France		675,872	675,872
	Germany		675,872	675,872
	Ireland		133,813	133,813
	Italy	197,628	183,794	381,423
	Japan	1,549,587	2,467,289	4,016,876
	Private donors in Saudi Arabia		24,800	24,800
	Qatar Charity (Qatar)	232,500		232,500
	Saudi Arabia		930,000	930,000
	Spain		687,870	687,870
	Sweden		629,005	629,005
	Switzerland	985,889		985,889
	United States of America	2,540,336	5,314,300	7,854,636
	USA for UNHCR	109,600		109,600
World Assembly of Muslim Youth (Saudi Arabia)		895	895	
Yemen subtotal		7,953,082	14,161,815	22,114,897
Total		20,045,946	242,516,299	262,562,245

Note: Contributions listed above exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.