

North Africa

Returnees dig foundations for their new houses at a returnee site in Mauritania.

Algeria

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Mauritania

Morocco

Tunisia

Western Sahara Confidence-Building

Measures



Working environment

The protection climate in North Africa continues to be affected by the movement of mixed groups of refugees, asylum-seekers and other migrants, particularly from sub-Saharan Africa. While the majority of these migrants seek better economic opportunities, others are in need of international protection.

With the exception of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya—which is a State party to the Organisation of African Unity’s 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa—all North African States have ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. However, no country except Mauritania has adopted national refugee legislation or established asylum procedures consistent with international standards.

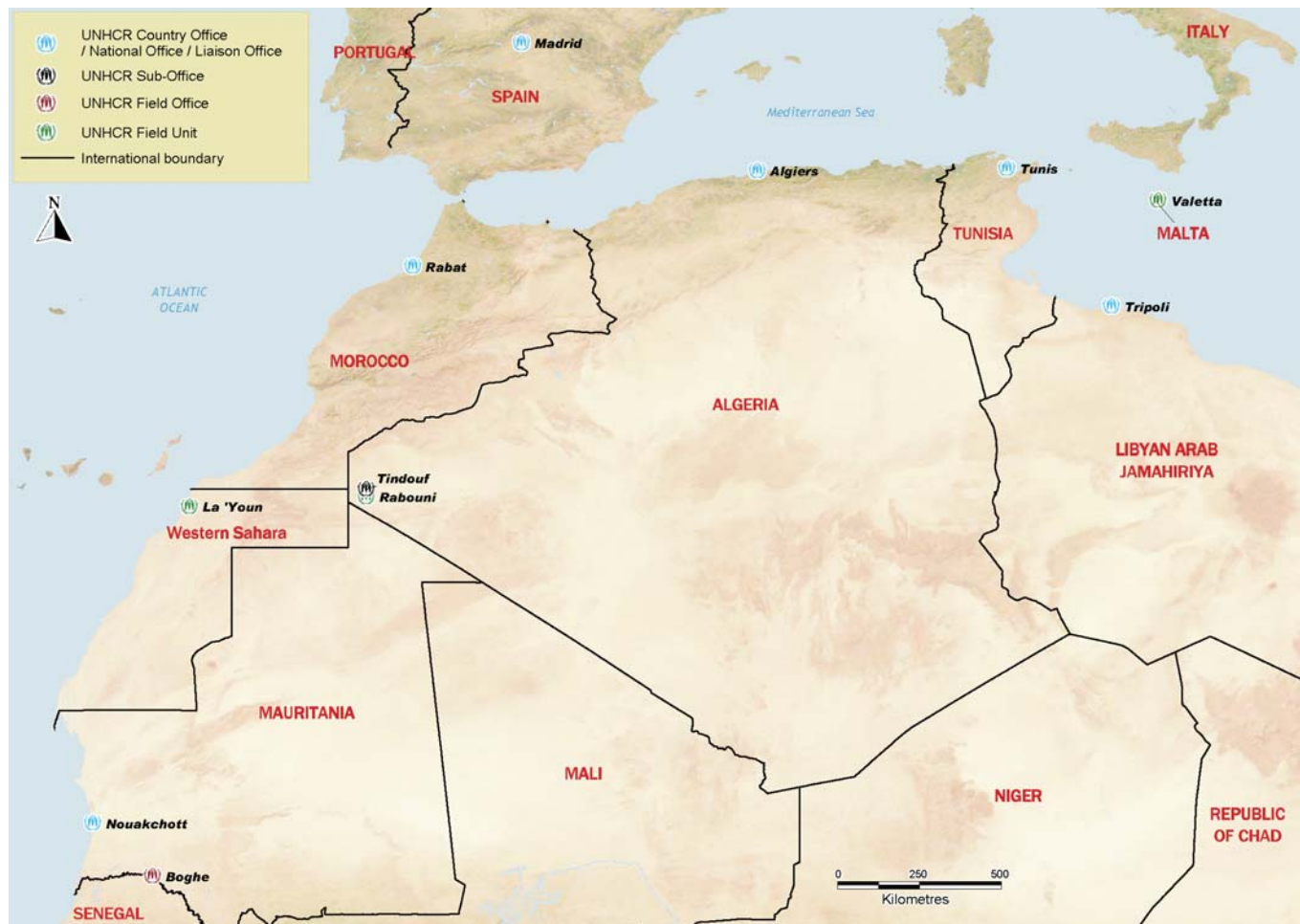
In 2011, UNHCR will continue its efforts to expand the protection space for refugees and asylum-seekers. Recent positive developments include the Algerian Government’s expression of interest in working with UNHCR to establish national asylum legislation. Moreover, following the visit of the High Commissioner in 2009, UNHCR is re-orienting its assistance programme for the Sahrawi refugees in the camps by increasing investments in their long-term welfare, particularly in health, nutrition and education. UNHCR is also establishing a permanent presence in each of the camps around Tindouf. The family visits which form part of the Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) programme for Sahrawi refugees and their families have been on hold since March 2010.

In Morocco, the Ministry of Justice and UNHCR are conducting a programme for the promotion of refugee law.

There has been progress with regard to the voluntary repatriation of Mauritanian refugees from Senegal. The repatriation operation concluded in December 2009, with some 19,000 returnees, while 2,500 more refugees from Senegal will be assisted to return in late 2010. Plans for the return of all the other remaining refugees, especially those in Mali, will be elaborated in cooperation with all concerned parties.

Despite progress, the protection space in the subregion remains limited. In 2010, UNHCR received instructions from the Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to close its office and cease its activities in the country. Discussions between UNHCR and the authorities resulted in UNHCR resuming its work for the currently registered caseload. UNHCR has submitted to the Government a proposal for future working arrangements and discussions are ongoing.

North Africa



Strategy in 2011

UNHCR's key challenges in North Africa are to meet the basic humanitarian and protection needs of refugees and other people of concern, establish responsive national asylum systems and promote protection-sensitive management of mixed-migration movements.

UNHCR will meet these challenges by:

- Improving access to asylum procedures through enhanced registration, profiling and data collection mechanisms.
- Supporting the establishment of national asylum systems through training and discussions on joint policies and planning.
- Expanding partnerships with States, governmental and non-governmental organizations and civil-society institutions to promote protection-sensitive strategies to address mixed-migration movements.
- Advocating on behalf of people in need of protection among mixed-migration flows and disseminating information about the dangers of illegal migration.
- Providing life-sustaining assistance and basic services to refugees, particularly in the refugee camps in Algeria.
- Encouraging all parties concerned to agree to the expansion of the CBM programme.
- Supporting Mauritania's efforts to reintegrate returnees.

Constraints

The dominance of national security concerns presents a major challenge for UNHCR's efforts to expand the protection space in

the subregion. Other constraints include weak or non-existent national asylum systems, the lack of national and regional strategies for managing mixed-migration movements and the absence of a political solution to the Western Sahara situation.

Furthermore, UNHCR operates in most countries in the subregion without cooperation agreements, restricting its ability to ensure effective protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Algeria** are covered in a separate chapter.

In the **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**, UNHCR carries out asylum-related activities, including the registration of asylum-seekers, the screening and profiling of new arrivals, refugee status determination (RSD) and the search for durable solutions. UNHCR also provides vulnerable refugees living in urban areas with limited financial assistance and access to other vital services. Asylum-seekers and refugees in detention who are known to UNHCR are provided with emergency food and basic items such as blankets and mattresses.

UNHCR is also working on expediting resettlement for more than 400 refugees already registered for resettlement. At this time, however, some activities are on hold pending a decision by the authorities on UNHCR's legal status in the country.

In **Mauritania**, UNHCR is focusing on ensuring the sustainability of the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Senegal by expanding reintegration activities in the areas of return. The assisted return of some 2,500 of the remaining 6,000 Mauritanian refugees in Senegal is expected to end by December 2010.

In 2011, the Office will focus more on protection and asylum- and migration-related activities. Mauritania remains an important transit point for sub-Saharan African migrants attempting to reach Europe. UNHCR will help build institutional capacities by providing training and expertise in support of national asylum procedures.

Morocco is another country of transit—but also progressively one of destination—for migrants and asylum-seekers from sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. Although a Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, Morocco has yet to adopt national refugee legislation and establish asylum procedures consistent with international standards. In their absence, UNHCR's challenge is to ensure the protection of refugees within mixed migration movements in Morocco.

In 2011, UNHCR will continue to conduct RSD for asylum-seekers. It will provide food, shelter, health care, education, legal counselling and income-generation opportunities for refugees with specific needs. The Office will also continue to promote the adoption of a comprehensive national asylum system.

In **Tunisia**, in the absence of national asylum legislation and procedures, UNHCR registers asylum-seekers, conducts RSD, issues documentation for refugees and asylum-seekers and works to ensure that minimum international standards of protection are upheld for all persons of concern. The Office promotes self-reliance through vocational training and provides long-staying refugees with monthly allowances to meet their basic needs. UNHCR assists some 100 refugees living in urban areas and seeks resettlement for those with specific protection needs.

Since 2004, UNHCR has been implementing the CBM programme designed to facilitate person-to-person contact between Sahrawi refugees in the camps in Algeria and their

families in Western Sahara. The programme provides for the exchange of family visits and the provision of free telephone services. It is conducted in cooperation with the parties and with the support of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

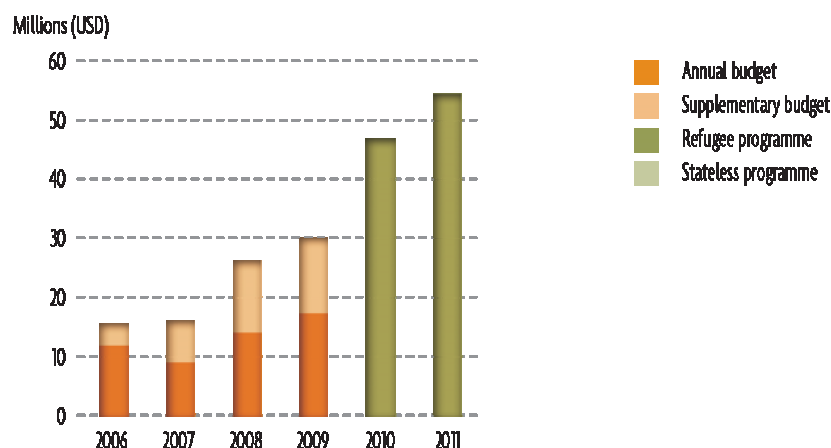
In view of the high cost of air transport and the limited carrying capacity of the available aircraft, only some 10,000 of the 41,000 people registered for visits have benefited from them. Most have been women, children and elderly persons. Some 138,000 free telephone calls have been made by Sahrawi refugees from the camps to their relatives in the territory.

In order to allow a greater number of persons to benefit from the family visits, UNHCR has proposed an expansion of the CBM programme to include transportation by land. This would allow approximately 4,400 more Sahrawis to benefit from the programme each year. UNHCR met with both parties in 2010 to evaluate the existing CBM activities and to promote the expansion of the family visits by land. In this connection, UNHCR plans in 2011 to assess the proposed route and raise funds for de-mining, procurement of vehicles, establishment of a transit centre, identification of additional beneficiaries and updating of the registration database, as well as eventually start the family visits by road.

Financial information

For 2011, the total requirements for the North Africa subregion amount to USD 54.4 million, representing an increase of USD 7.5 million compared to the budget for 2010. This increase reflects the inclusion of unmet needs which were identified during the comprehensive needs assessment, mostly in Algeria. The budget for 2011 is mainly devoted to refugee situations.

UNHCR's budget in North Africa 2006 – 2011



UNHCR budget for North Africa (USD)

OPERATION	2010 REVISED BUDGET	2011				TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	
Algeria	18,106,749	25,509,323	0	0	0	25,509,323
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	5,405,723	6,236,846	0	0	0	6,236,846
Mauritania	7,864,950	7,185,528	0	0	0	7,185,528
Morocco	2,550,253	2,623,340	0	0	0	2,623,340
Tunisia	1,190,472	612,419	0	0	0	612,419
Western Sahara (CBM)	11,797,442	12,305,208	0	0	0	12,305,208
Total	46,915,589	54,472,664	0	0	0	54,472,664