

NORTH AFRICA



UNHCR

2014 - 2015
GLOBAL APPEAL

Algeria

Egypt

Libya

Mauritania

Morocco

Tunisia

Western Sahara



UNHCR staff greet newly arrived refugees from Mali in Mbera camp, Mauritania (February 2013)

UNHCR / B. MALUM



Overview



Working environment

The North Africa subregion serves as either a transit or final destination for sizeable mixed migration movements from sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the instability still affecting much of North Africa continues to generate irregular movements from the region to Europe. UNHCR offices throughout North Africa witnessed an increase in the number of asylum-seekers in 2013.

The continuing unrest in the region has had a negative impact on the protection climate, with increased arrests and detention of refugees and asylum-seekers, especially those from sub-Saharan Africa. Terrorist activity in the Sahel and Sinai regions, as well as in Libya, has also affected UNHCR's operations. In Egypt, for instance, the insecurity arising from the recent political crisis has led UNHCR to put new security measures in place for its staff.

Local integration is generally not possible in North Africa, and the prospects for voluntary repatriation for most of the refugee groups in the region are limited. Resettlement remains the main durable solution and continues to be used as a protection tool for the most vulnerable.

By mid-2013, there were more than 31,000 asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR

in the North Africa subregion. In addition to nearly 47,000 registered refugees in urban areas, there were around 90,000 Sahrawis in the Tindouf camps (Algeria), and some 70,000 Malians in Mbera Camp (Mauritania). UNHCR has registered 141,000 Syrians in the North Africa subregion, some 127,000 of them in Egypt. It is anticipated that the profile of those groups of concern to UNHCR in North Africa will not change significantly in 2014, with the exception of a rise in the number of Syrian refugees.

Most refugees and asylum-seekers in North Africa reside in urban areas. However, UNHCR's urban programmes in the countries of the region are quite small, assisting only a few hundred refugees and asylum-seekers. These people of concern face difficult socio-economic conditions due to the lack of legal status and residence permits; UNHCR helps them gain access to housing and basic social services and works to improve their opportunities for self-reliance.

An increasing number of asylum-seekers from South Sudan and Sudan have been registered by the UNHCR office in Egypt. UNHCR also supports more than 1,300 refugees and asylum-seekers at the Saloum camp near the Egyptian-Libyan border,

pending their departure on resettlement or other durable solutions.

Despite the risk of arrest and detention, especially for sub-Saharan Africans, Libya continues to see the arrival of many refugees and asylum-seekers. Pending the setting up of a national asylum system and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Libya and UNHCR, a progressive resumption of registration and refugee status determination (RSD) activities is in progress. UNHCR conducts protection monitoring visits to detention sites where refugees and asylum-seekers are held following interception at sea or upon discovery that they lack valid documentation.

Thousands of Syrians have reportedly arrived in Algeria by air. Malians who sought safety in Algeria in 2012 are being hosted by families along the border. Both the Malians and Syrians are being assisted by the Algerian Red Crescent.

In Morocco, UNHCR saw a tripling in the number of asylum-seekers, with most coming from Côte d'Ivoire and the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria). UNHCR advocated for temporary protection for asylum-

seekers and in September 2013 the Government announced that an Ad hoc Committee would be established to review and recognize people of concern in the country. This is an important step forward whereby the Government of Morocco seeks to assume responsibility for developing asylum procedures in conformity with international standards. In 2014, UNHCR will therefore support efforts to build the capacity of the local authorities to establish national asylum infrastructure by providing training, conducting workshops and facilitating professional exchanges. .

There are some 70,000 Malian refugees in Mauritania at Mbera camp, near the border with Mali. Movements into the country and spontaneous returns have stabilized. Biometric registration that is

being performed by UNHCR and the Government is expected to enhance the protection space afforded to this group. More than 3,000 refugees (37 per cent) in Mbera camp voted in the 2013 Mali presidential elections.

The Confidence Building Measures (CBM) programme for Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps, Algeria, will continue in 2014 in an effort to meet the humanitarian needs of families who have been separated for a prolonged period of time. The measures will also reduce the psychological isolation of the refugees by restoring family and community links. The CBM activities complement the efforts of the United Nations to find a political solution to this protracted refugee situation, which has lasted more than 38 years.

| Response |

Strategies

- UNHCR's efforts will continue to focus on the safeguarding and expansion of protection space; the establishment of responsive national asylum systems; and the promotion of protection-sensitive management of mixed migration movements.
- UNHCR will also seek to expand partnerships with States, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society to develop fair and efficient legislative and administrative frameworks for asylum. The Office's strategic priorities are to deliver life-saving assistance, ensure protection for all people of concern, seek durable solutions including resettlement as a protection tool and prepare for new emergencies.

Challenges

The key challenge facing UNHCR in North Africa is the continuing arrival of large numbers of asylum-seekers while countries in the region are unstable and going through a period of transition.

This is exacerbated by the absence of national and regional strategies for managing mixed migration movements, and the lack of national asylum systems consistent with international standards.

In the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria, the effects of the global financial crisis are aggravating the challenges faced by Sahrawi refugees. Several bilateral donors

recently ceased or severely limited their support for the provision of essential and basic services; this has had an impact on UNHCR's humanitarian programme and life-saving assistance. Furthermore, security concerns also led some bilateral donors to withdraw support in 2013, leaving the prospects for 2014 unclear.

In Libya, large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers without prospects of a durable solution are taking the risk of engaging people smugglers in illegal boat movements across the Mediterranean. In 2014 UNHCR will intensify efforts to address such mixed migration phenomena in a comprehensive manner, working with Governments, IOM and NGOs.

Fragile security and instability in Egypt have added to the challenges of managing existing populations of concern and stretched host communities' tolerance for the growing number of Syrians arriving in the country. The Office will continue to advocate to maintain this protection space in 2014, and will seek to expand its response to the growing number of Syrian arrivals through the opening of an annex in the Cairo office and a field office in Alexandria.

Mauritania is grappling with the complexities of registering and delivering an assistance programme for the Malian refugees in Mbera camp. In 2014, close attention will be given to opportunities for voluntary return by these refugees to their homes in Mali.

Implementation

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Algeria**, **Egypt** and **Mauritania** are covered in separate chapters.

In **Tunisia**, the Government remains committed to developing an asylum law and procedure. UNHCR and its partners are working to enhance the capacity of national officials to ensure a protection-sensitive approach to border management. With the closure of Shousha camp in June 2013 there are still some 300 people with rejected claims. UNHCR is working with its partners and the Government to find solutions for this group as well as for recognized refugees who are not likely to be resettled.

Nearly 20,000 people (including some 2,800 at the time of writing in 2013) have benefitted from the family visits under the Confidence Building Measures programme. More than 48,000 people have registered for the programme since its inception in 2004 and further expansion will continue in 2014 in addition to cultural seminars.

In **Morocco**, the Government announced the development and establishment of a national asylum system. The Ad hoc Committee (of which UNHCR is a member) met in September 2013 and began reviewing cases with a view to regularizing the situation of people of concern, in accordance with international legal standards. UNHCR will continue to support building the capacity of

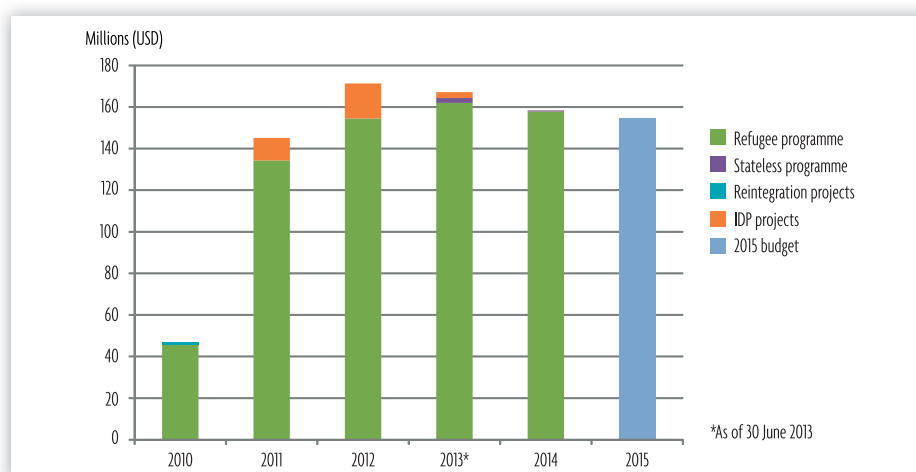
government institutions and civil society in the country.

To date, UNHCR in **Libya** has registered more than 7,600 refugees and nearly 18,000 asylum-seekers, including Syrians. However, unconfirmed estimates put the number of Syrians in Libya at some 110,000. In 2014, UNHCR will seek support for its activities from the national authorities and other partners in the country. It will visit and provide assistance to people of concern in detention and advocate for alternatives to incarceration. UNHCR will also strengthen registration, ensure adequate protection mechanisms are in place, provide capacity building workshops to Government officials, and reinforce the pursuit of durable solutions.

Financial information

Over the last four years, UNHCR's financial requirements in the North Africa sub-region have increased significantly from USD 47 million in 2010 to a high of USD 171.3 million in 2012, in response to the multiple refugee crises that swept the region in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the conflict in northern Mali. Though the situation in Mali has since stabilized, the crisis in Syria has driven large numbers of refugees to North Africa. The 2014 financial requirements for the sub-region are set at USD 158.5 million, with almost the entire budget allocated to the refugee programme.

Budgets for North Africa | 2010–2015



Budgets for North Africa | USD

Operation	2013 REVISED BUDGET (as of 30 June 2013)	2014			TOTAL	2015
		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
Algeria	28,170,158	32,659,529	0	0	32,659,529	32,742,980
Egypt Regional Office	63,048,620	65,034,985	69,962	0	65,104,948	65,104,196
Libya	17,255,113	17,508,000	340,000	150,000	17,998,000	18,359,760
Mauritania	29,967,648	23,960,463	0	0	23,960,463	22,393,871
Morocco	3,268,226	3,516,920	0	0	3,516,920	3,516,920
Tunisia	14,578,650	5,836,778	0	0	5,836,778	4,200,000
Western Sahara (Confidence Building Measures)	10,381,830	8,838,157	0	0	8,838,157	7,931,386
Regional activities	468,161	450,000	100,000	0	550,000	400,000
Total	167,138,406	157,804,834	509,962	150,000	158,464,796	154,649,114