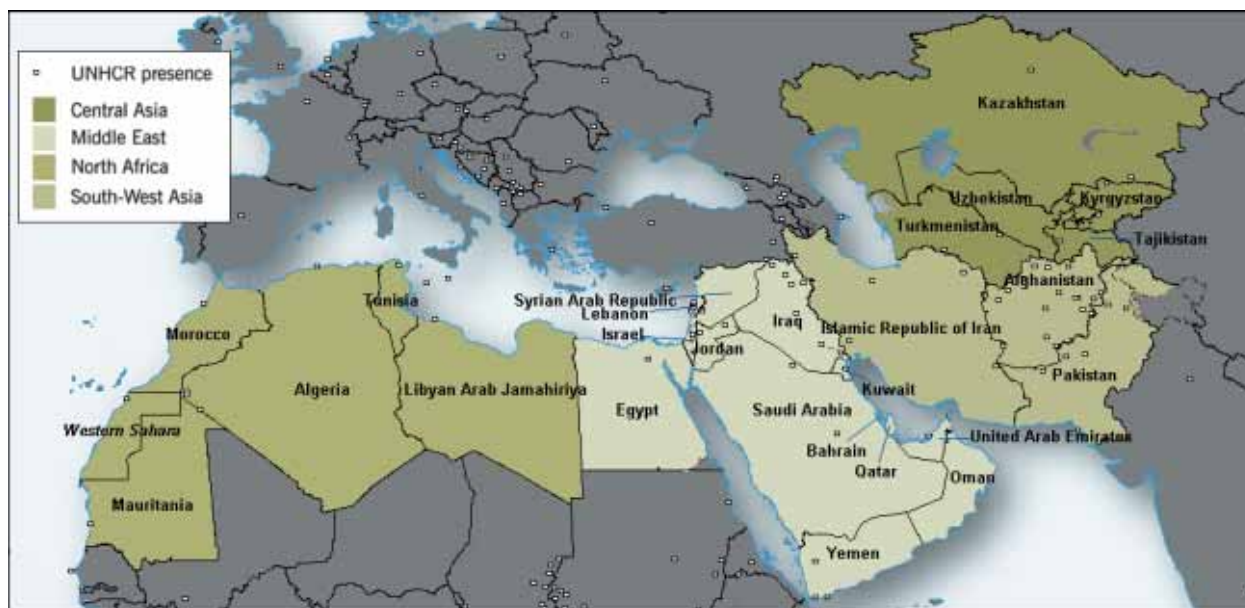


CASWANAME



Working environment

UNHCR's work in Central Asia, South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East (CASWANAME) covers a wide, diverse and often volatile area where it can be a challenge to respond effectively to situations of displacement.

In Central Asia, the overall protection environment deteriorated in 2006. The events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, in May 2005, when hundreds of protesters were killed by government troops, continued to affect asylum conditions in the region. In April 2006, the Uzbek Government decided to close UNHCR's office in the country. Access to asylum has been further constrained, and more restrictive interpretations have been used in the granting of refugee status. Given the fragile political situation in the region, particularly in Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley, UNHCR and its partners have prepared and updated a contingency plan.

The region has seen some progress as well. Durable solutions have been found for Tajik refugees in Central Asia. More than 10,000 Tajiks have become citizens of Turkmenistan. Furthermore, a naturalization campaign for Tajik refugees in Kyrgyzstan will be almost complete by the end of 2006. In light of these developments, UNHCR's returnee programme for Tajiks is about to cease. Development agencies will take over reintegration projects.

Afghan refugees in all the Central Asian Republics have also benefited from durable solutions. Many of them have been resettled in third countries or are on their way to gaining permanent resident status with the help of UNHCR.

The overall situation in South-West Asia revolves around the situation in Afghanistan. Permanent institutions of government have been established in the country, as foreseen by the 2001 Bonn Agreement. However, Afghanistan's recovery still faces many hurdles, as evident in the recent deterioration in security in the southern and eastern provinces of the country.

In January 2006 the Afghan Government and the international community agreed to the ambitious Afghanistan Compact, a programme of state-building, reconstruction and development covering the years 2006 to 2010. The success of this partnership will determine the prospects for solutions to the Afghan refugee situation.

Since March 2002 more than 4.7 million Afghans have returned home, 3.5 million of them assisted by UNHCR. Return figures have declined significantly in 2006, with approximately 290,000 Afghans repatriating, just under half of them assisted by UNHCR.

At the time of writing, some 3.5 million Afghans remain in exile. The Governments and peoples of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan have been generous hosts for a quarter of a century. Indeed, more than 80 per cent of the Afghans remaining in the countries neighbouring Afghanistan have lived there for more than 20 years, with half of them born in exile. Though security does remain a concern, surveys indicate that the major challenges to return now are primarily of a social and economic nature. Moreover, normal cross-border movements are increasing.

In view of this changing operational environment, UNHCR and its partners have made both immediate and medium-term adjustments to their operations in Afghanistan and the region. In Afghanistan, UNHCR will support voluntary repatriation and reintegration while strengthening the Government's capacity to manage population movements. Despite worsening security, UNHCR and its partners will conduct a substantial shelter, water, sanitation and returnee monitoring programme.

A registration exercise undertaken by UNHCR in late 2006 will help the Government of Pakistan and UNHCR develop solutions for the estimated 2.5 million Afghans still remaining in Pakistan (the Government and UNHCR agree that not all Afghans in the country are of concern to UNHCR). At the same time, UNHCR, UNDP and the Pakistani authorities have been conducting assessments to help devise programmes for refugee-affected areas that would improve conditions for both the local and refugee communities.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a registration exercise at the end of 2005 recorded 54,000 Iraqis and 920,000 Afghans. In 2006, the number of assisted returns to Afghanistan fell to its lowest level in a decade. UNHCR and the Iranian authorities signed a two-year agreement to support a series of assistance projects designed to foster self-reliance and improve repatriation prospects through vocational training, as well as to provide some targeted assistance to those with special needs.

In North Africa, the five Member States of the Union of the Arab Maghreb have seen a steep rise in the number of asylum-seekers and economic migrants from sub-Saharan Africa crossing their territories while trying to enter Europe. Incidents of mistreatment and even expulsion of asylum-seekers, including some with UNHCR documents, have spurred UNHCR to design a regional strategy – a ten-point plan of action – to strengthen asylum in North Africa. Begun in 2006, the project will continue through 2007. One of the things it will do is increase the regional capacity to identify asylum-seekers and refugees among those *en route* to Europe.

Saharawi refugees in the Tindouf camps in Algeria receive basic assistance from UNHCR. The Office has worked with the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to implement the Confidence Building Measures Project initiated in 2004 as part of a 1999 Security Council resolution. In this context, in 2007 the Office will continue to facilitate family visits and phone calls to help refugees in the camps and their relatives in the Western Sahara Territory to stay in touch.

Lebanon's efforts to rebuild its economy received a massive setback with Israel's attacks on the country in 2006. The crisis temporarily displaced up to a million people, primarily from southern Lebanon, the southern suburbs of Beirut and the Bekaa Valley. Most of them

returned to fragile socio-economic environments after the cessation of hostilities.

In addition to its emergency and early recovery response related to the Lebanon conflict, UNHCR's activities in the Middle East region are directed at four situations: the unabated flow of asylum-seekers and migrants from the Horn of Africa to Yemen; the Sudan crisis and its impact on Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan; the Iraq conflict and its impact on surrounding countries; and the protracted situation of Palestinian refugees outside UNRWA's area of operations.

As a result of ethno-religious violence and expulsions, particularly since the bombings of the Samarra Shrine in February 2006, Iraq has witnessed an upsurge in internal and external displacement. The Iraqi Government estimates that the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country is more than 1.6 million, with some 425,000 having been displaced due to the most recent violence. Widespread insecurity, severe shortages in basic social services and unemployment have forced some 1.5 million Iraqis to flee to surrounding countries. More than 90,000 of these are registered with UNHCR.

While the number of Iraqis in neighbouring States is escalating, their coping mechanisms and resources are being eroded as host countries have reduced access to services. UNHCR aims to increase its support to the most vulnerable Iraqis in surrounding States. The Office is reinforcing its emergency response capacity by revising its contingency plans and consolidating emergency stockpiles in the region.

Strategic objectives

UNHCR's strategic objectives for the CASWANAME region are to identify and implement comprehensive solutions for refugees and to support state and civil society institutions to protect refugees and others of concern. These objectives are underpinned by an improved emergency response capacity in the region. A participatory, gender- and age-sensitive approach is mainstreamed into the subregional objectives.

In Central Asia, the goal is to ensure that all refugees and others of concern to UNHCR are protected by governments according to international standards in a fast-changing operational environment. The objectives here are to ensure that:

- Refugee protection regimes are sustained and *refoulement* of asylum-seekers and refugees is prevented.
- Partnerships are strengthened with civil society institutions, international organizations and key States in the region to protect the displaced according to international standards.



Palestinians fleeing threats in Baghdad have been stranded in the no-man's-land between Iraq and Syria land since May 2006.
UNHCR

- Refugees and others of concern benefit from a durable solutions strategy. In particular, the protracted situation of Afghan refugees should be resolved through the strategic use of resettlement; the cessation clause should be implemented for Tajik refugees; and the return home of Afghan and Chechen refugees is to be facilitated.
- An updated contingency plan is readied and emergency preparedness measures are implemented.

In South-West Asia, the overriding goal is to sustain progress towards new policy and implementing arrangements to manage refugee and population movements. This would complete the transition from a refugee-oriented framework to a broader population management structure beyond 2009. The subregional objectives are to ensure that:

- Repatriation is sustained to allow the return of 403,000 people in 2007 through improvements in conditions in Afghanistan, national programmes to support reintegration and by strengthening asylum countries' ability to aid returns.
- Afghans in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan are permitted temporary stay under more predictable conditions.
- Assistance projects in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan are reconfigured to emphasize more development to sustain returns, while social protection is offered to the most vulnerable.
- Bilateral contacts between governments in the region on refugee and broader population movements are intensified.
- Partnerships with national and international actors on refugee and population movements (including research institutes) are strengthened and further operationalized.
- The quality of protection in Afghanistan and benchmarks on voluntary repatriation are appraised on a regular basis.

In North Africa, UNHCR intends to establish a framework to better identify and protect refugees and asylum-seekers in the mixed population flows in transit through the region. Accordingly, the aims will be that:

- Field research is conducted on migration in North Africa to build knowledge and gain expertise on the issue, forge a common understanding of the dimensions of mixed migration and help with policy planning.
- Partnerships are established with key national and international partners for both migration and asylum issues; consensus is reached on what is required to improve the management of migration and asylum issues.
- A collaborative migration management strategy is developed by key partners.
- Progress is sustained towards the development of a national infrastructure in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Tunisia for the reception, screening and management of asylum-seekers within mixed migration flows.
- Comprehensive solutions for migrants and asylum-seekers in North Africa are identified in partnership with key institutions.

In the Middle East, the goal is to engage governments to assume greater responsibility for protecting refugees and others of concern, as well as to increase partnerships and financial contributions. The objectives here are to ensure that:

- Partnerships are strengthened with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, other civil society institutions, prominent individuals and religious institutions to promote refugee rights in the Muslim world.
- Protection is strengthened through the greater engagement of civil society, by bolstering States' capacity to manage refugee issues, and by challenging the detention of asylum-seekers and refugees.
- Comprehensive solutions are identified for the Sudanese of concern to UNHCR in Egypt together with key partners.
- Asylum-seekers arriving in Yemen from the Horn of Africa are registered by the authorities; their basic humanitarian needs are met by a range of agencies supplementing UNHCR's assistance.
- Partnerships are developed to implement an appropriate maritime response (including interception as well as rescue-at-sea) to the trafficking of asylum-seekers and migrants from the Horn of Africa across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen.
- Gulf States increase their contributions to UNHCR, either directly or through NGOs and associations.

UNHCR will seek a regional approach with regard to protection and assistance to Iraqis in neighbouring States. In Iraq, UNHCR will focus on assistance to IDPs, voluntary repatriation and resettlement where there is little chance for local integration of refugees. The overall objectives are to ensure that:

- All refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees and others of concern in Iraq are protected in a volatile security environment.
- A comprehensive and harmonized regional approach with regard to protection and assistance to Iraqis in neighbouring States is implemented.
- Assistance is provided to IDPs in the three northern governorates and six southern governorates;
- Contingency plans and existing emergency stockpiles are regularly updated.

Challenges

In Central Asia, refugee protection has been rendered even more difficult with the decision of the Government of Uzbekistan to deny UNHCR a presence in the country.

In the short term, security conditions in Afghanistan will determine the feasibility of UNHCR's initiatives in South-West Asia. In the longer term, the key to achieving solutions will lie in agreements between Afghanistan and its neighbours, the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan. Furthermore, these countries will have to develop practical arrangements to manage future population movements outside a refugee and humanitarian framework.

In North Africa, sustaining UNHCR's expanded role in the protection and assistance of refugees and asylum-seekers within the massive flow of illegal migrants remains a complex and expensive task. Major partnerships have to be forged or consolidated with other UN agencies and international organizations.

Resettlement opportunities for refugees from the Middle East have diminished since the tragic events of 11 September 2001. Voluntary repatriation remains a limited option for the major refugee groups until political solutions and stability are achieved in their countries of origin. The Arab States and neighbouring countries in the Middle East continue to host large refugee populations.

Of particular concern are the Iraqis who are increasingly seeking asylum and protection in the region. In addition, refugees who were previously living in Iraq, such as Palestinians, have also fled the country and need temporary protection. Most countries in the Middle East are not signatories to the international refugee instruments and refugees in them are unable to access basic rights.

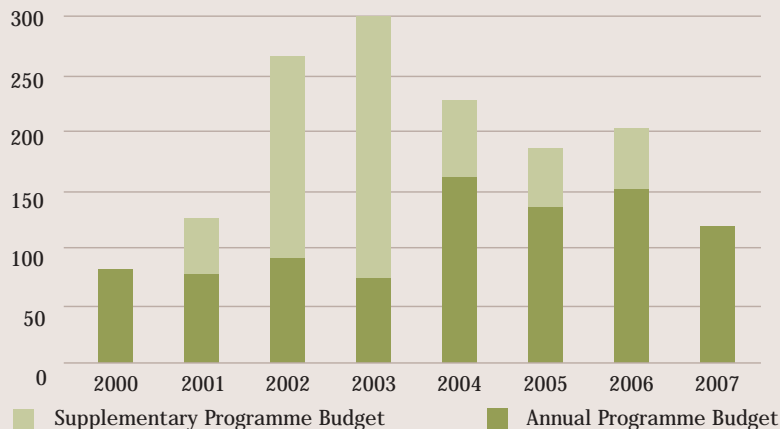
Security constraints and procedures greatly limit the operations of UN Agencies in Iraq. In northern Iraq, where security conditions have remained relatively stable, UNHCR has re-established its international presence and expects to strengthen it further in 2007. However, violence in central Iraq and instability in the south require UNHCR international staff to manage operations in these regions remotely from Amman. Due to a lack of funds and because of the difficulty reaching southern Iraq, UNHCR will close its Iraq support office in Kuwait in the first quarter of 2007. However, while foreseeing a continuation of remote management through government and NGO partners, UNHCR is considering re-establishing presence in Baghdad should security conditions permit in 2007.

Budget (USD)		
Country	Annual Programme Budget	
	2006	2007
Algeria	4,889,412	4,268,794
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1,096,200	984,270
Mauritania	605,017	885,472
Morocco	535,609	983,475
Tunisia	358,859	358,096
Sub-total North Africa	7,485,097	7,480,107
Egypt	4,569,179	4,294,356
Iraq	2,151,057	1,305,042
Israel	93,200	144,000
Jordan	2,098,883	1,755,137
Lebanon	3,204,282	3,667,704
Saudi Arabia	2,348,944	2,118,995
Syrian Arab Republic	1,885,381	2,050,212
United Arab Emirates	0	684,983
Yemen	5,168,295	4,755,782
Sub-total Middle East	21,519,221	20,776,211
Afghanistan	60,978,721	52,270,958
Islamic Republic of Iran	16,411,128	12,849,430
Pakistan	23,327,170	19,053,563
Regional activities ¹	589,242	275,000
Sub-total South-West Asia	101,306,261	84,448,951
Kazakhstan	1,834,526	1,644,523
Kyrgyzstan	1,291,566	1,439,904
Tajikistan	1,319,032	1,152,957
Turkmenistan	1,020,770	765,635
Uzbekistan	1,277,649	0
Sub-total Central Asia	6,743,543	5,003,019
Total CASWANAME	137,054,122	117,708,288

¹ Includes repatriation of Afghans from various countries.

Annual and Supplementary Programme Budgets 2000 - 2007

Millions of USD



Note: The figures for 2000 to 2005 represent the final revised Annual and Supplementary Programme Budgets as presented in the Global Reports 2000-2005. For 2006, the revised Annual and Supplementary Programme Budgets as at 1 September 2006 have been used. For 2007, the initial ExCom-approved Annual Programme Budget has been used.