



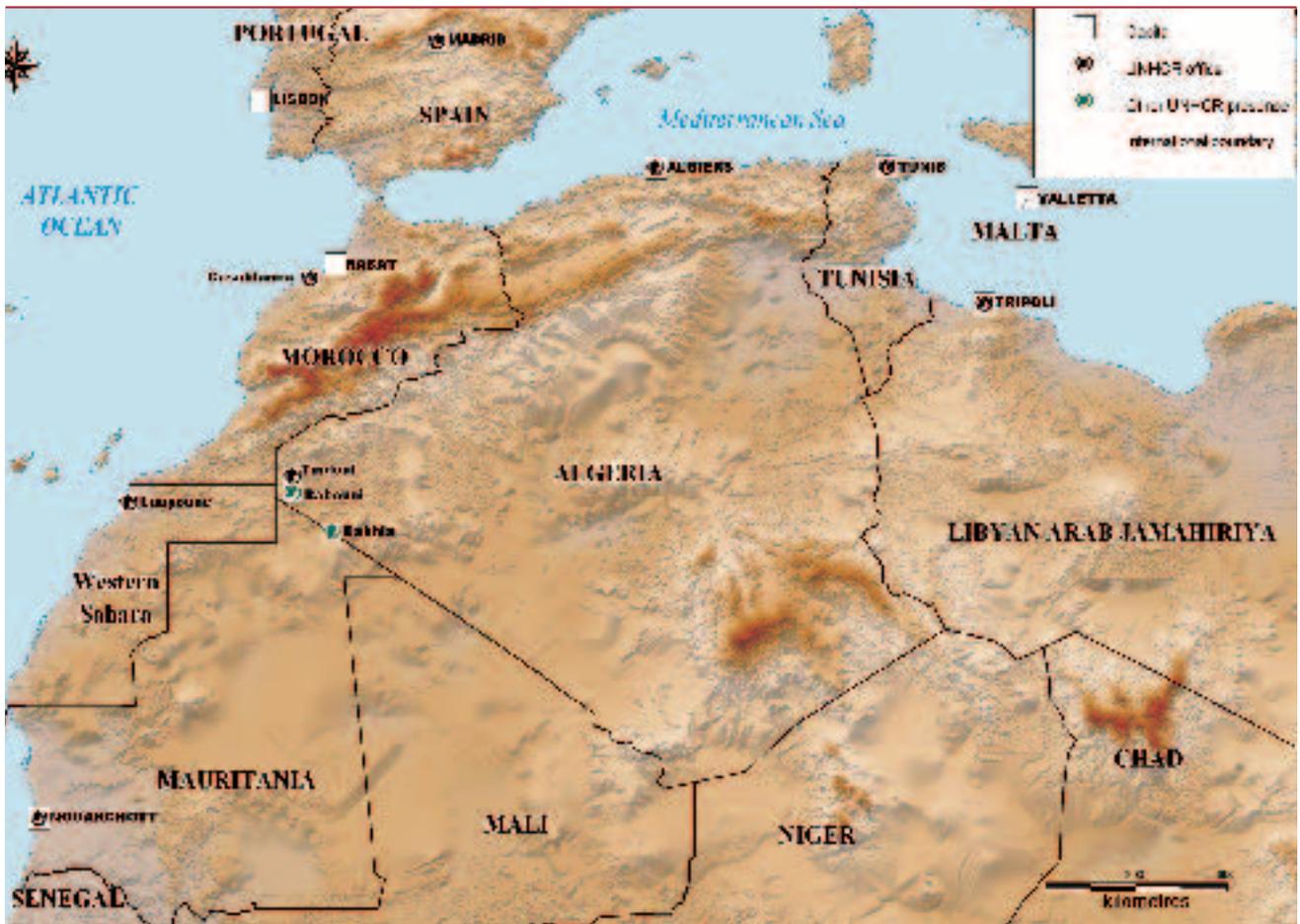
North Africa

Major developments

Activities in North Africa focused on the main protracted refugee situation in the Tindouf camps, Southwest Algeria, where refugees from Western Sahara have been living for more than 25 years. Through a permanent presence in the camps, UNHCR provided protection and assistance to some 165,000 refugees (according to Government estimates) who are living in the camps, and held regular meetings with refugees and their representatives. UNHCR also provided protection and limited material assistance to urban refugees and asylum-seekers in the region. In addition, the organisation tried to strengthen the Algerian authorities' capacity to establish national asylum legislation.

Despite joint efforts by UNHCR and WFP to mobilise international assistance, the refugees in these camps remain acutely short of food. The organisation was, however, able to provide other forms of assistance in co-operation with local and international NGOs, particularly in the areas of health, education, water and sanitation.

Algeria
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Mauritania
Morocco
Tunisia
Western Sahara Territory



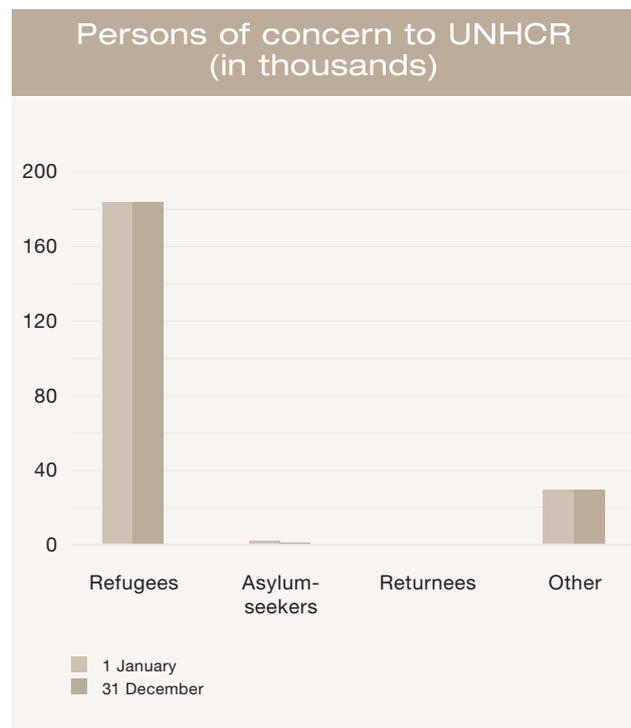
Following the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1429, and in close co-ordination with MINURSO, a proposed confidence-building project consisting of family visits, telephone and mail services between the refugee camps and their country of origin was submitted to all parties involved. Unfortunately, the parties could not agree on implementation procedures, and as a result, there were no concrete results.

Challenges and concerns

A political solution to the conflict in Western Sahara remains the fundamental prerequisite for a durable solution for the refugees living in the camps. So far, despite the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, his Special Envoy and Special Representative, little progress has been made.

In the absence of appropriate national legislation on refugees, UNHCR offices in the region continued to conduct refugee status determination. Last year, two international legal officers were appointed to

help the authorities in Morocco and Tunisia to draft national asylum laws and establish comprehensive asylum systems. It will be some time before results





Algeria: Saharan refugees in Laayoune camp, Tindouf region. UNHCR / A. Hollmann

will be achieved. Meanwhile, in Mauritania, some progress has already been made: draft national legislation has been prepared and is currently under review by the authorities.

Progress towards solutions

UNHCR remains ready to repatriate Saharan refugees if and when there is progress on the political front. In the meantime, the organisation has supported the individual repatriation of sub-Saharan refugees from Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia.

UNHCR has maintained regular contacts with authorities and universities in most countries within the region in order to promote understanding of refugee law, and to establish functioning asylum structures and legislation.

Operations

In **Algeria**, UNHCR managed to provide adequate assistance to camp residents in a variety of sectors. A new water system installed in Laayoune camp provides sufficient quantities of good quality water to some 36,500 Saharan refugees. UNHCR trained three refugee water engineers and equipped a repair workshop in order to combat the frequent technical problems faced in the harsh desert conditions. For the first time in many years, there were no disruptions to the trucking of water, even during the summer.

UNHCR conducted comprehensive and detailed sector-level needs assessments covering nutrition,

education, health, and logistics in all four camps. In February 2002, UNHCR and WFP undertook a joint mission to assess the food and non-food requirements of the refugee population. The lack of regularity in the arrival and distribution of food, along with the lack of variety in the food basket, are serious problems affecting the welfare of the refugees.

In line with the “Five Commitments to Refugee Women”, UNHCR ensured that women participated in camp activities, taking responsibility for the management and distribution of food, non-food items and water. Vocational training for adolescent girls and young women was increased, and a legal and psycho-social centre for women opened in Smara camp.

Key counterparts in Algeria’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs benefited from courses in refugee-related affairs at academic institutions in Strasbourg and San Remo.

In the **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (Libya)**, there are more than 11,670 registered refugees, of whom some 1,700 (mostly Palestinians and Somalis) are categorised as vulnerable. Most of these people have been living in a compound provided by the authorities, where they receive some assistance from UNHCR, including vocational training. This year they were moved to a new compound with better sanitation and electricity. Only 20 refugees were repatriated from Libya in 2002, mostly to Sierra Leone.

In **Mauritania**, UNHCR continued to provide assistance to some 400 urban refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia. Sixty new asylum-seekers were granted refugee status and provided with assistance and protection. UNHCR funded 28 income generation projects for a group of 72 refugees, most of them women. The organisation also monitored the situation of the 26,400 Saharawi refugees living in Mauritania, carrying out regular missions to the border area with Western Sahara. Working sessions with local authorities and NGOs served to increase their knowledge of international refugee law.

In **Morocco**, UNHCR continued to help 500 refugees, most of them from Palestine, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sub-Saharan countries.

In **Tunisia**, UNHCR assisted some 60 refugees, mainly from Algeria, Palestine, Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In 2002, refugee status determination was carried out by a UNHCR international staff member based in Tunis. Efforts to establish national legislation on refugees in Tunisia have yet to bear fruit.

In the **Western Sahara Territory**, UNHCR continued to work closely with MINURSO and the Office of the Secretary General's Special Representative to monitor developments in the area, and move forward on confidence-building measures.

Funding

Assistance programmes and protection activities in North Africa were curtailed as a result of UNHCR's general funding shortfall. Funds are still required to extend the water system project to Awsard camp in southwest Algeria. The lack of funds also resulted in the cancellation of a number of workshops and training sessions on protection issues. However, donors did respond positively to urgent appeals to provide funds to avert a humanitarian crisis in the camps in Algeria.

| Voluntary Contributions – Restricted / Earmarked (USD) | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Earmarking ¹ | Donor | Annual Programme Budget | |
| | | Income | Contribution |
| Algeria | | | |
| | <i>España con ACNUR (SPA)</i> | 11,837 | 19,212 |
| | Japan | 600,000 | 600,000 |
| | Norway | 408,163 | 408,163 |
| | Spain | 235,230 | 235,230 |
| | United States of America | 880,000 | 880,000 |
| | USA for UNHCR (USA) | 50,090 | 50,090 |
| North Africa | | | |
| | Sweden | 282,222 | 282,222 |
| | United States of America | 2,755,027 | 2,755,027 |
| Total | | 5,222,569 | 5,229,944 |

¹ For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the Donor Profiles.

| Budget and Expenditure (USD) | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Country | Revised Budget | Expenditure |
| | Annual Programme Budget | |
| Algeria | 4,724,201 | 4,192,872 |
| Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | 1,137,711 | 765,775 |
| Mauritania | 324,362 | 301,399 |
| Morocco | 438,888 | 403,705 |
| Tunisia | 318,894 | 249,143 |
| Western Sahara Territory | 149,342 | 110,145 |
| Total | 7,093,398 | 6,023,039 |