

A photograph of two young boys playing soccer in a dusty, open area of a refugee camp. In the background, there are several tents and simple brick buildings. A soccer ball is suspended in the air above the tents. The boy on the right is wearing a teal shirt and khaki shorts, while the boy on the left is wearing a colorful plaid shirt and dark pants. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

North Africa

Algeria

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Mauritania

Morocco

Tunisia

Western Sahara Confidence-Building Measures



| Working environment |

Mixed movements of refugees, asylum-seekers and other migrants, particularly from sub-Saharan Africa, have had a significant impact on the protection environment in North Africa. While the majority of these migrants are seeking better economic opportunities, some are in need of international protection.

Except for 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, national asylum systems generally do not exist, and security and other concerns dominate asylum policies and practices in the subregion. Only Mauritania has adopted national asylum legislation and established a refugee status determination (RSD) procedure consistent with international standards.

The positive developments underway in Mauritania are helping to strengthen the asylum space in the country. The existing national asylum system is being improved to ensure full consistency with international standards. This process will continue in parallel with the ongoing organized repatriation of Mauritanian refugees from Senegal, which is expected to be concluded in late 2009. In 2010, UNHCR will focus on reintegration activities for these returnees.

The protracted nature of displacement; absence of durable solutions; continued life under harsh climatic conditions; and reliance on international aid are some of the main features of the humanitarian situation of the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps in Algeria. The comprehensive needs assessment conducted in the camps revealed serious gaps in the international community’s response to the needs of these refugees. Among the identified gaps are: high rates of anaemia and malnutrition, particularly among children and pregnant and lactating women, due to the limited range of food available; the low quantity of tents; and a lack of opportunities for self-sufficiency. The refugees endure long separation from their families in the Western Sahara territory and are totally dependent on humanitarian aid.

In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the authorities are increasing their control over the flow of migrants transiting the country. The forcible return of hundreds of migrants and asylum-seekers from various African countries to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya from the high seas and European territorial waters has led to the tightening of the country’s border controls, including the detention of illegal migrants and restrictions on access to asylum procedures.

North Africa



Strategy

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 a protection-sensitive regional management of mixed migration movements.

UNHCR will tackle these challenges by:

- Providing life-sustaining assistance and basic services to refugees, particularly in the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria.
- Encouraging all parties concerned to agree to the expansion of the Confidence-Building Measures programme in order to help more people benefit from family visits between refugees in the camps and their family members in the Western Sahara territory.
- Improving access to adequate asylum procedures through improved registration, profiling and data collection mechanisms that would allow for a better understanding of mixed migration flows and routes.
- Supporting the establishment of national asylum systems through targeted training and discussions on joint policies and planning.
- Expanding partnerships with States, governmental and non-governmental organizations and civil-society institutions to promote regional 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.
- Exploring means for engagement with the authorities on the return of people not in need of protection.
- Supporting Mauritania's efforts to reintegrate citizens returning from exile.

Constraints

Security concerns in the region overshadow the national policies and practices of States, while the spread of extremist activity makes it more difficult to protect and assist refugees. Other constraints are weak or non-existent national asylum institutions, a lack of national or regional strategies for mixed-migration movements, and the absence of a political solution to the situation in Western Sahara. An added challenge for UNHCR in the region is the ongoing push-back of hundreds of asylum-seekers to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya from Europe.

Operations

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

In the **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**, UNHCR provides living allowances, housing, medical assistance and educational and legal support to the most needy among some 10,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly from Eritrea, Somalia and

other African countries, as well as Palestinians. UNHCR also assists them with counselling, vocational training, and support for apprenticeships and micro-credit.

Meanwhile, the search for durable solutions will continue. Within the framework of a partnership agreement with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, the International Organization for Peace, Care and Relief (a leading Libyan NGO), and the Italian Refugee Council, UNHCR is setting up mechanisms for the reception and screening of people intercepted en route to Europe. This entails providing life-sustaining assistance and intervening when those requiring protection need to be released from detention.

A partnership agreement signed in May 2009 between UNHCR and the Libyan National Youth Organization is expected to help improve protection in the country.

Mauritania remains an important transit point for sub-Saharan African migrants attempting to reach Europe. In 2010, UNHCR will assist families and individuals with specific needs among some 1,000 urban refugees. The Office will also help build institutional and procedural capacities, including by providing technical expertise, training and advice in support of national asylum procedures.

UNHCR will ensure the sustainability of the voluntary repatriation of returning Mauritanian refugees. By the end of 2009, approximately 12,800 refugees remaining would have either returned to Mauritania or found other durable solutions, primarily local integration in their respective countries of asylum. UNHCR will augment the Government's efforts in this regard by providing assistance with housing, health care and water and sanitation services, and implementing educational and income-generation projects.

Morocco is another transit country for thousands of 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 2010, UNHCR will conduct refugee status determination (RSD) for a significant number of asylum-seekers. It will also provide food, shelter, health care, education, legal counselling and income-generation opportunities for refugees with specific needs. The Office will also promote the adoption of a comprehensive national asylum system through capacity-building activities, including refugee law training for law-enforcement, government officials, the judiciary and civil-society institutions.

In **Tunisia**, UNHCR conducts RSD under its mandate and, in the absence of national asylum legislation and procedures, works to make sure that the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers are respected. The Office promotes self-reliance through vocational training, and provides long-staying refugees with monthly

allowances to meet their basic needs in relation to food, housing, health care and education. UNHCR assists more than 100 refugees living in urban areas, and seeks resettlement for those with specific protection needs.

In **Western Sahara**, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1282 of 1999 and subsequent resolutions, UNHCR has been implementing a Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) programme designed to facilitate person-to-person contacts between Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps in Algeria and their family members in Western Sahara.

The programme is conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. It allows an exchange of family visits as well as free telephone calls between refugees in the camps and their family members in the Territory. These measures have had a positive impact on the psychosocial well-being of the beneficiaries, many of who have been separated from their families for more than three decades.

Some 41,000 Sahrawis from both the refugee camps and the territory are registered to take part in family visits. However, in view of the high cost of air transport and the limited carrying capacity of the aircraft involved, only 8,568 persons, of whom 56 per cent were women, have benefited from such visits since the start of the programme in 2004. Meanwhile, during the same period, more than 113,000 free telephone calls were made, of which 60 per cent were placed by women.

To improve the response to the needs of the Sahrawi communities in the camps and the Territory, UNHCR is seeking to expand the programme in 2010. Subject to the agreement of the concerned parties and the availability of funds, the expansion will include: 1) use of road transportation for family visits; 2) exchange of visits for special family events, such as weddings and funerals; and 3) the organization of joint summer camps for youths from the camps and the Territory. A proposal to this end has been submitted to the concerned parties, and international support is being sought.

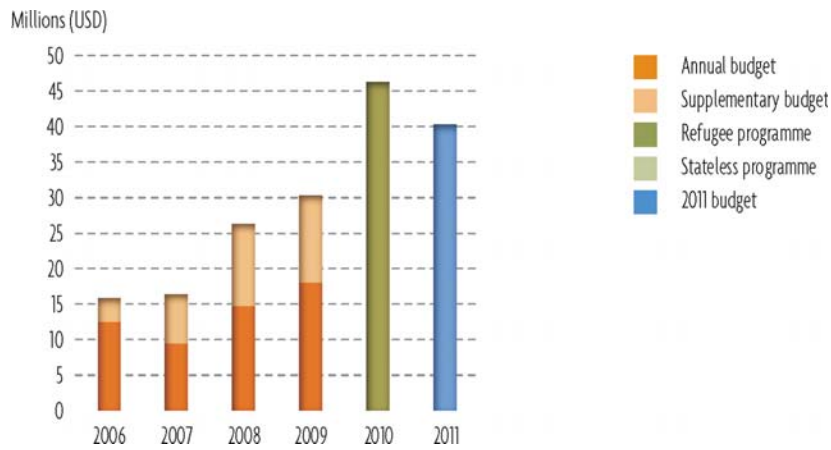
The Confidence-Building Measures programme may prove to be of paramount importance for the integration of refugees into their communities of origin, once a political solution to the Western Sahara problem has been found.

| Financial information |

The budgets in North Africa have remained relatively stable in recent years. UNHCR has also managed a number of supplementary programmes related to mixed migration, the Confidence-Building Measures and the repatriation of Mauritanian refugees from Senegal and Mali.

For 2010, the requirements for North Africa are more than USD 46 million. The increase is mainly due to the inclusion of unmet needs, particularly in Algeria. These gaps were identified in the context of the comprehensive needs assessment and the proposed expansion of the Confidence-Building Measures .

UNHCR's budget in North Africa 2006 - 2011



UNHCR budget for North Africa (USD)

OPERATIONS	2009 REVISED BUDGET ¹	2010			2011
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	TOTAL	
Algeria	9,897,416	18,106,749	0	18,106,749	18,126,800
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	4,204,196	5,405,723	0	5,405,723	5,405,700
Mauritania	8,009,944	7,842,600	22,350	7,864,950	1,750,100
Morocco	1,955,030	2,550,253	0	2,550,253	2,550,300
Tunisia	882,261	611,758	0	611,758	611,800
Western Sahara (CBM)	4,114,811	11,797,442	0	11,797,442	11,797,400
Regional activities	1,041,660	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	30,105,318	46,314,525	22,350	46,336,875	40,242,100

¹ Includes supplementary programme requirements of USD 12,678,379.