

KEY FIGURES - 2015

350

Children, adolescents and higher education students who have been supported by UNHCR with their studies

516

Families received a home visit from UNHCR staff, partners, or refugee community workers

170

Refugees benefitted from a vocational training or support to develop an income generating activity

421

Vulnerable refugee households who benefited from cash assistance to cover basic needs

130/month

Refugees with chronic diseases benefitted from appropriate health care

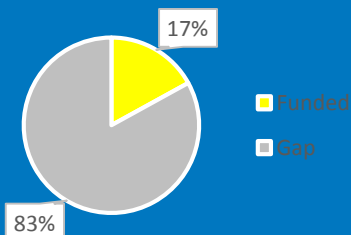
100

Refugees submitted for resettlement

FUNDING

USD 4.17 million

Requested for the operation in 2015



MOROCCO

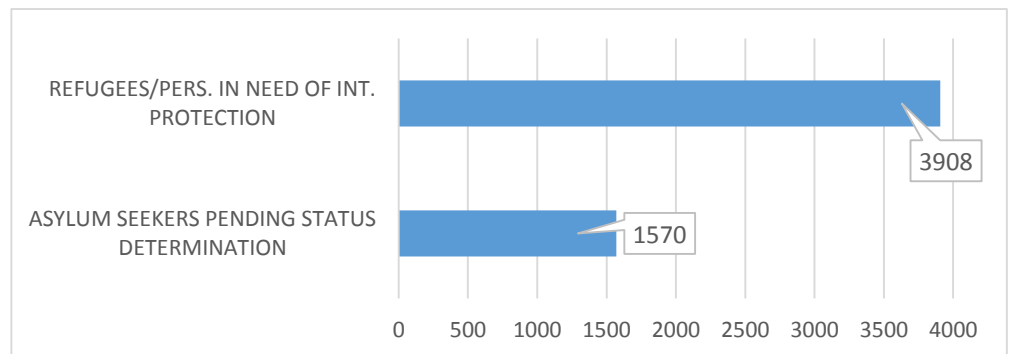
UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1 October – 31 December 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- Since the beginning of 2015, the number of UNHCR-registered refugees **has increased by 200 %** (from 1,275 in December 2014 to 3,908). The increase is due essentially to the ever growing number of Syrians registering with the office.
- At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, a **joint registration** for asylum-seekers has been implementing since November 23. Once registered with UNHCR, asylum-seekers are referred towards the BRA (Bureau des Réfugiés et des Apatrides).
- With the collaboration of UNHCR Morocco and the Moroccan Ministry of Justice, the **Africa Chapter of the International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ)** organized its Regional Conference in Marrakech, from November 25th to 27th. This conference gathered 110 participants and featured a great opportunity for 30 Moroccan judges, magistrates and civil servants from MoJ to meet their African and European counterparts in the context of the development of an asylum framework in Morocco.
- On Monday 14 December, a MoU was signed between the Ministry for Moroccan Residing Abroad and for Migration Affairs (MCMREAM) and the UN in Morocco to undertake joint programming in support of the **National Strategy for Migration and Asylum (NSMA)**.

Population of concern : A total of **5,478** persons of concern to UNHCR



OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Migration & Asylum: On October 26, a new framework agreement providing migrants and refugees legally residing in Morocco with **free basic medical and healthcare coverage** was put in place, giving legal framework for UNHCR-recognised refugees to have access to public hospitals and health centres.

On the same day, a new **regularisation process** was launched for undocumented Sub-Saharan African migrants living in Morocco whose demands for a residency cards had been rejected back in 2014. Nearly 9,000 persons had appealed negative decisions. 92% of them are expected to be regularized during this process. A number of migrant NGOs will also be legally registered by the Ministry of Interior, following the regularization of their administrators.

Situation at the border with Melilla and Ceuta: In November, UNHCR Morocco registered the first family of Syrian refugees that had decided to return from Melilla to seek protection in Morocco. They were referred to UNHCR through the referral mechanism implemented with our partner, the *Organisation Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme* (OMDH) in Oujda, for persons seeking international protection in Morocco.

In December, reports from NGO partners in Tangier, the Human Rights Commission (CRDH) reflected the escalating level of raids and harassment against irregular migrants' settlements in Tangier and Tetouan areas. On the night of Thursday 24th to Friday 25th December, more than 300 African migrants attempted to cross to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, either by swimming or by climbing the border fence near Benzou, in Northern Morocco. This was the most massive attempt to cross the border towards Ceuta in the last six months.

Legislation: On December 16, the Council of Government postponed the adoption of the **draft law on asylum** (last step before submission to Parliament). Officially, the government justified this decision in a statement by claiming there is a need to "deepen the study of this text due to its importance", sending back the draft law to the drawing board.



Participants at the IARLJ Conference – Marrakesh

ACHIEVEMENTS

Protection

Registration:

- The number of Syrian **individuals approaching UNHCR** continued to increase during the reporting period, reaching up to **434** persons in November.
- On the contrary, the number **of Yemeni asylum seekers** approaching the office started to decrease in September, only reaching a figure of 15 persons per month at most.

- The number of asylum-seekers from other countries of origin who approached the office in Rabat doubled after September to reach up to 173 persons only for the month of November. This figure is close to the number of applications prior to July.
- At the end of December, the waiting period between first contact and registration interview was 3 weeks for both Syrian and non-Syrian asylum-seekers.
- A breakdown of new requests for registration with UNHCR is as follows:

Country of origin	1 October – 31 December		Cumulative since 1 January, 2015	
	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons
Syrians	274	1,089	591	2,542
Yemenis	26	45	257	463
Others	300	364	946	1,158
Total	600	1,498	1,794	4,163

Refugee status determination (RSD):

- The number of asylum-seeker cases pending an interview with UNHCR was 1,094 at the beginning of 2015, and 769 at the end of December.¹ The unit registered 300 new applications (non-Syrian and non-Yemeni) during the reporting period, compared with 124 new applications during the previous reporting period (July-September). This had a large impact **on the work load of the RSD team**.
- Following the **Global RSD Retreat** that took place in Geneva in November, the RSD team has been working on implementing a more strategic use of RSD aiming to the reduction of the backlog of pending asylum applications.

Outreach and community based activities:

- During the reporting period, **479 asylum-seekers were referred to UNHCR Morocco** by UNHCR's partner OMDH (*Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains*) in Oujda (north eastern province). Nationalities include: Syria (367), Cameroon (33), Mali (7), Guinea Conakry (3), Central African Republic (1), Burkina Faso (1), Nigeria (59), and other (8). OMDH referred 1 irregular migrants to OIM in Oujda for assisted voluntary return. Since January 2015, **1,235 persons (540 cases)** were referred to UNHCR Rabat (63 per cent were Syrians).
- During the reporting period **260 home visits took place** in Rabat, Casablanca, Sale, Kenitra, Marrakesh, and Oujda (172 by UNHCR's partner *Fondation Orient-Occident* and UNHCR staff; 88 by refugee community workers). There have been 516 home visits since January, surpassing the total number of home visits in 2014 (139). This upward trend is the result of UNHCR's outreach strategy aimed at covering a higher number of persons of concern. These home visits are automatic once a refugee requests monthly cash assistance.
- Some **421 vulnerable refugee households were assisted with regular monthly cash assistance** (October to December), compared with 256 families during the last reporting period, due to the increased vulnerability of Yemenis and Syrian families.
- Some **2,555 refugees** benefitted from cash assistance (October to December), compared with 1,934 during the last reporting period. This upward trend is the result of UNHCR's strategy to deliver cash assistance through banking system throughout the country.

¹ The figures mentioned do not include Syrian and Yemeni refugees, who are considered, on a prima facie basis, to be in need of international protection.

Legal counselling and representation:

- The number of persons of concern (refugees and asylum seekers) referred to UNHCR legal aid partner who received free legal aid and counselling was **54**, making a total of **236** persons since January. Roughly 26 per cent of those assisted are minors and 20 per cent are women or girls. The applicants are mainly from Cote d'Ivoire (26%), Democratic Republic of Congo (14%) and Syria (14%) and Cameroon (14%).
- Some **28** individuals were assisted during the reporting period with the provision of legal documentation, including marriage or birth certificates, and nationality documentation.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV):

- To increase prevention of and protection against SGBV, a **multi-year UNHCR SGBV strategy** (2015-2016) was put in place to: 1) Reduce the risk of SGBV for persons of concern; 2) Improve early detection of SGBV survivors of concern; 3) Improve the quality of SGBV response services; 4) Strengthen interagency coordination on SGBV and collaboration with civil society organizations and stakeholders; 5) Support government/institutional capacities on SGBV. On December 8, on the occasion of the **16 Days of Activism against SGBV** and alongside with FOO, UNHCR ran educational activities for 20 refugee minors to raise awareness on gender-based violence.
- 6 survivors of SGBV were referred for legal assistance. SGBV survivors in need of protection and assistance were hosted in protection houses managed by UNHCR's partner *Fondation Orient-Occident (FOO)*.
- **47 visits** were conducted by the FOO for monitoring the situation in safe houses.

Education

- UNHCR and its education partner, the *FOO*, **assisted 350 children and adolescents to access to primary/secondary school**, (Jan-Dec), compared with 110 at the end of 2014. This increase is partly due to outreach made towards Syrian families in the oriental region to support the enrolment of Syrian children and adolescents in public schools.
- Some **38 refugee students** were provided scholarships for higher education, compared with 12 students during the two first semesters of 2015. Refugee students from Central African Rep. and Yemen were among the new beneficiaries.

Health

- During the reporting period an average of **130 refugees** per month were referred to primary health care centres, compared with 84 during the previous reporting period.
- During the reporting period **121 refugees** with chronic diseases benefitted from appropriate health care on a regular basis.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- Some **33 refugees benefitted from vocational training** and **24 refugees** were selected to receive six months training and three month internships in early October.
- **Income generating activities (IGA) developed by 30 refugees** were accepted by UNHCR and partners, making a total of **83 in 2015**. These IGAs are now submitted to feasibility studies.
- Feasibility studies to determine the practicality of proposed income generating projects were conducted by the enterprise counselors to assess commercial projects such as perfumery, cosmetics, spare parts, clothing, motor

oils, catering (cheese, vegetables) and pastry. The team prepared **40** additional feasibility studies, bringing the number of feasibility studies to **120** in 2015.

- **11 refugees** were supported to develop their income generating projects in the fields of clothing, shoemaking, catering, and perfumery, for a total of **31** in 2015.

Durable Solutions

- Of the **46 refugees who departed Morocco through resettlement**, 27 went to Canada, 11 to the USA, 4 to France, 2 to the Netherlands, 1 to Finland and 1 to Norway.

	Identified for resettlement		Submitted for resettlement		Cases departed	
	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons
1 July – 30 Sept	13	13	30	48	5	5
Cumulative (2015)	78	96	73	100	33	46

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

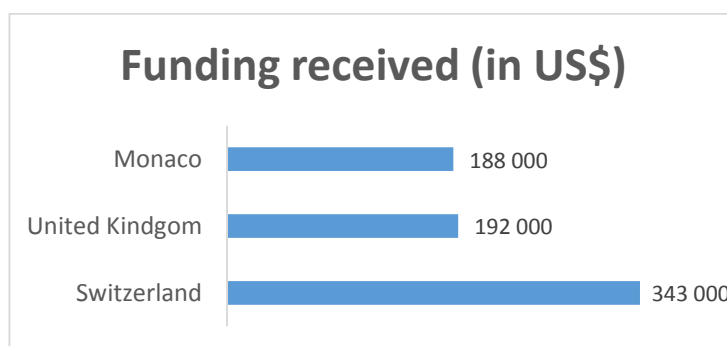
- On October 28, UNHCR Morocco, in collaboration with IOM, organised an information meeting for Moroccan journalists. This session aimed at providing to journalists sound information about UNHCR’s and IOM’s mandate and activities in Morocco.
- On November 10-11, UNHCR Morocco facilitated a training session on UNHCR’s mandate and specific needs of refugees for Moroccan NGOs working with migrants and refugees in the North and the Oriental.
- On November 11, UNHCR Morocco gave an introductory presentation on migration and asylum and the role of civil society at a seminar at Al-Akhawayn University (Ifrane) to Bachelor’s and Masters’ students.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The earmarked recorded contributions for UNHCR operations in Morocco in 2015 amount to

723,000 USD.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors (**Switzerland, the UK and Monaco**) who have contributed directly to this operation, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.



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