

Egypt

April - June 2020

As of 30 June 2020, **258,816 refugees and asylum-seekers from 57 countries of origin** were registered with UNHCR Egypt.

Half of the registered refugees and asylum-seekers are from Syria. In 2020, **6,143 people have been newly registered** with UNHCR Egypt.

Most refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt live in the **urban areas** of Greater Cairo and on the North Coast.

KEY INDICATORS

10,198 families received monthly multi-purpose cash grants in the second quarter of 2020

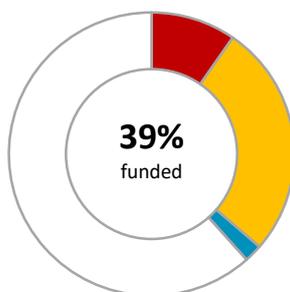
4,283 unaccompanied and separated children were registered with UNHCR Egypt as of end of June 2020

621 refugees departed to resettlement countries in 2020

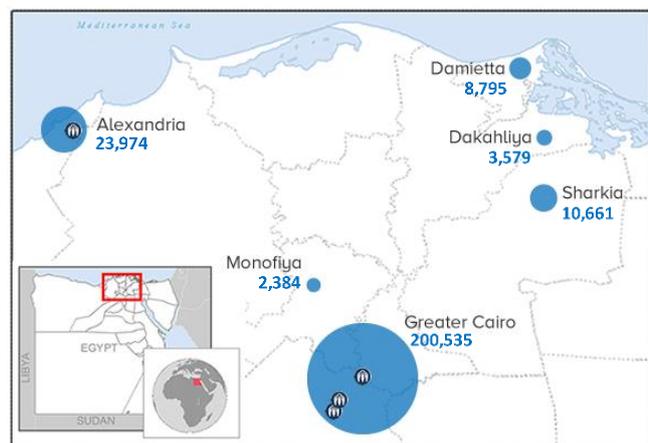
FUNDING SITUATION (8 SEPTEMBER 2020)

USD \$118.3 million

requested for the Egypt operation in 2020

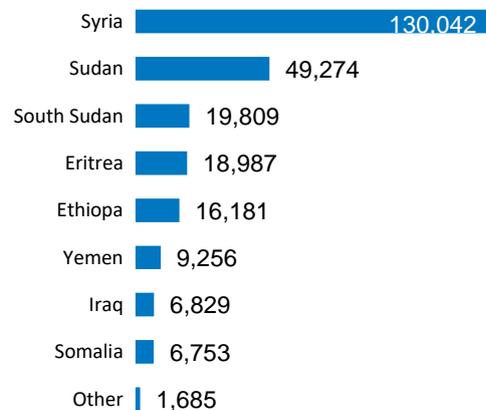


■ Tightly earmarked ■ Earmarked
■ Softly earmarked (indicative allocation) ■ Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
 Funding gap (indicative)



REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Countries of Origin



Increased vulnerabilities during COVID-19 pandemic

The majority of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt were **already very vulnerable prior to the outbreak** of COVID-19 and immediately felt the impact of the changed environment. Many have lost their sources of income and **cannot afford to buy sufficient basic supplies or pay their rent**. In the current circumstances, unaccompanied and separated children are becoming even more vulnerable. Cases of **sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** are on the rise. Elderly people and people with special needs and medical conditions are among the most affected groups by the pandemic.

UNHCR Egypt analyzed all inquiries received through phone and e-mails during the month of May. Out of a total of 10,989 inquiries, most pertained to job loss (15%), food unaffordability (13%), risk of eviction or having already been evicted (6%) and other socio-economic and protection needs (4%). Among the refugees and asylum-seekers who contacted UNHCR, **62 per cent** (4,648 people) reported that they were **in need of food and cash assistance**.

In addition, UNHCR surveyed 446 refugees to identify information needs and access barriers to services. This situation monitoring exercise also informed UNHCR of individual experiences with COVID-19 and communal responses, the support required and refugee expectations from UNHCR and partners. Findings from the survey helped ensure that the **operational response was informed by refugee voices and concerns**.



Shukran and Maysoon prepare a traditional stuffed bell peppers dish. The two refugee women are full-time volunteers at "Mastoura", an Egyptian initiative that was founded to respond to the needs of the local and refugee communities in Egypt which were hard-hit by the COVID-19 crisis. ©UNHCR/Reem AkI

The **support provided by UNHCR and partners** in Egypt in response to these increased vulnerabilities is outlined in an [inter-agency pictogram](#).



PROTECTION

- In order to remain reachable and to continue to serve refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR Egypt has strengthened and adapted its **communication with refugees and asylum-seekers**. The communication channels used in times of COVID-19 include **phone, e-mail, social media, messaging applications and video calling**. Between April and June, UNHCR Egypt responded to a total of **38,607 calls** through its Infoline and registration hotline.
- In light of physical distancing measures in place, UNHCR convened **10 online community meetings** bringing together refugee leaders, UNHCR staff and partners to discuss the challenges arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and possible solutions to mitigate their impact on refugee communities. UNHCR also maintains two-way communications with the communities through **daily engagement on mobile messaging groups** with over 130 community leaders and 7,000+ community members.

- Between April and June, UNHCR continued to follow up and **advocate on arrest and detention-related matters especially administrative detention and call for release due to risks in detention facilities during the pandemic.**
- Protection counselling activities enabled UNHCR to **swiftly identify the most vulnerable refugees** and asylum-seekers and to provide them with assistance, protection and durable solutions. UNHCR proactively initiated protection, reception and counselling activities based on case referrals made via phone calls and e-mails. In times of COVID-19, individual protection interviews were conducted through phone calls and the **protection risks and social vulnerabilities faced by the refugees or asylum-seekers were assessed in-depth.** In accordance with their needs, refugees and asylum-seekers were then referred to various services including legal, medical and psychosocial services; housing assistance; cash based interventions (CBI); services and assistance related to education, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and child protection; as well as to accelerated refugee status determination (RSD) and resettlement.
- **Emergency child protection cases were handled in-person.** This included emergency registration of high-risk cases and urgent alternative care needs for children facing abuse.
- In order to effectively **respond to children's needs during the COVID-19 crisis,** UNHCR as co-chair of the Child Protection sub-working group, initiated a mapping of child protection services including modified remote working modalities during COVID-19 and created an open forum to share materials and to **ensure harmonization of counselling messages** sent to all children at risk.



*Mariam, a child from Sudan at the waiting area of UNHCR partner Refuge Egypt.
©UNHCR/Pedro Costa Gomes*

- Between April and June, **73 Best Interest Assessments (BIAs)** were conducted for children at risk, mainly **unaccompanied and separated children.** In line with prevention measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, UNHCR and child protection partners mainly teleworked since 16 March. BIAs, case management, referrals and counselling were conducted remotely. A total of 585 inquiries were received and responded to via the child protection functional email box and **over 8,050 phone calls were carried out** by UNHCR and partners to provide individual counselling to children at risk.
- As of 30 June 2020, **4,283 unaccompanied and separated children** were registered with UNHCR Egypt. Following the partial suspension of registration activities on 16 March because of COVID-19, all newly identified children at risk, including unaccompanied children, underwent an **extensive protection screening over the phone** and, if applicable, were referred for **emergency registration** to address highlighted protection risks. Unregistered children at risk remain under close monitoring by the child protection team and will be registered as soon as activities resume.

- In April and May, UNHCR carried out a **Child Protection monitoring survey for unaccompanied children** to identify their needs and ensure that activities are adapted in light of the COVID-19 situation. The survey highlighted the **need for additional individual counselling on COVID-19 related health services and child protection services**. In coordination with partners, UNHCR ensured that further counselling was provided to unaccompanied children on health, safety and available services, including referral pathways.
- As of mid-June, **UNHCR piloted remote RSD interviewing**, with adequate procedural and integrity standards in place. In the second half of June, the UNHCR RSD team conducted 146 interviews and 484 decisions were endorsed at all instances.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR and its **Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV)** partner, CARE International responded to 365 SGBV incidents. The **survivors received multi-sectoral response services** including safety, medical, psychosocial, livelihoods, legal services and quality case management.
- The inter-agency SGBV sub-working groups in Alexandria and Cairo started discussions on **SGBV trends during the COVID-19 pandemic** and jointly brainstormed on key emerging needs, notably, **housing and financial assistance**, considering the current economic challenges. Agencies such as UNFPA and UN Women shared resources to help support programs addressing SGBV and cross-cutting issues during this time.
- In both Cairo and Alexandria, CARE International started conducting **virtual SGBV prevention awareness activities**. A total of 22 sessions were held on basic psychosocial support, early marriage, self-defense, basic protection matters, sexual and reproductive health and legal counselling.
- **Training activities that are usually held at the Women Friendly Space in Cairo resumed in a virtual modality** and 79 women from different sub-Saharan African countries, Syria and Yemen attended several vocational trainings on recycling and thermal clay. An anxiety management session was also delivered and highly appreciated by the participants.
- **Socio-economic vulnerabilities among SGBV survivors continued to be a protection concern**. UNHCR worked closely with CARE as well as other organizations to ensure that the needs of the survivors, including for emergency medical and psychosocial support, were met. Between April and June, many of the organizations offered remote support to the SGBV survivors.
- UNHCR continued to **facilitate birth registration** for refugees and asylum-seekers. The cases include, among others, children born out of wedlock or SGBV incidents, and children whose birth registration was delayed and is therefore more complicated. In May and June, 110 birth certificates were issued, through legal service providers contracted by UNHCR. Assistance in securing birth registration plays a crucial role in **preventing statelessness** and facilitating individuals' **access to governmental services**.



*Maria, a refugee from Sudan who studies medicine in Egypt.
©UNHCR/Pedro Costa Gomes*



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

- In efforts to strengthen community-based protection mechanisms in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, **31 refugee community leaders and volunteers** were trained on **psychological first aid**. The two-day online training workshop aimed at enabling them to play a greater role in the identification, referral, and support of persons distressed by the disruption to their lives that was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Another **130 refugee community leaders** were **trained** through the Community Empowerment project **on crisis management** to help them navigate their communities through these challenging times.
- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, **636 people living with disabilities and older people underwent** needs assessment to identify possible areas of intervention and 4,043 more benefited from regular follow-up and case management processes. Over 200 field visits were undertaken to deliver adult diapers, assistive devices, and other aid to refugees and asylum-seekers in need.



HEALTH

- UNHCR supported the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) through the **provision of personal protective equipment for frontline health workers** in line with the requirements shared by the ministry. On 15 April, **15,000 N95 masks** were delivered to MoHP stores and were immediately distributed to hospitals in need of this kind of equipment. This was followed by a donation of **160,000 surgical masks** on 25 June. UNHCR's support to the MoHP was part of the UN Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP).
- UNHCR further continued to ensure **sustained access to essential health services** such as **life-saving emergency services**, regular supply of **medicines for patients with chronic conditions** for three months, management of **complicated pregnancies** as well as **mental health services**. With the gradual ease of the movement restriction imposed by the Government of Egypt, UNHCR's partners for primary health care increased their operating hours in May and started to receive more refugees and asylum-seekers on appointment basis while continuing to strictly adhere to infection protection and control measures.



Young refugee volunteers from Eritrea set up a community initiative to support vulnerable families who were hit hard by the economic impact of COVID-19 in their neighborhood in Cairo. ©Attumanina

- In the second quarter of 2020, UNHCR's partner Save the Children (SCI), modified its community outreach activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this adapted response, **community health workers attended calls** by refugees and asylum-seekers who suspected to have been infected with COVID-19. They then provided the refugees and asylum-seekers and their families with health education messages on home isolation and directed cases with moderate and severe symptoms to the nearest MoHP hospitals providing COVID-19 screening and treatment services. The community health workers **continued to follow up with the suspected cases** and their families to ensure compliance with health instructions and to try to resolve and report refugee access barriers to health care services.
- In May, SCI distributed **hygiene kits** in an underserved area in Greater Cairo targeting **socioeconomically disadvantaged refugees and asylum-seekers**. Out of the kits, 110 were funded by UNHCR.



BASIC NEEDS AND SELF RELIANCE

- UNHCR delivers **monthly unconditional cash grants** to extremely vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in order to provide protection and assistance, and to avoid reliance on negative coping mechanisms. Between April and June 2020, UNHCR assisted a total of **10,198 families** (comprising 49,092 refugees and asylum-seekers) with monthly cash grants.
- Also, **2,250 unaccompanied and separated children** were supported with monthly cash assistance to help them cover their basic needs. In addition, a total of 828 cases (2,843 individuals) received **interim cash support** from UNHCR. The interim cash program seeks to **sequence cash assistance with protection interventions** for an interim basis ranging from three to six months. This program supports refugees and asylum-seekers with certain profiles such as newly arrived individuals with serious protection needs and risks, newly identified persons with specific needs and inability for selfcare, and cases with temporary medical needs that impact their ability to work.
- UNHCR further provided “**cash for hygiene**” to **18,662 cases** (67,045 individuals). The one-off payment supported, among others, refugees and asylum-seekers **living with disabilities or chronic diseases, single parents and elder persons**
- Biometric authentication** at UNHCR Egypt’s financial service provider, the Egypt Post Office, was **re-activated in June** after a temporary suspension. The reactivation followed the confirmation by the financial service provider of **hygiene measures in place** to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Throughout the holy month of **Ramadan**, Egyptian Actor Ahmed Hatem led **Arabeit Elkheir** - a “**car of good**” - through Cairo and provided nearly 1,000 hot meals per round to some of the refugees and Egyptians hardest-hit by the outbreak of COVID-19. The initiative was launched by Hatem, Uber and Venture Lifestyle, who partnered with **UNHCR Egypt to ensure refugees and asylum-seekers were included in the various distributions.**
- Refuge Egypt, one of UNHCR’s Livelihood partners, finalized the setup of a **center** that will cater for **employment profiling and guidance on labor market options**. The center is expected to start offering its services in July.



UNHCR staff member during **Arabeit Elkheir** food distribution ©UNHCR



To help people protect themselves against COVID-19, refugee women from Nilfurat project, supported by UNHCR, made these masks in a variety of designs and colours. ©Nilfurat

- Twelve women at the NilFurat project started to produce **high quality facemasks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19**. NilFurat is a member of UNHCR’s global artisanal initiative MADE 51 “Market Access, Design & Empowerment for Refugee Artisans”.
- During the times of movement restrictions related to COVID-19, **UNHCR linked 15 refugee artisans to social entrepreneurs** specialized on handicraft production and marketing in Egypt. The refugees and asylum-seekers provided their services in the fields of quilting, crocheting, sewing and printing on fabrics, and were able to work in a safe environment from home.


EDUCATION

- To control the spread of COVID-19, all **schools, universities and other education institutes remained closed** in the second quarter of 2020. For the rest of the school year, students enrolled in public schools were assisted by the Ministry of Education through the **government operated Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB), an on-line platform**, and were supported with various types of activities and learning materials. The modality of end-of year exams for students of Grade 9 and Grade 12 was adapted to comply with the restriction on movements and gatherings. Private schools also facilitated online learning. For families who had televisions, programming episodes for different grades and classes were being aired.
- Refugee and asylum-seeker children enrolled in basic education in **community schools** had **finished the academic year** before the restrictive measures were implemented and started their summer break. Only higher grades (Grade 8 and Senior 3 students) prepared for the **Sudanese national exams**, the date and venue of which had not yet been confirmed at the time of reporting.
- Towards the end of the second quarter of 2020, **school enrolment** for the academic year 2020/2021 started and refugees and asylum-seekers reported on **challenges** in enrolling their children in the public-school system with expired UNHCR documents and without valid residence permits. UNHCR followed up on these issues with the national authorities and continued to **advocate for tolerance** in relation to asylum-seekers and refugees with expired UNHCR cards or residencies, and those who did not yet have UNHCR documentation. Related advocacy efforts were sustained in the next quarter.
- UNHCR and its education partner, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), undertook two surveys targeting approximately 3,000 refugee and asylum-seeker households. The aim was to gauge the **impact of COVID-19** on the **learning of students, passing of exams and their general mental health and well-being**. In addition, the surveys served to better understand the families' **digital capacity and access to technical devices and internet connectivity**, which would determine the children's ability to follow their classes during school closure.



Syrian sisters Naya and Celine make Ramadan arts and crafts at home during the COVID-19 curfew. ©Terre des Hommes/UNHCR/Rama Tamer

The survey outcomes revealed a **pressing need to support these families financially to access online educational material and final exams**.

Purchasing of internet package costs families at least USD 20 per month, which most could not afford. As a result, UNHCR and CRS **repurposed funds and small cash grants were provided to families** to purchase internet data packages.

Families with **school age children with disabilities** were also contacted, to assess in particular how the caregivers were able to provide needed support.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

- Interviews for resettlement and voluntary repatriation at UNHCR premises remained suspended during the second quarter of 2020, except for emergency cases. **As of mid-June, UNHCR piloted remote resettlement interviewing**, with adequate procedural and integrity standards in place. Feedback received from refugees was largely positive, with refugees expressing appreciation that UNHCR sought alternative processing modalities to support them.
- UNHCR continued to assess and review cases already interviewed through remote work modalities. From April to June 2020, the **cases of 1,053 persons were submitted for resettlement consideration** to eight resettlement countries. The main nationalities included Syrians, Sudanese, Eritreans, South Sudanese, Ethiopians, Somalis and Iraqis.
- On 18 June 2020, UNHCR and IOM announced the **resumption of resettlement departures** for refugees globally. As the **airport in Cairo remained closed** for international commercial flights until the end of June 2020, only refugees who benefited from special flight arrangement undertaken by resettlement countries departed Egypt. During the period between April and June, one family with four members was resettled.
- Voluntary Repatriation activities remained suspended** owing to the closure of concerned government services and the airport.

World Refugee Day 2020

- World Refugee Day, which falls on 20 June of every year, recognizes the strength and courage of people who were forced to flee their countries in search of safety. The theme at the heart of this year's campaign was **"Everyone can make a difference and every action counts."** Within these parameters, UNHCR and partners launched several activities to raise awareness about the situation of refugees in Egypt and globally, highlight the positive contribution of refugees to their host communities, engage more supporters from the public and the private sector and raise funds at a time of heightened vulnerability because of COVID-19.



UNHCR cooperated with rising Egyptian illustrator Aya Marzouk on the production of a Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) that was shared by celebrities and other public figures to celebrate World Refugee Day.

- UNHCR Egypt produced a [video to commemorate the day](#), with the participation of the President of the Egypt National Council for Human Rights, the Assistant Secretary General of the League of Arab States (LAS), five ambassadors of donor countries (Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) and the Head of the European Union Delegation to Egypt and private donors. Staff from partner NGOs and the UNHCR team in Egypt also used this forum to express their support to refugees and asylum-seekers.

- On 20 June, UNHCR's partner for community-based protection, Terre des Hommes (TdH), **launched the song "Ana Insan" (I am Human)**, a joint production between local celebrity supporter Mai Abd el-Aziz and refugee youth performers. The song touches on the commonality of experiences between refugee and host populations and the need for solidarity during these challenging times. The song was followed by a compilation of short recordings by refugees and host community members talking about the same topic.
- The women at Nilfurat **showcased their face mask production** in an event that was **livestreamed** with participation of UNHCR headquarters and UNHCR's representation in the United Kingdom.
- The celebrations concluded on 28 June with an all-day online interactive session organized by TdH. The event was attended by 59 refugee and host community youth who **talked about their hopes and aspirations for a better tomorrow** while engaging in group activities meant to bridge cultural divides and bring the communities closer together.

Other Developments



Mary, one of the refugee cooks featured on "Mesh Mogarrad Akla." She prepared a popular South Sudanese recipe called "Mafrouka" made of okra and minced beef. ©UNHCR/Yasmine EIDemerdash

During the holy month of Ramadan, UNHCR Egypt released a **six-episode cooking show entitled "More than Just a Meal"**. Each three-minute episode featured new celebrities and refugee cooks from different nationalities. The show reached more than 2.4 million views on different social media platforms. [Watch the first episode here](#)



Syrian actress Kinda Alloush (L) sings with Sayeda, a Yemeni refugee in Egypt who studies biophysics and host Sherine Arafa (R) on the set of UNHCR's Ramadan show "Mesh Mogarrad Akla." ©UNHCR

Working in partnership

- **UNHCR works closely with the Government of Egypt, UN and NGO partners to provide protection and assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees.** The Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG), chaired by UNHCR, is the main interagency coordination mechanism overseeing six sectorial working groups gathering representatives from UN agencies, as well as international and national NGOs. The protection sector includes three sub-working groups which consist of Child Protection, Response to SGBV, and Durable Solutions. The other working groups are for Education, Health, Basic Needs and Cash, Livelihoods, and Communication with Communities. In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR works very closely with partners to ensure a coordinated response to the emerging needs. Earlier in the crisis, UNHCR initiated weekly virtual meetings with operational partners to discuss the COVID response. The frequency of these meetings was later scaled back to a bi-weekly. All meetings currently take place via videoconferencing.
- In 2020, UNHCR Egypt works through the following implementing partners: All Saints' Cathedral • CARE International • Caritas Egypt • Catholic Relief Services (CRS) • Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights (EFRR) • Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) • Save the Children International (SCI) • Terre des Hommes (TdH) • United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) • United Nations Volunteers (UNV). UNHCR has weekly virtual meetings with its implementing partners during the COVID-19 crisis.
- In the frameworks of the Egypt Response Plan for Refugees and Asylum-seekers from sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq and Yemen (ERP) and the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) focusing on Syrian refugees and host communities, UNHCR appeals together with the following partners in Egypt: CRS • CARE International • Caritas Egypt • Don Bosco • ERC • Fard Foundation • International Labour Organization (ILO) • International Organization for Migration (IOM) • Mostafa Mahmoud Society (MMS) • Plan International • SCI • World Food Programme (WFP) • World Health Organization (WHO) • United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) • United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) • United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) • UN Women

Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **US\$ 45.8 million** as of 8 September 2020.

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LINKS

Syria Regional Refugee Response: data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria

UNHCR Refugees & Migration Emergency Mediterranean Response: data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/Mediterranean



UNHCREgypt

 unhcr.org/eg