

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Middle East and North Africa region continued to face high levels of displacement throughout 2015. With three system-wide, Level-3 emergencies in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) and Yemen, the region accounted for more than 30 per cent of global displacement, including 2.7 million refugees, 13.9 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and an estimated 374,200 stateless individuals.

Protection remained UNHCR's main priority in the Middle East and North Africa. The Office worked closely with governments and partners to enhance protection space, focusing on: advocating access to safety and protection from refoulement; reinforcing registration and refugee status determination; promoting legislative frameworks; addressing the risk of statelessness; ensuring security from violence and exploitation; and working towards durable solutions, including by expanding resettlement opportunities.

Middle East and North Africa

UNHCR/Bassam Diab

Fatima, a 76 year-old Syrian IDP, lives with her husband in a complex for internally displaced people in Lattakia, Syria.



MAJOR OPERATIONS

This overview highlights key aspects of the main situations that required emergency or sustained response from UNHCR and its partners in 2015. More details on individual operations are available in the relevant subregional and country operations pages on the Global Focus website (<http://reporting.unhcr.org>).

The crisis in **Syria** continued to trigger unprecedented levels of displacement. At the end of 2015, more than 6.5 million Syrians were internally displaced, and 4.6 million sought refuge in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Against this backdrop, UNHCR worked with more than 200 partners to support national response plans in these five main hosting countries, in line with the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP).

Despite the continued generosity of host countries and donors, Syrian refugees faced increasingly difficult living conditions after more than five years in exile, with many falling further into poverty. Meanwhile, host governments battled economic and security challenges as a result of the conflict.

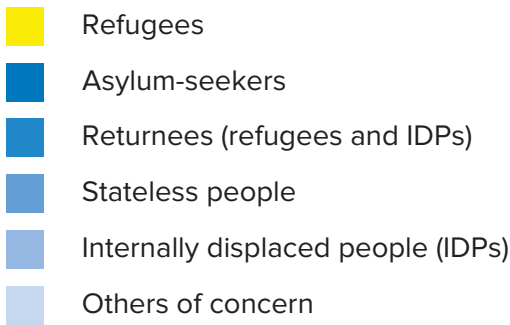
Inside Syria, the humanitarian situation and level of human suffering endured by the Syrian people dramatically worsened in 2015. Safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access in the country remained a significant challenge. An estimated 13.5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, including 4.5 million in hard-to-reach locations.

With respect to onward movement, 2015 witnessed a notable increase in those seeking refuge in Europe. By the end of the year, Syrians comprised the largest proportion of those who undertook dangerous journeys by sea.

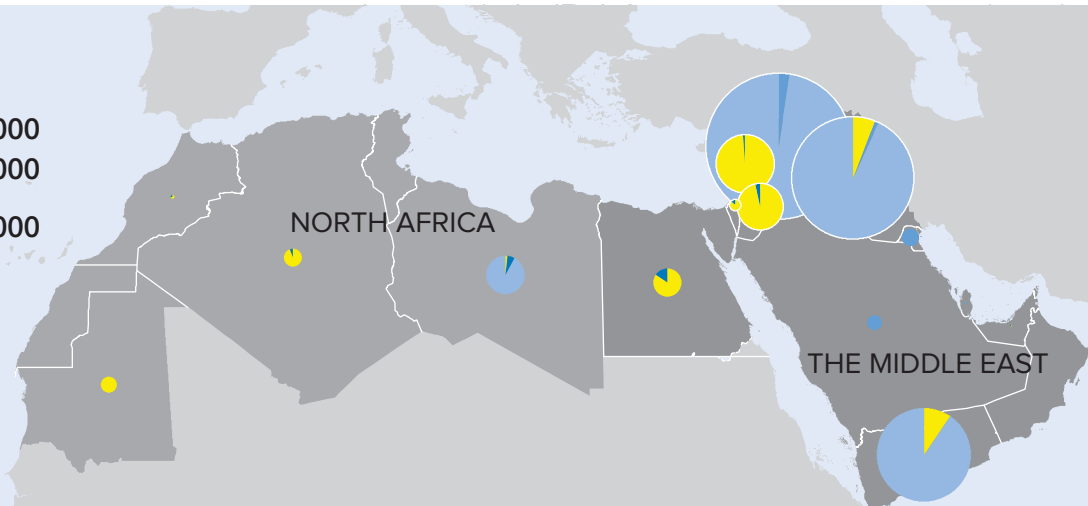
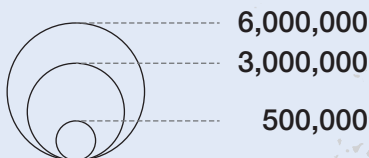
In **Iraq**, the escalation of armed conflict resulted in significant internal displacement. Nearly 3.3 million people had been displaced across the country since January 2014. This figure does not include, however, nearly 1 million people displaced by sectarian violence between 2006 and 2008. In 2015, nearly 222,000 Iraqis sought asylum in the region. Growing numbers of Iraqis, facing precarious living conditions and impoverishment, resorted to negative coping strategies or onward movement.

Yemen's alarming and complex humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate. With conflict escalating at the end of March 2015, approximately 170,000 people fled to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, as well as other countries in the East and Horn of Africa. More than 2.5 million people were internally displaced, and an estimated 82 per cent of the Yemeni population were in need of humanitarian assistance. Despite insecurity, Yemen continued to host some 267,000 refugees residing either in urban areas or in Kharaz camp. The country also received 92,500 new arrivals in mixed movements, two-thirds of which arrived after the conflict began. This represented one of the highest annual totals of arrivals for Yemen in the past decade. At least 95 people are known to have died or gone missing in the Gulf of Aden in 2015.

Unrest continued to affect people of concern to UNHCR in **Libya**, including approximately 435,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) and an estimated 100,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, more than 36,400 of whom were registered with UNHCR. The Office provided life-saving assistance to individuals deemed most vulnerable through its partners and national staff, though access remained a challenge. Cooperation with the Libyan coast guard and immigration authorities was



Population size



strengthened, and UNHCR gained access to 8 of the 18 State-run detention centres.

Mixed movements by sea from Libya grew exponentially in 2015. Some 127,500 people risked their lives at sea to reach Italy, accounting for 83 per cent of the arrivals by sea in the country. In this context, UNHCR's partners provided immediate humanitarian assistance to around 2,000 individuals rescued during their sea journeys. Through regular detention monitoring, the Office also identified people of concern with specific humanitarian needs, and either ensured their release or sought alternatives to their detention.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Safeguarding access to protection and asylum

As conflict continued in Iraq and Syria throughout 2015, UNHCR coordinated

the refugee responses with more than 200 partners, in line with the 3RP.

Support was provided to host countries and communities, as well as to Iraqi and Syrian refugees in the region.

Cash-based assistance, targeting the most vulnerable, and registration activities remained priorities in 2015. Almost all of Iraqis and Syrians deemed in need of winter assistance received relevant support. This included 1.5 million Syrian refugees in the region, 1.1 million IDPs in Syria, more than 94,000 Iraqi refugees in the region, and more than 500,000 IDPs in Iraq. The Office continued to conduct individual biometric registration for those in need of international protection. In 2015, the Office registered more than 148,000 Syrians in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Operations carried out refugee status determination under UNHCR's mandate to safeguard the integrity, quality and efficiency of the process.

To address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and refugee child

protection issues, UNHCR continued to implement a multisectoral, coordinated and community-based approach to prevention and response. Activities aimed at strengthening national and community-based protection systems, as well as detention monitoring were prioritized.

UNHCR provided ongoing support to the Sahrawi refugees in the five camps near Tindouf, Algeria. In October 2015, the Office coordinated the inter-agency response following unexpected weather conditions that caused flooding in the five camps.

Throughout the region, UNHCR focused on the protection of urban refugees, assistance to those in need, and advocacy for burden-sharing with governments and host communities.

Addressing mixed movements

Large-scale mixed movements continued, particularly in North Africa. Many travelling in such movements came from sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn of Africa, as well as from within the Middle East and North Africa region itself, seeking to move onwards to Europe.

In response to mixed movements, UNHCR adopted a regional approach with four strategic objectives: preventing refoulement; improving access to safety and asylum; empowering people of concern to make informed decisions about their lives; and enhancing protection space and access to solutions within broader migration frameworks.

In North Africa, UNHCR continued to work towards establishing responsive national

asylum systems and strengthening the protection-sensitive management of mixed movements. Progress on the development of draft laws on asylum and national strategies for migration was achieved in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. In Libya, UNHCR provided core relief items to nearly 65,000 people of concern and continued to provide information on the protection and assistance available through partner hotlines and community centres in Benghazi and Tripoli.

UNHCR and the IOM developed a joint approach to mixed movements through an inter-agency response plan in Yemen, *The Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea with a special focus on the Yemen situation - IOM and UNHCR Proposals for Strategic Action*, which aimed to address the onward movement of refugees and migrants.

Ensuring protection of IDPs

UNHCR continued to support the inter-agency coordination framework by leading the protection, shelter and non-food items, and camp coordination and camp management sectors in Iraq and Syria.

Inside Syria, some 3.2 million people received core relief items, including nearly 430,000 people in more than 30 hard-to-reach locations and some 469,000 people through cross-border operations.

In Yemen, the Office worked with partners to distribute core relief items and other shelter materials to more than 283,000 IDPs in 19 of the country's 21 governorates. UNHCR co-led IDP protection monitoring and regularly updated the IDP figures in the country.

Seeking durable solutions

In 2015, UNHCR encouraged States in the Middle East and North Africa to take one or more of the 10 actions contained in the Global Action Plan, which sets out the strategy for achieving the goals of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024. Advocacy efforts focused on addressing the risk of statelessness in situations of forced displacement, family separation, and the loss or destruction of identity documents. UNHCR worked with governments to ensure the birth registration of refugee children born in exile and internally displaced children, and to address gaps in nationality laws that increased the risk of statelessness.

UNHCR worked towards achieving durable solutions for people of concern, including through resettlement. The files of nearly 67,000 refugees from the Middle East and North Africa region were submitted for resettlement in 2015. In addition to accelerating resettlement processing, the Office advocated alternative pathways for admission, such as humanitarian visas, community-based private sponsorships, labour mobility schemes, and family reunification, including for extended family members.

In Mauritania, UNHCR enhanced self-reliance activities for some 50,000 registered refugees in M'bera camp, including by further investing in education, vocational training and income-generation projects. Following a verification exercise carried out in 2015, the nationality of some 3,700 Mauritanian returnees was confirmed. The returnees received assistance to reintegrate into their areas of origin, and their files were deactivated from the relevant database of registered refugees. A further 8,000 returnees whose nationality was confirmed will have their files deactivated from UNHCR's database in 2016.

Strengthening leadership and coordination

UNHCR further strengthened its partnership with States, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and civil society across the region. The Office continued to cooperate closely with regional organizations such as the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Gulf Cooperation Council. In addition, partnerships with the private sector and development actors were reinforced, particularly in responding to the Syria situation.

CONSTRAINTS

Insecurity continued to impede delivery of humanitarian assistance and hinder access to people of concern. Although every effort was made to boost assistance in hard-to-reach areas, providing basic items in some countries, including Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen, was difficult. Unstable and unpredictable political situations also continued to affect UNHCR operations in the region.

The humanitarian situation significantly worsened in 2015, with refugees and other people in need of international protection becoming increasingly vulnerable because of ongoing displacement. The loss of hope among displaced populations and the increased burden on refugee-hosting communities was palpable.

With more than 85 per cent of refugees across the region living among host communities, the dire situation of urban refugees demanded special attention. In particular, many Syrian refugees in large cities were living in extreme poverty and

Financial information

The original 2015 budget for the Middle East and North Africa region approved by the Executive Committee in 2014 amounted to USD 1,886 million. At the end of 2015, the revised budget for 2015 had increased to USD 2,137 million, mainly because of additional requirements for the Iraq and Yemen situations.

Total voluntary contributions received for the region amounted to USD 1,229.8 million, leaving almost half of the region's needs unmet.

Despite record levels of contributions, funding levels in 2015 did not match needs. The impact of this shortfall included:

- The livelihoods component of the 3RP was critically underfunded (21 per cent), weakening the capacity of refugee and host community households to cope with poverty.
- In Algeria, only 2,000 refugee families out of more than 17,000 received shelter rehabilitation support after their homes were damaged or destroyed by flooding.
- In Iraq, the education sector was severely underfunded. In camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, only 71 per cent of Syrian refugee children aged 6-17 attended school. Some schools were closed in 2015 because teacher salaries could not be paid. Moreover, many schools ran double shifts in order to accommodate the high demand for places.
- In Lebanon, although as many as 860,000 vulnerable Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian individuals received monthly food assistance through cash-based programmes, funds provided on an individual basis decreased from USD 27 per month to an average of USD 18.2 per month.
- In Mauritania, funding constraints limited livelihoods initiatives. Some 1,500 people of concern deemed vulnerable could not benefit from income-generating activities.
- In Yemen, support available for survivors of SGBV were reduced, and only 90 of the 250 survivors identified benefited from enrolment in income-generating activities.

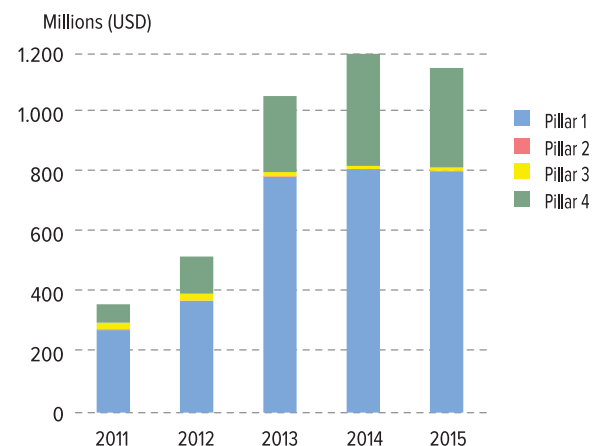
were forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms for their survival.

Countries in North Africa were increasingly challenged by mixed onward movements, including the smuggling and trafficking of migrants and refugees risking their lives to reach Europe or other destinations in North Africa.

Owing to the region's multiple crises and complex operational environment, the prospects for durable solutions for most refugee populations remained elusive. Meanwhile, UNHCR focused on the role of innovation in improving delivery and gaining efficiencies for the benefit of refugees and other people of concern.

A lack of funding severely affected UNHCR operations in the region. For example, by the end of 2015, the 3RP was only 62 per cent funded. ■

Expenditure in the Middle East and North Africa | 2011-2015



BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | USD

Operation		Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	Pillar 3 Reintegration projects	Pillar 4 IDP projects	Total
MIDDLE EAST						
Iraq	Budget	136,096,621	2,045,988	35,763,788	382,158,525	556,064,922
	Expenditure	102,035,214	1,499,491	11,329,620	151,481,108	266,345,433
Israel	Budget	3,207,939	0	0	0	3,207,939
	Expenditure	2,755,898	0	0	0	2,755,898
Jordan	Budget	328,877,516	0	0	0	328,877,516
	Expenditure	208,743,090	0	0	0	208,743,090
Lebanon	Budget	480,453,635	1,242,275	0	0	481,695,910
	Expenditure	318,557,297	205,636	0	0	318,762,933
Saudi Arabia Regional Office ¹	Budget	4,577,895	320,000	0	0	4,897,895
	Expenditure	3,321,862	258,138	0	0	3,580,000
Syrian Regional Refugee Coordination Office	Budget	35,614,693	0	0	0	35,614,693
	Expenditure	22,878,549	0	0	0	22,878,549
Syrian Arab Republic	Budget	56,815,990	179,730	0	309,778,397	366,774,117
	Expenditure	23,272,341	126,601	0	150,368,031	173,766,973
United Arab Emirates	Budget	2,971,041	110,000	0	0	3,081,041
	Expenditure	2,242,609	78,228	0	0	2,320,836
Yemen	Budget	54,533,885	0	0	52,889,729	107,423,614
	Expenditure	30,629,251	0	0	28,521,223	59,150,474
Regional activities	Budget	66,254,567	0	0	0	66,254,567
	Expenditure	930,072	0	0	0	930,072
Subtotal	Budget	1,169,403,783	3,897,994	35,763,788	744,826,650	1,953,892,215
	Expenditure	715,366,184	2,168,094	11,329,620	330,370,363	1,059,234,260
NORTH AFRICA						
Algeria	Budget	33,227,036	0	0	0	33,227,036
	Expenditure	16,010,470	0	0	0	16,010,470
Egypt Regional Office	Budget	85,120,372	50,000	0	0	85,170,372
	Expenditure	46,409,664	31,621	0	0	46,441,285
Libya	Budget	18,212,314	0	0	2,218,046	20,430,360
	Expenditure	6,714,574	0	0	1,834,639	8,549,212
Mauritania	Budget	24,368,374	0	0	0	24,368,374
	Expenditure	13,029,283	0	0	0	13,029,283
Morocco	Budget	4,166,919	0	0	0	4,166,919
	Expenditure	3,065,906	0	0	0	3,065,906
Tunisia	Budget	6,644,560	0	0	0	6,644,560
	Expenditure	3,593,599	0	0	0	3,593,599
<i>Western Sahara:</i> Confidence Building Measures	Budget	7,213,152	0	0	0	7,213,152
	Expenditure	1,564,125	0	0	0	1,564,125
Regional activities	Budget	2,246,029	0	0	0	2,246,029
	Expenditure	225,305	0	0	0	225,305
Subtotal	Budget	181,198,757	50,000	0	2,218,046	183,466,803
	Expenditure	90,612,925	31,621	0	1,834,639	92,479,185
Total Middle East and North Africa	Budget	1,350,602,539	3,947,994	35,763,788	747,044,696	2,137,359,017
	Expenditure	805,979,109	2,199,715	11,329,620	332,205,001	1,151,713,445

¹ 1 Includes activities in Kuwait

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | USD

<i>Donor</i>	Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
Australia	18,124,410			18,124,410
Austria	905,495	548,246	1,156,463	2,610,203
Belgium	1,402,918	5,981,781		7,384,699
Canada	13,967,102	4,340,278	11,709,831	30,017,211
Central Emergency Response Fund	9,545,134	13,882,485		23,427,619
Cyprus			10,965	10,965
Czech Republic	1,784,298	782,779		2,567,077
Denmark	300,000		6,899,223	7,199,223
European Union	91,812,023	3,497,237	2,663,164	97,972,423
Finland	8,333,257			8,333,257
France	10,072,597	1,996,491		12,069,088
Germany	2,864,123	17,399,676	56,700,261	76,964,061
Holy See	49,656			49,656
Yemen Humanitarian Pooled Fund	239,841	192,998		432,839
Hungary			264,550	264,550
Iceland			600,000	600,000
Ireland	897,868	1,058,201		1,956,069
Italy	3,028,561	566,893	1,648,352	5,243,806
Japan	30,429,278	22,410,000	2,501,668	55,340,946
Kuwait	101,000,000	19,000,000	106,762	120,106,762
Latvia	55,249			55,249
Liechtenstein			211,576	211,576
Lithuania	43,573			43,573
Luxembourg	1,232,228	250,313	500,626	1,983,167
Malta	27,655			27,655
Monaco	187,735		55,310	243,044
Morocco			24,656	24,656
Netherlands	24,975,313			24,975,313
Norway	4,356,923	4,400,449	16,116,912	24,874,283
Philippines			10,000	10,000
Poland	991,301			991,301
Portugal	84,175			84,175
Private donors in Argentina			1,768	1,768
Private donors in Australia	19,449	23,349	1,361,812	1,404,609
Private donors in Austria	18,348		1,571	19,919
Private donors in Bangladesh			4,473	4,473
Private donors in Canada	203,934	5,645	1,102,510	1,312,089
Private donors in China (Hong Kong SAR)	41,547	12,107	202,466	256,120
Private donors in Denmark	65,000			65,000
Private donors in Egypt	1,500			1,500
Private donors in France	44,199		49,202	93,401
Private donors in Germany	4,483,032	2,370,631	657,895	7,511,557
Private donors in Greece			40,827	40,827
Private donors in Ireland	5,129			5,129
Private donors in Italy	348,822	66,585	263,102	678,508
Private donors in Japan	31,473	75	358,749	390,297
Private donors in Kuwait	50,000			50,000
Private donors in Lebanon	6,113			6,113

<i>Donor</i>	Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
Private donors in Monaco			167,785	167,785
Private donors in Pakistan	525			525
Private donors in Qatar	243,136	342,933		586,069
Private donors in Republic of Korea	100,765		1,285,034	1,385,799
Private donors in Saudi Arabia	98,342	50,000		148,342
Private donors in Singapore	10,000			10,000
Private donors in Spain	140,024		303,427	443,450
Private donors in Sweden	265,975	460,946	2,759,417	3,486,337
Private donors in Switzerland	4,528,030		1,203,537	5,731,568
Private donors in Thailand			19,159	19,159
Private donors in the Netherlands	9,315,323	1,278,070	207,847	10,801,241
Private donors in the United Arab Emirates	2,165,726		362,886	2,528,612
Private donors in the United Kingdom		14,470	130,058	144,528
Private donors in the United States of America	1,802,111	218,779	1,736,555	3,757,444
Private donors in Tunisia			333,962	333,962
Private donors in Turkey	7,685			7,685
Qatar	744,247			744,247
Republic of Korea			500,000	500,000
Romania	50,000			50,000
Russian Federation	300,000	500,000		800,000
Saudi Arabia	2,923,000	25,649,657		28,572,657
Slovakia			33,670	33,670
Spain	5,822,862	474,868	24,508	6,322,238
Sweden	2,887,774	2,361,103	5,646,157	10,895,034
Switzerland	7,358,235	6,172,187		13,530,422
United Arab Emirates	2,333,279			2,333,279
United Kingdom	77,024,823	25,230,630		102,255,453
United Nations Emergency Relief Fund		750,338		750,338
United Nations Peacebuilding Fund		534,600		534,600
United Nations Population Fund	95,793			95,793
United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS	120,000			120,000
United States of America	245,020,535	83,250,000	168,400,000	496,670,535
Total	695,387,446	246,074,798	288,338,692	1,229,800,936

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM) Reserve