

Middle East

Bahrain
Iraq
Israel
Jordan
Kuwait
Lebanon
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Syrian Arab Republic
United Arab Emirates
Yemen



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Syrian refugees in Za'atari camp (Jordan) receive relief items from UNHCR.

UNHCR / A. RUMMERY

| Working environment |

The Middle East subregion is marked by extreme volatility. The civil unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) poses a danger to the stability of neighbouring countries: it has led to the massive displacement of civilians including over 350,000 refugees. In addition, other refugee situations, such as that of the Iraqis in exile and the flow of Somalis into Yemen, show no signs of ending. For UNHCR, in 2013 it will be even more difficult to protect and assist the growing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region.

Of the States in the region, only Israel and Yemen have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention. However, the countries that are not yet party to the accord have been very generous in their reception of refugees. Long-standing traditions of hospitality, ethnic linkages and religious solidarity have been demonstrated towards the floods of Syrians fleeing their country. Still, with issues related to asylum tending to be governed by national laws on foreigners, international standards for the protection of people of concern to UNHCR are not always met. Consequently, international support is vital to ensure that States in the region continue to provide assistance and protection to people of concern to UNHCR.





| Strategy |

UNHCR's strategy in the region has been refined to respond to the deepening conflict in Syria and its rapidly worsening humanitarian consequences. In Yemen, the change of Government has led UNHCR to pay due attention to ensuring the continuity of its protection and assistance activities. While Iraqi refugees are increasingly returning home, particularly from Syria, some 148,000 refugees are still being hosted in the region. In order to address these issues, UNHCR will identify protection and assistance gaps through comprehensive needs assessments and enhance partnerships with host Governments and relevant regional and national organizations.

Given the precarious regional balance, sustained international solidarity and burden sharing will be essential to support UNHCR's growing population of concern as well as to maintain host countries' ability to deal with these influxes in the absence of legal protection frameworks.

While pursuing durable solutions wherever possible, the Office works closely with host Governments to increase opportunities for self-reliance among refugees and others of concern across the subregion. To this end, UNHCR is also increasing its partnership efforts with the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States. In cooperation with national and regional partner organizations, it will engage in awareness raising about statelessness, as well as undertaking capacity building and research initiatives. Every effort will be made to persuade more

States to sign the 1951 Refugee Convention and develop national asylum systems.

| Constraints |

The unfolding of a new refugee crisis in a context already made complex by other long-standing refugee situations, steady growth in the number of mixed-migration movements, and political and social upheaval are set to magnify existing challenges and create new ones in the Middle East subregion. Security concerns continue to dominate asylum policies and practice, and the absence of regional and national legal frameworks to deal with population displacement hinders the institutionalization of protection in the region.

The increase in extremist activities, the political transition in Yemen, the prolonged state of insecurity in Iraq and the expanding conflict in Syria all hamper the scope and nature of UNHCR's interventions. The Office and its partners currently face restrictions in accessing locations in Iraq, Yemen and Syria due to security concerns. Moreover, the drop in resettlement departures due in part to more stringent security checks by resettlement States, and limitations on access to refugees, will constrain the search for durable solutions.

| Operations |

UNHCR's operations in **Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria** and **Yemen** are covered in detail in separate chapters.

In addition to its activities for displaced Syrians and Iraqis, UNHCR assists several thousand refugees of other nationalities in the region. The majority of these are from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea and Turkey. The most vulnerable among them receive basic humanitarian assistance from UNHCR, which also conducts registration and refugee status determination and seeks durable solutions, including resettlement.

Several hundred people, mainly from countries in sub-Saharan Africa, continue to cross the Egypt-Israel border through the Sinai desert each month with the support of smugglers. Given Egypt's own security concerns following its 2011 revolution and the subsequent upheaval across other parts of North Africa, the number of asylum-seekers with protection risks among these arrivals will continue to grow. There is therefore a need to increase capacity in the region to manage mixed-migration flows, as well as to establish an adequate legislative and procedural framework. In view of the criminal networks engaged in human smuggling in the region, UNHCR is also devising a regional strategy to support the protection needs of people of concern along these migratory routes. While Israel continues to receive and accept asylum-seekers, heightened security measures have significantly reduced the number of people able to enter the country irregularly.

UNHCR has no offices in **Bahrain, Oman or Qatar**. Operations in these countries, as well as those in **Kuwait, Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates**, are managed by the Regional Office in

Riyadh. Public awareness, fund raising, RSD and durable solutions – primarily resettlement – are the main components of the programme in the Gulf region. Resettlement processing is facilitated by the Regional Resettlement Hub in Lebanon.

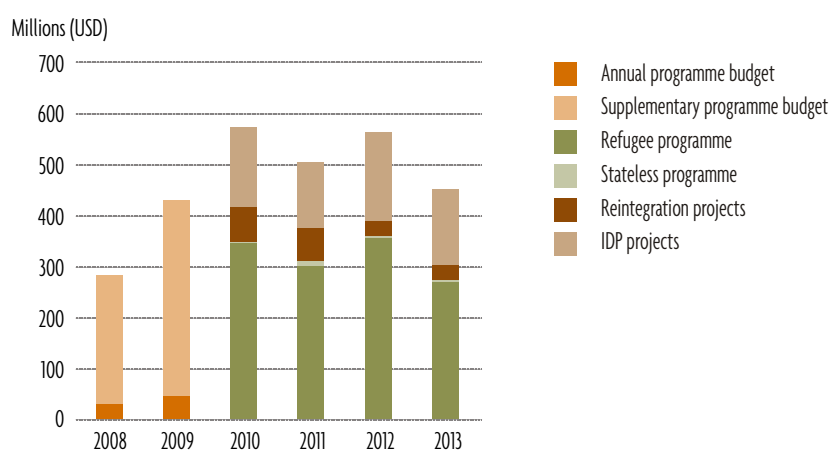
Fund raising in the Gulf region has been strengthened by the establishment of an external relations hub in the United Arab Emirates. Strategic partnerships with national and regional organizations are being enhanced and efforts to reduce statelessness intensified by means of public awareness campaigns and capacity building and research initiatives.

Financial information

UNHCR's financial requirements for the Middle East in 2013 amount to USD 453.4 million. This represents a drastic decrease compared to the 2012 revised budget. The 2013 overall requirements for the Middle East will be further revised in order to cover additional needs related to the Syria crisis which could not be assessed at the time this budget was approved.

Of the total budget, some 60 per cent is allocated to refugee operations, followed by 33 per cent for IDP situations, 6 per cent for reintegration activities and 1 per cent to address statelessness issues.

UNHCR's budget in the Middle East 2008 – 2013



UNHCR's budget in the Middle East (USD)

OPERATION	2012 REVISED BUDGET (as of 30 June 2012)	2013				TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	
Iraq	215,777,945	26,869,547	1,322,163	30,304,146	87,504,144	146,000,000
Israel	3,129,545	3,202,259	0	0	0	3,202,259
Jordan	65,673,390	75,435,290	0	0	0	75,435,290
Lebanon	32,029,883	35,601,706	389,775	0	0	35,991,481
Saudi Arabia Regional Office	4,296,791	3,288,262	295,922	0	0	3,584,184
Syrian Arab Republic	133,002,498	83,804,488	708,328	0	37,213,431	121,726,246
United Arab Emirates	3,761,362	3,146,529	70,932	0	0	3,217,461
Yemen	59,930,072	34,452,288	0	0	25,385,153	59,837,440
Regional activities	21,282,423	3,994,129	397,711	0	0	4,391,840
Total	538,883,910	269,794,498	3,184,830	30,304,146	150,102,728	453,386,203