

Morocco

September 2024

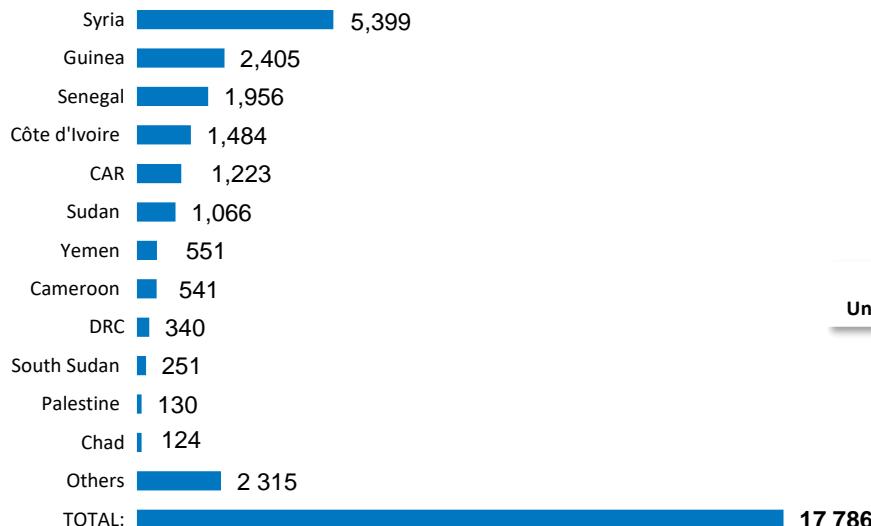
Morocco is both a transit and a host country for people seeking asylum, with **17,786 refugees and asylum seekers** registered with UNHCR from over 60 countries.

UNHCR works to ensure **access to asylum and protection for refugees and asylum seekers** in Morocco, working closely with Moroccan authorities under the framework of the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum (SNIA).

UNHCR and partners are actively working to ensure a comprehensive response to meet the growing **protection needs of refugees and asylum seekers**.

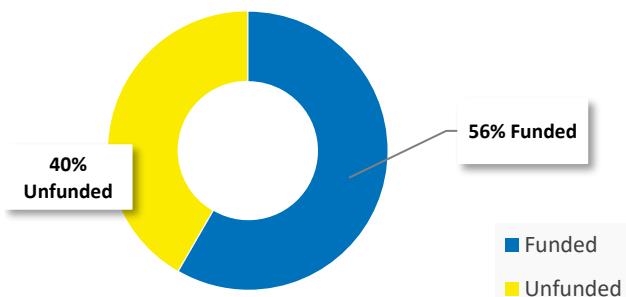
KEY FIGURES:

8,951 refugees and **8,835** asylum-seekers across **81** localities in Morocco *(as of 30 September 2024)*



FUNDING: *(as of 2 December 2024)*

\$ 11.3 million requested for UNHCR's Operation in Morocco in 2024



UNHCR PRESENCE:

53 Total Staff

UNHCR Staff: 29 total staff

- **25** national staff
- **4** international staff

Affiliate Workforce: 24 total affiliate staff

- **2** UNV
- **17** UNOPS
- **2** others
- **3** interns

Office: 1 Branch Office in Rabat



Sanaa, staff at the Moroccan Human Rights Organization (OMDH), registers an asylum-seeker at the OMDH center in Oujda.
@UNHCR/Ass Hagouchi

Working with Partners

- Morocco's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates (MAECAMRE) is UNHCR's main government counterpart. UNHCR also collaborates with key ministries, academic partners and other institutions.
- UNHCR actively engages with its partners to meet the needs of forcibly displaced people, including: Fondation Orient-Occident (FOO), Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF), Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains (OMDH), Association Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise (AMAPPE) and Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme (CNDH).
- In Casablanca, Fes, Tangier, Oujda, Marrakech and Beni Mellal/Khouribga, UNHCR participates in, and supports, **Protection Working Groups (PWGs)** to better identify and protect refugees and asylum seekers. These groups are composed of civil society actors, institutional partners, regional human rights commissions, UN agencies, universities, and legal partners.
- On 7 October 2021, the Moroccan High Commissioner for Planning (HCP) and UNHCR signed a partnership agreement to strengthen collaboration between the two institutions. This agreement confirms a long and fruitful engagement to respond to the needs of refugees in Morocco. Under the auspices of this partnership agreement, the HCP in collaboration with UNHCR has conducted a [new survey](#) on the situation of refugees in Morocco post-COVID-19 whose final report was released at the end of 2023.
- In the context of mixed movements, UNHCR and IOM co-chair a joint **Thematic Working Group on Migration and Asylum** to support the implementation of both the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration, and this in accordance with Morocco's National Policy on Migration and Asylum.
- In line with the whole-of-society and multi-partner approach outlined by the Global Refugee Compact (2018) and Global Refugee Forum (2019), UNHCR engages with a range of actors including refugee and asylum-seeking communities, the media, regional and municipal authorities, civil society, and the private sector to improve the protection landscape for refugees and asylum seekers.
- Along with other UN agencies, UNHCR is involved in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) as well as in thematic groups on migration, gender, HIV/AIDS awareness, trafficking, education, youth, communication and monitoring and evaluation.
- On 14 November 2022, UNHCR and the Ministry of Health signed a framework partnership agreement aimed at promoting refugees' access to health and social protection in Morocco.
- On 5 April 2023, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication along with the United Nations system (UNS), represented by six of its agencies: UNHCR, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNDP, and UN Women, signed the fourth annual joint youth work plan. This joint work aims to help achieve the vision of the New Development Model 2021-2035 and is part of the guidelines of the framework plan for cooperation between the Moroccan government and the United Nations Development System 2023-2027.
- The Rabat Declaration to strengthen the global commitment to improve the health of refugees and migrants, was adopted during the high-level segment of the Third Global Consultation on the Health of Refugees and Migrants, that took place on 13-15 June 2023. The event, co-hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco, WHO, IOM, and UNHCR, was attended by government representatives from 50 United Nations Member States and observers as well as representatives from humanitarian organizations, civil society, refugee and migrant communities and UN agencies served as a meaningful and sustained platform for multi-sectoral dialogue on refugee and migrants' health.
- On 10 October 2023, UNHCR renewed a partnership agreement with the French Embassy and French institutes in Morocco, in collaboration with the Fondation Orient-Occident. The renewal of this agreement involves collaboration in the fields of education and capacity building for institutions and civil society actors in Morocco who are involved in the protection and integration of refugees in Morocco.
- On 19 December 2023, on the occasion of its 10th anniversary, the Noufissa/Pharma 5 Foundation renewed its partnership with UNHCR for the period of 2023-2026. The first partnership was signed in 2018 with the aim of improving refugees' access to health care, education and employment.
- On February 23, 2024, UNHCR Morocco signed a new partnership agreement with TIBU Africa. This partnership with TIBU will implement sport for protection activities that include vocational training in the sports industry, sports activities in public schools promoting social cohesion, sports activities for refugee youth, children and mothers, and support for refugee-led associations.
- On 20 June 2024, on the occasion of World Refugee Day, UNHCR Morocco signed a tripartite agreement with the Noufissa Pharma 5 Foundation and the Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF). This agreement aims to strengthen joint efforts to facilitate the education and economic integration of refugees in Morocco, while enhancing their skills to promote their integration into Moroccan society.

- During the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in July 2024, a young Syrian refugee attended a side event, a solidarity festival alongside UNHCR implementing partner Tibu Africa, which was selected as the Moroccan association to take part in it. Tibu Africa was lucky enough to choose a delegation of 8 young Moroccans, including Salah, who plays on the Khouribga soccer team.
- On 2 August 2024, UNICEF and UNHCR Morocco signed a letter of understanding (MoU) to promote the inclusion of mobile and refugee children in national systems, including child protection systems, as part of their overall strategic collaboration framework.
- On 22 October 2024, UNHCR Morocco and the Jadara Foundation have signed a partnership agreement to offer young refugees sustainable integration through education and vocational training. During the pilot phase of this project, some 50 young refugees and university students will benefit from capacity-building workshops, the “mentoring” program, language enhancement and “employability boost” training.

Operational Context

- Following a significant increase of the number of refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR between 2020 and 2022, and a concomitant increase of their socio-economic vulnerability and protection needs; there was a stabilization of the overall number of active refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR in 2023. This stabilization is explained by the parallel process of registering new asylum seekers (over 3,500 in 2023), the recognition or not of refugee status and the deactivation of inactive cases.
- UNHCR internally activated a crisis cell which coordinated with its partners and refugee communities; two emergency hotlines were activated. UNHCR and its partners identified up to 700 refugees and asylum seekers living in affected areas who benefited from a blanket cash distribution to cover most basic needs. Up to 200 refugees and asylum seekers living in affected areas were directly impacted by the earthquake (injuries, loss of shelter, no access to education, psychological distress).
- Morocco actively participated in the Global Refugee Forum in 2023 with **6 important pledges** on health, education, socioeconomic integration, data management, and an initiative to consolidate the implementation of “humanized border management”. **Two refugee representatives** from Morocco took part in the GRF.

Main Activities

Protection

- Registration & RSD:** Pending the establishment of a national asylum system, UNHCR continues to register new asylum seekers and conduct RSD. All recognized cases are referred for verification to the Bureau des Réfugiés et des Apatrides (BRA) of the MAECAMRE as the Inter-Ministerial Commission in charge of regularization in Rabat. UNHCR participates in the Commission’s hearings and introduces the cases. As of 30 September 2024, **417 refugees have been auditioned by the BRA** hearings through 51 auditions. It is important to note that from the start of the auditions in September 2013 until 30 September 2024, the number of refugees (non-Syrian) auditioned is 1,882. From 1 January to 30 September 2024, UNHCR registered **2,964 new asylum applications and recognized 221 refugees**.
- As of 4 March 2024, the Interministerial Commission of the Bureau for Refugees and Stateless Persons (BRA) has moved from one session per week for 8 refugees to **two sessions per week for 10 refugees per session**, in order to reduce the current gap between the number of refugees recognized by the UNHCR and those recognized by the government. This is the result of months of advocacy by UNHCR with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior.
- Legal assistance:** UNHCR works with private law firm Cabinet Lemseguem to provide legal aid to refugees and asylum seekers (e.g. for issuance of birth certificates, to file complaints for physical assault and for representation before Moroccan courts). From 1 January to 30 September, **779 legal consultations were provided including 34 with administrative support, 30 with advice on legal proceedings, 49 legal assistances before court including 73**



Jerry, Central African refugee, and community agent with OMDH Oujda @UNHCR/Ass Hagouchi

counselling in obtaining birth certificates. Moreover, Cabinet Lemseguem provided **593** legal counselling, including 210 legal receptions at the FOO for asylum seekers and refugees.

- **Emergency housing:** Along with Fondation Orient-Occident, UNHCR supports an **emergency shelter and protection programme**. Emergency housing covers immediate housing needs of forcibly displaced people, while protection housing responds to longer-term needs. This programme benefits refugees and asylum seekers with extreme vulnerabilities, including unaccompanied minors, at-risk women, single mothers, victims of trafficking, and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). From January to September 2024, **74 refugees and asylum-seekers including 44 adults and 30 children (46 refugees and 28 asylum seekers)** benefited from these services. Women represent **44%** of those who benefit from the program.
- **Protection for victims of GBV:** As of 30 September 2024, **356 UNHCR recognized refugees** have at least one specific need related to gender-based violence, **women and girls represent 67% of this population** and **40%** of this violence took place in the countries of origin. A **referral and support system** is in place for survivors and people at increased risk of GBV to ensure access to healthcare, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and livelihood services. Prevention is also achieved through **awareness-raising** and **community activities**; since January 2023, a GBV risk and needs mapping exercise has been implemented. In 2024, **seven GBV committees were organized**, in which **78 cases of GBV survivors** were discussed by the panel and guided towards sustainable solutions and were provided multi-sectoral assistance. In 2024, as part of International Women's Rights Day, UNHCR and its partners in partnership with Politics4Her, organized an **awareness and information campaign on menstrual hygiene and health under the theme "Life is a Cycle"**. The campaign ran from 7 to 15 March, with awareness-raising workshops in Tangier, Rabat, Marrakech, Casablanca, and Fès. This campaign was supported by a joint digital communications campaign including testimonials and feedback from refugee women and several key actors. The main objective of this action was to destigmatize the taboos surrounding this theme, but above all to inform and raise awareness through the participation of experts in the field of menstrual and mental health from AMPF and FOO. Informative toolkits developed by Politics4Her were also made available to these refugee women, along with hygiene kits containing reusable menstrual panties. The campaign reached **250 refugee women/girls and 58 refugee men**. In 2024, UNHCR was present at **three meetings** of the UN System Gender Thematic Group and contributed to the GENDER SWAP scorecard survey on gender and organizational culture, aimed at assessing the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming by UN country teams.
- **Outreach and community-based activities:** UNHCR works in close collaboration with **Protection Working Groups (PWG)** in Fes/Meknes, Casablanca, Oujda, Tangier, Marrakech and Khouribga-Beni Mellal to identify and refer people with specific needs to appropriate services.
- A network of **24 refugee community agents** of different nationalities shares information among refugee communities across seven localities in Morocco, relaying their needs and concerns to UNHCR and partners.
- Protection, registration, and RSD hotlines available in three languages (English, French and Arabic) continue to be operational and remain a key point of contact for refugees and asylum seekers. One additional phone line is dedicated to emergencies, specifically for people facing arrest and detention. **Social media** is also an important point of contact for forcibly displaced people, with more than **274 requests received across multiple social media platforms as of 30 September 2024**.
- **Coordination meetings for the management and follow-up of protection cases:** UNHCR is conducting **monthly coordination meetings with partners** to strengthen case management and ensure timely and adequate referrals and response. In line with confidentiality guidelines and following refugees' consent, sensitive cases are discussed to identify appropriate durable solutions. In this regard, UNHCR and partners meet monthly to discuss available services and identify multi-sectoral solutions.
- **Strengthening commitment to key protection policies and approaches:** UNHCR has reinforced its engagement towards key protection principles, with specific attention directed towards **participatory assessments** and **data collection** through Kobo Power BI platform, **feedback and complaint mechanisms**, **communication with communities (CwC)** and **accountability to affected people (AAP)** under UNHCR's mandate.

Financial assistance for the most vulnerable

UNHCR contributes to the cost of housing and food for the most vulnerable refugees (unaccompanied minors, single parents, survivors of GBV, people with medical needs etc.) through financial assistance. Based on assessments conducted by FOO, cases are discussed in a monitoring committee with UNHCR and FOO staff. In 2024, **1,290 vulnerable refugees benefited from financial assistance**.

Education

- During the academic year 2023-2024, with the support of UNHCR's education programme and in collaboration with FOO, **921 refugee children were enrolled in school at primary level, 437 were enrolled at secondary level, and 452 in kindergarten**. At the start of the 2024 school year, 9 students were enrolled in non-formal education. In addition, **31** refugees in Morocco in 2023/2024 benefitted from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative

(DAFI) scholarship programme.

- Ensuring equitable schooling from a gender perspective remains among top UNHCR's priorities. In Morocco, **48 per cent of refugee children enrolled in schools are girls.**
- More than half of refugee children are following remedial classes. This was exacerbated in particular by the strike in public establishments which began at the end of 2023 and lasted until the beginning of 2024. At the end of the academic year 2023/2024, the success rate of refugee children enrolled was of **92 per cent in primary school, 92 per cent in secondary school, and 91 per cent in high school.**
- During the academic year 2023-2024, **641 refugees benefitted from tutoring** including French classes through the tripartite agreement with UNHCR and FOO, the Embassy of France in Morocco.
- **All refugee children attending school benefitted from conditional cash assistance for education.**
- **30 refugees** obtained their high school diploma in 2023-2024 with a success rate of 91%.

Health

- Through its partner *Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF)*, UNHCR facilitates the **referral of refugees to public primary healthcare centres**, where services are provided free of charge. Pending the extension of the national medical insurance system (RAMED) to refugees, UNHCR assists with refugees' access to specialized health services, including expenses related to medication, laboratory tests and specialized medical treatments.
- Between January and September 2024, through the **health program, 5,020 specialized consultations were performed at AMPF centres and public facilities**. Moreover, more than **661 refugees** with chronic illnesses were supplied with medicines in AMPF's centres or through partner pharmacies.
- As of 30 September 2024, **1050 psychosocial counselling** were conducted for refugees and asylum seekers.
- To provide an integrated response on **Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS)**, UNHCR participated during 2024 in one meeting related to the 'Psy' platform made up of various psychologists and NGOs working on migration in order to discuss the current situation, exchange good practices, ensure follow-up and referencing of cases between the different actors. The goal of the platform is to advocate for the integration of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees into national health systems.
- In a process of strengthening the national MHPSS response, UNHCR is actively participating in the establishment of a national mental health coalition "Amal", scheduled to be officially launched in May 2024.

Livelihood and self-reliance

- Along with Association Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Enterprise (AMAPPE), UNHCR supports refugees' enrolment in **vocational trainings**, the creation of **income generating activities** through **microfinancing** and **job placement**, with the involvement of two state partners, namely l'Agence Nationale de la Promotion de l'Emploi et des Compétences (ANAPEC) and l'Office de Développement de la Coopération (ODCO).
- Since the beginning of 2024, 958 refugees were assisted by AMAPPE with **economic integration support** in Morocco. 529 competency assessments were conducted. Additionally, 53 new IGAs were approved for funding and 39 were financially reinforced. Finally, of the 93 IGAs funded in 2023 et 88% of the reinforced IGAs are still active.
- As for vocational training, of the 65 apprentices enrolled in vocational training courses, 55 are still being trained at Entraide Nationale centers and partner associations. In addition, 40 refugees have been placed in jobs and 7 in internships via the economic integration program. Of the 81 formerly integrated refugees, 48 are still in employment.

Capacity building and sensitization

- Capacity building remains a key element of UNHCR's strategy to support Moroccan authorities and civil society in the implementation of a fair and efficient asylum policy. UNHCR regularly organizes workshops on refugee law, international protection and statelessness in the context of mixed movements. From January to end of September 2024, **9 workshops** were organized in various parts of the Kingdom for **416 people, including Royal Gendarmerie officers, UNHCR partners, university students and civil registrars.**

Durable Solutions

- UNHCR implements a **resettlement** programme for refugees with specific protection needs. In 2024, Morocco has received quota from Canada (200 refugees, including 100 spots for Sudanese refugees) and the United States of America (50 refugees).

- Between January and September 2024, **252 refugees** have been resettled, **141 to the United States of America and 111 to Canada**.
- UNHCR is continuing its efforts to increase admissions to third countries through programs other than resettlement, in particular scholarship and labour migration programs.

Donors

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to its activities in Morocco in 2024:

Canada | European Union | France | Germany | Italy | Liv Golf | L'Oréal Foundation | KOICA | Monaco | Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund | Switzerland | United States of America | L'Oréal Paris | Tamer Foundation |

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LINKS TO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

UNHCR Morocco – Facebook – Twitter – Instagram – YouTube

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