

Yemen



Operational highlights

- At the end of 2006, Yemen was host to more than 96,000 refugees. Most were living in urban areas, but some 8,100 lived in a camp in Kharaz, an isolated, semi-arid region in the south of Yemen.
- An estimated 30,000 asylum-seekers, mainly of Somali and Ethiopian origin, reached Yemen in 2006. Most landed on the country's 2,400 km coastline

after a 48-hour ordeal on the high seas. However, only 900 asylum-seekers approached UNHCR for assistance.

- UNHCR implemented an assistance programme in the Kharaz camp. In partnership with WFP and others, it provided essential services including food, non-food items, health care, education, water and sanitation, vocational training, small income-generating projects, with special attention to people with special needs.

Persons of concern

Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Somalia	91,600	91,600	35	26
	Ethiopia	1,900	1,900	43	35
	Iraq	1,500	1,500	42	35
	Various	800	800	34	55
Asylum-seekers	Iraq	400	400	48	53
	Ethiopia	200	200	41	21
	Occupied Palestinian Territory	200	200	47	45
	Eritrea	100	100	40	23
Total		96,700	96,700		

- UNHCR also provided basic services to urban refugees. They were offered health care, language courses, vocational training and microcredit schemes. Other activities promoted self-reliance and empowerment.
- Some 13,400 Somalis and 1,200 Ethiopian new arrivals approached UNHCR's Mayfa'a Reception Centre (MRC) on the coast near the village of Bir Ali, opposite the Somali port of Bossasso. However, Ethiopians tend to avoid the MRC for fear of being arrested and deported by the Yemeni authorities, preferring instead to travel on to the other Gulf States.
- Some 550 Somalis and three Ethiopian refugees voluntarily repatriated with the assistance of UNHCR. Another 88 Somalis and 31 Ethiopians with special protection needs were resettled in the United States of America.

Working environment

The Government of Yemen continued to grant *prima facie* refugee status to new Somali arrivals. However, it arrested and deported many non-Somalis, mainly Ethiopians, in 2006. The Government considers Ethiopians not to be in desperate need of protection and some are considered to be transit migrants, headed for the Gulf States. UNHCR generally had access to those arrested and carried out refugee status determination to identify those in need of international protection.

However, in early 2006, government security officials entered the MRC and arrested 21 Ethiopian asylum-seekers, including five women. UNHCR could not obtain access to the detainees despite interventions by the Office. Local donor embassies also tried to intervene without success. UNHCR has expressed its concern over the arrests and deportations to the Government.

Yemen is one of the few Arab States in the peninsula that has signed the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The country has also acceded to almost all international conventions on human rights. But the implementation of these agreements is erratic. Though a national law on refugees has been drafted, it has yet to be adopted, and refugee issues continue to be governed by reference to other statutes.

Nonetheless, the Government of Yemen has taken a generally liberal attitude towards refugees. For instance, it allows them freedom of movement. Refugee children are allowed to attend local schools, although facilities are limited and cannot meet all the demand. Though work permits are not issued to refugees, their employment is tolerated. Jobs are hard to find, and when they are available, they are usually daily jobs and under difficult conditions. Refugees in the Kharaz camp find it even more challenging to find work because of

the camp's isolation. Most refugees work in the informal sector.

Physical protection, particularly of women and children, remains a priority. Harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, the abduction of women and violence against them continue to require the intervention of UNHCR, implementing partners and the Government. In the area of prevention, continuous training of police and the judiciary was a priority, alongside sustained efforts to sensitize and mobilize the community to protection issues.

Yemen is not a rich country, and the influx of new arrivals from Somalia and rampant people-smuggling in the Gulf of Aden have put a serious strain on the limited resources of the Government.

Achievements and impact

Main objectives

UNHCR's objectives for 2006 in Yemen were to ensure international protection for all refugees, asylum-seekers and others of concern; work with the Government to strengthen the legal framework and institutional capacities for refugee protection and assistance in order to limit irregular movement of refugees; review and assess the refugee situation and evaluate prospects for durable solutions; provide basic humanitarian assistance and services to refugees and asylum-seekers in the refugee camp and urban areas; and support formal education and vocational training for refugees, followed by income-generating opportunities; and empower the camp community, particularly refugee women, to play a role in planning and managing programmes through participatory community development activities.

Protection and solutions

The registration of Somali refugees in Yemen was completed, with 47,400 registered in 2006. Of these, 8,140 Somalis and 650 Ethiopians lived in the Kharaz camp.

UNHCR assisted 550 refugees who opted for voluntary repatriation. As food and housing are expensive in Yemen, many Somalis who cannot afford to live there opt to return to their country. Others seek accommodation in the Kharaz camp. UNHCR assists those who wish to return to join their relatives in northern Somalia; the returnees are often female heads of households.

Refugees from southern Somalia are unable to return to their homes, but resettlement is a viable solution only



UNHCR/EK

Registration of Somali refugees in Sana'a.

for some of them. UNHCR is endeavouring to improve their living conditions in Yemen.

Activities and assistance

Community services: Some 60 children attended day-care services for working mothers at the Sana'a and Aden community centres. Women made up half the members of the camp management committee in the Kharaz camp.

Domestic needs and household support: Virtually all (97 per cent) refugee women and girls of reproductive age in the Kharaz camp received sanitary materials. Refugees in Kharaz received kerosene (three litres/person/month) which reduced firewood consumption. Blankets, mattresses, stoves and kitchen sets were distributed based on need.

Education: Among urban refugees, a total of 2,500 refugee pupils (1,700 boys and 800 girls) were registered in schools in Aden, while in the Kharaz refugee camp some 2,900 (1,400 girls and 1,500 boys) children were enrolled in school. Among the adults, 210 women and 130 men were enrolled in tertiary education. Another 115 refugees (78 women and 37 men) aged between 15 and 24 years were enrolled in vocational training programmes. Women trained in skills such as hairdressing and henna painting found work more easily than those trained in computer and secretarial skills.

Food: Approximately 90 per cent of the refugees in the Kharaz camp received WFP's full food ration of 2,100

Kcal per person per day. Half the members of the food distribution committee were women.

Health and nutrition: Two clinics in Sana'a and Aden provided basic and reproductive health services to refugees. Some 1,900 women of reproductive age received help with family planning, while 1,300 women received gynaecological services. About 12,000 children under four years of age were attended by a paediatrician. HIV and AIDS awareness programmes were implemented in coordination with the national programme and UNICEF. In Kharaz camp, all births were attended by a female doctor or midwife. The camp's health unit attended to some 4,500 refugees.

Legal assistance: A total of 96,000 refugees, mainly of Somali origin, were registered by UNHCR at the Mayfa'a Reception Centre upon their arrival. Of these, 34,000 were female and 62,000 male. Individual identity documents were given to 27,400 refugees (13,900 females and 13,500 males), while 220 newborn babies were issued with birth certificates. All refugees who reported sexual and gender-based violence (24 females and one male) received support. All UNHCR and implementing partner staff were trained to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR helped implementing partners cover the cost of fuel, office supplies, vehicle maintenance and wages.

Sanitation: In Kharaz camp, 70 per cent of refugee households have family latrines; some 1,500 people still use communal latrines.

Shelter and other infrastructure: Some 225 shelter units were constructed to ease the accommodation problem for the Ethiopian and Somali families who have lived in the Kharaz camp for a long time.

Transport and logistics: Transport was provided for refugees and new arrivals moving between the entry points and MRC and between the Kharaz camp. UNHCR also moved food, medicine and other supplies to the camp, where it maintained a warehouse and a food-distribution centre.

Water: Camp populations have access to an average of 5.5 litres of water per person per day.

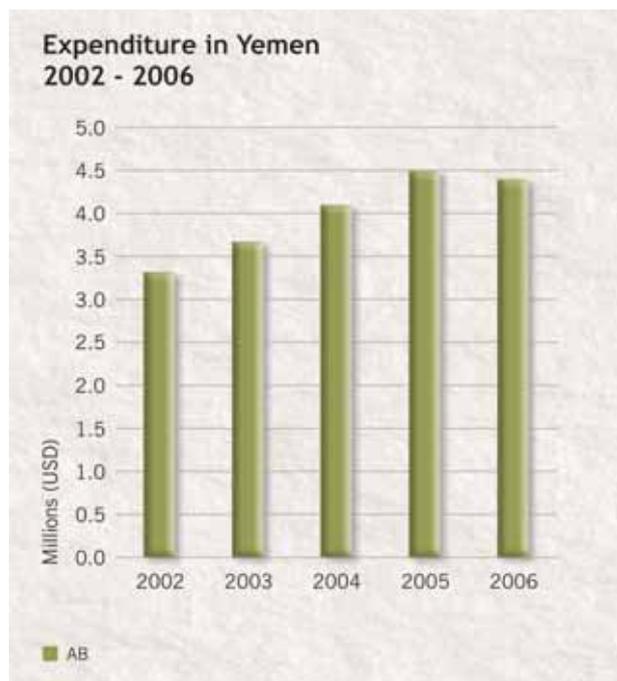
Constraints

Yemen ranks among the least developed countries in the world and is unable to cope with its large and growing refugee population without external assistance. The more than 25,000 new arrivals in 2006 represented a quarter of the country's refugee population.

UNHCR is concerned about the arrest and deportation of Ethiopian asylum seekers and the high toll in asylum-seekers' lives taken by human smuggling in the Gulf of Aden.

Financial information

Only 16 per cent of the budget requirements for the Yemen programme were funded through earmarked contributions in 2006.



Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR has two offices, in Sana'a and Aden, with a total of 54 staff members (16 international staff, including five UN volunteers, and 38 national staff). UNHCR also maintains the MRC.

Working with others

UNHCR participates in the UN Country Team and inter-agency Security Management Team.

It also works in close coordination with the Government of Yemen and national and international NGOs. WFP provides food rations to the refugees.

Overall assessment

Yemen has traditionally maintained an open-door policy towards refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa. Somalis enjoy *prima facie* refugee status; at the MRC they receive temporary registration documents. Other nationalities, including Ethiopian asylum-seekers, are required to undergo refugee status determination by UNHCR in Sana'a or Aden within two weeks of arrival.

The average flow of people seeking help from UNHCR at the MRC ranges between 12,000 and 15,000 per year, but there were more than 25,000 new arrivals in the country in 2006. There were 330 reported deaths among those seeking to reach Yemen, and some 300 were missing and believed dead at sea. The recent surge in the number of asylum-seekers can be attributed to deteriorating conditions in Somalia: the past few months have seen more and more people fleeing Mogadishu and surrounding areas as the conflict between forces of the Union of Islamic Courts and the Transitional Federal Government intensifies.

UNHCR continues to call for international action to stem the flow of people falling prey to smugglers across the Gulf of Aden. It is also working with other actors to uphold the integrity of the international maritime search and rescue regime. With the help of the authorities in north-eastern Somalia ("Puntland"), UNHCR has begun information campaigns to warn people of the dangers of using smugglers to cross the Gulf of Aden. A crackdown by the "Puntland" authorities on people smugglers seems to have had little impact on the number of arrivals in Yemen, which keeps increasing.

A participatory assessment under UNHCR's age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy was conducted in the refugee area of Basateen in Aden, in the Kharaz camp and in Sana'a in September/October 2006. Refugees focused on the fragile economic situation and lack of self-reliance, the quality of services and their desire for durable solutions, mostly resettlement. Those living in Sana'a said discrimination was a major problem.

Partners
Implementing partners
Government agency: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
NGOs: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (USA), Charitable Society for Social Welfare, International Development Foundation, Marie Stopes International (UK), Save the Children (Sweden), Society for Humanitarian Solidarity.
Operational partner
Others: WFP.

Budget, income and expenditure (USD) Annual programme budget

Final budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
4,689,993	473,813	3,925,679	4,399,492	4,393,755

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects	Previous years' projects
	AB	AB and SB
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,494,652	0
Community services	26,707	109,988
Crop production	0	4,960
Domestic needs and household support	62,886	13,593
Education	64,775	100,343
Food	43,223	48,509
Forestry	2,235	1,255
Health and nutrition	166,890	150,262
Legal assistance	338,609	0
Livestock	0	1,901
Operational support (to agencies)	109,204	146,097
Sanitation	38,763	84,708
Shelter and infrastructure	85,193	284,601
Transport and logistics	210,370	110,890
Water	21,284	73,749
Instalments with implementing partners	1,004,494	(1,130,855)
Sub-total operational activities	3,669,285	0
Programme support	724,490	0
Total expenditure	4,393,775	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure		(13,079)
Instalments with implementing partners		
Payments made	1,621,394	
Reporting received	(616,900)	
Balance	1,004,494	
Previous years' report		
Instalments with implementing partners		
Outstanding 1st January		1,127,194
Reporting received		(1,130,855)
Refunded to UNHCR		(3,514)
Adjustments		7,175
Balance		0