

MIDDLE EAST AND



OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite the impact of the global financial crisis on their already overburdened social services and infrastructure, many countries in the region continued to allow large numbers of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR to take refuge on their soil.
- In most countries in the region, the absence of national asylum systems and administrative procedures to deal with refugees and asylum-seekers

constitutes the biggest hurdle for UNHCR in its bid to protect people of concern. Refugee status determination (RSD) in the region is conducted solely by UNHCR.

- The legal vacuum in relation to asylum-seekers and refugees is particularly apparent in the sphere of livelihoods, as refugees and asylum-seekers are not given the right to work.

- In Yemen, the limited resources of the Government were hard put to cope with a marked increase in the number of non-Somali asylum-seekers arriving in 2009. This influx, coupled with a volatile security environment, has given rise to negative reactions towards refugees. It has also raised questions about the continuance of the Government's policy of recognizing all arriving Somalis as *prima facie* refugees.

LAND AND NORTH AFRICA



- The north of Yemen harbours an estimated 250,000 people who have been internally displaced as a result of conflict between the Government and rebels of the Shia Al Houthi movement.
- UNHCR increased financial assistance to vulnerable refugees in the countries of asylum neighbouring Iraq.
- In 2009, UNHCR cooperated with the Naif Arab University for Security

Sciences and the Organization of Islamic Conference to publish *The Right to Asylum between Islamic Shari'ah and International Refugee Law: A Comparative Study*. With its emphasis on the influence of Shari'ah on modern international refugee law, the book serves as an effective awareness and communications tool in the region and beyond.

UNHCR / R. NURI

IDPs recently uprooted due to violence in the north of Yemen queue for registration.

| Working environment |

Though the general security environment in Iraq improved in 2009, the threat to some groups remained high. A wave of bombings, particularly in Baghdad, Nineveh and Tameem, underlined the tenuous character of recent progress. UNHCR expanded its presence in Baghdad, Basra, Erbil, Kirkuk and Mosul, and despite security restrictions, was able to reach most areas of Iraq through national staff.

The majority of Iraqi refugees in the region are not allowed to work. With their savings depleted, many find themselves in an extremely vulnerable situation. In light of these difficulties and the relative improvement in security in Iraq, some have returned home.

In Yemen, the six-year-long conflict between the Government and the Al Houthi group in the north of the country escalated in August, leading to massive displacement. Five governorates—Sa'ada, Amran, Al Jawf, Hajjah and Sana'a—have been affected by the fighting, which had displaced some 250,000 people by the year's end. In response, the UN and NGO communities have set up an emergency coordination system. UNHCR has helped the Government to assist the displaced by coordinating protection, camp management and shelter sectors in the governorates where it is allowed access.

New arrivals were given pamphlets and shown videos in their own languages to raise their awareness of refugee rights and obligations in Yemen, as well as available services. Another 13,000 people, mainly Ethiopians, who arrived at the transit centre in Bab al Mandab on the Red Sea, were given basic assistance and then transported to Kharaz camp.

A profiling exercise of the refugees in the Basateen and Kharaz camps was completed in 2009. The establishment of a database using the Heightened Risk Identification Tool (HRIT) helped to identify resettlement cases. A similar profiling exercise begun in Sana'a in 2009 will be completed in 2010.

o Ensuring that basic needs are met: Yemen and North Africa

The cluster approach to internal displacement was adopted in Yemen in 2009. Of the eight clusters established, the protection cluster and the shelter (including NFIs) and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) clusters are led by UNHCR. A sub-cluster on child protection was established in December 2009, with UNICEF as the lead agency. In Harad and Amran, two working groups on protection and education and two sub-clusters dealing with shelter, NFIs and CCCM were established.



| Achievements and impact |

o Bridging protection gaps

In Yemen, mixed migration from the Horn of Africa continued unabated in 2009, with more than 77,800 people arriving in the country, a 55 per cent increase from the previous year. Many of these people planned to travel onward to the Gulf States. More than 41,700 arrivals were transported to reception centres in Mayfa'a, Ahwar and Kharaz camps, where they were registered and provided with food, health care, shelter and non-food items (NFIs).

In Western Sahara, the ongoing Confidence Building Measures programme has benefited more than 9,600 Sahrawis (23 per cent of those registered). More than 160 family visits have been conducted under the programme since 2004, with women making up more than 56 per cent of those participating. At the end of 2009 some 41,200 Sahrawis were registered to participate in family visits.

In Mauritania, despite enormous logistical challenges, a high "no-show rate", and heavy flooding over several months in the return areas, over 19,000 Mauritanian refugees returned home from Senegal between 2008 and

the end of 2009. In 2009 alone, more than 12,000 people returned home in 49 convoys.

◉ *Ensuring that basic needs are met*

The expansion of its field presence in Iraq in 2009 allowed UNHCR to confront the serious humanitarian situation faced by refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs living in public buildings or makeshift settlements. UNHCR protected and assisted some 35,000 refugees in Iraq, with the focus on emergency assistance and documentation. The Office was also able to assist in the resettlement of many Palestinians who had been stranded in camps on the Jordanian and Syrian borders.

UNHCR expanded its financial aid programme in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic by providing refugees in these countries with automated banking cards. The cards had helped some 15,000 families to receive assistance by the end of 2009.

Resettlement remained the main durable solution for vulnerable Iraqi refugees in the countries neighbouring Iraq. UNHCR submitted 36,000 Iraqi refugees for resettlement and recorded some 23,000 departures. Since early in 2007, UNHCR has referred some 91,000 Iraqis from the surrounding countries for resettlement, and assisted with more than 44,000 departures.

The flow of IDPs returning to their places of origin in Iraq continued in 2009, with an estimated 167,000 doing so during the year. Baghdad and Diyala received the largest number of returnees. Some 38,000 Iraqi refugees, including 2,500 UNHCR-assisted, also returned home. The comparable figures for 2008 were 195,000 and 25,000, respectively.

A major achievement in 2009 was the closure of Al Tanf Camp, which was located at the Iraqi/Syrian border and hosted Palestinian refugees. The majority of the camp's residents have been resettled, while some 170 of the remaining refugees have been transferred to Al-Hol Camp in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Approximately 11,300 Palestinian refugees and 500 refugees of other nationalities in Baghdad and Mosul were re-registered by the Government with UNHCR support. Some 1,850 individuals were referred for resettlement, including 1,300 Palestinian refugees from Al Waleed camp. More than 270 Palestinians and 130 Sudanese from Darfur were evacuated to Romania and Slovakia prior to their resettlement in third countries.

UNHCR operated 14 protection and assistance committees (PACs) and 35 mobile teams with a total of 130 Iraqi staff (lawyers, managers/team leaders, social workers, monitors and public information and database officers). Some 40 per cent of team members were women. The teams operated throughout

Iraq, monitoring protection and providing legal assistance to people of concern.

More than 1,200 community assessments were conducted throughout Iraq to monitor protection. Some 1,900 mobile-team visits were made to villages, settlements, public buildings, collective centres, camps and communities in order to provide legal assistance, assess needs and maintain contact with the local authorities. More than 12,900 individuals, of whom 40 per cent were women, benefited from PAC services.

Some 11,600 legal assistance cases, related mainly to access to services, documentation, personal status, inheritance and certificate recognition, were resolved. Nine Governorate Emergency Cells liaised with local authorities and helped build national capacity in contingency planning and emergency response.

The Office registered and provided documentation to some 50,000 Iraqi refugees in Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and the Gulf States in 2009. The total number of registered Iraqi refugees in these countries at the end of 2009 stood at 230,000, of whom 35 per cent had special needs.

UNHCR continued to intervene in cases of deportation and arbitrary detention. In Lebanon, for instance, UNHCR obtained the release of 75 Iraqi refugees, while in the Syrian Arab Republic, it secured the release of 43 detained refugees and prevented 20 deportations.

Iraqi refugees willing to return to Iraq continued to receive UNHCR assistance through an individual assessment and assistance scheme. In the course of 2009, the programme helped some 2,500 people with their returns.

◉ *Strengthening relations with Gulf States and reinforcing links with regional intergovernmental organizations and civil society*

UNHCR's contacts and cooperation with governments from the Cooperation Council For the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and regional NGOs led to a strong response from donors in 2009, including contributions to benefit Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan, IDPs in Yemen and UNHCR's operations in Pakistan.

The cases of more than 200 Iraqi asylum-seekers were adjudicated in 2009. More than 50 refugees were submitted for resettlement and another 43 cases were under review. At the end of the year, some 60 Iraqi asylum-seekers were awaiting RSD interviews.

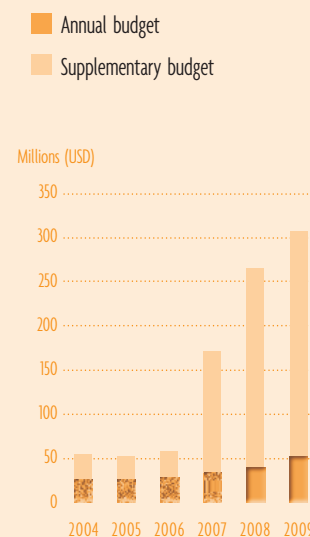
UNHCR fielded several protection missions to Bahrain, Oman and Qatar, during which some 130 people were interviewed. Of these, 94 were submitted for resettlement.

Expenditures in this region have increased steadily since 2005.

Supplementary programmes such as the Iraq situation response, IDPs in Yemen, and the repatriation of Mauritanian refugees all contributed to higher expenditures in 2009.

Annual Budgets for all individual country operations increased in the Middle East and North Africa except for Morocco and Tunisia.

Expenditure in the Middle East and North Africa 2004-2009



The authorities in the United Arab Emirates approached UNHCR to intervene in several cases, either to facilitate the admission of asylum-seekers to the country, mediate with third countries for resettlement or conduct RSD. UNHCR intervened with the authorities after interviewing Palestinians at the deportation centre, and helped to resettle 28 Palestinians.

As of December 2009, some 220 refugees and 3,000 asylum-seekers of different nationalities were registered in Kuwait. The majority were from Afghanistan, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

○ *Monitoring developments related to statelessness*

In January 2009 a training workshop on statelessness was organized in Bahrain for UNHCR staff working in the region. The main objective was to introduce UNHCR guidelines on statelessness and to familiarize field staff with the contents of the Statelessness Conventions. The workshop emphasized that proper birth registration and documentation play a significant role in the prevention of

statelessness, and should be closely monitored by UNHCR staff.

UNHCR also continued its efforts to address the problem of statelessness with regional bodies. In 2009, UNHCR and the Arab Parliamentary Union exchanged views on statelessness, which will be addressed during the next Annual Conference between UNHCR and the Union Representation with the participation of the League of Arab States.

| **Constraints** |

The absence of national asylum systems and administrative procedures to address refugee and asylum issues hampered UNHCR's ability to fully operate and pursue its mandate.

The sensitive political and security environment in certain parts of the region also limited the Office's ability to reach people who may be in need of international protection, particularly those moving as part of mixed migration flows or being held in detention.

The protection space remained weak; arrests for illegal entry and lack of residence permits can lead to deportation and refoulement in some parts of the region. ■

Budget and expenditure in the Middle East and North Africa (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budgets	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budgets	Total
North Africa						
Algeria	10,637,933	292,878	10,930,811	9,885,942	211,154	10,097,096
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	4,327,320	32,780	4,360,100	4,029,222	28,151	4,057,372
Mauritania	1,448,269	7,683,387	9,131,656	1,281,206	6,900,484	8,181,690
Morocco	1,523,159	381,871	1,905,030	1,263,330	313,975	1,577,305
Tunisia	469,984	412,277	882,261	395,693	252,478	648,171
Western Sahara	5,369	4,025,311	4,030,680	0	3,662,265	3,662,265
Regional activities ¹	0	1,041,660	1,041,660	0	776,995	776,995
Subtotal	18,412,034	13,870,164	32,282,198	16,855,393	12,145,501	29,000,894
Middle East						
Egypt	6,147,767	4,025,921	10,173,688	5,476,620	2,429,014	7,905,634
Iraq	778,680	165,009,467	165,788,147	643,017	88,754,209	89,397,226
Israel	2,363,257	0	2,363,257	2,043,430	0	2,043,430
Jordan	2,175,897	44,966,843	47,142,740	1,869,945	38,894,590	40,764,535
Lebanon	3,185,885	6,566,945	9,752,830	2,870,450	6,182,668	9,053,118
Saudi Arabia	2,340,498	394,909	2,735,407	2,209,077	215,328	2,424,405
Syrian Arab Republic	1,985,415	127,714,185	129,699,600	1,865,727	95,578,527	97,444,254
United Arab Emirates	2,166,144	79,132	2,245,276	1,905,099	79,132	1,984,231
Yemen	22,639,710	19,097,988	41,737,698	16,289,812	14,328,121	30,617,933
Regional activities ²	950,000	17,415,886	18,365,886	646,281	1,589,565	2,235,846
Subtotal	44,733,253	385,271,276	430,004,529	35,819,458	248,051,153	283,870,612
Total	63,145,287	399,141,440	462,286,727	52,674,851	260,196,655	312,871,505

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.

¹ Includes activities for refugee protection within broader migration movements in North Africa.

² Includes regional support activities for procurement and stockpiling, as well as durable solutions.

Voluntary contributions to the Middle East and North Africa (USD)				
Donor	Regional funding	Annual Budget ¹	Supplementary Budgets	Total
Arab Gulf Programme for UN Development Organizations			153,450	153,450
Australia			6,922,411	6,922,411
Australia for UNHCR			1,055	1,055
Austria		239,100		239,100
Belgium			1,351,744	1,351,744
Canada	402,576		1,347,826	1,750,403
Cartier Middle East & South Asia (UAE)		12,077		12,077
Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)		1,194,670	1,772,898	2,967,568
Croatia			6,510	6,510
Denmark		463,679		463,679
<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO</i> (Germany)		71,942	112,048	183,991
<i>España con ACNUR</i> (Spain)		80,000		80,000
European Commission		5,064,008	14,426,173	19,490,181
Finland			1,330,472	1,330,472
France			1,421,287	1,421,287
Germany			4,668,354	4,668,354
HQ Online Donations (Switzerland)			2,762	2,762
Ireland			787,821	787,821
Italy		197,628	264,082	461,711
Japan		1,549,587	3,401,868	4,951,455
Japan Association for UNHCR	6,313		54,948	61,261
Liechtenstein		95,602		95,602
Netherlands		17,506	2,735,294	2,752,800
Norway			925,277	925,277
Private donors in Spain		128		128
Private donors in the United States		600		600
Qatar Charity (Qatar)		232,500		232,500
Saudi Arabia		309,325	5,580,000	5,889,325
Spain		892,844	2,257,471	3,150,315
Sweden		4,291,287	6,670,322	10,961,609
Switzerland		1,185,460	566,580	1,752,040
The Center for International Migration (Israel)		91,042		91,042
UN Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund		12,277		12,277
United Kingdom		13,484	2,998,238	3,011,723
United States of America		12,843,724	192,430,300	205,274,024
USA for UNHCR		109,600	10,519	120,119
World Assembly of Muslim Youth (Saudi Arabia)			24,800	24,800
Total	408,890	28,968,072	252,224,512	281,601,474

¹ Includes earmarking at the subregional, country, thematic and sector levels.

Note: Contributions shown exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.