

A Syrian refugee mother bakes bread for her family of 13 outside their shelter in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon.



MIDDLE NORTH

This chapter provides a summary of the general environment in which UNHCR is operating in the Middle East and North Africa, and the organization's planned responses in 2015. Mention is made of major challenges, notably those related to the situations in Iraq and in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), which will continue to have a significant impact on UNHCR's work in 2015 and beyond.

Details of operations plans and budgets for 2015 are provided in the subregional and country chapters which are published in the digital version of the Global Appeal 2015 Update at www.unhcr.org. This Global Appeal will soon be complemented by further information on the redesigned Global Focus website which is being launched at the end of the year.

| WORKING ENVIRONMENT |

- The Middle East and North Africa region continues to face multiple and complex emergency situations on an unprecedented scale, that are likely to pose further overwhelming challenges in 2015. This region is also one of origin, destination and transit of refugees and migrants. Many of those caught up in mixed migratory movements are victims of smuggling and trafficking as they face perilous journeys, notably by sea.
- The humanitarian situation in Syria remains extremely challenging. In the fourth year of the conflict, there are more than 3 million Syrian refugees in the region. In addition, over 50,000 Syrians have sought asylum in more than 90 countries outside the region. Inside Syria, an estimated 10.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, including some 6.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs). The security situation remains volatile, and humanitarian access is a continuing challenge. Between January and September 2014, UNHCR supported more than 3 million IDPs with more than 11 million core relief items (CRIs). In 2015, further mobilization of response and support for both IDPs and the millions of refugees now residing outside the country will continue to be critical to save lives and help keep people in displacement safe and well (see box on the Syria situation).
- In Iraq, the deteriorating security situation and armed conflict in Anbar and Ninewa Governorates have triggered new waves of internal displacement. As estimated by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), some 1.8 million people were displaced by insecurity in Iraq between January and September 2014, and heavy fighting has continued to force people to flee to other parts of the country. Many of the displaced have sought safety in the Kurdistan Region, which is also hosting more than 95 per cent of Syrian refugees in Iraq, in addition to thousands of other IDP and refugee groups. In August 2014, the Iraqi internal displacement situation was declared a UN system-wide Level-3 emergency. UNHCR rapidly scaled up its response to the IDP crisis and launched a massive logistics operation to bring in relief supplies by air, land and sea. This largest single aid operation organized by UNHCR in more than a decade targeted some 500,000 IDPs. As for the Syrian situation, this emergency will clearly continue to mobilize enormous resources in 2015, including for winterization measures as the cold season approaches (see box on the Iraq situation).

EAST AND AFRICA

- The security situation in Libya is increasingly volatile with at least 140,000 Libyans displaced within the country by recent fighting, as of September 2014. UNHCR and national partners are involved in the distribution of CRIs, including medical supplies and in monitoring missions into Libya to assess the needs and provide assistance to IDPs. Contingency plans have been developed by the Governments of Tunisia and Egypt in coordination with UNHCR to deal with potential further displacement across Libya's borders.
- Yemen continues to face a complex humanitarian situation characterized by

ongoing insecurity, localized conflicts, water scarcity and the extreme poverty of growing numbers of the population. These challenges are exacerbated by rising prices and economic difficulties that contribute to reduced access to food and safe water, basic state services and livelihood opportunities. Yemen's malnutrition levels are among the highest in the world. The number of people internally displaced rose significantly in 2014 as a result of recent conflicts, with over 334,000 people registered as IDPs across the country. In addition, Yemen hosts 246,000 registered refugees, 95 per cent of whom are Somalis.

| STRATEGY |

UNHCR's protection strategy for the region will take into consideration the operational priorities specific to each situation.

However, overall throughout the Middle East and North Africa region, UNHCR's strategic priorities in 2015 are: to deliver innovative operational responses, including life-saving assistance; to ensure protection for all people of concern with a particular focus on the most vulnerable, especially those in urban areas; to seek durable solutions, including resettlement as a protection tool; and to continue to respond to ongoing emergencies.

In the context of the Syria and Iraq situations, UNHCR will continue to coordinate the refugee responses, together with more than 150 partners in the case of the Syria regional response (see boxes). This will include support for host countries that are providing assistance and support services for Syrian and Iraqi refugees in the region. Cash-assistance programmes targeting the most vulnerable people of concern, and registration activities, will continue to be a priority in 2015.

Throughout the region, UNHCR will pursue its efforts towards the protection of urban refugees, the delivery of assistance and burden sharing with the governments and host communities.

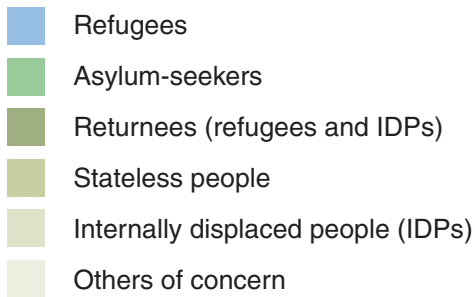
Owing to the ongoing crises and complex operating environment in the region, the

prospects for durable solutions for large proportions of the refugee populations remain limited; innovative approaches in delivering assistance when dealing with the implications of protracted displacement will therefore have to be pursued.

To respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and to address refugee child protection issues, UNHCR will continue to implement a multi-sectoral, coordinated and community-based approach to prevent and respond to SGBV and prioritize activities aimed at strengthening national and community-based child protection systems.

Working towards the establishment of responsive national asylum systems and the promotion of protection-sensitive management of mixed migration movements will also be key priorities, particularly in North Africa. In Yemen, UNHCR will strengthen refugee status determination activities and legal counselling. Detention monitoring and advocacy will also be prioritized.

To achieve its goals for 2015, UNHCR will continue to strengthen its partnerships with States, governmental and non-governmental organizations and civil society across the region, and in particular will continue to widen and deepen its relations with key actors in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.



Syria situation

After four years, the crisis in Syria shows no sign of abating. Worse, continued widespread violence has led to such massive displacement both inside the country and across the region that the situation poses a growing threat to the stability, security and fabric of the Middle East. Out of 10.8 million Syrians considered to be in need of humanitarian assistance in their country, 6.5 million are displaced, including many who have had to move repeatedly in constant search of safety. Beyond Syria's borders, well over three million Syrian refugees now live in increasingly difficult circumstances, whether having just fled their country with scarcely any resources or whether having exhausted the assets they initially had after living for months or even years as refugees.

In addition to supporting the inter-agency IDP response inside Syria, through its significant presence and assistance delivery programme on the ground, as well as its leadership in the areas of

protection and NFIs/shelter under the Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), UNHCR continues to coordinate the largest-ever regional refugee response, bringing together over 150 UN and NGO partners in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In 2014, these partners appealed for USD 3.74 billion under the Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP).

The countries neighbouring Syria are now having to contend with unprecedented local and systemic challenges as a result of the crisis and the displacement of over 3 million people. In recognition of this, UNHCR continues to advocate for – and whenever possible directly deliver – support to local communities impacted by the refugee influx in order to alleviate the growing political, economic and social consequences of this situation.

As a result, with the aim of addressing the protection and humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees while building the resilience of vulnerable and

impacted communities and strengthening the capacity of national delivery systems, a new response plan is being developed under the co-leadership of UNDP and UNHCR. Building upon the RRP model, the 2015 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) will provide an innovative approach that brings together humanitarian and development interventions for a sustainable resilience-based response to the crisis.

The 3RP is envisioned as a broad regional partnership strategy, based on national plans or processes, and a platform for advocacy, fundraising, information management and monitoring. In accordance with its mandate, UNHCR will continue to ensure the coherence of the refugee response in each country and provide overall leadership and coordination of the refugee dimensions of the response; while UNDP will facilitate the development and coordination of the resilience/stabilization dimensions of the 3RP. The 2015 3RP is due to be launched in Berlin in December 2014. ■

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The worsening security, political and social situations in large parts of the region explain the dramatic increase in UNHCR's financial requirements for the Middle East and North Africa: from USD 651 million in 2011 to a revised 2014 budget of USD 1.76 billion, as a result of the response to the Syria and Iraq crises.

In 2015, the financial requirements for the region are set at USD 1.89 billion. These requirements are based on best estimates using information available as of mid-2014.

In light of the evolving situation in Syria and Iraq, any additional requirements related to these emergencies will be presented in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan for Syrian refugees and impacted communities (3RP), the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), and in a supplementary appeal for the Iraq Situation. They will undergo further review in the course of the year as required.

Iraq situation

The internal armed conflict which has escalated in Iraq since January 2014 has resulted in the country's most severe displacement crisis in years, affecting millions of Iraqis. While over 1 million people were displaced in Iraq prior to 2014, some 1.8 million people have been forced to flee their homes since the beginning of 2014. This brings the total number of IDPs who have settled in over 1,850 different locations across the country, to 2.8 million. Some 850,000 Iraqis have sought safety in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), while the remaining IDPs are scattered across the south and centre of the country, where access is difficult. The KR-I is also hosting more than 95 per cent of the 222,500 Syrian refugees in the country, and UNHCR is leading the coordination of the refugee response in this regard. In addition, some 180,000 Iraqis have sought refuge in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Syria due to the recent violence.

To respond to this emergency, UNHCR launched a Supplementary Appeal for an additional USD 577 million to meet the urgent needs of the 1.8 million newly displaced Iraqi IDPs and Iraqi refugees in the region. The Office has also increased its staffing capacity, provided support to local authorities in the construction and management of camps, and launched its largest single aid push in more than a decade.

At the same time, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) decided to declare the Iraq internal displacement situation a system-wide L-3 Emergency in August 2014. As is mandatory following an L-3 designation, a Strategic Response Plan (SRP) led by OCHA has been developed for the period October 2014–December 2015. UNHCR has participated in the formulation of the SRP through its role as lead of the protection, shelter and camp coordination and camp management (CCCCM) clusters for IDPs. ■

| CHALLENGES |

In addition to the sheer scale of needs, increasingly complex protection issues are arising from the emergency situations in the region. Insecurity is challenging the delivery of humanitarian operations and limiting access to people of concern. In addition, the unstable and unpredictable political situations in the region are ongoing concerns for UNHCR operations.

Countries in North Africa continue to face the challenges posed by mixed migratory movements, including smuggling and trafficking, of migrants and refugees, in transit to Europe or to other destinations in

North Africa. The movement of increasing numbers of refugees and migrants who resort to dangerous boat trips across the Mediterranean, at grave risk to their lives, are an ever-growing concern.

With more than 85 per cent of refugees living among host communities across the region, the dire situation of urban refugees demands special attention. In particular, many Syrian refugees in large cities are living in extreme poverty and are being forced to resort to harmful coping mechanisms for their survival. ■

BUDGETS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | USD

Operation	2014	2015				Total
	Revised budget (as of 30 June 2014)	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	
MIDDLE EAST						
Iraq	311,967,182	136,096,621	2,045,988	35,763,788	56,629,011	230,535,408
Israel	2,934,409	3,207,939	0	0	0	3,207,939
Jordan	352,882,579	404,432,393	0	0	0	404,432,393
Kuwait ¹	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
Lebanon	471,872,116	555,537,603	1,242,275	0	0	556,779,878
Saudi Arabia Regional Office	4,266,486	4,577,895	320,000	0	0	4,897,895
Syria Regional Refugee Coordination Office	17,425,583	20,537,705	0	0	0	20,537,705
Syrian Arab Republic	320,223,482	52,557,990	179,730	0	309,778,397	362,516,117
United Arab Emirates	3,372,493	2,890,951	110,000	0	0	3,000,951
Yemen	56,726,371	44,869,802	0	0	14,668,309	59,538,111
Regional activities	22,015,977	60,640,011	0	0	0	60,640,011
Subtotal	1,563,691,679	1,285,348,911	3,897,994	35,763,788	381,075,716	1,706,086,409
NORTH AFRICA						
Algeria	32,708,250	33,227,036	0	0	0	33,227,036
Egypt Regional Office	99,014,244	85,170,372	0	0	0	85,170,372
Libya	19,722,146	18,212,314	0	0	1,450,833	19,663,147
Mauritania	23,990,818	24,368,374	0	0	0	24,368,374
Morocco	3,588,701	3,516,919	0	0	0	3,516,919
Tunisia	6,006,778	6,394,560	0	0	0	6,394,560
Western Sahara (Confidence Building Measures)	8,838,157	7,213,152	0	0	0	7,213,152
Regional activities	650,000	848,071	0	0	0	848,071
Subtotal	194,519,094	178,950,799	0	0	1,450,833	180,401,632
Total	1,758,210,772	1,464,299,709	3,897,994	35,763,788	382,526,549	1,886,488,041

¹ As from 2015 Kuwait is reported under Saudi Arabia Regional Office

BUDGETS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | 2006-2015

