

Working environment

The context

Yemen lies along an ancient migration route that links the Horn of Africa, marked by poverty and political instability, and the oil rich countries of the Gulf. As a result, it faces unique challenges, characterized by continuous mixed migration and refugee flows. Every year some tens of thousands of people, mostly Somalis and Ethiopians, risk starvation, robbery, extortion, beatings, rape and even death during their journey across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen. They take these risks to escape conflict, violations of human rights, economic deprivation, drought and food shortages in their home countries.

The number of people crossing the Gulf of Aden increased significantly in 2008, with more than 32,000 making the crossing by September. The composition of the arrivals also appears to be changing; they now include more women. The estimated number of those

who died or drowned during the crossing when forced overboard or when vessels capsized was more than 1,000 in 2007 and nearly 400 by mid-2008.

Yemen is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and has traditionally adopted an open-door policy towards Somalis, granting them *prima facie* refugee status. Some 82,000 Somali refugees are currently registered with UNHCR in Yemen, the majority of whom live in urban areas. Some 10,000 refugees live in the Kharaz camp. However, it is estimated that some 150,000 Somalis may currently be living in the country.

The Government of Yemen is concerned about the serious economic burden that hosting such a large number of refugees and asylum-seekers places on the country. The situation is aggravated by the presence of some 77,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) uprooted from their homes in northern Yemen by sectarian conflict. The humanitarian situation of these IDPs remains dire; UNHCR is supporting those with specific needs, particularly in shelter, and is seeking to improve their living conditions.

The needs

The most crucial needs are for basic humanitarian assistance and essential services, including food, shelter, health care, water and sanitation, as well as education for both refugees and IDPs. Extensive support is needed to ensure the successful integration of some Somali refugees in the urban areas of Basateen in southern Yemen. This support has to be provided to both the refugees and their host community. Other priority needs include creating a favourable refugee protection environment, which has to be built by helping the authorities increase their capacity to deal with refugee and asylum issues.

Main objectives

- Ensure effective protection for all refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and others of concern, with particular attention to women and children.
- Strengthen the legal framework and institutional capacities for refugee protection and assistance.
- Enhance the Government's capacity to discharge its international obligations.
- Provide basic humanitarian assistance and services to refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs in camps, urban areas and IDP settlement areas.
- Maximize refugees' self-reliance to increase their livelihood opportunities.
- Facilitate voluntary repatriation whenever possible in safety and dignity.
- Use resettlement as a strategic protection tool and a durable solutions option.
- Implement the 10-Point Plan of Action in response to mixed migration.
- Improve reception facilities and assistance for new arrivals in protection, transportation, registration and basic needs.

Key targets

Annual programme

- Some 30,000 new arrivals are transported to reception centres and Kharaz camp.
- 750 refugees are resettled in third countries.
- All survivors of sexual and gender-based violence receive support.
- Six refugee registration centres are fully functional and all refugee documents updated.
- Some 1,000 refugees are assisted to repatriate voluntarily.
- Some 550 shelter units are maintained or repaired and refugee reception facilities are expanded.
- At least 90 per cent of refugee children are enrolled in school.
- The camp population is provided with adequate quantities of food and safe drinking water, primary health care and non-food items.
- Income generating opportunities are increased for refugees in the camp and urban areas.

Supplementary programmes

- A new reception centre is established on the Red Sea coast and existing reception facilities are upgraded.
- All arrivals have access to 20 liters of safe drinking water per day.
- Kharaz camp is extended; public health facilities on the coast are helped to cope with the large number of new arrivals.
- Shelter is provided to 2,000 people.
- 500 standard shelters are built for vulnerable IDPs.
- Emergency tents are provided to 1,000 families in areas of displacement and return. Shelter materials are provided for the construction and repair of 750 houses for returnees with specific needs.
- Some 200 IDP families with specific needs benefit from small business training.

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Ethiopia	800	800	-	-
	Iraq	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
	Somalia	82,720	82,720	101,020	101,020
	Various	500	500	-	-
Asylum-seekers	Ethiopia	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	Iraq	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
	Various	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Total		90,520	90,520	107,520	107,520



Asylum-seekers and migrants arrive at the Ahwar reception center.

UNHCR/U Björge/insson

Strategy and activities

UNHCR's operation in Yemen is focused on providing protection within the framework of the 10-Point Plan of Action designed to protect refugees in mixed migration movements. The Office will also focus on building the capacity of national asylum structures and developing national refugee legislation to ensure that refugee protection is implemented in accordance with international standards.

The Office will continue to encourage greater burden sharing by the international community to address mixed migration movements and the situation of IDPs in the north of the country.

Constraints

The ongoing conflict in the Horn of Africa makes repatriation unlikely for the majority of Somalis. Other durable solution options are also limited. The sheer size of the mixed migration movements, coupled with the absence of national legislation or strategies to address these, are major constraints for UNHCR's programme in Yemen.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence	
Number of offices	6
Total staff	115
International	17
National	59
JPOs	1
UNVs	32
Others	6

Coordination

UNHCR operation is implemented in collaboration with the Government of Yemen and supported by UN agencies and NGOs. Food rations are supplied to all

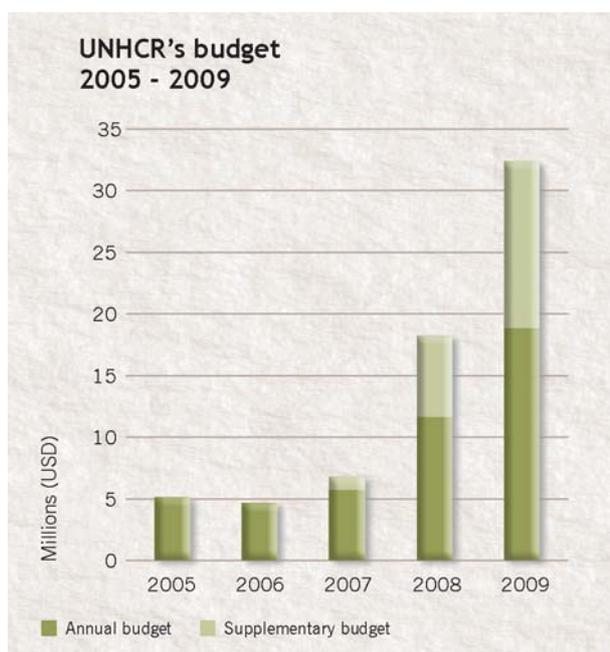
refugees in the Kharaz camp by WFP. Efforts to address refugee needs within the Common Country Assessment and UN Development Assistance Framework are ongoing. The UN/NGO country team in Yemen is currently considering the Delivering as One initiative as a framework for community assistance.

Partners
Implementing partners
Government agencies: Ministry of Interior
NGOs: INTERSOS, Danish Refugee Council, CARE, Society for Humanitarian Solidarity, Yemeni Red Crescent, <i>Al Amal</i> Charitable Society, Charitable Womens Association
Operational partners
Government agencies: Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs
NGOs: Yemeni Red Crescent
Others: UNICEF, WFP, WHO

Financial information

From 2000 to 2006, UNHCR's Annual Programme Budget averaged USD 4 million. In response to the protection and assistance gaps in the country, UNHCR increased its budget and activities to USD 5.9 million in 2007, and to USD 12 million in 2008.

Nonetheless, the resources are not enough to meet basic protection and assistance needs. UNHCR intends to double its activities on behalf of refugees in 2009 as a result of the Global Needs Assessment initiative. Activities related to new arrivals of Somali refugees are presented under the supplementary programme for the Somalian Situation



Global Needs Assessment

The Global Needs Assessment (GNA) was piloted in Yemen in 2008 to identify the full range of refugees' and asylum-seekers' needs. Using a collaborative approach, UNHCR drew on the experience of the Government, partners and refugees to identify unmet needs.

The results show that UNHCR and its partners must scale up existing operations and start new ones to protect and assist refugees. The Office must address poor nutrition and limited access to health care, and improve access to documents to prevent arrest and detention. There is also a need to bridge the Government's capacity gaps and expand the limited opportunities for self-reliance available to refugees.

Activities that were identified by the GNA initiative and that UNHCR will address if it receives sufficient funding include:

- Strengthening the legal and administrative framework by helping the Government to adopt national legislation on refugee and asylum affairs; helping the authorities to set up a Bureau for Refugees and a National Eligibility Committee.
- Enhancing the protection and security of new arrivals by improving facilities at the Mayfa'a, Ahwar and Kharaz reception centres. These would include counselling for new arrivals, facilities for them to communicate with family and burial services.
- Improving access to essential services, with a special focus on health care for refugees in urban areas.
- Improving living conditions in the Basateen area for refugees and local hosting communities.
- Increasing educational opportunities for refugees, including vocational and skills training programmes, to improve their opportunities for self-reliance.
- Establishing an effective detention monitoring system.

Budget (USD)

Activities and services	2008			2009			
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget ¹	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget		Total
					Somalia Situation	IDPs	
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,454,539	739,299	3,193,838	2,729,654	1,522,419	554,213	4,806,286
Community services	210,067	260,400	470,467	325,837	917,300	53,400	1,296,537
Domestic needs	198,766	722,550	921,316	570,038	400,000	1,049,700	2,019,738
Education	176,180	200,000	376,180	336,301	86,000	0	422,301
Food	0	0	0	45,011	700,000	0	745,011
Forestry	0	0	0	50,013	0	0	50,013
Health	538,609	527,350	1,065,959	630,150	400,000	0	1,030,150
Income generation	443,158	145,000	588,158	300,699	630,000	150,000	1,080,699
Legal assistance	62,604	678,680	741,284	700,075	1,148,958	247,480	2,096,513
Operational support (to agencies)	221,281	414,000	635,281	674,323	964,600	250,000	1,888,923
Sanitation	27,685	260,000	287,685	47,568	500,000	0	547,568
Shelter and infrastructure	391,447	1,182,263	1,573,710	370,451	1,395,000	1,350,000	3,115,451
Transport and logistics	639,595	286,040	925,635	548,995	0	89,160	638,155
Water	90,607	440,000	530,607	282,248	725,000	0	1,007,248
Global Needs Assessment	0	0	0	10,000,000	0	0	10,000,000
Total operations	5,454,538	5,855,582	11,310,120	17,611,363	9,389,277	3,743,953	30,744,593
Programme support	1,259,375	698,364	1,957,739	1,318,992	0	307,850	1,626,842
Total	6,713,913	6,553,946	13,267,859	18,930,355	9,389,277	4,051,803	32,371,435

¹ Includes supplementary programmes for IDPs (USD 2,723,120), the Somalia Situation (USD 3,094,476), anaemia control and prevention (USD 236,350) and water and sanitation activities (USD 500,000).

Note: Supplementary programme budgets exclude 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.