

North Africa

| Working environment |

Since the end of 2010 and early 2011, a wave of unprecedented popular uprisings has spread across North Africa. They have resulted in changes of regime in Tunisia and Egypt and civil conflict in Libya where more than a million people have fled to neighbouring countries, mainly Tunisia and Egypt, but also Algeria, Chad, Italy, Malta, Niger and Sudan. It is also estimated that there are more than 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Libya.

Responding to the emergency, UNHCR advocated with all stakeholders to maintain basic protection standards, mobilizing staff, establishing a presence and setting up camps at the Tunisian-Libyan border, airlifting hundreds of tonnes of essential humanitarian assistance, and joining IOM, for a limited duration, in evacuating third-country nationals.

Meanwhile, national staff in Libya have worked with UNHCR's national implementing partner to provide assistance and counselling to people who were unable to relocate or to access basic services. Telephone hotlines were set up in Libya and at UNHCR's Regional Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa for calls from Libya and elsewhere.

The upheavals in North Africa have brought radical changes, providing UNHCR with new challenges, but also opportunities. In countries such as Egypt, Libya and Tunisia the prospects of democratic transitions have raised hopes that UNHCR will be able to work more closely with governments on issues related to asylum and migration. They may also lead to States assuming greater responsibility in protecting people of concern in accordance with international law.

All countries of North Africa have ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol—with the exception of Libya, which, however, is party to the Organisation of African Unity's 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. However, none, except Mauritania, have established national asylum laws and systems consistent with international standards. Therefore, UNHCR has been the sole entity undertaking refugee status determination (RSD), while refugee status granted by UNHCR has not been automatically recognized by governments. Only a limited number of refugees registered with UNHCR have been given residence permits.

Algeria

Egypt

Libya

Mauritania

Morocco

Tunisia

Western Sahara

Refugees at the UNHCR camp of Choucha Ras Djir, Tunisia.





Progress has been achieved with regard to the resumption of the voluntary repatriation of the remaining Mauritanian refugees in Senegal. While close to 20,500 Mauritanian refugees have returned home from Senegal since 2008, some 5,200 refugees who have applied for voluntary repatriation remain in Senegal. A tripartite meeting between UNHCR and the Governments of Mauritania and Senegal will be held in October 2011 to agree on the modalities to repatriate some 1,000 refugees by the end of 2011 and the remainder in 2012.

Progress has also been achieved with the implementation of additional Confidence Building Measures (CBM) for the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps and their families in the Western Sahara Territory. The family visits have been resumed and new activities have been undertaken, including a road reconnaissance mission and a seminar on Hassania culture.

| Strategy |

The key challenges facing UNHCR in North Africa are the establishment of responsive national asylum systems and the promotion of protection-sensitive management of mixed migration movements. In 2012, UNHCR will seek to expand partnerships with States, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society for this purpose. The Office will advocate on behalf of people in need of protection within mixed migration flows, and explore means of engaging with the authorities on the return of people not in need of protection. UNHCR will provide targeted training as well as technical support, and participate in discussions on joint policies and planning.

As the situation inside Libya improves, it is anticipated that a significant number of displaced Libyans will return to their homes. Intense efforts will continue to find durable solutions for people of concern still at the Egyptian and Tunisian borders, while addressing the protection and assistance needs of refugees, IDPs and returnees inside Libya.

| Constraints |

The predominance of national security concerns, exacerbated by recent events, presents a major hurdle for UNHCR to surmount in order to expand the protection space in this region. The main

constraints include the absence of national and regional strategies for managing mixed migration movements, the lack of national asylum systems consistent with international standards, and the remoteness of a political solution to the situation of Western Sahara.

| Operations |

UNHCR's operations in **Algeria, Egypt, Libya** and **Tunisia** are covered in separate chapters.

In **Mauritania**, a working group was created at the end of 2010 to develop a national strategy on asylum, which includes the drafting of a national asylum law. It is expected that a final draft will be presented to the Government for endorsement and submission to Parliament for its 2012 session. Meanwhile, UNHCR continues to help build institutional and procedural capacity for a national asylum system by providing technical expertise, training and advice.

UNHCR also continues to implement reintegration activities in areas of return to ensure the sustainability of the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Senegal.

Since 2008, close to 20,500 Mauritanian refugees have repatriated from Senegal with UNHCR's assistance. According to the latest profiling and verification, a further 5,200 Mauritanian refugees remain in Senegal, and have opted for return. The 15th tripartite meeting between UNHCR and the Governments of Mauritania and Senegal is expected to be held in October 2011 to validate the number of the remaining refugees in Senegal, and agree on a timetable to complete this voluntary repatriation operation. There are also more than 12,000 Mauritanian refugees registered in Mali, of whom some 9,000 have expressed the wish to return. Voluntary repatriation from Mali will be considered once repatriation from Senegal is completed.

Morocco is a country of transit, but also progressively one of destination for migrants and asylum-seekers from sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. Although a Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, Morocco has yet to adopt national refugee legislation and establish asylum procedures consistent with international standards. UNHCR will therefore continue to carry out RSD, while at the same time seeking to encourage greater involvement by the authorities.

UNHCR will also continue to promote the adoption of a comprehensive national asylum system in Morocco through capacity-building activities, including training in refugee law for government officials, the judiciary and civil society institutions. Pending durable solutions, UNHCR will continue to support assistance programmes which enable refugees to have access to basic social services, and help them achieve self-sufficiency.

Since 2004, UNHCR has been cooperating with Morocco, the *Frente Polisario* and host country Algeria to implement a Confidence Building Measures (CBM) programme aimed at addressing the effects of prolonged separation between Sahrawi refugees in the camps in Algeria and their families in **Western Sahara**. UNHCR also works closely with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which provides logistical support, including aircraft and ground transportation, for CBM activities.

After 10 months of suspension, the family visits that form part of the CBM resumed in January 2011, but telephone services have not yet resumed. More than 41,000 Sahrawis from the refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria, and Western Sahara are registered to take part in the family visits. Due to the high cost of air transport and the limited capacity of the available aircraft, less than 12,000 people on both sides have so far benefited from such visits. UNHCR has proposed an expansion of the CBM programme to include transportation by land or with larger

aircrafts. This would benefit approximately 4,400 additional Sahrawis each year.

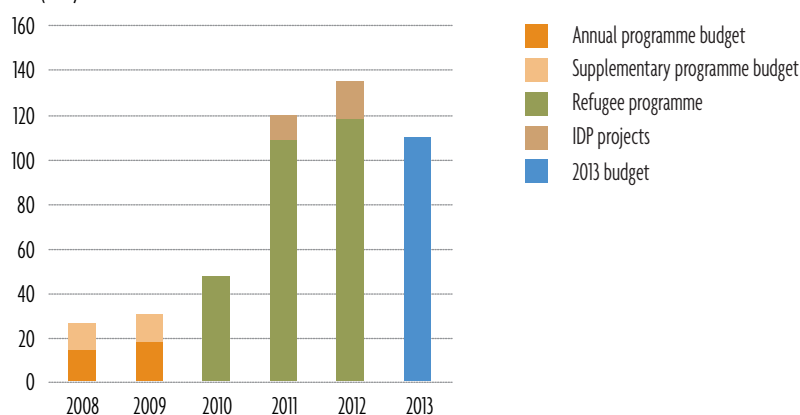
Following a CBM evaluation meeting held with the parties in February 2011, also attended by Algeria and Mauritania, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, a road reconnaissance mission was conducted in April 2011 to assess the proposed overland routes for family visits. It was also agreed that UNHCR would endeavour to simplify procedures for the preparation of the family visits, and to improve logistical capacity, while exploring the possibility of hiring a larger aircraft. In addition, it was agreed to organize seminars to promote an exchange of views between the two Sahrawi communities, the first of which took place in September 2011 in Portugal on Hassania culture, attended by a total of 34 participants from the camps and the Territory.

Financial information

While the 2011 budgets for Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco have remained stable, the budgets for Egypt, Libya and Tunisia have expanded to meet new needs arising from the Libyan crisis. Requirements for the CBM operation have grown slightly in 2011, to cover additional needs which were identified during the road reconnaissance mission. For 2012, total requirements for North Africa amount to USD 110 million, double what they were in 2011.

UNHCR's budget in North Africa 2007 -2012

Millions (USD)



UNHCR Budget in North Africa (USD)

OPERATION	2011 REVISED BUDGET	2012				2013
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	TOTAL	
Algeria	25,779,823	25,499,999	0	0	25,499,999	25,500,000
Egypt Regional Office ¹	53,571,401	19,657,759	68,890	0	19,726,649	20,205,100
Libya	18,219,281	14,336,878	0	16,925,724	31,262,602	20,000,000
Mauritania	7,185,528	7,778,366	0	0	7,778,366	4,200,000
Morocco	2,626,840	2,761,868	0	0	2,761,868	2,761,867
Tunisia	27,280,848	34,471,589	0	0	34,471,589	24,130,099
Western Sahara	12,305,208	13,222,319	0	0	13,222,319	13,156,679
Total	146,968,929	117,728,778	68,890	16,925,724	134,723,392	109,953,745

¹From 2012, Egypt will be a Regional Office and is reported as part of the North Africa subregion.