



North Africa

Operational highlights

- In view of the increase in migratory movements across North Africa, UNHCR consolidated its presence in the subregion in 2007. Large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees within these migratory streams now have access to international protection.
- UNHCR collaborated with governmental and non-governmental partners to ensure that the large number of urban refugees in the region, as well as the Sahrawi refugees in camps in Tindouf, Algeria, received international protection and assistance.
- The Office's advocacy and capacity-building activities began to yield results. The 10-Point Plan of Action to address refugee protection in mixed migration movements is helping to reconcile the imperatives of refugee protection and States' migration-management interests.
- Mauritania established national refugee status determination (RSD) procedures, and some 40 asylum-seekers were granted refugee status under the recently developed national asylum system. The repatriation of some 20,000 Mauritanian refugees in Senegal was planned to begin in early 2008.

Algeria

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Mauritania

Morocco

Tunisia

Western Sahara



- The December terrorist attack against the UN in Algiers claimed the lives of 17 UN staff members and other personnel. The blast demolished the UN House and the UNHCR office in Algiers, temporarily halting activities on behalf of urban refugees in Algeria.
- UNHCR signed a country agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco. In Libya, a tripartite agreement between UNHCR, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development and the International Organization for Peace, Care and Relief, a Libyan NGO, has been signed. Libya has prepared a national law on refugees which is currently under consideration by the National Legislative Committee.

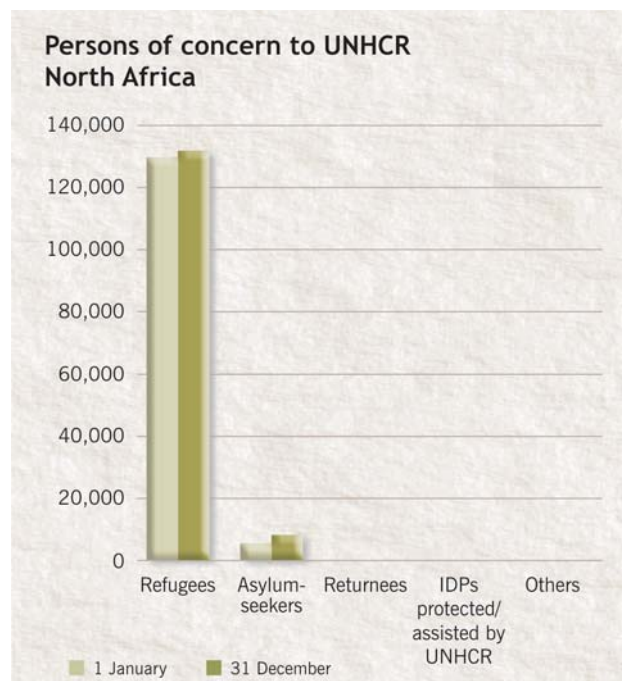
by this complex phenomenon. Consequently, UNHCR's strategy for North Africa focused on providing access to protection for asylum-seekers, assisting refugees, building the capacity of State institutions, advocating for the adoption of refugee legislation and persuading States to establish asylum procedures consistent with international standards.

The humanitarian situation of the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps in southern Algeria remained daunting, with most of them living in harsh climatic conditions in the desert. In the absence of a political

Working environment

All the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union are parties to either or both international and regional refugee instruments. (Libya, which is not party to either the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, is a signatory to the 1969 OAU Convention on refugee issues in Africa). However, for a variety of economic and other reasons, including a focus on national security in light of a significant increase in extremist activities, refugee issues have not been given priority by governments in this subregion.

The number of people involved in mixed migration movements to North African countries continued to increase in 2007, while existing national migration structures are striving to cope with the challenges posed





UNHCR/R. Al Hassan

Refugee children ready to "kick the ball" at a summer school near Cairo.

solution to the Western Sahara situation, it is unlikely that durable solutions can be found for this group.

In 2007, UNHCR strove to provide basic humanitarian assistance to as many of the large number of refugees in the North African subregion as possible. The most vulnerable among urban refugees were provided with monthly subsidies, education allowances and, occasionally, housing assistance.

UNHCR collaborated with WFP and NGOs to provide refugees in the Tindouf camps in southern Algeria with food, shelter, water and sanitation, health care and education. Additional quantities of vegetables, fruit and fresh meat were also provided in order to improve the nutritional status of the refugees in the camps.

The Office made significant efforts to generate support for the 10-Point Plan of Action designed to address various aspects of refugee protection in mixed migration movements. These efforts have started to yield positive results, as the Plan of Action gradually has become a reference framework for refugee protection in the subregion. The establishment of asylum procedures in Mauritania, the signing of the country agreement with

Morocco and the drafting of the national law on refugees in Libya are some of the fruits of UNHCR's advocacy and capacity-building activities in the North Africa subregion.

The Office developed partnerships with several organizations operating in the Tindouf camps to ensure that basic services were provided to the refugees. These partnerships generated additional financial support for UNHCR activities to assist the Sahrawi refugees.

Constraints

Mixed migration movements in the region are making it increasingly difficult for UNHCR to protect refugees. No national asylum structures or strategies for dealing with asylum issues in the context of mixed migration movements exist in the region. Meanwhile, regional governments are becoming increasingly focused on national security. The terrorist attack against the UN in Algiers resulted in an almost total halt of UNHCR activities for urban refugees in the country. However, the Office managed to keep the humanitarian operation for the Sahrawi refugees running uninterrupted.

Operations

In **Algeria**, UNHCR, in cooperation with the Algerian Government, UN agencies and other partners ensured the protection and assistance to Sahrawi refugees in camps in Tindouf, Algeria. The assistance covered provision of food, health care, water and sanitation, education and transport. Vocational training, particularly for women, was also provided. In response to the poor nutritional status of the refugees in the camps, the Office provided fresh meat and vegetables. In Algiers, the Office conducted status determinations and assisted some refugees and asylum-seekers with monthly allowances, including housing allowances for some 50 refugees.

The December terrorist attack against the UN in Algiers claimed the lives of 17 UN staff members and other personnel. The blast demolished the UN House and the UNHCR office in Algiers, temporarily halting activities on behalf of urban refugees in Algeria. However, the Office managed to maintain the programme for Sahrawi refugees in the camps in Tindouf without interruption.

In the **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**, UNHCR and its partners assisted hundreds of urban refugees with living allowances, housing, medical assistance, educational, legal support and counselling, vocational training, apprenticeships and micro-credit. The programme tried to ensure that the needs of refugee women were adequately addressed. A significant achievement was the drafting of the national refugee law.

Mauritania, which neighbours sub-Saharan Africa, is an important transit point for migrants attempting to reach Europe. To protect refugees in mixed migration movements, UNHCR helped the Government to establish effective asylum procedures consistent with international refugee protection standards. The finalization of plans and the signing of a tripartite agreement for the repatriation of the approximately 20,000 Mauritanian refugees from Senegal was a major accomplishment.

Morocco is a transit country for thousands of migrants and asylum-seekers from sub-Saharan Africa and from as far away as Southeast Asia. Ensuring the protection of refugees in the context of mixed migration movements has been a challenge for UNHCR in Morocco. Apart from conducting RSD for a large number of asylum-seekers, the Office also assisted a number of refugees with specific needs by providing food, shelter, health care, education, legal counselling and income-generating activities. It is hoped that the conclusion of the country agreement, (*Accord du Siège*), will lead to the establishment of a national asylum system consistent with international standards.

In the absence of national asylum procedures in **Tunisia**, UNHCR conducted RSD under its mandate and ensured that the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers were respected. The Office also promoted refugees' self-reliance through vocational training. In addition, several long-staying refugees were provided with monthly allowances to meet their basic needs in food, housing, health care and education, and those with special protection needs were submitted for resettlement to third countries.

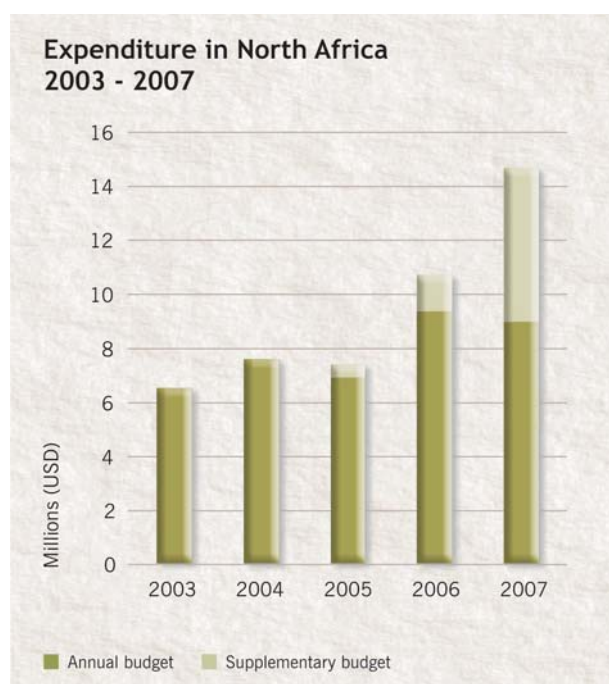
The Confidence Building Measures (CBM) programme for Western Sahara was designed to facilitate contacts between the Sahrawi populations in the refugee camps in Tindouf and their families in Western Sahara. The programme was conducted with the involvement of the parties to the conflict and in close collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara.

In 2007, the exchange visits benefited some 2,050 refugees from the Tindouf camps and their family members in the Territory. Some 23,000 telephone calls were also made by refugees to their family members in Western Sahara through the free telephone services provided by UNHCR in the camps.

The CBM programme allowed UNHCR to help families who have been separated for more than three decades to meet and keep in touch, which had a positive impact on the psychosocial well-being of beneficiaries.

Financial information

Sufficient funding was available for UNHCR operations in the North Africa subregion, including additional



funding made available for the CBM programme. The CBM budget of USD 3.4 million received 93 per cent funding, which was used to organize 32 return flights from the Tindouf camps to the Territory. The funds were also used to provide telephone services in the

four telephone centres in the refugee camps. Total expenditure for the operation in 2007 was USD 2.6 million. As some of the funds were received late in the year, the balance has been carried over to support the operation at the beginning of 2008.

Budget and expenditure (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget ¹	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Algeria	5,679,842	722,014	6,401,856	5,675,868	396,254	6,072,122
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	844,914	89,945	934,859	843,487	42,841	886,329
Mauritania	1,170,628	2,175,171	3,345,799	1,131,610	1,853,832	2,985,442
Morocco	983,543	481,365	1,464,908	959,906	415,614	1,375,520
Tunisia	358,350	22,038	380,388	357,774	19,141	376,915
Western Sahara	0	2,667,257	2,667,257	0	2,351,896	2,351,896
Regional activities ²	0	823,625	823,625	0	624,972	624,972
Total	9,037,276	6,981,415	16,018,692	8,968,645	5,704,550	14,673,195

¹ Excludes a seven per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

² Includes institution building for asylum and refugee protection within broader migration movements.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget
North Africa	European Commission	0	823,625
	Sweden	436,681	0
	United States	1,550,000	0
	Sub-total	1,986,681	823,625
Algeria	Belgium	360,231	0
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe E.V.</i>	66,113	0
	<i>España con ACNUR</i>	133,333	0
	European Commission	1,662,490	25,979
	Spain	1,262,014	0
	United States	650,000	0
	Sub-total	4,134,180	25,979
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	European Commission	0	17,736
	Switzerland	15,418	0
	Sub-total	15,418	17,736
Mauritania	CERF	0	610,500
	European Commission	385,577	0
	France	0	180,934
	Italy	0	187,500
	Japan	0	1,289,522
	Liechtenstein	0	33,214
	Mauritania	0	7,314
	Netherlands	30,076	0
	Spain	268,817	507,522
	Switzerland	0	166,071
	United Kingdom	37,454	0
	United States	0	465,000
Sub-total	721,924	3,447,578	
Morocco	European Commission	0	593,900
	Spain	403,226	0
	Switzerland	52,080	0
Sub-total	455,306	593,900	

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget
Tunisia	European Commission	0	22,038
	Sub-total	0	22,038
Western Sahara	Croatia	0	4,650
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe E.V.</i>	0	126,507
	Finland	0	381,148
	France	0	301,556
	Liechtenstein	0	38,750
	Norway	0	347,015
	Spain	0	1,000,030
	United States	0	744,000
	Sub-total	0	2,943,655
Total		7,313,508	7,874,511

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.