



**UNHCR**

The UN Refugee Agency

**EGYPT**

**AT A GLANCE**



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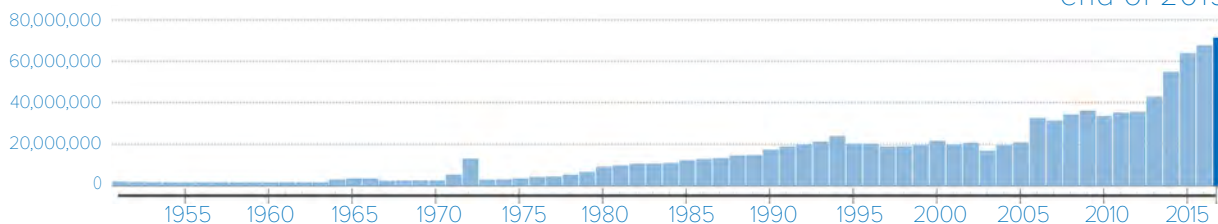
Children from Nuba Mountains during the commemoration of the war that forced them to flee. PHOTO: Aly Hazzaa



# ABOUT UNHCR

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is committed to protecting people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. The global organization safeguards the rights and well-being of refugees, asylum-seekers and of people displaced within their own country. It also has a mandate to support stateless people. Globally, UNHCR has more than 16,700 personnel and works in 138 countries.

## 79.5 MILLION PERSONS OF CONCERN GLOBALLY end of 2019



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UNHCR strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find refuge in another country, and to return home voluntarily. By assisting refugees to return to their own country or to settle permanently in another country, the organization also seeks lasting solutions to their plight.

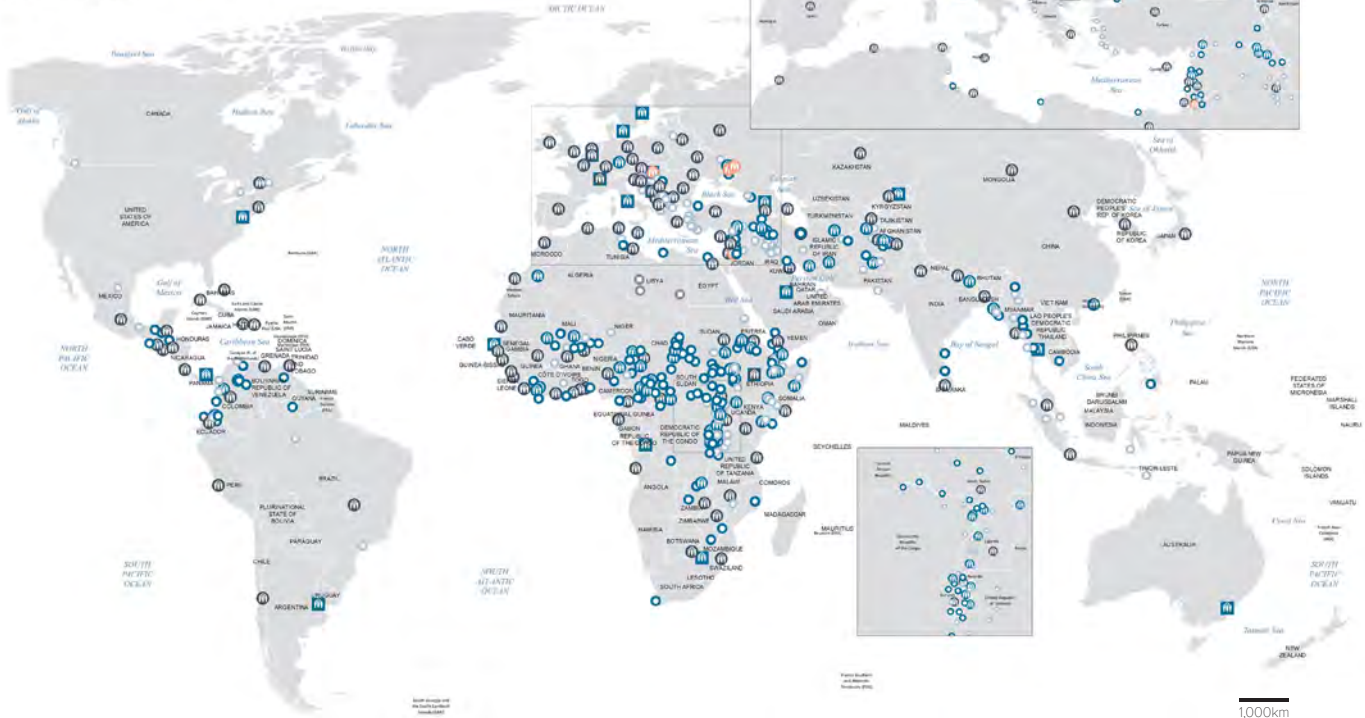
The UN Refugee Agency was created in 1950, in the wake of the Second World War. UNHCR's efforts are mandated by its Statute and guided by the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. To date, 148 States are parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or to its 1967 Protocol.



# UNHCR GLOBAL PRESENCE

as of November 2017

-  UNHCR HeadQuarter
-  UNHCR Regional Office
-  UNHCR Country Office
-  UNHCR Office of Special Coordinator
-  UNHCR Chargé de Mission
-  UNHCR Deputy Director Office
-  UNHCR National Office
-  UNHCR Liaison Office
-  Global Hub / Service Center
-  UNHCR Regional Hub
-  UNHCR Sub-Office
-  UNHCR Field Office
-  UNHCR Field Unit
-  UNHCR Planned Office



SOURCES: UNHCR | AUTHOR: UNHCR - Geneva

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

# WHO DOES UNHCR SERVE GLOBALLY?

For over half a century, UNHCR has helped millions of people to restart their lives. They include refugees, returnees, stateless people, the internally displaced and asylum-seekers.

**REFUGEES** are individuals fleeing armed conflict or persecution, who have crossed international borders to seek safety in another country. As refugees are recognized and protected under international law, they have a right not to be returned to situations where their lives and freedoms are in danger.

**ASYLUM-SEEKERS** are individuals seeking international protection, but whose claims to refugee status have not yet been determined.

**RETURNED REFUGEES** (returnees) are former refugees who have returned to their country of origin, either spontaneously or in an organized fashion, but are yet to be fully integrated. Such returns would normally take place only under conditions of safety and dignity.

**INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE** seek safety in other parts of their country.

**STATELESS PEOPLE** are not officially recognized as nationals by any State under the operation of its law, and therefore do not hold the nationality of any State. UNHCR has been granted a global mandate by the United Nations General Assembly to contribute to the prevention and reduction of statelessness and the protection of stateless persons.



# PROTECTION OF REFUGEES

Under international law, refugees are defined and protected by several legal instruments. These include the 1951 Refugee Convention (and its 1967 Protocol) which defines those eligible for refugee status and outlines the basic rights which States should accord to these persons. Together with the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Refugee Convention, the 1951 Refugee Convention is considered the cornerstone of modern refugee protection. Their underlying principles have effectively filtered into various international, regional, and national laws and practices. One fundamental principle laid down in international law is that of ‘Non-refoulement’, which stipulates that refugees should not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom would be jeopardized.

The protection of refugees is a multi-faceted goal: it includes the guarantee of not being returned to the dangers from which refugees have fled; access to fair and efficient asylum procedures; and measures affirming their basic human rights to live in dignity and safety while helping them to find a longer-term solution. As States bear the primary responsibility for this protection, UNHCR works closely with governments, advising and supporting them as needed in order to carry out their responsibilities.

## THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

On 17 December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugees, after two years of extensive consultations led by UNHCR with Member States, international organizations, refugees, civil society, the private sector and experts.

The Global Compact on Refugees is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation. It provides a blueprint for governments, international organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives. The Global Compact on Refugees constitutes a unique opportunity to transform the way the world responds to refugee situations, benefiting both refugees and the communities that host them.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

The terms 'refugee' and 'migrant' tend to be used interchangeably in media and public discourse. However, they carry very different meanings.

While there is no formal legal definition of the term 'migrant', migration is often related to the quest for work opportunities abroad, better education or family reunification. While refugees cannot safely return home, migrants may not face such impediment and continue to receive the protection of their government.

For governments, making a distinction between refugees and migrants is critical. Countries deal with migrants under their own immigration laws and processes. In contrast, refugee issues are handled through norms of refugee protection and asylum, according to both national legislation and international law. As countries bear specific responsibilities towards any individual seeking asylum on their respective territories or at their borders, UNHCR contributes by helping them fulfill these responsibilities.











## UNHCR IN EGYPT

UNHCR has been working in Egypt since 1954 after the Government of Egypt and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Within the framework of this MOU, UNHCR provides protection services including all aspects of registration, documentation, refugee status determination and resettlement to persons of concern. For more than six decades, the office provided assistance to stateless individuals from Armenian and European origins, followed by large influxes of African, Iraqi and Syrian refugees in subsequent years.

## WE CURRENTLY FOCUS OUR WORK ON:

Ensuring that asylum-seekers are able to apply for and gain access to protection;

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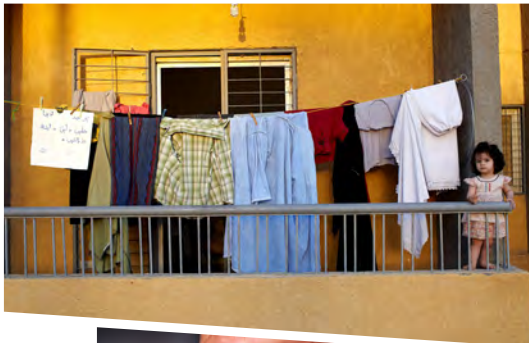
Supporting the access of refugees to health and education services, and ensuring that vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers can meet their basic needs;

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Raising awareness of the plight of refugees, advocating for their rights, and coordinating efforts to support them.









# REFUGEE CONTEXT IN EGYPT



Egypt hosts more than 258,000 registered asylum-seekers and refugees from 57 different countries. The majority are from Syria, followed by Sudan, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Yemen and Somalia.

In 2012, Syrians fleeing their war-torn country started seeking asylum in Egypt. Representing diverse socio-economic and religious backgrounds, the number of Syrians registered with UNHCR Egypt rose dramatically from 12,800 at the end of 2012 to more than 130,000 to date. As a result of the Syrian crisis, we now assist the largest number of registered refugees and asylum-seekers in history. In response to the needs of the large influx, UNHCR set up a field office in Alexandria in December 2013.







At the same time, renewed conflicts and political instability in East Africa, and the Horn of Africa as well as the unrest in Iraq and Yemen, have driven thousands of Sudanese, South Sudanese, Ethiopian, Iraqi, and Yemeni individuals to seek refuge in Egypt. As of 31 August 2020, the refugee population registered with UNHCR comprised 130,047 Syrians, 49,290 Sudanese, 19,814 South Sudanese, 19,002 Eritreans, 16,181 Ethiopians, 9,259 Yemenis, 6,824 Iraqis, 6,755 Somalis and more than 1,000 individuals from 49 other nationalities.

Refugees and asylum-seekers live in an urban setting in Egypt, and are largely concentrated in Greater Cairo, Alexandria, Damietta and several towns in the North Coast. In recent years, however, Egypt's challenging economic conditions have considerably increased the vulnerability of both refugees and host community members. With many refugees lacking a stable source of income, coupled with soaring inflation, basic needs are barely covered. Other challenges include limited livelihood opportunities and the language barrier facing non-Arabic-speaking refugees. Some also lack access to sustainable formal education that could support their development. In addition, a considerable number of refugees and asylum-seekers rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs and to provide medical or psychosocial support.



# COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



50%  
SYRIA



19%  
SUDAN



8%  
SOUTH  
SUDAN



7%  
ERITREA



6%  
ETHIOPIA



3%  
YEMEN



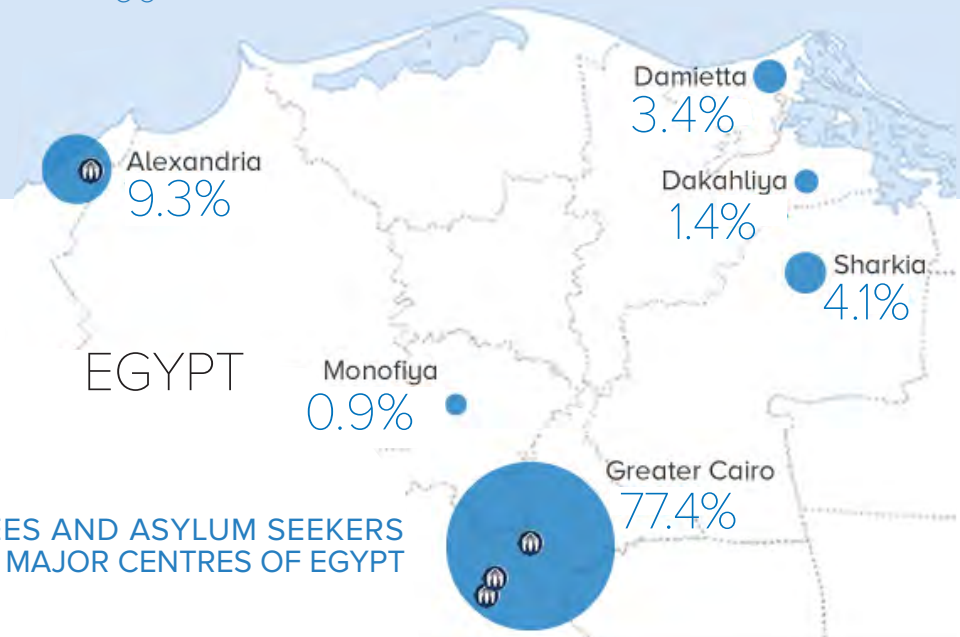
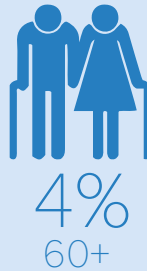
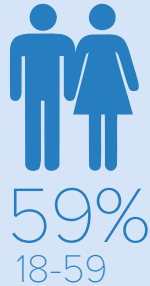
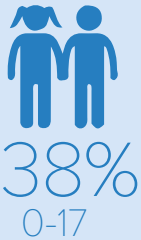
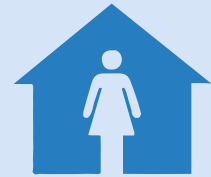
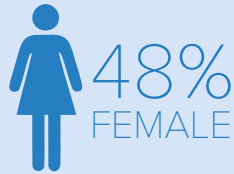
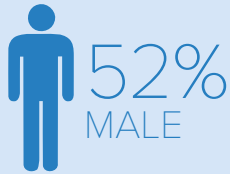
3%  
SOMALIA



3%  
IRAQ

1%  
OTHERS

# DEMOGRAPHICS



**97%** OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS RESIDE IN 6 MAJOR CENTRES OF EGYPT







## REGISTRATION

International protection for asylum-seekers and refugees begins with admission to a country of asylum and registration and documentation by national authorities or UNHCR. Registration and identification of refugees is key for the people concerned, as well as for States to know who has arrived. It facilitates access to basic assistance and protection and allows UNHCR to identify those individuals with protection risks or special needs, as well as those requiring assistance.

By providing a record of their status, registration helps protect refugees against Refoulement, arbitrary arrest, and detention. It is also a protection tool that assists to identify the most appropriate durable solutions to refugee problems.

In Egypt, the registration process has been delegated by the Government of Egypt to UNHCR based on the memorandum of understanding signed in 1954. Over the years, registration has evolved in keeping with the latest international advances, now including collection of biometric data such as iris scanning and finger printing. In addition to facilitating access to services, registration allows refugees and asylum-seekers to regularize their stay in Egypt. Once registered, they can obtain a renewable residence permit which grants them freedom of movement across the country.





# REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION (RSD)



Refugee Status Determination (RSD) is the legal or administrative process by which governments or UNHCR determine whether a person seeking international protection is considered a refugee under international, regional or national law. The determination of refugee status is often a critical step in order to access an array of rights, including protection against Refoulement. In Egypt, UNHCR is mandated by the Government of Egypt to determine refugee status since 1954.

Globally, UNHCR works closely with states to support and capacitate them in taking over increased responsibility for RSD and with improving their RSD systems. Within the broader framework of the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR will be establishing an Asylum Capacity Support Group, which will assist states in establishing or strengthening their national asylum systems.





# DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Finding solutions that enable refugees to live their lives in dignity and safety is the core of our work. Such solutions may include voluntary repatriation and resettlement.

Voluntary repatriation is usually viewed as the most desirable long-term solution by refugees themselves as well as by the international community. UNHCR's humanitarian action in pursuit of lasting solutions to refugee problems is therefore oriented in favour of enabling a refugee to exercise the right to return home in safety and with dignity.

Currently, UNHCR Egypt facilitates voluntary return to certain areas of Sudan and Somaliland, and, for Ethiopians, to Addis Ababa. We also conduct intention and perception surveys with Syrian refugees to measure their interest in return, and we prepare for their potential future return.

For refugees who are unable to return, either due to ongoing conflict, wars, or persecution, resettlement in another country can be an alternative. Resettlement involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a country where they have sought protection to a third country that has agreed to admit them as refugees and grant them permanent residence status. This provides a resettled refugee and their family or dependants with access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country.

We identify the most vulnerable refugees for resettlement. Since 2003, more than 27,000 refugees have departed out of Egypt to resettlement countries. In 2016 alone, over 4,035 refugees left Egypt for resettlement, marking the highest number of resettlement departures yet for UNHCR Egypt. UNHCR appeals to countries to accommodate on a sustained basis more refugees with acute protection needs.





## PROTECTION SERVICES

**RECEPTION AND COUNSELING** UNHCR Egypt receives more than 1,000 refugees and asylum-seekers at its offices every working day. One of the first points of contact with UNHCR are the reception areas in Greater Cairo and Alexandria. There, protection staff counsel refugees and asylum-seekers entering the premises on a walk-in basis.

Apart from the reception areas in our four offices, refugees have several other access avenues to UNHCR. This includes our in-house telephone infolines in Cairo and Alexandria. The 13 call attendants respond to an average of 750 calls daily, and provide information in seven languages (English, Arabic, French, Amharic, Oromo, Somali and Tigrinya). Two-way communication also takes place through home visits, refugee outreach volunteers, focus group discussions, and our social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook).

We also seek feedback on the services provided through regular meetings with community representatives. Our partner NGOs, which implement part of our activities, have additional communication channels with the refugee community. Their offices have integrity mechanisms in place, such as anti-fraud and complaints receipt systems, in order to fully adhere to UNHCR's principles and guidelines.



**CHILD PROTECTION** Over half of the world's refugee population is made up of children. Many will spend their entire childhoods away from home, sometimes separated from their families. In crisis and displacement situations, children, adolescents, and youth are at risk on several fronts: various forms of abuse, separation from their caregivers, neglect, violence, exploitation, trafficking, or military recruitment. This is why UNHCR is committed to ensuring that children are protected from harm and that their rights are upheld through the provision of psychosocial support and targeted programs to meet their specific protection and developmental needs.

In Egypt, close to 40 per cent of the registered refugee and asylum-seeker population is made up of children. Youth (aged 15-24) also constitute a large part of population registered with UNHCR. The number of vulnerable children with urgent protection needs continues to increase. The majority of this at-risk group are unaccompanied and separated children (roughly 4,000 to date) who have fled from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. Typical risks include neglect, lack of appropriate alternative care, physical and verbal violence and abuse, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and child labor. We work closely with communities to mitigate those risks, respond to them and provide tailored services.

Best Interests Assessments are essential elements of UNHCR's general child protection work. They constitute a key intervention tool in identifying and addressing child protection needs and ensuring systematic referral of children for the services they require. These include psychosocial support, financial assistance, educational opportunities, family tracing, intensive follow-up provided by specialized child protection partners and alternative care arrangements supported by trained mentors within the community.



**SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE** Sexual and gender-based violence refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual in nature, and can take the form of a denial of resources or access to services. It inflicts harm on women, girls, men and boys. SGBV is a violation of human rights.

In Egypt, our prevention activities encompass innovative multi-sectoral approaches including community-based activities, legal awareness sessions, women empowerment initiatives, and art therapy. In all response activities, quality case management is continuously provided for identified SGBV survivors.

**LEGAL ASSISTANCE** Legal assistance and advocacy are one of UNHCR's priority interventions. In Egypt, we provide advice to refugees and asylum-seekers on the protection environment in the country and offer legal assistance with issues relating to residency and access to basic rights. In parallel, we conduct capacity-building workshops for national institutions and law enforcement agents.

UNHCR Egypt facilitates the process of obtaining legal documents related to civil status for refugees and asylum-seekers. They are counselled on civil status registration, divorce, custody and the acquisition of Egyptian nationality. In addition, we support refugees and asylum-seekers in accessing birth registration, especially in cases of improperly documented marriage, inter-marriage and children born out of wedlock.

We also ensure due process of law by supporting refugees and asylum-seekers through legal proceedings, including criminal and civil disputes. Assistance is available in case of physical attacks, with filing police reports, as well as in cases of detention or arrest related to irregular migration incidents.

**COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION (CBP)** UNHCR has adopted a community-based protection approach to working with all the people it serves, based on consultation and participation. CBP implies that communities engage meaningfully and substantially in all aspects of programmes that affect them, strengthening the community's leading role as a driving force for change. To be truly community-based, programmes must involve persons of concern to UNHCR at every stage: in assessment, diagnosis, prioritization, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, while applying an age, gender and diversity approach to ensure inclusiveness.

Our formal surveys and assessments include an annual participatory assessment, in which girls, boys, women and men of different nationalities inform about their needs, tell us how they cope with challenges, and make suggestions on possible UNHCR interventions. The findings from this assessment are incorporated in our planning process for the following year.

UNHCR Egypt also works closely with refugee and asylum-seeker communities to enhance their capacity for self-management. Throughout 2018, 197 members of the refugee community, members of volunteer initiatives, and outreach volunteers received training on the community-based approach to protection in Greater Cairo and the North Coast. We also organize outreach meetings with refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as community dialogue, focus group discussions, and awareness-raising on the services provided by UNHCR and our partners.

# COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES



Communication with Communities (CWC) is an essential component of UNHCR's operations and constitutes a crucial element in its accountability to affected populations.

CwC can be defined as a reciprocal flow of information between humanitarian actors and persons of concern. For UNHCR, this means that refugees and asylum-seekers not only have access to information and life-saving services in order to remain protected, but that they are also part of the decision-making process which ultimately affects their lives.

In order to achieve these objectives, UNHCR uses different communication channels to reach its persons of concern and capture their feedback. This is guided in part by the context in which the agency operates in Egypt, whose main features include a largely urban population of refugees and asylum-seekers who come from 57 countries and are spread throughout Egyptian governorates. It is also shaped by the information needs of refugees and asylum-seekers and their preferred communication channels.



## COMMUNICATION CHANNELS USED BY UNHCR (AND PARTNERS):

**TRADITIONAL PRINT TOOLS:** Information brochures, leaflets and branded posters.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Two Facebook pages dedicated for refugees and asylum-seekers and wider community groups. These pages provide information in the seven main languages spoken by the largest refugee population in Egypt.

**MOBILE PHONES:** SMS, as well as free messaging services, i.e. WhatsApp, etc.

**UNHCR EGYPT INFOLINE:** Launched in July 2015, the Infoline takes over a thousand calls each day from all refugee populations in Egypt, with dedicated interpreters for specific languages per day.

**OUTREACH EFFORTS:** UNHCR maintains an active outreach programme for engaging with refugee and asylum-seeker communities. Held on a monthly basis, community meetings serve as a direct channel to deliver information about services provided by UNHCR and partners and receive feedback.

**RECEPTION CENTERS:** UNHCR operates four reception centers where reception front liners counsel refugees and asylum-seekers with concerns regarding registration, assistance and protection.

**A KNOWLEDGE BASE (FAQS):** for staff and partners to answer basic queries about UNHCR services.

**VIDEOS:** available both online and in reception areas. Created to inform PoCs about available services and to highlight the stories of refugees in Egypt.

In order to ensure that information fans out to as many members of its population of concern, especially the most vulnerable, UNHCR consistently assesses its communications and feedback (including comments, suggestions, and complaints) across high-tech, low-tech and no-tech options, to improve accessibility and its ability to receive and respond to sensitive (and non-sensitive) feedback.

## Chake



*"I never felt stateless," said Chake, "Egypt is my country."*

Born in Cairo to Armenian parents, 80-year-old Chake's father escaped the Armenian Genocide and fled to Egypt in 1915 where he settled, married and had two children. In an unexpected twist of fate, the young father died suddenly, leaving behind a 22-year-old widow and two children.

Soon after his death, Chake's mother remarried, sending Chake to live with her aunt, a seamstress. At the age of 13, she dropped out of school to help her aunt make ends meet. She too became a seamstress and was hired by several ateliers, until her marriage in 1973.

Chake's husband was an Armenian driver working at the Australian Embassy. "He was a good man who knew my worth," Chake said. In 1992, he passed away, leaving Chake with their only son Hagob, who currently lives in Italy with his wife and three children. He works as a restaurant manager and visits his mother several times a year.

Chake has lived all her life in the upscale neighborhood of Heliopolis where most of the Armenian community lives. "I used to be a member in the church's choir; I was very active in our community," she recalled with pride.

Since 1992, Chake has been receiving financial assistance from UNHCR every three months. "I thank God for what they provide me. I have a roof above my head and bread on my table," she said.

## Guled



*Once his only option, running is now Somali refugee's passion*

For the past six years, Guled's long-striding legs have carried him to every corner of his adopted Egypt, running in marathons and other endurance races across the country as his prized collection of medals has grown ever larger.

"Whenever I am running I feel free, living in a free world of my own," he said.

But this is not the first time Guled has had to run. In 2007, he fled his home country, Somalia, in fear for his life after militia groups killed his father and continued to spread terror on the streets as part of the country's decades-long civil conflict.

He left Somalia alone with the help of his late father's friend, who arranged for smugglers to take him across the border and onwards to Egypt.

In 2012, when the world's gaze turned to the London Summer Olympics, Guled's attention was fixed on one athlete in particular – British distance runner Mo Farah, who as a child had himself fled Somaliland as a refugee.

Watching as Farah became a double Olympic champion, Guled was inspired to join a local running group in Cairo, a move that would transform his life in ways he could not have anticipated.

"Running took me out of my home, my neighbourhood, for the first time, because before, I never even knew the neighbourhoods in Cairo itself," he recalled.

Today, he has a proud record of participating in marathons, decathlons and obstacle races in places as far away as Alexandria, Sharm El-Sheikh, Aswan, and Ismailia.

## Judy El Khatib



### Little girl flees Syria and receives life-changing surgery in Cairo

When nine-year-old Judy El Khatib's photo was displayed at an exhibition in Cairo, neither her nor her family expected that her life would change forever.

Originally from Syria, Judy and her family were living in their Damascus apartment when a 2011 explosion knocked a pot of boiling water over Judy, leaving her with serious burns and inability to move her left arm. In 2012, the family fled the war in Syria and came to Egypt seeking safety as refugees.

The nature of her wounds were classified as cosmetic and thus medical treatment could not be covered by UNHCR due to budgetary constraints.

A UNHCR photo exhibit held in 2014 displayed Judy's photo alongside those of other refugees. A visitor, highly moved by Judy's story, established communication between Professor of plastic surgery at Ain Shams University, Dr. Amr Mabrouk and UNHCR to ensure that Judy could be treated.

When Dr. Mabrouk agreed to treat Judy free of charge, the family was "extremely happy, grateful, surprised, hopeful, anxious, and worried," according to Judy's mother.

Upon her initial examination, Dr. Mabrouk, who regularly volunteers his services with charity organizations, told Judy's parents that their daughter would require only a minor surgery, but that he wanted to do it as soon as possible.

Dr. Mabrouk performed a non-cosmetic functional, reconstructural surgery aimed to help Judy move her left arm again. The surgery was a success and Judy's stitches were removed in early 2015.

## Bassem Al Attar



### Syrian director unites refugees and locals through drama

When thirty-seven-year-old Bassem Al Attar approached UNHCR in late 2014, he was not expecting to unlock the door to a journey of self-discovery.

In Syria, Bassem was a television presenter at a popular Arabic cartoon channel- SpaceToon. However, the unfolding of the Syrian crisis forced him to flee.

Forced displacement takes a heavy toll on the people whose lives it eclipses, and Bassem is no exception. "I was running for my life during an aerial bombardment of my hometown when I was shot in the leg," he said. The injury left him in agony and partially disabled.

Not one to succumb to despair, Bassem was determined to explore other opportunities to make a living and support his family after settling in the Coastal City of Alexandria in Egypt in 2013.

In 2015, UNHCR announced the launch of a Community Empowerment project for refugees and asylum-seekers, allowing Bassem's community-based initiative "the Nomads" to be established.

The initiative focused on using art as a tool for self-expression and addressing social issues particularly domestic violence, discrimination, gender issues and harassment. It comprised a team of artists, mainly theatre actors, from different nationalities.

Many young people have already expressed how the initiative has changed their perceptions and made a difference in their lives.

"Not only have I met many friends, but I also don't feel alone anymore in my adopted country," said 21-year-old Nour, one of the young Nomads.



## Tereza Ammous



### *We Matter Too, Sudanese Refugee Says*

Thirty-one year old Tereza Ammous was among many Sudanese refugees who arrived with their families to Egypt seeking safety.

For the mother of two, who did not get to complete her higher education and her husband, who worked as a street vendor, life was laden with challenges.

However, Tereza harbored inner strength and a courageous spirit that does not give up. Believing that every woman matters, Tereza co-founded a committee for Sudanese and South Sudanese women where they can discuss issues affecting them and find solutions together.

Despite their efforts, Tereza and her female peers still felt isolated in their community and needed more support. Determined, they approached UNHCR in 2016 and uttered three simple words: "we matter too."

Working closely with them to build their capacity and engage them in different refugee-led activities, UNHCR introduced Tereza and other committee members to a community forum where they were linked to other community groups of different nationalities. The forum unleashed networking opportunities for them and flushed out the feeling of isolation.

On a personal level, Tereza was motivated to register as an undergraduate student in the Faculty of Arts, Sociology Department.

"It is sometimes the dark that leads to the light because it shows us how strong we are," she said, recounting how struggles have helped her foster resilience and pursue her dreams.

## Adel Bezmawi



### *Syrian Wrestling Champion Helps Refugee Children Fulfill their Dreams*

Twenty-three-year-old Adel Bezmawi fled Syria shortly after competing in a national wrestling championship, leaving his family behind. Buried in the rubble of their bombarded building were his old memories along with his proudly won certificates and medals.

In 2012, he arrived to Egypt where he was only concerned with finding safety, making a living and reuniting with his family. In late 2013, his parents and siblings finally joined him and the family moved to Alexandria.

Inspired by his brother, Adel started exploring opportunities to resume his sports career. Although Adel could not participate in Egyptian national championships, he had dreams to become a coach and give back to his community.

"I felt frustrated that I could not make my way again to the wrestling ring as a contestant, but my dream shifted to working with younger refugees and making champions out of them," he said.

Meeting with other former champions living in Alexandria in 2016 marked a new chapter in Adel's life. Together, they planted the seeds for an envisioned sports academy for refugees, which blossomed into a sports center in early 2017.

For Adel, this is just one of many dreams that he managed to fulfill. He still aspires to become an Olympic champion and pursue specialised education in sports.

*Hala, Nersine, Abeer, Amal, Ruqaya, Nour*



### **Syrian Refugee Women Prove Influential in Responding to Community Needs**

It takes different pieces to complete a jigsaw puzzle and it takes six strong Syrian refugee women to build a “better tomorrow” for their communities.

Aged between twenty-three and thirty-eight, Hala, Nersine, Abeer, Amal, Ruqaya and Nour founded the “Bukra Ahla” (Better Tomorrow) initiative to respond to the needs of their society. Seeing their diverse backgrounds as an asset, the group of women poured their experiences into making their initiative flourish.

“Each of us has different skills, so we divide the responsibilities accordingly. Those who have teaching skills can give classes, while those who are part of wide social networks oversee the external relations”, says 31-year-old Ruqaya Darwish.

Since its establishment in 2016, Bukra Ahla has been facilitating awareness sessions, distributing in-kind assistance to the most vulnerable families in their community, providing livelihood training, micro-lending, and supporting refugee entrepreneurs with equipment and supplies.

According to the founders, it takes commitment and synchronized efforts to keep the initiative running and to touch the lives of those they serve.

*Dawood Mayom*



### **From IDP Camp to Egypt’s Top Universities: a DAFI Scholar’s Journey**

Born in South Sudan, Dawood Mayom was the youngest of seven siblings whose mother was desperate to protect after the outbreak of the second Sudanese civil war.

In the early 1990s, they made it to Jabarona Camp for internally displaced people near the Sudanese Capital of Khartoum, where they stayed for nearly eight years.

At the age of nine, the family moved to Khartoum where Dawood was able to attend school regularly. Although the setbacks he faced as a child meant that he would have to catch up with missed years of schooling, he managed to graduate from high school and enroll in university.

“As a human being, being displaced is the worst experience ever, one which separates a person from his loved ones,” he said.

However, in his freshman year Dawood experienced forced displacement for the second time, when he had to flee Sudan and seek safety in Egypt.

In 2012, UNHCR opened applications to its higher education scholarship programme, the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), which enables access to higher education for refugee students in their country of asylum. Following a series of interviews, Dawood was one of the seven refugees who were awarded the scholarship.

In 2016, he became a holder of a dual degree in economics and law from 6th of October University. He is currently pursuing a Master’s Degree in Public Policy at the American University in Cairo.







## LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

After fleeing war or persecution, the opportunity to work and earn a living is one of the most effective ways for refugees to rebuild their lives with dignity and in peace. Through safe work, people forced to flee can provide for their families' basic needs, maintain their dignity and contribute to the society, all of which meet their own personal goals. In such a way, refugees have the chance to enrich their communities with their experience and skills, while preparing for a more rewarding future.

UNHCR helps refugees and asylum-seekers to support themselves and their families by offering them training and assisting them in finding a market for their skills and goods. Work in this area is guided by several core principles, mainly protection, diversity, equity, access and sustainability. We also work to promote economic inclusion of those forced to flee their homes by advocating for their right to work and building their livelihoods through market-oriented programs.







## EDUCATION

Education is a vital aspect of the work undertaken by UNHCR. Instrumental to fostering social cohesion, education strengthens community resilience and empowers refugees by giving them the knowledge and skills to lead productive, fulfilling and independent lives. Education also provides for the ‘human capital’ needed for the future reconstruction and economic development of areas of origin or settlement.

Egypt’s predominantly young refugee population, 33.5 per cent of whom range in age from 3 to 17, is in dire need of adequate education services. To address these needs, UNHCR advocates for the enrolment of refugees and asylum-seekers in public schools. Currently, Syrian, Sudanese, South Sudanese and Yemeni nationals have access to the public system on par with Egyptians. In parallel and based on the needs identified by GOE, UNHCR provides training for teachers, supports the refurbishment of schools and supply of equipment, furniture, and other necessities to assist the Egyptian facilities in absorbing the refugee population. Moreover, we provide education grants to contribute to school fees, school uniforms, books, stationery and transportation.







## HEALTH

Ensuring access to health care is a key component of UNHCR's protection activities and programming. We promote an integration model, enabling refugees and asylum-seekers to access national health care.

In Egypt, UNHCR's public health program emphasizes primary health care and support for secondary, tertiary and life-saving health care. In 2016, the Ministry of Health and Population and UNHCR jointly signed two Memoranda of Understanding granting refugees and asylum-seekers of all nationalities equal access to public primary, secondary and emergency health care as Egyptian citizens.

We focus our support on primary public facilities in areas hosting high numbers of refugees. Through our partners, we also provide health care for patients with chronic diseases, offer psychosocial and mental health support, and secondary and referral care for life-saving conditions for all refugees.

In areas with high concentrations of refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR supports national efforts to improve the quality of services to meet the needs of refugees as well as those of the host population. This entails strengthening the existing national health systems through capacity-building and provision of equipment.









## CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS

UNHCR uses cash to protect and assist people in all phases of displacement. Cash-based interventions (CBI) can be used in a variety of settings, provided there is a stable market and a safe way to provide cash or vouchers. The flexibility that CBI offer makes them a more dignified form of assistance, giving refugees the ability to immediately prioritize and choose the items they need. Having the means to satisfy basic needs can minimize survival sex, child labour and neglect, family separation, forced marriage and other forms of exploitation and abuse.

In Egypt, refugees and asylum-seekers are among the most vulnerable of the urban poor. They have limited livelihood opportunities, and many struggle to make ends meet. Refugees and asylum-seekers live in an urban setting with access to markets and services, as do members of the local communities.

Providing refugees with sufficient cash enables them to fulfill their needs while also contributing to the local economy. Currently, around 16 per cent of the refugee population in Egypt receives monthly multi-purpose cash grants through the Egypt Post Office to meet their basic living expenses.













# UNHCR AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

The MENA region has continued to face extensive levels of displacement, particularly over the past seven years. With conflicts in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, the Arab region alone hosts 53 per cent of the refugee population worldwide and 67 per cent of the total forcibly displaced persons worldwide. Tense security conditions, coupled with political unrest, in many parts of the MENA region remain a major challenge. On another note, several countries in the region have become important transit points along the irregular migration routes used by refugees and migrants in “Mixed Migration Flows.”

In this regard, UNHCR is working closely with the League of Arab States and its Member States to enhance the protection space. Joint efforts focus on advocating for access to safety and protection from Refoulement, reinforcing registration and refugee status determination, promoting legislative frameworks, addressing the risks of statelessness, ensuring security from violence and exploitation, and working towards durable solutions, including increased resettlement efforts. UNHCR and the Arab League also organize regular meetings and capacity-building sessions at the sectoral, regional, ministerial and expert levels. The purpose of these sessions is to enhance the dialogue with the concerned authorities on refugees and provide assistance in developing their policies.

Key priorities to be undertaken by the Arab Countries to enhance protection of refugees in the region were outlined in three strategies; the Arab Strategy for the Protection of Refugee Children in Asylum Context in the Arab Region which was launched in 2019, the Arab strategy on Access to Public Health Services in Asylum and Displacement Contexts in the Arab region which has recently been adopted, and the Arab strategy on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Asylum and Displacement Context especially Sexual Violence against Women, which is currently in preparation. In 2018, Member States adopted the Arab Declaration on Belonging and Legal Identity aimed at achieving equal nationality rights for women and men to end statelessness.





Ahmed Hatem, Youssra & Karim Atassi, UNHCR Egypt Representative



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Injy El Mokaddem & Mohamed Mamdouh



Kinda Alloush



Sarah Essam



Lebleba



Bushra



Thuraya Ismail, Amr Salama, Qays Sheikh Najib



# ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING

Advocacy is a vital part of UNHCR's work. It covers a set of coordinated activities that seek to ensure the protection of persons who are of concern to UNHCR by promoting changes that bring policy, practice or law in line with international standards.

In this regard, UNHCR employs various advocacy tools including awareness campaigns, reaching out to local and international media outlets, content production and public and private events. We also forge partnerships with several high-profile personalities including movie stars, TV hosts and athletes who are well-known to the public and are committed to supporting the refugee cause at every turn.

These efforts contribute to a wider protection objective of sensitizing audience about the refugee cause and promoting greater acceptance of persons of concern by host communities and to combat discrimination and xenophobia.

# Beyond the Raging Sea

A FILM BY MARCO ORSINI

**Beyond the Raging Sea** follows the harrowing ordeal of two Egyptian athletes, Omar Samra and Omar Nour, during their participation in the Atlantic Challenge. Eight days into the race, the pair were caught off guard by a treacherous sea that capsized their boat, unleashing a fight for survival as the star athletes battled the relentless waves. What started out as a UNHCR and UNDP- sponsored quest to raise awareness about refugees and expose the dangers they face when crossing the open sea towards safety, escalated to a horrifying and completely unexpected re-enactment of those very same perils facing sea-borne refugees. The documentary debuted at the third edition of El Gouna Film Festival.

OMAR  
SAMRA



OMAR  
NOUR







PHOTO 1. UNHCR Goodwill Ambassadors Angelina Jolie and Adel Imam with Sudanese refugees in Kilo Arbaa We Nus, Egypt. 2003.

PHOTO: UNHCR/A. Alkorey

PHOTO 2. UNHCR Egypt Representative Karim Atassi and Adel Imam during World Refugee Day 2017.

PHOTO 3. Adel Imam with participating refugee children at the art exhibition. 2005. PHOTO: UNHCR/A.Ismail

# GOODWILL AMBASSADOR ADEL IMAM

Egyptian Actor Adel Imam is a megastar in the Arab World, who started his professional career as an actor in 1966. Since then, he has starred in over 100 movies, 10 plays and numerous TV series that are highly appreciated by the Arab public. Among his most famous movies are “Terrorism and the Kebab” and “the Terrorist”. His plays “Al Zaim” and “Madrasat Al Moshaghbeen” are considered classics, whose reruns are still aired on television years after they debuted. In general, his career is known to side with the poor and marginalised and denounce fanaticism and extremism.

In January 2000, Imam was appointed a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador (GWA) to raise awareness about refugees in Arabic-speaking countries. Following his appointment, he helped UNHCR increase public awareness and mobilize private sector resources to support refugees. He contributed immensely to the successful celebration of several UNHCR landmark events such as UNHCR’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Imam commenced his GWA duties by undertaking a field visit to Yemen and meeting with refugees and UNHCR field workers in Yemen in April, 2000. In the years that followed, he travelled to Jordan, Tunisia, Iraq, Oman, Syria, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates, where he seized all opportunities to raise awareness about refugees and to brief the media on UNHCR activities. In his own words, Imam expressed his solidarity with refugees, speaking to a wide public in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region.

More recently, Imam was a keynote speaker at the 2017 World Refugee Day Celebration held by UNHCR at the Zamalek Cinema in Egypt. Addressing the audience, Imam said, “we should not stand still and watch the tragedies escalate, we should all extend our hands to the refugees everywhere.”









# UNHCR PARTNERS 2020

UNHCR works closely with the Government of Egypt, United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs to provide protection and assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees. Part of our programmes are implemented through the following partner organizations:



**UNITED LAWYERS**



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