

This chapter provides a summary of the general environment in which UNHCR will operate in the Middle East and North Africa in 2016. It presents an overview of the organization's strategy for the region, the main challenges foreseen and the financial requirements for its operational response.

Details of the operations in the region and its subregions in 2016 are presented on the Global Focus website at <http://reporting.unhcr.org>.

| WORKING ENVIRONMENT |

- UNHCR continues to be challenged on an unprecedented scale in the Middle East and North Africa region. With no political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) in sight, Syrians have become the largest refugee population under UNHCR's mandate.
- Countries neighbouring Syria remain at the forefront of the crisis, with more than 4 million Syrian refugees being generously hosted by the Governments and people of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Inside Syria, a total of 12.2 million people remain in need of humanitarian assistance, including 7.6 million internally displaced people (IDPs).
- For the 4 million refugees in neighbouring countries, hope is dwindling as they sink deeper into poverty. Despite the assistance provided by host Governments and the international community, refugees and host communities are becoming increasingly vulnerable as the conflict persists.
- Continued pressure on host countries and difficulties in accessing safety have resulted in a rise in the number of Syrians seeking refuge beyond the Middle East and North Africa region. There has been a sharp increase in the number of refugees undertaking dangerous sea routes from Egypt, Libya and Turkey to Europe in 2015. Not all have made it to their destination, with many perishing at sea. Further details about the effects of these refugee movements are presented in the regional summary for Europe and UNHCR's supplementary and emergency appeals for the Special Mediterranean Initiative (June 2015 – December 2016).

MIDDLE NORTH



Syrian refugees fleeing renewed fighting cross the border into Turkey.

EAST AND AFRICA

UNHCR/A. OZTURK

- In Iraq, the security situation remains highly volatile, with ongoing hostilities leading to significant new internal displacement. Iraq now hosts 3.2 million IDPs. UNHCR continues to lead the protection, shelter/non-food items, and camp coordination and camp management clusters in Iraq, and has scaled up its response to the IDP crisis in 2015. The situation in Iraq continues to affect neighbouring countries, where more than 205,000 Iraqi refugees are registered.
- In North Africa, security in Libya remains unstable and fighting continues in many areas of the country. According to local authorities and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), there are some 435,000 IDPs in Libya. In 2015, UNHCR provided humanitarian assistance to nearly 60,000 people.
- The region continues to see large, complex mixed migration movements, including growing numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees from the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Horn of Africa, making their way towards the Gulf region, North Africa and the Mediterranean region.
- The increase in the numbers of people travelling in hazardous conditions by sea and losing their life on the journey is of great concern, as is the rise in incidents of detention and refoulement. North Africa is particularly affected by mixed movements, including departures by sea. From January to October 2015, more than 137,000 people arrived by sea in Italy, the majority reportedly having departed from Libya.
- The complex humanitarian situation in Yemen also deteriorated dramatically in 2015, aggravated by violent clashes throughout the country. Since the escalation of the conflict in March 2015, more than 2.3 million people have been internally displaced and nearly 100,000 more have fled the country. Around 25 million are in need of humanitarian assistance inside Yemen, and this number continues to rise.
- UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance in this challenging environment, where ongoing insecurity is hampering the delivery of basic services, such as food, medical supplies, shelter, water and fuel.

| STRATEGY |

UNHCR's response in 2016 to the needs of people of concern, in the many complex and critical situations across this region, will be articulated around the following protection and operational strategies.

○ *Maintaining protection space*

UNHCR's strategy in 2016 will focus on maintaining the protection space for all refugees in host countries in the Middle East and North Africa. In the case of Syrian refugees, to reduce the strain on hosting countries, the Office will continue to implement the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) and will aim to expand the engagement of development actors in supporting communities hosting them.

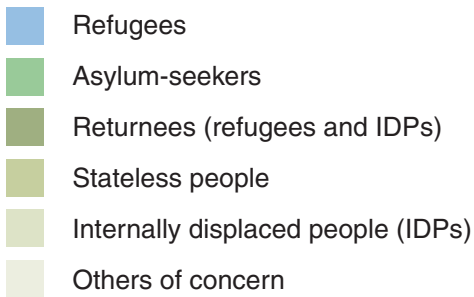
○ *Supporting the development of national asylum systems*

Several countries in North Africa, including Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia,

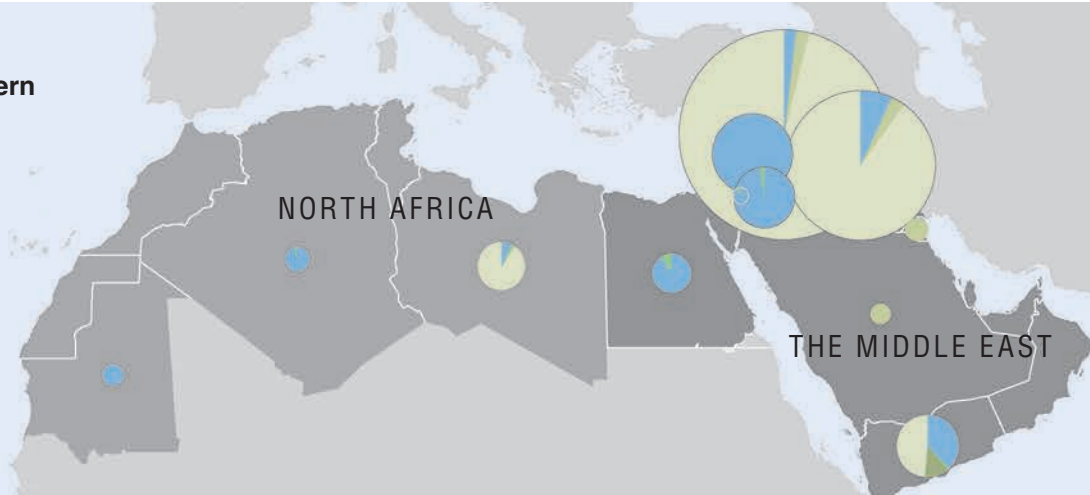
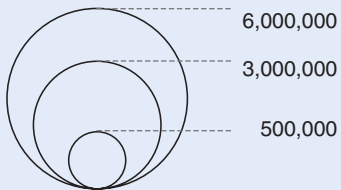
have expressed interest in engaging with UNHCR to establish national asylum laws and procedures. UNHCR will continue to support the Governments of these countries and provide technical advice on related legislative matters.

○ *Strengthening refugee protection in mixed migration movements*

In collaboration with all actors affected by mixed migration movements, UNHCR will encourage a comprehensive human rights-based approach to this phenomenon. UNHCR's Special Mediterranean Initiative has been designed to respond to refugee protection and mixed movements in North Africa. It is centred on four objectives: preventing refoulement; improving access to territory and to asylum; empowering refugees to make informed decisions; and enhancing protection space, including the quality of stay arrangements and access to protection.



Size of population of concern As of January 2015



○ *Providing safety from violence and exploitation*

UNHCR will continue to implement its strategies for the protection of children, and the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. The organization will strengthen national protection mechanisms, including by reinforcing two-way communication with communities and providing specialized assistance to refugees with specific needs.

○ *Pursuing durable solutions*

UNHCR will search for return solutions for refugees where appropriate. Resettlement will be pursued as both a solution and a vital protection tool for the most vulnerable refugees, who will be identified and assisted by the Office in collaboration with NGOs, civil society and host Governments, helping them to obtain access to basic social, education and health services. Support will also be afforded to the authorities in the region as they seek sustainable solutions for IDPs.

○ *Responding to new emergencies*

In view of the region's fast-evolving political and security situation, UNHCR will

regularly update its contingency plans to provide a swift and coordinated response to any new emergency.

○ *Building partnerships with local organizations and civil society*

UNHCR will seek new partnerships with emerging civil-society institutions in the region while advancing its existing relationships with local organizations. The Office will continue to strengthen its ties with regional bodies, including the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States.

○ *Working towards preventing and ending statelessness*

UNHCR will continue to implement its Global Action Plan to End Statelessness. The organization will focus on addressing new risks of statelessness arising in the region, related to unprecedented levels of forced displacement, family separation, and the loss or destruction of identity documents. UNHCR will also continue to work with governments to increase birth registration rates for refugees and IDPs, and provide advice on addressing gaps in nationality laws.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The situation in the Middle East and North Africa region has become increasingly unstable in recent years, with the conflict in Syria in its fifth year and new crises in Iraq and Yemen causing further large-scale displacement. This ongoing deteriorating political and humanitarian situation has led to a massive surge in humanitarian and protection needs.

The region's budget has increased six-fold in five years, from USD 347 million in 2010 to more than USD 2.1 billion in 2015. UNHCR has reduced its 2016 budget by USD 90 million, but still needs almost USD 2.05 billion to meet the most pressing needs of people of concern to UNHCR in the region.

Already, 70 per cent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in extreme poverty and 86 per cent of people of concern in Jordan residing outside camps live below the national poverty line. A funding shortfall would have devastating consequences for refugee families already struggling to live in safety and dignity. Efforts to facilitate access to education for 752,000 Syrian refugee children; provide cash assistance to 129,000 extremely or severely needy families; or provide basic shelter materials to help meet their basic needs, could be jeopardized.

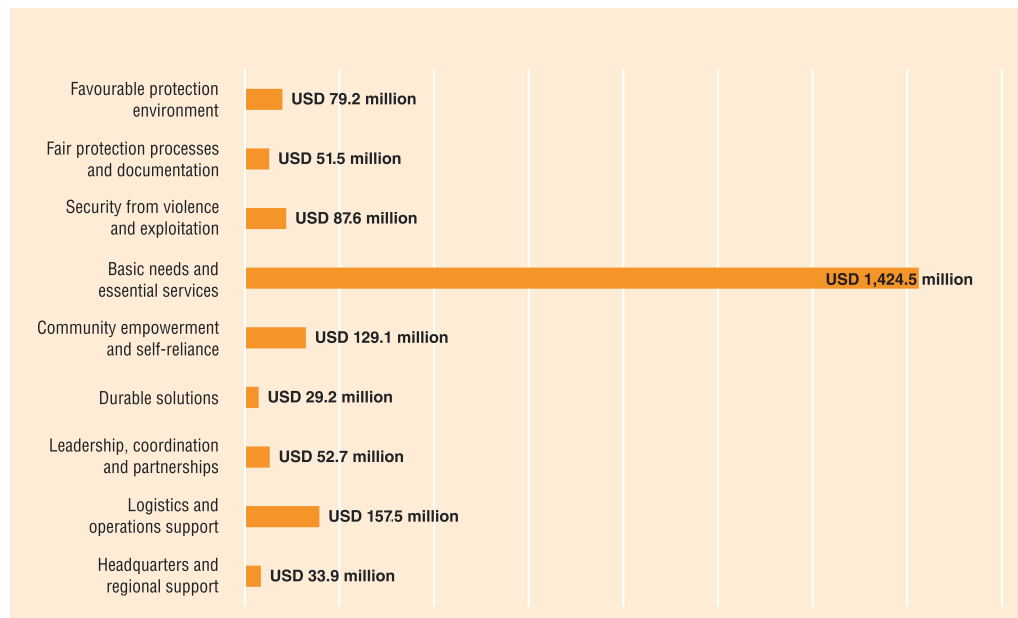
| CHALLENGES |

Conflicts in Iraq, Syria and Yemen have resulted in displacement in the Middle East and North Africa on an unparalleled scale. With no political solution in sight and ever-growing needs, UNHCR faces difficulties in reaching and assisting displaced populations, as well as in maintaining the high level of funding required to respond to the Syria situation. Security-related concerns are

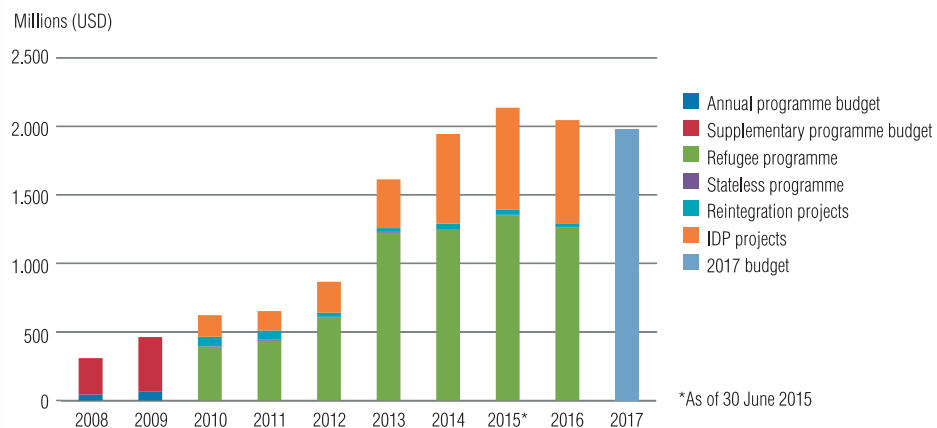
increasing, for both UNHCR staff and people of concern to the organization.

Increasingly restrictive State asylum policies, dominated by security concerns, will continue to be a challenges in 2016. In addition, managing the growing number of people travelling as part of mixed migration movements on risky and perilous journeys is of great concern. ■

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA 2016 BUDGET | by Rights Group



BUDGETS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | 2008-2017



BUDGETS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | USD

Operation	2015	2016				Total	2017
	Current budget (as of 30 June 2015)	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
MIDDLE EAST							
Iraq	556,064,922	125,577,737	804,241	26,707,855	402,946,185	556,036,017	484,413,960
Israel	3,207,939	3,079,904	0	0	0	3,079,904	3,111,667
Jordan	328,877,516	318,701,538	0	0	0	318,701,538	321,700,000
Lebanon	481,695,910	453,208,766	775,064	0	0	453,983,830	458,410,451
Saudi Arabia Regional Office ¹	4,897,895	4,123,204	224,597	0	0	4,347,801	4,151,257
Syria Regional Refugee Coordination Office	27,696,693	26,841,387	0	0	0	26,841,387	19,034,578
Syrian Arab Republic	366,774,117	52,750,132	194,642	0	329,417,463	382,362,237	382,999,970
United Arab Emirates	3,081,041	2,813,438	87,620	0	0	2,901,057	2,901,057
Yemen	105,483,614	44,380,642	0	0	14,930,005	59,310,646	59,310,646
Regional activities	75,082,732	64,904,559	0	0	0	64,904,559	62,318,904
Subtotal	1,952,862,380	1,096,381,306	2,086,164	26,707,855	747,293,652	1,872,468,976	1,798,352,490
NORTH AFRICA							
Algeria	33,227,036	28,964,766	0	0	0	28,964,766	28,820,733
Egypt Regional Office	85,170,372	82,187,895	0	0	0	82,187,895	77,712,159
Libya	20,056,616	16,720,376	0	0	5,044,663	21,765,039	27,511,492
Mauritania	24,368,374	19,111,739	0	0	0	19,111,739	19,090,564
Morocco	4,166,919	5,680,726	0	0	0	5,680,726	5,093,141
Tunisia	6,544,560	5,750,784	0	0	0	5,750,784	5,440,000
Western Sahara (Confidence Building Measures)	7,213,152	7,519,239	0	0	0	7,519,239	7,489,781
Regional activities	2,246,029	1,701,095	0	0	0	1,701,095	11,181,095
Subtotal	182,993,059	167,636,620	0	0	5,044,663	172,681,283	182,338,965
Total	2,135,855,438	1,264,017,926	2,086,164	26,707,855	752,338,315	2,045,150,260	1,980,691,455

¹ Includes activities in Kuwait