

Sahrawi mechanics participate in
self-reliance activities in Rabouni, Algeria.

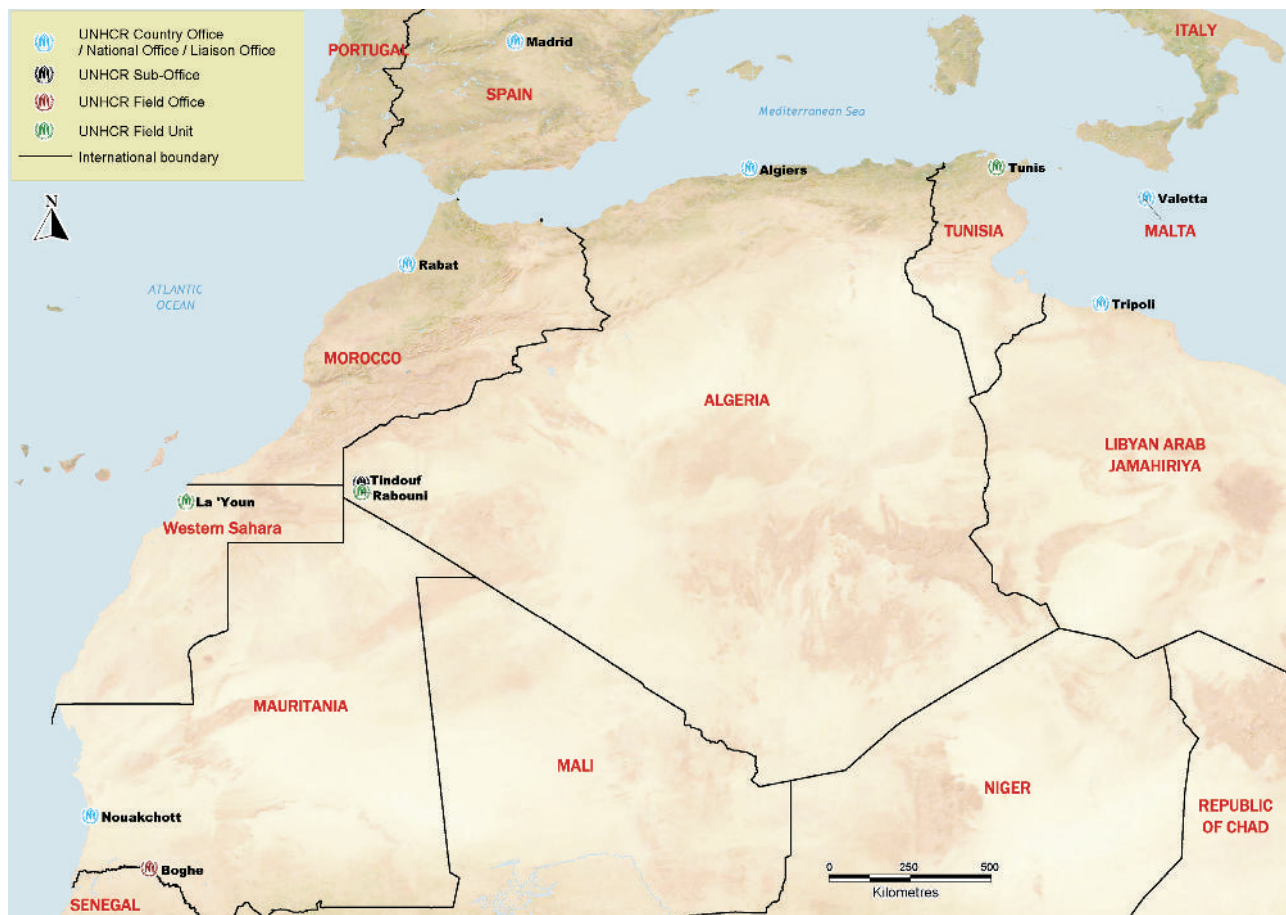
Algeria
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Mauritania
Morocco
Tunisia
Western Sahara

North Africa



| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- Despite progress in establishing refugee status determination (RSD) systems and increasing cooperation with national authorities, the dialogue on asylum and refugee protection in North Africa remained constrained.
- Most countries in the region lack asylum legislation and procedures, leaving it to UNHCR to conduct RSD under its mandate. The vulnerable legal status of asylum-seekers and refugees is reflected in a lack of opportunities for livelihoods and the absence of durable solutions, notably in relation to the right to work or a residence permit. Occasionally, sub-Saharan Africans face xenophobic attitudes and find it difficult to enjoy their basic rights.
- To address the challenges of detentions, deportations and *refoulement* of people of concern, UNHCR has established networks of lawyers and informal contacts in police stations where persons of concern are held. It has also helped build the capacity of NGOs, judges and civil society groups to address protection concerns.
- In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Government's harsh response to irregular entry was compounded by an increasing tendency to bar the re-entry of those who had left the country irregularly, but whose vessels had been intercepted at sea. It is estimated that more than 1,000 persons were "pushed back" to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by Italian authorities.
- While some progress has been made in gaining access to detention centres, the absence of a formal agreement between the Libyan Government and UNHCR makes it difficult for the Office to engage with the authorities on protection issues.
- In Morocco, UNHCR has forged important partnerships and helped build the capacity of judges and lawyers to deal with asylum issues. In 2009, an important publication on the future legislative and institutional framework in asylum and refugee matters was issued by the *Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme*, which had organized a seminar on the topic with contributions from legal experts, UNHCR staff and Government officials.
- In the Tindouf camps in Algeria, the protracted operation for the Sahrawi refugees continued to invest essentially in the sectors of health, education, water and vocational training.



Working environment

Each of the five countries in the North African subregion has ratified either regional or international refugee instruments.

However, with the exception of Mauritania, no country in the Arab Maghreb Union has yet developed national refugee legislation or asylum procedures consistent with international standards. Accordingly, strengthening the capacity of the relevant State institutions and ensuring protection for asylum-seekers arriving in mixed migration movements are major components of UNHCR's strategy in North Africa.

Achievements and impact

In 2009, UNHCR worked to protect and assist large numbers of refugees and others of concern throughout the subregion. Today, UNHCR's activities for urban refugees in North Africa are built on the basis of results achieved during the last few years. Having reinforced protection staffing in the region, the previous backlog of RSD cases has been cleared, and all offices have credible RSD procedures in place.

In Morocco and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, partnerships with some national NGOs have been instrumental in expanding the protection space. Expanded training programmes in asylum procedures and international refugee law for national and local authorities helped build local capacity in these areas.

Constraints

The large mixed migration movements in North Africa strained the capacities of national migration management structures, challenging UNHCR's ability to protect and assist refugees and other people of concern. A lack of national or regional strategies to tackle mixed migration, weak or non-existent asylum structures and legal frameworks, and security concerns hampered the emergence of responsive asylum regimes.

In the absence of a political solution to the problem of the Western Sahara, the prospect of finding durable solutions for the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps remained remote. Cooperation with the national authorities has been established in all countries, but in 2009 asylum and refugee protection issues remained of low priority for most governments in the subregion.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Algeria** and **Mauritania** are covered under separate chapters.

The **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya** has ratified a number of international human rights instruments and is party to the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. It has not acceded to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol. Given the fact that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya does not have an asylum system to deal with refugees and other asylum-seeking populations, UNHCR conducts RSD for all asylum-seekers and assists the most vulnerable among them.

With UNHCR's presence limited to Tripoli, asylum-seekers who were caught in mixed migration flows and detained in other cities were often not able to contact UNHCR. As of October 2009, UNHCR was aware of 15 centres where migrants are held. Through its partnership with the International Organization for Peace, Care and Relief (IOPCR), a Libyan local organization, UNHCR was able to access those centres.

In **Morocco**, at the end of the year, 780 refugees and 270 asylum-seekers, originating mainly from Côte d'Ivoire, DRC and Iraq, were registered with the Office. UNHCR has asked the Government to regularize the status of refugees who have been accepted under UNHCR's mandate.

As part of its efforts to increase the asylum space for undocumented people in need of protection in the border areas, UNHCR and its partner organized seminars and roundtables on refugee protection and international migration in the town of Oujda. These were attended by lawyers, academics, representatives of the judiciary and law enforcement bodies. One of the significant outcomes of this capacity building has been a sharp decrease in the *refoulement* of refugees and asylum-seekers as well as an end to prosecution in court for irregular entry or stay on Moroccan territory.

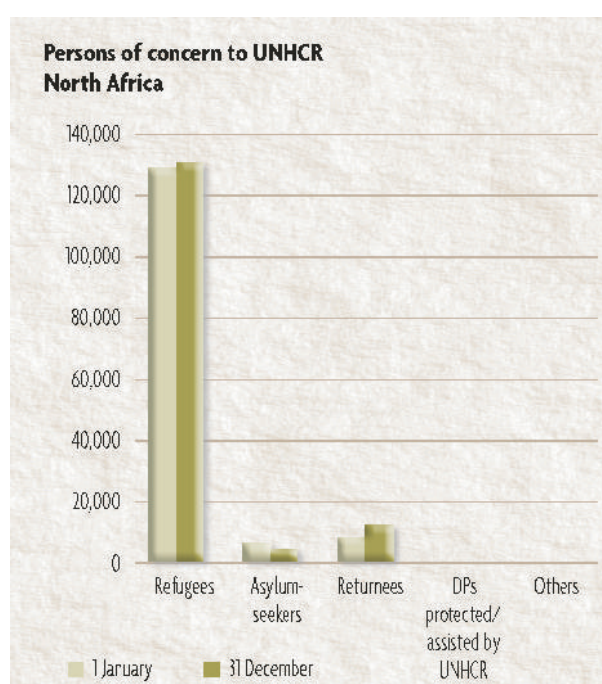
At the end of 2009, the population of concern to UNHCR in **Tunisia** totalled some 128 people, including 92 refugees and 36 asylum-seekers. The size of the refugee population in the country has remained static. No voluntary repatriation took place, but two families of nine people were resettled, and seven asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees. The number of asylum-seekers decreased by 30 per cent, as only 54 new asylum-seekers approached UNHCR in 2009.

UNHCR organized several regional and national capacity-building and awareness-raising activities that reached out to a broad range of stakeholders. Within the context of the implementation of the 10-Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration, UNHCR organized its second expert seminar in July 2009, bringing together participants from around the world and including the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen.

More than 9,600 people have benefited from the family visits programme for Sahrawi refugees since the start of the programme. In addition, over 123,000 telephone calls had been made by refugees in the Tindouf camps. During a visit by the High Commissioner to Algeria and Morocco, all concerned agreed to expand the confidence-building measures (CBM) programme to allow for a doubling of the number of persons who can benefit from the programme, to 4,000 per year.

Financial information

Annual budgets for countries in North Africa were generally higher than in 2008. All countries in the subregion had spending under supplementary programmes, such as the improvement of refugee protection within broader migration movements, confidence-building measures in Western Sahara and the repatriation of Mauritanian refugees from Senegal and Mali.



Budget and expenditure in North Africa (USD)

Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Algeria	10,637,933	292,878	10,930,811	9,885,942	211,154	10,097,096
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	4,327,320	32,780	4,360,100	4,029,222	28,151	4,057,372
Mauritania	1,448,269	7,683,387	9,131,656	1,281,206	6,900,484	8,181,690
Morocco	1,523,159	381,871	1,905,030	1,263,330	313,975	1,577,305
Tunisia	469,984	412,277	882,261	395,693	252,478	648,171
Western Sahara	5,369	4,025,311	4,030,680	0	3,662,265	3,662,265
Regional activities ¹	0	1,041,660	1,041,660	0	776,995	776,995
Total	18,412,034	13,870,164	32,282,198	16,855,393	12,145,501	29,000,894

¹ Includes activities for refugee protection within broader migration movements in North Africa

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related"(NAM) reserve.

Voluntary contributions to North Africa (USD)				
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budgets	Total
North Africa subregion	Liechtenstein	95,602		95,602
	Sweden	520,156		520,156
	United States of America	1,100,000		1,100,000
North Africa subtotal		1,715,758		1,715,758
Algeria	Austria	239,100		239,100
	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	1,194,670		1,194,670
	European Commission	1,573,677		1,573,677
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO</i> (Germany)	71,942		71,942
	<i>España con ACNUR</i> (Spain)	80,000		80,000
	Spain	474,434		474,434
	United States of America	1,500,000		1,500,000
Algeria subtotal		5,133,823		5,133,823
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	European Commission	1,310,355		1,310,355
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya subtotal		1,310,355		1,310,355
Morocco	Spain	418,410		418,410
	Switzerland	199,572		199,572
	UN Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund	12,277		12,277
Morocco subtotal		630,259		630,259
Mauritania	European Commission	107,546	2,660,944	2,768,490
	France		183,071	183,071
	Japan		934,579	934,579
	Netherlands	10,900		10,900
	Spain		246,032	246,032
	United Kingdom	13,484		13,484
	United States of America		1,953,000	1,953,000
Mauritania subtotal		131,931	5,977,626	6,109,556
Western Sahara confidence-building measures	Croatia		6,510	6,510
	France		196,203	196,203
	Germany		259,415	259,415
	Italy		80,288	80,288
	Norway		490,765	490,765
	Spain		343,935	343,935
	United States of America		1,023,000	1,023,000
Western Sahara subtotal			2,400,115	2,400,115
Total		8,922,125	8,377,741	17,299,867

Note: Contributions listed above exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.