Algeria
1 September – 31 December 2017

3,320 tent kits were provided and distributed in all five camps for the refugees from Western Sahara. UNHCR also provided accommodation for approx. 100 vulnerable urban refugees. Business skills training and development support was offered for over 600 young Sahrawi youth (men and women) for 58 new youth businesses in 2017. UNHCR carried out a two-day training on media coverage and terminology of human rights and migration issues and international protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.

KEY INDICATORS

6,627
Persons of concern in urban areas registered with UNHCR, of whom 5,829 are Syrian nationals.

39 per cent anaemia rate for children;
44 per cent anaemia rate for women

33,169
School-aged children in Tindouf camps are enrolled in primary education.

FUNDING

USD 36.5 M requested for Algeria

Funded 22%
8.1 M

Unfunded 78%
28.4 M

POPULATION OF CONCERN

96,627

Most vulnerable refugees in Sahrawi camps

6,627 total registered in Algiers (from Syria, Yemen, State of Palestine, DRC, Ivory Coast, Mali & other locations)
Update on Achievements

Operational Context
UNHCR’s activities in Algeria focus on providing protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers:

- In Algiers, a challenging urban context of mixed-migration (both migrants and refugees), UNHCR registers, conducts status determination and assists individuals who seek international protection. In total, 6,627 persons are registered with UNHCR in urban areas, the large majority of whom originate from Syria (5,829 at the end of the reporting period). Those recognized as refugees by UNHCR are mostly from Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast and Mali. UNHCR provides asylum-seekers and refugees with documents for identification and protection purposes. In terms of longer-term solutions, and in the absence of voluntary repatriation and local integration, UNHCR pursues resettlement opportunities to third countries (see ‘Durable Solutions’ section below).

- In Tindouf, UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance to the 90,000 most vulnerable Sahrawi refugees, who have been living in a protracted displacement situation in five camps near Tindouf for more than 42 years. The reduction of monthly food rations has been of particular concern over the last two years, given its impact on the nutritional health of Sahrawi refugees. UNHCR’s multi-sectoral activities focus primarily on community-based protection, education, health and nutrition, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), shelter and livelihoods. In 2017, while continuing to provide essential humanitarian assistance, UNHCR, in coordination with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Sahrawi refugee community, is strengthening livelihoods initiatives, with a focus on youth.

Achievements

PROTECTION

Algiers
- From September to December, UNHCR registered 1,327 individuals, the majority of whom are from Syria. During the same period, UNHCR recognized 33 individuals as refugees.
- After a return operation and a roundup operation by Algerian authorities targeting sub-Saharan migrants in many communities of Algiers, in September and October, respectively, UNHCR made interventions seeking their release. For the former, two refugees and one asylum-seeker released; and for the latter, all Persons of Concern to UNHCR were released.
- In October a three-day training workshop for the benefit of the Police and the National Security Department (DGSN) for 40 senior officers from different regions, including border guards, took place. At this occasion, UNHCR’s mandate, UNHCR Algiers Office’s activities, main principles on refugee protection and the New York Declaration were presented.
- In November, a participatory assessment for Syrian individuals registered with UNHCR Algiers took place. 58 Syrians asylum-seekers participated, divided in nine groups. The exercise permitted the gathering of important information with regard to protection risks faced by this population and the findings will help UNHCR tailor its activities.
- In December, under its protection mandate, UNHCR carried out a two-day training for 24 journalists from different regions, held in Algiers, on media coverage and terminology of human rights and migration issues and international protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.
Journalist Training, Algiers: UNHCR sensitized 24 journalists within his capacity building activities in international refugee law, its practical application and the importance of the terminology. © UNHCR / R. Fraser

Tindouf

- In October, UNHCR conducted three sessions on community-based protection for the benefit of members of civil society organization Centre d’Orientation Social et Juridique (COSJ), in Boujdour, Dakhla and Smara camps, respectively, with the purpose of involving refugees in the protection of their own community.
- In October and November, with the support of UNHCR, a group of youth refugees conducted the second annual sensitization campaign on the dangers of illicit drug use and trafficking. The campaign was carried out in all camps, including schools and vocational centers.
- For the 16 Days of Activism against SGBV, in November and December, UNHCR conducted advocacy sessions on different types of violence, risk factors related to SGBV and SGBV prevention and response. UN agencies, partners, and specialists from the refugee community were involved, including COSJ.
- In December, a Senior Adviser on Protection and Women’s Empowerment from Geneva came on mission to conduct consultations and facilitate training with Sahrawi experts and the general population with a view to mobilizing further engagement with protection and empowerment activities for women and children.

Advocacy session during 16 Days of Activism against SGBV Campaign. © UNHCR / N. El-Houda Boumaiza
Algeria

From September to December, UNHCR and its partner Réseau algérien pour la défense des droits de l'enfant (NADA), registered 30 refugees children and supported the registration of 112 Syrian asylum-seekers, and 12 sub-Saharan asylum-seekers. For the first time, five children were enrolled in kindergarten. [article]

For the beginning of the school year, a sensitization campaign held by NADA took place for the benefit of the Syrian population in order to reduce the risk of children not attending school.

In November, within the 16 Days of Activism campaign, UNHCR partner Green Tea organised sensitization activities under the motto “UNHCR vows to work for the end of child marriage”.

In December, NADA organized a Christmas Eve party for the benefit of children refugees where they received gifts and treats.

Tindouf

In September and October, UNHCR partner Association des Femmes Algériennes pour le Développement (AFAD) carried out teachers' trainings in all five camps: two days per camp.

In December, UNHCR partner InfoCom Solidarité (InfoCom) distributed 6,300 school uniforms for students.
HEALTH

Algiers

- UNHCR partner Green Tea is providing counselling to refugees and asylum-seekers and accompanying them to ensure access to health services. Since its involvement with UNHCR in April 2017, a total of 117 cases have been referred to this organisation; from September to December 132 individuals received individual counselling on medical issues.
- In September and October, Green Tea visited 17 residences in order to sensitize the refugees to the Algerian medical public system. In total, 50 persons received pertinent information to this effect and Green Tea distributed pamphlets they had designed for this purpose.
- UNHCR has also partnered with a psychologist to provide individual counselling to refugees. 33 refugees and asylum-seekers have benefitted from this assistance so far in 2017.
- Green Tea organized seven events with the refugee community – from a “toy library” for refugee children under 5 years and a “tea-talk” for their parents, to workshops and football games – in order to encourage resilience and sensitizing on issues such as vaccination and sexual health.

Tindouf

- UNHCR organized a five-day training on mental health (mh-GAP training) for 50 Sahrawi health workers. The training was fully funded and supported by UNHCR HQ.
- UNHCR participated with the Department of Health (DoH), Medico International and Médicos del Mundo (MDM) in the update process of the essential medicines list for the camps.
- UNHCR funded a training session on nutrition staff at dispensaries level, with the activity carried out by Algeria Red Crescent and the DoH.
- UNHCR and partners celebrated the International day against HIV, with activities including a conference on HIV given by two Algerian experts, a voluntary HIV testing campaign for health staff, five sensitization sessions (one per camp), and a radio and TV talk show on HIV-related topics.
- UNHCR partner Triangle Génération Humanitaire (TGH) completed the construction of a new dispensary, and carried out an inauguration session in December, at which time the project was officially handed over to the refugee leadership responsible for health, with the presence of UNHCR.

WATER AND SANITATION

Tindouf

- UNHCR conducted a hydrogeological survey through data review and studying the specifications of the existing boreholes in the camps. For this aim, five Diver probes designed to measure water pressure and temperature in boreholes were installed.

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1 The seven events were: a “toy library” for children with simultaneous “Tea-talk” for their parents (aimed at creating a support group for refugees in which they could exchange experiences and thoughts in order to help them attain resilience), a three day “Training for Trainers on Sexual and Reproductive Health”, a workshop on personal and dental hygiene for children, a workshop on knitting (for pregnant persons of concern and mothers of young children), accompanied by a sensitization event regarding the vaccination calendar for new born and children, health of young children and pregnant women, and breast cancer, a football game aimed at sensitizing teenagers on sexual health, and a sensitizing activity day of fight against AIDS organized by a collective of local associations from the civil society as well as some UN agencies.
In September 2017, for Smara camp where the water coverage is especially low, UNHCR installed a transmission line between the osmosis station and the camp. The second phase – the installation of a pumping station – will be implemented in 2018.

UNHCR constructed and installed, through direct implementation, 150 reinforced concrete water storage tanks with a unit capacity of 1,500 liters.

UNHCR through partner Solidaridad Internacional – Andalucía (SI-A) installed a sand decanter at the entrance of the Osmosis station in Laayoune to reduce the presence of sand in water before its treatment.

In October, UNHCR procured and installed three new generators to improve the functioning of water facilities in the camps.

UNHCR, through partner TGH, distributed soap to camp populations (385,350 bars) and to health and education institutions (12,699 bars to cover three months). The soap is locally produced in two refugee camp workshops in the refugee camps. In addition, UNHCR provided bleach to dispensaries and hospitals.

UNHCR distributed hygiene kits² to 38,450 Sahrawi female refugees of reproductive age. The hygiene kits are procured, packed and distributed by TGH. This distribution generally takes place twice a year to cover a period of six months. The October distribution was the second and final distribution of 2017.

SHELTER AND NON FOOD ITEMS (NFIS)

Algiers

UNHCR provided accommodation along with mattresses, blankets and kitchenware to approximately 100 vulnerable refugees. These items are distributed monthly to all urban refugees.

Tindouf

3,320 tent kits were provided and distributed in all five camps. Each tent is composed of 70 m of canvas, 70 m of blended cloth, 2 bamboo poles, 12 iron pegs and 120m of cotton rope.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Tindouf: UNHCR provided 68 MT³ of dried yeast to the population. The dried yeast is mainly used by the refugees to make bread.

ACCESS TO ENERGY

Tindouf: UNHCR through its partner Algerian Red Crescent (ARC) refilled 28,092 gas cylinders for Sahrawi refugee families on a monthly basis. Additionally, 758 gas cylinders (empty) were distributed to 758 newly-wed couples

² Each kit is comprised of one bottle of shampoo, three boxes of sanitary pads and one pack of soap powder.

³ The monthly ration per family is 200 g.
LIVELIHOODS AND SELF RELIANCE

Algiers
In September, nine refugees were registered into a private institution providing vocational training in various fields. The refugees are therefore now enrolled in aesthetics, office studies, and computer maintenance.

Tindouf
- While the 37 youth entrepreneurship projects established in 2016 continue to receive regular monitoring visits, coaching and guidance from partners, in 2017, business skills training was offered for over 600 young Sahrawi men and women for 58 new youth businesses. They received business development support (23 in partnership with Oxfam Belgium, and 35 in partnership with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), in addition to guidance and mentoring. Please refer to Annex, p. 9 for an article on one of these projects, for agriculture.
- A new semester started in October for young men and women enrolled in diploma-based and basic vocational training programmes that are supported by UNHCR in partnership with InfoCom.
- UNHCR has started since late 2016 to provide a blended course on entrepreneurship in the Sahrawi camps in partnership with the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM). The second edition of the course started in September 2017 for a total of 30 young refugees and includes online and in-class sessions. A certificate is obtained upon course completion.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Algiers
- Eight individuals were submitted for resettlement during the reporting period and a total of 62 individuals (42 cases) from 13 different countries were submitted for resettlement to France, Finland, Sweden and the USA in 2017.
- During the reporting period 16 refugees departed for resettlement to Finland, France, Sweden and USA with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), bringing the total of departures to 50 for 2017.

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Preparing cookies at the Awserd camp patisserie, a livelihoods project of UNHCR with Oxfam.

UNHCR / R. Fraser

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4 Activities include: production of bread, couscous, sweets and pizzas, livestock rearing and milk production (camel, sheep), butcher shop, wedding tent and equipment rental, photography services, beauty salon, barber shop, waste upcycling, laundry services, shoe making, construction of cement water tanks, fashion tailoring and sewing, air conditioning service repair, phone repair, and car mechanic workshops.

5 Training is offered in several disciplines including ICT, administration, carpentry, masonry, welding and metal work, car mechanics, automotive electricity, construction electricity, audio-visual, sewing, knitting, Spanish and pastry making.
Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some US$ 8.1 M

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds
United States of America (266 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | Priv Donors Spain (41 M) | Norway (41 M) | Japan (25 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (20 M) | Australia (19 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Priv Donors USA (14 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors Italy (13 M) | Germany (12 M) | Priv Donors Japan (12 M) | Priv Donors Sweden (10 M) | Italy (10 M)

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Annex I

Carrot Farming in the Sahara
9 June Agricultural Project, near Rabouni, outside Tindouf, Algeria

From small family gardens to the construction of houses using plastic bottles filled with sand, there is no shortage of innovative practices in the refugee camps around Tindouf. One such project is that of Mohammed Salem Malaynain Zawi, age 32, who is working a piece of desert land that his father started cultivating more than 30 years ago.

“I started working in agriculture at the age of 7, helping my dad in the land. My dad had acquired his agricultural knowledge from his dad, before pursuing a degree in agricultural engineering in Syria. In the early 90s, he was provided land and access to water, and was requested to produce food to contribute to food security in the camps.” The land in question has a large reservoir, making cultivation possible. It is the only piece of land amongst the camps with such an ample reservoir.

In 2009, Mohammed’s father fell sick, before passing away in 2012. This led his eldest son to quit his university studies in business management and give back a scholarship in Northern Algeria. “Priority was to focus on the family and assume responsibility as the eldest son in a fatherless household. I saw a potential in the land and decided to continue the production of vegetables and fruits that was started by my father”.

Last year, Mohammed learned about the opportunity provided by UNHCR and UNHCR’s partner Oxfam Belgium, and he benefitted from grant support, business skills training and guidance in the frame of a livelihoods programme targeting the youth. The conditions included youth project sustainability and that the initiative contributes to the benefit of the community.

“I applied along with three friends and our project was selected among 12 others in the camps; other successful projects included a mill, a pizzeria, and a chicken farm. Most of the projects selected were female-headed. Although this is a for-profit project, we have decided to give away 10% of the land production for people with specific needs and hospitals.”

Mohammed with a bumper crop. © UNHCR / R. Fraser
With UNHCR and Oxfam support, Mohammed and his partners received business skills training and acquired a drip irrigation system, a water pump, and a range of seeds and seedlings (grapes, pomegranate, onion, carrots and watermelon). However, several challenges have faced the team of farming entrepreneurs since the project’s launch.

“We had a major issue with water pump failures. Water is available in the land but requires a reliable pump. Variations in electrical voltage have resulted in the failure of two new water pumps.” As a result, pomegranate, onion and grape seedlings were all lost due to the lack of irrigation.

The production of vegetables in the camps is challenging, mainly due to limited water availability, sandy soil type, extreme temperatures and weak existing structures. These reasons partially explain the low local production of fresh fruits and vegetables, which make up less than 2% of the annual fresh food basket that is distributed to Sahrawi refugees. A massive high-scale investment in agriculture in the camps would be costly, complex and inadequate. However, the strengthening of local food production remains important, mostly through small-scale agro-ecological family farming, in close collaboration with local authorities. This would represent a good push for local empowerment and livelihoods promotion.

Even with these unexpected challenges, the team is committed to continue working in the project. The limited production of fruits and vegetables has been sold in the local market, the water pump has been replaced, land is under preparation and new seedlings will be acquired for the start of the new planting season.

“Despite a slow start, Mohammed and partners have all the essential elements for the success of their agribusiness,” concludes Juliette Murekeyisoni, UNHCR Senior Field Coordinator in Tindouf.

As a recommendation for future young entrepreneurs, Mohammed recommends taking risk management into account during project planning phase, and saving a portion of the grant for unexpected expenditures that may arise during project implementation.

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