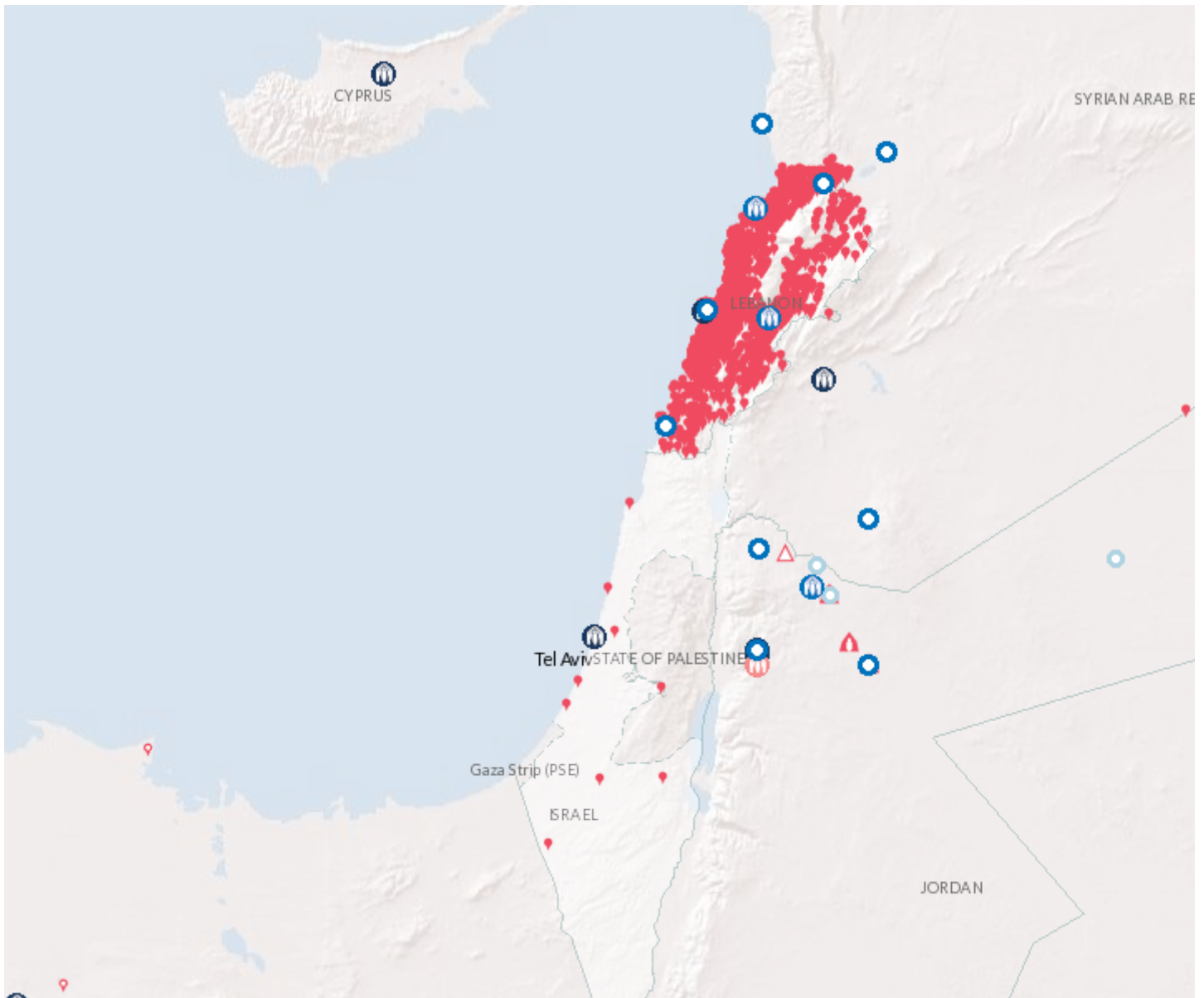


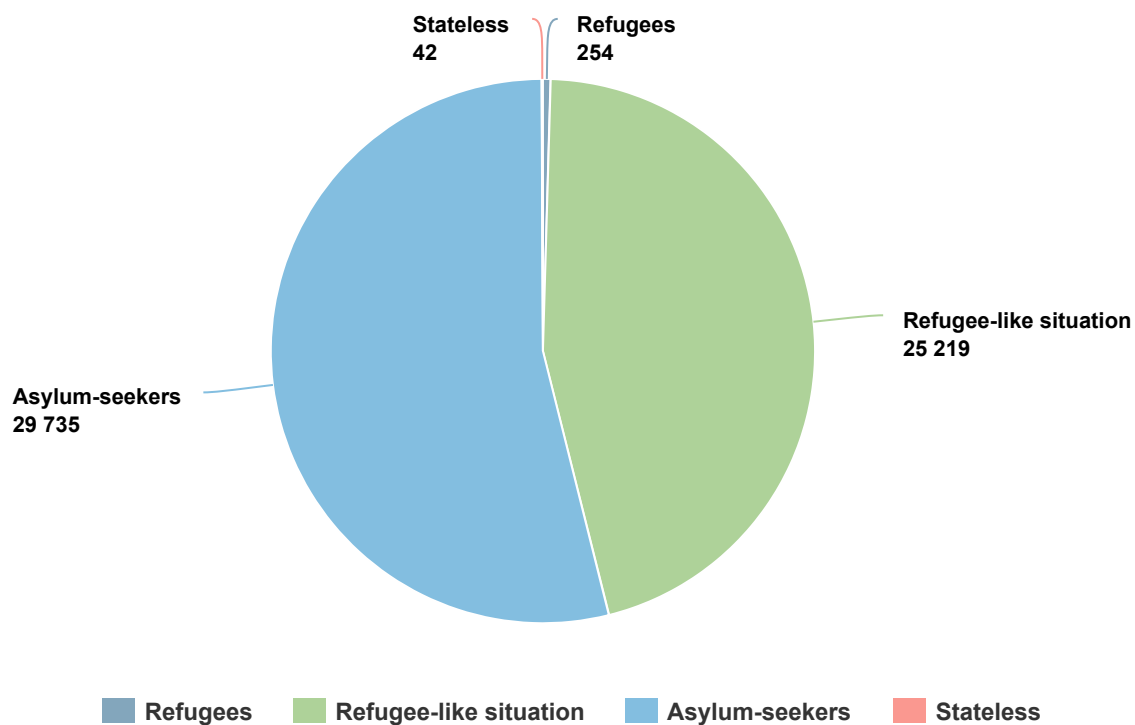
Operation: Israel



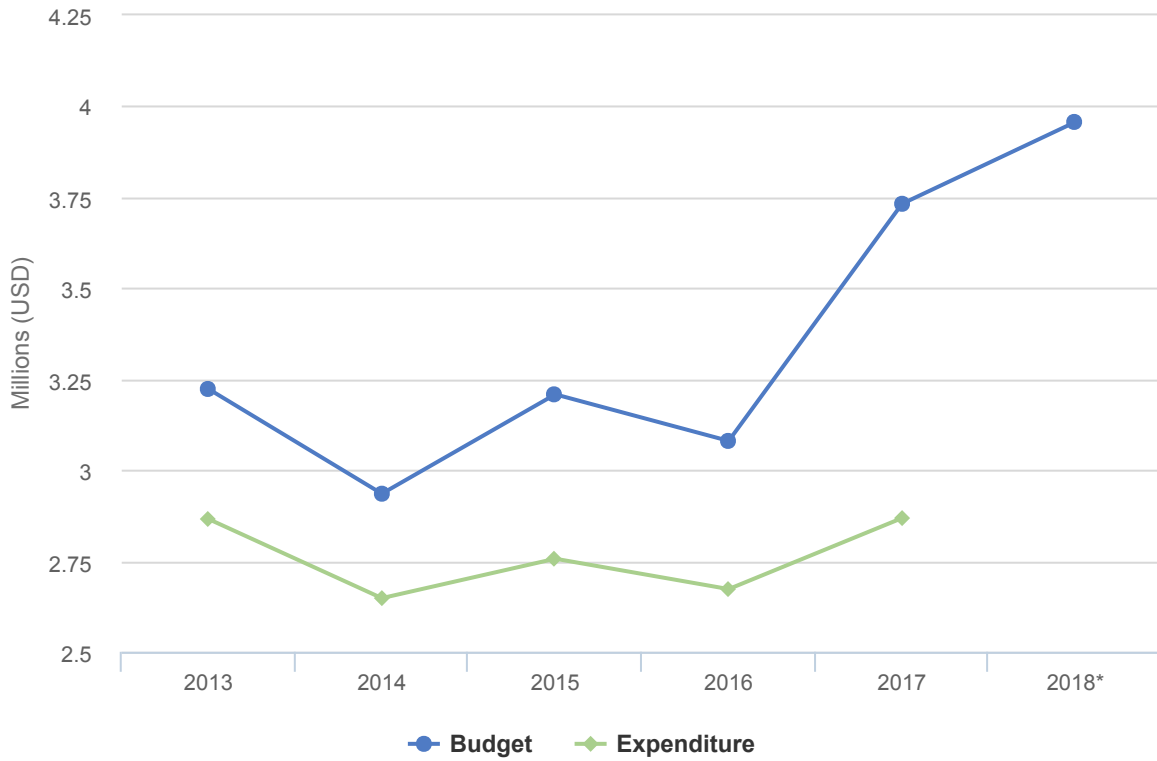
People of Concern

INCREASE IN
24% **2017**

2017	55,250
2016	44,665
2015	45,106



Budgets and Expenditure for Israel



Year-end Overview

Operational context

UNHCR seeks to enhance the protection space and increase the access of people of concern to services, while advocating for their rights and proposing solutions. The protection environment in Israel deteriorated in 2017. While some progress was made with respect to the granting of humanitarian visas to 500 Darfuris, UNHCR faced notable challenges in preserving the protection space for other people of concern and in pursuing durable solutions. The main restrictive measures impacting refugee and asylum-seekers' access to rights and protection in 2017 included:

- Detention for three months upon arrival followed by mandatory residence in a semi-open facility (Holot) for up to one year.
- Application of the "Deposit Law" whereby 20 percent of people of concerns' salaries were deposited into a fund, only available upon departure from Israel.
- Eritrean and Sudanese nationals in need of international protection have been encouraged with financial incentives to relocate from Israel to third countries in Africa.
- The relocation policy (to be implemented in 2018) was sanctioned, compelling people of concern to relocate to third African countries or face indefinite detention in Israel.

Population trends

- At the end of 2017, there were over 37,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in Israel, including over 26,500 Eritreans, 7,600 Sudanese, and more than 3,100 individuals, mainly from other African countries.
- Between 2016 and 2017, the overall refugee and asylum-seeker caseload decreased from some 40,000 to 37,000, mainly due to relocation to third countries, sponsorship programmes and resettlement.
- Since 2014, more than 21,100 nationals from Georgia and Ukraine have filed for asylum in Israel, making it more difficult for Eritreans and Sudanese to access asylum procedures

Key achievements

- Protection monitoring of the asylum-seeker population both inside and outside of detention facilities continued, identifying nearly 3,500 people, including 58 new survivors of trafficking and torture.
- As a result of interventions by legal partners, detention was avoided or interrupted for 186 asylum-seekers; HIV services were provided to over 5,000 asylum-seekers, including awareness raising, distribution of materials and referrals for medical assistance.
- Participatory assessments were conducted in 20 cities to identify asylum-seekers' priorities in order to further improve UNHCR's assistance programme.
- Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention trainings were carried out for 20 asylum-seekers.

Unmet needs

- Gaps in funding meant that legal assistance could not be extended to some 950 asylum-seekers, as legal appeals could not be systematically supported without funds for lawyers and translators. A negative decision on appeal leaves persons with a final rejection, meaning they are no longer considered asylum-seekers by the Government and may be subject to expulsion when conditions allow.
- Due to a lack of funding, UNHCR was unable to provide housing, financial, medical and/or psycho-social services for 411 identified SGBV survivors.
- With the recent evolution of the legal framework, it is estimated that there are 50 per cent more vulnerable asylum-seekers in need of financial and in-kind assistance. Due to limited funding in 2017, 51 asylum-seekers were left without solutions.

