

ALGERIA

March 2021

UNHCR provides protection, assistance and services to Sahrawi refugees in the five camps near Tindouf in south-western Algeria, with a focus on health and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH).

UNHCR provides protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in urban areas, including emergency cash assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR has adapted its activities while continuing to provide lifesaving assistance.

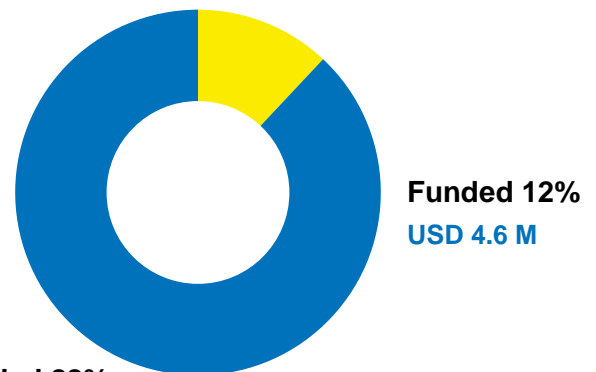


Construction of a water reservoir in Awserd camp.

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FUNDING

USD 40.7 M requested for Algeria Operation
 As of 16 March 2021:



Unfunded 88%
USD 35.9 M

COVID-19 response

Tindouf: With the camps emerging from lockdown on 7 May 2020, UN humanitarian agencies continue to provide life-saving activities and essential health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene, and food without disruption as well as to distribute water, soap, bleach, gas (re-filling), among others. At the beginning of the pandemic, UNHCR strengthened the remote monitoring system of daily activities in the five camps, and gradually resumed a regular presence in the camps from the beginning of September 2020 – while fully respecting COVID-19 prevention measures. In June 2020, UNHCR launched the Preparedness and Response Plan (PRP) for the five refugee camps, in coordination with the Sahrawi department of health. In line with it, UNHCR is strengthening pre-existing health services, and rehabilitating and equipping the central hospital of Rabouni to adapt it to the new pandemic context. In the WASH sector, UNHCR is working to improve personal and community hygiene conditions, as well as the quality of drinking water. UNHCR started the extension of the water distribution network in Awserd camp through the installation of new components (e.g. boreholes, pipes, water reservoir, etc.) of the water network, achieving 90% of the total works by the end of 2020.

Algiers: In the capital, lifesaving activities for urban refugees and asylum seekers have been maintained, including health assistance and cash-based assistance. While all reception and appointments have been suspended, UNHCR has started to resume renewal of asylum certificates and refugee cards through mobile teams, by appointment-only. The Office has reinforced communication with Persons of Concern through a Call Centre with three mobile lines (operating in French, English and Arabic), in addition to a 24-hour emergency hotline, a bulk SMS system and an online website (<https://help.unhcr.org/algeria/>).

 **Protection**

- Pending the establishment of a national asylum system in Algeria, **UNHCR undertakes a range of protection activities** through its offices in Algiers and Tindouf as well as capacity building for partners and the authorities.
- In **Tindouf**, UNHCR strengthens the protection coordination mechanisms and participatory approaches that encourage community-based engagement, self-management and empowerment, in particular for youth, women and civil society organizations and ensuring specific assistance for more than 3,000 persons with specific needs. UNHCR also promotes a favourable protection environment through the provision of capacity building opportunities for Sahrawi legal institutions, social workers, education staff and partners; as well as support for the Sahrawi Identification Centre, which issues identification cards. UNHCR and partner TGH conducts more than 40 physiotherapy sessions for families with vulnerable individuals (those with physical, mental and sensory disabilities including the elderly) in the camps. In these **homecare visits**, **social workers** provide appropriate support for their daily lives and to ensure their access to UNHCR services in the camps, while respecting COVID-19 prevention measures and providing **sensitization on the pandemic**.
- In **Algiers**, UNHCR conducts registration of asylum-seekers and refugee status determination, and issues documentation to asylum-seekers and refugees while **advocating for the adoption of legislation to protect persons in need of international protection**. UNHCR strengthens the protection space for refugees and asylum-seekers, monitoring and advocating for the release of refugees and asylum-seekers in detention and provides specialized assistance to refugees and asylum seekers with specific needs, including mental health and psycho-social support, housing, and cash assistance. Additionally, UNHCR raises awareness among populations of concern on the importance of **birth registration and receiving birth certificates** to prevent the risk of statelessness. To tackle the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic that have disproportionately affected refugees and asylum seekers, UNHCR provides cash-based assistance to the most vulnerable through adapted distribution modalities such as home delivery and mobile teams.

 **Education**

- In Algeria, all refugees and asylum seekers have free access to the public education system. In **Algiers**, UNHCR and its partner NADA support the **enrolment of nearly 500 refugee and asylum-seeking children in public schools every year**. UNHCR also provides transportation, school supplies, a daily meal and support classes for all essential subjects and organizes recreational activities. Moreover, UNHCR supports enrolment of children in kindergartens, with a particular focus on households headed by single parents.
In **Tindouf**, all school-aged children are enrolled in primary and lower intermediate schools in the camps. **Psycho-social and mental health support** are also provided for students including children with specific needs in specialized education centres. To ensure a safe learning environment UNHCR supports the sector through the provision of equipment, stationery, books as well as capacity-building and **financial incentives** for more than 1,000 education staff. To allow vulnerable refugees from the camps and urban areas to cover their daily needs and obtain a university degree, UNHCR provided DAFI scholarships for 265 Sahrawi and urban refugee students for the current school year.

 **Health and Nutrition**

- In **Tindouf**, UNHCR covers 70 percent of the medical costs and incentives for 40 Sahrawi refugee doctors in the five regional hospitals in the camps, funds the Sahrawi Midwife and Nursing School and offers capacity-building activities on the integrated management of childhood illnesses, psycho-social support, and non-communicable diseases. To ensure the provision of specialized health care, UNHCR supported the organization of five medical commissions from abroad, specialized in surgery, who performed more than 50 interventions. Additionally, UNHCR supported the Sahrawi referral system by maintaining the ambulance fleet, that received four new ambulances in 2020 and establishing a recovery house in Algiers. UNHCR supports the Sahrawi Health Information System and conducts, jointly with WFP, a **nutrition survey** in each camp every two years.
- Furthermore, with WFP and the Algerian Red Crescent, UNHCR supports the supplementary **feeding program for malnourished children and pregnant or lactating women** and conducts **awareness and prevention campaigns** about anaemia, chronic malnutrition and mental health. UNHCR also regularly provides medical supplies to all stakeholders, including the Sahrawi health system. UNHCR has also collaborated with the Algerian Red Crescent and relevant stakeholders to support Sahrawi families suffering from malnutrition. A total of 263 severely affected households have been provided with lactating goats, feed and veterinary services for the goats, to improve the nutrition of the 263 families.

- In **Algiers**, refugees and asylum-seekers have access to basic healthcare. UNHCR and partners provide information and facilitate access to national health facilities. Where necessary and possible, UNHCR supports medical treatment not covered by the national scheme e.g. specific medications and laboratory tests. UNHCR and partner Humanity and Inclusion (HI) provide individual psychological support, as well as assistance to persons of concern with disabilities.



Food Security

- In **Tindouf**, UNHCR regularly complements the monthly food distributions provided by WFP with yeast for baking bread and fresh food items. In 2020, UNHCR distributed more than 603 metric tons of fresh food (onions, potatoes, carrots) during the month of Ramadan. In the camps, UNHCR and WFP monitor refugees' access to food through **monthly food basket monitoring** at distribution points, and post-distribution monitoring at household level.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- In a context of scarce water resources and extreme weather conditions, accessing water services in the camps near **Tindouf** is a challenge that can have a direct impact on health, education and daily life. UNHCR provides **about 700,000 m³ of water per year to the Sahrawi refugees** living in the camps through the operation and maintenance of existing water facilities, the installation of new facilities, and by monitoring the quality of the water. UNHCR also continues to renew the fleet of trucks for distribution of 70% of the water, as well as reservoirs used by families to store household water. In 2020, UNHCR provided eight water trucks and developed through Oxfam a WASH strategy and multi-year plan for improving the water supply, which offers further guidance for this sector.
- UNHCR supports the **waste management system** in the camps through the procurement of garbage collection trucks (four in 2020), provision of necessary equipment, and payment of incentives to 82 workers. In addition, UNHCR is beginning the roll out of a plastic recycling project to reduce the quantity of solid waste.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR is supporting the Sahrawi refugee community in its **disinfection campaigns** to clean and sterilize areas of the camps through provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning equipment and solutions (water and bleach). UNHCR and partners regularly produce **soap bars and bleach** for the chlorination of water that are distributed to all refugees, including women of reproductive age and to 123 health and education facilities. Furthermore, every two months UNHCR provides hygiene kits to 48,400 women and girls of reproductive age. During the last quarter of 2020, UNHCR provided 145,200 kits.



Shelter and NFIs

- To cover the increasing needs of shelter in the **Sahrawi refugee camps**, UNHCR annually provides **shelter materials** to the most vulnerable refugee families. In 2020, total of 2,010 family tent kits were provided and over 3,700 new and efficient **cooking stoves** were distributed. Furthermore, UNHCR provided more than 263,000 **second-hand clothes** donated by UNIQLO, for the entire population.
- In **Algiers**, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and allow refugees and asylum-seekers to cover basic needs (housing, food, hygiene, etc.), UNHCR expanded its quarterly **multi-purpose cash-based assistance** programme. From March 2020 to January 2021, over 1,170 refugees and asylum-seekers benefited from MPCA through adapted distribution modalities such as home delivery by mobile teams.



Access to Energy

To address energetic poverty in **Tindouf**, UNHCR provides clean energy to 28,000 Sahrawi families in the form of one gas cylinder per household and month for 10 months a year, allowing to avoid the use of fossil fuel to cook and covering 60% of the population needs. Additionally, in 2020, UNHCR provided 737 new gas cylinders to facilitate families' access to the monthly gas distribution (refilling).



Logistics

- To ensure the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in **Tindouf**, UNHCR maintains a large fleet of trucks and organizes the delivery of assistance from Oran harbour to Tindouf. Four new waste management trucks and a truck for gas distribution have been introduced in 2020.



Self-reliance

- UNHCR's **livelihoods strategy** in **Tindouf** focuses on developing skills and facilitating access to financial and productive assets for small enterprise development and employment, in addition to reinforcing the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the camps. UNHCR supports **production workshops** in the camps including a soap factory, sewing workshops, five vocational training centres, and a business innovation centre.
- In partnership with the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM) a multi-year strategy has been developed and is under implementation to revamp vocational training in the camps. **Vocational training centres** provide 9-to-18-month courses on auto mechanics, electricity, carpentry, sewing, pastry production, administration, languages, digital media and computers. A total of 272 young refugees registered for diploma-based Vocational Training in 2020, and 100 women have registered for vocational training in the women centres.
- Since 2016, over 150 businesses have been supported by UNHCR and partners, directly benefiting some 600 refugee entrepreneurs. With support from UNHCR's **Community Connectivity Fund**, an Android app to facilitate trade within the camps was developed based on a refugees' original idea. The app has already more than 4,000 users, more than 1,000 items and services advertised, and more than 800 sales made through the App since its release in April 2020.
- In **Algiers**, asylum-seekers and refugees have free access to public vocational training centers since 2018. UNHCR and partners facilitate their enrolment supporting equal access of women and girls to enhance resilience and self-reliance.



Durable Solutions

- In 2020, UNHCR **Algiers** recommended 80 refugees for resettlement to third countries including Canada and France, but only four refugees could depart due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, departures resumed in 2021 and 17 persons of concern left for resettlement in January 2021. UNHCR also promotes complementary pathways for admission to third countries to help more refugees attain sustainable solutions and in 2020 facilitated the departure of five refugees for family reunification to France and Spain.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR is a member of the UN Country Team (UNCT) and works closely with the Algerian Government and with 13 partners in Algeria; three in **Algiers** and ten in **Tindouf**. UNHCR's partners are: Algerian Red Crescent (ARC), *Association des Femmes Algériennes pour le Développement* (AFAD), *Asociación de Trabajadores y Técnicos sin Fronteras* (ATTSF), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), *Humanité et Inclusion* (HI), *Enfants Réfugiés du Monde* (ERM), Green Tea Association, Movement for Peace, Disarmament & Liberty (MPDL), Oxfam, *Réseau algérien pour la défense des droits de l'enfant* (NADA), *Solidaridad Internacional Andalucía* (SI-A), *Triangle Génération Humanitaire* (TGH) and *Universidad Autonoma de Madrid* (UAM).
- In **Tindouf**, UNHCR leads **inter-agency efforts to support the Sahrawi refugee programme** in close coordination with WFP (food assistance and resilience) and UNICEF (health, education and child protection). UNHCR leads the Inter-Agency Working Group and Inter-Sector Working Group, the regular sector coordination meetings for the Protection, Livelihoods, WASH and Health sectors, in coordination with the Sahrawi refugee community, as well as participating in the Education and Food sector coordination meetings. UNHCR works closely with Sahrawi community representatives and civil society across the five refugee camps. UNHCR is coordinating the response to COVID-19 in the Sahrawi refugee camps with the Sahrawi and Tindouf departments in charge of health.

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