



# The Middle East and North Africa

A young internally displaced girl at a displacement site where her family are constructing a hut in Abs, Hajjah Governorate, Yemen.  
© UNHCR/Ibrahim Al-Ja'adi

“The Middle East and North Africa region remains at the epicentre of global displacement challenges, as conflicts continue unabated and prospects for comprehensive political solutions remain limited. UNHCR, with the support of the international community and donors, must continue to maintain a strategic vision to ensure the sustainability of protection and assistance interventions to meet the most urgent needs across the region, while seeking out durable solutions where possible.”

**Amin Awad**

Director, Regional Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa

## KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Strengthening emergency humanitarian response

With a current estimate of 11.7 million IDPs in Iraq, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) and Yemen, and more than 2.7 million refugees across the region, emergency humanitarian assistance is a vital lifeline. Despite insecurity and constrained access, UNHCR will strengthen its presence and emergency response capacity to provide lifesaving multi-sectoral assistance. This assistance includes protection, shelter, basic relief items, multi-purpose cash and health assistance in all locations where IDPs are residing, both in sites and settlements. In line with its new IDP Policy, UNHCR will demonstrate its leadership across the Global Protection, Shelter and the CCCM Clusters in a joined-up and strategic approach.

UNHCR will provide at least 164,000 IDP families in Yemen with cash assistance to meet protection, shelter and other basic needs. Given the large-scale humanitarian needs, support for the Iraq and the Syria situation will continue not

only for emergency response but for needs associated with the transition to supporting solutions and longer-term development plans, especially in Iraq. Other key emergency interventions will take place in Libya and neighbouring North African countries, where UNHCR and partners will undertake protection monitoring and provide humanitarian and medical assistance at all accessible disembarkation points.

### Maintaining protection space and supporting access to national asylum systems

In 2020-2021, UNHCR protection efforts will include advocating, and supporting, access to territory, protection from refoulement, registration, strengthening of the protection space, and available solutions. Across the region, timely access to fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures and support to national asylum systems will be key, with the overall objective of registering all people of concern on an individual basis. Through country of origin information, UNHCR will advise States on

The new Policy on “UNHCR’s Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement”



asylum policies and adjudication of claims for international refugee protection across all UNHCR's operations in the region.

Obtaining civil documentation is a core element of UNHCR's protection programming for refugees, returnees, IDPs and stateless persons across the entire region, as documents provided by UNHCR or governments will enable people of concern to access education, healthcare and employment, and will allow them to register for other important events in life, such as marriages and births. Furthermore, the promotion of gender equality in nationality laws will be prioritized for the prevention and reduction of people at risk of statelessness, particularly for 12 States in the region where women cannot confer nationality to their children or spouse on an equal basis with men. Across the region, measures will continue to be taken to address statelessness through assisting people of concern with confirmation of nationality as well as with legal assistance.

Education is key to building people's ability to better protect themselves, increase self-reliance and facilitating socioeconomic opportunities. Primary, secondary and tertiary education inclusive of people of concern will be encouraged for 95,000 children and young people. As part of wider livelihood programming to increase refugees' self-reliance, for

young people in particular, market-based vocational training opportunities will be pursued across the region. UNHCR will invest further in community-based approaches to strengthen protection, solutions and accountability to affected people. Community day centres will be a cornerstone of UNHCR's protection assistance in emergencies such as Libya and Yemen, but also within other operations such as Egypt, Mauritania and Tunisia, where community outreach in urban areas will enable UNHCR to monitor protection concerns, facilitate referrals and identify possible solutions.

### Ensuring protection from violence and exploitation

Children make up half of the displaced population in the region, and they face violations of their rights on a daily basis. Psychological and social distress and violence are inherently linked, and often result in over-reliance on negative coping strategies. The region's strategy for 2020-2021 frames mental health and psychological and social support as intrinsically linked to the protection response and, ultimately, to promoting the resilience of people of concern. UNHCR will support national systems for the prevention, mitigation and response to sexual and gender-based violence for

almost 40,000 people and will mainstream it across all interventions, so that more women, girls, men and boys of concern live in an environment where risks are reduced.

UNHCR will strengthen its zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse through awareness and capacity-building, communication with affected communities, and community-based complaint mechanisms. Efforts to prevent and protect people of concern from trafficking, particularly across North Africa and onward to Europe, will be addressed by strengthening identification mechanisms. In this regard, urgent protection interventions will be prioritized in addition to advocating that perpetrators are held accountable.

### Achieving comprehensive solutions

Projected resettlement needs will significantly outweigh the number of resettlement places available in 2020. Across the region, more than 249,700 people will be in need of resettlement in 2020. With vulnerability escalating, UNHCR will call for States to increase resettlement quotas and strengthen other legal pathways of admitting vulnerable refugees, such as through humanitarian visas, private sponsorship or complementary pathways.

UNHCR will actively explore opportunities to build on family reunification and tertiary education as one of the complementary pathways for admission of refugee youth. With respect to returns, UNHCR will encourage interventions that are sustainable, voluntary and which are done in safety and dignity. In Libya, UNHCR will continue evacuations to Niger and Rwanda as a lifesaving measure for the

most vulnerable. It will also prioritize a solutions-oriented approach for IDPs and host community members, such as in Yemen, where support will be provided to establish small businesses that produce locally-sourced materials for use in UNHCR shelter kits.

### Mobilizing support through strategic partnerships

Addressing regional refugee crises through an inclusive approach remains a priority for UNHCR's strategic partnerships across the region. This approach is reflected in the 270-partner Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for the Syria crisis—an integrated humanitarian and development plan to address the needs of refugees and host communities alike. Such an approach will also necessitate enhanced policy design and partnerships for a true "whole-of-society" response. UNHCR will strengthen its partnership with the World Bank towards more sustainable solutions to displacement across the region. In Mauritania, in particular, UNHCR will engage with the World Bank and the Government to advocate the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in the national health system.

Assisting IDPs in Iraq, UNHCR will work with the World Bank to advocate their inclusion in national social protection mechanisms. Mixed population movements across the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Aden will also require collaborative cross-regional approaches to prevent loss of life and strengthen solidarity and responsibility-sharing, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees.

The 3RP strategic overview in response to the Syria crisis 2019/2020



### Citizenship hopes become reality for Iraq's Bidoon minority

A UNHCR-funded legal initiative has secured nationality for hundreds of formerly stateless families in southern Iraq, giving them access to basic rights and services.

"I felt that I did not exist. When you don't have documents you are not counted."

—Mohammad, a former stateless person in Iraq.



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# MAJOR SITUATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA IN 2020



## SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

With an estimated 6.2 million IDPs and 5.6 million registered Syrian refugees in the region, of whom 41% are children and 21% are women, the Syria situation remains one of the largest humanitarian and displacement crises in the world. While large-scale conflict is expected to decline in most parts of Syria in 2020, it will likely persist in contested areas, resulting in continued humanitarian needs with significant protection risks. Access to people of concern and areas of return will remain challenging. IDPs and refugees will continue to return from the region, particularly to areas where relative stability has emerged.

UNHCR will focus on multi-sectoral assistance ranging from access to civil documentation to strengthening community-based protection. It will promote comprehensive solutions, provide emergency core relief items and shelter assistance, and support livelihood opportunities. In the five main countries hosting Syrian refugees, UNHCR will co-lead the Regional Refugee Response Plan along with UNDP, coordinating the work of more than 270 partners.

**5.6 million**  
REFUGEES & ASYLUM-SEEKERS<sup>1</sup>  
**6.2 million**  
INTERNALLY DISPLACED<sup>1</sup>  
**292,000**  
IDP RETURNÉES<sup>1</sup>  
**64,000**<sup>2</sup>  
REFUGÉE RETURNS



## IRAQ

Some 1.5 million Iraqis remain internally displaced and more than 4 million IDP returnees face protection risks, constrained access to basic services and insecurity while contending with lack of livelihoods and shelter, as well as the danger from explosive remnants of war. Secondary displacement or re-admittance to camps where return is not possible or sustainable, is likely to continue in 2020.

UNHCR's focus will remain on ensuring protection and gradual transition from humanitarian assistance to development programming through strengthening national protection systems, access to employment, inclusion in national systems, and identifying comprehensive solutions for people of concern. In neighbouring countries, there are more than 257,000 Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR, of whom 33% are children and 24% are women, with an additional 32,000 people living in camps without any form of registration in Al-Hassakeh Governorate in Syria.

**257,000**  
REFUGEES & ASYLUM-SEEKERS<sup>3</sup>  
**1.5 million**<sup>3</sup>  
INTERNALLY DISPLACED<sup>3</sup>  
**4.3 million**<sup>3</sup>  
IDP RETURNÉES



## YEMEN

The Yemen situation is still the world's worst humanitarian crisis with some 24.1 million people—80% of the population—in need of assistance. In 2020, the political and security situation is expected to deteriorate, with new frontlines likely to emerge.

Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law have caused intense suffering to civilian populations. The protection space is also shrinking for the 277,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, some of whom have faced arbitrary arrest, detention and deprivation of basic rights. Cholera will continue to be a threat, aggravated by harsh rain and flooding across multiple governorates.

UNHCR's focus will be on delivering emergency humanitarian aid to IDPs, IDP returnees and affected host communities, while continuing to improve the protection space for refugees and asylum-seekers.

**277,000**  
REFUGEES & ASYLUM-SEEKERS<sup>4</sup>  
**3.6 million**<sup>4</sup>  
INTERNALLY DISPLACED<sup>4</sup>  
**1.3 million**<sup>4</sup>  
IDP RETURNÉES



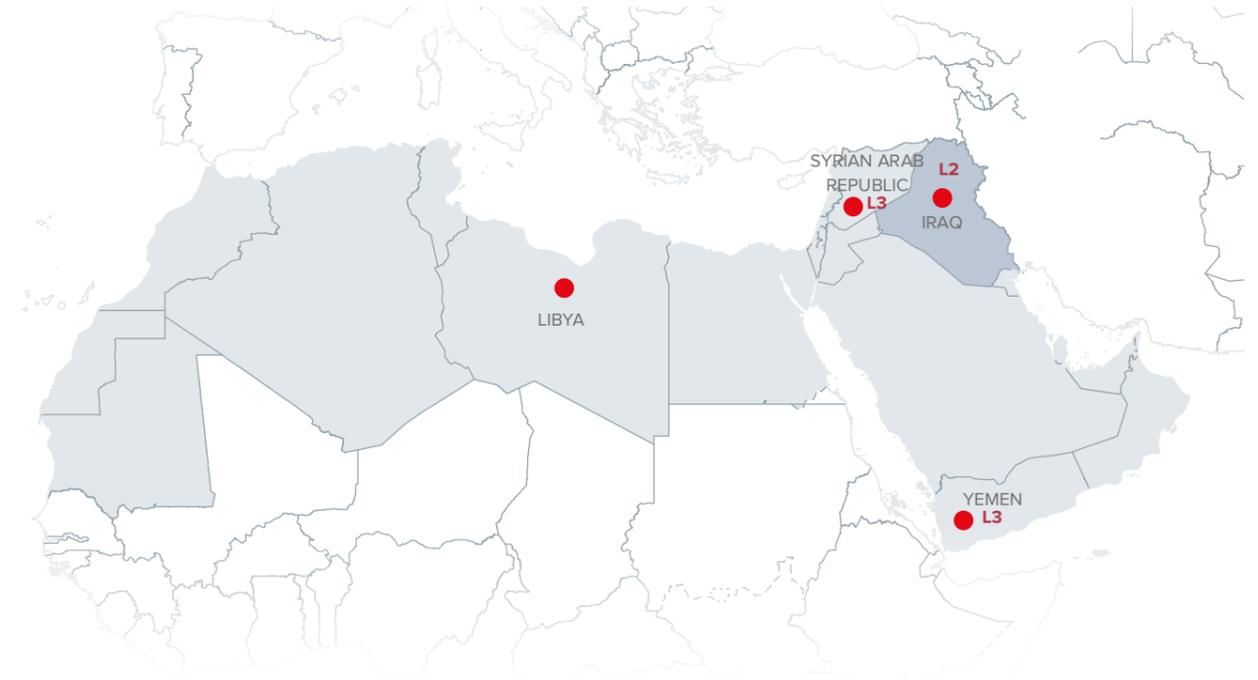
## LIBYA

While efforts are underway to end conflict and encourage peace, fighting in Tripoli is likely to trigger further internal displacement and people in need of protection will face difficulties in accessing assistance. The Libyan Coast Guard is expected to continue disembarking refugees and migrants attempting to use the Central Mediterranean route, with the risk that many of these people will find themselves in prolonged detention in dire conditions.

UNHCR will support IDPs, refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly in urban areas. It will deliver lifesaving assistance at disembarkation points and detention facilities, while strongly advocating for alternatives to detention. The implementation of durable solutions will be prioritized, including direct resettlement, voluntary repatriation and reunification, as well as humanitarian evacuations for vulnerable people of concern to the Emergency Transit Centres in Romania and Italy, and to the Emergency Transit Mechanisms in Niger and the newly-opened one in Rwanda.

**46,000**  
REFUGEES & ASYLUM-SEEKERS<sup>5</sup>  
**301,000**<sup>5</sup>  
INTERNALLY DISPLACED<sup>5</sup>  
**447,000**<sup>6</sup>  
IDP RETURNÉES<sup>6</sup>  
**2,600**<sup>7</sup>  
PEOPLE OF CONCERN  
IN DETENTION

*The Middle East and North Africa region continues to bear some of the most adverse and prolonged humanitarian crises globally, with complex drivers including ongoing hostility and a lack of political solutions. Emergency assistance will be at the forefront of the operational response in 2020-2021, in tandem with work that focuses on preserving protection space and creating conditions that allow people of concern to voluntarily return in safety and in dignity.*

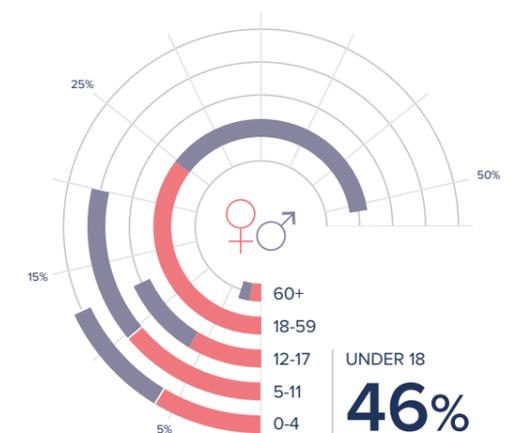


## AGE AND GENDER BREAKDOWN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS | January 2019

## 16 million

2020 PLANNING FIGURES FOR PEOPLE OF CONCERN  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

REFUGEES	<b>2.7 million</b>
ASYLUM-SEEKERS	317,000
RETURNEES (REFUGEES AND IDPs)	<b>2.3 million</b>
IDPs	<b>10.3 million</b>
STATELESS PERSONS	365,000
OTHERS OF CONCERN	3,300



<sup>1</sup> Source: OCHA (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Monitored by UNHCR in 2019 and does not reflect all returns.

<sup>3</sup> Source: IOM (2019), cumulative figures since January 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Source: IOM (2019), cumulative figures since March 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Source: IOM (2019), displaced since January 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Source: IOM (2019), returned since 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Estimated as of November 2019.

● Situation  
■ IDP initiative  
L 2/3 Level of emergency

## IMPLICATIONS OF UNDERFUNDING

All situations, including the ones for Iraq, Syria and Yemen, were underfunded in 2019. Difficult decisions were therefore made about the priorities for support, given the resources available.

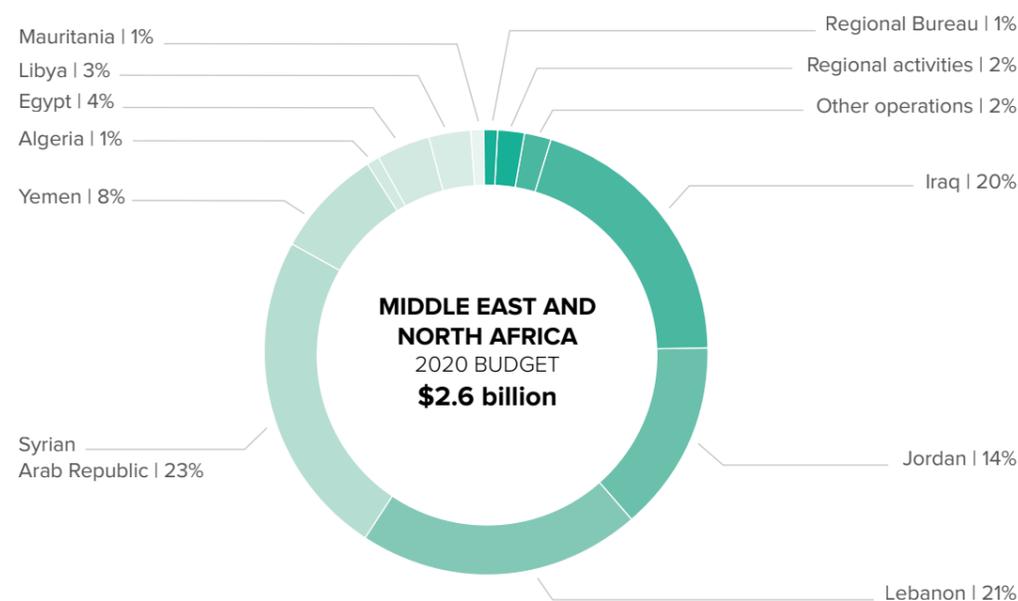
The implications of a lack of funding can be seen across the spectrum: from preparedness to response, to finding solutions. For instance, UNHCR’s winter assistance programme remains vital to ensure that vulnerable IDPs and refugees are equipped to survive harsh conditions. Underfunding in 2020-2021 will leave these people without the means to cover their survival needs during winter months and will lead to further deterioration of their living conditions.

The vulnerability of Iraqi and Syrian refugees and IDPs as a result of prolonged displacement has worsened over time, with poverty rates continuing to exceed 60% in some countries. More than 1.2 million Syrians are eligible for cash assistance but, without adequate funds, UNHCR will not be able to use this valuable modality to address the protection risks of the most vulnerable. Cash prevents and mitigates

child protection by, for example, reducing risks of child labour, early marriage and gender-based violence. However, risks to children will increase if operations do not receive sufficient funding. Protection and cash programmes work in tandem to ensure vulnerable people are successfully identified, providing individuals with cash for their most basic needs or with multi-purpose cash assistance. Given the value of cash assistance and that those who are eligible for it are among the most vulnerable in the region, reducing it may worsen their protection risks and compel them to increasingly rely on negative coping mechanisms.

For operations facing chronic funding shortfalls, such as Algeria, UNHCR will need funds in 2020-2021 to meet international standards of lifesaving assistance in the areas of, amongst others, protection, shelter, health, and water and sanitation.

Furthermore, health costs continue to rise across the region and not all refugees have access to public health care services. Continued funding is vital to ensure that refugee families have access to the most basic medical services, including preventive and curative primary health care services, as well as secondary and tertiary referral health care.



## BUDGETS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | USD

OPERATION	2019 Current budget (as of 30 June 2019)	PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3	PILLAR 4	TOTAL	2021 Proposed budget
		Refugee programmes	Stateless programmes	Reintegration projects	IDP projects		
<b>MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA</b>							
Regional Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa <sup>1</sup>	3,294,998	17,335,283	-	-	-	17,335,283	19,000,000
Regional activities for the Middle East and North Africa <sup>1</sup>	59,474,887	48,421,053	-	-	-	48,421,053	48,421,052
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>62,769,885</b>	<b>65,756,336</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>65,756,336</b>	<b>67,421,052</b>
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>							
Other operations in the Middle East	41,013,282	-	-	-	18,000,000	18,000,000	18,000,000
Iraq	602,477,448	177,062,196	934,307	-	332,454,370	510,450,874	510,425,000
Israel	4,491,967	6,000,000	-	-	-	6,000,000	6,000,000
Jordan	371,820,283	356,357,449	-	-	-	356,357,449	370,557,449
Lebanon	562,760,979	534,379,077	1,008,633	-	-	535,387,710	488,429,155
Saudi Arabia Multi-Country Office <sup>2</sup>	11,448,862	11,284,686	178,167	-	-	11,462,853	11,462,853
Syrian Arab Republic	624,382,693	46,968,149	198,640	317,833,049	247,382,855	612,382,693	612,382,693
Yemen	198,648,637	73,178,497	-	-	138,679,375	211,857,873	270,999,999
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>2,417,044,152</b>	<b>1,205,230,054</b>	<b>2,319,747</b>	<b>317,833,049</b>	<b>736,516,601</b>	<b>2,261,899,451</b>	<b>2,288,257,148</b>
<b>NORTH AFRICA</b>							
Algeria	37,046,284	37,383,599	-	-	-	37,383,599	37,118,500
Egypt	104,156,716	108,814,434	-	-	-	108,814,434	117,518,805
Libya	88,120,936	58,873,779	-	-	26,740,333	85,614,112	90,568,384
Mauritania	19,321,340	24,591,889	-	-	-	24,591,889	27,131,658
Morocco	8,000,000	8,500,000	-	-	-	8,500,000	8,000,000
Tunisia	7,270,297	8,328,165	-	-	-	8,328,165	7,778,402
Western Sahara - Confidence-building measures	7,259,413	4,000,000	-	-	-	4,000,000	4,000,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>271,174,985</b>	<b>250,491,865</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,740,333</b>	<b>277,232,198</b>	<b>292,115,749</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,750,989,022</b>	<b>1,521,478,255</b>	<b>2,319,747</b>	<b>317,833,049</b>	<b>763,256,933</b>	<b>2,604,887,985</b>	<b>2,647,793,949</b>

<sup>1</sup> Regional Bureau and regional activities cover the whole Middle East and North Africa region.  
<sup>2</sup> Coordinates activities in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.