



Pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1282 of 1999 and its subsequent resolutions on Western Sahara, UNHCR is conducting, since 2004, Confidence Building Measures (CBM) in cooperation with Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO and with the support of Algeria and Mauritania, to facilitate contact between the Saharawi refugees in camps near Tindouf and their families in the Territory.

Currently, CBM includes the exchange of family visits to shortly reunify families divided by the conflict for decades. In addition, UNHCR organizes cultural seminars that provide an opportunity for participants from the camps and the Territory to exchange views and experiences.

I. CBM in a nutshell

- The objective of the program is to restore family links between refugees in Tindouf camps and their relatives and communities in the Territory.
- The program facilitates visits from Tindouf refugee camps to Western Sahara Territory and vice versa, for beneficiaries who have direct family links (parents, children, siblings and spouses) with relatives on either side.
- The program is governed by a Plan of Action agreed upon by all parties in 2004 and revised in January 2012.
- CBM comprise two main activities: (a) family visits and (b) seminars.
- UNHCR provides financial assistance in the form of grants to help beneficiaries in the camps to cope with hosting and traveling expenses. UNHCR also distributes bags for all traveling beneficiaries.
- Since the expansion of the program in 2012, UNHCR has augmented its logistic capacity on the ground through procurement of adequate buses and recruitment of two staff members for logistical support.

II. Statistical overview

	Territory		Camps		Total	
	Families	Individuals	Families	Individuals	Families	Individuals
Registered	3,762	16,886	5,658	31,365	9,420	48,251
Benefited at end of April 2014	2,164	9,472	2,188	11,040	4,352	20,512

Since the beginning of CBM operation in March 2004, a total of 4,352 families (20,512 individuals) have benefited from the family visits program.

III. Seminars

After four confidence-building seminars held in September 2011, July 2012, February 2013 and Oct/Nov 2013, a fifth seminar took place in Ponta Delgada (Portugal) from 16-21 March 2014. The event was organized by UNHCR with the support of the Government of Portugal. It gathered 123 participants from both Western Sahara and the refugee camps and was facilitated by three independent professors from Mauritania. Coordinators from the Moroccan Government and the Frente POLISARIO also attend.

The subject of the seminar was “The Consolidation of good practices of lessons learned”: its context and significance. It brought together participants from previous four seminars and concluded with the publication of a book on the previous four seminar subjects/themes.

IV. Database and registration

From 01 November until 01 December 2013, UNHCR in cooperation with all parties undertook a registration exercise in both Rabbouni office in Tindouf, Algeria and the four cities (Laayoune, Boujdour, Smara and Dakhla) in the Territory, in order to allow qualified and interested families to partake in the CBM program. This exercise included verification of previously registered families to complete and update their information accordingly.

The registration data was directly inputted to UNHCR standard database system (proGres) which allows better information management.



V. Working with partners

To ensure a smooth implementation of the program, UNHCR cooperates with the Frente POLISARIO, the Kingdom of Morocco and Algeria, as the host country.

UNHCR also works closely with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which provides logistical support on a reimbursable basis.

Finally, UN Police and personnel of MINURSO's Bangladeshi Medical Unit (BMU) accompany UNHCR team in escorting beneficiaries during the family visits.

VI. Recent developments

Following the agreement reached with the parties during CBM meeting in Geneva on 24-25 January 2012, UNHCR expanded family visit activities by strengthening its logistic capacity. A larger aircraft was chartered, the vehicle fleet reinforced and new qualified personnel recruited.

Since April 2012, with the chartering of a larger aircraft (Boeing 737-800), the number of beneficiaries from each location increased from 30 to around 150 per flight.

Thanks to this positive development, in 2012 the number of individuals who benefited from family visits has reached 4.651, the highest peak since the beginning of CBM in 2004.



VII. CBM staff

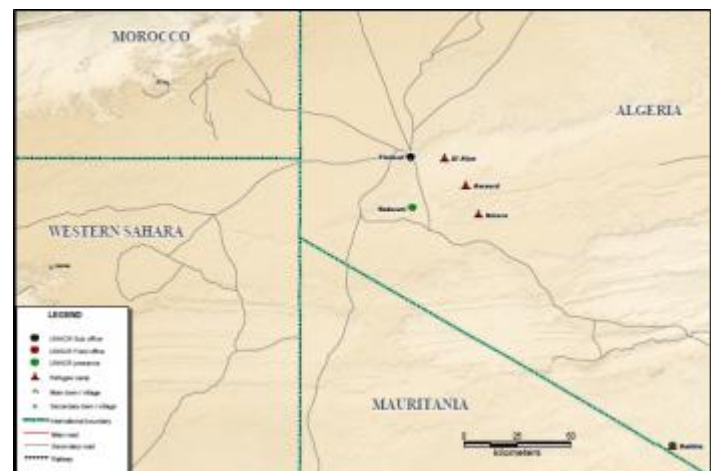
Total: 43 (International 5, National 27 and IUNV 11).

VIII. CBM 2013 Funding situation

Operations Requirements		USD 1,0381.831
Contributions	USA	USD 1,600.000
	Norway	USD 953,006.91

In 2012, the main donors were Italy, Germany and Spain and donors' contributions covered 4% of CBM's total needs.

IX. Maps of Western Sahara and Saharawi refugee camps in Tindouf area



X. UNHCR/CBM vehicles

On flight days, UNHCR/CBM provides the vehicles to escort the beneficiaries to and from their residences, the airport and their host destination.

The fleet currently consists of 2 Scania coaches, 5 Toyota Coaster minibuses and 2 Toyota minibuses, operated by UNHCR/CBM drivers. Overall, the fleet has a capacity of 267 passengers.

In consideration of the number of beneficiaries that are to be transported during family visits (around 150 people each way), CBM contracted private buses, operated by their respective company drivers, to enhance its hauling capacity.

The buses are accompanied by pick-ups for the transportation of luggage.



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