

KEY FIGURES

561

Children, adolescents and higher education students supported by UNHCR with their studies

175

Families received a home visit from UNHCR staff, partners, or refugee community workers

41

Refugees benefitted from vocational training or support to develop an income generating activity

524

Vulnerable refugee households received cash assistance to cover basic needs (average per month)

121

Refugees with chronic diseases supported to access health care (average per month)

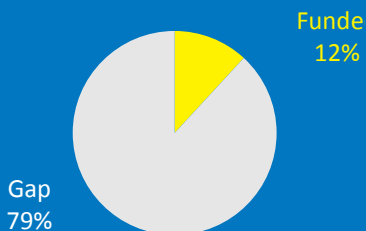
8

Refugees resettled

FUNDING

USD 5.7 million

Requested for the operation in 2016



MOROCCO

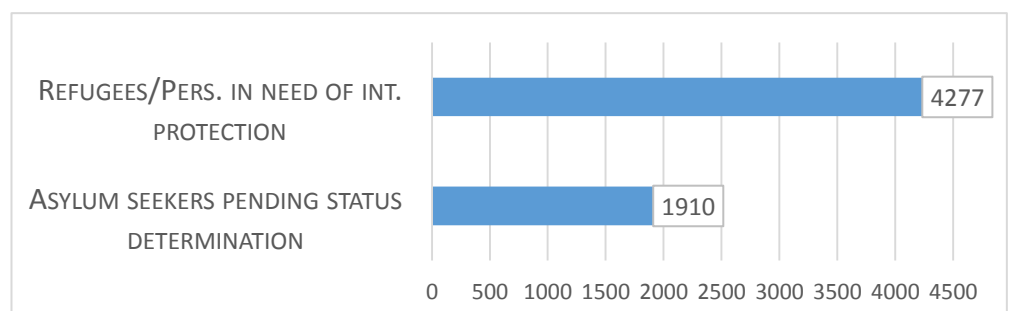
UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1 January – 31 March 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

- In January, the **Global Refugee Youth Consultations** were held in Morocco in cooperation with the Women's Refugee Commission and UNHCR's partner the *Fondation Orient-Occident* (FOO). Some 25 young refugees and Moroccans gathered over 4 days to find solutions to foster refugees' integration in Morocco. The recommendations were presented to national stakeholders and cooperation agencies to ensure that the voices of young refugees could be heard and taken into account. This will feed Moroccan civil society's efforts in this regard. In addition, two refugee participants to the consultations will partake in the annual UNHCR-NGO consultations in Geneva, scheduled for June 2016.
- On 19 January, the UNHCR Representative provided an overview of international refugee law and asylum procedures to members of the House of Councillors (upper house) to assist their preparations for parliamentary debates on the new asylum law. The draft law is to be approved by the Council of Government before its submission to Parliament.
- In February and March, UNHCR Morocco continued its capacity-building activities for officials in Moroccan **law enforcement agencies** in Rabat, Casablanca, Tangier and Oujda. The trainings for the Royal Police Academy, the *Gendarmerie Royale*, the *Forces Auxiliaires* and the Higher Institute of Magistracy aimed at deepening the understanding of the officials in international refugee law and enhancing their handling of refugees and asylum-seekers in the context of the national legislation and the implementation of the **National Strategy for Migration and Asylum** (NSMA).
- On the occasion of the **UNHCR Conference on Global Responsibility Sharing for Syrians refugees** in Geneva (30 March), Morocco pledged to grant legal status to the 722 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR who did not benefit from the exceptional regularization procedure in 2014. This will allow them to have legal access to labour market. The Government of Morocco also committed to granting visas and scholarships to a number of Syrian refugees currently strand in neighbouring countries of Syria.

Population of concern : A total of **6,187** persons of concern to UNHCR



OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Migration & Asylum: On 29 February 2016, **Morocco and Germany** renewed their commitment to sign a new agreement on global security, once it is finalized. This agreement covers cooperation against international terrorism, smuggling, trafficking, organized crime and illegal migration. Morocco has agreed to take back an undisclosed number of Moroccan migrants who entered Germany in 2015 and are staying irregularly in the country.

Situation at the borders: In February, Algerian authorities started strengthening **security at the border with Morocco** by digging a trench between the two countries and doubling the number of the intelligence services. According to the Algerian authorities, the objective is to block the access of potential “Jihadists” in Libya who want to cross Algerian territory to Morocco. As this border is the main entry point for mixed-migration arrivals, the following months will show if this measure has an impact on the monthly registration figures of refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR has noted a decline in registrations of Syrians since March.

During the reporting period, NGO partners reported the escalating level of raids and harassment against the settlements of irregular migrants in Tangier and Tetouan areas. On 4 January, around 200 African migrants attempted to cross to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta by climbing the border fence near Benu, in Northern Morocco. Reports from NGOs stated that at least three migrants died during this movement while a dozen wounded migrants were accompanied by Moroccan police to hospitals.

Legislation: On 14 January, the Council of Government endorsed a draft law **approving International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families**. The draft law is now at the Parliament for consideration.



UNHCR Training Session at Institut Supérieur de la Magistrature (ISM) in Rabat, March 2016
© UNHCR / M. Talha

ACHIEVEMENTS

Protection

Registration:

- The number of **Syrian individuals approaching UNHCR** in the first quarter of 2016 is comparable to the same period last year (470 persons in 2016 compared to 417 in 2015). However, UNHCR notices a recent overall downward trend after an increase throughout 2015: during the last quarter of 2015, 1,091 had approached UNHCR. While in January and February, 217 and 287 Syrian nationals, respectively, approached the office, this figure was down to 79 people in March.

- Similarly, the number of **Yemeni asylum-seekers** approaching the office started to decrease since September, only reaching a figure of 10 persons per month at most.
- The number of asylum-seekers from **other countries of origin** approaching the office in Rabat tripled: in the first quarter of 2016, UNHCR Morocco received 781 persons, compared to 267 persons registered during the same period last year. The highest monthly registration of 296 persons was noted in March 2016, whereas a year ago, the highest figure was 95 persons. This is largely due to the new referral system implemented with the CARITAS in this area since October 2015, through which more people of concern have access to UNHCR services.
- At the end of March, the waiting period between first contact and registration interview was three weeks for Syrian and non-Syrian asylum-seekers.
- A breakdown of new requests for registration with UNHCR is as follows:

Country of origin	1 January – 31 March	
	Cases	Persons
Syrians	120	470
Yemenis	22	29
Others	712	781
Total	854	1,280

Refugee status determination (RSD):

- The number of asylum-seeker cases pending interview with UNHCR was 769 at the beginning of 2016. By the end of March, a total of 713 new applications (from non-Syrian and non-Yemeni) were made. a total of **1,194 asylum claims are pending interview**.
- This is linked to the **increase in number of applications from sub-Saharan Africans**, which has an impact on the workload of UNHCR's Refugee Status Determination. UNHCR Morocco is planning a workshop in Tangiers in April 2016 with CARITAS to build their capacity in applying preliminary criteria of international protection needs and vulnerability, as done already with the *Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains* (OMDH) in Oujda. This should ensure that the most vulnerable in need of international protection are prioritized and supported to apply for asylum in Rabat.

Outreach and community based activities:

- End-March, **274 asylum-seekers were referred to UNHCR Morocco for registration** by UNHCR's partner OMDH in Oujda (North Eastern Province). Nationalities include: Syria (152), Cameroon (34), Nigeria (34), Mali (17), Guinea Conakry (12), Ivory Coast (11), Central African Republic (7), and other (7).
- During the reporting period **175 home visits took place** in Rabat, Casablanca, Sale, Kenitra, Temara and Oujda by UNHCR's partner FOO, UNHCR staff and refugee community workers.
- Some **524 vulnerable refugee households were assisted with monthly cash assistance** (from January to March 2016) compared to 421 families during the lastquarter of 2015, due to the increased vulnerability of Yemeni and Syrian families.

Legal counselling and representation:

- Some **38 refugees and asylum seekers were referred to UNHCR legal aid partner and received free legal aid and counselling**. This includes **11** females and **27** males. Roughly 10 per cent of those assisted are minors. The applicants are mainly from Cameroon (33%), Syria (16%), Ivory Coast (13%), Central African Republic (13%) and Democratic Republic of Congo (11%).
- Some **12** individuals were provided with legal documentation, including marriage or birth certificates, and nationality documentation.



Global Refugee Youth Consultations' Facilitators from UNHCR, Women's Refugee Commission and Fondation Orient-Occident, January 2016 @ UNHCR

Capacity building and training on asylum issues:

- On 8 January, UNHCR Morocco took part in the Model United Nations (MUN) organized at Al-Akhawayn University (Ifrane) which tackled the Syrian refugees' crisis. On February 16, UNHCR Morocco gave a presentation on asylum and UNHCR's mandate at Casablanca Law Faculty to 40 Masters' students.
- In January, two capacity-building trainings were facilitated for around 20 legal aid providers that will assist asylum-seekers in the asylum procedure (asylum file creation, appeal procedure...).
- To support this opening of CARITAS' programmes to non-sub-Saharan migrants from April 2016, UNHCR Morocco facilitated on March 23 training sessions on Country of Origin Information (COI) for CARITAS' staff in Rabat and Casablanca. These trainings aimed at providing sound information about the current situations of countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya and Palestine.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV):

- To increase prevention of and protection against SGBV, a **multi-year UNHCR SGBV strategy** (2015-2016) is being implemented to: 1) Reduce the risk of SGBV for persons of concern; 2) Improve early detection of SGBV survivors of concern; 3) Improve the quality of SGBV response services; 4) Strengthen interagency coordination on SGBV and collaboration with civil society organizations and stakeholders; 5) Support government/institutional capacities on SGBV. Advocacy efforts to strengthen national legislation continue through technical support in capacity development of asylum determination procedures connected to SGBV and human trafficking, and gender sensitive considerations in the application of these procedures.
- In January, UNHCR attended a three-day workshop organized by *Initiative pour la Protection des Droits des Femmes* (IPDF) to map all actors working on SGBV in the region of Fez. This effort is intended to **strengthen SGBV inter-agency coordination** at the regional level while reinforcing the coordination at national level.
- UNHCR refers SGBV survivors to FOO, *Association Action Urgence* (AAU), *Association de Lutte Contre le Sida* (ALCS) and legal partners for medical, psychological or legal assistance. The office reported 66 cases of SGBV; amongst them, 15 received medical assistance, 5 received legal assistance and 3 SGBV survivors in need of physical protection were hosted in protection houses, where 42 monitoring visits were conducted by FOO.

Education

- UNHCR and together with implementing partner FOO, **assisted 473 children and adolescents to access to primary/secondary school** compared to 350 at the end of 2015. This increase is partly due to outreach made towards Syrian families in the Oriental Region to support the enrolment of Syrian children and adolescents in public schools.
- Some **88 refugee students were provided with scholarships** for higher education, compared to 38 students during the last quarter of 2015. Refugee students from Central African Republic and Yemen were among the new beneficiaries.

 Health

- During the reporting period an average of **210 refugees were referred to primary health care centres per month**, compared to 84 during the last quarter of 2015.
- During the reporting period **121 refugees with chronic diseases benefitted from appropriate health care** on a regular basis.

 Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- End March, **25 refugees benefitted from vocational training**: **15** in aesthetic training and **10** in jewellery production.
- Another **10 refugees were supported to develop their income-generating activity** in the fields of clothing, shoemaking, catering, calligraphy and infographics. In the meantime, enterprise counsellors conducted 25 feasibility studies to determine the practicality of submitted income generating projects, such as perfumery, cosmetics, clothing and pastry projects. The team will submit these studies to the Joint Committee, composed of UNHCR and its partner *Association Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise* (AMAPPE). Since January, the Joint Committee accepted six projects for income generating activity submitted by refugees.
- Further to the meeting held between the Secretary General of the Ministry for Moroccan Residing Abroad and for Migration Affairs (MCMREAM) and UNHCR Representative in March, a positive outcome was noticed related to the **possibility of non-regularised Syrian refugees to access the legal labour market**. A close follow-up and monitoring on the ground is being undertaken by UNHCR and partners *AMAPPE* and *FOO*.

 Durable Solutions

- **Eight refugees departed Morocco through resettlement**, six to Canada and two to France.

	Identified for resettlement		Submitted for resettlement		Cases departed	
	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons
1 Jan. – 30 March	12	14	1	1	2	8
Cumulative (2016)	12	14	1	1	2	8

- UNHCR assisted **two individuals to voluntary repatriate to their country of origin**.

Countries	Repatriation demands		Cases departed	
	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons
Reporting period	2	2	2	2
Cumulative since January	2	2	2	2

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- UNHCR works closely with Moroccan authorities, particularly through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, as well as with the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Education, Health, Employment and Migration.
- UNHCR works with several non-gouvernemental organisations throughout Morocco, including: *Fondation Orient-Occident* (FOO), *Association Action Urgence* (AAU), Caritas, *Association de Lutte contre le Sida* (ALCS),

Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains (OMDH), Association Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise (AMAPPE). During the reporting period, UNHCR organized three monthly coordination meetings with its implementing partners plus a special coordination meeting in March in line with the 2017 planning exercise.

- In the Oujda region, an oriental region of Morocco bordering Algeria affected by mixed migration movements, UNHCR developed coordination mechanisms with IOM and led the creation of a Protection Working Group to better identify, refer and protect refugees and asylum seekers, including those with specific needs. The Protection Working Group in Oujda has further expanded in 2016 through the creation of thematic sub-groups: health/SGBV, trafficking, education and legal protection. Through this network of partners, UNHCR is able to reach refugees and asylum seekers in the region.
- UNHCR is a member of the United Nations Country Team in Morocco and as such is involved in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), as well as in thematic groups on migration, gender, HIV-Aids, communication and monitoring and evaluation.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **US\$ 672,965**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

