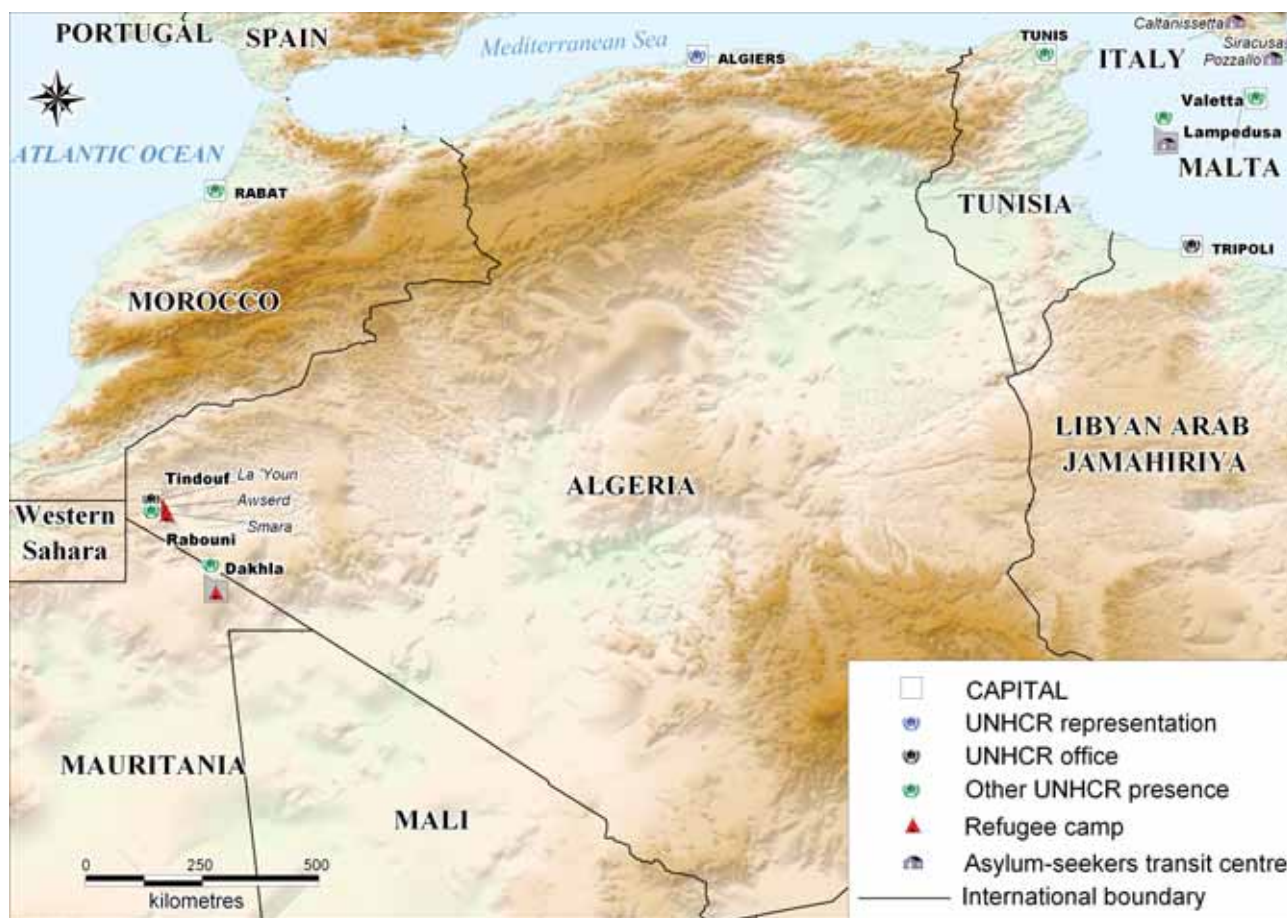


# Algeria



## Operational highlights

- UNHCR provided protection and assistance to some 90,000 Saharawi refugees in camps in the Tindouf area, aiming at improving the living conditions of the refugees.
- To foster contact between Saharawi refugees in Algeria and their relatives in the Western Sahara Territory, UNHCR could resume flights in November 2006, after an eight-month suspension, between the two areas and organized family visits, raising the total to over 2,900 visits since inception of the programming in March 2004 up to end 2006.
- UNHCR also helped the Saharawi refugees make some 24,000 telephone calls to their relatives, resulting in a total of over 60,000 since 2004.
- The Office launched an asylum and migration project in 2006 to deal with the increasing number of migrants who pass through Algeria en route to Europe.

## Working environment

UNHCR has assisted the Government of Algeria to meet the basic needs of the Saharawi refugees since 1985. In 2006 some 90,000 refugees in Algeria received assistance under the programme. In the Tindouf camps, refugees were helped by UNHCR, the Government of Algeria, UN partners (The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara – MINURSO – UNICEF and WFP) and NGOs to meet their basic needs.

Torrential rains in Tindouf in February 2006 seriously damaged schools, health centres and refugee dwellings. Some structures were completely destroyed. About 60,000 refugees, or 12,000 families, lost their personal belongings in the catastrophe. UNHCR established an emergency programme to meet the immediate needs of the affected population.

The UNHCR office in Algiers has been increasingly dealing with migrants who transit the country on their way to Europe and the difficulties involved in determining who amongst those qualify for international support, either as asylum-seekers or refugees. In this

context, a European Commission-supported initiative to deal with the asylum-migration nexus in the region was extended to Algeria. The project aims to increase the capacity of UNHCR and governments in the region to establish and manage mechanisms to control mixed migration movements and identify those people who need international protection.

## Achievements and impact

### Main objectives

The main objective of the Algeria operation in 2006 was to protect and assist some 90,000 Saharawi refugees considered the most vulnerable among the refugee population in the Tindouf camps, with a special focus on children and young people, to alleviate the conditions generated by long exile in a very difficult environment. Importance was also given to capacity building and self-reliance activities.

Since 2004, UNHCR has worked with MINURSO and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara on a Confidence-Building Measures project aimed at fostering contact between the refugees in camps in Algeria and their relatives in the Western Sahara territory.

With regard to urban refugees, UNHCR encouraged the implementation of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The Office also aimed to expand protection space within a broader migratory framework in cooperation with the Algerian authorities.

In line with the strategic objectives for the Middle East and North Africa region, UNHCR helped train academics

and provincial border and migration control authorities on refugee law.

### Protection and solutions

UNHCR met most of its objectives with regard to the Saharawi refugees in 2006. By establishing a protection unit with two international staff in April, the Office was able to concentrate on protection issues.

In response to the floods of February 2006, UNHCR established an emergency operation which provided immediate support to the affected population. A programme to reconstruct schools damaged or destroyed by the floods was carried out between August 2006 and February 2007.

The majority of the urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Algeria in 2006 were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Somalia, Chad and Burundi. Some 4,000 self-sufficient Palestinian refugees live in the country, receiving no assistance from UNHCR.

In 2006, most asylum-seekers in Algiers had access to refugee status determination procedures and were provided with UNHCR documents. The registration of asylum-seekers was streamlined, and a data base established. Status determination interviews proceeded smoothly during the first half of the year, but in the second half the rapid rise in the number of asylum-seekers put a strain on the Office's capacities and created a backlog.

There was no change in Algeria's official position on sub-Saharan refugees, which considers all undocumented sub-Saharan asylum-seekers as illegal aliens. On the positive side, documents issued by UNHCR certifying that a person is a refugee or of concern to the Office were generally respected by the authorities.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total <sup>1</sup>	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Western Sahara	90,000	90,000	-	-
	Occupied Palestinian Territory	4,000	-	-	-
Asylum-seekers	Côte d'Ivoire	300	100	-	-
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	300	100	-	-
	Cameroon	100	-	-	-
	Various	200	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>94,900</b>	<b>90,200</b>		

<sup>1</sup> According to the Government of Algeria, there are an estimated 165,000 Saharawi refugees in Tindouf camps.



UNHCR/J. Gagné

UNHCR airlifted relief supplies for more than 50,000 Sahrawi refugees affected by the floods in camps in western Algeria.

Urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Algiers were helped to gain free access to health and education services. The refugees were also given emergency allowances for food and shelter. Some 70 refugees received toolkits to help them start income-generating activities.

As a result of UNHCR's assistance with school fees, there was an increase in the number of refugee children enrolled in school. Cooperation with national and international NGOs in research, assistance to refugees and raising awareness of asylum issues was also improved.

To raise awareness of sexual and gender-based violence and promote women's rights, several workshops and training sessions were organised for refugee representatives, NGO staff and government officials. UNHCR staff also received training on how to deal with sexual and gender-based violence.

The Confidence-Building Measures project in the Tindouf camps aimed at helping re-establish contact between families who had been separated from each other for decades continued in 2006. Flight services to facilitate family visits between Western Sahara and the camps in Algeria, which had been suspended in early 2006, resumed in November 2006. With the resumption of flights, exchange visits continued and, since the inception of the programme until the end of 2006, had benefited over 2,900 people who saw their friends and relatives for the first time since the 1970s. In addition, some 24,000 telephone calls were made by refugees in the camps to their relatives in the Western Sahara territory, raising the figure of phone calls made to some 60,000 by the end of 2006.

### Activities and assistance

**Community services:** Some 340 adults and young women and 470 other refugees with disabilities were

trained in various skills in the four camps to help them start income-generating activities. A sports field with electrical lighting was inaugurated in Dakhla camp, and the construction of a new training centre started in Awserd camp. Some 38,000 hygiene kits were distributed to the refugees. A workshop on employment possibilities was conducted for some 130 participants.

**Domestic needs and household support:** Most refugees in the camps cook using butane gas. Two-thirds of the fuel needs are supported by the Algerian Government, while the rest is supplied with UNHCR support. The Office distributed some 31,200 units of plastic sheeting, about 9,900 mattresses, 9,750 water containers and 43,000 blankets after the floods in February. The Algerian Government and national and international NGOs contributed significantly to the relief effort.

**Education:** Schools reopened in June after flood damage was repaired. More than 34,700 textbooks as well as other educational materials were provided to children attending primary school. All sanitary installations and nine dormitories were also rehabilitated. As an integral part of the 2006 assistance project, 33,500 jogging suits were distributed to all school-age children. Furthermore, UNHCR covered school fees and transport costs for those urban refugee children who were enrolled in private schools.

**Food:** In addition to the food provided by WFP, UNHCR distributed 104.5 metric tons of tea and 32 metric tons of yeast to the refugee population. Some 11 metric tons of camel meat and 300 camels were also distributed during the month of Ramadan.

**Health and nutrition:** All refugees had access to basic health services. Drugs and equipment were supplied to all health centres. Some 60 nurses received specialized training, seven new midwives completed a two-year course and 27 head nurses participated in a programme to upgrade their skills. The supplementary feeding programme benefited some 9,700 people, in particular children and pregnant and lactating women. Measures to prevent the spread of HIV included a workshop for some 30 doctors, nurses and midwives, and a plan of action with several international NGOs for HIV- and AIDS-related activities in the camps. In addition, UNHCR covered the cost of referral for specialized treatment, as well as the bills for prescribed medicines for urban refugees.

**Legal assistance:** A workshop on violence against women was conducted for 30 participants. Six young female refugees participated in seminars on subjects such as the Algerian Family Code, health and women's labour rights. The Library of Smara camp received new books and documents. Finally, training sessions were organized for UNHCR and NGO staff on protection issues.

**Operational support (to agencies):** UNHCR's support to implementing partners provided them with the capacity to deliver services and assistance to the refugees. The UNHCR base in Rabouni was rehabilitated to accommodate NGO staff working in the camps. A training session on administrative and financial management was organized for some 40 NGO personnel.

**Sanitation:** UNHCR distributed at least 4,700 litres of chlorine disinfectant to help reduce the incidence of disease due to bad hygiene. Another 960 litres of chlorine were distributed to the health centres. No epidemic was reported in 2006. Eleven water sources and storage tanks in the camps were also regularly sterilised with chlorine.

**Shelter and other infrastructure:** Most of the refugees in the camps have access to some form of shelter. Some 375 tents were purchased and distributed to needy families in 2006. During the emergency caused by the floods in the camps, the Government, UNHCR, WFP and international NGOs donated more than 7,200 tents to the affected families.

**Transport and logistics:** The mechanical workshop in Rabouni repaired and serviced an average of 35 to 50 vehicles every month. The vehicle fleet helped distribute food, potable water and non-food items. However, the capacity of the workshop needs to be strengthened. About 30 per cent of the vehicle fleet is in need of repair. Indeed, frequent vehicle breakdowns delayed the distribution of food and water. UNHCR's warehouse was fully repaired after the floods.

**Water:** Refugees received an average of 15 to 17 litres of potable water per person per day. The water distribution system was properly maintained throughout the year. In addition, a bore well, a pumping station, two storage tanks and a water desalinization and treatment system for the Smara refugee camp were established. Three submersible pumps and three water-purifying plants were also installed. Fifty-five Saharawi refugees were trained in water treatment, analysis and quality control.

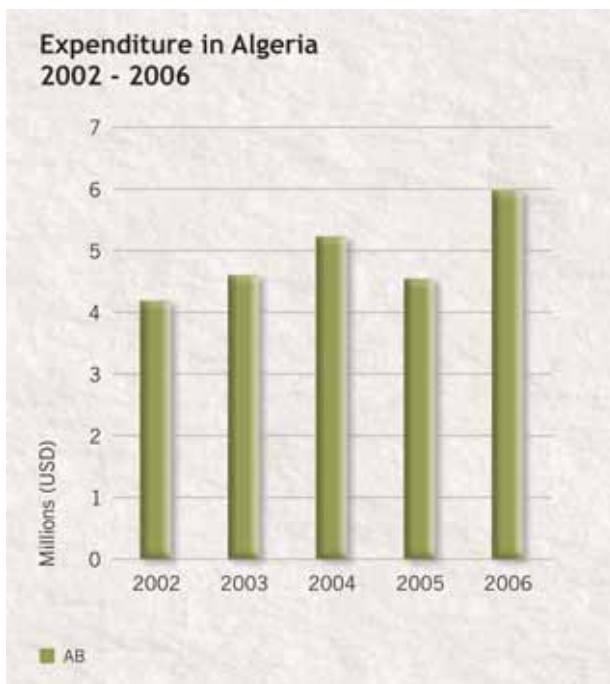
## Constraints

Given the lack of local integration prospects in the Tindouf region and its harsh environment, the only viable durable solution for the Saharawi refugees is voluntary repatriation. This solution, however, is conditional on a political solution. As regards urban refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR is able to protect only those in Algiers.

## Financial information

The funding of the Algerian annual programme was fairly good, with 65 per cent of the budget covered in 2006 by earmarked contributions (and the remainder taken from loosely earmarked or unearmarked contributions). The flood emergency in the Tindouf camps also received a good response from the donor community. All the donor funds were used to provide the affected population with shelter and infrastructure, water and sanitation, food and non-food items and health services, as well as help those with special needs.

The budget for the Algeria programme has been relatively constant over the last five years. However, the budget needs in 2006 increased slightly as a result of the February floods and related emergency work in the Tindouf camps.



## Organization and implementation

### Management

The representation office in Algiers is headed by one international staff member, assisted by six national employees. The sub-office in Tindouf has six international staff, including a JPO, and eleven national staff members. The sub-office implements the major components of the UNHCR programme in Algeria. The Algiers office serves mainly to liaise with government counterparts, national NGOs, diplomatic missions and UN agencies, but also assists urban refugees and asylum-seekers.

## Working with others

UNHCR works closely with WFP, which is responsible for providing basic food supplies to the refugees; UNICEF, which has initiated special programmes for refugee children in the camps; and MINURSO, which in addition to being a partner in the Confidence-Building Measures project provides logistical support to UNHCR staff in Tindouf. Close relations are also maintained with the Algerian Government and its ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs as well as the Algerian Red Crescent Society. The latter is UNHCR's main implementing partner.

Other international NGOs run programmes complementary to those financed by UNHCR.

## Overall assessment

Overall, UNHCR Algeria succeeded in streamlining and rationalizing its programmes. However, in 2006 project implementation was delayed, reports were late and audit certificates remained outstanding as working agreements with the main implementing partner could not be signed on time.

The lack of sufficient protection capacity in the Algiers office led to a backlog in refugee status determination decisions. This in turn meant that many asylum-seekers remained uncertain of their status for a long time. Measures have been taken to remedy the shortage of staff.

Partners
<b>Implementing partners</b>
<b>NGOs:</b> <i>Association de femmes algériennes pour le développement, Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli, Croissant Rouge Algérien, Enfant Réfugiés du Monde, Rencontre et Développement, Solidaridad Internacional, Triangle.</i>
<b>Operational partners</b>
<b>Government:</b> Ministry of the Interior and Foreign Affairs.
<b>NGOs:</b> Spanish Red Cross Society.
<b>Others:</b> MINURSO, UNICEF, WFP.

## Budget, income and expenditure (USD) Annual programme budget

Final budget	Income from contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other funds available <sup>2</sup>	Total funds available	Total expenditure
7,375,706	4,137,983	2,069,518	6,207,501	5,983,094

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

<sup>2</sup> Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

## Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects	Previous years' projects
	AB	AB and SB
Protection, monitoring and coordination	917,580	0
Community services	22,445	483,922
Domestic needs and household support	309,525	210,869
Education	48,585	99,463
Food	349,135	129,616
Health and nutrition	26,826	167,285
Legal assistance	21,039	17,832
Operational support (to agencies)	153,708	242,235
Sanitation	7,668	55,669
Shelter and infrastructure	361,556	0
Transport and logistics	183,292	228,418
Water	337,914	602,769
Instalments with implementing partners	2,760,674	(2,238,079)
<b>Sub-total operational activities</b>	<b>5,499,946</b>	<b>0</b>
Programme support	483,148	0
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>5,983,094</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cancellation on previous years' expenditure</b>		<b>(186,123)</b>
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>		
Payments made	3,348,804	
Reporting received	(588,130)	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>2,760,674</b>	
<b>Previous years' report</b>		
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>		
Outstanding 1st January		2,517,471
Reporting received		(2,238,079)
Refunded to UNHCR		(29)
Adjustments		0
<b>Balance</b>		<b>279,363</b>