

Djibouti—Response to the Yemen Situation

September 2018

The past few months saw intensified conflict in Yemen, especially in the western port city of Hudaydah, which is key for taking in basic resources to Yemenis. The situation remains unpredictable—some episodes of escalated warfare have triggered arrivals coming from Yemen, while others have not. Steady amounts of new arrivals

continue coming, but not at emergency levels. UNHCR monitors the borders closely with the Djiboutian Coast Guard, ready to assist new individuals seeking refuge. Some settle in Obock at the Markazi settlement, while others may head toward the capital to join family who had come ahead. There is also the possibility that Yemenis use Djibouti

as a transit point before moving onward to other countries. Hence the reason why we have recorded over 38,000 Yemeni refugees coming to Djibouti, when only more than 4,000 currently remain. UNHCR is closely monitoring the situation and is prepared to mobilize assistance along with the government and partners.

KEY INDICATORS

38,000

Number of Yemenis who have come to Djibouti since the start of the conflict in March 2015

4,398

Current population of Yemeni refugees in Djibouti—of which, **2,078** live at the Markazi settlement in Obock and **2,320** in the capital city, Djibouti.

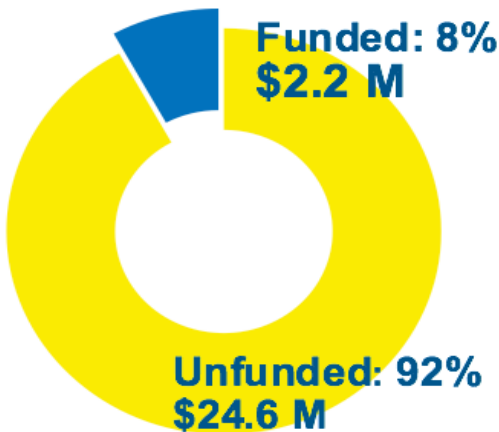
48%

Percentage of youth (18 and under)

FUNDING (AS OF SEPTEMBER 2018)

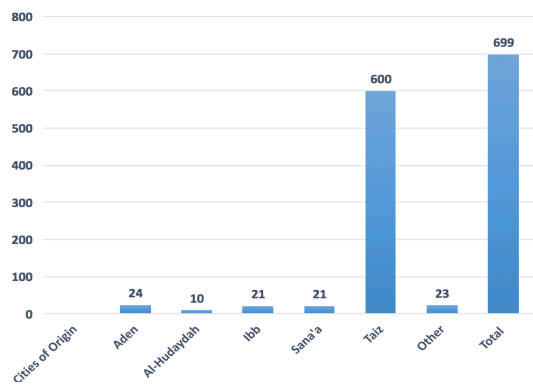
USD \$26.7M

requested for Djibouti

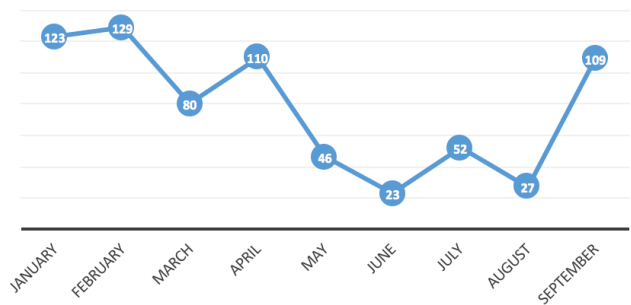


Arrivals by Origin

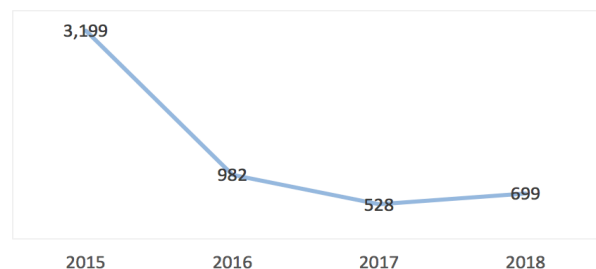
(January–September 2018)



New Arrivals in 2018



New Arrivals by Year



Operational Context

More than three years since conflict and fighting broke out in Yemen, hundreds of Yemenis continue to flee the country in search for safety and protection. People in Yemen are contending with a worsening situation and the insufferable combination of conflict, famine, and disease. Djibouti is among the handful of countries taking in refugees escaping the conflict.

The settlement at Markazi, outside of the town of Obock in the north of the country, is entirely comprised of Yemenis. The total population as of August 2018 stands at 2,078. UNHCR and its partners strive to provide them with the basics like food, shelter, and healthcare, but also pave paths to durable solutions with livelihoods activities, education, and vocational training. Meanwhile, there are 2,320 Yemeni refugees in the capital city, Djibouti. Most have come with adequate means and assets, developed self-sufficiency, and managed to be independent of aid, allowing them to thrive outside of the settlements. Refugees from Yemen are recognized *prima facie* upon arrival at the settlement of Markazi. Freedom of movement allows them to move onward to other areas like the capital, Djibouti, or even to other countries.

UNHCR Djibouti stands committed to working together with its partners to effectively respond to the Yemen situation and protect the individuals fleeing for safety. The operation gathers and mobilizes resources, expertise, and manpower to bolster progress in establishing long-lasting solutions. Moreover, in seeking to empower refugees into crafting their own independence and putting themselves on paths to self-reliance, the ideals of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) impart guidance on aspirations to also leverage a level of local integration that also produces advantages for the host communities.



Boys at the Markazi settlement doing a taekwondo demonstration during World Refugee Day.
©UNHCR/VPanaligan, 2018.

**PROTECTION****Achievements and Impact**

- UNHCR's Regional Senior SGBV Officer undertook a mission to the Markazi settlement and engaged the refugees with workshops focused on community empowerment, children's rights, and SGBV prevention. This complements UNFD's existing work on SGBV prevention and response.
- LWF assisted over 38 people with special needs. This includes the elderly and those who are mobility impaired. Working with UNHCR and ONARS, LWF helps to procure and distribute wheelchairs and crutches when and where needed.
- LWF also distributed nutritional supplement packages to the elderly and vulnerable, which include powdered milk and boxes of oatmeal.
- ICAN recently began coordinating field trips for young people. In September, an educational and cultural excursion was organized for 10 youth from the Markazi settlement to see the sights of Tadjourah. More trips are planned in the near future for other locations.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Yemeni refugees make up half of the urban refugee caseload, who often struggle to make ends meet. Although they tend to be more self-sufficient and financially independent than the refugees at the settlements, many of them contend with issues like high cost of living and increased competition for few job opportunities. Part of ONARS' and UNHCR's commitment to advocating for the advancement of the recent legal reforms on refugee socio-economic inclusion involves boosting access to quality vocational training programs and improving their professional skills.
- UNFD, the partner covering SGBV prevention and response, is in need of a physical space to conduct their counseling. They had been previously working out of a tent, but it was destroyed by the harsh weather conditions.

**EDUCATION****Achievements and Impact**

- Some 277 students are enrolled in the primary and secondary levels of school at the Markazi settlement with curriculum and teacher training designed by MENFOP.
- In September, DRC opened a computer center to boost computer literacy to the youth of Markazi. Several have already participated in the courses offered by a former computer science expert who is himself a refugee from Yemen. The project was funded by the U.S. State Department and is part of a larger scheme that will be developed in the coming months to give young people access to extracurricular activities like sports and the arts.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Even more children are not in school than are enrolled. The operation is working with MENFOP to boost enrollment and encourage regular attendance.
- There is also a shortage of qualified teachers at all levels. UNHCR is working with MENFOP to expand recruitment and properly train individuals to fill these roles in order to provide quality education to youth of all ages.
- Students at the Markazi settlement are still largely taught in tented classrooms. In line with the CRRF approach, MENFOP constructed a school for refugees and the community of Obock right outside the settlement, of which they have plans to inaugurate soon.



HEALTH

Achievements and Impact

- In September, Markazi health center staff took part in a training on curative care for persons with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis lead by the UNHCR staff physician.
- Medicines are locally available and procured by the Ministry of Health. Those that are not available are ordered and shipped in by UNHCR.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Since January 2018, the Ministry of Health has been covering refugee healthcare, including at the settlements. Despite the strong will of the government to give refugees this access, capacities remain weak. Service delivery is deficient—for example pre and post-natal care are weak and immunization programs are deficient.
- The healthcare staff still operate their clinic in a tent, which is inadequate for providing a calm and controlled environment under the searing heat of the region. The Ministry of Health will initiate work on constructing a solid facility by the end of the year.
- Community-based activities on health are also weak. Health committees at Markazi had been formed, but coordination and motivation is lacking in advancing community-led efforts.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Achievements and Impact

- WFP helps ensure refugees and asylum seekers have adequate supplies of food. A monthly food distribution package includes 6kg of flour, 0.9kg of beans, 0.15kg of salt, and 1 liter of oil.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Some refugees save money to be able to buy other food not included in the assistance package—like meat and vegetables. Although WFP gives additional cash assistance of 500DJF per person, some put extra effort into gathering resources to buy more food.



WATER AND SANITATION

Achievements and Impact

- Access to water is one of the main priorities of the CRRF for Djiboutian authorities. The refugees at the Markazi settlement and their host community of Obock currently have access to 29 liters per person per day while the standard amount is 20 liters.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Sanitation committees have been formed a while ago by NRC, but community participation and coordination are lacking.



SHELTER AND NFIS

Achievements and Impact

- NRC led efforts to clear out 20 empty or unused tents and housing units at Markazi, which contributes to a safer community.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The reporting period coincides with Khamseen season. The Obock region is particularly hit hard every year as strong sand storms menace residents and disrupt day-to-day living. Working around these difficult conditions remains an obstacle.



ACCESS TO ENERGY

Achievements and Impact

- Residents of the Markazi settlement continue to receive a monthly allotment of 4 liters of kerosene from ONARS.
- A handful of residents of the Markazi settlement had the means to purchase their own solar panels. In addition to providing energy for their own living spaces, they are able to share the resource with others in the community by cooling beverages (and subsequently selling them) and charging cell phones.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The operation is looking for ways to boost eco-friendly practices. In terms of energy, this means relying less on the use of firewood and kerosene—which are the main sources of fuel at the moment—and more on solar and renewable energy.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

Achievements and Impact

- In the spirit of the CRRF, over the summer, UNHCR staff conducted several profiling missions at the Markazi settlement to get a sense of what refugees' skills and interests are in terms of their professions and careers. These efforts are part of the advocacy pushing forward recent legal reforms leveraging refugees' socio-economic inclusion and right to work in Djibouti. Yemenis possess a strong entrepreneurial spirit and many have the desire to open their own businesses. Quite a few that expressed interest are women. The operation, after assessing their professional goals and capacities, stands ready to provide financial backing through CPEC (*Caisse Populaire d'Epargne et de Crédit*) to help these refugees with their start-ups. These include coffee shops, hair salons, and boutiques.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Despite efforts to extend vocational training to refugees, the prospects for increasing business or work opportunities remain low due to the struggling local economy. The operation is currently studying the feasibility of connecting artisans and handicraft makers to global business opportunities vis-à-vis online platforms.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR's three principal targets for durable solutions include voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and local integration. Since repatriation is an undesirable option given the volatile environment in Yemen, we strive to help Yemeni refugees integrate into Djiboutian society, an objective that is part of UNHCR's commitment to achieving durable solutions.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Whenever possible, UNHCR advocates for resettlement of refugees in third party countries. However, as more countries have adopted stricter refugee acceptance policies, it is becoming more difficult to succeed on this pathway.

Working in Partnership

- UNHCR leads the multi-sector response for Yemeni refugees and asylum-seekers at the Markazi settlement and in urban settings, in addition to the Ali Addeh and Holl-Holl settlements in the southern region of Djibouti. Close collaboration is maintained with the Government of Djibouti and authorities at national and local levels, with international and national NGOs, as well as with refugee community leaders to ensure an optimal coordination of response for refugees.
- UNHCR works with national and international partners; namely, the NRC (water, sanitation, shelter, hygiene); the LWF (education and community services); the Ministry of Health (health/reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and nutrition); UNFD (SGBV) and the Ministry of Habitat, Urban Planning and Environment (firewood distribution), and ICAN (child protection). UNHCR also collaborates with NGOs such as the DRC, Al Rahma Association, and Caritas. The government humanitarian arm in charge of refugee and migrant-related issues is ONARS, who manages the refugee settlements.
- UNHCR also co-leads the Mixed Migration Task Force (MMTF) with IOM to strengthen regional and international co-operation enhancing national response to reduce irregular migration flows.

For more information on UNHCR's regional response to the Yemeni refugee situation, please visit: <http://data.unhcr.org/yemen/regional.php>



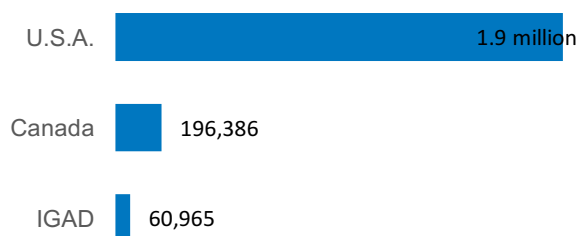
Women and children at the Markazi settlement, some of whom have arrived in the past year.
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Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 2.2 million**.

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 broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | \$2.2 million USD



BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of broadly earmarked contributions that can potentially be used for this operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region.

United States of America 56.2 million | **Germany** 11.8 million | **Private Donors Australia** 8.6 million | **Canada** 3.3 million

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UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

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