

Country Operations Plan UNHCR ALGERIA 2002

PART I Executive Committee Summary

(a) Context and Beneficiary Population(s)

Although UNHCR has been operational in Algeria for over twenty years, its presence remains inextricably linked to a durable solution for the Western Saharan refugees in exile in Algeria since 1975. A durable solution is linked to the successful implementation of the UN Settlement Plan, which is to hold a referendum that will decide on the future of the Western Saharan Territory. UNHCR's role is well defined in the Settlement Plan, which has as its main objective: the voluntary repatriation of those refugees identified as voters (and their family members) to the Territory, so as to participate in the referendum.

Pending a solution to the outstanding political issues and the implementation of the UN Settlement Plan, UNHCR will continue to maintain a high level of preparedness in the event of the voluntary repatriation of the Western Saharan refugees, and under its mandate will continue providing care and maintenance and international protection to the 155,000 vulnerable beneficiaries, out of the estimated 165,000 refugees in the Tindouf camps in Algeria. With its enhanced presence in the camps, UNHCR will ensure the protection welfare of the refugees, especially the most vulnerable, i.e. women and children.

With regards to the urban refugees who are mainly living in the vicinity of Algiers, UNHCR will continue to provide protection and assistance to the most vulnerable. It will also continue to carry out refugee status determination interviews until such time when there is a functioning refugee status granting body and a more comprehensive refugee legislation within the Algerian government. UNHCR will continue to promote refugee law and conduct training and capacity building activities. These activities will be done so as to facilitate the establishment of asylum frameworks for the provision of protection and assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees in Algeria.

Despite the security concerns in Algeria, UNHCR is able to implement its protection and programme objectives.

(b) Selected Programme Goals and Objectives:

Western Saharan Refugees:

The refugees from Western Sahara living in the camps along Algeria's western border have been considered to be refugees since 1975 on a *prima facie* basis. In 2000, UNHCR completed a comprehensive pre-registration of all refugees and their immediate families in preparation for an eventual repatriation, using voter information from the UN Mission for the Repatriation in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Pending a solution to the outstanding political issues and the implementation of the UN Settlement Plan, UNHCR holds as its first goal, in

accordance with its role in the UN Settlement Plan, to maintain a high level of preparedness in the event of the voluntary repatriation of the Western Saharan refugees. Several “core” preparatory activities have been completed and in this regard the major outputs will be to complete a thorough update of the Plan of Action.

While awaiting the implementation of the voluntary repatriation of the Western Saharan refugees, in the context of the UN Settlement Plan, the second goal of UNHCR is to continue to implement its mandate responsibilities with the provision of assistance and international protection to vulnerable refugees in the four camps, particularly women and children. As such, UNHCR will continue its activities in the core sectors such as supplementary food, health, education services, transport and logistics, vocational training, sanitation, shelter and domestic items. UNHCR also aims at continuing to ensure that the water supply and water distribution for the camps is maintained, and will use the services of water experts in order to ensure technical integrity. UNHCR will also strengthen its coordination role, ensuring the active involvement of the refugee community and refugee leaders in the planning and allocation of assistance, involving NGOs and donor agencies in the planning of overall assistance with a view to strengthening coordination and utilizing donor funds in the most effective way possible.

The third goal is to strengthen UNHCR’s protection activities in the four camps. The increase in protection-related activities will work on the progress made in 2001. UNHCR will try to ensure full and unhindered access to the refugee population, and will strengthen the local protection capacity in all four camps. UNHCR will organise several workshops/information-sharing sessions with UNHCR’s implementing partners in Tindouf to strengthen their knowledge of UNHCR’s mandate, role and responsibilities.

Western Saharan Refugees	FMIS Project Code 02/AB/ALG/CM/201
<p>Main Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain high level of preparedness in the event of voluntary repatriation. • Continue to provide care and maintenance to vulnerable refugees in the four camps in Tindouf, particularly women and children • Strengthen UNHCR’s protection activities in the four camps 	

<p>Principle Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functional Plan of Action for repatriation • continue activities in the core sectors such as supplementary food, health, education services, transport and logistics, sanitation, shelter and domestic items • strengthen coordination role, ensuring the active involvement of the refugee community and refugee leaders in the planning and allocation of assistance • ensure full and unhindered access to the refugee population, and strengthen the local protection capacity in all four camps. • Organize several protection workshops/information-sharing sessions with UNHCR's implementing partners 	<p>Related Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Plan of Action • Increase in well-being of refugees in the four camps • Quarterly strategic meetings at the Algiers level • Monthly coordination meetings in the field (with sector-specific Working Groups) • strengthen local protection capacity in the four camps
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Urban Refugees:

Algeria is a party to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the specific problems of African Refugees. The Bureau Algerien pour la Protection de refugies et apartides (BAPRA) is the government body that implements these provisions of the 1951 Convention. Asylum seekers recognized by UNHCR as refugees are automatically recognized by the Algerian authorities. UNHCR Algeria will continue to carry out refugee status determination interviews throughout 2002.

UNHCR's protection activities in Algiers will also consist of the promotion of international refugee law, capacity-building and training of the government officials with the objective of updating national refugee legislation and establishing a functioning refugee status granting body. UNHCR will also monitor the refugee situation in Tamanrasset and along the Algeria/ Niger/ Mali border where a residual caseload of some 200 refugees still remain after the completion of the voluntary repatriation of 45,000 persons in 1998.

The first goal for the urban caseload is to provide protection and assistance to urban refugees of different nationalities and seek durable solutions for them. UNHCR will continue to provide protection to urban refugees and medical and financial assistance to vulnerable cases. UNHCR will promote the granting of refugee status to eligible applicants. Asylum-seekers and urban refugees are protected against refoulement and and possible deportation respectively. Voluntary repatriation will be promoted and facilitated for the urban caseload. Resettlement activities will be carried out when other durable solutions are not available. UNHCR will continue working closely with the Algerian authorities for the full and effective application of the provisions of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol in Algeria.

UNHCR's second goal will be to carry out activities relating to the promotion of international refugee law, capacity-building and training of the government officials with a view to facilitating

the establishment of effective asylum frameworks for the provision of protection and assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees in Algeria.

<p>Urban Refugees</p>	<p>FMIS Project Code 02/AB/ALG/CM/200</p>
<p>Main Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first goal for the Urban caseload is to provide protection and assistance to urban refugees of different nationalities and seek durable solutions for them. • To facilitate the establishment of <u>effective asylum frameworks</u> for the provision of protection and assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees in Algeria. 	
<p>Principle objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full and effective application of the provisions of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol with a functioning refugee-status granting body in Algeria • Promotion of international refugee law, capacity-building and training of the government officials with a view to updating national refugee legislation in Algeria. 	<p>Related outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granting of refugee status to eligible applicants by the Government of Algeria • Treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees in accordance with international legal norms and standards; • Updated national refugee legislation; and • A functioning refugee-status granting body.