



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Regional Operations Plan 2008

**Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE,
Qatar, Bahrain, Oman**

Regional Operational Plan 2008-09
(Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman)

Part One: Context and Strategy

Operational Context

Political Situation

1. Following the death of the former Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah in January 2006, Crown Prince Sheikh 'Saad al-Abdullah al-Sabah, 76, was appointed Emir. Kuwait's cabinet, under Prime Minister, Sheikh Sabah, wrote to the National Assembly indicating that Sa'ad was medically unfit to assume the role of Emir. This led to a vote in the National Assembly. The members voted that the new Emir Sa'ad was unfit to be the Emir. Emiri prerogatives passed to the Prime Minister (current Emir). Subsequently Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has been sworn in as Emir and he has chosen a new Crown Prince and Prime Minister.
2. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah issued a new succession law in October 2006 that would facilitate smooth transfer of power and remove the uncertainty caused by the inability of a king or crown prince to run the affairs of the state as a result of poor health. Under the law a committee of senior princes would be appointed to select future generations of kings and crown princes. The new law, which will not be applied to the present king and crown prince, aims at streamlining the succession process. The law, which has 25 articles, offers a new mechanism for declaring the reigning monarch or heir to the throne unfit to exercise their powers, temporarily or permanently.
3. United Arab Emirates reshuffled its cabinet in February 2006. - The new Cabinet of the UAE is widely seen as representing a new direction for the country in terms of economic, social and cultural progress. Eight new faces have been brought into the Cabinet by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who succeeded his brother Sheikh Maktoum as vice president, prime minister and ruler of Dubai in early January.
4. On 16 May 2005, following extensive debate on women voting rights, the Kuwait National Assembly voted in favour of giving women the right to vote and stand for election. In the elections held in June 2006 women campaigned, voted and ran for elections for the first time in Kuwait's history. However, no woman was elected to Parliament in that round and many believe that this will change in future rounds. Moreover, on 5 June 2005 the government named two women on the Municipal Council and on 12 June 2005 the government made an historic step by appointing Dr Massouma Al-Mubarak as the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Administrative Development. Women rights issues and women group activities in Kuwait are observed to be more active and visible on the domestic scene than other situations in the GCC countries.

Economic Situation

1. Saudi Arabia's top oil body said in July it cannot see any shortages in crude supplies in the world's markets and blamed a problem with refinery for the world's high oil prices. Following a meeting of the Supreme Council for Petroleum and Minerals presided by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah, Secretary General of the Council said "The Council realizes that the current rise in oil prices stems from various factors such as the lack of advanced refining capacity and is not the result of any shortage in crude supply." The Supreme Council, which was also attended by Crown Prince Sultan, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense and Aviation, was pleased about the balance of supply and demand in oil with the rise in world crude stocks to levels not seen for many years. Outlining oil policy over the next year, the Council said Saudi Arabia wanted a stable oil market in the short and long term and would increase production capacity gradually in accordance with rising global demand.
2. Press reports indicated in January 2006 that Saudi Arabia needs at least one million housing units immediately in order to provide decent housing for its poor. Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah established the foundation to build low-cost housing units for the poor in various parts of the Kingdom. The foundation, which was established three years ago, has already completed a large number of low-cost housing projects for the poor in various parts of the country. The housing units are provided with all facilities including health care and education. The project also includes a girl schools, a mosque and a center for vocational training. The king had donated land worth SR2 billion in Madinah estimated at an area of five million square meters. King Abdullah ordered a national strategy to fight poverty in the country after visiting a Riyadh slum three years ago when he was crown prince. He set aside SR2 billion from the budget surplus for the low-cost housing scheme.
3. Muslims in the Gulf who were angered over the cartoons, which depicted the Prophet Muhamed, in the Danish press in September 2005, declared boycott of Danish goods. Various private groups circulated lists of Danish products that should be boycotted.

Social Situation

1. The first Domestic violence and Child-Spouse Abuse Conference was held in Riyadh in January 2006. Defining, assessing and recommending solutions to the issue of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia had been a hot topic in the media during the past two years. The conference presented the medical perspective. The problem is identified in the Saudi society based on statistics prepared by the National Society for Human Rights (NSHR), which received 500 abuse cases last year nationwide, 220 cases of them were in the Western Province.
2. During the GCC summit which was held in Abu Dhabi in January 2006, the Gulf Cooperation Council labor ministers proposed restriction on the stay of expatriate workers to six years only because of fears that they would demand naturalization and rights equal to GCC citizens.
3. The GCC summit did not approve the proposal, which was based on a study conducted by Bahrain and the office of GCC labor ministers. However, the summit leaders did not reject the proposal all together. GCC countries fear that naturalization

would have economic, social, demographic, political and security consequences. The number of foreign workers in the Gulf countries is estimated at 10 million.

4. The issue of stateless individuals (Bedouins) in Kuwait has resurfaced during a debate January 2006 in Kuwaiti Parliament with a strong statement made by some MPs urging the Government, to move forward in resolving this issue. In this regard, MP's highlighted the fact that some of these Bedouins have sacrificed their lives and tremendously contributed in the liberation of Kuwait, following the 1990 invasion by Iraq, therefore, they deserve to be naturalized. They warned against the internationalization of the issue through press conferences in which the government will be held responsible for the plight that this segment of the society is undergoing, and stressed the importance of maintaining Kuwait's reputation abroad as a country with a positive attitude towards the issue. The Government has been given by some MPs a six- month ultimatum in order to do something about the issue. Hopefully, this interesting debate will open a new era for the difficult Bedouins issue.

Human Rights

1. Kuwait ratified the UN convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its two protocols (the Protocol of Suppression and Punishment of the Trafficking of Women and Children, as well as the Protocol against Emigrant Trafficking).

Security Situation

2. Saudi Arabia foiled in February 2006 a terrorist attack on its largest oil processing facility at Abqaiq in the Eastern Province. In a statement posted on a website, Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attack. Terrorists in two explosives-laden cars attacked the facility but were prevented from breaking through the gates when guards opened fire on them. The vehicles exploded and killed their occupants. Authorities confirmed that two terrorists and two security guards were killed in the attack. The attack was the first by terrorists in the Kingdom targeting an oil refinery. The Eastern Province witnessed a three-day gun battle when Saudi security forces stormed a major Al-Qaeda hide-out in Dammam in September 2005, killing five terrorists.
3. The leader of the Al-Qaeda network in Saudi Arabia was among five terrorists gunned down in a shootout in Riyadh in March 2006. Fahd Faraj Al-Joweir, 36, who was trained in Afghanistan and had taken charge of the network in the Kingdom after Moroccan Younis Al-Hayari, the former commander in the Arabian Peninsula, was killed in a shootout in Riyadh on July 3. The slain leader was No. 2 on a list of the 36 most-wanted Al-Qaeda-linked suspects published last June by the Interior Ministry. The government has scored a number of successes in its campaign against terrorism since its war on terror began in May 2003. The recent raid brought the number of terror suspects still at large down to 18.
4. Saudi security forces killed in June 2006 six suspected members of a terrorist cell accused of plotting suicide attacks from a house in a residential district of the capital. Security forces pursued the seven members of the "deviant minority" to a house in the Al-Nakhil district and immediately came under sustained automatic weapons fire. One member of the Kingdom's security forces was killed while others were injured in the shootout. Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah pledged in April to root out Al-Qaeda-linked militants in the Kingdom, vowing to "combat the ideology of those who accuse others of infidelity." At least 90 civilians, 55 security personnel

and 136 militants have died since a wave of unrest began in May 2003 where compounds were attacked in Riyadh. Hundreds more have been wounded.

5. Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah declared in June 2006 an amnesty to militants at large who have joined deviant groups provided they surrendered themselves to the security forces. The king, who had made a similar declaration in June 2004 which resulted in six wanted suspects turning themselves in; one was on the most-wanted list. These men were released five months later. Observers said the royal pardon has been a successful tool the Kingdom has used in its fight against terrorism and that it gives these men a chance to seek redemption. Meanwhile, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah ordered the release of prisoners, including expatriates, held for petty crimes in all parts of the Kingdom and the payment of the debts and indemnities of people detained for violating private rights.
6. Four militants surrendered to security forces in Jeddah in August 2006 after a 17-hour gun battle. They included two men who had escaped from a prison near Riyadh in July.
7. Authorities came under fire as they attempted to enter and arrest the suspects in a residential building in Jeddah's Al-Jamia district. A month earlier security forces had arrested 43 suspected militants in raids over the previous few months throughout the Kingdom.
8. The Interior Minister Prince Naif said in November 2006 that Saudi Arabia will begin building next year a security fence along its 900-km border with Iraq in order to prevent terrorists from sneaking into the country. He said the project would cost SR45 billion (\$12 billion).

The government earlier this year invited bids to provide security systems along the border. He said the fence would have 135 gates with advanced monitoring systems and added that the Iraqi interior minister has welcomed the project. Some Saudis were among many Arabs who were reported to have gone to Iraq to join the insurgency against US-led forces and the US-backed government in Baghdad.

Asylum Issues

1. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia came into existence in 1932 after its unification by the founder of the kingdom and the dynasty, King Abdulaziz Al Saud. The population of KSA amounts to 23 million including 6 million foreign workers according to a census undertaken in 2004. It is the number one oil exporter in the world. Both history and geography in addition to proven oil reserves have endowed it with great potentials. Being the custodian of the two Moslem Holy Mosques (Makkah and Madina), Saudi Arabia assumed a leading role in the Islamic world. Pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia (Hajj & Omrah) attracts every year millions of Moslems from around the world.
2. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE and Oman have an estimated population of about 9.6 million in addition to several millions of expatriate workers. The huge oil wealth of the Gulf Countries and lack of expertise in various fields led to the recruitment of millions of workers from all over the world. Moreover, the region became a place of

choice for persons seeking better opportunities. With its geographic proximity to the less privileged hotbeds in Southwest Asia, Middle East and the Horn of Africa, the GCC States resorted to extremely restrictive immigration policies to control illegal immigration.

3. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman did not yet accede to the 1951 Convention or to the 1967 Protocol concerning refugees. Consequently, there are no legislative or administrative provisions governing refugees. The long outstanding Palestinian refugee problem and the volatile situation in the Middle East have both made the Gulf Countries as well as other Middle Eastern Countries less enthusiastic to accede to the international regime-
4. governing refugees. RO Riyadh's focus was on strengthening of the Gulf countries' adherence to refugee law principles and the improvement of the protection conditions and ultimately the promulgation of domestic refugee laws and the accession to the 1951 Convention. RO's efforts in this respect have led to an increasing understanding of international protection principles and UNHCR's mandate among Governments and NGOs. This has also reflected on UNHCR's ability to have access to increasing numbers of asylum-seekers and to ensure better respect of asylum seekers and refugees' basic rights.
5. At the end of 2005, there were 2,003 urban refugees and 541 urban asylum seekers registered with UNHCR offices in the Gulf region (323 refugees/212 asylum seekers) in KSA, (1,523 refugees/203 asylum seekers) in Kuwait, (104 refugees/79 asylum seekers) in UAE, (46 refugees/28 asylum seekers) in Qatar, (15 asylum seekers) in Bahrain, and (7 refugees/4 asylum seekers) in Oman). This figure includes 215 Eritrean ex-military refugees, who fled to Saudi Arabia in 2004 and early 2005 and who were admitted by the Saudi authorities in Gizan and granted refugee status by RO Riyadh.
6. Besides, UNHCR Riyadh has been gradually extending the applicability of its protection mandate to other groups of refugees than those in Rafha camp, i.e. urban refugees. This expansion of UNHCR's mandate in the region is of crucial importance as there are a large number of persons who may be, in need of international protection. Some Governments have, though with some reservations, agreed to that expansion. Others continue to show some reluctance. UNHCR has continued to efficiently expand the applicability of its protection mandate to the urban refugees in KSA and in the other countries under its direct supervision (Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait and Oman). While doing so, UNHCR has faced a challenging situation where it was required to extend its protection to persons who were not allowed to stay in the GCC countries due to their illegal status (illegal entry or expired residence permit or visa). In order to circumvent this major difficulty, UNHCR was left with no other choice than to obtain from the concerned Governments clearance for a temporary stay of recognised refugees against a commitment to find durable solutions for them. With the onset of vigorous policies to localise the labour market, it is feared that 2007 would witness diminished work opportunities for foreigners and consequently more applicants approaching UNHCR seeking asylum to evade return to their home countries.
7. The presence of millions of migrant workers has led to demographic disproportion in KSA and other Gulf countries. This has in turn, generated a deleterious effect on

policies regarding asylum. The presence of refugees is being perceived as a destabilising as well as a pull factor due to the geographic proximity to hotbeds in Africa and Southeast Asia. Therefore, the strategic objective of the Regional Representation in Riyadh was to continue to encourage Gulf countries' respect and to adhere to refugee law principles as well as the improvement of international protection conditions, accession to the 1951 Convention and ultimately the promulgation of domestic refugee laws. Efforts in this respect have led to an increasing understanding of international protection principles and UNHCR's mandate among Governments and NGOs. This has also been instrumental on UNHCR's ability to have access to increasing numbers of asylum-seekers and to ensure better respect of refugees basic rights.

8. Due to the peculiarities of the Gulf countries in terms of their demographic profile and vast wealth, KSA and other GCC countries have adopted very strict immigration policies. As a result, naturalisation of foreigners has been extremely limited. There are therefore almost no opportunities for local integration for the refugees that are under UNHCR's mandate. The search for durable solutions is further made complicated because these countries are not party to any of the international instruments governing refugees. Thus the stay of recognised refugees is only temporarily tolerated, pending the identification of a durable solution, i.e. repatriation or resettlement.
9. Besides, there are Bedoons (stateless persons) mainly in Kuwait (about 113,000) and KSA (about 70,000) who live under a precarious situation emanating from lack of legal status. The statelessness is being politicised because of demographic imbalance, volatile political, security, economic and social situations. Nevertheless, KSA has amended in 2004 its naturalization legislation opening the door for the potential naturalization of a number of stateless persons (Bedoon) and expatriates. None of the Gulf countries are parties neither to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons nor to the 1961 Convention relating to the Reduction of Statelessness.

o Populations of concern/ themes¹ to be addressed in UNHCR programmes

Population of Concern # 1: Rafha caseload

UNHCR main caseload in the region was the Iraqi refugees in Rafha camp, which reached a peak of 36,000 in 1992. Approximately, 25,000 were resettled in 16 countries over the years, 5000 were voluntarily repatriated by 2003 and 5000 opted for spontaneous repatriation after the regime change in Iraq. In 2005, a significant arrangement was reached with the Saudi authorities after lengthy negotiations undertaken by RO Riyadh to secure an alternative solution for the residual caseload in Rafha camp (363 persons) at the end of 2005 as part of its exit strategy. The Saudi authorities, for the first time, authorized in 2006 Iraqi refugees and their families, who opted to benefit from this alternative arrangement, to leave the camp and settle in urban areas in Saudi Arabia. They were provided with a refugee identification

¹ A "theme" is chosen when several, different populations are covered under one programme (e.g. an urban programme) or when the programme is mainly directed at the capacity building of institutions (e.g. "asylum system development"). Use themes only if you cannot establish a programme around one well defined refugee/returnee/IDP population. A theme is not any cross-cutting issue. Cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS, environmental management etc. should be included in the programme for the relevant beneficiary populations wherever possible (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2).

card issued by the Saudi Ministry of Interior as well as residence permit. They were allowed to work, access medical and education facilities. Rafha camp was officially declared closed in June 2006 but the Saudi Ministry of Defence is tolerating the presence of a group of undecided 88 refugees in the old camp site. By the end of the year 2006, 161 refugees had settled down in various urban centres in the country (mainly Rafha city).

Population of Concern #2: Urban Caseload

The majority of the urban refugees and asylum seekers in the Gulf have entered the country as temporary migrants (guest workers, expatriates). The number of foreigners in the Gulf is estimated to be around 10 millions persons. KSA's authorities are of an opinion that only those who have a residence permit, either valid or expired, can present a claim for asylum. Other GCC countries are, in general, of a similar opinion. According to Gulf national legislations, expatriates who have valid work contracts are issued a residence permit (iqama).

The nature and content of protection/asylum varies according to the situation of the person vis-a-vis the immigration regulation. Asylum seekers and refugees holding valid residence permit are effectively protected. The RO however, managed to establish practices of certain cases with no valid residence permits to enjoy protection pending finding a durable solution, mainly resettlement in these cases. Here are the main components of the nature and content of protection/asylum of the main refugee groups or persons of concern to UNHCR.

Population of Concern # 3: Iraqis in the Gulf

Iraqis were practically banned from entering the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries since the occupation of Kuwait in 1990 and the second Gulf war that followed few months later in 1991. Iraqis who were holding a residence permit in a GCC country had their residency terminated and were requested to leave or were authorized to stay until the expiry of their residency. Very few were able to overcome the very strict immigration regulations and have their residency extended. This could only be done exceptionally through some influential contacts or sponsors.

From 1991 until 2003, a limited number of Iraqis were able to obtain a visa to visit Bahrain and Qatar since these two countries continued to have diplomatic relations with the former Iraqi government. Likewise, a limited number of Iraqis were admitted every year to Saudi Arabia in order to perform the pilgrimage (Hajj or Omra). Almost no Iraqi citizen was authorized to visit Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates.

This situation radically changed further to the 2003 war. All GCC countries opened their doors to Iraqis. Some countries opened it widely. The country that has been receiving the largest number of Iraqis is UAE due to its liberal entry visa policy and its dynamic economy. By the end of 2004, the estimated number of Iraqis in UAE was already in terms of thousands. The presence of a large Iraqi community in UAE since that time was indirectly confirmed by the fact that the Iraqi Electoral Commission decided to open in the Gulf only one polling station in Dubai during the 2004 elections. The Iraqi community in UAE at that time consisted mainly of individuals and families who had entered the country through the visit visa procedures and were in the process of securing an employment and a sponsor in order to obtain a residence permit and remain in UAE.

Since 2005 and in view of the continuous deterioration of the situation in Iraq, the flow of Iraqis entering the GCC countries in order to secure an employment and a residence permit has not diminished. In fact it has increased and in parallel, the number of Iraqis contacting

UNHCR Abu Dhabi, Kuwait or contacting RO Riyadh from Qatar and Bahrain has also increased by the end of 2006. Some media reports are indicating that the number of Iraqis in the Gulf is estimated to be around 200,000. According to information gathered by UNHCR Kuwait and UAE, the estimated number of Iraqis in January 2007 would be around 91,300 for UAE comprising 42,000 residents and 49,300 on visit status and 45,000 in Kuwait comprising 30,000 Iraqis on visit visas in addition to around 15,000 Iraqis who are legal residents in Kuwait. Only a minority had registered with UNHCR.

Population of Concern #4: Eritreans in Gizan

Saudi Arabia has generously admitted some 215 Eritrean military asylum seekers in 2004 (The majority of this caseload are Tigrenian Christians, Few are university graduates and the rest are soldiers). They were all granted refugee status by UNHCR during fall 2004 and first half of 2005, and have been secured temporary protection pending the identification by UNHCR of a durable solution. Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers are a special group because of their military backgrounds they are held in confinement in Gizan under the protection of MOI's coast guards and their movement is restricted. All material assistance and basic human needs for the Eritrean refugees in Gizan are provided by the Saudi government. All Eritrean refugees in Gizan have access to the public medical care (duly escorted). UNHCR closely monitors the situation in the confinement and the quantity and quality of the assistance and ensures its compliance with the basic principles of international refugee law and refugee rights. Following a medical check up to all refugees performed by the Saudi Ministry of Health, which revealed that there were 6 HIV positive cases and another 6 Hepatitis cases among the caseload. RO Riyadh counselled the Saudi authorities on the standard necessary procedures on medical and psychological treatment of these cases, as well as on precautionary measures that should be taken in such situations and agreed on standard procedures according to UNHCR guidelines. RO also provided necessary counselling to the refugees and monitoring to the implementation. All HIV positive cases were notified following necessary individual professional counselling and received necessary treatment through regular visits to HIV clinic in Gizan. All Eritrean refugees were provided with sessions on the preventive measures against the spread of HIV and Hepatitis.

Due to the fact that neither voluntary repatriation nor local integration is possible, the only option left was resettlement in a third country. During 2005, USA was identified as resettlement country, RRFs for all Eritrean refugees were completed and they were all screened by IOM. They were interviewed by DHS officers in the second quarter of 2006. Travel arrangements were finalized for all accepted cases by DHS during 2006. However, a residual of some 14% (26 cases/29 persons) of the Eritrean caseload in Gizan, were rejected by DHS. In December 2006, two Eritrean pilots sought asylum in Saudi Arabia and were added to the existing group in Gizan. UNHCR interviewed both of them (RSD) and granted them refugee status.

Theme #1: Promotion of Refugee Law and Capacity Building

Capacity building and establishment of national institutions for refugee protection in the Gulf region are of extreme importance, taking into account that the Gulf countries are not parties to any international or regional instruments relating to refugees and have no official asylum policy. Promotion of refugee law has proved to be instrumental in increasing, amongst Governments and NGOs' officials, better knowledge and understanding of Refugee Law Principles and UNHCR's mandate and further improvement of the protection conditions in the region, it also helped in drawing the attention to the plight of the refugee's worldwide and their needs for humanitarian assistance.

In this context, the Regional office's strategic objective is primarily to strengthen the Gulf countries' adherence to refugee law principles and to improve protection conditions and ultimately promulgate a domestic refugee law and the accession to the 1951 Convention.

In this context, the promotion of the accession to the 1951 Convention remains a strategic objective not only in KSA but the rest of the GCC countries.

Theme # 2: Public Information and Fund Raising

The importance of the GCC countries to UNHCR is derived to a large extent from the Gulf region's large fund raising potential manifested by its increasing involvement in international humanitarian aid and the leading role of its largest member state – Saudi Arabia in the Gulf region, Arab and Islamic worlds. Hence RR Riyadh's strategic objectives are to promote awareness of UNHCR role and activities and increase political and financial support to UNHCR programs.

The implementation of RR Riyadh's long term systematic regional approach in 2006 has generated continued public awareness, improved perception and understanding of UNHCR activities and requirements, consolidated partnerships with governments, regional organizations and NGOs and consequently pledges and contributions from Gulf governments, NGOs and private donors which amounted to USD 4,129,552.

In 2008-9, RR Riyadh intends to build on these efforts with further consolidation of its activities and resources. In this context, RR Riyadh is aiming at additional institutionalizing, among other things, of its relations with the governmental/ non-governmental sectors, regional organizations, business community and civil societies in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region particularly through activation of the Gulf NGOs Network (GNN) process, the training and stockpiling centers, special events and initiatives such as: the World Refugee Day (WRD), 9 million Refugee Kids, International Women Day (IWD), International Environment Day (IED), Refugee Education Trust (RET), UNHCR day and the Good Will Ambassador (GWA), implementation of the JPO system and consolidating cooperation with Zakat Funds.

- o [Summary Results of Assessments including Participatory Assessment with populations of concern, Annual Protection Report, Standards and Indicators, and other assessments undertaken by UNHCR and partners, per programme as defined by population of concern or theme.](#)

The age, gender, diversity mainstreaming approach (AGDM) has been recently introduced to RO Riyadh, despite the fact that it was applied, in principle, before but on an individual manner. RO Riyadh has initiated conducting a regional AGDM workshop, which was further organized by UNHCR Kuwait in Kuwait city in November 2006. RO Riyadh has immediately started implementing this exercise by assigning the multi-functional team approach in Saudi Arabia. RO Riyadh has developed a work-plan for age, gender and diversity mainstreaming and has established a multi-functional team in Saudi Arabia. RO has advised UNHCR Kuwait to follow the same example.

The newly established multifunctional team in Saudi Arabia is composed of 5 UNHCR staff, 3 key officials representing MOI, MFA, and MODA, and 5 influential officials representing various well-reputed NGO's, e.g., Saudi Red Crescent (SRC), International Islamic Relief

Organization (IIRO), World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), and the National Association for Human Rights, as well as 6 refugees (3 male and 3 female).

The MFT team has conducted its first participatory assessment (PA) in March 2007 for one day, which is meant to be part of a periodic exercise. Protection risks faced by the refugees have been raised during the PA, which can be presented with regard to the populations of concern as follows. Proposals for means of tackling these risks have been further elaborated by the MFT and capacities among the refugee groups were identified, whenever possible.

It is quite premature to report on the outcome of the newly implemented AGDM approach, however, its immediate benefit was to avail a golden opportunity to design a two-year plan for UNHCR programs in consultation with its partners and based on discussions held with the people of concern taking into consideration beneficiaries' perspectives, their protection concerns and capacities to contribute to solutions.

Population of Concern # 1: Rafha caseload

The following issues were raised during the Participatory Assessment: (1) the necessity for the refugees to gradually move from total assistance to self-reliance. Refugees were encouraged to actively look for job opportunities and if need be to register at training courses. (2) Driving licence and possibility for refugees to register their car under their own names. These two documents are extremely important for refugees in order to be insured while driving. (3) The possibility for refugees to obtain an authorization to move from Rafha town while searching for employment. (4) The payment of the financial assistance promised by IIRO (up to one year).

Population of Concern # 2: Urban Caseload

Urban refugees who participated to the PA raised the following issues: (1) Documentation, since UNHCR certificates are not recognized by the various Saudi administrations. (2) Temporary authorization to work pending resettlement. This will allow the refugees to sustain themselves and their families until they leave the country. (3) Authorization to enrol their children in schools until their departure from the country. (4) Access / referral to Saudi public medical care centres.

Population of Concern # 3: Iraqis in the Gulf

This caseload was not directly discussed during the PA since the Iraqi community in Saudi Arabia is very limited in number. The largest Iraqi community in the Gulf is believed to be in UAE and In Kuwait.

Population of Concern # 4: Eritrean Ex-military refugees in Gizan

This caseload was discussed during the PA. There is a consensus between all parties (UNHCR and Government) that the best durable solution is resettlement in a third country. KSA officials who attended the PA were extremely grateful to UNHCR for having obtained excellent results in resettlement (86% of the caseload) in a relatively short period of time (less than 2 years). UNHCR suggested some "Visit Programmes" to the nearby city of Gizan in order to diffuse the tension in the compound and assured its counterparts that it will continue its efforts to identify receiving country for the remaining caseload.

[UNHCR Strategy](#)

[o Planning Figure Table](#)

Planning Figures				
Population	Dec. 2006	Dec. 2007	Dec. 2008	Dec. 2009
Iraqi Refugees	550	200,000	250,000	250,000
Eritrean Refugees	150	100	400	500
Palestinian refugees	241,000	241,000	241,000	241,000
Other refugees	400	400	400	500
Asylum seekers	600	600	600	700
Stateless	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Total	392,700	592,100	642,400	642,700

[Achievements to date per programme \(06/AB/SAU/CM/201\)](#)

[Population of concern # 1: Rafha caseload](#)

In December 2005, the Saudi government decided to implement the “alternative arrangements that UNHCR had suggested concerning the residual caseload in Rafha camp. The Saudi authorities, for the first time authorized refugees who opted to stay in the country, to leave the camp and settle down in urban areas in Saudi Arabia. This arrangement was implemented in 2006. Refugees were provided with a refugee identification card issued by the Saudi Ministry of Interior as well as a residence permit. They were allowed to work, to access medical care and educational facilities. The Ministry of Defence and aviation generously provided SAR 2000 to each refugees at the time of leaving the camp.

All the refugees who exited the camp and settled down in Rafha town were registered by Islamic International Relief Organization (IIRO) office in Rafha in order to benefit from the assistance program that started since June 2006 to support the refugees for an initial period of six months, and enable them for self reliance. IIRO has granted financial assistance for those refugees. Refugees have been allowed to enroll for any technical courses and/or training. The total amount IIRO project which is coordinated with the government for 6 months was SR 2 millions (US\$ 533,400)It is worth mentioning that the program was extended for another six months.

Under these new arrangements some 161 refugees have left the camp and settled in urban areas in the host country, of which some where resubmitted for resettlement (5 cases/18 persons to Australia) & (4 cases/persons to the US) in a third country. Other 119 refugees have decided to take advantage of the repatriation grant provided by MODA and have returned to Iraq. UNHCR is closely monitoring the voluntariness of any decision to return or to settle down in Saudi Arabia through the presence of its Field Office in Rafha camp. The camp was officially closed on 01 June 2006, however 88 refugees are still remaining in the old camp location.

After their exit from the camp, some refugees submitted to FO Rafha their claims in order to be considered for possible resettlement in a third country. Following the reviewing and updating exercise of the RRFs, (5 cases/18 persons to Australia) & (4 cases/persons to the

US) were resubmitted for resettlement in a third country through the Hub in Beirut (for more details, please refer to section on Resettlement).

- **Population of concern # 2: Urban caseload**

Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries accept the presence of refugees on their territories on temporary basis only. They are not a signatory to the 1951 Convention, neither to the 1967 Protocol concerning refugees and there is no asylum policy in their national legislation/regulation.

The main objectives of the RO for what concerned the urban caseload in 2006 can be summarized as follows: (1) to broaden the existing protection space in the Gulf in order to include all persons who are of concern to the office, (2) in the absence of any national legislation or accession to any international instrument regarding refugees, to strengthen the asylum institution through best practices, and creation of precedents, (3) whenever possible, to incorporate persons of concerns to UNHCR in the framework of the national immigration provisions regulating the presence of foreigners and, (4) to strategically use resettlement as a protection instrument when no other durable solution is available. Here are the main groups of the urban caseload:

1. Palestinians

Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf countries host a large number of Palestinians. There is an estimate of some 240,000 in Saudi Arabia only (the exact figure is likely to be much higher), however, there is no available figures from government or official sources. Governments in the Gulf region are extremely careful not to provide figures or information that could be misinterpreted in the overall political context and in particular the durable solution for Palestinian refugees. The long standing position of the GCC governments is to call for the implementation of the pertinent UN resolutions (Res.194) and the decisions taken in the framework of the League of Arab States (Beirut Declaration 2002). Palestinians in the Gulf are processed by UNHCR in accordance with the note on the interpretation of Article 1 D dated October 2002.

In terms of the established regional arrangements for hosting Palestinians in the Arab countries, it is to be mentioned that Saudi Arabia and the other GCC countries are not formally party to the 1965 Casablanca Protocol adopted within the framework of the League of Arab States, although, they are de facto implementing most of its partners. Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf countries are gradually reaching the limit of the applicability of their current regulations which consider Palestinians as expatriates. These regulations (immigration, penal) or conditions for accessing basic social services (medical, education, higher education) were not designed for and can not be applicable to the situation of families, such as the Palestinians, that may have been living in the country for 3 or 4 generations. The standard of treatment of some Palestinian refugees has therefore been slowly and silently moving from the status of expatriate to something else, to a new category with a more favourable treatment that still does not exist in the local legislation. The authorities do not want this change in the standard of treatment to be perceived as a gradual local integration. They emphasize on their international commitment towards the rights of Palestinian refugees and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and in particular resolution 194 on the right to return.

Palestinians living in Kuwait are estimated to be around 6000 Persons. Here again no official statistics available and the actual number might be much higher. Practically very few of them

do contact the office in Kuwait. Most of them are holders of Jordanian passports or Egyptian travel documents. They have been living in Kuwait since 1948 and 1967. They don't have particular protection problems, however, they suffer being refugees without clear potential durable solutions. LO Kuwait continues to provide them with assistance regarding enrollment of their children in schools in Kuwait.

A large Palestinian community is also living in UAE. Official figures are not available. Palestinians in UAE have the same profile of Palestinians living in other GCC countries and are subject to the same standard of treatment.

2. Somalis

Somali asylum seekers who approach RO Riyadh and the other Gulf countries mostly belong to one of the following categories: (1) Somalis who have been living in the Gulf as economic migrants for an extended period of time, (2) Somalis who have entered the Gulf on a short visit visa (tourism, family visit, pilgrimage) and who are willing to remain, (3) Irregular movers who first came to Yemen and then moved to another Gulf country.

As per UNHCR Advisory dated November 2005, asylum seekers from northern Somalia (Somaliland) are subject to a refugee status determination as per the standard procedures, asylum-seekers originating from southern and central Somalia are considered to be in need of international protection and, excepting exclusion grounds, should be granted, if not refugee status, then a complementary form of protection.

In view of the deterioration of the situation in some areas in Somalia, the latest UNHCR Advisory dated November 2005 made the call upon all governments to refrain from any forced returns to southern and central Somalia until further notice. Within this context, RO Riyadh' role is to inform; advice and counsel its counterparts in the region on the required standard of treatment for Somalis in view of the tragic developments in their place of origin, as well as to explain the rationale behind the need for a complementary form of protection for this particular group at this particular time. It will be the State responsibility to determine the nature of the temporary treatment that could be granted for members of this group. Depending on each case what RO advocates for is: authorization to stay, protection against expulsion, access to the basic social and economic rights same as what is generally available for the other foreigners (education, medical care, housing, access to assistance or employment) and to preserve the unity and integrity of the families (no forcible return for the nuclear family members who are in the country on a visit visa.)

In July 2006, RO Riyadh was informed by HQs of a group of 6500 persons mainly Indians and Somalis said to be detained in a military base in Oman. RO Riyadh asked for an urgent meeting with the Embassy of Oman in Riyadh during which it relayed the information. UNHCR requested the Omani embassy to verify this information and expressed its readiness to extend its technical expertise with regards to refugees, asylum seekers and persons who are in need of international protection that might be in Oman. UNHCR also expressed its readiness to send professional staff to help the Omani authorities to deal with the categories that fall under the mandate of the High Commissioner.

Since UNHCR continued to receive additional information on new deportation of Somalis from Oman, a note verbale was later on sent to the Embassy of Oman. In the note verbale, UNHCR stressed on the principle of non-refoulement and recalled its Advisory Note dated November 2005 on the Return of Somali Nationals to Somalia (which was attached) and

which stipulates that asylum seekers originating from southern and central Somalia are in need of international protection and, excepting exclusion grounds, should be granted, if not refugee status, then complementary forms of protection.

In October 2006, RO Riyadh received an answer from the Omani authorities stating that persons of different nationalities were detained for few days during a campaign conducted in Dhofar governorate against illegal stayers/foreign workers in the country. MFA mentioned that the return of these categories of persons to their home countries was safely organized in close collaboration with their respective embassies and diplomatic missions and in accordance with the international norms. No mention was made in the note verbale on asylum seekers, refugees, or other persons of concern in need of international protection, who could not avail themselves to the diplomatic protection of their countries of origin. The Omani authorities highly commended UNHCR proposal to share its expertise and render any required assistance within its mandate.

In reply to this note verbale, RO Riyadh proposed to the Omani authorities to send a mission to Muscat in order to discuss such cooperation with the concerned authorities, including issue of profile of the persons in Oman that might be in need of international protection as per the international standards and in need of a durable solution.

4. Eritrean refugees' holders of Sudanese CTD

During the last two years, RO Riyadh has been constantly receiving claims from Eritrean refugees, holders of convention travel documents CTDs issued by government of Sudan, whose CTDs seized to be renewed by the Sudanese Embassy in KSA. RO Riyadh discussed with HQs on securing any arrangement for this category, who were not informed about the screening procedure held in Sudan consequent to declaration of cessation clause for Eritreans. RO Riyadh clarified that upon expiry of their CTDs, those refugees became ipso facto in an illegal situation in Saudi Arabia that resulted in depriving them from access to social services (health care, education) and they became also subject to risk of deportation if they are arrested during a routine security check. RO Riyadh proposed to HQs to consider the possibility of approaching the Sudanese government in order to obtain a grace period of two years renewal of CTDs for Eritrean refugees living in the Gulf region. However, RO Riyadh took the initiative and contacted the concerned staff at the Sudanese Embassy in Riyadh, and an arrangement was made regarding renewal of some CTDs, on exceptional and humanitarian basis, for those who have serious compelling reasons.

5. Liberians

There are some 30 cases/30 persons of Liberian asylum seekers currently residing in Saudi Arabia, and registered at RO Riyadh. They are mostly residing in Madina except for two cases residing in Riyadh. They mostly share the same claim of being granted scholarship to study in Saudi Arabia Arabic language and Islamic studies while they were in their first country of asylum, usually Guinea. They entered legally to Saudi Arabia to study in Madina. They hold special residence permits for students, which allow them to attend the university in Madina for a certain period of time (usually 4 years). However, they are not allowed to work in the Kingdom. They are granted monthly subsistence allowance by the university in Madina and a yearly ticket to travel outside the Kingdom during summer vacation.

Based on the latest position paper on the treatment of Liberian Asylum-seekers and Refugees dated 3 August 2005, the practice of RO Riyadh concerning Liberian asylum seekers and refugees is that all new Liberian cases would be processed for RSD. Recognized refugees

will enjoy full refugee status (protection, durable solution, assistance). While a moratorium on forced returned of rejected cases to be requested from the government, a complementary form of protection would be sought with the local authorities for the rejected cases by approaching MOI to request temporary authorization to stay, right to work and access to the social services (education, medical, etc.)

6. Sudanese from Darfur

Sudanese from Darfur who have approached UNHCR offices in KSA and the Gulf, have been living in the region as economic migrants for an extended period of time. The office was not faced with applicants that were direct victims of the on-going conflict in Darfur fleeing the war zone. So far, the applications received in Riyadh were from Sudanese from Darfur who were holding a permission to stay. They have entered the host country legally with their national passports and were holding work contracts and residence permit. Therefore, they fully enjoyed the protection of the host country. With this type of profile, Sudanese from Darfur that have migrated to the Gulf might neither be covered by a strict interpretation of the 1951 Convention nor fall under the Mandate of the High Commissioner. Recognition on a "refugee sur place" basis is subject to a careful individual assessment on a case by case basis and can not be generalized.

Sudanese from Darfur living in the Gulf are processed in accordance with the guidelines issued in 2006 which contains provisions on the need of complementary protection in some instances. In practical terms, the urgent need for a complementary form of protection for any Sudanese from Darfur will arise if she/he loses one of the three pillars of a regular stay in the Gulf countries (national passport, work contract, residence permit). According to the local legislation in the region, should any expatriate loses her/his work contract or residence permit, she/he will be asked to leave the country within a short period of time. In the case of Sudanese from Darfur, the returnability to the country of origin could be problematic in certain cases, in view of the current circumstances.

Since 2004, UNHCR had encouraged the authorities not to forcibly return Sudanese from Darfur to their country of origin. This demarche was based on human rights and/or refugee law standards. Kuwait for instance has not acceded to the 1951 Convention but is party to several human rights instruments including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and should therefore, in light of the current situation, avoid forcibly returning Sudanese from Darfur to Sudan.

UNHCR informed, advised and counselled its counterparts on the required standards of treatment for Sudanese from Darfur in view of the tragic developments in their place of origin. UNHCR explained the rationale behind the need for a complementary form of protection for this particular group at this particular time. It will be the State responsibility to determine the nature of the temporary treatment that could be granted for members of this group. The minimum that we advocated for was: authorization to stay, protection against expulsion, access to the basic social and economic rights same as what is generally available for the other foreigners (education, medical care, housing, access to assistance or employment) and to preserve the unity and integrity of the families (no forcible return for the nuclear family members who are in the country on a visit visa).

This type of demarche was new to our counterparts who were used to dealing with non refugee foreigners present on their territory through the unique scope of the immigration regulations. The Saudi Ministry of Interior has so far been receptive to this new approach and

agreed to look into the cases and has expressed no objection in principle to coordinate with the immigration in order to have the residence permit extended and if need be, the employer (Kafil) will be asked to also extend the sponsorship to his employee from Darfur. MOI was also of an opinion that the Sudanese from Darfur for whom the authorization to stay would have been extended should continue to benefit from the social services of the country (education, Health care, etc.). The process of granting an authorization to stay for non refugees who are nevertheless in need of international protection is far from being completed. However, there is an incremental progress that gradually serves the objective of broadening the asylum space and thus impacting positively on the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in the country.

7. Burmese

Many of the above mentioned categories of ex-pilgrimage originate from Myanmar, and it was reported that there are hundreds perhaps even thousands of Burmese living in the Western Province and engaged in different terms of employment. It is particularly difficult for them to come to Riyadh to undergo the eligibility interviews due to the presence of check points between different cities in Saudi Arabia and also because of their limited financial resources. Owing to the sensitivity of the issue and its far reaching implications for the country; it is the government opinion that they need to regularize their situation first before they proceed with their asylum claim. This stance had in the past limited UNHCR activity in receiving asylum claims from this group.

In view of the above and in the absence of guidelines concerning asylum seekers from Myanmar and based on the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Meeting on RSD and asylum seekers from Myanmar held in Kuala Lumpur in 2004, RO Riyadh has adopted the following course of action for Burmese cases: registration of all the applicants; protection against deportation; counselling; regularization whenever requested or feasible; referral to a local NGO for assistance for vulnerable cases or cases in need of protection. RSD will be undertaken in case of threat of deportation.

8. Ahwazis

During the reporting period, LO Kuwait was dealing with a number of Ahwazi cases. Cases who contacted the office have families and jobs. The Ahwazi caseload claim connection with the various movements to liberate Ahwaz who exist in Canada and the UK. Applicants claim detention incidents by the Kuwaiti authorities. They claim that the state security is detaining them for few days and asking them to work as agents against the Iranian government. They also claimed that the state security is detecting their activities in Kuwait; and that they are refusing to allow renewal of their residence in Kuwait so as to be deported to Iran. The Ahwazis are claiming that their activities are peaceful and do not exceed raising funds for families of prisoners in Ahwaz. LO Kuwait has been counselling these cases and in coordination with RO Riyadh their claims are being assessed accordingly after RSD interviews.

9. Stateless

After many difficult years for stateless persons in Kuwait -- where they were not able to get official papers such as birth certificates and driving licenses -- things have started to move after instructions issued by the new Prime Minister. According to governmental reliable sources, Special attention will be given to issues related to education and health. The government also intends to give these individuals an opportunity to work without restrictions.

During the reporting period, Kuwaiti media have reported new measures in favour of bedoons. It has been reported that in accordance with two Amiri decrees 77 persons from naturalized parents will be granted Kuwaiti citizenship. An official from the Executive Committee for Illegal Residence Affairs stated that the Committee started to distribute "To whom it may concern" document to bedoons registered at the 1965 census to enable them to renew their driving license and issue birth certificates to their family members. The same source added that similar procedure will take place for bedoons registered after the 1965 census.

In a statement to Al-Qabas newspaper on June 13, the newly appointed Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for nationality and passport affairs, Major General Ahmad Al-Nawaf announced that bedoon issue is the top priority of his Office. In this regard, he stated that all cases involving bedoons will be definitely resolved during the next six months. He added that he issued instructions to all employees in the bedoon committee to deal effectively with problems faced by bedoons. He suggested opening a face-to-face dialogue with bedoons in order to find out, deal with their problems, and improve their situation

For the first time, a Bedoun Affairs Committee was elected by the Parliament with the aim of working to alleviate inhuman conditions faced by stateless persons in Kuwait. According to its Rapporteur, MP Khudair Al-Enezi, the Committee will submit to the Cabinet proposals including the issuance of civil identifications cards or any other identification documents attested by the Interior Ministry to all bedouns regardless of whether they are eligible or not to obtain a security clearance, adding that the proposed Civil ID policy is a step that can be taken in treating bedouns equally. Identity card holders will be given access to free public services such as education and health. This policy will also facilitate the processing and issuance of birth and marriage certificates. Indicating this will be the first step toward finally putting an end to the problems of bedouns in Kuwait, Al-Enezi said that government officials will ensure there will be no delay in the processing of their transactions in any government institution. The Committee asked its experts to prepare a study on the issue which will be submitted to the Government in order to take the necessary actions.

In October 2006 the President, His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, issued directives to find a comprehensive and permanent solution to all bidouns in the UAE, that will lead to closing their files once and for all. The Supreme Federal Council, comprising the rulers of the UAE's seven emirates, "has given the green light for procedures to naturalize" a first short list of 1,294 people. The final settlement will include around 10,000 stateless residents who live in UAE. The committee at the Ministry of Interior has put into consideration certain criteria for stateless people eligible for citizenship, including that they must have been residing in the country before declaration of UAE federation on December 2, 1971, and must not conceal any information or documents pertinent to their former nationalities and have not been convicted in any criminal felony."

UNHCR is monitoring the situation of the stateless in the UAE, and continues intervening on their behalf with the local or federal authorities on a case-by-case basis. One of UNHCR's objectives in UAE clearly aims at encouraging the Government of UAE to continue to maintain practices in line with international standards of treatment as well as encouraging its efforts to reduce statelessness.

- Population of concern # 3: Iraqis in the Gulf

Iraqis who have recently contacted UNHCR Abu Dhabi have indicated that in practice, residence permits are no longer granted by the Ministry of Interior to Iraqi nationals in UAE even if they had secured an employment and identified a local sponsor. According to information gathered by UNHCR Abu Dhabi on an informal basis the number of Iraqis in the UAE by the end of January 2007 was estimated to be around 91,300 comprising (42,000 residents and 49,300 on visit status). During the month of January 2007 UNHCR Abu Dhabi registered a total of 31 asylum cases, while during the month of February it registered 63 cases of Iraqi asylum-seekers who approached our office directly or referred by embassies in the country (Canada, American and Australian). In addition, UNHCR Abu Dhabi is receiving constant telephone calls seeking assistance.

It is noticeable that most of these individuals are highly educated including doctors, engineers, university professors, journalists, translators and civil servants, from both Shiaa and Sunni Muslims and a number of Christians. They also include Palestinians holding Iraqi travel documents. Most of them are from Baghdad or its neighboring towns and they include families, women with children, and singles. (See the attached breakdown). The majority of the Iraqis entered the UAE via Dubai or Sharjah airports with local visit visas, valid for a period of three months and renewable. Nevertheless, they all have problems in attaining legal residency since the Federal Government had stopped issuance of residency permits for Iraqi nationals even after managing to find jobs or legal sponsors. Due to their circumstances, they are all requesting UNHCR intervention with the authorities to allow them temporary stay in the UAE. Amongst those Iraqis are individuals who need financial and medical assistance. Most of Iraqis remain fearful of being deported under the strict UAE immigration regulations which may lead to demonstrations in front of UNHCR office which is located within UNDP premises. Those who can not remain legally in the country find themselves compelled to travel either to Jordan or Syria where they can enter without a visa.

According to information gathered by UNHCR Kuwait on an informal basis the number of Iraqis in Kuwait by the end of January 2007 was estimated to be 30.000 Iraqis on visit visas in addition to around 15.000 Iraqis who are legal residents in Kuwait. The current findings of the verification process reflected that only 300 Iraqi nationals are currently registered at LO Kuwait. Their numbers are in constant increases since September 2006 as LO Kuwait continues to open about 10 new Iraqi files per month. During the past month, LO Kuwait registered 16 new cases/35 Iraqi persons .

The Iraqi caseload in LO Kuwait consists of both Sunni and Shiaa Muslims. They are from Baghdad, Center and Southern parts of Iraq. Most of them are illegal residents or with temporary residence in Kuwait. They entered the country on visit visas valid only for 3 months. Now they are not willing to go back to Iraq and at the same time, unable to get legal residency in Kuwait or renew their stay. Some of them were compelled to leave Kuwait to another country like Syria, Jordan or Egypt because of their fear of exceeding their legal stay in the country and being unable to pay the fees of exceeding the stay which is 10KD for each illegal day (equal to US\$ 35)

Some of the new Iraqi asylum seekers registered with LO Kuwait are current or previous staff with International NGOs or claim to have worked with the American forces in Iraq. We registered staff from UNHCR implementing partners in Iraq such as the Danish Refugee

Council. LO Kuwait has already registered some IOM/Iraq staff member, HOC, Mercy Corps and other organizations.

Another particular group is the category of long-stayers who have been residing in Kuwait for many years and now unable to renew their residency due to the immigration restrictions on Iraqis in Kuwait. Some of these Iraqis have Kuwaiti spouses or relatives but still unable to legalize their stay in Kuwait. The Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers are contacting UNHCR office daily and instantly calling to ask questions about the help that UNHCR can provide for them. They all fear deportation in case they were caught by the Kuwaiti authorities .LO Kuwait is in constant contact and negotiations with the respective Kuwaiti authorities to maintain the protection of the Iraqis in Kuwait and to ensure the respect of the principle of non-refoulement . Same as for the UAE, Iraqis who can not remain legally in Kuwait and do not wish to return back home, are compelled to go either to Jordan. Syria or Egypt.

- [Population of concern # 4: Eritreans in Gizan](#)

During the reporting period, 183 Eritrean refugees in Gizan out of 215 were accepted for resettlement in the US. 29 refugees were not approved. Amongst the 183 refugees accepted for resettlement in the US, 180 refugees have already left Saudi Arabia for their resettlement in the US whereas the remaining 3 refugees are expected to leave in early 2007. The cases of 29 refugees, who were not approved by the US DHS officers, their cases have already been submitted to the Resettlement Hub in Beirut for onward submission to the traditional resettlement countries.

The period under report witnessed the arrival of 2 more Eritrean ex-military asylum seekers, who fled to Saudi Arabia in December 2006. These two asylum seekers were admitted by the Saudi authorities in Gizan and subsequently transferred to the military facility in Gizan, where they were kept in confinement along with the other residual caseload of 32 Eritrean refugees. Both the asylum seekers were interviewed for refugee status determination by RO Riyadh and consequently recognized as refugees under UNHCR mandate. Given their confinement, RO will give a high priority in the processing of their cases for resettlement and submissions to the US refugee program.

In 2005, all individual RRFs for the Eritrean refugees in Gizan were submitted to the US Refugee Coordinator in Cairo for resettlement consideration and onward processing prior to the visit of DHS officers to Gizan in the first quarter 2006.

All refugees were interviewed by IOM/DHS during the first half of 2006. At the end of the circuit ride in April 2006, the DHS has accepted 182 cases/185 persons totalling 86 % of the caseload; 1 case/1 person was denied; and 26 cases/28 persons did not qualify for resettlement in the US owing to the date of the date of joining the EPLF, as they joined the EPLF before Eritrea's independence in 1991. RO Riyadh has submitted those who were not qualified for resettlement to USA to the Regional Australian Immigration Officer in Beirut to explore the possibility of resettlement in Australia through the hub in UNHCR Beirut, which was supposed to conduct a selection mission during 2006, however it was deferred due to the outbreak of the war in Lebanon. Necessary counseling was however provided by the Protection Officer during his mission to Gizan to those cases along with the case that was denied resettlement in USA.

The year 2006 witnessed the safe departure of some 169 cases/172 persons of the accepted refugees in seven groups. While the remaining 10 cases/10 persons departed in January 2007.

Protection and Solutions Strategy for 2008-2009

- Population of concern # 1: Rafha caseload

UNHCR will continue to ensure that all refugees who have chosen the option to settle down in Saudi urban areas and those who are yet to leave the old camp site are receiving effective and adequate protection. UNHCR will continue to strategically use all three durable solutions for this caseload namely, facilitation of the voluntary repatriation process, temporary local integration in urban areas and resettlement. UNHCR will continue to counsel refugees and promote self-reliance for the urban ex-Rafha camp refugees. It is assumed that the Saudi authorities will continue to provide a generous repatriation/reintegration for refugees who will opt to return to Iraq. It is also assumed that in line with the “alternative arrangements” refugees who have opted to settle down in urban areas will continue to have free medical care and access to education for their children.

- Population of concern # 2: Urban caseload

RO Riyadh will continue to work towards the expansion of the asylum space in Saudi Arabia and in the GCC countries in order to address the needs of potential bona fide urban asylum seekers and refugees.

Emergency cases will receive urgent protection consideration and adequate/timely attention in terms of finding durable solutions. In some instances, it might be difficult to timely process resettlement due to scarcity of possibilities and to the increasingly restrictive criteria imposed by the traditional resettlement countries.

RO Riyadh will also work towards the access of refugees to the basic social and economic rights same as what is generally available for the other foreigners (education, medical care, housing, access to assistance or employment) and to preserve the unity and integrity of the families (no forcible return for the nuclear family members who are in the country on a visit visa).

Regularization of Persons of Concern

When voluntary repatriation for recognized refugees is not feasible or foreseeable within an acceptable time frame, resettlement is usually considered as a durable solution and a vital instrument of protection to safeguard recognized refugees from being forcibly deported to their country of origin, given the lack of possibility of local integration in Saudi Arabia and the gulf countries. However, following the regularization of a Burmese case, illegally residing in Makkah further to RO’s intervention with the Saudi authorities, preference would be given, whenever possible, for the regularization of persons of concern in the country of asylum especially for long stayers.

Negotiations with the authorities on the content of the complementary form of Protection

RO Riyadh will continue to provide necessary counseling and documentation for certain groups of persons of concern residing in the gulf countries, e.g., Liberians, Burmese, Sudanese (originating from Darfur) and Somalis. RO will carry on its negotiations and interventions, whenever required, with the authorities on their behalf to ensure protection

against deportation/expulsion; temporary authorization to stay, regularization whenever requested or feasible; referral to local NGOs for assistance for vulnerable or needy cases

- [Population of concern # 3: Iraqis in the Gulf](#)

Registration of Iraqis in the Gulf

Emphasize on registration of all Iraqis in the Gulf countries approaching UNHCR. This is the first step for a fair access to procedures and necessary protection tool against refoulement.

Protection

After having assessed the intention of the various governments in the Gulf region regarding this particular caseload and its protection needs (documentation, authorization to stay, etc.), RO Riyadh will work in partnership with the local authorities in order to ensure that adequate and effective protection is provided to Iraqis in the Gulf.

Durable Solutions

UNHCR offices in the Gulf countries will continue to closely monitor the situation in country of origin. Should the situation remains non conducive for repatriation, RO Riyadh will spare no efforts in order to ensure that Iraqis in the Gulf are treated in accordance with the guidelines issued by HQ. Cases eligible for resettlement will be processed and submitted to potential receiving countries.

Assistance

Vulnerable cases in need of assistance will be referred by UNHCR to local NGOs. Experience has proven that local NGOs are, in general, in a much better position than UNHCR to provide regular assistance to vulnerable cases in the Gulf.

- [Population of concern # 4: Eritreans in Gizan](#)

UNHCR will continue to closely monitor the protection and assistance situation of the remaining Eritrean refugees (31) in Gizan and counsel the refugees and the authorities. UNHCR will continue its on-going efforts until the resettlement of the remaining caseload. UNHCR will promote a “Visit Programme” to the nearby city in Gizan in order to decrease the frustration of the refugees who have been in this location since 2004-05.

○ [Overall Objectives and their Links to GSOs/ RSOs](#)

○ [Partnership and Collaboration](#)

- [Population of concern # 1: Rafha caseload](#)

Ministries of Defence and Aviation and Interior (MODA) and (MOI) and the International Islamic Relief Organization IIRO.

- [Population of concern # 2: Urban caseload](#)

In all six GCC countries, Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Saudi Arabia, International Islamic Relief Organization IIRO and SRCS; in Kuwait Beit Al Zakat and KRCS; in UAE RCS and other NGOs in the different Emirates.

- [Population of concern # 3: Iraqis in the Gulf](#)

In all six GCC countries, Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

- [Population of concern # 4: Eritreans in Gizan](#)

Ministry of Interior (MOI) in Saudi Arabia

- [Assumptions and Constraints](#)

- [Population of concern # 1: Rafha caseload](#)

One of the main constraints that might be faced with respect to this beneficiary population would be their inability to find suitable job opportunities especially that most of them had been unemployed for the last 15 years and hence would not be able to cover their basic needs. In that respect, RO Riyadh has been promoting with its Saudi counterparts the possibility to have some NGOs organizing trainings and self reliance courses for refugees who would need it.

Towards the end of the reporting period, some refugees in Rafha town expressed concerns of the possible fall out of the Suna/Shia conflict in Iraq on their situation. RO Riyadh will continue to closely monitor this situation and its impact, if any, on their protection situation.

- [Population of concern # 2: Urban caseload](#)

In respect of the expansion of the scope of applicability of UNHCR's mandate in KSA and other related Gulf countries RO Riyadh continues to work towards achieving its objectives, while recognizing some major constraints:

- The reluctance of KSA to allow UNHCR to extend its protection role to the illegal stayers mainly visa or pilgrimage overstayers who may claim asylum during the pilgrimage and to infiltrators from neighbouring countries whose number is reportedly very high;
- Gulf governments still hesitate to take steps towards formal accession to the 1951 Convention despite UNHCR's efforts to promote refugee law principles.
- The fear of the Gulf countries to destabilise a situation where tens of thousands of people originating from refugee producing countries have been enjoying for years a de facto asylum;
- The apprehension not to jeopardise the nascent protection space by creating pull factors in countries having porous land and sea borders with some refugee producing countries;

Protection needs of urban refugees will be addressed by ensuring Governments' commitment to basic refugee law principles, including non-refoulement and by assessing asylum claims through conducting RSD and finding durable solutions in accordance with UNHCR standards and procedures.

Although a promising attitude of tolerance and non-refoulement towards the refugees and asylum seekers has been shown by the Gulf Governments, yet much is to be done in order to strengthen the foundations of the nascent institution of the International Protection in the region and to be codified and to reinforce it by practical arrangements or renegotiations and amendment of MOUs.

UNHCR will strive to attain its objectives assuming that the present level of relations with the Gulf countries in dealing with asylum seekers and refugees is maintained. The agreed procedures with the local authorities would need to remain in force and bureaucratic difficulties would not be allowed to impede the implementation of the objectives. It is assumed that the office would enjoy the present level of co-operation with the NGOs' and charity organisations operating in the GCC States.

UNHCR will continue to receive asylum seekers and will continue to have access to asylum seekers in detention at the deportation centres. It is also assumed that the present working arrangements for asylum and international protection would be functional and maintained.

- **Population of concern # 3: Iraqis in the Gulf**

Since the publication by HQ in January 2007 of the Return Advisory and Position on International Protection Needs of Iraqis outside Iraq, RO Riyadh has been consulting with HQ on ways and means to adapt these latest guidelines to the reality of the Gulf.

RO Riyadh believes that the implementation of the latest guidelines on Iraqis in the Gulf necessitates the followings:

- To strengthen the processing capacity of UNHCR in Kuwait and Abu Dhabi by additional protection staff and in particular in the field of registration (installation of the ProGres, additional human resources in the field of registration and protection).
 - To coordinate and if possible, harmonize the practices between UNHCR offices in the Gulf and in the Middle East in order to limit the flow of irregular movements between these two sub-regions.
 - To engage a dialogue at an adequate level with the GCC countries based on (a) the standard of treatment of Iraqis as per the latest Position paper on the international protection needs of Iraqis outside Iraqi, (b) the principles of responsibility and burden sharing among countries in the region
- **Population of concern # 4: Eritreans in Gizan**

It is assumed that the Saudi government will continue to grant the residual caseload of Eritrean refugees with temporary protection. They will continue to provide them with all material assistance and basic human needs in Gizan confinement. They will continue to render necessary medical services in public medical facilities in Gizan (including the specialized ones). In case of any new medical cases including HIV among the residual caseload, they will be provided with necessary medication in clinic in Gizan. All Eritrean refugees will be provided with sessions on the preventive measures against the spread of HIV and Hepatitis. RO Riyadh will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the standard necessary procedures in terms of medical and psychological treatment of these cases by the concerned Saudi authorities.

- **Potential for Durable Solutions and Phase Out**

- **Population of concern # 1: Rafha caseload**

Following the official closure of Rafha camp in 2006, refugees, refugees who opted to benefit from the alternative arrangement, were allowed to live outside the camp as urban refugees and enjoyed the protection of the Saudi government and UNHCR. They will be able to live a normal life with the population in Saudi Arabia and will be provided with special refugee ID cards. The refugees were exempted from the residence permit fees

upon finding of an employer. Free education services were provided to refugee children as well as free access to health services. In future, whoever wants to return to Iraq will be facilitated to do so and in co-ordination with UNHCR. The Saudi authorities are still tolerating the presence of a small group (88 persons) in the old camp location.

In view of the above mentioned developments and should the situation stabilize further to the exit of the remaining refugees from the old camp location, UNHCR may consider phasing out from Rafha while keeping a monitoring protection role only.

- **Population of concern # 2: Urban caseload**

Due to non-resolution of the ongoing conflicts in their countries of origin, very few refugees would be willing to repatriate.

Gulf governments will continue to hesitate to take steps towards formal accession to the 1951 Convention despite UNHCR's efforts to promote refugee law principles.

UNHCR will continue to gradually extend its overall protection role, including RSD, in order to address the needs of potential bona fide urban asylum seekers and refugees.

- **Population of concern # 3: Iraqis in the Gulf**

The phasing out of UNHCR from this caseload will depend on the future developments of the situation in the country of origin, the intention of the host governments in the Gulf (admission, authorization to stay) and the processing capacity of UNHCR offices in the region.

Population of concern # 4: Eritreans in Gizan

Given the lack of voluntary repatriation for this group, which is not possible or foreseeable in the near future, and taking into consideration that they have been admitted in Saudi Arabia on temporary basis pending identification of durable solution in a third country by UNHCR and that there is no prospect for their local integration in Saudi Arabia, the resubmission to another resettlement country for the residual Eritrean caseload in Gizan, who might be rejected by DHS, will be conducted during 2006. Following identification of resettling country/countries, necessary travel arrangement will be expedited on their behalf during 2006 (if possible) and 2007 (probably).

Resettlement

Pursuant to the High Commissioner's global strategic objectives, UNHCR Riyadh will continue to give priority to use resettlement as a durable solution and as part of comprehensive protection strategy. In this regard UNHCR Riyadh will ensure that resettlement needs are identified and robust submissions are made to the resettlement Hub in Beirut or through HQ.

Given the peculiarities of the Gulf countries in terms of their demographic profile and vast wealth, KSA and other GCC countries have adopted very strict immigration policies. As a result, naturalisation of foreigners has been extremely limited. Saudi Arabia and the GCC countries accept the presence of refugees on their territory on temporary basis only. They are

not signatories to the 1951 Convention, neither to the 1967 Protocol concerning refugees and there is no asylum policy in their national legislations/regulations. None of the recognized refugees (camp/urban) have ever been locally integrated in these countries with the exception of few Ugandan families in Dubai in 1997. With the lack of possibility of local integration and as voluntary repatriation is not feasible or foreseeable within an acceptable time frame, resettlement is considered as a vital durable solution and an instrument of protection. Resettlement is a safeguard for recognized refugees from being forcibly deported to their country of origin.

Implications for the Protection and Solutions Strategy for 2007.

Iraqi urban refugee caseload (ex-Rafha)

RO Riyadh will continue to pursue with the HQ and Resettlement Hub to find a quick solutions in terms of resettlement for some Iraqi refugees (ex-Rafha), who exited the camp and for whom Resettlement was contemplated as an integral part of the comprehensive exit solution from Rafha camp. Given the protracted nature of this caseload, it might be a difficult task to find a country to accept them for resettlement.

Eritrean Caseload

RO Riyadh will continue to follow up on the resettlement opportunities of the residual refugee caseload along with the two newly arrived Eritrean refugees with the resettlement hub in Beirut, since they have been admitted in Saudi Arabia on temporary basis pending identification of durable solution in a third country by UNHCR.

It is also believed that there would be some individual refugees fleeing Eritrea and seeking asylum because of the human rights situation and the impending war between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Other Individual Urban Cases

UNHCR will continue to use resettlement as a protection tool and to achieve protection objectives. It would also be ensured that resettlement is used strategically to achieve other durable solutions and create protection dividends such as expanding the asylum space and improve conditions of asylum.

- [Achievements to date per programme as defined by theme # 1: Promotion of Refugee Law and capacity building](#)

In the absence of national institutions dealing with asylum and in the absence of any Saudi signing and ratifying the main international instruments related to refugees, building the capacity of our national counterparts and the promotion of refugee law is of extreme importance. These two activities have proven to be instrumental in increasing a better knowledge and understanding of the basic refugee law principles and UNHCR mandate. These activities have positively reflected on the protection of refugees and persons of concern by improving our counterparts' daily practices and creating precedents. We believe that capacity building and the promotion of refugee law will ultimately facilitate the achievement of RO Riyadh's strategic objective which consists in the adoption of a domestic refugee law and the accession to the 1951 Convention.

It might be premature at this stage to provide a list of trainings to be undertaken in 2008-09 however, as an indication, here is a list of the trainings that have been organized by RO Riyadh in the last two years:

- 1- RO Riyadh conducted a Refugee Law Training in February 2005 in Jeddah for some 35 OIC staff in preparation for the OIC Ministerial Conference on Refugees in the Moslem World.
- 2- RO Riyadh conducted a workshop on Refugee Law in Doha in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar in June 2005.
- 3- RO Riyadh conducted a Refugee Law Workshop in Abu Dhabi in December 2005 for some 35 key officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Justice.
- 4- RO Riyadh organized a workshop on Asylum and Security in collaboration with the Naif University for Security Sciences (NAUSS) in KSA in April 2005.
- 5- UNHCR Headquarters and RO Riyadh organized an Age gender diversity mainstreaming in Kuwait during November 2006.
- 6- RO Riyadh organized with the Human Rights Section of Dubai Police a training on Sexual Gender Based Violence in Dubai in December 2006.

RO Riyadh is planning to conduct the following workshops during 2007:

- Refugee Law training to the Saudi Ministries of Interior (MOI) and Defense and Aviation (MODA).
 - Refugee Law training for MOI in Kuwait during March 2007.
 - Training for the Omani Diplomatic Institute is tentatively planned in Oman during May 2007.
 - Symposium with Naif University for Security Sciences (NAUSS) on migration and asylum is planned during the 1st week of June 2007.
 - Training on statelessness is tentatively planned in Kuwait on the 3rd week of October 2007.
 - Training for Judges is tentatively planned in UAE on 4th week November 2007.
- [Achievements to date per programme](#) as defined by theme #2: **Public Information and Fund Raising**

Public Awareness

RR Riyadh public awareness and information activities will continue to target the untapped potential of the Gulf region, further instil better understanding of UNHCR role and activities and stimulate support of governments, NGOs and the public at large to UNHCR and the cause of refugees. However, continued limited means and resources still hamper the chance of considerably better achievements especially in light of the negative ramifications of 9/11.

Promotion of awareness of UNHCR role and activities in 2008-9 will be carried out through the following activities:

- Arrange additional press, audio and visual interviews, debates and broadcast of UNHCR-related documentaries with major local and regional media and increase distribution of press releases, news updates, briefings, humanitarian advertisements, contribution of articles and feature stories in Arabic and upgrade/ increase the effectiveness of the sub Gulf region Arabic and new UN websites.

- Consolidate relations with and capacity building for local and regional media, regional and inter governmental organizations, development funds, parliaments, academic/educational/training institutions, strategic studies/Research centres, women societies, bar associations/human rights & advocacy organizations, business communities including chambers of commerce and major corporations and private funds and prominent individuals.
- Organize working sessions with the Secretariats of the OIC, the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Solidarity Fund.
- Pursue the establishment of advocacy groups/committees to lend support to and promote UNHCR mandate and asylum in the region..
- Strengthen/expand bilateral partnerships and multilateral relations within the GNN process with main Gulf NGOs by concluding/implementing additional co-operation agreements, capacity building, field cooperation/coordination and joint public awareness and fund raising programs.
- Pursue the implementation and operation of the @ Center in Doha, Qatar and the regional stockpile center in Dubai, UAE.
- Organize/implement special activities (e.g. UNHCR Day) / creative initiatives (e.g. with the business community, schools, artists, sports, Good Will Ambassador, etc.) and UNHCR related events such as World Refugee Day.
- Organize visits of UNHCR government and non-government counterparts and, whenever appropriate representatives of the local and regional media to HQ and the Field
- Participate in cultural and commercial fairs, public and private sector exhibitions and charity bazaars.

Fund Raising

The Gulf countries humanitarian assistance to refugees remains mainly bilateral in character due to deeply rooted political perceptions and cultural practices. This has been further compounded by the war on terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11 and its ramifications represented by increased restrictions and added regulations on private and public fund raising in the region. RR Riyadh resolute efforts, supported by the Working Group, within the context of its long term systematic regional and integrated approach will endeavour to influence these trends to increase the returns of the fund raising process in the region. However, significant advances in the utilization of the region's immense potential will depend on long term commitment, availability of adequate financial and professional/specialized human resource (i.e. investment) in addition to the extent of co-operation and support provided from HQ and UNHCR field offices.

RR Riyadh fund raising efforts in 2006 with above donors managed in drawing contributions and pledges to UNHCR programs and projects totalling USD 4,129,552.

Additional financial assistance to UNHCR programs and projects will be sought in 2008-9 through the following efforts/activities:

- Strive to increase existing governmental annual contributions to UNHCR budget in accordance with the 30% base line criteria. Also, draw additional governmental financial assistance to and further involvement in UNHCR emergencies/special appeals/specific-situations.
- Strengthen partnerships with Gulf NGOs to induce additional and more systematic financial and in-kind support to UNHCR requirements. This will also involve increased UNHCR project submittals and the implementation of joint schemes.

- Implement plan of action for private sector fund raising emanating from a specialized study, or if not materialized, further apply fund raising pilot projects with selected leading corporations, prominent figures and foundations.
- Develop appropriate methods for channelling assistance to/financing of UNHCR programs and projects through governmental, regional and local assistance and development funds/institutions. Also, Strengthen existing relations with local Zakat funds/establishments to generate additional funding for UNHCR programs.

- **Security**

RR Riyadh is MOSS compliant. There are no designated UNHCR Field Safety Advisor/Assistant. Security regulations, information, material requirements and provisions including guarding services and equipment, medical supplies, modifications and upgrades are overseen by a Security Focal Point (SFP), currently the External Relations Officer. The SFP coordinates with the UN Security Field Advisor on security operational and implementation issues including UNHCR security and emergence plans and the UN country security plan. Overall management and policy matters are the responsibility of the UN Senior Management Team (Heads of Agencies). In 2006, staff members were requested to implement the UN advanced Security in the Field training program. In 2008-9 further improvements are needed to enhance the office's and staff safety and security including upgrading and expanding security equipment& systems, guarding services as well as staff members awareness and level of compliance with security rules and regulations.

1. Management objectives

The justification and rationale for UNHCR's involvement in the Gulf Region are mainly:

- Enhancing UNHCR's mandate, strengthening the asylum institution in the Gulf Region and assist governments to deal with asylum seekers and refugees in line with international standards through training and local capacity building. Promoting Refugee Law principles, fostering protection culture in the Region and enhancement of partnership.
- Safeguarding and whenever possible expanding the asylum space in the GCC countries including access to all asylum seekers and the promotion alternative arrangements in accordance with the local immigration regulations. Encouraging GCC states to accede to international instruments regarding refugees and stateless persons.
- Fostering operational partnership with Gulf-based regional institutions and NGOs, and mobilizing financial support.
- Ensuring continued protection, care and maintenance to the residual caseload of Rafha.
- Persuing durable solutions for refugees facilitating or organizing (if circumstances permit) and in particular repatriation programmes for Iraqi refugees and those in refugee like situation.
- Mobilizing
 - (1) political support from GCC governments to UNHCR;
 - (2) support from the public opinion for the refugee cause; and
 - (3) financial support from governments, NGOs and private sectors.

Within the framework of asylum system development, the office will continue to pay special attention to gender related standards in the RSD procedures. During negotiations with the local authorities on individual cases, government officials would be sensitised on the special needs of women. Similarly, UNHCR policy on refugee women will be promoted in any thematic event organised with the participation of Governments, NGOs and civil society elements.

RO, in line with the protection guidelines on refugee children, will adopt a more structured approach in dealing with this issue and the special protection needs of refugee children will continue to be taken into account during negotiations with local authorities on finding local solutions and in search for other types of durable solutions.

RO will continue to secure assistance from NGOs' and charity organisations.

RO will continue to closely monitor statelessness issues and will liaise with the Stateless Committee at the Ministry of Interior in order to advance the cause of the stateless persons.

RO will continue to adapt the security arrangement of its premises in Riyadh as per the development of the security situation in the country. Security arrangement will continue to be provided by a private firm with which RO Riyadh has been dealing for the last two years.

RO will liaise with the Bureau to implement the External Relations strategy that has been adopted for the region.

Despite the fact that important advances have been achieved in relation to governments multilateral contribution, RO will continue to work systematically within the External Relations Strategy in order to increase donor support within governments in the region. RO will further develop its communication network to include government bodies that have direct links with the civil society and will seek, in co-ordination with HQ, the involvement of the Gulf country leadership.

Notwithstanding the vast prospective of fund raising in the private sector, especially from the general public, tangible results will require substantial resources. Consequently, RO fund raising activities during this period will continue to focus on selected leading corporations, prominent figures and foundations. RO will also work closely with HQs to advance the work of the working group on fund-raising in the GCC Region, aiming at adopting a systematic, well-studied plan of action for fund raising, in particular, private sector, fund raising.

2. Justification for post requirements and administrative budgets

Post Requirements:

RO Riyadh needs in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries in the field of protection, programme, public information/fund raising and administration, have been thoroughly reviewed in respect of staffing and administrative budgetary requirements, in conjunction with its overall operational responsibilities.

Office Structure

In view of the significant increase in the volume of protection and resettlement activities coupled with the growing need for intervention and opportunities for fund-raising, UNHCR

presence in Abu Dhabi would need to be strengthened. A separate ABOD is therefore submitted for UAE. The Liaison Office in Kuwait where the volume of protection and resettlement activities have considerably increased will also be strengthened but will remain in the UNAMI compound. All the offices will be under the overall supervision of the Regional Office. RO Riyadh will have one ABOD for KSA and Kuwait and one operational Project covering costs related to all activities in the Gulf.

Staffing structure for RO Riyadh including Kuwait and Abu-Dhabi offices as of March 2007:

Category	UNHCR Saudi Arabia		UNHCR Kuwait	UNHCR Abu Dhabi	Total
	Riyadh	Rafha			
International Staff	4*	-	1*		5*
General Service staff	7	1	2	1	11
Staff under UNDP Contracts	-	-	1		1
Other UNHCR arrangements (TA appointments)	-	1	2	1	4
Total	11	2	6	2	21

Staffing Requirements:

Taking into consideration the overall structure of the Regional Representation office, there is a need to create 8 new posts, and reclassification along with downgrading of 1 post.

Reclassification/ Downgrading (UNHCR Abu Dhabi Office):

1. Reclassification of Post no 650004 Special Advisor (L-5) to Senior Liaison Officer (L-4).

Creation of 8 new posts:

1. Creation of a post of Data Entry Clerk in Abu Dhabi (GL 3)

The volume of protection and resettlement related activities have significantly increased in the past period at UNHCR Abu Dhabi. As a result, the office in Abu Dhabi needs the post to undertake in a systematic manner all the refugee data-base, registration and statistical reporting activities that are needed in Abu Dhabi.

2. Creation of a post of Data Entry Clerk in Kuwait (GL 3)

The volume of protection and resettlement related activities have significantly increased in the past period at UNHCR Kuwait. As a result, the office in Kuwait needs the post to undertake in a systematic manner all the refugee data-base, registration and statistical reporting activities that are needed in Kuwait.

3. Creation of a post of Protection Officer post in Kuwait (L-3)

The volume of protection and resettlement related activities have significantly increased during the past period in Kuwait. These activities were performed by Protection Assistant and

a Consultant, who were hired under TA and SSA agreement in early and late 2006 respectively. As a result, UNHCR Kuwait need the post to undertake in a systematic and timely manner all the protection and resettlement activities that are needed in Kuwait. Besides, UNHCR has also to expand its ongoing capacity building activities in order to create further opportunities in promotion of refugee law and in increasing a better understanding of the basic refugee law principles and UNHCR mandate responsibilities in the Kuwait.

4. Creation of a post of Protection Officer post in Abu Dhabi (L-3)

The volume of protection and resettlement related activities have significantly increased during the past period in UAE. These activities were performed by Protection Assistant and Data Entry Clerk who was hired under TA. As a result, UNHCR Abu Dhabi needs the post to undertake in a systematic and timely manner all the protection and resettlement activities that are needed in UAE. Besides, UNHCR has also to expand its ongoing capacity building activities in order to create further opportunities in promotion of refugee law and in increasing a better understanding of the basic refugee law principles and UNHCR mandate responsibilities in the UAE.

5. Creation of a post of Admin./Finance Assistant in Kuwait (GL-6)

The volume of Administrative and Finance issues have significantly increased following the expansion of UNHCR operations in Kuwait. This operation in the past was curtailed to one man show and now because of the revival of the office in Kuwait, the need for the Administrative and Finance Assistant is required at UNHCR Kuwait. The Admin/Finance Assistant post is to undertake and advise on the Financial and Administrative policies, procedures rules and regulations.

6. Creation of a post of Administrative Officer in Riyadh (L-3)

The volume of Administrative and Personnel issues have significantly increased following the expansion of UNHCR operations in Kuwait and Abu Dhabi. These operations were in the past either curtailed to one person show or even closed down. Because of the revival of these two offices in Kuwait and Abu Dhabi, the need for the Administrative Officer is required at RO Riyadh in order to undertake and advise on the Administrative and Personnel policies, procedures rules and regulations.

7. Creation of a post of Durable Solutions in FO Rafha (GL-6)

The volume of durable solutions activities have significantly increased following the exiting of Iraqi refugees from Rafha camp to the Rafha town and other Urban locations under the alternative solutions arrangements provided by the KSA Government. The implementation of these activities and to liaise with the Government counterparts for the coordination of the movement outside the camp, monitoring of spontaneous return and resettlement processing that are needed at UNHCR Field Office Rafha, the Durable Solution Assistant is to undertake these activities in a systematic manner without any delays. Besides, the incumbent is to monitor the protection related issues of the Iraqi refugees.

8. Creation of a post of Protection Clerk in Riyadh (GL-4)

The volume of protection and resettlement related activities have significantly increased during the past period in Riyadh. As a result, UNHCR RO Riyadh need the Protection Clerk post to undertake and maintain in a systematic manner a robust and credible refugee data-base, registration and statistical reporting activities that are needed at RO Riyadh.

RO Riyadh ABOD:

Further to the instruction received from HQs concerning the necessity to limit the expenditure in 2008 and 2009 to the existing budget, RO Riyadh has exercised maximum restraints and has limited its submission to the strict minimum (staffing, admin costs) in order to be able to carry on its duties in an efficient manner.

It is also to be mentioned that following to the recommendation of UNSECOORD, security expenditure have been included in the 2008 and 2009 ABODs.

In view of the above, the administrative budget for 2008 & 2009 has been submitted to the level of USD 400,000 respectively including USD 128,000 for security budget each year.

We would like to mention that the entire amount of expenditures under RO ABOD is reimbursable by the Government of Saudi Arabia through MODA (Ministry of Defence and Aviation) on a monthly or quarterly basis and recorded as contributions from the Government of Saudi Arabia.

**A. 03X (Temporary Assistance) Total required budget in 2008 is US\$ 25,867
Total required budget in 2009 is US\$ 33,500**

The budget under this chapter is needed in case of unplanned absence. Staff will be hired under Temporary Assistance in case of absence of existing staff for official reasons i.e. maternity/paternity leave or home leave.

**B. 05X (Over Time) Total required budget in 2008 is US\$ 8,000
Total required budget in 2009 is US\$ 8,000**

Overtime is proposed for the staff required working beyond the official working hours or on weekends.

**C. 2XX (Travel) Total required budget in 2008 is US\$ 64,000
Total required budget in 2009 is US\$ 64,000**

An increase of US\$ 4,000 compared to the 2007 travel budget is needed to cover the travel cost in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The increased amounts will cover the additional travel expenses needed for Three International staff in Riyadh, Abu-Dhabi and Kuwait offices. Regional posts in Riyadh office will be travelling to these countries to fulfil their supervisory role. The budget under this chapter will also cover the travel cost for the extra regional travel of the Regional Representative and Deputy Representative to HQs and other offices whenever requested. A Provision is also made to cover the cost of the Regional Information System Officer's mission during the year.

**D. 31X (Training Services) Total required budget in 2008 is US\$
500
Total required budget in 2009 is US\$
500**

Since training is a mandatory tool in improving the staff's operational capacity; therefore a provision has been made under this chapter to cover the training needs of UNHCR staff in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

Total required budget in 2009 is US\$ 8,000

The amount budgeted under this chapter will cover fuel and lubricants for the vehicles of RO Riyadh and Kuwait office.

M. 6XX (Furniture and Equipment)

Total required budget in 2008 is US 20,302

Total required budget in 2009 is US 19,600

The amounts of USD \$ 20,302 and USD \$ 19,600 in 2008 and 2009 respectively are needed to equipped the offices of the new required posts in RO Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait (EDP equipment, photocopiers, telecommunication equipment). The total budget also included the equipment needed for incorporating the people-soft programme for LO Kuwait and Abu Dhabi.

N. 9XX (Joint UN Activities)
12,000

Total required budget in 2008 is US\$

12,000

Total required budget in 2009 is US\$

Provisions for USD\$ 12,000 in both financial year of 2008 and 2009 are needed to meet the implementing partner service charges.

Part Two - RBM Results Tables by Programme

- Summary Table for the Programme showing overall Budget and Sectoral Budgets
- Sectoral Tables showing Sector Objectives, Baselines, Targets, Specific Links to GSO Sub-Objectives and Targets, Summary Budgets by target for implementing partners and UNHCR

Country (or Sub-Region)	
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Population of Concern/ Theme # 1		Relevant Project(s):	08/AB/SAU/CM/201 09/AB/SAU/CM/201		
Overall Goal (s)		Budget for the Programme			
		2008	2009	Total	

Sector Objective(s)²	Current year situation	Objective for 2008 to 2009	Impact indicators
1.			

Baseline situation for core problems/ areas of focus in sector as of end 2006 ³	Link to GSO ⁴	Target end 2007	Target end 2008	Implementing Partner Budget for 2008 in USD	UNHCR Budget for 2008 in USD	Target end 2009	Implementing Partner Budget for 2009 in USD	UNHCR Budget for 2009 in USD
O: Legal Assistance/ Protection: 1. Improving protection against	1.1	States respect the principle of non-refoulment and grant all asylum-seekers access to asylum	States respect the principle of non-refoulment and grant all asylum-seekers access to		64,000	States respect the principle of non-refoulment and grant all asylum-seekers access to asylum procedures that provide for		31,333

² Maximum 3 objectives per sector

³ Problems that require a multi-sectoral response should be planned and budgeted for in each relevant sector. For each core problem/ area of focus indicate the source of the baseline information, (Participatory Assessment (PA), Standards and Indicator Report (SIR), Annual Protection Report (APR), Joint Food Assessment (JFA), Other Assessments (OA)

⁴ Indicate the specific numeric reference to GSO Sub-Objectives, e.g. 2.1, 3.1, etc.

<p>refoulment and physical security and reducing incidents of violence, in particular preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence.</p> <p>2. Preserving asylum space through effective implementation of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol and related international and regional standard.</p> <p>3. Enhancing the use of resettlement as a strategic protection tool, durable solution, and burden and responsibility sharing</p>	<p>2.1</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p>procedures that provide for fair, effective and prompt decision-making with UNHCR’s monitoring detecting no instances of refugees being returned against their will,</p> <p>UNHCR operations have in place standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence including systematic and timely reporting,</p> <p>The legal frameworks and administrative capacities of States are strengthened in order to ensure compliance with their international protection obligations,</p> <p>Expand the strategic use of resettlement in line with the guidance provided in the</p>	<p>asylum procedures that provide for fair, effective and prompt decision-making with UNHCR’s monitoring detecting no instances of refugees being returned against their will,</p> <p>UNHCR operations have in place standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence including systematic and timely reporting,</p> <p>The legal frameworks and administrative capacities of States are strengthened in order to ensure</p>			<p>fair, effective and prompt decision-making with UNHCR’s monitoring detecting no instances of refugees being returned against their will,</p> <p>UNHCR operations have in place standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence including systematic and timely reporting,</p> <p>The legal frameworks and administrative capacities of States are strengthened in order to ensure compliance with their international protection obligations,</p> <p>Expand the strategic use of resettlement in line with the guidance provided in the Multilateral Framework of Understanding on Resettlement,</p>		
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mechanism.		Multilateral Framework of Understanding on Resettlement,	compliance with their international protection obligations, Expand the strategic use of resettlement in line with the guidance provided in the Multilateral Framework of Understanding on Resettlement,					
C: Domestic Items/Household : 1. Ensuring civil, social and economic rights are secured and opportunities for self-reliance maximized with particular attention to the rights of women and children.	1.3	Self-reliance and empowerment of refugees including community self-management enhanced in UNHCR operation enabling refugees' increased enjoyment of their civil, social and economic rights, reduced dependence on assistance and enhanced sustainability of any of the three durable solutions.	Self-reliance and empowerment of refugees including community self-management enhanced in UNHCR operation enabling refugees' increased enjoyment of their civil, social and economic rights, reduced dependence on assistance and enhanced sustainability of		79,400	Self-reliance and empowerment of refugees including community self-management enhanced in UNHCR operation enabling refugees' increased enjoyment of their civil, social and economic rights, reduced dependence on assistance and enhanced sustainability of any of the three durable solutions.		102,000

			any of the three durable solutions.					
F: Health/ Nutrition: 1. Preventing malnutrition, and reducing the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS.	1.2	Refugees will have access to appropriate HIV and AIDS information-education-communication (IEC) material and can benefit from antiretroviral therapy (ART).	Refugees will have access to appropriate HIV and AIDS information-education-communication (IEC) material and can benefit from antiretroviral therapy (ART).		2,666.	Refugees will have access to appropriate HIV and AIDS information-education-communication (IEC) material and can benefit from antiretroviral therapy (ART).		5,333
Education: 1. Ensuring the right to education.	1.4	School enrolment of primary-aged boys and girls in camp and urban situations increased.	School enrolment of primary-aged boys and girls in camp and urban situations increased.			School enrolment of primary-aged boys and girls in camp and urban situations increased.		
Agency Operational Support: 1. Strengthening UNHCR's partnership and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular with Governments, the UN and NGOs. 2.	6.2 6.5	UNHCR is active participant in UN common programming processes and utilize comprehensive assessment of needs and participatory planning with stakeholders to strengthen partnership and develop strategies	UNHCR is active participant in UN common programming processes and utilize comprehensive assessment of needs and participatory planning with stakeholders to		83,267	UNHCR is active participant in UN common programming processes and utilize comprehensive assessment of needs and participatory planning with stakeholders to strengthen partnership and develop strategies that utilize the full range of resources available, Management Systems		120,000

<p>Institutionalizing results-based management as a fundamental performance and accountability framework for the organization.</p>		<p>that utilize the full range of resources available, Management Systems Renewal Project roll-out completed resulting in increased efficiency and savings.</p>	<p>strengthen partnership and develop strategies that utilize the full range of resources available, Management Systems Renewal Project roll-out completed resulting in increased efficiency and savings.</p>			<p>Renewal Project roll-out completed resulting in increased efficiency and savings.</p>		
<p>P22: Public Information: 1.Raising UNHCR's overall visibility, branding and image, 2.Expanding UNHCR's donor base and increasing contribution to UNHCR's programmes.</p>	<p>5.2 5.3</p>	<p>New Public Information strategy, including a multi-media branding campaign, developed and under implementation, resulting in increased visibility and public awareness of UNHCR, New fund raising strategy that includes country specific strategies that take into account bilateral and other initiatives</p>	<p>New Public Information strategy, including a multi-media branding campaign, developed and under implementation, resulting in increased visibility and public awareness of UNHCR, New fund raising strategy that includes country</p>		<p>70,667</p>	<p>New Public Information strategy, including a multi-media branding campaign, developed and under implementation, resulting in increased visibility and public awareness of UNHCR, New fund raising strategy that includes country specific strategies that take into account bilateral and other initiatives being implemented, resulting in an enlarged donor base and increased contributions to UNHCR</p>		<p>31,200</p>

		being implemented, resulting in an enlarged donor base and increased contributions to UNHCR programmes.	specific strategies that take into account bilateral and other initiatives being implemented, resulting in an enlarged donor base and increased contributions to UNHCR programmes.			programmes.		
Sub-Totals								
Total Budget for the Sector					300,000			300,000

Part Three- Comprehensive Assessment of Needs per Programme⁵

- Contributions by the host government, refugee and/or local communities
- Financial contributions of partners

Programme	UNHCR	WFP (where applicabl e)	Operatio n-al partners	Imple- menting partners	Unmet needs	Total
Total						

Key Assumptions:

⁵ The purpose of this table is to provide an indicative picture of the overall needs of persons/ issues of concern to UNHCR and to show the important contributions of other partners. Compiling this information is limited by the challenge of trying to apply standards in the contexts in which UNHCR is working. UNHCR’s approach in preparing this table is to undertake standards-based assessments of need which take into account implementation capacity as well as what is reasonable in a given country context. The table includes the key assumptions underpinning the arrival at estimated financial requirements.