



POPULATION OF CONCERN

Sahrawi camp refugees

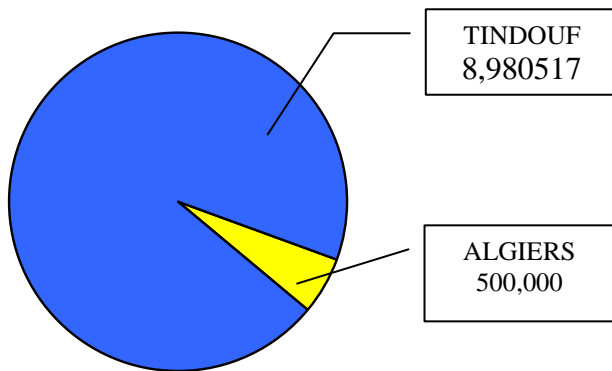
The Sahrawi refugee situation is one of the most protracted refugee situations worldwide. Sahrawi refugees arrived to Algeria in 1975-76 and were recognized by the host State on a *prima facie basis*. Ever since, they have been residing in four refugee camps (Awserd, Dakhla, Laayoune and Smara) and one settlement (27th February), in the Algerian south-western province of Tindouf. The Algerian Government estimates the number of Western Sahara refugees at 165,000. UNHCR is in dialogue with the host Government and the Sahrawi refugee leadership seeking to conduct a registration exercise to determine the exact number of refugees in the camps. Pending a positive conclusion of this dialogue, for the purpose of UNHCR’s humanitarian operation, the office is using a planning figure of 90,000 vulnerable refugees in the camps.

Refugees and asylum seekers in Algiers

The urban refugees (141 persons) and asylum-seekers (about 316 persons) originate mainly from sub-Saharan African countries. Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Nigeria. Women and children constitute less than 20% of the population of concern. Pending the adoption of a national refugee law and the establishment of an asylum procedure consistent with international standards, individual refugee status determination (RSD) is conducted under UNHCR mandate, and an average of 50 cases is processed each month. The Age Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) exercise conducted in October 2009 clearly showed that the lack of residence and work permits, together with lack of adequate housing, remain the most serious challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers. The Office is conducting a number of activities, ranging from registration and individual status determination to daily protection interventions on detention cases, etc. The Office has engaged in an open dialogue with the Algerian Government in an effort to promote the establishment of a responsive national asylum system, inter alia, through capacity building, notably refugee law training activities. The constantly improving relations with the concerned authorities have contributed a great deal to the improvement of the refugee protection climate, whereby nearly all UNHCR’s interventions on detention cases having ended successfully.

UNHCR Algeria Operational Budget 2010 (USD):

TOTAL: \$ 9,480,517



UNHCR PRESENCE:

As of August 2010, the UNHCR team includes 35 staff members and other personnel:

- **Algiers:** 3 internationals (The three IUNV and JPO posts are vacant) and 10 local staff
- **Tindouf:** 6 internationals and 16 local staff (including 2 national UNV). These do not include the UNHCR staff members working for the Confidence Building Measures (CBM) program which is managed by the UNHCR office in L’aayoune.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AS AT FEBRUARY 2010

UNHCR Algeria provides protection and assistance to Sahrawi refugees in Tindouf, asylum seekers and refugees in Algiers and other urban centers.

Care and Maintenance for Sahrawi refugees: UNHCR support includes complementary food assistance, health care/nutrition services, shelter, education, domestic needs, community services and transport/logistics services. Furthermore, UNHCR has re-oriented its programme in 2010 to invest in the future of generations, through capacity building and support to local human rights protection institutions and coping mechanisms. Protection activities focus on monitoring the overall situation in the camps, developing contacts and enhancing cooperation with the refugee leadership and camp management to address refugee protection issues, advocacy to prevent sex/gender-based violence (SGBV) and other forms of human rights abuses and discrimination; capacity development and training for local administrative bodies and the judiciary (e.g. human rights training for Sahrawi law-enforcement structures).

Urban Refugees and Asylum Seekers: The protection activities include RSD; monitoring of the refugee protection situation; interventions on detention cases and to prevent refoulement; ensuring the physical and legal safety of refugees and asylum-seekers; prevention of SGBV and other forms of human rights violations; refugee law training workshops for law-enforcement structures. UNHCR is also monitoring migration trends and trafficking. Refugees and asylum seekers reside mostly in the poor urban outskirts of Algiers and other major cities. Because livelihoods opportunities are minimal, the office provides housing assistance and a monthly food basket distribution to cover 100% of the urban refugees. The urban programme also includes the provision of medical assistance, primary education fees in private schools and legal psychosocial counseling. An agreement with a local NGO serves to address and provide psychosocial counseling to SGBV victims.

UNHCR conducts RSD and grants Mandate refugee recognition to ensure protection and prevent *refoulement*. UNHCR’s recognition rate is below 5 %. In the absence of IOM, there is no program for the return of rejected asylum seekers, though NGOs and UNHCR have supported voluntary return in a few exceptional cases.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR is working with 10 implementing partners (nine NGOs and one parastatal entity): Association des Femmes Algériennes pour le Développement (AFAD), Enfants Réfugiés du Monde-Pays de la Loire (ERM), Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme (LADDH), Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL), Rencontre et Développement (R&D), Red Deporte y Cooperación

(RDC), Réseau Algérien pour la protection des Droits de l'Enfant (NADA), Solidaridad Internacional Andalucía (SI-A), SOS Femmes en Détresse (SOSFeD), Triangle Génération Humanitaire (TGH) and the Algerian Red Crescent (CRA), a parastatal entity. UNHCR works closely with a number of operational partners in Tindouf, such as ECHO, Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (AECID), OXFAM Belgium, MDM-Greece, MDM-Spain, and "Sahrawi Red Crescent". In Algiers, UNHCR cooperates with human rights entities (e.g. Amnesty International, CNCPPDH), other UN agencies involved in migration issues and ICRC. Other UN agencies also support refugee programs in Tindouf: WFP in food assistance; UNICEF in health and education and WHO in health care. UNHCR's overall government focal point is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Division for Human Rights, Social Development and Cultural, Scientific and Technical Affairs. UNHCR also works closely with the Bureau for Refugees and Stateless Persons (BAPRA), which is under the Division of Legal and Consular Affairs of the same Ministry.

For further information please contact:

Algal@unhcr.org

Tel: + 213 (0)21 924 083