

# Morocco

September 2022

Morocco is both a transit and a host country, with **18,934 refugees and asylum-seekers** registered with UNHCR from over 43 countries.

UNHCR works to ensure **access to asylum and protection of refugees** in Morocco, while working closely with Moroccan authorities under the framework of the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum (SNIA).

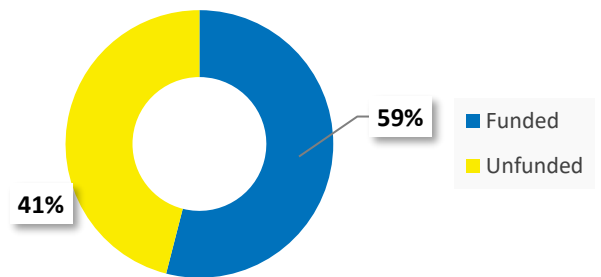
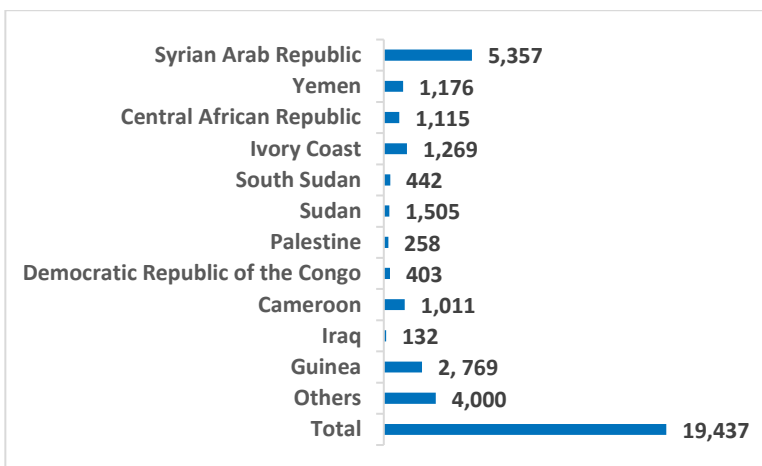
With the number of refugees and asylum-seekers having almost doubled since 2019, **UNHCR** and partners are actively working to ensure a comprehensive response to increasing **protection needs**.

## People of Concern to UNHCR:

9,949 refugees and 9,488 asylum-seekers (as of 30 September 2022)

## Funding needs in 2022 (as of 29 September 2022):

**\$ 9.5 million** requested for UNHCR's Operation in Morocco in 2022



## UNHCR PRESENCE

**48 Total Staff**

UNHCR Staff: 22 total

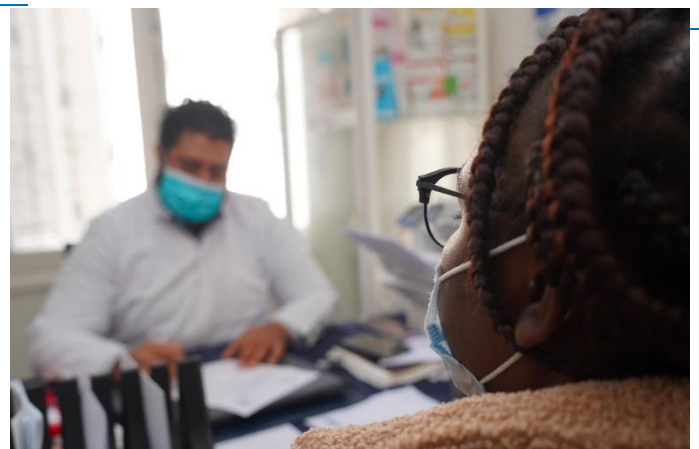
- 17 national staff
- 5 international staff members

Affiliate Workforce: 26 total

- 6 UNV
- 17 UNOPS
- 2 interns

**Office:**

- 1 Branch Office in Rabat



A refugee woman benefits from a medical consultation with UNHCR's health partner in Morocco. © UNHCR

## Working with Partners

- Morocco's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFAIC) is UNHCR's main government counterpart. UNHCR also collaborates with key ministries, academic partners and other institutions.
- UNHCR actively engages with its partners to meet the needs of People of Concern, including: Fondation Orient-Occident (FOO), Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF), Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains (OMDH), Association Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise (AMAPPE) and Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme (CNDH).
- In Casablanca, Fes, Tangier and Oujda, UNHCR has established **Protection Working Groups (PWGs)** to better identify and protect refugees and asylum-seekers. These groups are composed of civil society actors, institutional partners, regional human rights commissions, UN agencies, universities, and legal partners. Similar groups are being established in Marrakech and Rabat.
- On 7 October 2021, the Moroccan High Commissioner for Planning (HCP) and UNHCR signed a partnership agreement to strengthen collaboration between the two institutions. This agreement confirms a long and fruitful engagement to respond to the needs of refugees in Morocco.
- In the context of mixed movements, UNHCR and IOM co-chair a joint **Thematic Working Group on Migration and Asylum** to support the implementation of both the Global Compact Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration, and in accordance with Morocco's National Policy on Migration and Asylum.
- In line with the whole-of-society and multi-partner approach outlined by the Global Refugee Compact (2018) and Global Refugee Forum (2019), UNHCR engages with a range of actors including refugee and asylum-seeking communities, the media, regional and municipal authorities, civil society, and the private sector to improve the protection landscape for refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Alongside UN agencies, UNHCR is involved in the process UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) as well as in thematic groups on migration, gender, HIV/AIDS awareness, trafficking, education, youth, communication and monitoring-evaluation.
- UNHCR will conduct a new survey with the High Commission for Planning of Morocco in December 2022 on the current situation of refugees in Morocco following the COVID-19 pandemic.



A young refugee girl benefits from UNHCR' education programme.  
Photo taken in front of her school.  
@UNHCR

## Operational Context

- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR's population of concern has rapidly increased, with a significant increase in their socio-economic vulnerability and protection needs. Between January 2020 - September 2022, the total number of people under UNHCR's mandate in Morocco has nearly doubled; the refugee population increased by over 45% from 6,757 (January 2020) to 9,949 (September 2022), while the overall number of asylum-seekers has tripled.
- In the third quarter of 2022, the epidemiological situation in Morocco improved significantly, with all standard reception and assistance procedures for UNHCR and its partners remaining fully operational. At the same time, protection hotlines continue to be operational. Registration and refugee status determination (RSD) procedures continue, both in-person through appointment and remotely (when conditions allow, or during outreach missions).

On 24 June 2022, between 1,500 and 2,000 people (mainly from Chad, Sudan and Mali) attempted to cross the border between Nador and Melilla. According to official sources, 23 people died during this attempted crossing while hundreds of people were injured among migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers as well as law enforcement. Following this attempted crossing, UNHCR conducted individual protection interviews and provided urgent medical assistance through its partner, in addition to and legal assistance.

## Main Activities

### Protection

- **Registration & RSD:** Pending the establishment of a national asylum system, UNHCR continues to register new asylum-seekers and conducts RSD. All recognized cases are referred for verification to the Bureau des Réfugiés et des Apatrides (BRA) of the MoFAIC as the Inter-Ministerial Commission in charge of regularization in Rabat. UNHCR participates in the Commission's hearings and introduces the cases. In 2022, **25 hearings were conducted for 140 refugees**. As of September 2022, UNHCR had registered 3,761 new asylum applications.
- **Legal assistance:** UNHCR works with a private law firm Cabinet Lemseguem to provide legal aid to refugees and asylum-seekers (e.g. for issuance of birth certificates, to file complaints for physical assault and for representation before Moroccan courts). **As of September 2022, 299 legal consultations were conducted, with 31 provided with administrative support, 129 with advice on legal proceedings, and 94 individuals advised on civil matters.**
- **Emergency housing:** Through partner Fondation Orient-Occident (FOO), UNHCR supports an **emergency shelter and protection programme**. Emergency housing covers immediate housing needs of persons of concern, while protection housing responds to longer-term needs. This programme benefits refugees and asylum-seekers with extreme vulnerabilities, including unaccompanied minors, at-risk women, single mothers, victims of trafficking, and survivors of gender-based violence. In 2022, 81 refugees and asylum-seekers (including 15 women and 66 men with specific needs) were assisted by UNHCR and FOO's housing programme in Rabat and in Oujda.
- **Protection for victims of gender-based violence (GBV):** A referral and support system is in place for survivors and people at increased risk of GBV to ensure access to healthcare, psycho-social support, legal assistance, and livelihoods through services UNHCR and its partners, civil society and public services. Prevention is also achieved through awareness-raising and community activities; 11 sensitization activities around the protection of women and GBV were conducted during the first quarter of the year in the cities of Agadir, Beni Mellal, Casablanca, Chichaoua, Fes, Ifrane, Klaa Serghna, Marrakech, Rabat, Tadla, and Tangier. As part of capacity building for UNHCR partners in terms of GBV and improving systems for prevention response and support for survivors, four capacity building workshops were carried out in Fes, Oujda, Rabat and Tangier for the benefit of partner AMAPPE.
- In response to the accumulated risk of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR established a dedicated phonenumber for women through its protection hotline. **As of 30 September 2022, the protection hotlines received 555 calls from refugee and asylum-seeking women.** Requests included housing

support, financial assistance, and resettlement.

- **Outreach and community-based activities:** UNHCR works in close collaboration with **Protection Working Groups (PWG)** in Fes/Meknes, Casablanca, Oujda, and Tangier to identify and refer people with specific needs to appropriate services. UNHCR is preparing to launch two additional PWGs in Marrakech and Rabat.
- A network of 24 **refugee community agents** of different nationalities share information among refugee communities across seven localities in Morocco, relaying their needs and concerns to UNHCR and partners.
- Protection Hotlines available in three languages (English, French and Arabic), RSD, registration and other services continue to be operational and remain a key point of contact for refugees and asylum-seekers. One additional phone number is dedicated to emergencies, in particular arrests and detention. **Social media** is also an important point of contact for people of concern, with more than 300 requests received across multiple platforms during 2022.
- **Coordination meetings for the management and follow-up of protection cases:** UNHCR is conducting **monthly coordination meetings with partners** to reinforce vulnerability assessment and ensure timely and adequate referrals and response. In line with confidentiality guidelines and following refugees' consent, sensitive cases are discussed to identify appropriate durable solutions. In this regard, UNHCR and partners meet monthly to discuss available services to identify multi-sector solutions.
- **Strengthening commitment to key protection policies and approaches:** UNHCR with the support of the MENA Regional Bureau has reinforced its engagement towards key protection principles, with specific attention directed towards participatory assessments and data collection through KOBO Power BI, complaint mechanisms and feedback, communication with communities and accountability to affected people (AAP) under UNHCR's mandate.

### Financial assistance for the most vulnerable

- UNHCR contributes to the cost of housing and food for the most vulnerable refugees (unaccompanied minors, single women, survivors of GBV and people with medical needs) through financial assistance based on assessments carried out with FOO. **In 2022, more than 2,377 vulnerable households benefited from financial assistance.**

### Education

- With the support of UNHCR's education programme and in close collaboration with FOO, more than **80 per cent of refugee children are currently enrolled in school at the primary level in 2022.**
- Ensuring equitable schooling from a gender perspective remains among top UNHCR's priorities. **In Morocco, 48 per cent of refugee children enrolled in schools are girls.**
- More than half of refugee children are following remedial classes. For the first semester of 2021/2022, the success rate of refugee children enrolled was more than 90 per cent in primary school, 89 per cent in secondary school, and 96 per cent in high school.
- During the second semester of 2022, more than 905 refugee children were enrolled in primary education, 286 in secondary education, 15 in non-formal education and 437 in kindergarten. Over 1,000 families received **monthly cash assistance to support education.** In addition, 54 refugees benefitted from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) **scholarship programme.**
- Within its tripartite agreement with UNHCR and FOO, the Embassy of France in Morocco has facilitated access to more than 75 refugees to language courses offered by the French Institute in Morocco.

### Health

- Through its partner *Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF)*, UNHCR facilitates the **referral of refugees to public primary healthcare centres**, where services are provided free of charge. Pending the extension of the national medical insurance system (RAMED) to refugees, UNHCR assists with refugees' access to specialized health care services, including expenses related to medication, laboratory tests and specialized medical treatments.
- So far in 2022, **the health program has assisted over 4,810 refugees.** Some 640 refugees with chronic illnesses were supplied with medicines in AMPF's centres or through partner pharmacies. **In total, 4,088 primary consultations were carried out, along with 4,344 specialized medical consultations.**

- Since 28 January 2021, Morocco launched its national vaccination campaign against COVID-19. The Government of Morocco has confirmed the **inclusion of refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers in the vaccination campaign**. UNHCR is working with national institutions and civil society to ensure the effective inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers. **So far, UNHCR has verified the vaccination of 2,000 refugees.**
- In 2022, 275 refugees and asylum-seekers received **psychosocial counselling** with more than 682 consultations.
- To provide an integrated response on Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS), UNHCR participated in eight meetings related to the 'Psy' platform made up of various psychologists, and NGOs working on the issue of migration and asylum in order to discuss the current situation, exchange good practices, ensure follow-up and referencing of cases between the different actors. The objective of the platform is to advocate for the integration of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees into national health systems.
- UNHCR signed a partnership agreement with the National Council of Doctors (CNOM) to facilitate **access to specialized healthcare**, including mental health support, for refugees and asylum-seekers in Morocco. Through this partnership, seven refugees benefited from specialised consultations.
- During the attempted 24 June crossing attempts to Melilla, UNHCR Morocco provided survivors with the following assistance:
  - **109** emergency care consultations for individuals with fractures and injuries to the head and lower limbs
  - **72** accompaniments for emergency services for poorly treated/infected wounds
  - Coverage of **52** consultations and **80** prescriptions of medicine
  - **10** hospitalizations
  - **106** individuals benefited from referrals to other services and additional medical care
  - **10** individuals received support for mental health and psychological needs

At the level of coordination in the different zones:

- UNHCR was able to initiate a platform of NGOs in the Beni Mellal region to coordinate the response for remote cases. More than 400 people have been identified in the Beni Mellal/Khouribga region.
- Coordination of the response in Casablanca through the Casablanca PWG with a system of responses/referrals with the different actors.

### Livelihood and self-reliance

- Along with Association Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise (AMAPPE), UNHCR supports refugees' enrolment in **vocational trainings**, the creation of **income generating activities** through **microfinancing** and **job placement**, with the involvement of two state partners, namely: l'Agence Nationale de la Promotion de l'Emploi et des Compétences (ANAPEC) and l'Office de Développement de la Coopération (ODCO).
- In 2022, 440 refugees were assisted by AMAPPE with economic integration support in Morocco: 161 new project ideas were submitted by refugees, 129 of which were under consideration; 127 formerly financed Income Generating Activities (IGAs) were monitored in the first quarter and 67 IGAs funded in 2021 are still operating in the first quarter of 2022; 198 apprentices (of which 46% have a residency permit) are pursuing vocational training courses in the Office of Vocational Training and Employment Promotion (OFPPT), Entraide Nationale centers and partner associations. So far in 2022, 22 refugees have been placed in enterprises and 42 in internships.
- **Private sector:** Since 2016, **279 refugees have found placement in private enterprise** through the support of UNHCR and AMAPPE, including 22 during the third quarter of 2022. Since the beginning of this programme, 61 different companies have provided employment to refugees.

### Capacity building and sensitization

- Capacity building is a key element of UNHCR's strategy to support Moroccan authorities and civil society in the implementation of a fair and efficient asylum policy. UNHCR regularly organizes workshops on refugee

law, international protection and statelessness in the context of mixed movements. **Several training courses** were held throughout the year by UNHCR in various locations in Morocco for judges (Higher Institute of the Judiciary), lawyers, legal clinics, university students, Royal Gendarmerie, National Police as well as civil society organizations and the Protection Working Groups in Casablanca, Fes , Oujda and Tangier

### Durable Solutions

- UNHCR implements a **resettlement** programme for refugees with specific protection needs. Resettlement departures resumed in 2022, after two years of interruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since January 2022, 27 refugees have been resettled, 22 to Canada, three to the United States and two to Spain.
- In 2022, four refugees left Morocco through **family reunification** Canada and France. Three refugee students were able to leave Morocco to continue their studies, including two in France and one in Italy after being awarded a scholarship.

Following the return to a situation of political stability and fundamental and lasting changes in Ivory Coast, UNHCR recommended a general cessation of refugee status for people from Ivory Coast. This cessation clause took effect on 30 July 2022, with a program to facilitate voluntary repatriation and reintegration has been put in place to support those returning.

## Donors

**UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to its activities in Morocco:**

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### CONTACTS

**Maxence Hayek**, Associate External Relations Officer

[hayekm@unhcr.org](mailto:hayekm@unhcr.org) , Tel: +212 537 54 54 55, Cell +212 661 95 85 63

**Sarah Mokadader**, Communication Associate

[mokadade@unhcr.org](mailto:mokadade@unhcr.org) , Tel: +212 537 54 54 55, Cell +212 659 74 07 20

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