

Egypt

October 2021

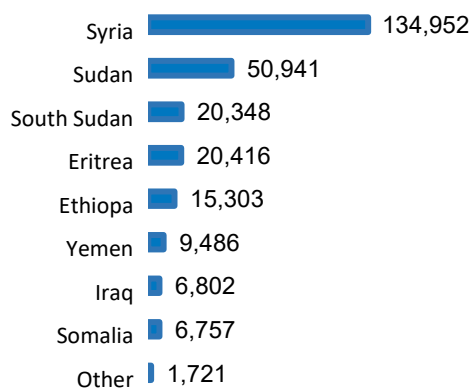
Egypt hosts **266,726 refugees and asylum-seekers** from **63 countries of origin** (half of them from Syria).

Most refugees and asylum-seekers are **located in urban areas** of Greater Cairo and on the North Coast.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, **UNHCR has adapted its activities to the evolving situation**, continuing to provide critical assistance and protection support.

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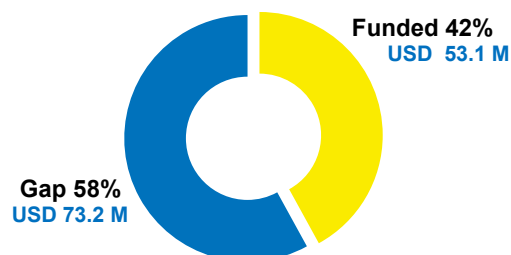
Countries of Origin



FUNDING IN 2021 (AS OF 26 OCTOBER 2021)

USD 126.3 M

requested for UNHCR's Egypt Operation in 2021

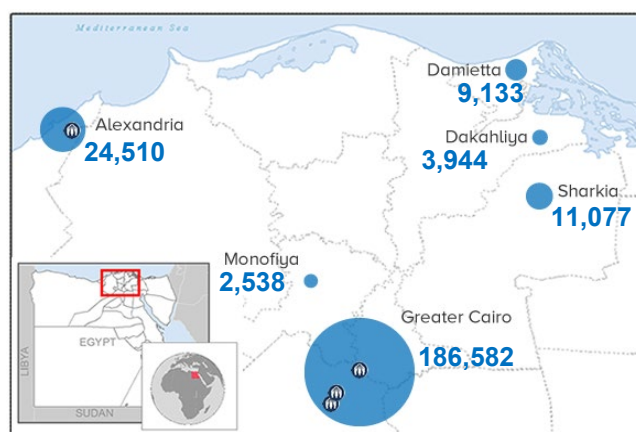


COVID-19 in Egypt

The majority of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt were already highly vulnerable prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, and have been further impacted by the evolving circumstances. Many have **lost their source of income and reportedly cannot afford sufficient basic supplies or pay their rent and hence have been evicted from their houses**. Unaccompanied and separated children are becoming increasingly vulnerable, and cases of gender-based violence (GBV) continue to be reported. **Elderly people and persons with special needs and medical conditions are among the most affected groups during the pandemic.**

UNHCR Egypt maintained its essential services throughout the pandemic. By the end of August 2020, all activities resumed with adapted modalities and precautionary measures in place.

UNHCR has **strengthened and adapted outreach**



Location of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt

activities and communication with refugees and asylum-seekers through various channels, including phone, e-mail, social media, and messaging services. UNHCR's info-line continues to operate, and emergency contact lines have been established with partners to ensure 24-hour service.

Working with Partners

UNHCR works closely with the Government of Egypt, UN agencies, and international and national NGOs to provide protection and assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR leads the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG), the main refugee coordination mechanism which gathers representatives from UN agencies as well as international and national NGOs. The IAWG oversees an Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG) and six sectorial working groups: Protection, Education, Health, Basic Needs and Cash, Livelihoods and Communication with Communities (CwC). The Protection sector includes three sub-working groups which consist of Child Protection, Prevention and Response to GBV, and Durable Solutions. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, **UNHCR works closely with partners to ensure a coordinated response** to emerging needs, with coordination meetings currently taking place through videoconferencing.

Main Activities

Protection

- UNHCR Egypt **registers and documents asylum-seekers and refugees** on behalf of the Government of Egypt. Registration entails the use of biometric information, iris scanning and fingerprinting. In January 2021, UNHCR remodelled its interview rooms and waiting areas to comply with required COVID-19 safety precautions and has since significantly increased the number of people provided with registration services. UNHCR Egypt has advocated for tolerance among national authorities with regards to asylum-seekers and refugees with expired UNHCR cards or residencies, and those who do not yet have UNHCR documentation.
- To support efforts towards the development of Egypt's first law governing asylum, UNHCR provides technical assistance to the Government of Egypt to familiarize key engaged stakeholders with international refugee law standards and good practice examples, thus supporting the drafting process. **Two events were held in this context in 2021 co-organized with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), a one-day roundtable in February and a two-day workshop in September.** UNHCR presented key elements of comparative asylum laws and RSD institutions, as well as basic principles related to the identification of persons in need of international protection, admission and standards of treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers, to the representatives of various government entities involved in drafting asylum law.
- UNHCR Egypt remains the **largest refugee status determination (RSD) operation globally** and conducts RSD on behalf of the Government for people of all nationalities, except Syrians and Yemenis. By the end of September 2021, **3,211 remote RSD interviews were conducted involving 5,022 persons.**
- Refugees and asylum-seekers have **access to legal remedies and representation** through lawyers of NGO partners. Those arrested for administrative and residency related charges are provided with legal assistance, while UNHCR advocates with local authorities for their release. The Office continues to advocate for access to persons in detention who may be in need of international protection.
- UNHCR and partners provide **tailored assistance and psychosocial support to survivors of GBV**, and those who have experienced or witnessed conflict, violence or trauma. With modified working modalities in light of the pandemic and increased challenges, UNHCR and partners continue to provide case management support to GBV survivors through remote means, as well as emergency services.
- Around 37 per cent of all refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt are children (99,468 individuals). Out of this figure, **4,134 are unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).** The number of UASC pending registration has increased during the pandemic. UNHCR conducted an eight-week intensive registration exercise for UASC and continues to prioritize those who have not yet been registered. UNHCR conducts Best Interest Assessments (BIAs) and prioritizes protection and assistance to UASC and other children at-risk across all programmes through prevention and response activities and specialized services,

including quality case management, strengthening of national child protection systems and internal/external capacity building. Due to the pandemic, BIAs, case management, referrals, follow-up and counselling are conducted by phone, while emergency and essential services remain functional.

- In addition to close **coordination with partners**, daily refugee **counselling and case management** are now carried out remotely and continue to be integral components of the Office's engagement with refugees and asylum-seekers.
- UNHCR and partners provide **targeted support to persons with specific needs** through individual case management and community-based psychosocial support and emergency response. Extremely vulnerable persons living with disabilities and elderly people also benefit from targeted assistance that includes individual and group counselling, provision of assistive devices, and participation in social and recreational events aimed at breaking their isolation from communal activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, essential services continue to be provided to persons with specific needs, with emergency cases being prioritized.
- UNHCR has internal **integrity mechanisms** in place — including anti-fraud and complaints receipt systems — to ensure full adherence to the organisation's principles, values, and guidelines.

Durable Solutions

Due to its location, Egypt is part of both the Syrian and Central Mediterranean resettlement initiatives. Resettlement is driven by the **high protection needs of the populations in the country, which is often coupled with severe economic vulnerability**. Currently, UNHCR Egypt is conducting in-person and remote resettlement interviews, with the necessary procedural and integrity safeguards in place. By September 2021, 1,929 refugee cases were submitted to third countries for resettlement consideration. During the same period, 1,823 refugees departed from Egypt to eight resettlement countries. UNHCR Egypt received 29 cases (88 individuals) self-referrals for **voluntary repatriation** by September 2021 from mainly Sudanese nationals. To date 218 persons have reportedly spontaneously returned to Syria.

Cash-Based Interventions (CBI)

- In Egypt, UNHCR delivers monthly **unconditional cash grants** to extremely vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in order to provide protection and assistance, and to avoid harmful coping mechanisms such as incurring debt or reducing expenditures on food and other essential items. By September 2021, UNHCR assisted **11,182 families** (comprising 40,029 refugees and asylum-seekers) with cash grants under its regular programme. An additional **4,572 families** (14,944 refugees and asylum-seekers) received cash grants as part of UNHCR's response to COVID-19. Additionally, **2,704 UASC** have been supported with cash for protection as of September 2021.
- During 2020/2021, UNHCR supported 97,663 refugees and asylum-seekers (46,896 families) with one-off cash grants for **winter assistance** to help them meet their needs during the winter period. As part of the 2021-2022 plan for winter assistance, UNHCR is planning to support more than **100,000 people (60,900 families) with a one-off cash grant**.

Education

- Syrian, Sudanese, South Sudanese and Yemeni refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt are granted **access to public education** on the same level as nationals. UNHCR continues to advocate for the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers of all nationalities in public education. Following UNHCR advocacy, the Ministry of Education & Technical Education (METE) agreed to allow refugee and asylum-seeker children registered with UNHCR **to enrol in the 2021/2022 academic school year while their documents are being renewed or obtained**. Advocacy on this issue has been one of UNHCR's main priorities over the past months in order to ensure that students with expired documents are able to enrol in schools.
- During the 2020/2021 school year, the COVID-19 pandemic constituted a challenge to students across all levels of academia. While students in public and private schools could access online learning if they had the required devices and internet connectivity, **most community schools had little capacity to deliver education through remote modalities**.
- For the 2020/2021 academic year, UNHCR provided education grants to **47,200 students in public, community and private schools**. Additionally, enhanced education grants were provided to 1,513

unaccompanied and separated children and 400 children with special needs, who were supported with enrolment in specialized schools catering to their individual educational needs. Due to the exceptional circumstances, a top-up was added to the regular education grant to allow families to purchase internet credit for students to access online learning.

- UNHCR also supports access of refugees and asylum-seekers to **tertiary education**. In the academic year 2020/2021, **330 students received scholarships through UNHCR** from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) to continue their university studies. In addition, four students receive scholarships to attend the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology in Alexandria.

Health

- Refugees and asylum-seekers continue to have **access to public primary, secondary and emergency health care** on an equal level to Egyptian citizens. However, the national health system suffers gaps in the availability and the quality of services provided.
- In February 2021, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) **launched a registration website for Egyptians and foreigners including refugees and asylum-seekers to register for the COVID-19 vaccine**. This aligns with the Government's policy in providing refugees and asylum-seekers access to similar COVID-19 treatment and care as Egyptian nationals.
- UNHCR supports national efforts to improve the quality of services to refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as the host population in areas with high concentrations of refugees. This entails **strengthening the existing national health system through building the capacity of health care staff and the provision of equipment**. In relation to the national COVID-19 response, UNHCR supported the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) with personal protective equipment for the use of frontline MoHP health care workers dealing with the first and second wave of the pandemic. This included 50,500 respirators (FFP2 masks), 15,000 N95 masks, 560,000 surgical masks, 50,000 medical gowns, and 290,000 pairs of medical gloves. In addition, UNHCR provided 400,000 surgical masks to NGO partners.
- UNHCR continues to deliver healthcare assistance to patients with chronic diseases, as well as **psychosocial and mental health support** through partners. Moreover, the office provides secondary and referral care for life-saving treatments for all refugees and asylum-seekers.

Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

- UNHCR, in cooperation with partners, provides eligible refugees and asylum-seekers with **training, coaching, counselling** and other support lines to assist them in sustainable livelihood activities. In the artisanal sector, UNHCR Egypt is taking part in the global initiative '**Market Access, Design & Empowerment for Refugee Artisans**' (MADE51).

Community Empowerment

- UNHCR maintains an active outreach programme for Communication with Communities (CwC). The team provides refugees and asylum-seekers with information about services provided by UNHCR and partners and encourages feedback. **Participatory assessments, focus group discussions, and awareness sessions** conducted with refugees and asylum-seekers throughout the year enable UNHCR to directly monitor protection concerns and coping mechanisms, and to identify possible solutions aimed at

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