

Regional Cash Assistance Update

April-June 2021 (Q2)¹



Khairiah, a displaced woman, sits with her children in their shelter in Ibb. She fled from Taizz because of the ongoing conflict. UNHCR cash assistance helps her put food on the table. Photo: ©UNHCR/Deem

Key Highlights



2,392,862
unique individuals²

reached with all modalities of cash assistance from January to June 2021.



2,039,070
unique individuals

reached with multi-purpose cash assistance in January - June 2021, including **151,949 individuals** who received emergency cash assistance³.



USD 131,164,630*

distributed via all modes of cash assistance from January - June 2021, out of which **USD 70,094,437** was to Syrians and **USD 61,070,173** to persons of other nationalities.

* An additional **657,680 individuals** received **USD 36,618,294** in cash assistance for winterization in 2021. For more information, please refer to the [Final Report](#) for [UNHCR's 2020-2021 Regional Winterization Assistance Plan for the Syria and Iraq Situations](#).

¹ All figures are reported cumulatively for the year, with achievements reported on a quarterly basis

² The term unique individual applies to the calendar year. UNHCR counts unique individual as those that were added after Q1. When reporting the figures for a given quarter, individuals assisted in earlier quarter(s) of a given year will therefore not be counted.

³ To address the economic hardship compounded by the pandemic, as well as other protection needs, for a total of **USD 8,684,502**. The remaining **353,792 individuals** were assisted with other types of sectoral CBI, including grants towards health care and education.

Background and operational highlights

During the second quarter of 2021, cash-based interventions (CBI) were implemented in 15 MENA operations as well as Turkey⁴, all of whom delivered **multi-purpose cash assistance** (MPCA) for basic needs and one-off emergency support. In addition, **livelihood grants** were delivered in Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Turkey, **health grants** in Jordan, **education grants** in Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco and Turkey, and shelter grants in Lebanon and Yemen, in addition

to other sectoral support such as **cash for youth, adolescents** and **GBV survivors** in Turkey.

Additional support to address the economic impacts of **COVID-19** continued throughout Q2 in nine countries (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Yemen), compared to 14 countries at the end of 2020, due in large part to the streamlining of the COVID-19 response into regular CBI activities.

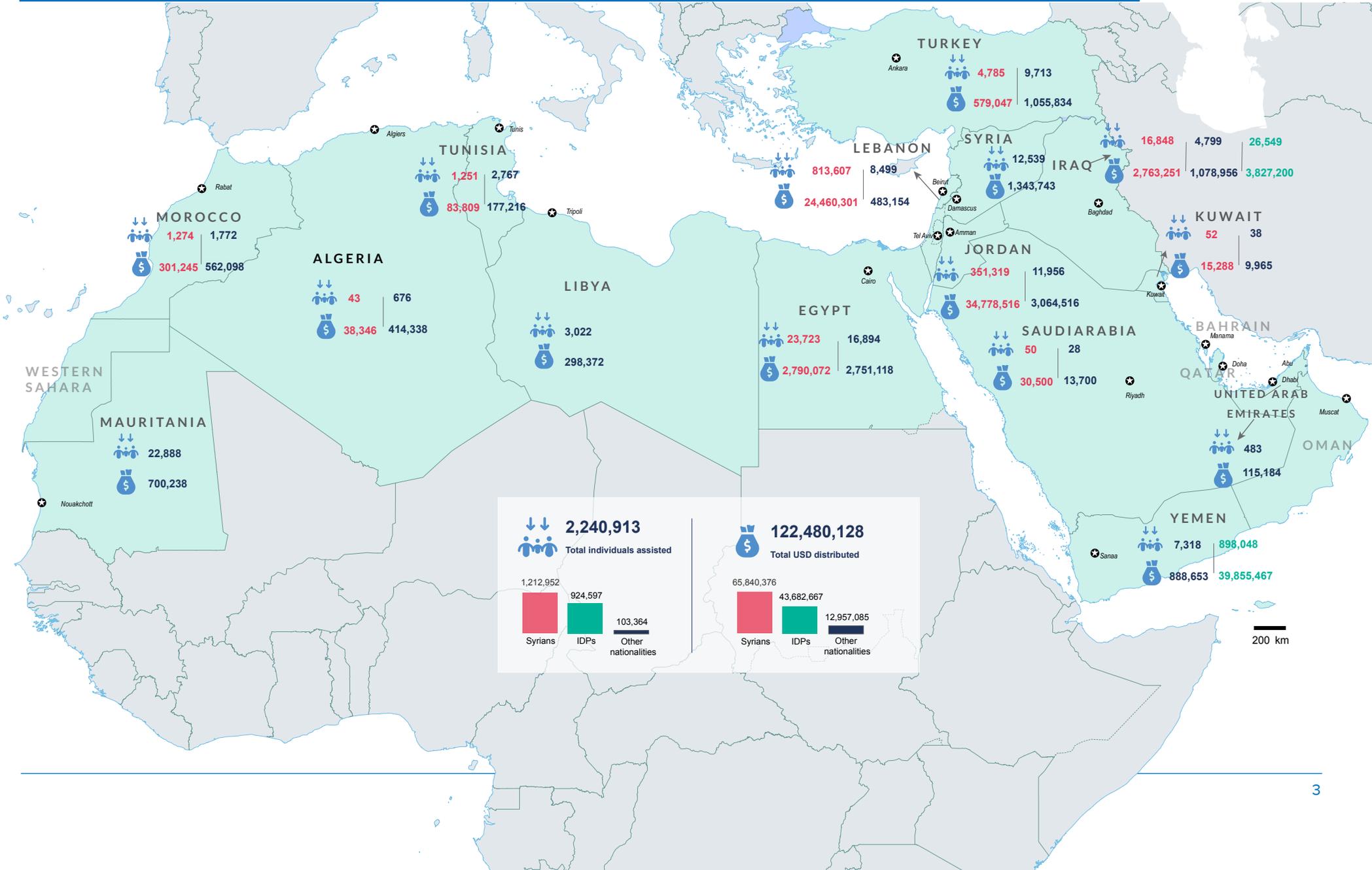
2021 strategic priorities

In support of the regional strategy for CBI operations in MENA for the years 2021 and 2022, during the second quarter of this year UNHCR MENA focused on:

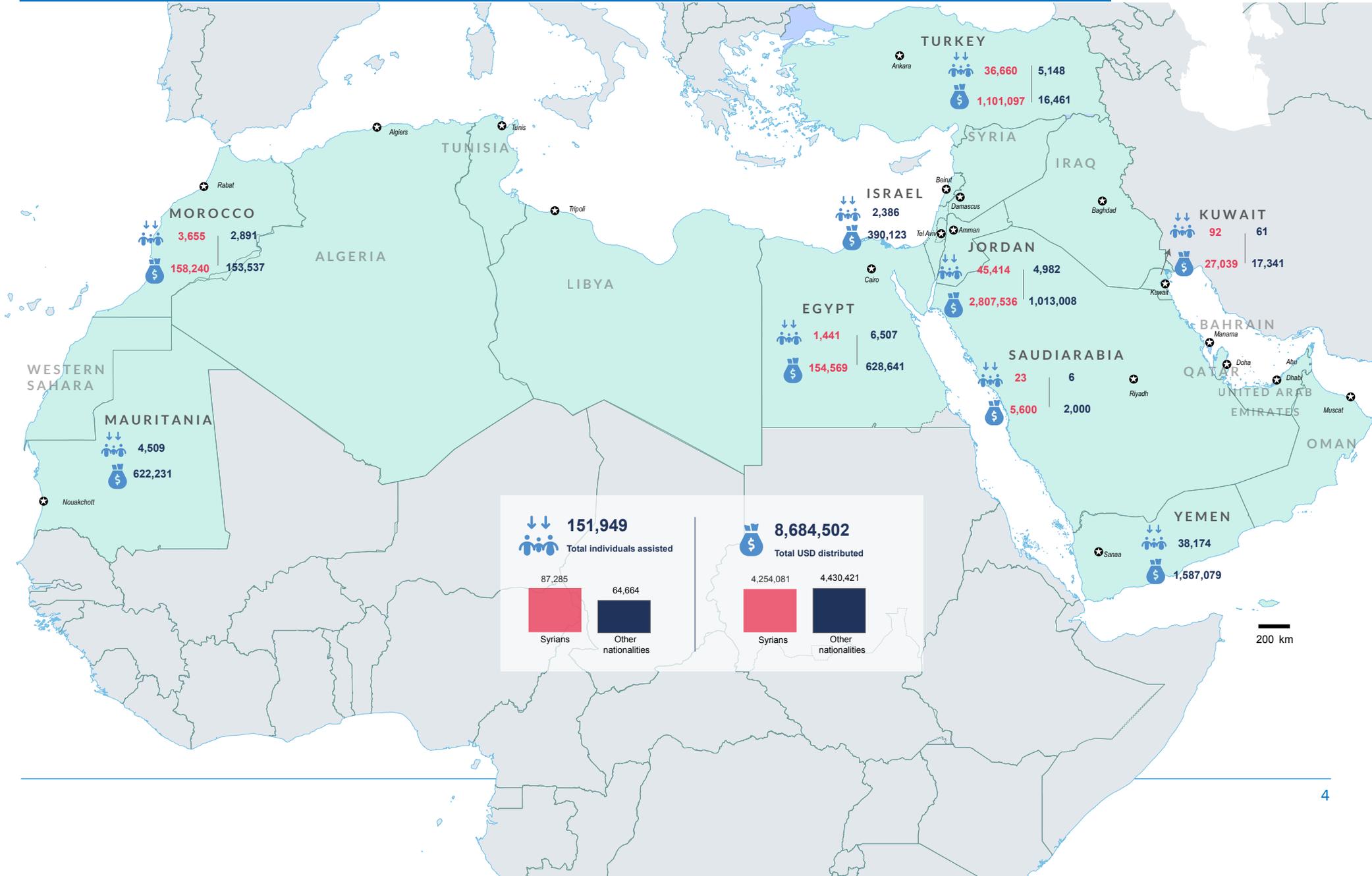
- **Expanding standard CBI post-distribution monitoring (PDM) tools** and transitioning towards harmonized and predictable targeting approaches: UNHCR continued to expand the use of standard PDM tools for CBI, which have now been adopted across six operations (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Yemen). The use of standard PDM tools allows operations to report against a set of comparable indicators, among other outputs. Expansion to additional operations will continue throughout the 2021.
- **Advocacy for the financial inclusion** of UNHCR's persons of concern into national social safety nets and social protection schemes: Starting from Q2, CBI activities for the region are being complemented by the efforts of the MENA Bureau's Inclusion Taskforce, which works towards furthering the social and economic inclusion of refugees in development and social protection programmes through systematic policy, planning and technical guidance within operations falling under the Iraq and Syria situations (i.e. Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey). The objective of these efforts towards economic inclusion is to support the integration of beneficiaries of UNHCR's CBI programmes into national social protection schemes.
- **Strengthening implementation systems:** During Q2, the deployment of UNHCR's Cash Management System 'Cash Assist' continued. This integrated software solution allows for all steps of cash delivery—from attribution of selection criteria, to preparation of beneficiary lists, to automatic reconciliation of cash deliveries—to be managed through a single software platform. Cash Assist is being rolled out globally in all UNHCR operations that directly implement CBI. During Q2, Cash Assist was progressively deployed in Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen, with roll-out across the remaining operations (Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Turkey and GCC countries) forecasted for 2022.
- **Aligning UNHCR's cash assistance programmes with national social safety nets and social protection schemes**, in close collaboration with partners.
- **Undertaking sectoral studies** to enhance analysis and evidence-based programming for CBI (see "Protection needs" section below).
- **Continued integration of CBI with case management** and other protection services.

⁴ UNHCR operations in Turkey related to the Syria and Iraq situations are included in this MENA update.

UNHCR cash operations in MENA in 2021 – budget and number of individuals reached by country, non-COVID-19 response only



UNHCR cash operations in MENA in 2021 – budget and number of individuals reached by country, COVID-19 response only



Needs

Protection needs

During Q2, UNHCR completed a regional study on the use of CBI in support of protection outcomes across 15 operations in MENA as well as Turkey. The study documented how in the region and in the organization at large, UNHCR's CBI address protection needs in three primary ways, namely through: (1) **Protection mainstreaming** – by ensuring the safe and dignified delivery and use of CBI; (2) **Providing CBI for basic needs**, by delivering assistance to ensure access to basic goods and services, **with a range of positive protection outcomes**; (3) **Providing CBI to address specific protection purposes**, in areas such as **education, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) or child protection**. The mapping also found a strong complementarity between CBI and protection services, with at least 50 per cent of CBI recipients receiving protection services.⁵

The study—which also took stock of earlier MENA child protection and CBI interventions—presented an **overview of UNHCR's CBI in MENA**, outlining **how and to what extent they contribute to protection outcomes** and shedding light on **the role of protection in targeting of CBI**. Results of the study indicated the following:

- Cash was found to be most effective in achieving protection outcomes when provided together with other services and through case management. Overall, a strong complementarity between CBI and protection services (i.e. legal assistance, psychosocial support) exist in UNHCR operations, with at least 50 per cent of CBI recipients also receiving protection services.
- The link between cash and protection outcomes can be better harnessed when the amount distributed matches specific protection needs (i.e. legal fees, costs associated with disabilities). Such protection-related costs are often not part of the calculation of transfer values, such as the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) and the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB). The impact on protection outcomes also depends on the duration of the CBI.
- UNHCR delivers most of its CBI as support to basic needs, while also addressing the needs of individuals with specific protection concerns through dedicated sectoral CBI. Among sectoral interventions, CBI in support to education outcomes are increasing.
- Access to digital payments in the region is an opportunity to expand protection outcomes, notably as a vehicle for financial inclusion.
- PDM data indicates that most cash recipients could find what they needed in their local markets; rated CBI as their preferred modality; could safely and securely withdraw their cash; and were aware of which avenues to pursue for complaints and feedback.
- PDM data also highlighted that most respondents reported a moderate or significant improvement in their living conditions due to UNHCR's CBI, in addition to reduced stress and anxiety. However despite receiving cash assistance, the same PDM indicated the use of harmful coping mechanisms among some recipients.
- The most common targeting mechanisms across UNHCR operations in the region include self-targeting combined with community-based (eight countries), Proxy Means Testing (five countries) and score cards (five countries). Most targeting mechanisms include persons with specific needs as selection criteria.
- Finally, there is a need to systematically document how protection is mainstreamed and enhanced throughout programme design, including by developing and analysing corresponding indicators to measure the impact of CBI activity through a specialized impact assessment model.

⁵ According to data from Algeria, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Turkey and UAE.

Response

Response in 2021⁶

# of unique individuals assisted with cash	2,392,862
Referrals of CBIs to/from case management	18,081
# of inquiries related to cash assistance	1,281,763
# of elderly persons (>65 or >60) assisted with cash	73,941
# of children and youth (<18) assisted with cash	1,284,616
# of transactions	1,086,509
Total USD disbursed⁷	131,164,629

Assistance gap

# of eligible individuals not reached by UNHCR due to lack of funding	616,875
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Refugees collect their cash grants in Amman, Jordan as part of UNHCR's emergency distribution to 18,000 refugee families to help ease the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on asylum-seeking families in Jordan. Photo by: Lilly Carlisle/ UNHCR Jordan

⁶ All figures related to number of individuals assisted with cash, number of transactions and amount of USD disbursed are based on uploaded lists with the names of payees/eligible beneficiaries, which are sent to the Financial Service Provider(s) for that specific quarter, prior to any reconciliation or confirmation of withdrawal and/or reception of funds.

⁷ This figure corresponds to the implementation of a wide variety of CBI (see Table 1 for details) which includes MPCA for Basic Needs, Cash for Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC), Education grants, Livelihood Grants, Shelter grants, Health and Hygiene grants.

Table 1 “Type of cash assistance in MENA countries”

Country Operation	Type of response	Type of cash-based assistance					
	COVID-19	Multi-purpose cash assistance for basic needs	Education grants	Livelihood Grants	Health Grants	Shelter	Other
Algeria							
Egypt							
Iraq							
Israel							
Jordan							
Kuwait							
Lebanon							
Libya							
Mauritania							
Morocco							
Saudi Arabia							
Syria							
Tunisia							
Turkey							
UAE							
Yemen							

Partnerships

Beyond its role in inter-agency coordination for CBI in several operations, UNHCR continues to place a strong emphasis on common delivery systems and partnerships in the provision of financial assistance, in line with the [December 2018 statement on cash](#) by OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP. This vision is fully implemented in Jordan through the Common Cash Facility (CCF), and in Lebanon through the Lebanon One Unified System for E-cards (LOUISE) platform.

Contributions from the private sector towards UNHCR’s growing [Refugee Zakat Fund](#) also continued throughout the second quarter of 2021, providing ongoing support to persons of concern in **Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania** and **Yemen**.

Donors:

UNHCR is grateful for the support of donors who contributed to the cash assistance programme for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in MENA with unearmarked and earmarked funds, as well as those who have contributed directly to the operations.

African Development Bank Group | Australia | Austria | Canada | CERF | Czechia | Denmark | Estonia | European Union | Estonia | Finland | France | Germany | Holy See | Iceland | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Kuwait | Lichtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Morocco | Netherlands | Norway | Private Donors Italy | Private Donors Lebanon | Private Donors Republic of Korea | Private Donors Kuwait | Private Donors Saudi Arabia | Private Donors United Arab Emirates | Private Donors United Kingdom | Private Donors Worldwide | Qatar | Qatar Charity | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Sheikh Thani Bin Abdullah Bin Thani Al-Thani Humanitarian Fund | Slovenia | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe



Abdulwasa, a Yemeni refugee has been living in Jordan for 15 years. Since 2017, he hasn't been able to find any work and so has relied on UNHCR cash assistance to support his family. As part of UNHCR emergency cash assistance distributions to refugees affected by the coronavirus crisis, he received 120 dinar cash. "The last couple of months have been hard economically but feels like humanity has increased. People here are more understanding of the difficulties that we as refugees are facing because they are finding themselves in similar positions. Photo by: Mohammad Hawari/ UNHCR Jordan

For MENA regional and country reports, please visit: [UNHCR Global Focus](#); [UNHCR Operational Portal \(Syria Regional Refugee Response\)](#); and [The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan website](#)

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