

# Egypt

September 2023

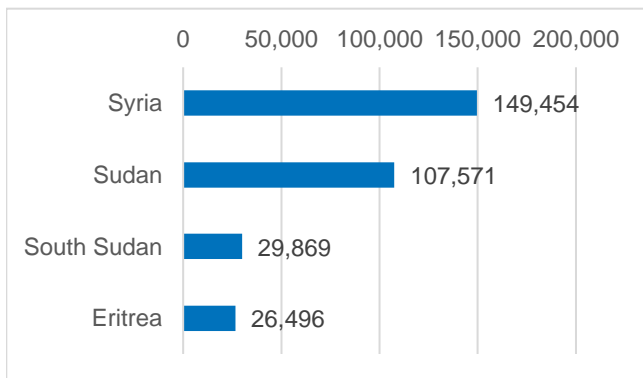
Egypt hosts some 352,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers from 59 countries. Syrians remain the largest group. Most refugees live in urban areas of Cairo and North Coast.

UNHCR conducts Refugee Status Determination on behalf of the Government and facilitates access to protection, basic needs, and essential services, such as health and education.

287,230 people forced to flee the Sudan crisis have entered Egypt since mid-April. UNHCR is scaling up the delivery of cash assistance and registration to address the most urgent needs of the most vulnerable.

## REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN EGYPT \*REGISTERED WITH UNHCR

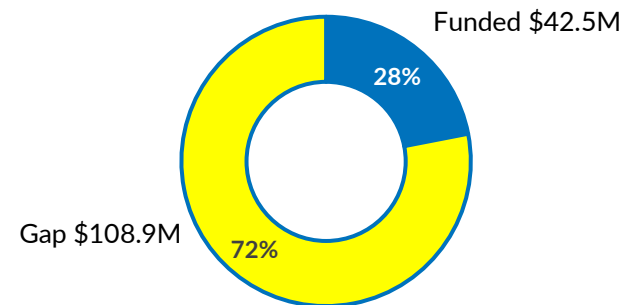
### Top-4 Countries of Origin



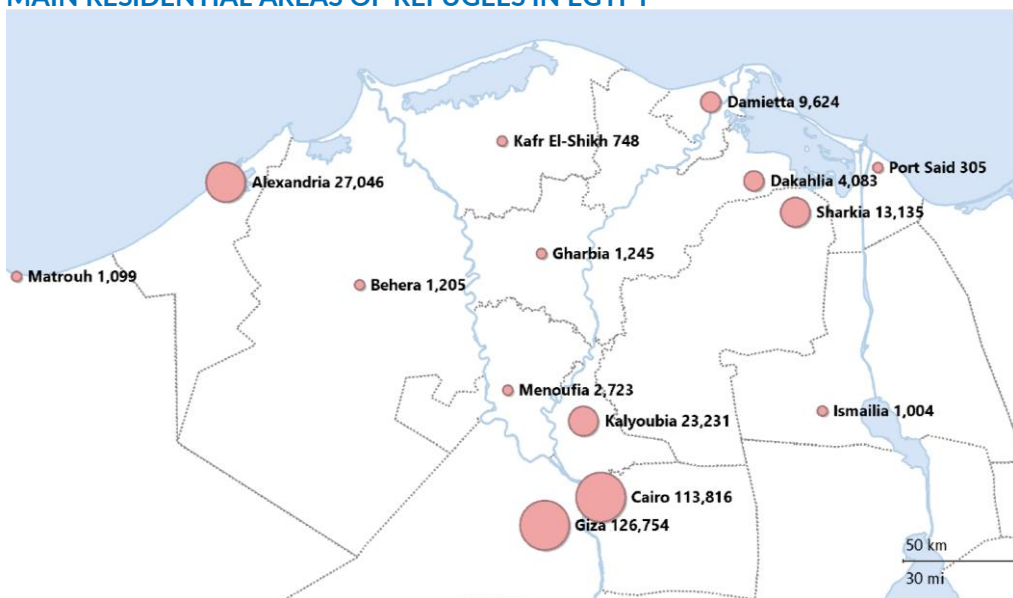
## FUNDING (AS OF 31 AUGUST)

**USD 151.4 million**

requested for the Egypt Operation



## MAIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF REFUGEES IN EGYPT



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

64 International Staff  
291 National Staff

### Offices:

1 Country office in Cairo  
1 Registration centre in Giza  
1 Field office in Alexandria

## Context

Historically, Egypt has welcomed people forced to flee their homes. In recent years, these have included tens of thousands of refugees from Syria, Sudan, and South Sudan. Since the onset of the conflict in Sudan in April 2023, Egypt has been a primary refuge for mainly Sudanese women and children seeking safety.

UNHCR has been operational in Egypt since 1954 after the Government of Egypt and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Since then, UNHCR provides protection services including all aspects of registration, documentation, refugee status determination and resettlement to those who are forcibly displaced. UNHCR operation in Egypt is the world's largest in terms of refugee status determination (RSD).

UNHCR works through ten partners in Greater Cairo, North Coast and Aswan: CARE Egypt, Caritas, Catholic Relief Service, Don Bosco, Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights, Egyptian Red Crescent, Plan International, All Saints/ Refuge Egypt, Save the Children, and Terre des Hommes.



*Sherin and her son were forced to flee Khartoum due to violence and arrived in Egypt in Cairo, where they were registered by UNHCR. ©UNHCR/Jaime Gimenez*

## Main Activities

### Protection

- **Reception and counselling**

UNHCR Egypt receives around a thousand refugees and asylum-seekers at its offices every working day. One of the first points of contact with UNHCR are the reception areas in Greater Cairo and Alexandria. There, protection staff counsel refugees and asylum-seekers entering the premises on a walk-in basis.

Apart from the reception areas in UNHCR offices, refugees have several other access avenues to UNHCR including its in-house telephone InfoLine in Cairo and Alexandria. InfoLine operators provide information-sharing and counselling and schedule registration appointments for asylum-seekers and refugees in Egypt from Sunday to Thursday in seven languages (Arabic, Tigrinya, Amharic, French, Oromo, English and Somali). Two-way communication also takes place through home visits, refugee outreach volunteers, focus group discussions, and our social media platforms which are run in six languages.

- **Legal assistance**

Refugees and asylum-seekers have access to legal remedies and representation through lawyers of NGO partners. UNHCR advocates with local authorities for the release of those under administrative detention for residency-related offences and for access to persons in detention who may need international protection.

## Community-based protection (CBP)

UNHCR and partners provide targeted support to persons with specific needs through individual case management, community-based psychosocial support, and emergency response. UNHCR also organizes outreach meetings with refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as community dialogue, focus group discussions, and awareness-raising on the services provided by UNHCR and our partners. The aim of these activities is to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among refugees and host communities.

- **CBP – Communication with communities**

UNHCR maintains an **active outreach programme** for Communication with Communities (CwC). The Office provides refugees and asylum-seekers with information about UNHCR and partners services.

UNHCR uses different communication channels, including social media, to reach the persons forced to flee and capture their feedback. This is guided in part by the context in which the agency operates in Egypt, whose main features include a largely urban population of refugees and asylum-seekers who come from 57 countries and are spread throughout Egyptian governorates. It is also shaped by the information needs of refugees and asylum-seekers and their preferred communication channels.

A confidential complaint and feedback mechanism is in place for refugees and asylum-seekers to report misconduct, including corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse by staff and NGO partners, as a key component of UNHCR's accountability to affected communities. Confidential reporting channels include email, physical complaint boxes and the UNHCR hotline.

- **Child protection**

UNHCR Child Protection (CP) programming focuses on children at risk of abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation. Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) remain one of the key vulnerable groups of refugee children. UNHCR conducts best-interest assessments and prioritizes protection and assistance to UASC and other children at-risk across all programmes through prevention and response activities and specialized services. In addition to direct CP service provision, UNHCR engages with national counterparts to advocate for inclusion of refugee children into national CP services. UNHCR is working with the Ministry of Social Solidarity to ensure that refugee children are considered in the draft national Alternative Care Law.

- **Gender-based violence**

In Egypt, UNHCR prevention activities encompass innovative multi-sectoral approaches including community-based activities, legal awareness sessions, women empowerment initiatives, and art therapy. UNHCR and partners provide tailored assistance and psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and those who have experienced or witnessed conflict, violence or trauma.

## Registration

As the Government of Egypt delegated to UNHCR the registration process with the 1954 MoU, registration of the population in need of international protection is a central activity of UNHCR. The crisis in Sudan has prompted UNHCR to significantly expand its registration capabilities, aiming to provide protection to as many individuals as possible who have arrived in Egypt. In addition to facilitating access to services, biometric registration allows refugees and asylum-seekers to regularize their stay in Egypt and obtain a renewable residence permit which grants them freedom of movement across the country.

Among the new arrivals, from 15 April to 01 September 2023, 71,674 new arrived persons from Sudan have approached UNHCR for registration— in person, through the Infoline or by internal and external referrals. Of the total, 62% (44,188 persons) were prioritized and registered while the remaining were issued registration appointments. Those who approached in person were provided registration appointment slips which are recognized by the government and provide protection from refoulement. UNHCR is enhancing Infoline and registration processes to accommodate the needs of new arrivals as well as the pre-existing community. UNHCR is also exploring online appointment issuance modalities to enhance the accessibility. In response to the increasing numbers, UNHCR scaled up its overall

registration processing capacity by over 470 per cent, increasing staffing, carrying out registration over weekends, improving infrastructure, and expanding the Infoline as well as the communication channels.

### Refugee Status Determination

UNHCR Egypt strategically utilizes Refugee Status Determination to maximize protection benefits for a large number of asylum-seekers while maintaining the integrity of the asylum system. In 2022, UNHCR Egypt finalized more than 11,000 RSD decisions extending the operation's status as the most productive RSD mandate operation globally. In 2023, priority processing will be given to applications deemed manifestly unfounded or clearly abusive, preserving the protection space in Egypt for genuine international protection applicants. UNHCR strives to finalize decisions on refugee status promptly, enabling individuals to make informed choices about their future, whether as refugees or through alternative avenues like the International Organization for Migration's Assisted Voluntary Return and Repatriation program.

### Education

UNHCR advocates for enrolling refugees and asylum-seekers in public schools. Currently, Syrian, Sudanese, South Sudanese and Yemeni nationals have access to the public system on par with Egyptians. In August 2023, the Ministry of Higher Education imposed a \$2,000 fee for first-time university registration for foreign students, including refugees, ending the previous equal treatment policy. Additionally, school registration delays occurred due to residency permit issues, affecting both new arrivals and existing refugees. Based on the needs identified by the GoE, UNHCR provides teacher training, supports the refurbishment of schools and supplies equipment, furniture, and other necessities to assist the Egyptian facilities in absorbing the refugee population. Moreover, UNHCR provides education grants to contribute to school fees, school uniforms, books, stationery and transportation.



For the 2022/2023 academic year, UNHCR has provided education grants to more than 56,000 refugees and asylum-seeker students (50% female) in public, community and private schools. Additionally, enhanced education grants are provided to around 1,800 unaccompanied and separated children and some 600 children with disability.

### Durable solutions

Due to its location, Egypt is part of the Syrian and Central Mediterranean resettlement initiatives. In 2022, 2,834 refugees were submitted for resettlement consideration to Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and US, while 4,101 refugee departed for resettlement countries.

As of August 2023, UNHCR Egypt successfully identified, processed, and submitted 2,243 refugees for resettlement to Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, UK, and USA. Additionally, some 2,028 individuals departed for resettlement, including also 702 individuals to the US.

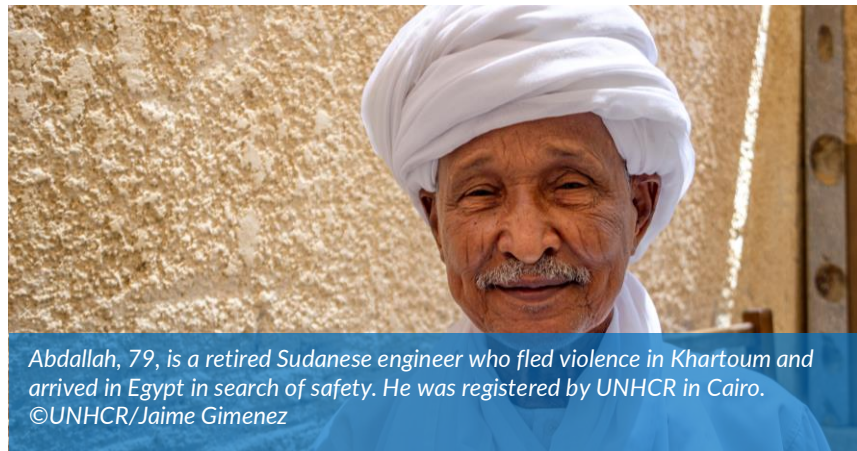
UNHCR Egypt prioritizes solutions through legal admission to third countries, including Complementary Pathways. In 2022, 891 refugees and asylum seekers accessed such pathways, including humanitarian visas, family reunification, and private sponsorship. Partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) was established to explore labour mobility opportunities to third countries. UNHCR organized an information session on labour mobility pathways with the Livelihood and Economic Inclusion Working



Group. Advocacy efforts are made to include refugee-led community-based organizations in the MENA Contact Group on Complementary Pathways (MCGCP).

### Health

UNHCR supports national efforts to improve the quality of health services to refugees and asylum-seekers and the host population in areas with high concentrations of refugees, including the Aswan region close to the border with Sudan. Refugees and asylum-seekers continue to have access to public primary, secondary and emergency



*Abdallah, 79, is a retired Sudanese engineer who fled violence in Khartoum and arrived in Egypt in search of safety. He was registered by UNHCR in Cairo.*  
©UNHCR/Jaime Gimenez

health care equal to Egyptian citizens. The Office supports the delivery of healthcare assistance to patients with chronic diseases, as well as psychosocial and mental health support.

### Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

UNHCR helps refugees and asylum-seekers to support themselves and their families by offering them training and assisting them in finding a market for their skills and goods. Work in this area is guided by several core principles, mainly protection, diversity, equity, access and sustainability.

UNHCR also works to promote economic inclusion of those forced to flee their homes by advocating for their right to work and building their livelihoods through market-oriented programs.

### Cash-based Interventions

UNHCR delivers monthly unconditional cash grants to extremely vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers to provide protection and assistance and prevent refugees from resorting to harmful coping mechanisms. Furthermore, the influx of refugees and asylum-seekers after the onset of the Sudan conflict in mid-April led UNHCR to a reorientation of its cash assistance program to also include recently arrived both registered and unregistered individuals if they meet the eligibility criteria. Adapting to the new emergency context, UNHCR began delivering assistance in the southern part of the country through its temporarily based team in Aswan. As of the end of August 2023, some 27,780 new arrivals from Sudan have been assisted with emergency cash assistance. Cash is deemed the most efficient and dignified way to enable vulnerable refugees cover their basic needs, while at the same time supporting and boosting local markets.

### Inter-Agency Coordination

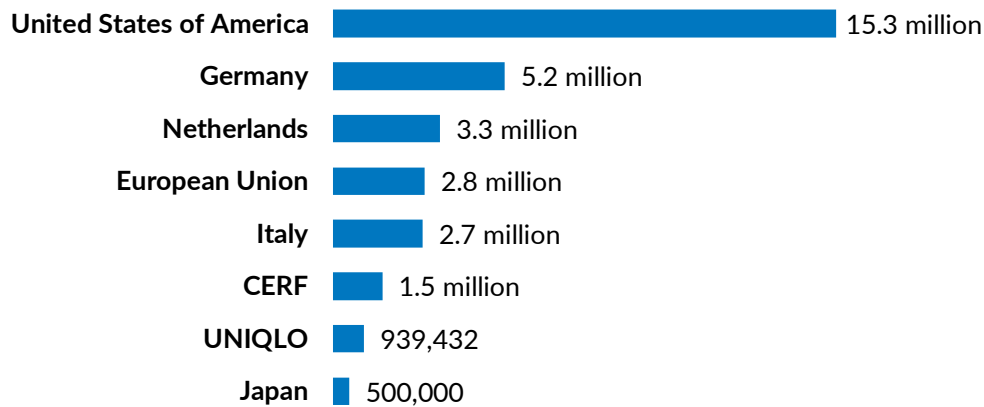
Following the onset of the crisis, in line with the Refugee Coordination Model, UNHCR led the development of a Regional Sudan Situation Refugee Response Plan (RRP), to coordinate the interagency response as well as associated advocacy and resource mobilization in the five countries most affected by the potential outflows of refugees from Sudan, including Egypt. Coordination structures already existed in Egypt for the response to existing refugee populations, particularly for the Syrian response, but they needed to be scaled up to deal with the demands of the new emergency. In support of the Government of Egypt which is the primary responder to the situation on its territory, the initial Egypt chapter of Sudan RRP 2023 had requirements of USD 114 million from May to October 2023. The plan had 25 partners, eight UN agencies, 7 International NGOs, and 10 national NGOs. Sectors leads and co-leads include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, and IOM, among others, according to their mandates and capacity. A revision of the RRP was conducted in August, to extend the plan until the end of 2023 and Egypt's requirements increased by around 10% to USD 125.5 million with additional resources required in areas such as Health, Food Security, Protection (registration), and Cash Assistance

among others. The Egypt chapter of the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) remains 27 per cent funded, as of end August 2023.

## Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to the Egypt Operation, including the Sudan Situation, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD



UNHCR Egypt is also grateful for the crucial support of private donors, including those from Australia, Germany, USA, United Kingdom, Republic of Korea, China, Spain, Japan, and Italy.

**CONTACT:** UNHCR Public Information and External Relations Unit – arecapi@unhcr.org  
**LINKS:** UNHCR Global Focus | UNHCR Egypt Website | UNHCR Sudan Emergency Website | UNHCR Egypt Twitter (@UNHCREgypt)