

REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

Djibouti continues to admit and host refugees and asylum-seekers in its territory. As of 30 June 2023, Djibouti is providing protection and solutions to 30,532 refugees and asylum-seekers, which is over 3 per cent of the total population. Despite a lower-middle-income status, and prone to recurrent droughts, Djibouti has traditionally maintained access to its territory for refugee inflows.

Refugees of Somali origin constitute the largest refugee group (43 per cent) in Djibouti, followed by refugees of Ethiopian origin (41 per cent) and refugees of Yemeni origin (11 per cent). The last verification exercise took place during the last quarter of 2022 and showed a decrease in numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers (5,905 individuals).

The reasons for this significant decrease in the total number could be attributed to: (i) the absence of these individuals in the country/site during the verification exercise for various reasons, (e.g. punctual return to the countries of origin for family and/or health reasons); (ii) undeclared spontaneous returns; and (iii) resumption of migratory movements towards a third country, as Djibouti serves as a crossroad connecting Africa, Asia and Europe.

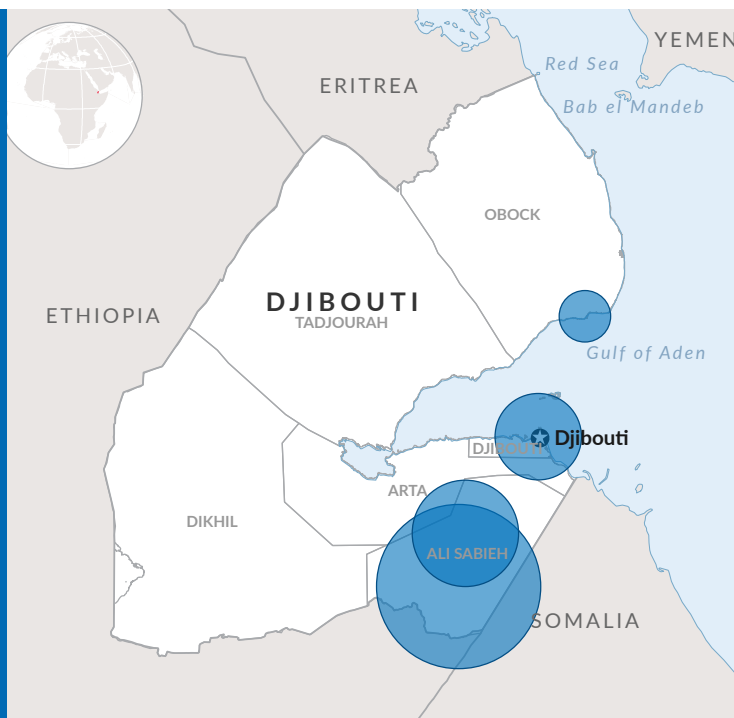
KEY POPULATION DATA (as of 30 June 2023)

21,614
Refugees

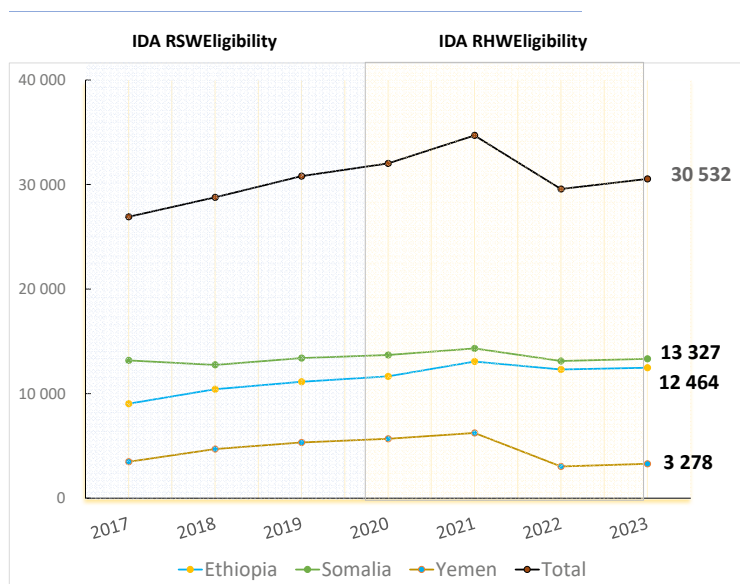
8,918
Asylum-seekers

3.14%
of the country's population (973,560)
are refugees and asylum-seekers

IDA 18 RSW/IDA 19 WHR
Eligibility: September 2017



In Djibouti, 85 per cent of refugees and asylum-seekers live in rural areas, of whom 56 per cent live in Ali Addeh village, 23 per cent in Holl Holl village, 5 per cent in Markazi in the Ali Sabieh and Obock regions, and 15 per cent live in in urban areas in Djibouti City. Refugees and asylum-seekers live peacefully in harmony and social cohesion with their hosts and contribute to local economies. Aside from Markazi camp, 95 per cent of the refugee population lives side by side with host communities.



POLICY DIMENSIONS

(as of 30 June 2023)

1. Host Communities

1.1 Support for communities in refugee-hosting areas

During the prescribed period, the [2018–2022 National Social Protection Policy](#) continues to provide for social safety nets for all Djiboutian nationals implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity (MASS). The social registry continues to be governed by [2017-311/PR/SEAS for the establishment, organisation and functioning of the social registry](#), which provides access to a poverty-targeted social assistance programme: the [National Family Solidarity Program \(PSNF\)](#).

Other key national social assistance programmes that are implemented include the Social and Solidarity Economy programmes (economic inclusion and social cohesion), education support for children with disabilities (including income generating assistance support for mothers), and subsidised access to the national health insurance scheme for the poorest people (Social Health Assistance Programme and the social assistance programme for poor older persons).

Supporting stability and resilience in Djibouti's refugee-hosting areas is vital. Collaborative efforts among government stakeholders and partners over the past three years encompassed providing basic services, education, healthcare and livelihoods to refugees and locals. Funded by the World Bank under IDA17, 18, and 19, the ARULOS Project has improved Holl Holl and Ali Addeh villages, home to 79.3 per cent of refugees with provision of clean water, electrification, roads, livelihoods and housing.

Other projects in refugee-hosting communities, led by ADDS (Agence Djiboutienne de Développement Social), IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development), NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council) and DRC (Danish Refugee Council) partners, focus on entrepreneurship, community development and community markets. They aim to enhance living conditions and access to social services for refugees and host communities. Additionally, the [Djibouti ICI development plan](#) (ICI - Inclusion-Connectivity-Institutions) launched in February 2022, seeks to expedite development in inland regions, including refugee-hosting areas with a focus on microfinance and unconventional financing.

During the IX Legislature of March 2023, the Prime Minister announced plans to boost development in inland regions. This includes tapping into underground resources in the Ali Sabieh Region, partnering with Hong Kong Aerospace Technology for a space base and promoting hotels in the Obock region.

1.2 Social cohesion

During the period under review, [Article 1 of the Constitution](#) and [Article 14 \(1\) of the Refugee Law](#) continue to provide the legal basis for non-discrimination and equality before the law without distinction based on language, origin, race, sex or religion, and non-discrimination against refugees. In practice, refugees and the host population maintain positive interactions regardless of their different countries of origin. The two communities thus continue to share sociocultural and linguistic ties that connect them in one way or another. Both communities have continued to live under the same administrative local authorities (*Prefet and sous-Prefet*), which allows a peaceful resolution of conflicts.

[ONARS](#) (Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés) with the support of UNHCR has continued to foster social cohesion programmes in refugee hosting areas. Ways of reinforcing peaceful coexistence have continued to include specific quotas for nationals and refugees in subsidized / funded vocational training opportunities, regional business fairs or joint sports tournaments. Similar efforts have been made to ensure that each refugee nationality group has its own subcommittee with age, gender, and diversity perspectives.

1.3 Environmental management

Environmental management in refugee-hosting areas continues to be governed by national laws. This includes: the [Law No. 51/AN/09/6^{ème} L](#), promulgated on 1 July 2009, which establishes the objectives of the national policy for environmental protection and management against all forms of degradation or deterioration of environmental resources with a view to ensuring sustainable development, the [Law No. 45/AN/04/5th L](#) relating to Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas, and the [Decree No. 2011-029/PR/MHUEAT](#) providing for environmental impact studies for any project likely to harm the environment.

The Ministry of Agriculture through its Direction of Rural Hydraulics continues to ensure the management of hygiene, water and sanitation in the refugee sites and host areas. The Ministry of Environment continues to provide on a regular basis prosopis as firewood for domestic cooking energy in the two refugee sites in the Ali Sabieh region.

1.4 Preparedness for refugee inflows

The [Refugees Act 2017](#), the [Asylum Procedure Decree 2017](#), the [Fundamental Rights of Refugees Decree 2017](#) and the [CRRF Action Plan 2017-2022](#) continue to provide elements for a national preparedness framework, including an institutional coordination mechanism. Together they could also be used to respond to eventual increases and/or new influxes of refugees, aiming to minimize socio-economic impacts in the short and medium term.

2. Regulatory Environment and Governance

2.1 Normative framework

During the reviewed period, Djibouti's national legal framework for refugee and asylum-seeker protection remained anchored in the [2017 Refugee Law](#), the [2017 Decree on Asylum Procedure](#) and the [2017 Decree on Refugee Fundamental Rights](#). The [2017–2022 CRRF Action Plan](#), serving as the national refugee policy framework, remains in place, but authorities are planning to develop a new CRFF action plan due to its lapse. Notably, the Refugee Law and the two related Decrees have yet to be translated into relevant local languages or languages spoken by refugees. However, border and immigration authorities have demonstrated an enhanced understanding of non-refoulement principles and ONARS's role, partially due to sensitization efforts by ONARS, in collaboration with Immigration Services.

Over the past three years, UNHCR and ONARS conducted 42 sensitization sessions on refugee rights, involving refugees, host communities, local administrative authorities, and security agents in two regions hosting refugees. These capacity-building efforts aimed to raise awareness and enhance understanding of refugee and asylum-seekers' rights within the national system.

Djibouti's asylum system, as governed by the [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree on Asylum Procedure](#), mandates individual refugee status determination (RSD) procedures for asylum-seekers unless they belong to groups or countries approved for prima facie refugee recognition. ONARS plays a pivotal role as the Secretariat, overseeing asylum-seeker registration, eligibility interviews and RSD assessments. The National Eligibility Commission (NEC) makes decisions on refugee status based on RSD files prepared by ONARS. However, information about these procedures remains inaccessible in languages understood by all asylum-seekers, leading to awareness gaps. While legal counsel is allowed by law, no asylum-seekers have utilized this right thus far. The appeal procedure, initiated in 2022, is not yet fully operational.

During the review period, people arriving from South Central Somalia and Yemen continued to be granted refugee status through a prima facie approach, despite the absence of a formal declaration by the government. Asylum applicants from other countries of origin went through individualized RSD procedures

conducted by ONARS and finally adjudicated by the NEC. In 2022, UNHCR facilitated a government-led assessment of asylum procedures, resulting in the development of a workplan for asylum capacity development interventions known as the 'Djibouti national asylum strategy' to address identified gaps.

Between 2022 and 2023, there was an increase in the number of adjudication sessions held by the National Eligibility Committee, which contributed to a slight reduction in the backlog of asylum applications (11,197 to 9,201). However, this reduction was primarily due to the assumption of asylum applicants' withdrawals made by ONARS, based on the non-appearance of applicants during the verification exercise from October to December 2022, a process often referred to as 'deactivation'. Therefore, additional efforts remain needed to reduce processing delays, enhance fairness and consistency in decision-making, and ensure equal accessibility to the national asylum procedure for all asylum-seekers.

Delays in UNHCR recruitment procedures have hindered the organization's ability to provide on-the-job coaching and training to the ONARS eligibility team. As a result, gaps have persisted, including deficiencies in the quality of RSD interviews, limited utilization of up-to-date country of origin information for RSD analysis, and flawed credibility assessments. Collecting necessary data during the registration phase would facilitate the effective use of various case processing modalities.

Over the past three years, UNHCR has continued to fund registration and RSD-related activities, including most eligibility officer positions at ONARS. However, these positions are not integrated into the government's planning, budgeting, and human resource systems, posing risks to their sustainability.

2.2 Security of legal status

The policy framework in Djibouti remained unchanged and there were no observed trends in terminating refugee status unlawfully.

The [2017 Refugee Law](#) continues to align with international non-refoulement standards, but isolated incidents of refoulement occurred in the past three years, notably in May 2021, when three recognized Ethiopian refugees were deported without proper legal procedures, prompting a UNHCR response.

In a roundup that occurred on 30 April 2023 targeting irregular migrants, some refugees and asylum-seekers were detained but released upon ONARS confirmation of their status with support of UNHCR, although many held expired identification documents. ONARS, in collaboration with UNHCR, has been overseeing this process.

Refugees and asylum-seekers continue to possess identification documents, including refugee ID cards and attestations with one-year validity. These documents grant them the right to stay in Djibouti.

2.3 Institutional framework for refugee management and coordination

The institutional framework for refugee management in Djibouti remains governed by the [2017 Refugee Law](#), the [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#), as well as the [2017–2022 CRRF Action Plan](#), along with its [coordination mechanism](#). The draft 2020–2023 ONARS Strategy, currently in preparation, will complement this framework. The 2017 Refugee Law continues to mandate the Ministry of Interior (Mol) to oversee refugee affairs, with daily execution and coordination handled by ONARS. Additionally, the 2017 Decree on Refugee Fundamental Rights outlines access to rights within the responsibilities of each Ministry.

The 2017-2022 CRRF Action Plan continues to guide roles and responsibilities for refugee coordination, overseen by a Steering Committee co-chaired by UNHCR and Mol. This committee includes representatives from refugee and host communities, national NGOs, donors, UN agencies, the World Bank and international NGOs. Although the Steering Committee has not met since February 2020, the CRRF national coordination

committee and its working groups convene regularly. The committee facilitates engagement with stakeholders, fostering exchanges and consultations on refugee affairs.

Refugee input and feedback on actions and decisions are gathered through community-based governance structures, including Refugee Central Committees (RCC), women's committees, dispute resolution committees, children and GBV committees. New RCC member elections are scheduled for August 2023, with a 50 per cent female representation goal.

Since the 2016-2017 academic year, refugee education data continue to be integrated into the national Education Management Information System.

On 24 February 2022, the National Development Plan 2020-2024, known as [Djibouti ICI](#) (Inclusion Connectivity and Institutions) was developed through a participatory approach including all ministries, regional authorities, the private sector, civil society organizations and development partners. With a view to leaving no one behind, the National Plan aims through the Inclusion axis to improve the quality of life and well-being of all Djiboutians, including refugees and asylum-seekers, by ensuring a better distribution of the fruits of growth, increasing social inclusion, and promoting private initiatives to diversify the economy.

Djibouti being part of the IGAD, refugee management and coordination is not only limited to country level. Regular regional meetings on refugees are held on education in line with the [Djibouti Declaration \(2017\) on Jobs, Livelihoods and Self-Reliance](#) aligned with the [Kampala Declaration](#) (March 2019) and recently on health online with the [Mombasa Declaration](#) (March 2022).

2.4 Access to civil registration and documentation

The [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#) governing the fundamental rights of refugees and asylum-seekers continues to provide for asylum-seekers to be issued with a six-month attestation delivered by ONARS and renewable, and refugees are issued with a national identity card delivered by the Ministry of Interior. The national identification documents also serve as authorization to stay and work in Djibouti. ONARS remained responsible for registering asylum-seekers and refugees with robust support from UNHCR. Furthermore, UNHCR has continued to prepare the asylum-seekers' attestations and refugee ID cards to be distributed by ONARS to refugees and asylum-seekers. It's worth noting that refugee ID cards do not contain any national identification number, as is typically found on national identity cards issued by the Ministry of the Interior to nationals.

Over the past three years, refugees and asylum-seekers have encountered challenges regarding the recognition and respect of their documents by authorities, at times leading to arrests and detentions by law enforcement officials. Some of these incidents stem from issues with the validity of their documentation, which had expired. There is also a notable lack of recognition for these identification documents by both national and sub-national authorities, as well as within the private sector. To address these issues in line with relevant national legislation, it is imperative that refugees are provided with national identity cards containing the national identification number issued by the competent authority within the Ministry of the Interior.

In January 2019, [Law No. 39/AN/19/8ème L](#) on the identification of individuals, creation of the national identification number, and establishment of a national register was enacted in Djibouti. Article 5 of this 2019 Law also provides for access to the national identification number for any foreigner residing regularly on Djiboutian territory. This includes refugees and asylum-seekers. Article 12 of the same law stipulates that the national register constitutes the unique reference for the identification of individuals and the production of all secure titles and national documents such as civil status certificates, national identity cards, travel documents, voter cards, driver's licenses, vehicle registration documents, work permits for foreigners, and criminal records. However, this new legislation has not been fully implemented as the government is still taking the necessary steps to ensure the interoperability of different national databases. Additionally, it is anticipated that a national population census scheduled for 2024 will also help prepare for the implementation of this law. Refugees and asylum-seekers are expected to be included in this upcoming national census.

The [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#) continue to uphold the right of refugees to obtain civil documentation. Specifically, the [2018 Civil Code](#) maintains the requirement for regular birth registration within three days of birth. In practice, authorities demonstrated flexibility in extending this period for refugees. Challenges have emerged in Holl Holl villages, particularly due to difficulties in obtaining birth certificates for new-borns when medical personnel are unavailable to issue the mother's exit sheet (serving as a birth notification). This delay affects the overall birth registration process in refugee hosting areas.

Since birth registration for refugees and asylum-seekers only began in 2013, some refugees who were born in Djibouti still lack a birth certificate. Late birth registration requires supplementary judgments serving as birth certificates, but the associated costs and accessibility challenges to the judiciary mechanism have made this process nearly impossible. Simplified procedures, such as mobile Court Hearings with a one-stop-shop registration approach with the support of ONARS and DGPF, could help clear the civil registry backlog. Addressing this issue is crucial in preventing statelessness because birth registration is essential for establishing a nationality entitlement for refugees born outside their country of origin. Data on the number of asylum-seekers and refugees born in Djibouti requiring birth certificates is unavailable. Furthermore, UNHCR continues to provide materials for the civil registry offices in refugee hosting areas. Refugees can also register their marriages through the services of the paralegal NGO 'Union Nationale des Femmes Djiboutiennes' (UNFD), facilitating the registration of religious marriages, benefiting refugees from Holl Holl and Ali Addeh.

There is a coordination mechanism among ONARS, UNHCR and the Immigration Department for issuance of Convention Travel Documents (CTDs) to recognized refugees. However, the documents are not machine-readable and do not meet International Civil Aviation Organization standards (ICAO).

2.5 Justice and security

During the period under review, refugees and asylum-seekers continue to have access to justice, law enforcement and legal assistance on par with nationals, as outlined in the [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#). This includes access to legal counselling, the 'Ma'adoun al Charia' accredited by the Ministry of Justice for personal status decisions and various national laws addressing gender-based violence (GBV).

While national laws cover protection from GBV, access to justice has remained limited for both refugees and host communities caused by inadequate judicial infrastructure, affordability and limited legal representation. Refugee and host communities continue to rely more on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Efforts to improve access to justice in refugee areas are limited, but UNHCR partnered with a national NGO to enhance access to the 'Maadoun al Charia,' mobile courts and legal assistance for GBV cases.

Refugees continue to benefit from security services like the police and gendarmerie, similar to nationals. However, implementation challenges persist, with limited access to services for both refugee and host community GBV survivors. Refugees often distrust GBV service providers due to confidentiality and data protection concerns, leading to a continued reliance on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms.

3. Economic Opportunities

3.1 Freedom of movement

The [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#) continue to accord refugees the right to move freely within Djibouti and choose their place of residence on the same basis as nationals.

In practice, refugees and asylum-seekers enjoy freedom of movement by presenting their refugee or asylum-seekers identification documents. During the period under review, more and more law enforcement officers have become familiar with refugee and asylum-seekers identification documents. Only refugees that are registered in the refugee sites (referred to as villages) and camps can benefit from humanitarian assistance. Over half of the refugees continue to be registered in one of three refugee villages where they reside and move daily. Some members of the refugee household might also move elsewhere for income generating purposes.

3.2 Right to work and rights at work

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Djibouti continue to enjoy the right to work and engage in self-employment, as guaranteed by the [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree on Refugee Fundamental Rights](#). Article 2 of the 2017 Decree, read in combination with Article 3 of the same, stipulates that for any professional activity, including liberal profession, refugees in Djibouti shall obtain a national refugee ID card issued by the Ministry of Interior. Both provisions indicate that the national refugee ID card serves as authorization to stay and work in the Republic of Djibouti. Similarly, the combined legal provisions of the same Decree also state that asylum-seekers can engage in professional activities and shall be issued an “attestation” by ONARS with a validity period of six months, which is renewable. This “attestation” serves as authorization to stay and work on Djiboutian territory. Additionally, Article 4 of the 2017 Decree provides asylum-seekers and refugees with the same treatment as nationals concerning Djibouti’s national legislation on the right at work and the right to social security. Furthermore, Article 2 of the 2017 Decree stipulates that for the exercise of any commercial activity refugees and asylum-seekers are subject to the same conditions and formalities than nationals.

Despite these legal provisions, challenges remain, such as high national unemployment rates and limited legal awareness among potential employers about asylum-seekers and refugees’ right to work without a work permit. Furthermore, the identity documents issued to refugees are not yet issued by the Ministry of Interior and also do not contain the single national identifier number as per the 2019 Law governing the identification of physical persons, creation of national identification number and national register. Therefore, these documents issued to refugees may not be recognized as official identity documents equating to authorization to stay and work in Djibouti. Additionally, some refugees lack the necessary skills. Asylum-seeker attestations may also not be recognized by employers, partly due to a lack of awareness.

The government has implemented strategies to promote employment, especially among vulnerable groups, including refugees, and emphasizes skills development. Refugees can register their businesses efficiently through the "[Guichet Unique](#)" (One-Stop Shop) process. On a less positive note, refugees and asylum-seekers are still unable to obtain Djiboutian driving licenses, which remains a marketable skill. Ongoing discussions with the relevant Djiboutian authorities aim to address this issue and ensure they can enjoy access to driving licenses.

In 2021, in collaboration with UNHCR, the Ministry of Labor and affiliated institutions (Employment National Agency, Labor Inspection, National Institution for Public Administration) organized sensitization sessions in three refugee villages to inform refugees about their right to work and the right for potential refugee and asylum-seeker workforces to be registered in the National Agency for Employment, and Professional Trainings database. This aims to link refugees to potential employers. Refugees have also been informed about their right to contact and file complaints to the Labor Inspection for any abuses from their employers.

3.3 Land, housing, and property rights

Under the [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#) refugees continue to enjoy the right to hold a property in line with the provisions of the [1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees](#).

There is still no data available on how many refugees have exercised their rights or have faced practical barriers in accessing land, housing, and property in Djibouti.

In the refugee villages, UNHCR has provided support for the construction of emergency shelters, semi-permanent and permanent structures. So far, 10 per cent of households in Ali Addeh and 12 per cent in Holl Holl live in permanent structures. In Djibouti city, refugees look for their own accommodation, except some of the most vulnerable.

By the end of 2022, the survey to restructure the two villages was concluded and submitted to the World Bank for approval. The next step will involve the implementation of the 'Agence de Rehabilitation Urbaine et du Logement Social' (ARULOS) project, which is designed to enhance refugee access to improved social infrastructure. This project will positively impact the living conditions of refugees and host communities, including housing, access to potable water, livelihoods, electricity, and road construction.

In Markazi camp refugees continue to live in prefab houses equipped with running water and connected to electricity. Those permanent structures were given by the King Souleiman Foundation.

3.4 Financial and administrative services

In accordance with the [National Law for Refugees](#) and its [implementing decree](#), refugees and asylum-seekers in Djibouti continue to enjoy the right to open a bank account, to have access to banking transactions and to public administrative services on the same basis as nationals. While the Central Bank of Djibouti issued an administrative regulation in 2018 to allow refugees to open bank accounts, using asylum-seeker attestations and refugee ID cards, certain obstacles remain in practice for opening bank accounts. In 2022, UNHCR met with eight commercial banks to assess potential barriers for refugees in accessing their services. Some banks expressed their concerns of the lack of a policy for the inclusion of such category of clients in the banking system, but they remain favorable to include refugees in digital banking services. Furthermore, refugees and asylum-seekers continue to have access to SIM card registration based on their refugee ID and/or asylum-seeker attestations.

Over the past three years, asylum-seekers have continued to face limitations in exercising their rights to access financial services. As a result, in April 2022, a workshop in Djibouti City aimed to raise awareness among 15 private sector representatives about refugee rights and financial inclusion. Notable participants included the Central Bank, BCIMR, BOA, BOCD, International Business Bank, Bank of China, SALAAM Bank, SABA African Bank, Silkroad International Bank, International Investment Bank and CAC Bank. These banks have now committed to providing banking services to refugees and asylum-seekers upon presentation of their refugee ID cards or household-level attestations (proof of registration) for asylum-seekers. Additionally, Djibouti Telecom has agreed to offer SIM cards based on refugee ID cards and asylum-seeker attestations.

To the credit of the government, the national strategy for financial inclusion was issued in 2022 and marks the political will of Djibouti to develop a comprehensive framework to ensure that all segments of the population, including refugees and asylum-seekers, have access to financial services, such as banking, credit, insurance, and investments. This strategy aims to promote economic growth, reduce poverty, and enhance the overall financial well-being of the citizens and other residents in Djibouti by providing them with the means to participate in the formal financial system. It often involves regulatory measures, infrastructure development, technology adoption and educational initiatives to bridge the gap between underserved populations and financial services. UNDP provided technical support in the design and drafting of the National strategy which includes refugees.

Since July 2020, UNHCR and its partner "[Agence Djiboutienne de Développement Social](#)" (ADDSD) launched an entrepreneurship project for both refugees and host communities. So far, 628 people have been trained and benefitted from startup kits, 128 of whom opened accounts at the national microfinance

agency CPEC (" [Caisse Populaire d'Épargne et de Crédi](#) ") with the possibility of getting loans.

Access to driving licenses has remained challenging for refugees, but the authorities are seeking to overcome the challenges.

4. Access to National Public Services

4.1 Education

The [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#) continue to grant refugees and asylum-seekers the right to enrol in primary and secondary public schools, and access to vocational training under the same conditions as nationals.

The government has upheld its commitment to integrate refugees into the national education system. This commitment was realized through the [Strategy for the refugees' inclusion in the national education system and its Implementation Plan 2019-2025](#), co-signed by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MENFOP), UNICEF and UNHCR. Notable achievements under this plan include the translation of the French curriculum into English, enabling refugee learners to follow the national curriculum. The authorities have strengthened school buildings in refugee hosting areas.

Previously, refugee schools in Djibouti used the Kenyan curriculum without Kenyan authority involvement, causing accreditation challenges. A decision was made to translate the Djiboutian curriculum from French to English. This translation has now been completed up to grade 10, with a full transition to the French education curriculum in English anticipated by 2025. During this transition, the Kenyan curriculum is still used in upper secondary education, officially recognized in Djibouti following Decree 2020-234 by MENFOP.

Refugees in Markazi, primarily from Yemen, continue to use their home country's curriculum taught in Arabic, recognized by Djiboutian authorities. The Djiboutian curriculum will be translated into Arabic and a trilingual system is planned where the national curriculum can be taught in French, English or Arabic.

Currently, 10,858 children attend pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in refugee sites. In 2022, the gross enrolment rate for primary education was 65 per cent and 41 per cent for secondary education. As of June 2023, 56 refugee students from three cohorts attended the University of Djibouti. Two refugee students were awarded government scholarships to study abroad for their outstanding performance. Refugee inclusion in the national education system, led by MENOPF, has been positive. However, refugee teachers are not yet on the national payroll due to financial constraints. Despite substantial funding from the IDA Sub-window for host communities and refugees, UNHCR continued to primarily cover school-related costs for refugees.

Since the 2022 Djibouti Declaration on education for refugees, returnees, and host communities, the IGAD Secretariat, UNHCR and MENFOP have developed a costed plan for refugee inclusion in the national education system. This plan awaits approval and focuses on three key areas: integrating refugee teachers into the national payroll, implementing a digital plan to enhance teaching and learning quality in refugee villages, and providing vocational training to prepare young refugees for the job market.

4.2 Health care

Djibouti continued to provide refugees and asylum-seekers access to the national healthcare system on equal terms with its nationals, in accordance with the [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#). The National Health Development Plan for 2020–2024 aimed to strengthen the primary care system, enhance disease prevention, and extend health insurance coverage, benefiting refugees as well. Additionally, the ongoing [UNDAF \(2018-2022\)](#) has

been instrumental in supporting access to health and nutrition care, including social health protection for vulnerable refugee and national populations.

Djibouti also continued to receive global funds for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and malaria, ensuring that refugees have access to treatments. UNICEF has also continued to play a key role in supplying routine vaccines to the Ministry of Health. IGAD also continued to support tuberculosis screening and contact tracing in refugee camps extended through 2025. These activities are funded through UNHCR and included in the project partnership with the Ministry of Health. The country continued to grapple with a shortage of healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, and lab technicians.

Since 2018, the Ministry of Health has assumed responsibility for delivering healthcare services to refugees and host communities, with support from UNHCR and the World Bank. The existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2018 is set to expire, necessitating its amendment and the development of a multi-year strategic plan involving other UN agencies and development partners, as the inclusion of refugees into the national health system remains reliant on UNHCR's financial assistance.

In the Holl Holl and Ali-Addeh sites, primary health posts continued to be funded by UNHCR through a project partnership agreement with the Ministry of Health. However, in Markazi camp, primary healthcare is provided by an NGO funded by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Foundation and the Ministry of Health, raising concerns among Yemeni refugees about potential conflicts of interest due to Saudi Arabia's financial support. Secondary healthcare services are delivered by the Regional Hospitals of Ali Sabieh and Obock without charge.

Financing from the World Bank, under IDA17 and IDA18, has made it possible to improve some of the medical infrastructure and equipment of the health posts in Holl Holl, Ali Adeh, and the regional hospitals in Ali Sabieh and Obock, but much remains to be completed to ensure full inclusion.

Referral patients from camps to Djibouti City for Level 3 care (tertiary level) has encountered challenges since 2022. While initially considered a government commitment, the costs of such referrals have not been covered, preventing refugee and asylum-seeker patients from accessing tertiary healthcare. Negotiations with the World Bank are underway to secure support for the Ministry of Health in addressing this issue.

Additionally, an inclusion strategy aimed at providing universal medical insurance to 12,500 refugees, financed by the European Union (EU) delegation through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity, has faced challenges in reaching an agreement. The individual insurance cost was deemed low, but sustainability remains a concern. Plans are now being considered for the pilot inclusion of vulnerable refugees if donor support can be obtained. Refugees residing in Djibouti City have enrolled in the national health insurance, while those with specific needs continue to access public health facilities in the city free of charge upon presentation of their identification documentation.

4.3 Social protection

The [National Social Protection Strategy 2018-2022](#) of the Republic of Djibouti was officially promulgated through the [Law No. 043/AN/19/8ème L](#) of 23 June 2019. The responsibility for implementation of the strategy lies with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity (MASS). The strategy aims to provide support to Djiboutian households living in extreme poverty by granting them access to social assistance as part of the National Family Solidarity Program (PNSF). Under this program, eligible households receive FDJ 30,000, equivalent to USD 170, each quarter. Eligibility criteria require that households are registered in the national social registry, with a focus on those experiencing poverty and vulnerability. This includes households with members who have a disability or are elderly, children under five years old, orphans, and vulnerable children.

On 8 July 2020, a new [Decree No. 2020-137/PR/MASS](#) was enacted, amending the previous [Decree No. 2017-311/PR/SEAS](#). This amendment aimed at including refugees and asylum-seekers in the national social registry, thereby granting them access to the national social protection system.

The inclusion of refugees in the national social protection system, a government priority under the [Djibouti 2017–2022 CRRF Action Plan](#), has faced challenges in securing long-term financing for the PNSF. This has affected coverage for eligible households and extended coverage to refugees. Nevertheless, MASS, with assistance from WFP and in collaboration with UNHCR and ONARS, has made progress in supporting refugees.

As of August 2022, sensitization efforts and analysis of eligibility criteria were conducted in Ali Addeh, Holl-Holl villages and urban areas to include refugees in the PNSF. Enrolments focused on urban areas, where 800 refugee households were included in the national social registry, gaining access to the PNSF in October 2022, benefitting approximately 4,000 individuals. This corresponds to approximately 4,000 beneficiaries, constituting 55 per cent of the urban refugee population and approximately 13 per cent of the entire refugee population.

In 2022, Djibouti faced drought that has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities of the population and affected food security. As a result, the MASS and partners often had to adjust their priorities, which impacted inclusion efforts. Concerns have arisen regarding the short duration of the PNSF, which is set for one year, and the predictability of funding beyond this period. This is an ongoing challenge for the social protection.

In the first half of 2023, the Ministry of Social Affairs initiated the development of a new National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS). It is expected to focus on extending social assistance to various internal regions, especially those hosting refugees.

4.4 Protection for vulnerable groups

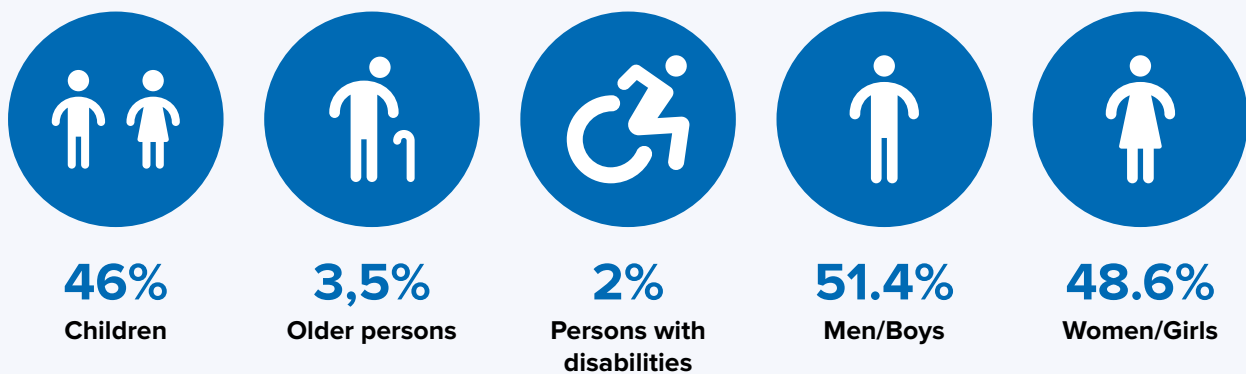
Djibouti continues to have policies, standards, and services for safeguarding the well-being of its children, including unaccompanied and separated children, victims of trafficking in persons, survivors of gender-based violence and children with special needs. In alignment with the [2017 Refugee Law](#) and the [2017 Decree Governing the Fundamental Rights of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers](#), refugee children also benefit from these policies and services for the protection of Djiboutian children. However, access to these vital services remains limited for both nationals and refugees due to policy and resource deficiencies, as well as challenges in implementation. While there are child protection laws in place, a comprehensive referral mechanism for all children at risk is lacking. Refugee children in particular follow separate referral pathways led by an international NGO in partnership with UNHCR.

In January 2023, Djibouti introduced a national child policy through the Ministry of Women and the Family to establish a coordination mechanism ensuring the well-being, development, protection, and participation of children, including refugee children. Despite the above, UNHCR continued to collaborate with an international NGO to ensure the protection of refugee children at risk.

In response to the [2016 Law No. 133 on preventing and responding to human trafficking](#), a [decree enacted on 4 February 2023](#) established a national committee to combat human trafficking and related practices. This inter-ministerial coordinating structure, overseen by the Minister of Justice, aimed at enhancing the government's efforts to address human trafficking. Djibouti has taken significant steps to establish a shelter for adult trafficking victims, including partnering with an international organization. However, there have been limited efforts in terms of reporting and prosecuting trafficking cases.

5. Cross Sectors

Characteristics of registered refugees and asylum-seekers in total refugee population
as of 30 June 2023



5.1 Gender

National laws and decrees continue to promote gender equality and related principles. Progress has been made in girls' education, women's representation in decision-making bodies and the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM), with fewer reported cases. Women's empowerment is apparent through cooperatives and mutual insurance entities (*mutuelles*) in various regions. Nonetheless, gender disparities persist in policies and their implementation, primarily in the following areas:

- a. **Support for refugee-hosting communities:** While UNHCR strives for gender parity in leadership, refugee women often yield to men due to cultural constraints and illiteracy.
- b. **Institutional framework for refugee management:** There are still a lack of gender perspective in programming, new regulations stipulate that 50 per cent of elected committee members should be female refugees.
- c. **Protection for vulnerable groups:** There are still gaps in preventing and responding to GBV, especially for individuals with specific needs. The UNFD ('Union des Femmes Djiboutiennes') actively monitors sites and addresses identified GBV cases with complaint mechanisms in place.

Despite progress, gender-related challenges persist in these dimensions, affecting socio-economic development.

5.2 Social inclusion

Differences and restrictions in policies and their implementation concerning refugees and asylum-seekers are evident, with the most significant impact on socio-economic development seen in the key areas below:

- a. **Rights to work and rights at work:** Asylum-seekers face disadvantages compared to recognized refugees due to limited recognition of asylum-seeker attestations by employers.
- b. **Access to civil registration and documentation:** Facilitated access to late birth registration and certification is needed for refugees and asylum-seekers born in Djibouti before 2013 who continue to lack birth certificates. Access to birth registration for refugees born in exile is key to prevent risks of statelessness and establish their entitlement to a nationality.
- c. **Education:** Insufficient targeted support exists for refugee children with special needs, including disabilities and age-related requirements.