

PLACE

Yemen

DATE

30 March 2023

EU humanitarian funding supports 15,721 refugees and asylum seekers in Yemen

***YEMEN** EU humanitarian support to UNHCR in 2022 provided registration, documentation, and refugee status determination to 15,721 refugees and asylum seekers in Yemen.*



Yemen has a long history of generously hosting large populations of those fleeing conflict. Most of the refugees and asylum seekers that reach Yemen, through the Gulf of Aden or the Red Sea, arrive without any type of identification. This increases the risks of exploitation and abuse by smuggling or trafficking networks, as well as arrest and detention. Registration and documentation are key protection interventions that enable access to international protection and assistance provided by UNHCR and its partners.

“Refugees are among the most vulnerable groups in Yemen. Despite the conflict in Yemen, host communities continue to generously shelter over 90,000 refugees from war-torn neighboring countries. The EU engagement in support of refugees and asylum seekers is essential for UNHCR to deliver core protection services. EU support has also been vital for capacitating the government and authorities to fulfil their primary obligations to protect refugees, as Yemen is a party to the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees”, says Maya Ameratunga, UNHCR Representative in Yemen.

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EU funds have also contributed towards development of a Joint Strategy with the International Organization for Migration for coordinated responses to mixed movements of refugees and migrants to Yemen.

“Life here is very hard, whether you are a Yemeni or a refugee”. Ayan is a mother of two, and a Somali refugee in Aden. She is one of the 40,613 refugees and asylum seekers registered with the Immigration, Passport & Naturalization Authorities (IPNA) or UNHCR in the south. With the support from EU humanitarian aid, UNHCR issued over one hundred Refugee Status Determination decisions under its mandate to refugees registered with its Sub-Office in Aden.

“The EU’s humanitarian funding has enabled UNHCR to provide crucial registration, documentation, and protection services to thousands of refugees and asylum seekers in Yemen,” says Heather Blackwell, EU Humanitarian Aid head of office in Yemen. “As vulnerable groups in a country facing ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis, refugees and migrants require our support to access the necessary protection and assistance.”

Together with the Immigration, Passport & Naturalization Authorities (IPNA), UNHCR in Aden registered and issued identity documents to 5,412 new individuals in 2022 and renewed 9,221 identification documents which had expired. Mobile registration teams were supported to reach remote areas, where communities of refugees have difficulty accessing these services in the city centers. Furthermore, EU humanitarian contribution supported refugee and asylum-seeking children’s access to birth certificates in Aden, Mukalla, and Kharaz refugee camp by providing legal assistance.

During 2022, after being on hold for several years, the Immigration, Passport & Naturalization Authorities (IPNA) and the Bureau for Refugee Affairs (BRA) in Sana’a began registering undocumented children of registered refugees. They were able to register 2,000 unregistered refugee children. Documentation is an essential protection activity, not only does it allow refugees to access services it also enables the early identification of individuals with specific needs, and their referral to an available protection response. Like most of the Somali refugee community, Ayan lives in Basateen, a neighborhood in the outskirts of Aden Governorate. Basateen neighborhood also hosts IDPs, IDP returnees and local Yemeni communities. After eight years of the conflict, families are living in dire conditions. *“I use my ID to get medical treatment at the hospital and to receive humanitarian assistance. It is important when travelling; it protects us.”*

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In March 2023, Yemen will enter its ninth year of conflict. The conflict continues to cripple the economy, reverse pre-conflict development gains, and exacerbate current and new vulnerabilities, notably on women and girls. In 2023, an estimated 21.6 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection services (HNO 2023), including 3.1 million internally displaced people. Yemen is the only country in the Arab Peninsula to have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

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