Egypt

December 2025

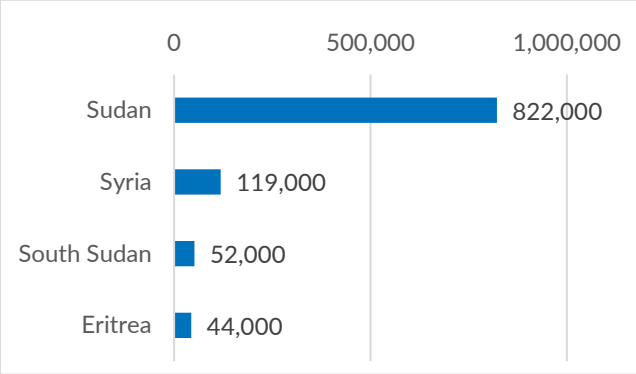
There are 1,085,000 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR Egypt. Sudanese are the largest group, followed by Syrians. Most refugees live in Greater Cairo and Alexandria.

UNHCR has been in Egypt since 1954. Since then, UNCHR has provided protection, including registration, documentation, refugee status determination, and resettlement to people forced to flee.

Egypt is the top recipient country of people fleeing the current conflict in Sudan. UNHCR is intensifying its protection and assistance efforts to meet the most urgent needs of newly arrived Sudanese refugees.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS REGISTERED WITH UNHCR EGYPT, AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 2025

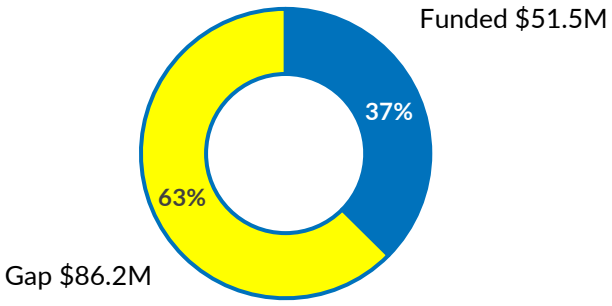
Top 4 Countries of Origin



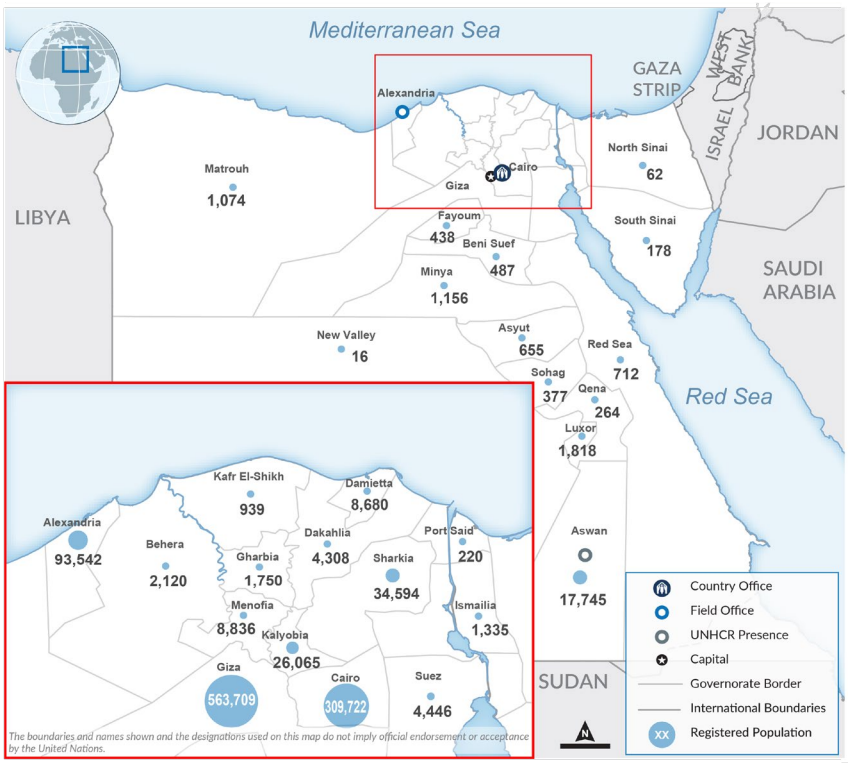
FUNDING (AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 2025)

USD 137.7 million

requested for UNHCR Egypt in 2025



MAIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF REFUGEES IN EGYPT



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

45 International Staff

283 National Staff

Offices:

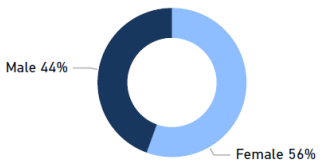
1 Country Office in Cairo

1 Reception Centre in Giza

1 RSD/RST Building in Giza

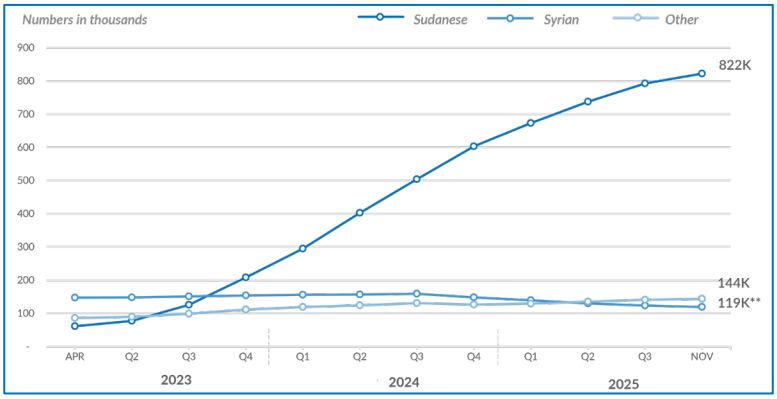
1 Field Office in Alexandria

Gender breakdown of refugees registered in Egypt:



Context

Egypt is currently at a critical juncture, amid the Sudan crisis on its southern border (the world's most damaging displacement crisis), the Gaza and Syria emergencies to the East, economic challenges, and severe aid cuts in 2025. In this context, Egypt is both a transit and destination country for refugees and asylum-seekers.



Refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR Egypt (April 2023 - November 2025)

According to the Government of Egypt (GoE), 1.5 million Sudanese have fled to Egypt since the onset of the conflict in 2023. The conflagration in Sudan has led to an unprecedented surge (twelvefold compared to pre-crisis level) in the number of refugees arriving in Egypt, placing additional strain on already overstretched resources. UNHCR Egypt is actively addressing the needs of refugees through a range of vital interventions.

In response to the Gaza crisis, UNHCR has delivered water, clothes, blankets, jerry cans, and sleeping mats to Gaza, and cash assistance to medical evacuees from Gaza in Egypt – both through the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC). UNHCR also provides protection and assistance to Syrian refugees in Egypt, including facilitating their return to Syria for those who wish to do so in an informed and voluntary manner.

According to the latest vulnerability assessment (June 2025) conducted jointly by UNHCR, WFP and the National Statistics Office, over half of the refugees in Egypt experience food insecurity, one in three Sudanese lack access to medical care, and half of refugee children are out of school, largely due to lack of documentation. Without legal access to the labour market, refugees at the same time depend heavily on humanitarian aid. Recent funding cuts have impacted vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and unaccompanied children most severely. To address these gaps, UNHCR facilitates legal status and documentation, including registration and birth registration.

A key goal of UNHCR Egypt is ensuring refugees are included in national systems, services, and strategies from the beginning of emergencies. This approach includes working closely with national and local public institutions, development organizations, the private sector, and other partners to strengthen policies, improve government capacity to deliver inclusive services and support refugees in becoming self-reliant. This long-term vision is implemented through multi-year programs aimed at refugee inclusion, such as the Dutch-funded PROSPECTS programme and the EU-funded Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees.

In December 2024, the GoE enacted its first-ever asylum law, which outlines a legal and institutional framework for managing refugee affairs and protecting their rights. UNHCR is working with the GoE on a transition plan to support establishing an asylum management system in line with international norms.

Adoth Back, 10 years old from Sudan, Adoth came to UNHCR registration center with her mother to renew their asylum cards. ©UNHCR/Basma Fathy.

Main Activities

Protection

- **Reception, Counselling, and Legal Assistance**
  UNHCR Egypt receives more than three thousand refugees at its offices every working day, mainly Sudanese. The first points of contact with UNHCR are the reception areas in Greater Cairo and Alexandria. There, protection staff counsel refugees that enter the premises on a walk-in basis. Refugees have several other access avenues to UNHCR, including its revamped helpline to help respond to the pressures with donor support. Operators provide service information and counselling and schedule registration appointments in seven languages. Furthermore, refugees have access to legal remedies and representation through lawyers of NGO partners.

- **Community-Based Protection**
  UNHCR and partners provide targeted support to persons with specific needs through individual case management, psychosocial support, and emergency response. UNHCR also organizes community activities to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among refugees and host communities.

Kindergarten student Sama (7) taking part in a class exercise in a community school in 6th of October, Egypt. ©UNHCR/John McGrane.

- **Communication with Communities**
  UNHCR provides refugees and asylum-seekers with information about UNHCR and partners' services through different communication channels, including social media pages on Facebook, with a total of 12.8 million views during 2025 and UNHCR Egypt's Help website, which was the second most viewed globally in 2025 with 3.4 million views. Moreover, as of November 2025, UNHCR provided information on protection and assistance to approximately 68,000 individuals through on-site awareness sessions.

- **Child Protection**
  UNHCR Child Protection activities focus 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.

- **Prevention and Response to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**
  UNHCR focuses on prevention, risk mitigation, and response activities to ensure that survivors of VAWG, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and trafficking for sexual exploitation receive quality, timely, and survivor-centred support services. All survivors receiving case management are guaranteed access to safe and confidential multisectoral VAWG referral pathways, which include emergency shelter, psychosocial support, legal assistance, emergency cash aid, and medical care. Between January and November 2025, UNHCR Egypt assisted 1547 VAWG survivors through its Safety Package programme.

- **Registration**
  Registration of the population in need of international protection is a central activity of UNHCR, as the GoE delegated this task with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1954. The crisis in Sudan has prompted UNHCR to significantly expand its registration capabilities, aiming to protect as many individuals as possible. 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.

  As of 30 November, some 999,000 people forced to flee Sudan have approached UNHCR for registration. Of them, 79% (more than 780,000 people) have been fully registered. In response to the increasing numbers, UNHCR has scaled up its overall registration processing since the start of the Sudan crisis by increasing staffing, improving infrastructure, and expanding the Infoline as well as communication channels. In August 2024, UNHCR Egypt launched its online registration appointment tool, which has already allowed over 68,000 Sudanese to expedite their access to appointments and reduce the pressures on UNHCR's reception centre.

- **Refugee Status Determination**
  UNHCR conducts Refugee Status Determination (RSD) on behalf of the Government and facilitates access to protection, basic needs, and essential services, such as health and education. UNHCR Egypt strategically utilizes RSD to maximize protection benefits for many asylum-seekers while maintaining the integrity of the asylum system. Before and after the Sudan crisis, UNHCR Egypt has been the largest and most productive RSD mandate operation globally. As of December 2025, UNHCR finalized over 16,000 RSD decisions.

- **Durable Solutions**
  UNHCR Egypt continues to avail comprehensive durable solutions for refugees in Egypt. The operation prioritizes resettlement for the most vulnerable, expanded complementary pathways for skilled refugees, and supports voluntary returns to Syria, while assisting with information sharing for those undertaking Sudan cross-border movements through.

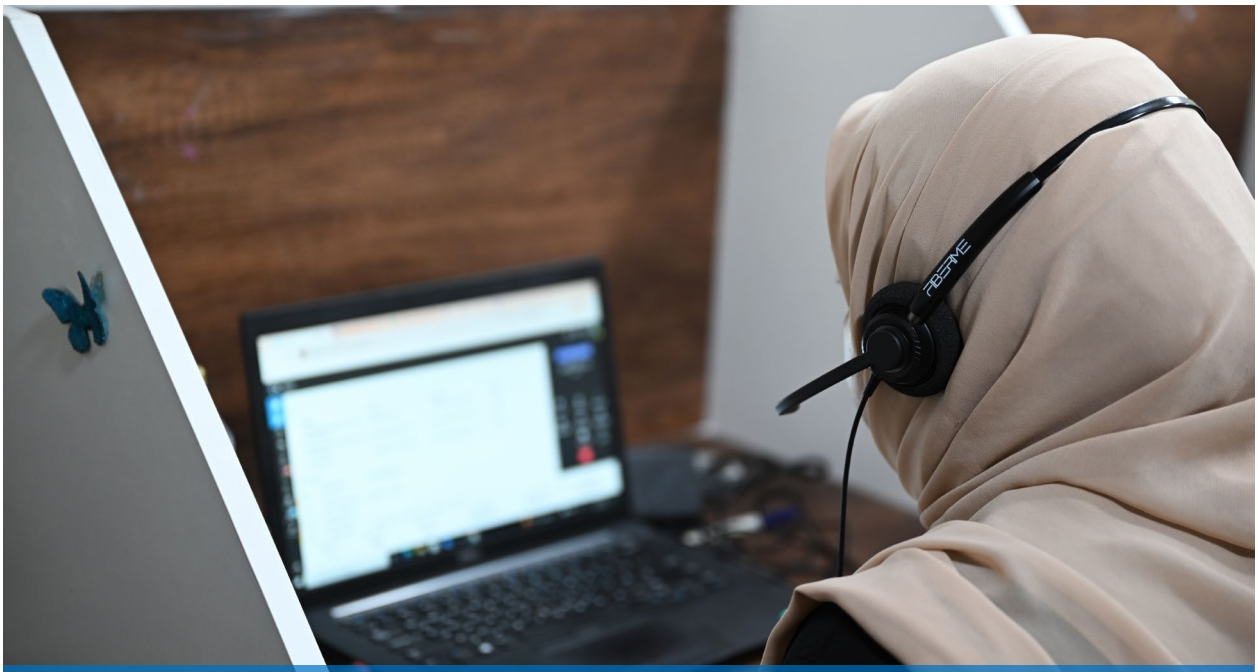
  In 2025, 2,328 refugees were submitted for resettlement consideration to 14 resettlement countries. During this time, more than 1,600 refugees departed for resettlement, while 2,176 have departed in this same period on various complementary pathways including family reunification, education pathways, labour mobility, and private sponsorship.

  Since December 2024, more than 28,000 Syrian refugees have requested UNHCR to close their case files in Egypt, indicating their desire to return to Syria. According to the latest Enhanced Regional Survey on Syrian Refugees' Perceptions and Intentions on Return to Syria (2025), 29% of Syrian refugees in Egypt expressed an intention to return home in the next year, up from just 1% in 2024. Based on these shifts, UNHCR plans to assist 35,000 Syrian refugees intending to return to Syria from Egypt in 2026, subject to funds available.

- **Education**
  UNHCR advocates for enrolling refugees and asylum-seekers in public schools on the same footing as Egyptians. In 2024, UNHCR provided education cash grants to 82,000 refugee children. Furthermore, based on the needs identified by the Ministry of Education, UNHCR provided bridging classes, and teacher training, supported the refurbishment of schools, and supplied equipment, and other necessities to assist the Egyptian facilities in absorbing the refugee children.

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. This entails strengthening the existing national health systems through the provision of needed equipment. Through partners, UNHCR Egypt provided around 40,000 primary care consultations to refugees and supported specialized healthcare, including hospital care, to around 3,000 individuals as of November 2025. However, due to a lack of funding in 2025, UNHCR has been forced to suspend most of its healthcare activities, leaving thousands of refugee patients without support.



Mersal staff member answering calls from refugees to the medical hotline UNHCR funds as a healthcare response. ©UNHCR/Basma Fathy.

Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

UNHCR supports refugees and asylum-seekers to become self-sufficient by providing training and helping them find markets for their skills and products. It also promotes their economic inclusion by advocating for their right to work and developing their livelihoods through market-based programs. UNHCR support includes guidance on the Egyptian labour market and matching employers with potential employees while ensuring minimum standards are met. Moreover, UNHCR helps entrepreneurs with cash grants and mentoring to establish businesses. In total, some 4,000 refugees and asylum-seekers (half Sudanese women) participated in UNHCR's livelihoods programmes in Egypt. Furthermore, UNHCR also empowered more than 100 artisans who crafted handmade products within the MADE51 initiative, which aims to highlight their skills, bring them hope, and promote the sale of their creations in global markets. All these efforts helped refugees to navigate a challenging labour market.

Cash-Based Interventions

UNHCR delivers bimonthly 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 led UNHCR to a reorientation of its cash assistance program to also include recently arrived individuals if they meet the eligibility criteria. Since the onset of the conflict in the neighbouring country, UNHCR has assessed the vulnerability of over 180,000 people. Meanwhile, more than 102,000 people were assisted with the bimonthly Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) in 2025. However, due to funding shortfalls, UNHCR has been forced to reduce the number of families receiving MPCA starting in May 2025. Only the most vulnerable cases will continue to receive this support. Cash is deemed the most efficient and dignified way to enable vulnerable refugees to cover their basic needs, while at the same time supporting and boosting local markets.

Inter-Agency Coordination

Following the onset of the Sudan crisis, in line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), 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 Egypt and other affected countries. Egypt is also part of the Syria Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP). UNHCR and UNDP co-lead the Sudan and Syria RRPs in Egypt. In June 2025, the GoE officially endorsed the Egypt Refugee and Resilience Response Plan (ERRRP 2025), marking its first nationally led refugee platform addressing all nationalities. This milestone followed nearly two years of dialogue and collaboration between UNHCR and the GoE.

Marwa Elomda, a refugee from Sudan living in Egypt (R), crafts crochet garlands and crochet flowers at Threads of Hope, a MADE 51 partner, for the Peace Tree installation. ©UNHCR/ Pedro Costa Gomes

Working with Partners

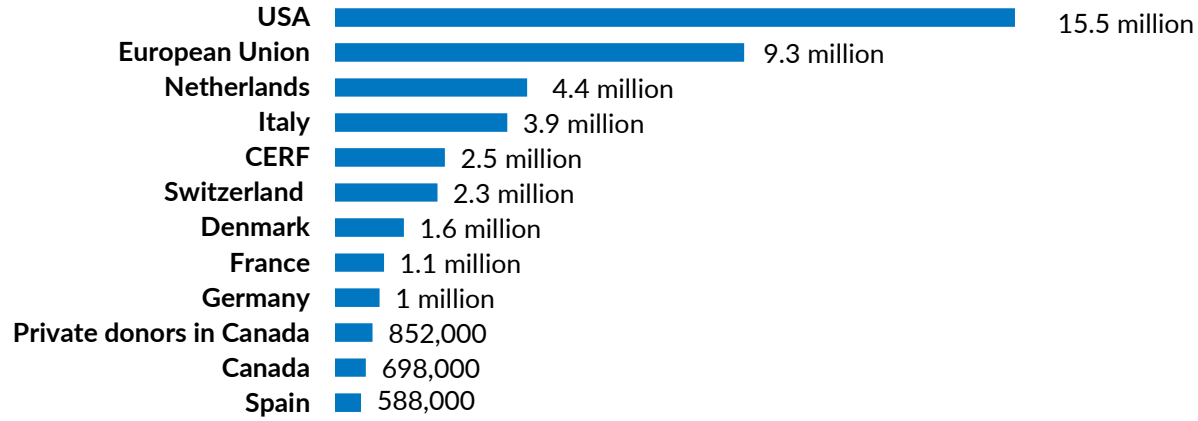
UNHCR works through twelve partners in Greater Cairo, North Coast, Aswan and North Sinai: All Saints/ Refuge Egypt, Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, Catholic Relief Services, CARE Egypt, Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights, Egyptian Red Crescent, Etijah - Youth and Development Consultancy Institute, Life Makers Foundation, Mersal Foundation, Plan International, Save the Children, and Terre des Hommes.

To bridge the nexus to development, UNHCR works to advance the Global Refugee Forum pledges, aiming to improve refugees' socio-economic inclusion and support long-term solutions. Egypt's pledges focus on integrating refugees into national health and education systems, peacebuilding, and provision of livelihoods and socio-economic opportunities.

Financial Information

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

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 2025 | USD



UNHCR Egypt is also grateful for the crucial support of private donors from Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, MENA, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, UK, and the USA.

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