

UNHCR Regional Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

# COVID-19 Vaccinations: Update #3

June 2021

Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Turkey\*.

\* UNHCR operations in Turkey related to the Syria and Iraq Situations are included in this update.

## Key Figures



12,930

cases of COVID-19 reported among persons of concern to UNHCR from March 2020 to May 2021, including fatalities



19 out of 19

countries in the MENA region have confirmed the inclusion of refugees in their national vaccination programmes



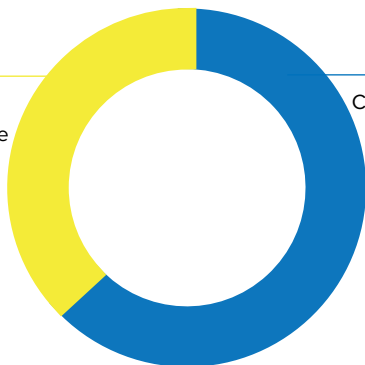
Refugees in 15 countries

have already started receiving COVID-19 vaccinations

Inclusion of refugees in national vaccination programmes in MENA

7

Countries where refugee inclusion has been confirmed in practice



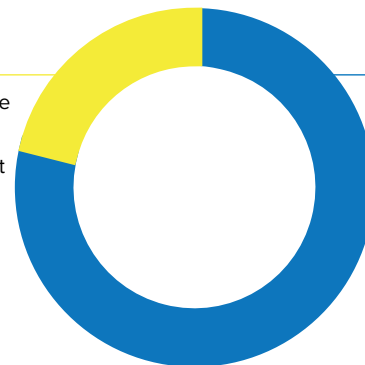
12

Countries where the inclusion of refugees in national strategies/plans has been confirmed

Progress of vaccination programmes in MENA and inclusion of refugees

4

Countries where vaccinations are ongoing but refugees have not yet been vaccinated



15

Countries where refugees have already started receiving vaccinations

## Overview

- COVID-19 remains a **global challenge** and must be addressed through **solidarity and cooperation**. UNHCR has been advocating for the equitable inclusion of refugees, internally displaced and stateless populations through the **COVAX Facility**, a global initiative that brings together governments and manufacturers to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines eventually reach those in greatest need. UNHCR also continues to advocate with Governments in the MENA region for the **equitable inclusion** of all people regardless of status – including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons – in their COVID-19 **national vaccination plans**.
- **Inclusion** is key to protecting refugees, IDPs, stateless people and their host communities. To protect refugees, IDPs, stateless people and their local communities, they need to continue to be included in all phases of the national response

plans, alongside national citizens. Safeguarding their health also protects the health of their host communities and societies. The pandemic will only be brought under control when vaccines are available on an equal basis to all people regardless of their status.

- The cumulative impact of COVID-19 has induced an **unprecedented protection and socio-economic crisis** on communities at large and more specifically for refugees, IDPs and stateless people. From restricted access to asylum, spiraling gender-based violence, worsening poverty, rising xenophobia, health risks and more – the consequences of the pandemic are threatening the rights, safety and lives of millions of people. UNHCR support to countries through **other COVID-preparedness and response interventions** continues. Among these are critical health, sanitation, hygiene and logistical support as well as personal protective equipment.

UNHCR is not procuring vaccinations as this remains the prerogative and responsibility of governments. However, in support of national vaccine roll-outs, UNHCR is supporting “last mile” delivery efforts. This includes addressing vaccine

hesitancy through community engagement and outreach, as well as addressing administrative obstacles faced by persons of concern to UNHCR in accessing online vaccine registration platforms.

## Country highlight: Iraq

Working together with UNHCR and WHO, health authorities in Iraq have included refugees and IDPs in the country’s National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19. Refugees and IDPs are able to register themselves on the online system and are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination through Iraq’s healthcare system.

The first refugees and IDPs received their initial dose in mid-April. As of 18 May, 1,226 persons of concern to UNHCR had already been vaccinated across 18 governorates. The actual number of refugees and IDPs vaccinated in Iraq is likely to be higher due to the fact that refugees and IDPs can independently register themselves on the system.

As part of efforts to promote immunization, UNHCR Iraq is preparing an awareness raising campaign on COVID-19 vaccination to ensure refugees and IDPs know that this service is available to them and their families. Posters and leaflets will be distributed in refugee camps, refugee registration centres, and in urban areas with refugee populations.

Limiting the spread of the virus among these vulnerable populations is crucial and UNHCR continues to coordinate with and provide support to the relevant health institutions in the country. For example, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where most of the refugees in Iraq live, UNHCR is coordinating with the Directorate of Health (DoH) to train Primary Health Care Centre and Camp Coordination and Camp Management staff to assist refugees in the vaccination registration process.

UNHCR and UNICEF are also supporting the DoH with the establishment of a COVID-19 vaccination unit in Domiz 1 refugee camp. The vaccination unit will be part of the country’s national vaccination plan and will facilitate the vaccination of refugees in both Domiz 1 and Domiz 2 refugee camps (Duhok Governorate).



A Syrian refugee and health worker receives his first COVID-19 vaccination on 2 May 2021.  
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## Donors

**UNHCR’s COVID-19 Supplementary Appeal** is **13 per cent funded** as of 25 May, with **USD 60.6 million received** (inclusive of indicative allocations of softly earmarked and unearmarked funds), of which **USD 5.4 million is for the MENA region** from: African Development Bank | Austria | Canada | European Union | Japan | United Kingdom | Private donors

### Unearmarked contributions\* to UNHCR’s 2021 global programme:

Norway \$80M | Sweden \$66.9M | Netherlands \$36.1M | Denmark \$34.6M | Private donors Spain \$28.3M | Germany \$26M | France \$20M | Switzerland \$16.4M | Private donors Republic of Korea \$14.3M | Ireland \$12.5M | Belgium \$11.9M

\* Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contributed USD 10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

**Useful Links:** [UNHCR’s 2021 Coronavirus Emergency Supplementary Appeal](#) | [UNHCR operations overview in MENA](#) | [COVID-19: UNHCR’s response](#)

**Contact:** Anna King, Senior Donor Relations Officer, UNHCR Regional Bureau for MENA, [kinga@unhcr.org](mailto:kinga@unhcr.org)