2023 Regional Cash Assistance Update

January - June 2023

Key Highlights

1.9 million unique individuals[1] reached with all modalities[2] of cash assistance from **January to June 2023.**

out of which:

1.4 million unique individuals reached with multi-purpose cash assistance from **January - June 2023.**

$107 million

distributed via all modes of cash assistance from January – June 2023, out of which **$86 million** was distributed to refugees from Syria in the region.

943,059 unique individuals received $25.2 million in cash assistance for winterization in 2023.

For more information, please refer to UNHCR's 2022-2023 Regional Winterization Programme Progress Report for the Syria and Iraq Situations.

In the first half of 2023, UNHCR cash assistance was implemented in 15 operations[3] throughout MENA region all of whom delivered **multi-purpose cash assistance** (MPCA) for basic needs. Egypt, Mauritania and Morocco also delivered **livelihood grants**, **health grants** were provided in Iraq and Jordan, **education grants** in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco and Syria and **shelter grants** in Algeria, Lebanon and Yemen. Other sectoral support such as **cash for protection** which serves to support persons who were exposed to gender-based violence, and unaccompanied and separated children, among other protection reasons and **cash for hygiene** were delivered in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Tunisia and Yemen.

Response in 2023 (January - June):[4]

1,948,693 unique individuals assisted with cash across MENA

- **1,003,535** Females
- **945,158** Males

of which

- **86,215** elderly people >60
- **1,017,624** children & youth (<18)

$107M disbursed[5]

16,465 Referrals of cash assistance to/from case management

Assistance gap

1,631,685 eligible individuals not reached by UNHCR in 2023 due to lack of funding[6]

Despite the appearance of cracks on the walls of their house after the February earthquake, Ismail and his son found themselves with no other viable option but to stay put. They were left without anywhere else to seek refuge.

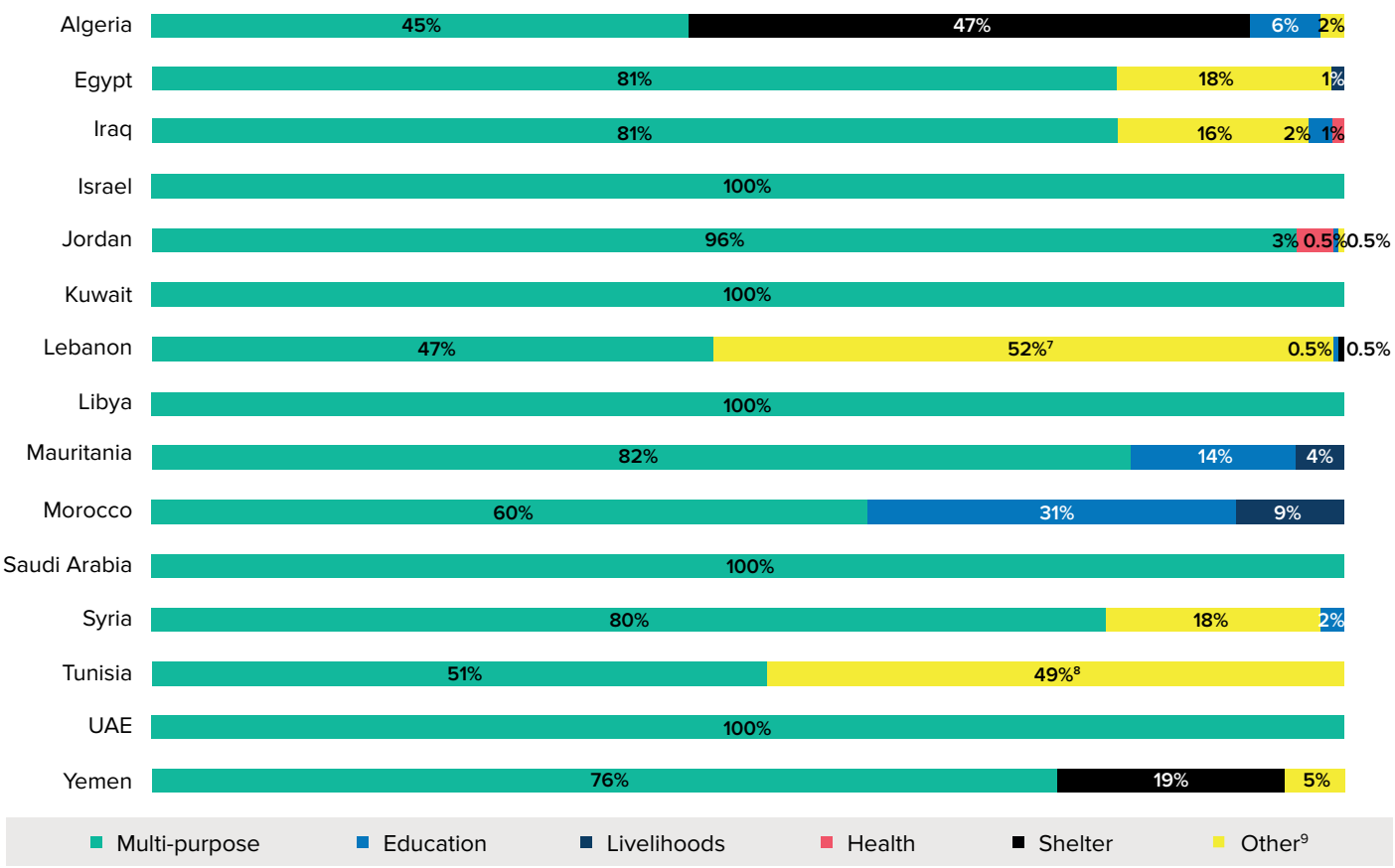
"I am sick, and my son desperately needs psychosocial support after his mother's death. The idea of living in a collective shelter was not feasible," says Ismail, a 65-year-old resident of rural Hama.

The multi-purpose cash assistance provided by UNHCR became a lifeline for Ismail and his son, offering crucial support that allowed them to meet their basic needs. Empowered with renewed determination, Ismail took it upon himself to repair their home, refusing to let his age hinder his resilience.

Photo: ©UNHCR/Saad Sawas

[1] *The term "unique individual" refers to the total number of persons who have received cash at least once across all the different types of cash projects during the reporting period.*
[2] *Including: multi-purpose cash assistance for basic needs, winterization grants, Education grants, Livelihood grants, Health grants, Shelter grants and ad-hoc cash programming in support to specific needs categories.*
[3] *Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen.*
[4] *All figures related to number of individuals assisted with cash, number of transactions and amount of USD disbursed are based on uploaded lists with the names of payees/eligible beneficiaries, which are sent to the Financial Service Provider(s) for that specific quarter, prior to any reconciliation or confirmation of withdrawal and/or reception of funds.*
[5] *This figure corresponds to the implementation of a wide variety of cash assistance (see Table 1 for details) which includes MPCA for Basic Needs, Cash for Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC), Education grants, Livelihood Grants, Shelter grants, and Health and Hygiene grants.*
[6] *This refers to beneficiaries classified as 'eligible' under the specific cash activity, but who could not be supported due to funding constraints.*

Type of cash assistance in MENA countries



Hanan, 51, fled war-stricken Syria in 2013 with her three children in search of safety. She found refuge in Jordan, where she now lives in a modest apartment in Amman, raising her three children by herself.

However, the high living costs in Jordan and her frail health condition prevent Hanan from working, leading to struggles in meeting her family's basic needs, such as rent and food. Her health issues make it difficult to find a job and maintain a steady income. Over the years, she has had to make tough decisions to make ends meet. "When we first found a home in Jordan, I had to buy less food to make sure we had a place to stay," said Hanan.

With no close family members in Jordan to support her with raising her children and covering living expenses, Hanan relies on the help of some old neighbors who have been a great support on numerous occasions. She has also found herself indebted to local grocery shops to buy food for her children.

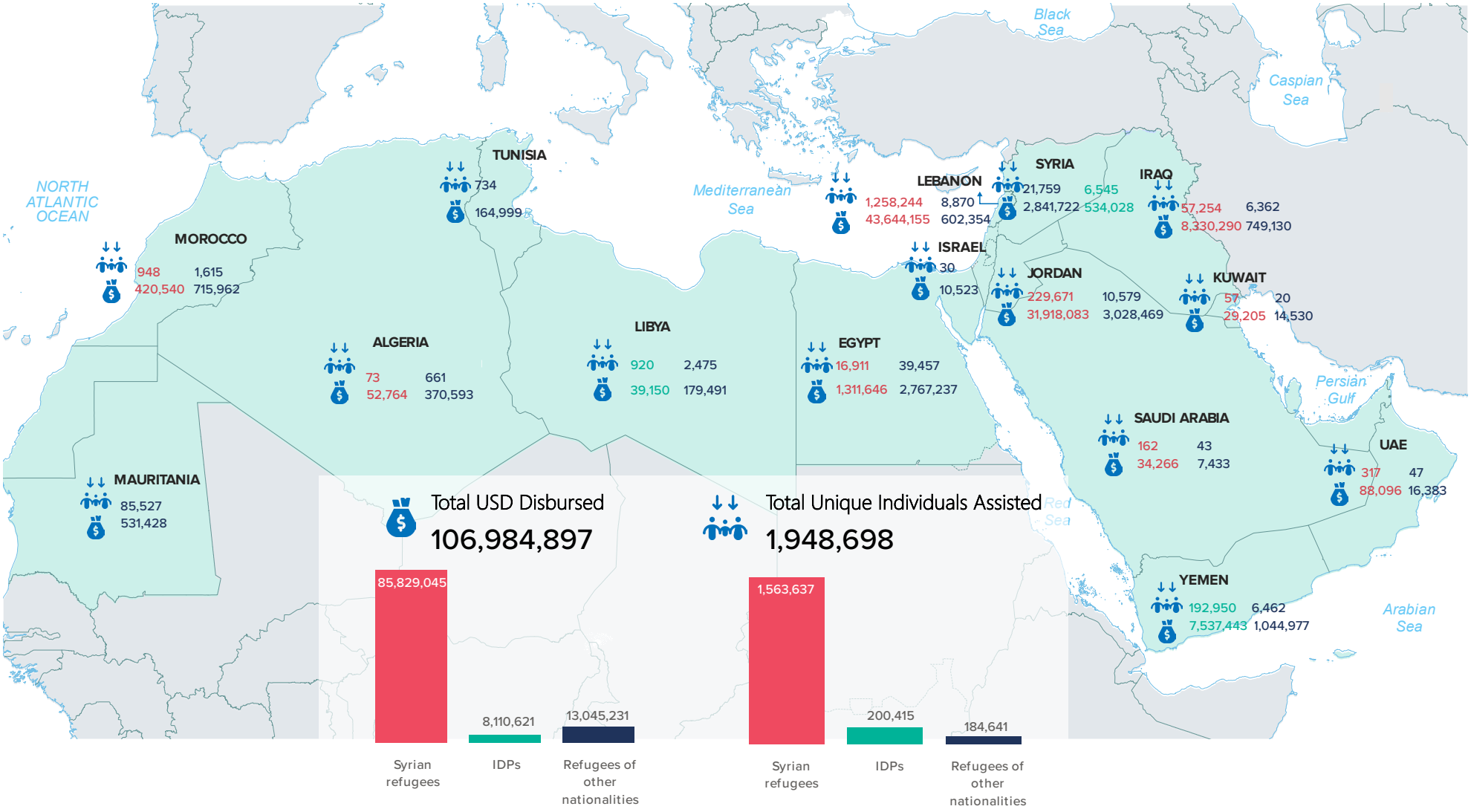
In this challenging situation, the multi-purpose cash assistance that Hanan receives from UNHCR, is a lifeline for her and her family. It provides partial support to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. "I spend all (the cash assistance) on the kids and the house," the loving mother said.

Reflecting on the challenges they have faced in recent years and looking ahead, Hanan places great importance on her children's education, believing it to be the path to a brighter future. Her children are currently enrolled in school, and she is determined to do her best to ensure they receive the quality education they need and deserve. "All I wish is for my kids to have a better future and to be educated. They would make me proud."

Photo: ©UNHCR/Sana Hamdan

[7] *Winterization assistance*
[8] *39% on cash for food and on 10% emergency cash assistance*
[9] *Other types of cash includes cash for winterization, cash for hygiene, cash for food, cash for protection (emergency cash support and cash for unaccompanied and separated children).*

UNHCR cash operations in MENA in 2023 – expenditure and number of individuals reached (by country)



Sara is a 38-year-old single mother of two young boys, who found themselves overnight on a bus, leaving the war in Sudan towards the unknown.

"I had nothing with me. Back then, my mind froze, and the only thing that mattered was my boys' safety. People gave me money, and I befriended a Sudanese family who made it with me until I reached Faisal (a neighborhood in the Egyptian Giza governorate, with a high concentration of Sudanese refugees)," said Sara.

In Khartoum, for the past four years, Sara used to do small jobs and errands to provide for her children, especially since the day her husband left and never came back.

Less than a week after her arrival in Egypt, Sara approached UNHCR to register, hoping to get financial assistance to help her rent a place with her boys because the family that was hosting her informed her that they would not be able to extend their hospitality beyond a month unless Sara contributes to the rent and daily expenses.

"I'm grateful I received cash assistance from UNHCR through the post office that enabled me to move to another place in Faisal and buy basic clothing for Amin and Ayman. I was told that this amount is emergency assistance and that I will have to wait until I undergo a vulnerability assessment, and based on the result, the assistance can be more regular," Sara explained.

A single question haunts Sara's mind: How will she manage to pay the rent when the end of the month arrives? Sara washes dishes in restaurants owned by fellow Sudanese nationals in exchange for a meal per day for her children and herself. "All I want is to work to be able to pay my rent, put food on the table, and send my boys to school," concluded Sara.

Photo: ©UNHCR/ Pedro Costa Gomes

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- UNHCR Operational Portal (Syria Regional Refugee Response)
- The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan website