

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. Facts and figures

Type of organisation: Humanitarian agency

Established in: 1950

Headquarters: Geneva

Number of country offices: 125

Head of organisation: António Guterres (Portugal)

Dates of Committee meetings in 2013: Meetings of Standing Committee: 5–8 March, 25–27 June, 17–18 September. Meeting of Executive Committee: 30 September – 4 October

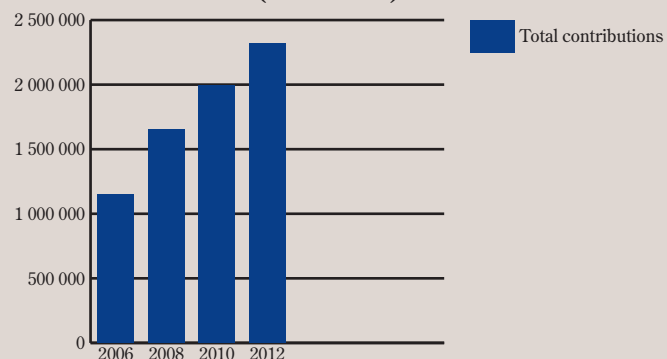
Norway's representation on Committee: Member of the Executive Committee and the Standing Committee

Number of Norwegian staff: 24

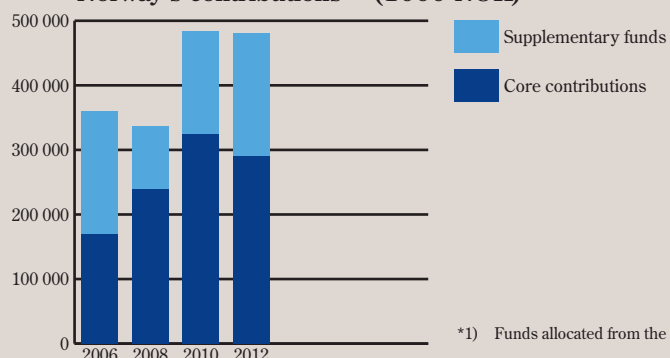
Competent ministry: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Website: www.unhcr.org

Total revenues (1000 USD)

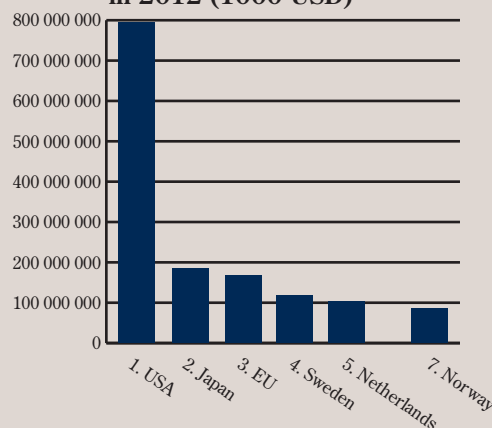


Norway's contributions ^{*1)} (1000 NOK)



*1) Funds allocated from the MFA's budget

The five largest donors, and Norway, in 2012 (1000 USD)



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mandate and areas of activity

Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is to provide protection and assistance to persons who are fleeing from persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, and to seek durable solutions to the world's refugee problems. UNHCR also provides assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs), although in this respect its mandate requires decisions by the UN's governing bodies. In accordance with the UN's cluster approach and to ensure a more effective humanitarian response, UNHCR plays a leading role in providing protection and shelter and administering camps for IDPs.

UNHCR's mandate does not cover Palestinian refugees (approx. 4.9 million), who are the responsibility of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). In practice, UNHCR assists many people who are not strictly speaking refugees, and UNHCR therefore normally refers to them collectively as "persons of concern". UNHCR also helps to find durable solutions such as assisted return, local integration and resettlement of refugees from the first country in which they applied for asylum. This is incumbent on UNHCR by virtue of its mandate, but is often difficult to implement in practice as such action is contingent on the political goodwill of countries of origin, host countries or third countries.

The agency's activities are reviewed and overseen by the Executive Committee (87 Member States in 2012), which meets formally once a year, but several times a year as a "working group" in the Standing Committee. UNHCR reports annually to the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC.

UNHCR's budget for 2013 totals approximately USD 4.5 billion (almost NOK 26 billion). The agency's revenues have traditionally been adequate. However, due to the changeover in 2010 from revenue-based to needs-based budgeting, the budget has increased dramatically, whereas there has been no corresponding increase in UNHCR revenues. Since the introduction of a needs-based budget, revenues have largely amounted to less than two-thirds of the budget. However, both have increased dramatically, which is an indication that major donor countries, even in times of financial crisis, consider UNHCR to be highly worthy of support. Only around 3 per cent of the agency's activities are financed from the UN's regular budget, and the rest is based on voluntary contributions.

Results achieved in 2012

At the end of 2012, a total of 45.2 million persons were registered as having fled due to war, conflict or persecution, an increase of more than 2.4 million from 2011. Of these, 937,000 persons were asylum seekers, 15.4 million were refugees (including 4.9 million Palestinians) and 28.8 million were internally displaced persons. UNHCR estimates that there are a total of 12 million stateless people, but has itself registered only just under 3.5 million. There were 1.1 million "new" refugees in 2012, while the corresponding figure for IDPs was 6.5 million. This is the highest number registered by UNHCR in this century. A primary factor that caused people to flee in 2012 was the crisis in Syria.

Many persons remain in what is called protracted refugee situations and more than half of all refugees originate from five war-torn countries: Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Sudan. Developing countries host 80 per cent of the world's refugees, the vast majority of whom live in countries bordering on their countries of origin.

Most of the 10.4 million refugees who are "persons of concern" for UNHCR received protection or assistance in some form or other from UNHCR. The three largest host countries for refugees in 2012 were Pakistan, Iran and Germany. A total of 526,000 persons were voluntarily repatriated to their home countries, e.g. to Afghanistan from Pakistan, to Iraq from Syria, to Burundi from Tanzania and to Côte d'Ivoire from Liberia. This is somewhat fewer than in 2011. The corresponding figure for IDPs was 2.1 million, significantly fewer than in 2011. Close to around 68,000 refugees, a slight increase, were resettled in 2012. More places were made available (a total of 86,000) and two new countries were willing to accept refugees, but due to capacity constraints UNHCR was unable to submit enough cases. Norway has an annual quota of 1,200 persons, most of whom come from five refugee situations.

2012 was a very demanding year in UNHCR's more than 60-year history. In addition to the protracted crises, the conflicts in Mali and Syria and the escalation of the conflict in DR Congo required substantial resources. UNHCR was therefore forced to make some extremely difficult priority choices and cut costs and positions in Geneva and at the country offices. Extensive use was made of deployed personnel, both from the agency's own staff, but also through stand-by partnerships. In 2012, UNHCR received 336 man-months from NORCAP, which is run by the Norwegian Refugee Council. The agency also increased its air cargo shipments of emergency relief equipment, sending 129 aeroplanes with cargo in 2012, which was more than twice the number in 2011.

In 2012, UNHCR was able to close Mtabila camp, which has sheltered Burundian refugees for almost 20 years. Mtabila camp was located in Tanzania, not far from the border, and still had 37,000 inhabitants in the autumn of 2012. At that time, 2,700 persons who were found on the basis of individual assessments to still be in need of protection were transferred to another camp. UNHCR and the Tanzanian Government have deemed it safe to return to Burundi since 2011, but the residents of Mtabila camp have not been willing to return home. In the summer of 2012, education programmes were discontinued and services for the camp residents were slowly phased out. At the same time, it was announced that the camp was to be closed and measures were to be implemented to encourage residents to return to Burundi, including the distribution of food rations and provision of food assistance during the first five months after their return.

The return programme was carried out in close collaboration between UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Red Cross Movement, UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Governments of Tanzania and Burundi. Despite considerable initial resistance, UNHCR and its partners succeeded in closing the camp. Norway provided NOK 20 million in funding for this measure. Bringing this type of protracted refugee situation to a safe conclusion is important to give people a new start, but also to free up resources to assist refugees in acute situations.

2. Assessments: Results, effectiveness and monitoring

The organisation's results-related work

UNHCR's results-based management mechanism is based on four elements:

A *results framework*, consisting of six sub-elements: 1) operations (normally a country programme), 2) target group (population planning group), 3) goals, 4) type of assistance (rights groups corresponding to basic needs), 5) objectives and 6) outputs, a *budget* consisting of four pillars (refugees, stateless persons, reintegration projects and internally displaced persons), a *planning framework* and a digital *reporting tool* called FOCUS, which will eventually cover virtually every aspect of UNHCR's activity.

This framework has been devised as part of a more comprehensive structural reform (see below) and has been adjusted on the basis of trial and error.

Planning and budgeting systems

The budget is based on an overall assessment of needs, which is carried out by multifunctional teams on the ground. Needs are identified by comparing the current situation (based on baseline data) with a standard that is to serve as a goal. The costs of an intervention to fill the gap serve as the basis for the budget, which at global level is called a *Global Needs Assessment*.

In this connection, two types of indicators are used, i.e. social impact indicators and output indicators. Social impact indicators are used to identify needs, determine the budget and design the programme, while output indicators are a quantification of efforts. Both of these are important prerequisites for reporting on the achievement of results.

Oversight and anti-corruption

UNHCR has five primary oversight functions: 1) *audits* carried out by the Board of Auditors (BoA) and the Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), 2) *inspection* and 3) *investigation* carried out by the Inspector General's Office (IGO), 4) *evaluations* carried out by the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) and 5) *reviews* conducted

by the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM). In 2011, moreover, UNHCR's Executive Committee established an Independent Audit and Oversight Committee (IAOC), which became operational in 2012. The IAOC serves in a general advisory capacity to both the Executive Committee and the High Commissioner on issues concerning oversight and audit in UNHCR, so as to ensure that the system functions effectively. UNHCR has recently strengthened the system for oversight of funding channelled to implementing partners. This is becoming increasingly important, given that these partners receive a growing share of UNHCR funding, in both relative and nominal terms.

Institution-building and national ownership

UNHCR is not a development organisation and in many situations cannot be expected to contribute to national capacity-building or institutional development. Admittedly, the states that have signed the conventions on refugees or stateless persons are subject to a range of obligations, such as the obligation to assess all claims for asylum and to accord certain rights if the conditions are fulfilled, but states often fail to meet their obligations. Moreover, many countries have not signed the treaties. The result is often that UNHCR becomes responsible for providing the protection that in principle is the responsibility of the states.

UNHCR also seeks to ensure that governments (those who have signed the convention) fulfil their treaty obligations or accede to the conventions in question. UNHCR addresses this issue either through its role as spokesman or through its provision of practical and capacity-building assistance.

Willingness to learn and change

In February 2006, UNHCR adopted a *Structural and Management Change Process*. The reason for the reform was the widely held view (particularly among donor countries) that far too many resources were tied to the operation of UNHCR's headquarters in Geneva, at the expense of flexibility and capacity to address the growing global challenges faced by refugees and internally displaced persons.

The structural changes have now been implemented, and have resulted in a reduction in the number of positions in Geneva and decentralisation of operational responsibility. A system of results-based management has been established that links the planning, budgeting and reporting processes and is designed to promote greater transparency and accountability in respect of the target group. Since 2010, UNHCR has had two-year, needs-based budgets.

The final stage of the reform process is the harmonisation of personnel policy (recruitment, human-resource development and promotions) with the results-based, management-by-objective tool FOCUS, and the establishment of independent oversight functions. FOCUS is now operational in a number of country operations and to some extent is accessible to the governments of countries that are members of the Executive Committee. Questions have been raised regarding the independence of the evaluation function, and the way UNHCR's leadership makes use of evaluations. This is an area that UNHCR itself now intends to review.

3. Norway's policy towards UNHCR

Norway is a strong, declared supporter of UNHCR, works in close cooperation with the agency and is currently the seventh-largest contributor of funding for the agency. Norway seeks not only to be a good donor, but also a relevant, constructive partner in addressing issues relating to specific refugee situations and future challenges. Protracted refugee situations are an area in which Norway has contributed political and financial assistance. One example is the situation for Eritrean refugees in eastern Sudan, the oldest refugee situation not counting the Palestinians in the Middle East. In collaboration with development stakeholders and the Sudanese Government, UNHCR is trying to phase out the camps and integrate the refugees into local communities. Norway is supporting these efforts by providing both humanitarian and development funds, and by resettling Eritrean refugees under its resettlement quota.

The latter is an example of the "strategic" use of the resettlement instrument, i.e. selecting resettlement refugees while pursuing a dialogue with the host country authorities on increased protection for the large group who remain in the country. This type of linkage is increasingly used by several Member States, and has had positive effects in both Nepal and Iran.

Norway has long been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that UNHCR assumes responsibility and allocates resources for the protection of internally displaced persons, a group who have far weaker legal protection than refugees. Experience has shown that internally displaced persons usually come second when there is a large budget deficit and UNHCR encounters resistance from Member States. This makes Norway's efforts even more important. Norway

has also advocated that UNHCR should be able to help environmentally displaced persons, i.e. individuals who flee their home or country due to a natural disaster. Climate change is very likely to lead to a substantial increase in the number of environmentally displaced persons, including among those who are forced to seek a safe haven in another country. UNHCR has had to lower its ambitions in this respect due to opposition from many member states.

Norway has for several years urged UNHCR to strengthen the gender perspective in its activities and increase the proportion of women in leading positions in the agency. As part of its efforts to incorporate considerations of age, gender and diversity in its activities, UNHCR also increased its capacity to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed persons (LGBTI persons). There is no consensus among member states regarding this group's need for protection, making it all the more important that UNHCR does whatever is possible.

UNHCR is also an important partner in Norway's efforts to implement its own asylum policy. On the whole, Norway, as one of relatively few countries, follows UNHCR's recommendations on asylum and resettlement issues, resettling 1,200 "quota refugees" every year. These refugees are selected in close cooperation with UNHCR. Accepting resettlement refugees helps to ease the pressure on UNHCR resources, but is not registered as assistance for the agency. More importantly, perhaps, resettlement promotes more equitable burden-sharing. At present, refugee-related costs worldwide are still borne primarily by the countries in the regions concerned.

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