

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) NORTH AFRICA

AMOUNT: EUR 21 000 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2023/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes¹ is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO²'s partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

The 2023 HIP for North Africa has a twofold objective. First, it addresses the direct humanitarian needs of the Sahrawi refugee crisis in Algeria and the refugees/asylum seekers crisis in Egypt. Second, it targets the humanitarian protection needs in the region through dedicated regional actions. Given the reduced humanitarian caseload in the country, DG ECHO is planning to exit from Libya in 2023.

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP – MODIFICATION 1 (SEPTEMBER 2023)

This modification consists of a top-up of EUR 5 000 000 to address urgent needs in Libya following the devastating floods that hit the eastern part of the country in September 2023. An estimated 900 000 people are affected by the floods. This additional funding aims to address the most pressing needs in the sectors of shelter, health, WASH, food, Non Food Items (NFIs), Education in Emergencies (EiE) and protection.

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The Sahrawi crisis

The ceasefire brokered in 1991 by the United Nations (UN) between Morocco and the Polisario Front in Western Sahara was broken in November 2020 and hostilities continue, albeit currently at a low intensity. The aggravation of the conflict could have negative spill-over on the humanitarian situation, although this has not been the case so far. In the meantime, political and diplomatic tensions between Algeria and Morocco are mounting.

Gathered in five camps around Tindouf, in the Algerian Sahara Desert, Sahrawi refugees are dependent on external humanitarian assistance. The lasting stalemate in the resolution of the conflict and political sensitivities, as well as extreme climatic and environmental conditions, thwart any short-term perspectives for return, integration, or resettlement, and deter the interest of development actors. DG ECHO has been advocating for this forgotten humanitarian crisis to become more visible by sensitising other donors. Given the protracted nature of the crisis, there is an important role to play by other financial instruments better suited to cover more structural needs with medium to longer-term

¹ Technical annex and thematic policies annex

² Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

activities. UN Agencies, and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) working in the camps have set up multiannual sectorial strategies to achieve more efficiency, sustainability and cost effectiveness.

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2022-2023 identified high humanitarian needs. The vulnerability of the population in the Sahrawi refugee camps is assessed to be high. The Sahrawi refugee crisis is on DG ECHO's list of forgotten crises.

1.2 The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt.

Egypt remains a destination and a transit for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The medium to long term trends suggest increasing mixed migratory pressures on Egypt. The drivers of these movements are interrelated: climate change and environmental degradation, demographic changes, a lack of economic opportunity, persecution, and conflicts. In Egypt, DG ECHO provides humanitarian support to refugees and asylum seekers living in the most populated urban centres.

Notwithstanding a relatively sound asylum space in place, refugees face severe and multiple barriers in accessing basic services. Protection services, safe access to quality education and health services are the most pressing needs, besides a lack of livelihood opportunities. Sub-Saharan refugees experience higher vulnerability and discrimination, while receiving less assistance, facing greater difficulties to access basic services. This is also due to declining funds and unbalanced earmarking of donor funds based on nationality, demonstrating a lack of a full-fledged one-refugee approach. Vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), women and girls, persons with disabilities, children, and refugees lacking proper documentation, are most at risk and in need of protection and other basic services. The socio-economic consequences of COVID-19, as well as the impact of the global food security crisis, are aggravating the needs of the most vulnerable.

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2022-2023 identified high humanitarian needs for refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be high.

1.3 Protection crisis in the region

The region continues to be marred by violations and abuses of IHL and IHRL and a shrinking humanitarian space, including criminalisation of humanitarian workers, restrictions against local CSOs and INGOs, and incidences of violence against civilian infrastructures such as health facilities, water installations and schools. This is often linked to abuses by Armed Groups and De facto Authorities (AGDA).

Civilians are often exposed to insecurity, threats, harassment, sexual and gender-based abuses and legal intimidation, as well as fear of retaliation. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees, migrants and asylum seekers face enhanced violence and targeted exploitation. They often lack legal status and civil documents and are deprived of access to basic services. They need specialised protection services.

Moreover, aid workers are often lacking the necessary protection and operate in increasingly insecure environments. Humanitarian workers face growing numbers of attacks and criminalisation of their work, exposing them to severe risks. According to the

Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB),³ 484 aid workers were victims of major attacks in 2020 worldwide, including 117 killed, 242 seriously injured and 125 kidnapped. This represents a 94% increase since 2010, a significantly worrying trend.

Many of these threats have a regional nature. There is a need to address humanitarian protection issues and protecting the humanitarian space via dedicated regional initiatives that go beyond the sole North Africa region and links with existing concerns in the whole MENA region.

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2022-2023 identified high humanitarian protection needs in the region. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be high.

	Egypt	Algeria
INFORM Risk Index⁴	4.7	4
Vulnerability Index	3.8	2.9
Hazard and Exposure	4.6	5.1
Lack of Coping Capacity	4.5	4.4
Global Crisis Severity Index⁵	2.9	-
Projected conflict risk	9.3	7.6
Uprooted People Index	6.4	5.3
Humanitarian Conditions	-	-
Natural Disaster Index	4.9	4.8
HDI Ranking⁶ (Value)	116 (0.707)	91 (0.748)
Total Population⁷	104 258.33	44 616.63

³[Aid Worker Security Database | Aid Worker Security Database](#)

⁴ INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters

⁵ <http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta>

⁶ Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP

⁷ World Bank data, year

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

2.1) People in need of humanitarian assistance:

The Sahrawi crisis. The number of refugees living in the camps around Tindouf is the object of a political controversy that is beyond the remit of the humanitarian community to solve. In 2018, UNHCR published a report estimating the number of refugees at 173°600. The report was disputed and UNHCR withdrew it. Currently, in its operational documents UNHCR refers to 90 000 most vulnerable refugees. This number is not sourced in any study, and a full vulnerability assessment has not yet been carried out. Pending formal registration of the Sahrawi refugees and awaiting a multi sector vulnerability assessment by UNHCR, DG ECHO bases its funding considerations on the latest Food Security Assessment (FSA) performed by World Food Programme (WFP) in August 2018 and sectorial ad hoc needs assessments, including the 2022 WFP nutrition survey. WFP estimated the number of food insecure people living in the camps at 133°672 people, composed of 49% female and 51% male, and 37.6% children.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. As of 30 June 2022, the UNHCR has registered 289 493 refugees and asylum seekers⁸. Women represent 48.3% of the total population, among whom are almost 87 000 school age children and a total of 4 163 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC)⁹. The asylum seekers and refugee caseload are split between 143 803 Syrians (49.7%) and 145 690 of other nationalities (51.3%). The latter are mainly from Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia. The majority of the most vulnerable refugees live in the most overcrowded and poorest neighbourhoods of Egypt’s largest cities, where host communities suffer from similar levels of vulnerability.

Protection needs in North Africa. People, who leave or flee their home to seek safety or better prospects, often find themselves in distress and need of protection. For internally displaced persons, vulnerable migrants, asylum seekers and refugees the lack of civil documentation and undetermined legal status are amongst the barriers to access basic services and meet their basic needs.

The effects of the Russian war against Ukraine have further compounded this situation. The region of North Africa and the Middle East is the largest importer of grain from Russia and Ukraine and the number of food insecure is estimated to increase by 4-6 million people in the region as a consequence of the conflict¹⁰.

	Algeria	Egypt
Category of beneficiary (such as IDPs, refugees, food	Food insecure Sahrawi	Refugees and Asylum

⁸UNHCR Egypt Factsheet, June 2022

⁹Source: UNHCR, June 2022. Unpublished data

¹⁰Ukraine Conflict: Impact on WFP operations and MENA Economies, March 2022

insecure people etc.	refugees: 133 672	Seekers: 285 949
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2.2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

2.2.1 Food and nutrition

The Sahrawi crisis.

According to WFP, 88% of the refugees depend on humanitarian assistance for their minimum daily food intake and access to basic services¹¹. The acceptable households Food Consumption Score (FCS) was reduced from 60.3% in 2019 down to 55.3% in February 2022. Child minimum dietary diversity (MDD) was reduced from 54.3% in 2019 to 34.6% in February 2022. According to the WFP's latest available nutrition survey (released in June 2022), levels of malnutrition in all its forms have increased between 2019 and 2022 among the most vulnerable group of women and children younger than 5 years¹². The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate rose from 7.6% in 2019 to 10.7% in 2022, and the prevalence of stunting from 28.2% to 28.8%. Anaemia affects more than half of children under 5 years of age and women in reproductive age. Over one third (35.2%) of women in reproductive age are at heightened risk of preventable morbidities, poor birth outcomes and other forms of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cancers and cardiovascular diseases.

The gradual deterioration observed in the food security and nutrition indicators is the result of combined shocks: socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current global food security crisis, poor health and WASH conditions, as well as decrease in food assistance delivery in 2021-22 due to underfunding¹³. Over the last year, we observed a worrying situation where for the first time in the history of this operation, WFP was obliged to temporarily reduce food rations by 75%. The food and logistics costs have tripled and the availability of food has dramatically decreased.

Additional support from humanitarian actors becomes particularly critical to address this set of circumstances and to avoid any food pipeline break down in 2023.

2.2.2 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The Sahrawi crisis. The multiannual WASH strategy is being implemented with important achievements. Dependency on water trucking has already decreased from 70% in 2019 to around 50% at the beginning of 2022. Access to fresh water has significantly improved and the minimum SPHERE standard of 15 litres/person/day was reached.

However, the implementation of the WASH strategy is only halfway. Important investments need to continue with the objective of making considerable savings in the longer term by switching from water trucking to water piping. Also, important works needs to be completed to improve water quality. Currently, on average, 37% of the

¹¹Source: WFP, July 2022. Unpublished data

¹²2022 Nutrition Survey – preliminary results communicated by WFP, June 2022

¹³Due to global food security crisis and inflation, WFP, the provider of general food assistance in the camps, increased its budgetary needs from USD 20 million to 35 million. The donor allocations remained at their pre-crisis level. The financial gap led to reductions in the quantities of food assistance in 2022.

distributed water is treated by osmosis as it contains high levels of fluorides and minerals that constitute a public health risk.

Provided that the global inflation also touches the water sector with visible increase of prices for parts and services, the strategy implementation risks being delayed, if not halted without additional support and other donors' involvement.

2.2.3 Health

The Sahrawi crisis. The healthcare system in the refugee camps fully depends on international aid. There is scarcity of qualified medical staff. Timely supply of medicines and medical waste management is challenging. Specific health needs of the vulnerable groups (children, persons with disabilities, elderly, etc.) are covered only partially. COVID-19 outbreak has put an additional burden on the weak health system. The vaccination against COVID-19 remains insufficient. COVID-19 immunisation coverage remains patchy and should be continued. Capacity to respond to health shocks would require extra capacity that would need to be anticipated by the hosting country or the international community.

Protection needs in North Africa. Vulnerable groups such as refugees, asylum seekers and migrants face specific challenges to access public healthcare services, including Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS). The barriers to access public healthcare combined with the lack of legal status enhance the exposure of vulnerable displaced people to epidemics and non-communicable diseases. Discrimination is a strong deterrent for people on the move to seek medical care. The lack of access to healthcare is worsened in remote or conflict affected areas.

2.2.4 Education in emergencies

The Sahrawi crisis. Access to free early childhood, primary and secondary education is in principle guaranteed for all the refugees but requires continuous international support. The quality of education for the 40 000 schoolchildren in the camps is poor. This is due to the limited capacity of teachers, insufficient teaching materials and infrastructure. Just as for the doctors, teachers are not sufficiently rewarded and tend to leave. Weak educational performance, increasing dropout and constrained progression are observed. The access of children with disabilities to education remains limited.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. The country hosts a predominantly young refugee population in need of adequate education services at all levels. According to UNICEF, most of them have experienced disruptions to their education in their country of origin and during their subsequent displacement to Egypt. Education challenges range from enrolment, through retention and progression, to integration and learning. Legal and language barriers, limited knowledge of education options, concerns of quality, including protection and safety, economic constraints, and gaps in education and curriculum differences, are amongst the causes of exclusion from education¹⁴. Although approximately 90% of refugee children are enrolled in basic education (Egyptian and community schools), dropout, especially at secondary level, is non-negligible. Agencies working in the field of refugee education in Egypt have stepped in over the years and provided various levels of support, wherever possible. A

¹⁴Comprehensive interagency needs assessment report. Cayambe, July 2022.

comprehensive and coordinated response, based on standardised and sustainable approaches to ensure access to quality education has started to be advanced¹⁵.

Protection needs in North Africa. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants' children have huge difficulties accessing public education systems; furthermore, the lack of official documentation often deprives them of basic rights and access to education. They risk becoming a lost generation as the lack of access to formal education systems prevents them, in many cases for years, to access any kind of certification limiting their opportunities for gainful employment.

2.2.5 Protection.

Protection needs in North Africa. The region of North Africa and the Middle East is particularly marred by conflicts, with a shrinking effect on the humanitarian space and attacks against civilian infrastructures such as health facilities, water installations and schools, often linked to armed actors, including armed non-state actors. Humanitarian workers and organisations are facing an increasing number of attacks and criminalisation of their work, exposing them to severe risks.

Local/national aid workers and related organisations constitute the majority of aid staff in the field and undertake the bulk of the frontline work in assisting beneficiary populations. They are exposed to insecurity, threats, harassment, sexual abuses, and legal intimidation by parties to a conflict, as well as fear of retaliation.

Many refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, including a significant number of unaccompanied children, are reportedly suffering from serious human rights violations, modern forms of slavery and sexual and gender-based violence. They are in need of specialised protection services. Humanitarian actors regularly call for an end to arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees and the coordinated release of those currently detained.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. The barriers faced by refugees and asylum seekers in obtaining and renewing national residency permits severely limit their access to livelihood opportunities, protective and basic services. This exposes the most vulnerable, notably of sub-Saharan African origin, and in particular girls and women, adolescents, youth, and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), to increased protection risks. Uncertainties and contingent difficulties caused by COVID-19 have had widespread impact on the mental and psychological health of people already living under these difficult circumstances. Overall, some NGOs report a severe impact of COVID-19 on refugee communities in Egypt; it has allegedly worsened vulnerabilities and stigmatisation, especially toward sub-Saharan African refugees and migrants.

2.2.6 Basic Needs Approach

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. Most refugees and asylum-seekers mention the ability to meet their basic needs as one of their biggest challenges in Egypt, a situation aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the global food security crisis, and subsequent price increase for essential commodities¹⁶. Negative

¹⁵As highlighted in the *Comprehensive interagency needs assessment report, Strengthening the sector coordination of the education working group to serve the educational needs of refugee and migrant children in Egypt*, UNICEF/CAYAMBEE, July 2022.

¹⁶Lately, with the global food prices increase, aggravated by the war in Ukraine, and significantly affecting Egypt, it is assumed that the refugees' purchasing power is significantly affected, although precise analysis

coping mechanisms are prevalent among refugee populations struggling to meet their basic needs. According to UNHCR, more than 95% of surveyed households fell below the minimum expenditure basket threshold (MEB)¹⁷. 32.4% of households are food insecure (mostly moderately insecure) while 53.6% are vulnerable to food insecurity. Due to low funding levels, only an estimated 18% of eligible vulnerable refugees are benefiting from multi-purpose cash-based assistance (MPCT), according to the UNHCR. It is acknowledged that without sustainable livelihood options, refugees and asylum-seekers remain dependent on humanitarian aid.

2.2.7 Coordination

The Sahrawi crisis. Coordination among the humanitarian actors would benefit from further improvement. For the establishment of cross-sectorial strategies, such as for nutrition, an integrated information exchange and cooperation is crucial. Contingency planning is not fully effective, even if the camps are regularly affected by small to mid-scale natural disasters. To remediate this at donor level, DG ECHO established in 2021 an informal donor coordination group that meets on regular basis. This allows for a better information flow and has already shown satisfying results on joint advocacy actions.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. A significant coordination effort is required among donors, different stakeholders, and the government of Egypt, to uphold the “one-refugee approach”, and respond accordingly to needs based on vulnerability. There is a lack of common strategy, between some of the key humanitarian stakeholders, on how to best address these needs and promote sustainable solutions. However, during 2021-22 an intensified strategic dialogue amongst international donors and specialised agencies – including ministerial counterparts - has promoted a better understanding of the dynamics of migrants and forcibly displaced persons hosted in Egypt.

2.2.8 Environmental impact

The Sahrawi crisis. Only a very limited waste management exists in the camps¹⁸. In addition, humanitarian activities rely mostly on in-kind assistance (food aid and nutrition, WASH, health). These activities produce waste and pollution that is affecting the environment. It is time that the humanitarian community acknowledges, studies and addresses this problem to ensure more environmental sustainability of the camps.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. The humanitarian actions undertaken to address refugee needs rely mostly on 'immaterial' assistance (cash transfers, education, health, protection), with little effect on environment. Refugees reside in the private sector in big cities of Egypt. There are no refugee camps.

on this have yet to be conducted. In a communication to ECHO (early April 2022), UNHCR projected that 17, 620 refugee families previously categorized as near poor to become poor in the next 6 months if the prices continue to spiral upwards.

¹⁷Source: UNHCR, March 2022, unpublished data.

¹⁸It is estimated that 25-35% of waste ends up dumped by households in unofficial piles around the camps (source: UNHCR report on *Solid waste management in Sahrawi refugee camps, Algeria*, September 2019)

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

3.1) National / local response and involvement

The Sahrawi crisis. Algeria provides substantial assistance to the Sahrawi refugees such as access to water resources, free electricity, access to healthcare (including specialised care) and scholarships for secondary and high school education. Refugees also receive some support from civil society, channelled through the Algerian Red Crescent (ARC). Algerian authorities respond proactively and effectively to natural disasters in the Sahrawi refugees' camps. Algeria integrated refugees and migrants in its COVID-19 national response plan and deployed a field hospital in the camps. Education and health services in the camps are organised by the Sahrawi camps' authorities thanks to the refugees volunteering to serve their community. The volunteers receive "incentives" for the service provided. The level of pay is insufficient to motivate qualified health and education personnel. The incentives' policy needs to be reviewed to prevent the collapse of essential social services in the camps.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. In the absence of a national asylum system, all activities pertaining to registration, documentation, and refugee status determination for asylum seekers are carried out by UNHCR under a framework agreement signed with the government in 1954. With the support of European Union Agency for Asylum (EASO), Egypt is currently in the process of drafting a national "asylum law". Besides the provision of an overall conducive asylum space -which includes access to public health and education for most Arabic speakers, and access to public education for other nationalities on a case-by-case basis through specified procedures - the Government of Egypt does not provide direct material assistance to refugees. The Government of Egypt has, however, decided to include all people residing in Egypt, also refugees and migrants, in its national COVID-19 vaccination plan.

3.2) International Humanitarian Response

The Sahrawi crisis. UNHCR is the leading UN agency for the response to the Sahrawi refugee crisis. It is responsible for the coordination, protection, health, and WASH sectors through dedicated working groups. UNICEF leads on education and WFP on food security. UN agencies release a project-based annual appeal. In 2022, international donors advised the UN to initiate a consolidated humanitarian appeal for the Sahrawi camps. An appeal would be helpful to (1) create a coherent international assistance plan and budget, (2) mobilise donor resources by providing a clear picture of the needs, (3) clearly outline the coordination mechanisms between international actors and donors; and (4) outline a joint mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impacts. As of June 2022, the total incoming funding amounted to USD 38.8 million, leaving a gap of USD 46 million¹⁹. EU humanitarian funding allocated in 2022 represents 23% of the total humanitarian funding. Most funding provided by donors is allocated to the emergency operations of WFP and UNHCR. The rest supports operations of a limited number of international NGOs. Development assistance is very limited. In recent years, the international funding has been decreasing. Only a limited number of donors and actors are present in this protracted forgotten crisis.

¹⁹Source: UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF (June 2022)

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. In Egypt, the humanitarian funding architecture is structured around two appeal mechanisms: the Egyptian component of the 3RP-Syria for Syrian refugees and the Egypt Response Plan (ERP) for all other nationalities. The Egyptian chapter of the 3RP-Syria requested USD 146.6 million for 2021 and was covered at 53%, while the Egypt Response Plan by UN agencies and partners have requested USD 99.6 million and was covered at 27%²⁰. The imbalance between both appeals targeting the same caseload is of concern. Moreover, non-Syrian refugees suffer higher vulnerability and discrimination, while receiving less assistance, and facing greater difficulties to access basic services. This is also due to declining funding and imbalanced earmarking of donor funds based on nationality.

Protection needs in North Africa. Most humanitarian organisations, both international and local, include protection in their advocacy response strategy but the response is partial and not effectively co-ordinated, in particular in relation to the protection of humanitarian workers and organisations.

3.3 Operational constraints in terms of:

i.) Access/humanitarian space:

The Sahrawi crisis. The physical access to camps is guaranteed. However, the host country and the refugee camps' authorities exert tight control on international organisations as well as on the planning and delivery of aid. Sahrawi camps' authorities act as local counterparts for the organisations involved in delivering humanitarian aid. This increases the ownership of projects and reduces the cost of humanitarian operations. Yet, it is also a constraint when it comes to transparency. Additionally, at times DG ECHO partners face difficulties to get long-term visas and registrations in Algeria. The use of armed escorts, movement restrictions and curfew are compulsory for all international actors working in the camps. While meant to ensure the security of the humanitarian workers, they also limit independent and non-mediated access to the beneficiaries. The capacity of local actors is in most cases low due to limited resources and weak technical expertise.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. Humanitarian space has faced restrictions due to the legislation regulating NGO work. The implementation of the reformed NGO Law (adopted in 2021), and its bylaws, have not significantly impacted humanitarian actors, who are still able to access beneficiaries and deliver required multi-faceted services, including on sensitive protection related issues.

Protection needs in North Africa. International organisations are still struggling to access people in need. Security constraints, bureaucratic hurdles, logistics challenges and difficulties in obtaining visas still hamper the presence of international staff and their ability to conduct regular field missions to all target populations. Consequently, the limited operational presence of humanitarian actors on the ground severely impacts humanitarians' ability to reach people in need.

ii) partners (presence, capacity), including absorption capacity on the ground:

²⁰Source : UNHCR, March 2022

The Sahrawi crisis. Only a handful of implementing partners work in the refugee camps. Mobilising partners for a context where the conditions of remoteness, extreme climate conditions and lack of development opportunities and limited humanitarian space combine is difficult. The operations in the refugee camps are largely implemented by the refugees themselves with little room for improvement. The possibilities to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and strategic multiannual planning remain limited.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. International humanitarian actors are limited to UN agencies and a few INGOs, whose operational capacity is constrained by restrictive barriers and delays in accreditation and project clearance, operational challenges, and government scrutiny faced by their local implementing partners.

Protection needs in North Africa. UN agencies and most international NGOs have limited reach beyond the major cities and surrounding areas along the Mediterranean coast. In addition, bureaucratic hurdles slowing down international procurement, banking restrictions, and difficulties to obtain visas, hamper partners' capacity to deliver effectively, in particular in remote and hard to reach areas.

iii) other:

The Sahrawi crisis. Given the geographical location of the camps, the logistical costs of the operation are very high. Ensuring local purchases of goods such as medicines and medical consumables can help lowering the costs.

4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

The Sahrawi crisis. The ongoing stalemate in the resolution of the conflict continues to stand in the way of a more active involvement of development actors. Only a few small-scale livelihood projects were implemented. In the past, DG ECHO facilitated the design and implementation of an 18-month EUR 800 000 project funded by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) to foster opportunities for the Sahrawi youth. DG NEAR funded a regional environmental project.

It would be crucial for development actors to engage through nexus approaches and provide support to the WASH constructions, livelihood projects or environment preservation activities. DG ECHO will strive to pursue any possibility to set up nexus opportunities by engaging with other donors, including EU Member States.

The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt. Given the protracted nature of the refugee crisis in Egypt - at the same time, a destination and transit country for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants from across the Middle East and Africa, the prevalence of the migration flows in the region and the few possibilities of resettlement or return - there is no prospect to expect an end to the refugee crisis in the short or long run. Multi-year development financial instruments would be better placed for a gradual replacement of short-term humanitarian funding, especially for social services to be potentially provided by the government of Egypt. Humanitarian-development-peace nexus opportunities should be developed by building on Egypt's declared intentions to promote the inclusion of refugees and migrants in the national solidarity system, with the support of international donors. The government of Egypt expressed an interest to expand the national social assistance to all residents classified as vulnerable. Nexus opportunities should be developed through advocacy and coordination, by building on this stated

interest along with other donors. It will possibly require several years to transition the current parallel MPCT programmes into a national-led system. This approach has gained some traction in 2021, with the establishment of the UN/Government of Egypt Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees. This new work stream could introduce an additional avenue for collaboration, programming, and resource mobilisation to provide new assistance and protection modalities for migrants, refugees and their host communities. It could contribute to durable solutions through sustainable financing and delivery modalities, supporting the implementation of Egypt's Vision 2030 and the SDGs.

In 2023, DG ECHO will work to support the operationalisation of this framework, in synergy with other EU services (notably with DG NEAR and DG HOME). In addition, DG ECHO will continue to identify, in coordination with other EU services, opportunities for transitioning from humanitarian aid to development in certain areas (as was the case in previous years for the health sector and basic needs assistance for unaccompanied minors), and whenever possible, fund pilot projects that will support the operationalisation of the nexus in its priority sectors of intervention. In addition, current efforts to mainstream inclusion issues in development sector plans are also positive²¹. DG ECHO intends to continue a regular dialogue with other EU instruments, as well as with EU Member States and other stakeholders involved in the nexus, including through the Cairo-based EU roundtable on migration.

Protection needs in North Africa. Supporting an enabling environment for Civil Society Organisations and promoting human rights in third countries is a prominent focus of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and is supported by the thematic programmes for civil society organisations as well as human rights and democracy of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation (NDCI). DG ECHO will ensure proper synergies, in particular with the EU Human Rights Defender Mechanism ([ProtectDefenders.eu](https://protectdefenders.eu)) implemented by DG INTPA.

5. ENVISAGED DG ECHO RESPONSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF HUMANITARIAN AID INTERVENTIONS

5.1 Envisaged DG ECHO response

5.1.1 *The Sahrawi crisis*

DG ECHO will contribute to meeting humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable Sahrawi refugees continue while promoting actions aimed at reducing dependence on in-kind assistance. The four dimensions of protection mainstreaming (access, accountability, safety/do no harm/dignity/participation) should be integrated into all actions (see the policy annex for details). Generation of evidence and lessons learned, together with efforts to strengthen coordination, strategic planning and resourcing are important. In line with DG ECHO global commitments, activities aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of humanitarian aid should be present in all DG ECHO funded actions. In 2023, as in 2022, DG ECHO aims to target the entire refugee camps' population.

²¹The EU Delegation has included refugees in their proposal for the Education Sector Plan for Egypt via the inclusion lens. This shall facilitate further policy dialogue on the inclusion of refugees into the Egyptian educational system.

DG ECHO will prioritise funding for the following sectors and priorities:

Food Assistance: timely access to safe and well-balanced fortified food, of sufficient quantity and quality is crucial for the most vulnerable households. The negative influence of the global inflation on the purchasing power of the humanitarian actors and the risk of food pipeline break down should be mitigated in different ways, not only through additional funding. Necessary adjustments in the food assistance programme should be considered such as targeting food assistance to the most vulnerable and different modalities such as cash or vouchers. Multi-annual planning and timely communication are also encouraged.

Nutrition: Developing and implementing a multi-year, interagency nutrition strategy covering the whole malnutrition spectrum is critical and urgent. Until then, DG ECHO will focus on nutrition-sensitive food distributions and targeted management of acute undernutrition (CMAM). It also aims to promote focused individual and community-based maternal, infant and young child feeding (MIYCF) practices. Targeted response to the specific nutritional needs of vulnerable groups (e.g., celiac, or diabetic people), through specific interventions or actions integrated in healthcare response could be considered if based on solid evidence and analysis of comparative advantage.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: it is a priority for DG ECHO to fund actions aiming at continuous improvement in providing access to safe water. The response shall cover drilling of new boreholes and optimal use of those already in exploitation. DG ECHO will also consider actions aiming to improve water distribution (mainly through the extension of water network and improvement of water treatment) and to further reduce water trucking, thereby reducing costs and environmental footprint. DG ECHO will continue to strengthen local WASH authorities so that they progressively undertake the maintenance of the existing water infrastructure.

Health: DG ECHO will focus on the provision of basic healthcare, epidemics preparedness/response and the supply of essential drugs (including for non-communicable diseases). Support to emergency health services could also be considered. Specific health needs of people living with disabilities and the elderly will also be considered. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, health partners should also support epidemiological surveillance. Partners are expected to integrate into their projects the appropriate emergency preparedness measures and stand ready to support health authorities in case of an epidemic outbreak. Options on greening the health services (e.g.: waste or energy) response could be explored.

Education in Emergencies (EiE): This sector is a major priority for DG ECHO in the Sahrawi camps. DG ECHO will continue supporting the multi-annual strategy to obtain greater effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the education. DG ECHO pays particular attention to education quality and to children not enrolled or at risk of dropping out and discontinuing learning. DG ECHO promotes a holistic approach to education (e.g., resilient school rehabilitation, WASH minimum standards in schools).

Coordination: Coordination among humanitarian actors, advocacy and visibility remain important to raise the profile of this forgotten crisis and to attract development/stabilisation as well as non-traditional donors.

5.1.2. The Syrian and Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt

To maximise the efficiency of its funding available for Egypt in 2023, DG ECHO will focus its intervention on Education in Emergencies, with integrated child protection. Considering the recent improvement of MPCT programming and the anticipated growing needs in the sector due to the global food crisis and inflation, the MPCT component of the current DG ECHO portfolio shall be kept. Based on an estimation of people targeted in 2022, DG ECHO could reach up to 40 000 beneficiaries in 2023.

Education in Emergencies (EiE): DG ECHO will support actions that enable sustainable access to safe and quality education, with a differentiated and equitable response targeting out-of-school children/adolescents, and those at risk of dropping out. DG ECHO's sectorial approach will focus on i) strengthening the inclusion of refugees within the Egyptian education system; ii) enhancing the quality of refugee community schools and fostering innovative approaches for their sustainability, where appropriate; and iii) promoting out of school children's access to education and mitigating the risk of dropout. The reinforcement of the coordination architecture in refugee education strengthening efficient, evidence-based coordination as well as common minimum standards and approaches, will translate into the implementation of an interagency education strategy for refugees and asylum seekers, reinforced by joint advocacy and dialogue. A child protection dimension shall be mainstreamed into EIE.

Basic Needs Approach (BNA)/Multi-Purpose Cash Transfer (MPCT): Considering the anticipated negative impact of the underlying socio-economic crisis, and of the ongoing global food crisis, DG ECHO shall continue funding MPCT to address the basic needs of the most vulnerable beneficiaries. This will be based on a full-fledged one refugee approach and a robust needs analysis. Moreover, innovative pilot projects promoting avenues to initiate the formulation of a nexus approach in linking refugee cash transfers to the Government-led social protection system will be explored.

Protection will be supported as an integrated component of other sectoral interventions whenever appropriate.

Coordination: Enhanced coordination and advocacy shall aim at redressing the overall response based on nationality, while addressing the basic needs of the most vulnerable and specific gaps. Inter-sectoral coordination should be strengthened to ensure timely and appropriate referrals across sectors. Coordination will also be of the essence to promote the operationalisation of a Nexus framework.

5.1.3 Addressing protection needs in North Africa

DG ECHO will support the following targeted interventions:

- a) Reinforcing protection and compliance on IHL by Armed Groups and De facto Authorities (AGDA): engaging with Armed Groups and De facto Authorities is an essential regional priority. All recent needs assessments confirm that current huge protection needs deserve increased targeted activities. DG ECHO will continue to support evidence-based advocacy and efforts to promote respect for IHL/IHRL, by engaging with Armed Groups and De facto Authorities, religious and tribal leaders and civil society in the region.
- b) Protecting humanitarian workers and organisations under attack: DG ECHO will support setting up a regional mechanism offering targeted assistance to humanitarian workers and organisations under attack to 1) support and structure

the coordination and safe exchange of information between the participating actors involved in legal cases and actions (both defensive and offensive ones), addressing humanitarian workers and humanitarian organisations and identify forgotten cases; 2) support the provision of direct comprehensive assistance to the humanitarian workers and organisations being prosecuted, harassed or sexually abused because of their involvement in humanitarian aid delivery: legal counselling, rapid deployable body of investigators to collect evidence, medical, psychological and economic support.

- c) Empowering local responders and local protection networks: access to legal counselling and documentation represents a relevant barrier for the most vulnerable people in need to obtain protection and access to basic services and reinforce the protection of the most vulnerable people on the move through an enhanced information, counselling and legal assistance response. DG ECHO will support the reinforcement of the capacity of local associations of professionals able to provide such key services to people in need. This will also contribute to the commitment of the Grand Bargain to empower local responders, thus enhancing the localisation.

5.2 Other DG ECHO interventions

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon for the prevention of, and response to, outbreaks of Epidemics. Under the Emergency Toolbox HIP, the Small-Scale Response, Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT) and Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) instruments may also provide funding options.

In view of the importance of logistics for humanitarian operations, DG ECHO remains also committed to contribute to logistics operations, via funding or any other tool, such as the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC), at its disposal.

The European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) is a global initiative, aiming at supporting the delivery of humanitarian assistance with a gap-filling approach. Under the EHRC the Commission has at its disposal several tools that can be activated in case of sudden onset disasters, e.g., a series of Common Logistics Services (including air operations, warehousing services, last-mile ground transportation, etc.), and a stockpile of emergency WASH and shelter items to be pre-positioned in regional warehouses worldwide.