



Report on **The National Efforts in the Area of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

Since 2001, the world has been celebrating the World Refugee Day on June 20 of every year. On this occasion, the Technical Secretariat of the Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights issued this report in collaboration with the “Department of Immigration and Refugees Affairs and Combating Trafficking in Persons” at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The report presents the national efforts exerted in the area of refugees and asylum seekers.

First: The National Efforts at the International and Regional Levels Regarding Issues Relevant to Refugees and Asylum Seekers

1. Egypt joined the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 optional Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees in addition to the 1959 Organisation of African Unity’s Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Furthermore, Egypt played a vital role in the adoption of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which confirmed the importance of supporting the already existing international mechanisms to protect the rights of refugees. Egypt also joined the Global Compact on Refugees, which was endorsed by the United Nations in December 2018. Similarly, Egypt joined many of the human rights agreements, which include the rights of refugees and especially refugee women and children. Egypt has also been actively participating in the Global Refugee Forum, which was held for the first time in Geneva in mid-December 2019.
2. Egypt has been cooperating with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in accordance with the 1954 memorandum of understanding by virtue of which the Egyptian government authorized the UNHCR to determine the status of refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. Both parties continuously coordinate their efforts to ensure the protection and rendering of services to refugees and asylum seekers. Egypt also launched the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) to support Syrian refugees and empower their host communities. It also initiated the annual Egypt Response Plan for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers from Sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq & Yemen to ensure that the international community shares the burdens relevant to hosting refugees in Egypt. Egypt also cooperates with the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration on the voluntary return or repatriation of refugees to a third country upon the request of the refugee or asylum seeker.
3. Egypt believes that supporting peace and stability is the best and most sustainable way to deal with long-lasting conflicts, which cause the largest inflow of refugees in the region.

“ Egypt also launched the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) to support Syrian refugees and empower their host communities. ”

Egypt also exerts its utmost efforts to find political solutions to the crises in the region. Furthermore, Egypt hosts the African Union Center for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development; this center is concerned with post-conflict development, since conflicts may lead to forced displacement, and it encourages the voluntary return of refugees to their homeland.



4. Along the same line, Egypt took great interest in addressing the issue of refugees in Africa during its presidency of the African Union in 2019. The theme for 2019 was “Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa,” which was chosen based on the fact that there are 7.4 million refugees in the continent and that a quarter of the refugees of the world are found in sub-Saharan Africa. Different initiatives were undertaken to find sustainable solutions to the problems of refugees in Africa by addressing the root causes that might lead to the renewal of conflicts, enhancing peace and reconciliation, and achieving development and reconstruction in post-conflict regions. Moreover, Egypt was particularly keen to ensure that the deliberations of the African Union in this regard result in recommendations that are tangible and applicable. In fact, these recommendations were confirmed during the first Global Refugee Forum held in Geneva and in the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, both of which were held in December 2019.
5. As the majority of refugees in Egypt are from the Middle East region, particularly from Arab countries suffering from crises, Egypt supported the efforts exerted by the League of Arab States to assist refugees, which were undertaken under the framework of three strategies reflecting the main priorities of the member countries: (1) the Arab Strategy for the Protection of Children in Asylum Context in the Arab Region, which was launched in 2019; (2) the Arab Strategy on Access to Public Health Services in Asylum and Displacement Contexts in the Arab Region; and (3) the Arab Strategy on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Asylum and Displacement Context especially Sexual Violence against Women, which is currently under preparation.

Second: The Efforts of the Egyptian Government in the area of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

1. The geographical location of Egypt, as well as the political conditions in a number of countries in the region, has made Egypt both a country of transit and of destination for refugees. Egypt now hosts, according to the latest statistics of March 2020, about 256,000 refugees and asylum seekers, 51% of whom are Syrians while the rest are from 58 other countries, mainly Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Iraq, and Yemen. Among them, 28,000 are children and minors and 863 are unaccompanied children. Most refugees in Egypt live in the urban areas of the governorates of Cairo, Giza, Qalyubiya, Alexandria, Sharqiya, and Damietta.
2. In addition to the refugees registered with the UNHCR, there are thousands of refugees who have fled to Egypt to escape from armed conflicts and political upheavals in their countries;

Egypt helped them acquire residence, mobility, and work permits. They also enjoy basic services equal to Egyptian citizens. These refugees and asylum seekers freely move in Egypt as the Egyptian government adopts a policy that prohibits the establishment of camps or detention places for refugees and asylum seekers.



Egypt hosts
256,000
refugees and
asylum seekers

3. The financial and economic pressures on the Egyptian state budget are high: International organizations operating with refugees in Egypt estimate the cost of their needs at USD 300 million annually and that contributions from international donors only cover 15% of these costs. Therefore, Egypt reiterates the importance of burden-sharing in accordance with the principles adopted by the 2016 New York Declaration so as to ensure the continuity of the services rendered by the government to refugees and improve the quality of such services to both refugees and local communities.
4. Egypt reaffirms the importance of ensuring that donors treat refugees equally and that the criteria for granting help should be the needs of the refugees rather than their nationalities. Egypt also calls for the distribution of aid to Syrian refugees in the region in a fair and equitable manner to ensure the ability of all host communities to continue hosting the refugees.
5. Egypt provides the same health and education services to refugees and asylum seekers as it does to Egyptian citizens without discrimination. The Universal Health Insurance Law No. 2 of 2018 provides that foreigners residing in Egypt and refugees shall be covered by the universal health insurance system. Egypt likewise extended the scope of the health campaigns that were initiated by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to include refugees and asylum seekers. Such campaigns include the 100 Million Healthy Lives Campaign to detect and treat Hepatitis C, the campaign against polio, and the campaign against obesity and anemia among students in the primary level of education.
6. In addition to the above, refugees in Egypt benefit from the subsidies offered by the government on basic services and commodities. Moreover, refugee students from Arab countries, who amount to more than 65,000, may join government schools on equal footing with Egyptian students. It is also worth mentioning that the Egyptian authorities allow refugees from Arab countries to receive residence permits.
7. At the institutional level, the coordination of policies related to refugees is achieved through the Committee Concerned with the affairs of refugees, which was established in 2017 by a Prime Ministerial decree. This committee is made up of representatives of all concerned ministries and is also concerned with cooperating with the UNHCR.

Third: The National Efforts to Provide the Necessary Support to Refugees and Displaced Persons During the Coronavirus Pandemic

1. The wide spreading of the coronavirus pandemic represents a true challenge for all countries of the world. Since the beginning of this pandemic, the Egyptian government has been keen on providing protection and support to refugees within its borders and providing them with the same health and medical services that it provides to Egyptian

citizens as part of the national efforts to combat the pandemic. Moreover, refugees in Egypt enjoy full freedom of movement with no restriction whatsoever except for preventive health measures to combat the spread of the pandemic throughout the country.

2. The Egyptian government cooperates and collaborates with international organizations operating in Egypt in the field of migration and asylum as refugees and asylum seekers are the most vulnerable groups. For their part, these organizations cooperate with the Egyptian authorities, including the Ministry of Health and Population, to restrict the spread of the pandemic among the migrants or refugees or in their host communities.