



NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia



CONTEXT

North Africa is increasingly at the centre of discussions on human mobility. The countries of the region are important destination, transit, and origin for mixed movement. Crises in Africa and the Middle East put increasing pressure on Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya as safe hosts for a growing number of people on the move.

OUTCOMES/IMPACT

Empowerment of people on the move through:

- People-driven (humanitarian) response and co-ownership of activities.
- Support to rights awareness and self-reliance.
- Knowledge and capacity-sharing.
- Collaborative cross-regional learning amongst local actors.

HMH COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

- Partnering with communities to find highly contextual solutions to global challenges.
- Capacity-sharing between partners for mutual learning.
- Humanitarian and displacement expertise.

NRC CAPACITY

NRC is an international humanitarian organisation, focusing on displacement and engaging in crises when local and national actors are unable or unwilling to respond. NRC primarily works in contexts affected by armed conflict and violence, prioritising hard-to-reach communities. It can also respond in other situations, where its expertise adds value to protect displaced persons' rights and access to basic services:

- Assistance programmes in countries of origin, transit, and destination for people on the move.
- Information Counselling and Legal Assistance programmes with local partners in most countries of origin.
- Global provider of displacement expertise, including NORCAP, which has around 1,000 experts who can be deployed within 72 hours.

NRC CONTACT PERSON

Katleen Maes Director, Human Mobility Hub
North Africa katleen.maes@nrc.no



NRC HUMAN MOBILITY HUB CAPACITY STATEMENT

Every day, people move from their homes in search of a better future, either in their country or by crossing borders. Often, these people face challenges and protection concerns that are overlooked. It is anticipated that 130 million people will have fled their homes in 2024,¹ and the gap between their needs and the resources to respond to them continues to grow.

NRC HMH mission

Building a network of empowered communities and partnerships, to protect the rights and dignity of people on the move and those hosting them.

The Human Mobility Hub (HMH) is an NRC pilot initiative launched in January 2023 as an innovative platform that aims to address the protection and assistance needs of people on the move in the context of North Africa. HMH's approach relies on the collaboration and partnership with local organisations, host communities, and people on the move themselves. By co-designing and co-implementing with people on the move and local partners, the HMH aims to provide a tailored, localised, and multi-disciplinary response. The HMH links countries of origin, transit and destination, to foster cross-country and cross-regional collaboration for learning and for operations.

NRC HMH approach

The NRC HMH has carved out its unique space within the North Africa context through an innovative, flexible, and localised approach. From its inception, the HMH has championed a consultative philosophy starting with inclusive scoping missions that engaged diverse stakeholders and local actors, ensuring their voices and insights were central to the HMH's strategy. Throughout its needs assessments and proposal development, the HMH actively seeks input, feedback, and participation from its diversified network of partners. The HMH employs small, targeted, and strategic financial (grants) and technical (capacity-sharing) support to an extensive network of diverse stakeholders. This approach enables the HMH to respond in an inclusive and effective way to emerging needs, challenges, and opportunities, ensuring that interventions remain contextually relevant and impactful. The HMH's approach highlights the significance of empowering local actors, fostering collaboration, and driving sustainable change within humanitarian settings.

NRC HMH objectives

The NRC HMH and its partners co-designed a strategy with the following objectives to which each partner will contribute to, in line with their expertise. The HMH and partners will jointly work towards one operational objective and one knowledge management objective:

Improve and safeguard the protection of rights for people on the move.

- Improve access of people on the move and host communities to basic services.
- Provide information, counselling and legal assistance to people on the move throughout their journey.
- Ensure continued education and learning opportunities for people on the move throughout their journey.
- Promote the economic inclusion of people on the move.
- Enhance social cohesion, fostering cultural exchange and promoting mutual understanding among host communities and people on the move.
- Support the participation of people on the move and their representatives, including refugee- and migrant-led organisations.

Establish a robust knowledge-sharing framework that fosters collaborative learning, information exchange, and joint research.

- Promote Communities of Practice to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaborative learning among the network's partners.
- Initiate and facilitate joint actionable research that bridges knowledge gaps around the journey and experiences of people on the move.

Key factors for success

Engagement: Network of partners(hips)

As of 2024, the NRC HMH has established operational and strategic partnerships with approximately 45 organisations in Egypt and Tunisia. Some of its partners are national NGOs (7), but the majority are community-based organisations (9), migrant- or refugee-led organisations (26), as well as one youth-led organisation and one regional refugee-led organisation. In addition, the HMH also supports a network of refugee-led organisations with capacity-sharing.

The HMH also cooperates closely with local government entities, academia, individual legal experts, and international migration research institutes. It is also actively exploring cooperation with specialised education institutes and the private sector. The HMH maintains engagement with UN entities and coordination mechanisms, the diplomatic/donor community, and local authorities.

The HMH's partners work on enhancing the quality of life and rights of refugees and vulnerable migrants through various programme areas: education, psychosocial support for children and young people, legal aid, and emergency support tailored to the needs of the situation, as well as community outreach and support to refugee- and migrant-led organisations or refugee/migrant community leaders. Through partnership, the HMH and its partners share invaluable first-hand insight into developments on the ground, which helps shaping response

strategies, also in the face of emerging crises. Strategic partnership enables access to a wide network of grassroots organisations and first-line responders, which is instrumental in reaching a broad range of vulnerable groups with emergency assistance. The HMM is supporting a growing number of these grassroots organisations through flexible funding arrangements and capacity-sharing. The HMM supports various start-up projects that specialise in high-impact or complex initiatives, such as sensitive case management/representation, digital legal aid, representation of extremely marginalised groups, and cross-border assistance. When useful, the HMM attracts external resources to support its own and its partners' activities, including on issues related to organisational and strategic capacity-development.

Learning: Contextual knowledge and stakeholder engagement

Remaining continuously up to date on changes in the local context is a cornerstone of the HMM's engagement. Through its extensive network of partners and proactive engagement, as well as its own skills-based team with significant experience in the region and with displacement, the HMM continuously monitors changes in the context, shifts in policies, the sociocultural landscape, and humanitarian needs. The HMM maintains engagement with a network of experts and community leaders who are equipped with in-depth knowledge of the context.

Scalability: Agile structure

The HMM's cost-efficient approach, enabled by its dedication to partnerships, meant that in 2023, 71% of its budgets were dedicated to supporting partners and activities. The HMM aims at further increasing the portion of its budget allocated to partners. Key to this has been the adoption of competency-based roles away from the traditional, resource-intensive hierarchical structures. Notably, the HMM's cost-efficiency will be pivotal in ensuring the sustainability of the HMM's presence and engagement, particularly during periods of reduced funding. Optimising resources and focusing predominantly on empowering partners and their initiatives enables the HMM to work towards a sustainable and resilient model that can adapt to financial constraints while maintaining its impact and efficacy.

Enabling: Support to mobilisation for the preparedness/response to crises

Because of its ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, the HMM is able to rapidly identify areas of cooperation when a crisis occurs. By focussing on activities in support of local actors, the HMM and its partners are able to reach areas where access is restricted and marginalised groups, often while navigating challenging legal frameworks. The HMM raises funding for civil society initiatives, often refugee- and migrant-led or community-based organisations, working in first-line assistance.

NRC HMM current programming

Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA)

- Support first line, emergency ICLA responses, including the development of information materials and awareness sessions for new arrivals.
- Support partner information, counselling, legal assistance services.
- Facilitate case-by-case cooperation between NRC operations and partners in host countries and in countries of origin on issues of civil documentation.
- Develop digital information, counselling, and legal aid platforms for the use by partners and people on the move.
- Increase (para-) legal capacity for community-based organisations and community leaders.
- Expand legal capacity in under-served areas.
- Develop legal guidance (child rights, employment and workplace negotiations)
- Implement ICLA with and for youth on the move.

Education

- Pilot Teachers on the Move initiative, providing learning and employment opportunities for migrant and refugee teachers.
- Support partners in implementing the Better Learning Programme, NRC's flagship psychosocial support intervention for children in crisis-affected communities in school environments.
- Provide skills and psychosocial support to youth (at risk of) dropping out of education.

Emergency response (in support of first line responders)

- Provide (cash for) basic needs items, based on priority needs identified by partners.
- Provide multi-purpose cash assistance.
- Psychosocial support for children and young people.
- Education in emergencies.
- Cash for protection.
- Emergency legal aid.
- Support to partners in developing and implementing responses tailored to the context.

Capacity-sharing and knowledge management

- Organise communities of practice to facilitate knowledge exchange (legal aid).
- Provide humanitarian response and humanitarian principles training.
- Provide technical training on topics identified by partners and people on the move, including legal aid topics, education, finance, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, advocacy and communications, risk management and meaningful participation.
- Initiate and facilitate research and assessments.
- Support cross-regional learning and exchanges between partners.
- Support exchange with practitioners from countries of origin.

Network support

- Support coordination efforts between partners.
- Engage with stakeholders on the inclusion of refugees and migrants and their organisations in relevant discussions.
- Support the reinforcement of community-based and refugee/migrant-led networks and community leaders, including capacity-sharing, funding and representation support.
- Support partners in reinforcing and expanding their community-based and volunteer networks, particularly in hard-to-reach or underserved areas.
- Provision of grants to community-based organisations and refugee/migrant-led networks for the provision of community-based humanitarian assistance.

NRC HMM future plans

- Increase co-ownership by people on the move in decision-making processes, including HMM itself.
- Continue to provide a wide range of legal aid, as well as remain an agile response mechanism to emergencies.
- Strengthen cross-border activities/route-based programming.
- Strengthen and, if needed/appropriate expand the HMM network.
- Maintain a community of practice/learning for partners and for NRC itself by documenting and disseminating learning.

Background

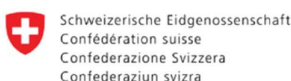
The HMM currently focuses on North Africa due to the region's strategic importance as a destination and transit for migrants and refugees from the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. North Africa is a hotspot for accelerated climate change and will experience increased resource competition.

People on the move include internally displaced persons, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and returnees. The reasons for their movement vary, and whether people intend to stay in a location long-term or are just transiting, they need to be able to access protection, education, a safe home, dignified employment, or essential services to build a better future. Unfortunately, an increasing number of people on the move are stuck in long-term displacement. Both along their journey and in their displacement location, people on the move often fall victim to harassment, discrimination, and exploitation and have limited access to legal recourse or ways to regularise their stay. Given global economic challenges, people on the move are increasingly seen as 'in competition' for jobs and services with local communities and, often equally desperate, local youth. The lack of prospects pushes some to take increasingly dangerous irregular migration routes hoping to find a better life elsewhere. The support to host local communities facing economic challenges in these contexts is also critical, including to enhance social cohesion.

The HMM receives support from the EU – Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Swiss Development Cooperation, US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, and private funding. It receives technical support from several research institutions and the private sector.



European Union
Civil Protection and
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Swiss Agency for Development
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NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



ⁱ UNHCR, global appeal 2024, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/global-appeal-2024-6383>