



# Transit migration in North Africa

## Commitment by SDC Humanitarian Aid (HA)

SDC Humanitarian Aid (SDC/HA) is committed to aiding migrants in selected countries in North Africa and on the Arabian Peninsula, working closely with other Swiss governmental agencies, particularly the Federal Office for Migration (BFM) and the political departments of the FDFA.

The concept of *Protection in the Region* concentrates on concerted cooperation by Swiss players on the ground. The protective capacities of the transit countries are reinforced by coordinated projects, in a bilateral dialogue with the countries in question, on which additional demands are being made for the management of migration flows and which are in a position which was difficult at the outset. The intention is to achieve stricter application of international rules on the protection of refugees in the first host country. Migratory pressures can be relieved by a better deal and humane treatment, which could ultimately entail a reduction in irregular secondary migration, relieving future pressure on Europe and thus Switzerland too.

Emergency aid measures within the SDC/HA commitment are contributing to the survival of and improved living standards for stranded people. SDC/HA advocates enhanced protection of the rights of migrants, to be achieved by the acquisition and transfer of knowledge to benefit the responsible local governmental and non-governmental organizations. Appropriate solutions also include Swiss support for the voluntary return of migrants from transit countries to their country of origin, if possible.

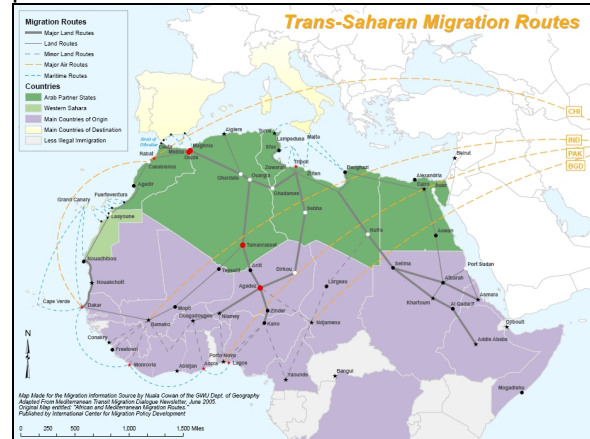
Each country in the region faces a similar challenge. SDC/HA's commitment depends upon the conditions and differing needs of the countries affected, and is currently concentrated on Morocco.

## Programmes and measures

SDC/HA is financing international and local non-governmental organizations such as Caritas, which are active in the provision of emergency and medical care, and which act as advocates.

The UNHCR's programmes for the protection of refugees in Morocco are supported financially and by the provision of

personnel.



The BFM finances the voluntary return programme operated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which includes reintegration assistance in the country of origin. Following a successful pilot phase, donor countries from the EU are making a financial contribution.

## Background information

Migration is a complex phenomenon. There are political refugees, victims of war, human trafficking and smuggling, and people who are simply fleeing poverty and hunger. This range of fates produces a complicated situation with differing needs for protection and legal entitlements.

People from West Africa, Sudan, the Horn of Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa undertake the journey to Europe, which is often fraught with considerable dangers. Thousands are stranded en route, have to give up due to a lack of funds or physical exhaustion, or drown in an attempt to cross the sea in unseaworthy vessels.

Transit countries form part of the international community, which has to take a uniform approach to the problem. A balance has to be struck between development and preventive projects in countries of origin and transit, with clear, transparent rules on legal immigration into destination countries.

## Further information

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