IRAN SITUATIONAL UPDATE N° 2

28 February 2025

UNHCR
آژانس پناهندگان سازمان ملل متحد

CONTEXT

On 6 February, the Iranian Interior Minister stated that unauthorized foreign nationals have taken numerous job opportunities in Iran, prompting the government to implement stricter labor laws to counter this issue effectively. Earlier that week, the Governor of Tehran province reported sealing off 300 businesses employing “unauthorized foreign nationals” in the past three months.

On 16 February, the new Bill on Establishing a National Organization for Migration (NOM) was published on 16 February, following the withdrawal of a previous draft in October 2024. The new bill outlines NOM’s structure, duties, and responsibilities. UNHCR is conducting a thorough analysis to assess its implications and identify advocacy opportunities.

On 19 February, he Government has withdrawn the proposed amendment to Iran’s nationality law, initially submitted in July 2024, citing the need for fundamental changes. The bill aimed to reform citizenship rules but faced criticism for restricting nationality access for children of Iranian mothers and foreign fathers. UNHCR continues to monitor legislative developments to engage in timely advocacy.

On 20 February, authorities deported approximately 600 Afghans from Mehdishahr County, Semnan province, while another 2,000 were asked to leave temporarily following local protests after an Afghan national was arrested for the alleged murder of a local resident. UNHCR is closely monitoring the situation and providing counselling to refugees approaching its offices.

On 24 February, the Center for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (CAFIA) confirmed that Headcount slips will expire on 20 March 2025, with no extensions. Plans to return holders to Afghanistan after Nowruz were announced, with some exemptions still under discussion. Families with school-enrolled children may stay until June but must apply for an extension by 15 March to avoid deportation risks. UNHCR is also seeking detailed information in its engagements with CAFIA to proactively inform affected communities. Meanwhile, Refugee Response Plan partners, led by UNHCR, are coordinating their advocacy efforts.

UNHCR
آژانس پناهندگان سازمان ملل متحد

FUNDING UPDATE

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

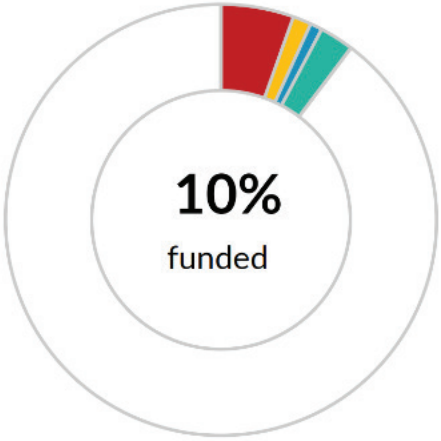
as of 28 February 2025

USD 140 million

UNHCR Iran financial requirements for 2025

USD 125.6 million

Funding gap for 2025



- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

UNHCR RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

PROTECTION

Reception & Communication with Communities

Since the beginning of 2025, UNHCR has provided **counselling to 73,700 persons** in the five UNHCR offices or remotely by phone or other digital channels. To offer information and counselling, the hotline has answered 18,000 phone calls, 6,789 emails were received, and 1561 letters via the different physical mailboxes.

UNHCR Iran website and help page are also a common source of consultation. These two have received a total of 68,761 visits in February (+24% compared to January). Out of the 7,745 submitted online forms this month, 49% asked for resettlement and 28% requested assistance.

Legal identity and documentation

UNHCR Hired Lawyers have assisted 1310 persons (512 in February) referred by UNHCR in 2025, including 175 represented or assisted in Dispute Settlement Committees services. This counselling is key to accessing rights and services in line with the national legislation. Majority of cases related to family disputes, followed by criminal cases and assistance for documentation.

Child and Women Protection & Psychosocial Counselling

The Protection team has identified **1340 children with specific protection needs** (798 in February) the majority of them at risk of not attending schools or engaged in labour, among other risks. While all cases were provided with the counselling, UNHCR has conducted a thorough assessment for 95 cases, prioritized based on their vulnerability. The protection team has also carried out best interest assessments for 63 children and provided psychosocial support, legal aid and other available services in response.

UNHCR has identified **945 refugee women at risk** (610 in February) and provided assistance, mostly through Psychosocial support, legal aid, as well as the provision of cash assistance, support with health services, and shelter to a number of them.

Additionally, **365 persons have participated in psychosocial counselling sessions** conducted by the UNHCR hired psychological counsellors since the beginning of 2025. The counselling sessions were conducted either in-person or through phone.

Cash Assistance

The cash instalments provide crucial support to vulnerable refugees, including those with special protection needs and disabilities, helping them meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life. As of end of February 2025, **6,846 most vulnerable persons had received instalments of cash assistance** for a total of IRR 195 billion (USD 356,000). Out of these, 55% are women.

HIGHLIGHT

FINLAND'S GENEROSITY GIVES AFGHAN FAMILIES A NEW BEGINNING

Sepideh still remembers the joy in the eyes of this Afghan family—a couple with two little girls—who were among the 152 refugees who departed from Iran as part of 2024 resettlement quota of Finland. Humble and kind, they remained grateful, thanking Sepideh and the team at every turn. From the first identification for resettlement to the interview with the Finnish resettlement team and the final steps of compiling documents, UNHCR resettlement team guided them every step of the way.

When they landed in Helsinki, their first message was a photo—snow-covered streets and their daughters in matching pink knit caps. Finland's generosity had given them a second chance, and for Sepideh, their journey was a reminder of why she does this work.

Finland is one of the countries generously providing Afghan refugees with resettlement opportunities. Since the beginning of 2025, 48 Afghan families, for a total of 166 persons, have departed Iran for resettlement to Australia, Finland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

UNHCR RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Education

UNHCR supports Iran's education system, particularly in refugee-hosting areas where classroom sizes reach up to 50 students—far exceeding the national standard. To accommodate all school-age children and reduce overcrowding, the **Government estimates a need for at least 2,000 new schools**.

Constructing a 12-classroom school costs approximately USD 800,000, benefiting 720 students in two shifts, while equipping it with essential materials like smart boards and stationery requires an additional USD 100,000.

Health

UNHCR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Center for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (CAFIA), has launched in February the 11th cycle of the Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) scheme to ensure refugees have access to essential medical services. This includes primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare.

As in previous cycles, **up to 95,000 vulnerable refugees** holding a valid Amayesh card, identity card, or travel document—including those with specific medical conditions such as hemophilia, thalassemia, kidney failure, kidney transplant, and multiple sclerosis—can register for free medical coverage at designated government counters nationwide.

Additionally, thank to Iran's inclusive policies, primary healthcare remains available to all, regardless of status or documentation, across the country.

Livelihoods

Under the Iranian labour law, refugees holding Hoviat or Amayesh cards can obtain temporary work permits allowing them to work legally in specific job categories–primarily in the construction and Agriculture sectors. UNHCR works in partnership with the government institution and NGOs to support vulnerable members and the host community to support skill-building opportunities, aiming to improve prospects for employment and self-reliance. In 2025, **UNHCR aims to support some 1,000 refugees** and vulnerable host communities with vocational and technical training.

Resettlement

UNHCR has advanced resettlement efforts, conducting case **identification interviews for 2,733 individuals** with 1,363 prioritized for resettlement interviews in 2025. 826 individuals underwent resettlement interviews, with 443 individuals cleared for submission. Additionally, 866 refugees have received post-submission counselling on exit procedures and other critical issues.

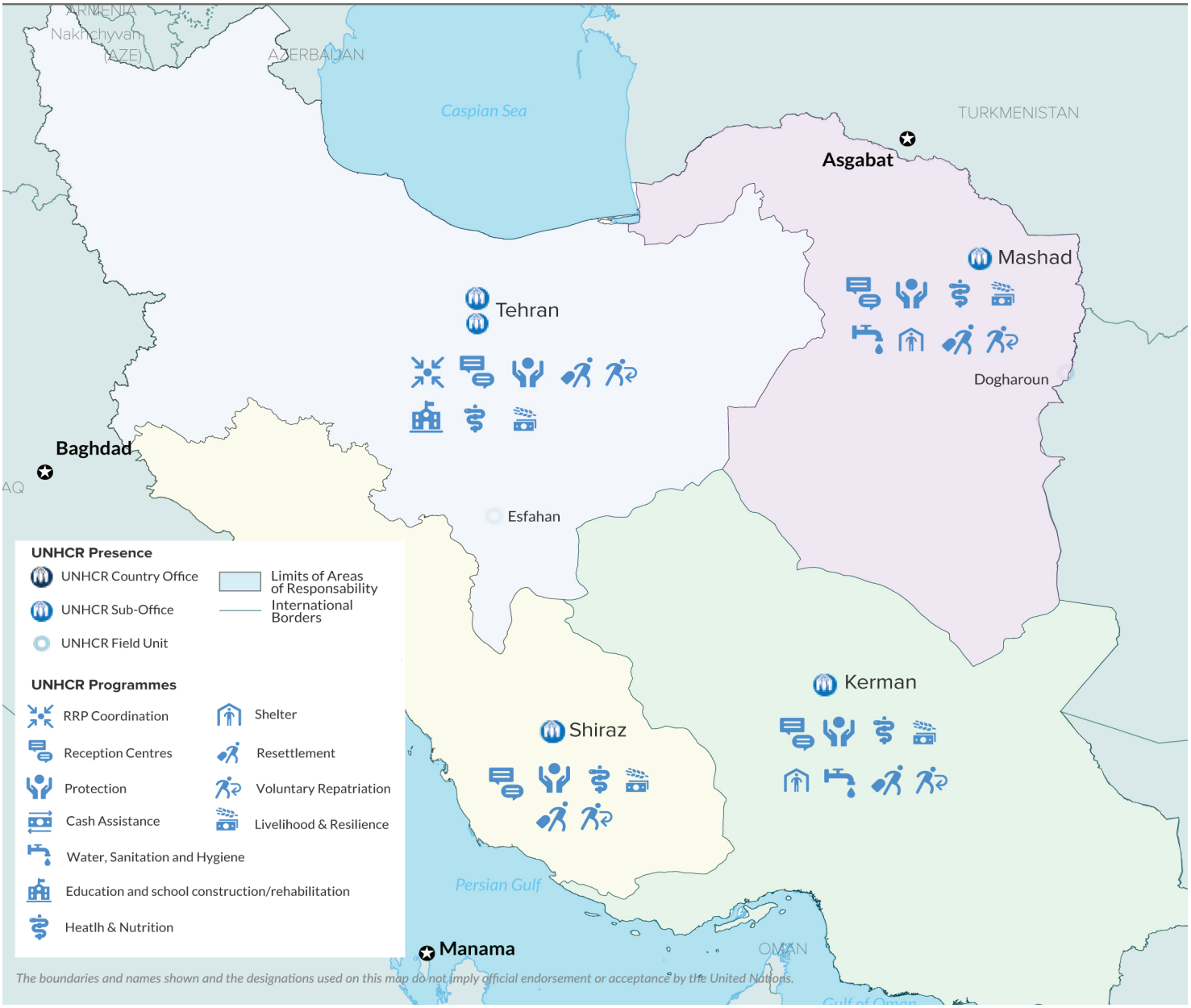
In February, **166 individuals** departed Iran for resettlement in 2025 (103 in February), with Australia receiving the largest part (54%), followed by the UK (22%), New Zealand (13%) and Finland (10%).

REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN

On 4 February, a high-level meeting was held with heads of organizations involved in the Refugee Response Plan (RRP). The meeting focused on enhancing the effectiveness of RRP activities. As a result, taskforces were established to improve reporting, advocacy, and fundraising capacities. These taskforces will strengthen efforts to highlight the impact of RRP initiatives and enhance fundraising strategies to approach donors.

This collaborative approach aims to address the critical needs of refugees and host communities more effectively, ensuring better resource allocation and improved outcomes.

14 RRP PARTNERS



KEY FIGURES

Iran hosts **3.8 million** refugees and individuals in refugee-like situations

- **773,000** refugees: Amayesh & Hoviat card holders
- **2.6 million** headcount slip holders
- **300,000** individuals with various documentation

150 Aghans have returned to Afghanistan in 2025 through UNHCR's Voluntary Repatriation Programme

FOLLOW US

@unhcriran
@UNHCRIran
UNHCR - Iran
Data Portal - Iran

UNHCR would like to wholeheartedly thank its donors

Austrian Development Cooperation
german cooperation
Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland
From the People of Japan
UKaid
from the British people

UNHCR would also like to thank its private donors