

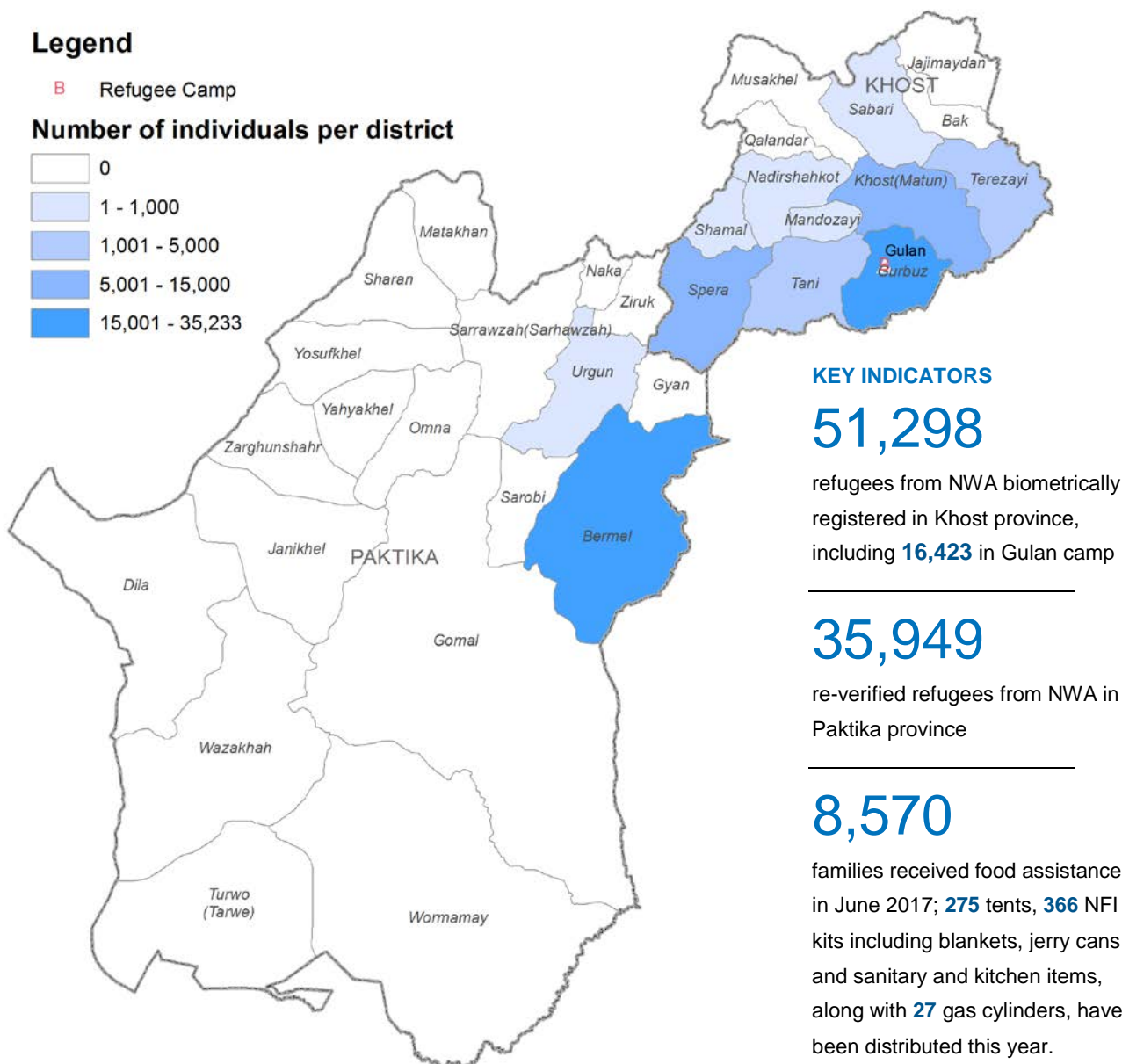
Afghanistan

June 2017

Afghanistan acceded to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees in 2005, but has not implemented a national asylum framework.

In 2014, Afghanistan received an influx of refugees from North Waziristan Agency; an estimated 125,000 individuals remain in a protracted refugee-like situation.

Under its mandate, UNHCR has registered 371 asylum-seekers and refugees of various nationalities in Kabul and other urban centres.



Operational Context and Response

The Government of Afghanistan acceded to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees in 2005. UNHCR continues to advocate with relevant government ministries and executive leadership for the enactment of a Refugee Law, and to offer technical support and training; however, at present there is no national asylum framework to regulate issues of refugee protection.

Under its mandate, UNHCR registers asylum-seekers and refugees in Afghanistan as a protection tool, with the aim to identify and assist persons with specific needs (PSN); support access to humanitarian assistance and essential services including education and health care; ensure freedom of movement and uphold basic rights; and provide a minimum safeguard against refoulement. UNHCR conducts Refugee Status Determination (RSD) in cases where the individual recognition of refugee status would lead to a durable solution, such as resettlement.

Urban asylum-seekers and refugees



152 individual asylum-seekers and refugees received cash-based assistance in June

Afghanistan currently hosts 371 asylum-seekers and refugees in Kabul and other urban centres. Local integration is largely unattainable, particularly as the majority do not have valid passports and other


documents necessary to regularize their legal status in Afghanistan. Many remain socially marginalized, with limited access to jobs in the informal economy. Resettlement opportunities are scarce, while voluntary return to the respective country of origin in safety and dignity is not possible.

UNHCR provides cash-based and in-kind assistance to the most vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees to enable them to pay for housing, food, utilities, and basic necessities. Additional financial assistance is provided during winter to mitigate heightened protection risks and reduce reliance on negative coping mechanisms. In June 2017, UNHCR distributed cash-based assistance to 152 individual asylum-seekers and refugees.

Agreements with public education and health care providers have been established to ensure access to these services for asylum-seekers and refugees. The increasingly volatile security environment and limited livelihood opportunities contribute to a challenging protection environment in Afghanistan, however, particularly as the country struggles to absorb refugees repatriating from Pakistan in adverse conditions, and undocumented returns, amid further conflict-induced displacement.

Pakistan Refugees from North Waziristan Agency

Afghanistan hosts a protracted population of Pakistani refugees, who fled North Waziristan Agency (NWA) in 2014 as a result of military operations which left the civilian population of Miranshah and surrounding villages forcibly displaced. As at 30 June 2017, UNHCR has biometrically registered over 51,000 refugees in Khost province, and re-verified registration data for almost 36,000 refugees in Paktika province where access remains a challenge on account of insecurity such that biometric registration has not been possible. Cultural barriers also impact on efforts to comprehensively register the refugee population, particularly women. An estimated total of 125,000 refugees from NWA remain in Afghanistan.

 **16,423** refugees receive shelter and essential services in the Gulan camp in Khost province

Some 16,423 refugees receive shelter and essential services in the Gulan camp in Khost province, while most live among the Afghan host population in various urban and rural locations. Refugees from NWA

benefit from the generous hospitality of the provincial Afghan government authorities and host communities, due in part to tribal affiliations and a shared understanding of the trauma of forced displacement. During inclusive consultations and community *shura* meetings, most of the refugees have stated that they are currently unwilling to return to Pakistan.

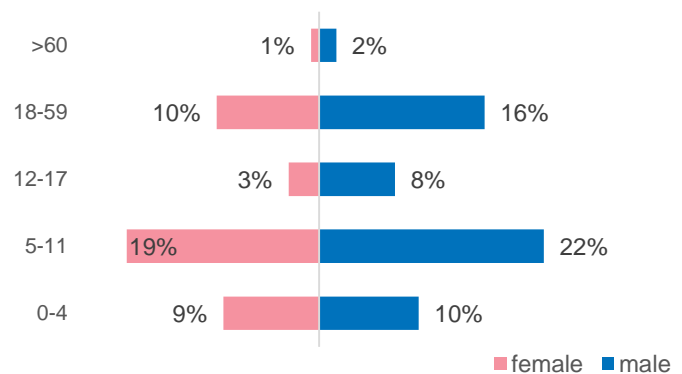
UNHCR, in coordination with other humanitarian agencies, provides targeted assistance to persons with specific needs (PSN) among the refugee population, and community-based support to build the capacity of refugees and the host population and reduce their vulnerability. Protection interventions include livelihoods, shelter, and WASH projects, and other community protection measures to promote peaceful co-existence and build resilience. In the month of June, UNHCR assessed 289 individual refugees under the PSN programme.


PROTECTION

■ UNHCR has registered and issued household ration cards for over 87,000 refugees (70% of the estimated refugee population), ensuring freedom of movement, as well as access to humanitarian assistance and essential services. Some 71% of registered refugees are children. UNHCR and partners identify and assist the most vulnerable individuals and families, including persons living with disabilities and serious medical conditions, single parents, women and children at risk, and survivors of gender based violence, through the PSN programme.

■ The lack of birth registration for refugee children is a significant protection concern due to the risk of statelessness and potential long-term disadvantage. As a protection measure, partners such as Health Net International (HNI), International Medical Corps (IMC), Afghanistan Center for Training and Development (ACTD), and the Organization for Health Promotion and Management (OHPM) mitigate risk by issuing birth notifications to refugee mothers, thereby facilitating the registration of new-born children with UNHCR, and future birth registration with government authorities in the country of origin.

Age and gender (Khost and Paktika)



Note: Paktika data for age and gender are extrapolated based on age and gender of the registered population in Khost.


HEALTH

■ With one clinic and one mobile medical team, ACTD provides primary health care services to refugees in the Gulan camp including natal care, vaccinations, and therapeutic food to infant children to meet their immediate nutritional needs.

- HNI is implementing a primary health care programme for refugees in Alishir (Terezayi), Tani, Spera, and Matun districts of Khost. The HNI project includes natal care, vaccinations, and infant nutrition, as well as psychosocial counselling, and medical treatment for trauma, mental illness, and tuberculosis. OHPM has also provided medical treatment, natal care, and vaccinations to 157 refugee patients in Khost province.
- IMC has been providing health care services to refugees in Paktika province through static and mobile health clinics in Barmal district and a mobile clinic in Urgon district. A midwife, one doctor and one vaccinator is present in each health facility. In the month of June, 1,850 individuals received health education, and 86 pregnant women received clean delivery kits. Two ambulances are now operational, referring 49 cases with serious medical needs to high level care providers for advanced treatment. A total of 3,179 individuals received primary health services including vaccinations and infant nutrition during the month.
- The impact of health interventions by humanitarian agencies is life-saving, and essential for the refugee community, due to the limited resources of public health care providers in Khost and Paktika provinces.



WATER AND SANITATION

- To address protection risks for the refugee population arising from a lack of potable water and sanitation, UNHCR and partners have implemented WASH projects in Khost province including the construction of 62 wells and 2,200 latrines in 2017. UNHCR and partners have also distributed almost 9,000 emergency hygiene kits, and conducted hygiene education, benefitting nearly 10,000 refugee families at a community level.

In 2017



62 wells constructed



2,200 latrines constructed



9,000 hygiene kits distributed

- Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR) has completed one WASH project for 10 villages in Gurbaz district, representing some 19,000 individuals comprised of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and members of the host population as a community based protection measure. CoAR continues to implement projects in Tani and Alishir (Terezayi) districts including construction of a gravity pipe network, latrines and bathing facilities, bore wells, chlorination of water points, and hygiene awareness programmes.

- A WASH project run by Solidarités International (SI) in the Gulan Camp will end in July 2017; however, SI will continue to provide technical assistance at the existing project site, thereby empowering the community to assume responsibility for managing their water supply system.
- In Paktika province, IMC has established WASH committees in Barmal and Urgon districts to promote hygiene awareness and build community capacity. The committees receive training on hand-washing, food and water hygiene, and personal and environmental hygiene. Some 20 Community Hygiene Promoters have been selected from the community through a participatory approach to mobilise and lead future hygiene awareness in mosques and public gatherings, and through home visits. In June 2017, IMC has overseen construction of 20 latrines and 3 bore wells, and distributed 482 hygiene kits.

**SHELTER AND NFIS**

- In 2017, UNHCR and partners in Khost have distributed 275 new tents to replace makeshift shelters and old tents which had deteriorated, including 16 tents in the month of June. Some 366 NFI packages have been distributed this year to PSN to provide soap and hygiene items, kitchen utensils, buckets, and blankets, along with 27 gas cylinders for cooking. As refugees are sometimes not permitted by the local landowners to collect firewood, providing an alternative source of fuel promotes peaceful co-existence.
- Some 289 PSN cases in Gulan Camp, Matun, Alishir (Terezayi), Gurbaz, Spera, and Tani districts have been identified by APA to be in need of NFIs, tents, and other forms of assistance. In Paktika, the Organization for Research and Community Development (ORCD) distributed 484 tents in the second quarter of 2017.

**EDUCATION**

45,000 school-age children (5-17 years of age) registered with UNHCR among the refugee population



12% school attendance rate

- The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is currently providing 4,261 students (including 1,816 girls) with primary education in the Gulan refugee camp and in Gurbuz, Matun, Mandozay, Shamal, and Tani districts of Khost province, ensuring minimal disruption to their learning and promoting the social development of refugee children during

displacement. NRC plans to distribute uniforms and learning kits, as well as 80 classroom kits, in the month of July; however, the number of students enrolled in NRC schools will be reduced to 3,600 in August owing to a lack of funding.

- UNHCR and CoAR provide secondary education to refugee students in Khost, along with teacher training and uniforms. An inter-school competition is planned for the month of July. Out of 569 students initially enrolled, however, only 283 students are now attending schools.
- There are currently more than 45,000 school-age children (5-17 years of age) registered with UNHCR among the refugee population. The low rates of school attendance (only 12% of registered school-age children) and challenges in maintaining student enrolments represent a critical need to mobilize additional resources, raise community awareness about the right to education, and empower parents with income-generating activities so as to reduce the reliance on child labour and other negative coping mechanisms.
- Access to education, particularly for girls, has significant protection dividends for the safety and well-being of refugee children and their ability to exercise economic, social, and cultural rights in the longer term. Integrating refugee children in Afghan government schools is not viable, due to limited classroom and teaching capacity, as well as differences in language and curriculum as compared to Pakistan schools.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Refugees in Khost and Paktika continue to rely on food assistance from the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to meet their immediate needs for food security in light of limited livelihood opportunities; however, WFP can provide food assistance for only 25,000 refugees, representing less than one third of the registered refugee population. Food rations have been reduced to reach a larger proportion of the refugee community. Food security remains the main concern of refugees raised in community consultations.



7,913 refugee families in Khost province received food assistance from the World Food Programme in June

In June 2017, the beneficiaries of food assistance included 190 acutely malnourished pregnant and lactating women, and 251 malnourished children under the Targeted Supplementary Food

Programme (TSFP), along with 333 pregnant and lactating women and 1,376 children in need of infant nutrition under the Blanket Supplementary Food Programme (BSFP) as a preventative measure. Through tri-partite agreements with UNHCR and WFP, the Afghan Planning Agency (APA) distributed 7,913 food packages in various districts of Khost including Gurbuz, Matun, Spera, Tani, Mandozayi, Shamal, Nadirshahkot, and Terezayi, as well as the Gulam camp; while in Paktika, ORCD distributed 657 food packages in the second quarter of 2017.



CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT

There is one refugee camp (Gulam camp), in Khost, accommodating more than 16,000 individuals. Camp management and coordination is led by UNHCR, with participation by NRC, SI, ACTD, APA, and CoAR. The inclusion of refugee women from four tribes in camp coordination committee meetings ensures their protection concerns are identified and addressed. The Gulam camp provides safe and dignified shelter and essential services such as primary health care, WASH, and education. Refugees are not obliged to remain within the camp limits, however, they have limited freedom of movement beyond Khost.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

UNHCR consults closely with provincial Afghan government authorities represented by the Department of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR), and at a national level, with a goal to gradually transfer the responsibility for refugee protection to the Government of Afghanistan.

Ensuring participation as a core protection principle, UNHCR and partners conduct *shura* meetings with tribal elders from the NWA refugee community, women, and youth, to design an inclusive and solutions-oriented protection strategy. UNHCR offices in Afghanistan and Pakistan coordinate to monitor the situation in NWA and the prospects of a safe and dignified return for refugees and IDPs, based on assessments by local partners. Some refugees are communicating directly with Pakistani authorities regarding the opening of the Ghulam Khan border-crossing and other matters related to their future return.

- The right of refugees to return to their place of origin in NWA depends on issuance of a *Watan* card by the Pakistan National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to allow access to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).
- In 2017, approximately 245 families have spontaneously returned to Pakistan where they must register at the Baka Khel IDP camp in Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; however, a majority of the refugees in Afghanistan are not willing to repatriate at present. Beyond concerns about the destruction of infrastructure, lack of services, unexploded ordnance and restricted freedom of movement in NWA, there is a significant trust deficit between the refugee population and the Government of Pakistan.

Working in Partnership

- UNHCR coordinates with the Department of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR) at provincial levels and with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) at a national level, noting that the responsibility for refugee protection primarily rests with the Government of Afghanistan, as a signatory to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. Through ongoing dialogue with MoRR, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and Ministry of Interior (MoI), UNHCR will continue advocacy and provide technical support to develop a government registration process for asylum-seekers and training in refugee status determination (RSD), subject to passage of a national Refugee Law, to maintain and enhance the asylum space for refugees in Afghanistan.

UNHCR Partners in Khost and Paktika

- UN World Food Programme (WFP)
- Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR)
- International Medical Corps (IMC)
- Health Net International (HNI)
- Afghanistan Center for Training and Development (ACTD)
- Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DaCAAR)
- Solidarités International (SI)
- Afghan Planning Agency (APA)
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- Mine Detection Center (MDC)
- HALO Trust
- Organization for Health Promotion and Management (OHPM)
- Organization for Research and Community Development (ORCD)

Financial Information

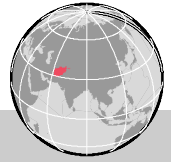
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Legend

B Refugee Camp

Number of individuals per district

