

Afghanistan

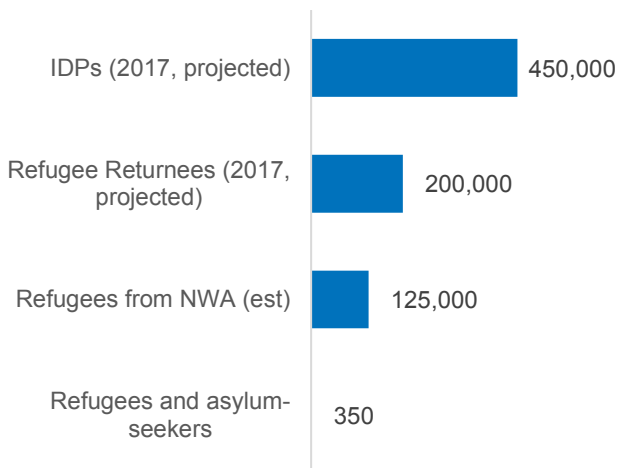
13 December 2017

As at 13 December, **58,750** refugees have returned to Afghanistan from neighboring and non-neighboring countries since 1 January 2017 (**57,409** Pakistan).

390,940 individuals have been newly displaced by conflict since 1 January 2017 and profiled by OCHA as internally displaced persons (IDPs).

87,247 Pakistani refugees from North-Waziristan Agency biometrically registered in Khost province and verified in Paktika province.

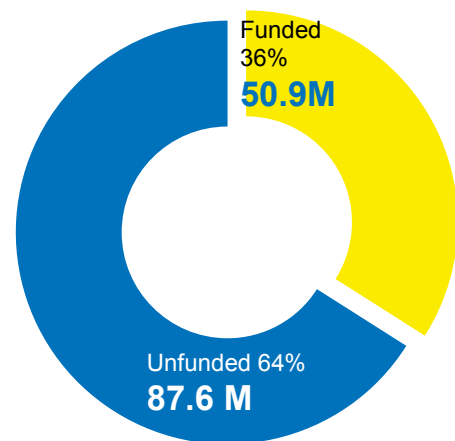
PROJECTED POPULATION OF CONCERN IN 2017



FUNDING (AS OF 5 DECEMBER 2017)

USD 137.6 M

requested for the Afghanistan operation



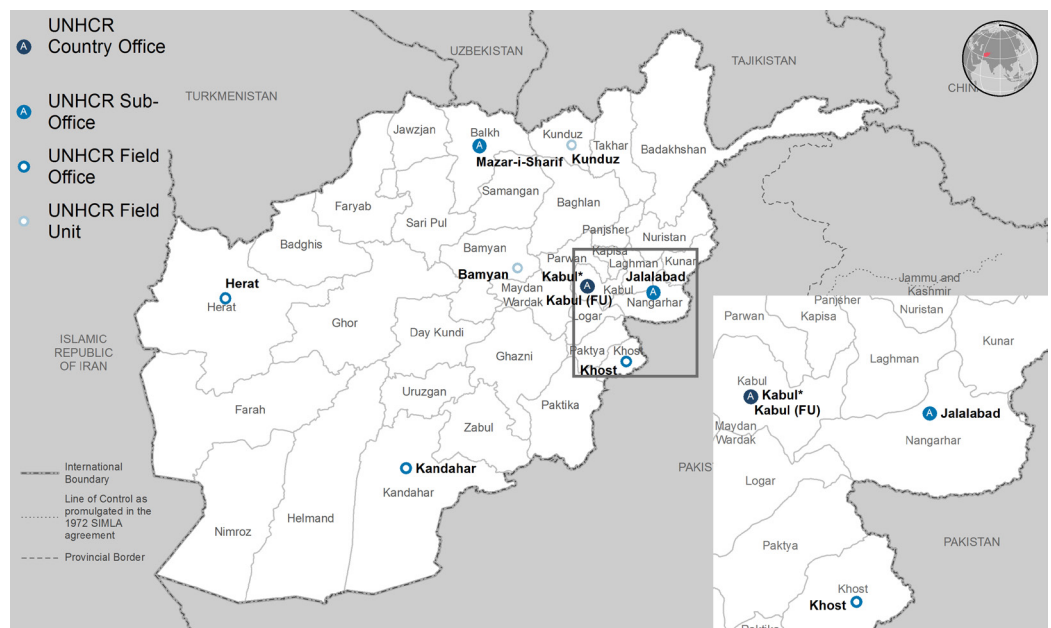
UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

205 National Staff
32 International Staff
15% female / 85% male

Offices:

- 1 Country Office in Kabul
- 2 Sub Offices in Jalalabad and Mazar
- 6 Field Offices in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Kunduz, Bamyan



Main Activities

Repatriation

UNHCR Facilitated Voluntary Repatriation (VolRep) Programme

The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) is the regional platform for Afghan refugees (Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan). Under the Tripartite Agreements with the respective Governments and UNHCR, voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan refugees is facilitated from Pakistan and Iran in conditions of safety and dignity. UNHCR's facilitated Voluntary Repatriation programme from Pakistan entered a three-month winter break from 1 December 2017 to 28 February 2018.

Cash Grant

Through protection monitoring, UNHCR has identified that unconditional cash grants to returnees are one of the most effective means to prevent, reduce, and respond to protection risks and vulnerabilities. The cash grant remains a key component of UNHCR's Protection Strategy to assist returnees to meet their transport to place of origin or destination and immediate humanitarian needs. UNHCR provides an average of US\$200 per person through its four Encashment Centres. From 1 January to early December, UNHCR assisted over 58,000 individuals. A study of the cash grant commissioned by UNHCR is anticipated to be completed in early 2018.

Management of Encashment Centres

UNHCR in coordination with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR/DoRR) and its implementing partners manages four Encashment Centres in Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat and Kabul. Besides cash grants, a range of services include basic health screening, referrals to emergency services and vaccinations for children (Ministry of Public Health supported by WHO and UNICEF), child friendly spaces (UNICEF), mine risk awareness (UNMAS and the Danish Demining Group (DDG)), educational information, referral for information and legal assistance to obtain civil documentation (*tazkira*) and a transit facility for overnight accommodation is provided by the Ministry of Public Health supported by WHO and UNICEF.

At the Centres, UNHCR also conducts household level interviews to assess the voluntary nature of return, return trends including reasons and protection risks in asylum and during return. During interviews persons with specific needs are identified by UNHCR and DoRR/MoRR and referred to service providers for assessment and potential assistance.



Refugee returnee family receive mine risk awareness briefing at the Kabul Encashment Centre ©UNHCR/ A. Mazurenko

Refugee Returnees and IDPs

Protection Monitoring

UNHCR systematically and regularly collects, verifies and analyses information over an extended period of time to identify violations of rights and protection risks for IDPs, returnees and host communities and inform effective responses. Protection risk analysis helps to inform the overall humanitarian response and uphold the Centrality of Protection. UNHCR's protection monitoring is the basis to plan interventions for persons with specific needs and community based interventions; and assists UNHCR and partners in overall programme planning and response, as well as supplies evidence for advocacy efforts.

UNHCR is using mobile data collection to enhance the analysis of the data collected through protection monitoring, its better categorisation and most importantly – systematisation of the evidence to inform advocacy

and interventions. Analysis of the collected data is key to its effective usage: UNHCR is in the process of developing a new analytical framework that will inform the key priorities and areas of work.

Returnee Monitoring

Returnee monitoring is an integral part of the protection monitoring system in Afghanistan: it consists of three components: monitoring upon arrival at the Encashment Centre; regular phone surveys of the representative sample when returnees settle in communities and monitoring of returnees using a community based approach:

UNHCR has also signed a project partnership agreement (PPA) on an inter-agency information centre (funded by UNOPS, with UNHCR, WFP support). The centre will refer concerns received through calls to UNHCR and appropriate agencies for follow-up. The centre will also provide a feedback mechanism to Government to strengthen transparency and address governance issues.

Persons with Specific Needs (PSN)

UNHCR's Persons with Specific Needs (PSN) programme provides targeted assistance to individuals with acute vulnerabilities and protection risks amongst registered returnees, refugees and conflict-induced IDPs. Beneficiary selection is based on vulnerabilities and need. The main objective is to mitigate and respond to individual emergency protection risks putting in place the self-reliance of each individual when designing a response.

- As of early December, 5,599 persons with specific needs have been provided with targeted protection assistance (in-kind or cash) in 2017.

Community based Protection Measures

UNHCR supports community based protection measures, aimed to reduce protection risks and vulnerabilities while fostering peaceful coexistence and reintegration of returnees and IDPs with local/host communities. These measures include: community support infrastructure facilities, in-cash and in-kind support for subsistence, promoting representation in community decision-making structures, and livelihoods/skills development for employment, particularly focused on women and youth.

The measures focus on community empowerment in line with the existing job market demand and include: (i) innovative approaches such as UNHCR's Global MADE51 for artisans' development and Graduation approach for the most vulnerable; and (ii) establishing/promoting linkages with the Afghanistan Government's National Priority Programmes, development agencies initiatives, and fostering partnerships with the local and international private sector to link to medium and longer term interventions for sustainability.

- In 2017, 23 high return/displacement communities were targeted with community protection measures, which has benefitted 80,000 families including 10,000 host families.

Winterisation

UNHCR as lead Agency of the Emergency Shelter/NFI Cluster, participates in year-end inter-agency efforts to address seasonal vulnerability. UNHCR has targeted 53,586 households (approx. 375,100 individuals) in all 34 provinces with unconditional cash assistance (approximately US\$200). The distribution of cash supports local markets, as beneficiaries purchased items such as heating fuel, warm clothing, household goods, and food. Winter blankets and clothes (from UNIQLO) will additionally be distributed for the identified most vulnerable families.

- As of early December, UNHCR and partners have distributed winter assistance to a total of 29,317 families (55 per cent of the total target in the country).

Protection Cluster and Emergency Shelter/Non Food Items Cluster

UNHCR's presence and active involvement in the inter-agency humanitarian coordination mechanisms and leadership of the Protection Cluster (including co-leadership of the Housing, Land and Property Task Force) and the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES/NFI) Cluster remains crucial to promote efficiency and responsiveness of coordination and response.

- In 2017, 128,188 persons received NFIs following emergency assessments as of early December.

Efforts are directed towards action oriented and cross cutting coordination. To that aim, UNHCR is leading a review process of protection priorities for Afghanistan within the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), to refocus on the protection of civilians and displacement related protection concerns, as well as mobilizing relevant stakeholders for longer term interventions to strengthen the protective environment. UNHCR is also reinforcing

coordination between regional and national levels by documenting protection concerns and engaging in advocacy to ensure response.

UNHCR promotes protection mainstreaming analysis in all sectors of the Humanitarian Response Plan, to ensure the protection of civilians remains the first priority given the increasing scale, complexity, and geographical scope of the conflict in Afghanistan and rising civilian casualties. In light of this, UNHCR is working closely with UNAMA and UNMAS to prevent risks related to IED/Mine/UXO as well as to promote respect of International Humanitarian Law by parties to the conflict.

Information Management

UNHCR is working to harmonize data and strengthen information management to enhance protection outcomes. UNHCR is committed to conducting joint needs assessments and analysis together with other partners and has recently started using mobile data collection to increase the efficiency of the teams on the ground, reduce errors and save time. UNHCR is also working with partners to revise its protection and return monitoring systems by using modern technologies for data collection and analysis, and lessons learned from other countries. Asking the right questions at the right time to inform the programmes and create the evidence required for targeted advocacy is the main goal of the information management unit.

Collaboration with the World Bank on research has moved forward significantly since signing the data sharing agreement that enables in-depth reviews of the data collected by both agencies. UNHCR is committed to sharing data and reports with the wider humanitarian community in a timely manner: deployment of the Operational Data Portal for Afghanistan demonstrates this in practice and allows partners to access most recent reports, updates, maps and datasets. Through an inclusive and participatory approach, UNHCR engages with Persons of Concern to UNHCR to generate data and evidence-based results to demonstrate the impact of UNHCR programmes, identify gaps for strategic direction and programming, and inform the wider humanitarian community.

Durable Solutions

Tripartite Commission and Quadripartite Steering Committee meetings

The **29th Tripartite Commission** (Afghanistan, Pakistan and UNHCR) and **20th Tripartite Commission meetings** (Afghanistan, Iran and UNHCR) – hosted by the Government of Afghanistan – took place on 30 November 2017 in Istanbul. All parties reaffirmed their commitment to work together to ensure the voluntary return of Afghan refugees in safety and dignity, and to joint resource mobilisation to support solutions and host communities in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The **5th Quadripartite Steering Committee meeting** (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and UNHCR) – hosted by the Government of Afghanistan – also took place on 1 December 2017 in Istanbul. The Governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and UNHCR reaffirmed the significance and relevant of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

to continue to implement reintegration and lasting solutions for Afghan refugees in the region and committed to a continuation of the SSAR. The SSAR in 2018-19 will particularly focus on enhancing self-reliance of refugees and returnees and promoting peaceful co-existence of Afghan refugees and their host communities, and advocating for greater, more equitable and predictable responsibility sharing by the international community including strengthened partnership with development stakeholders.

DiREC and national policy framework support

As an active member of the DiREC Technical and Finance Working Groups and co-chair of the DiREC Policy Working Group, UNHCR supports the GoIRA to implement the Policy Framework for Return and Displacement and the related national Action Plan and provincial Action Plans. UNHCR advocates with Government ministries



Afghan Minister Balkhi of Refugees and Repatriation, Pakistani Minister Baloch of SAFRON and Hossein Zolfageri, Iranian Deputy Minister and Indrika Ratwatte, UNHCR Director of Asia Pacific Bureau at the Quadripartite Commission meeting in Istanbul ©2017

and development actors for the needs of returnees and IDPs in national policy frameworks, development plans (Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF)) and priority programmes and mainstreaming of protection issues. UNHCR also advocates for the implementation of the IDP Policy (2013) and Policy Framework for Return and Displacement (2016). UNHCR has been involved in Land issues since 2002 and co-chairs the Housing Land and Property (HLP) Taskforce with IOM and UN Habitat. UNHCR has provided technical support to develop the technical procedures including the beneficiary selection process (Presidential Decree replacing PD104), which was discussed in the Policy Working Group, which is co-chaired by UNHCR as part of the DiREC.

The Humanitarian and Development Nexus

UNHCR works to strengthen the link between humanitarian and development through partnerships with development actors (mainly the World Bank) and the private sector to ensure access to documentation, livelihoods and essential services and to facilitate the representation of women in community decision making. In November 2017, UNHCR and the World Bank Group signed a data sharing agreement to better support reintegration of Afghan refugee returnees through strengthened data collection and analysis.

Herat and Jalalabad

To implement policy into action, UNHCR spearheaded two inter-agency initiatives on durable solutions in Herat and Nangarhar provinces with national and provincial ministries and Agencies (UNICEF, WHO, IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat, WFP and FAO). These initiatives translate national plans into provincial planning and joint programming in areas of high return and displacement. In Herat UNHCR and partners contributed with construction of shelter, a clinic and a school, in Jalalabad UNHCR and partners, with line departments and Agencies, are conducting a joint market assessment and designing sustainable livelihoods programmes through strengthened partnerships with development actors and the private sector.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Khost and Paktika

Afghanistan is hosting Pakistani refugees who fled North Waziristan Agency in 2014 in Khost and Paktika. UNHCR has completed biometric registration in Khost and verification in Paktika where access is limited due to insecurity. Some refugees have been reluctant to share biometric information due to cultural reasons and have not yet registered. The total population is estimated to be approximately 100,000.

UNHCR leads camp management and coordination in Gulan refugee camp which hosts over 17,000 Pakistani refugees but many have settled in host communities and benefit from UNHCR and partner's community based protection measures. With the emergency phase of displacement over, UNHCR is transitioning to a protection strategy built on targeted assistance to persons with specific needs and designed to build capacity, self-reliance and resilience, while coordinating with partners and advocating with donors to ensure continuity of essential services for the refugee population; including basic health care, WASH, and education among others.



Entrance to Gulan refugee camp in Khost UNHCR/A. Ghotge



Shura meeting with Pakistani refugee elders in Khost ©UNHCR/ A. Ghotge

Urban Refugees and Asylum Seekers

UNHCR prioritizes interim solutions for urban asylum-seekers and refugees pending the passage of a national refugee law and implementation of a national asylum framework. UNHCR conducts registration and, in some cases, refugee status determination (RSD), as a protection tool. Local integration is currently unattainable for legal, social, economic and other reasons, and resettlement opportunities are scarce, while the nature of certain refugee claims will continue to prevent their return to the country of origin in conditions of safety and dignity. The provision of targeted subsistence allowance and assistance to PSNs (cash-based and in-kind) aims to reduce their vulnerability. Through advocacy with the Government of Afghanistan, UNHCR mitigates protection risks, including detention and refoulement and has developed agreements with line ministries to ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees have access to basic services such as education and health care.

Working with Partners and Coordination

- UNHCR's direct counterpart in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) is the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR). UNHCR is also working with numerous line ministries.
- Within the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and UN Country Team (UNCT), UNHCR is working with UN agencies. UNHCR also works with international and national NGOs, the World Bank and the private sector.
- UNHCR is part of the Tripartite/Quadrupartite mechanisms established with the Governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran to plan coordinate and undertake repatriation of Afghan refugees and the implementation of the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).
- In line with the regional framework of the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR is an active member of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) Displacement and Return Executive Committee (DiREC), co-chairs the related Policy Working Group, is a member of the Technical and Finance Working Groups, and co-chairs the Housing Land and Property Taskforce with IOM and UN Habitat.
- UNHCR advocates and works with development actors to support the Government's policies and national priority programmes for interim and longer term solutions.
- UNHCR has signed a data sharing agreement with World Bank in 2017 to enhance joint analysis and foster future research about the situation of returnees. UNHCR has also signed a data-sharing agreement with WFP in 2017 to facilitate the provision of food assistance to vulnerable refugee returnees by WFP until they are included in national social services. Additionally, UNHCR is partnering with WFP and UNOPS on an inter-agency Information Centre which is being established and is aimed at increasing communication with affected people.
- UNHCR works with 18 national and 10 international partners to implement programmes across the country.
- UNHCR leads the Protection and the Emergency Shelter and NFI Clusters. The two Clusters are co-chaired: Protection with NRC and ES/NFI Cluster with IOM.
- UNHCR is co-leading the Durable Solutions Working Group with the Government, at the national and sub-national levels to strengthen the links between humanitarian and development for reintegration of returnees and IDPs.
- UNHCR Afghanistan works closely with UNHCR Iran and Pakistan for a regional approach to anticipate challenges and align efforts including advocacy and fundraising and share best practices and lessons learned.
- UNHCR also leads coordination of the Pakistani refugee response in Khost and Paktika provinces.
- UNHCR maintains close relationships with the donor community through donor briefings, consultations and regular dialogue and coordinating visits, among others.

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed regionally and directly (5/12/2017).

Algeria | Australia | Austria | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Canada | China | Chile | Costa Rica | Denmark | Estonia | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Holy See | Iceland | Indonesia | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Korea | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Morocco | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Russia | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Spain | Sri Lanka | Sweden | Switzerland | Thailand | Turkey | UN Central Emergency Response Fund | UNIQLO | United Kingdom | United Arab Emirates | United States of America | Uruguay | Zambia | Private Donors |

1. All financial information contained in this update is indicative and does not constitute official UNHCR financial reporting.
2. Unrestricted and regional funds mentioned above include all sub-regional and regional contributions worldwide.

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Operational data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/afg>