

Pakistan

30 April 2020

***28** registered refugees who returned to Afghanistan between 1 January – 30 April 2020

5,904 Afghan refugees whose births were registered between 1 January – 30 April 2020

8,707 Afghan refugees who have received legal assistance between 1 January – 30 April 2020

Personal protective equipment (PPEs) was provided to the health workers in **54** refugee villages to protect themselves from pandemic

2,145 individuals (Afghan refugees and Pakistanis) received livelihood assistance



UNHCR delivers housing units and Rubbhall to support quarantine facilities in Balochistan © UNHCR/H. Karim

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin	Total persons of concern
Afghan refugees with proof of registration (PoR) cards	1,421,946
Afghan mandate refugees (without PoR cards)	3,015
Somalia (refugees)	182
Others (refugees)	342
Asylum-seekers	9,715

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff

156 national staff

36 international staff

Offices

One Country Office in Islamabad

Two Sub-Offices in Peshawar and Quetta

Presence in Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat and Loralai



UNHCR and its partners reach out to every Afghan refugee, including children, to ensure that the best hygiene practices are adopted. © UNHCR

* The voluntary repatriation process was suspended on 30 November 2019 for the winter break and resumed from 2 March 2020. It was suspended again on 17 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan. Please refer to the UNHCR Afghanistan Situation Data Portal and the UNHCR Pakistan website for the latest updates.

Working with partners

- UNHCR collaborates closely with the Government of Pakistan. It works jointly with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), as well as the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the Commissionerates for Afghan Refugees at the provincial level.
- UNHCR partners with a range of national and international non-governmental organizations to provide protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as collaborates with non-implementing partners, such as the World Bank, sister UN agencies and private sector partners.

Main activities

Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

- The regional multi-year Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) provides a framework for cooperation between humanitarian and development actors to address the needs of Afghan refugees and the communities that host them. It supports the pursuit of durable solutions, as well as youth empowerment through education, the development of vocational skills and livelihoods training. The SSAR was previously extended until 2021.
- Aligned with the SSAR, a dedicated SSAR Support Platform was launched on 16 December 2019, one day prior to the Global Refugee Forum. The platform seeks to achieve: (i) enhanced international solidarity and burden-sharing for the Afghan refugee situation, resulting in stronger political and financial commitments to achieve solutions; (ii) additional investments and expanded partnerships for coherent humanitarian and development responses that increase absorption capacity for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, while easing the burden on host communities in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan and (iii) sustained visibility for the Afghan situation by linking the SSAR to the Global Compact on Refugees, enabling the sharing of regional good practices and lessons learned, showcasing the positive contributions of refugees to their host country and community and advocating for the implementation in the subregion of unassigned pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum.

Protection and durable solutions

- **Voluntary repatriation:** UNHCR usually operates two Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Pakistan where refugees wishing to repatriate to Afghanistan must deregister. From November to the end of February, voluntary repatriation was temporarily suspended during the winter months. On 2 March 2020, UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme resumed, but it was suspended until further notice on 17 March due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The centres therefore remained closed during the reporting period.
- **Legal assistance:** UNHCR operates nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas. Eight of these centres are run by UNHCR's partner, SHARP. The remaining centre is run by another partner, SEHER.
- In April 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of 1,871 persons of concern. During the month, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for 32 arrested/detained persons of concern and secured the release of all. In most cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested persons of concern before they were formally charged by law enforcement. Also, the majority were released within 24 hours. In addition, ALAC partners represented in court 26 persons of concern who had been charged under the Foreigners Act (dealing with the unauthorized stay of foreigners) and other preventive laws (allowing preventive detention of persons acting in a manner prejudicial to the

integrity, security and defence of the country and public order). These interventions resulted in court-ordered releases.

- During the reporting period, partner staff provided individual legal counselling to 131 persons of concern who visited the ALACs, as well as legal advice to 1,300 persons of concern through the ALAC helplines. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modification, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) information, and the asylum application process were the major areas requiring assistance during the reporting period. Out-of-court legal assistance was also provided to 329 persons of concern, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.
- UNHCR and ALAC staff organized a total of six legal camps and *shura* meetings, reaching 27 people. All legal sessions were held in refugee villages. Through these legal sessions, refugees shared various issues affecting their communities. UNHCR partner staff informed refugees of free legal aid available and UNHCR helpline services.
- Fewer training sessions of law enforcement personnel as part of advocacy under the legal aid programme have been held due to COVID-19 containment measures implemented by the Government of Pakistan. Such measures have also had an impact on awareness sessions on topics like legal services available to refugees.
- On communicating with communities, ALAC teams have been calling refugee community representatives to inform them about the emerging situation in the wake of COVID-19. ALAC teams made 1098 calls to the communities in the AoR of COI during the month of April. Communities were advised to comply with orders from the local and provincial administrations. ALAC teams have been encouraged to maintain a proactive approach throughout the situation and share daily SITREPs as per practice.

In April:

- *A total of 1,871 individuals received legal assistance;*
- *32 individuals were arrested/detained and all were released;*
- *26 individuals were provided with court representation;*
- *131 individuals received individual legal counselling; and*
- *1,300 people were assisted through ALAC helplines.*

Community-based protection

- The Protection Unit in Peshawar conducted a virtual training workshop on emergency referral pathways and guidelines for remote sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) case management for 14 partner staff from the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR)/Community Development Unit (CDU) and SHARP. UNHCR staff working on and providing specialized services to child protection cases, SGBV survivors and persons with specific needs also participated. Plans are under way to organize similar training for the provincial government actors, including women police and staff of the Department of Social Welfare. These officials are part of the updated referral pathway.
- The CBP team in Quetta conducted an orientation session, attended by 447 Outreach Volunteers (OVs) and Community Committees (CCs), including refugee leaders, on the criteria and data collection tools for COVID-19 emergency cash assistance for refugees. These sessions were conducted via telephone and in person while maintaining the precautionary measures of social distancing. To support the data collection exercise and information dissemination, PPE items were distributed amongst all the OVs and CC members.
- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR continued to share the key messages on COVID-19 developed by the Government of Pakistan. This information is mainly shared either by telephone or through WhatsApp groups comprising Outreach Volunteers, community mobilizers and community elders. The Outreach Volunteers and community mobilizers are playing an active role in sharing queries and information in the WhatsApp group regarding the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19, referrals and services available.

- A women Outreach Volunteers in Peshawar distributed three sewing machines and tool kits to vulnerable female-headed households in an urban cluster to support them in dealing with psychosocial problems associated with the current lockdown and earn a living from sewing clothes.
- The Community-Based Protection team in Islamabad distributed four core relief item kits to Afghan refugee families affected by heavy rains.

Education

- All UNHCR-supported schools in refugee villages were closed in March until mid-July as per the directives of the Government of Pakistan. UNHCR is exploring alternative learning arrangements to ensure education is not disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Some 413 DAFI scholars continue to be supported by UNHCR in 2020.

Health

- In Balochistan, UNHCR distributed 4,460 packages of soaps and sanitary items in the refugee villages situated in the province of Balochistan in the month of April 2020. UNHCR health partner, Taraqi Foundation, completed the distribution of awareness-raising materials, PPEs and water and sanitation supplies to health facilities. Another UNHCR partner also conducted 16 awareness-raising small group sessions for to total of 294 individuals in the refugee villages of Balochistan on COVID-19 prevention and response.
- In the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UNHCR delivered chlorine tablets and tissue rolls to health partners for use in health facilities for disinfection. A total of 250 kilograms of chlorine and 8,000 tissue rolls were provided. In addition, partners were given PPEs: 95 face masks, 22,275 surgical masks, 7,425 gloves (small size), 7,425 gloves (medium size), 14,850 gloves (large size) and 30 infrared thermometers.
- In line with the UN Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) strategy, 90,000 (A3) brochures and 4,000 stickers with messages about protection from COVID-19 and stigma reduction associated with the illness were placed in key public areas around refugee villages like health facilities, mosques, general stores and other prominent places.
- Imams have been involved in disseminating targeted preventative messages to their communities, including in mosques, in some of the refugee villages in the District of Hangu and Dir. Mass awareness campaigns conducted by health workers using loudspeakers were also conducted.

Livelihoods

- UNHCR's livelihood activities with government entities and private sectors were on hold due to the COVID19 pandemic. During the reporting period, the suspended activities were the following:
 - ✓ UNHCR-NAVTTTC: Skills development project (vocational skill training, internships and tool kit distribution);
 - ✓ UNHCR-PPAF: Poverty graduation project (all the activities of this project are the field level);
 - ✓ MADE51-Agreement on hold with the international NGO, CONCERN;
 - ✓ Agreement/Contract with Sharper/FNKAsia.
- In view of the provision of cash assistance to some 36,000 of the most vulnerable refugee households during the COVID-19 emergency, UNHCR liaised with the Pakistan Post Office to establish a partnership for transferring cash through its urgent money order service.

Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme

- Since 2009, UNHCR, together with the Government of Pakistan, has implemented the RAHA programme, an initiative which supports the implementation of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. Through RAHA, a wide variety of projects have been carried out in the sectors of education, health, livelihoods, infrastructure, water, sanitation and social protection. In 2019, the RAHA programme marked 10 years. During this decade, RAHA supported more than 4,250 projects which aligned with UNHCR's livelihoods, education and health strategies, all aiming to ensure greater inclusion of Afghan refugees in public systems and structures.
 - All the necessary groundwork has been completed for the implementation of the 15 projects in 2020, but a delay in implementation was expected due to COVID-19.
- *In total, 4,273 projects have been completed since 2009.*
 - *12.4 million beneficiaries in the projects implemented in 47 districts of Pakistan.*
 - *14 projects in 2019.*
 - *15 projects in 2020.*

External / donors relations

Earmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 30 April 2020)¹

Canada | Denmark | European Union | IRTHI-NAMA Women Advancement Establishment | Japan | Switzerland | United Nations Development Programme | United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS | United States of America | Miscellaneous private donors

Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 30 April 2020)²

Denmark | Germany | Norway | Netherlands | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | Private donors in Spain | Private donors Korea

CONTACTS

Marie-Claude Poirier, External Relations Officer

poirier@unhcr.org, Tel: +92 51-2600860, Mobile : +92 300-0540320

Uzma Irum, External Relations Associate

irum@unhcr.org, Tel: +92 51-2600860, Mobile: +92 322-5088668

LINKS

Website: <http://unhcrpk.org>

Twitter: [@UNHCRPakistan](https://twitter.com/UNHCRPakistan)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UNHCR-Pakistan>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/unhcrpakistan/>

Data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/pak>

¹ Contributions to Pakistan are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.

² Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Only donors who have contributed \$10 million or more are indicated.

Pakistan: UNHCR Presence 2020

