

KEY DISPLACEMENT FIGURES


3.25M

 Estimated internally displaced persons (IDPs) by conflict within Afghanistan as of 31 December 2022¹

32,410

 new conflict induced IDPs between 10 April to 13 Sep. 2022 (ongoing verification)²


52,160

Refugees in Afghanistan as of 31 December 2022


1,600

IDP returnees recorded in 2023


5,836

Refugee returns to Afghanistan in 2023


5.2M

Refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan in neighbouring countries as of 31 December 2022


1.6M

 Afghan new arrivals to neighbouring Countries since August 2021³

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 20 June, UNHCR operations in the region hosted various events to celebrate World Refugee Day. This year's theme – "Hope away from Home" – focused on solutions for refugees, the power of inclusion, and importance of compassion towards those forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, or natural disasters. [In Afghanistan](#), UNHCR worked closely with partners to host art exhibitions, poetry recitals, and various games across several regions, including Gardez, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Bamiyan and Kund. In Iran's Fars and Khorasan Razavi provinces and Semnan refugee settlement, UNHCR, together with the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, [organized](#) handicraft bazaars and live music performances by Afghan refugees. [In Pakistan](#), exhibitions showcasing Afghan art, music, literature and food were held in Peshawar and Quetta. In Turkmenistan, UNHCR delivered a guest lecture to students from the International University for Humanities and Development, the Turkmen State University, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Institute of International Relations in Ashgabat on international protection and the needs of people forced to flee. In Tajikistan, UNHCR jointly commemorated World Refugee Day as well as the operation's 30th anniversary with a fashion show by refugee designers, an art exhibition and live music performances. In Bangkok, UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific launched a campaign called "Straight From My Art" – a movement aimed at spotlighting, mobilizing and empowering refugee artists to tell their stories. The Bureau also [screened a short video](#) produced by the EU and UNHCR Iran about art's transformative impact on a young Afghan refugee in Iran.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR published its latest [Regional Trends report](#). This report provides key statistical trends and official statistics on refugees, people in refugee-like situations, asylum-seekers, stateless people, internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees or others of concern to UNHCR in the Asia and the Pacific region. By the end of 2022, there were 14.3 million people who were forcibly displaced, stateless, returnees or others of concern – a 26 per cent increase from 2021. The region hosts 13 per cent of the global total population UNHCR protects and/or assists (14.3 million out of 112.6 million). The release of the Regional Trends report follows the publication of UNHCR's flagship [Global Trends report](#) in June.
- UNHCR officially [completed its cash assistance programme](#) in Pakistan targeting over 1 million registered Afghan refugees who were impacted by the prolonged difficult economic situation in the aftermath of last year's devastating floods. \$17.8 million was disbursed via one-off cash grants of up to PKR 25,000 (approximately \$100) to 250,000 Afghan refugee households. Cash transfers are crucial tools which provide much-needed assistance in contexts of insecurity and fragility and other complex and protracted situations. UNHCR in the Asia and the Pacific region is working to [expand the use and quality of cash-based interventions](#) to better support protection and solution outcomes – in line with [UNHCR's Policy on CBIs \(2022 – 2026\)](#).

- The [2023 Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\)](#) was revised in view of the dynamic operating context and worsening protection situation. In March, the HRP initially appealed for \$4.6 billion to reach 23.7 million vulnerable Afghans. Since then, the estimated number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased to 28.8 million. Despite the challenging circumstances, humanitarian partners have been able to reach over 17.3 million people in the first five months of the year. Considering the assistance already delivered and planned response for the second half of 2023, humanitarian partners require \$2.26 billion in new funds to reach 22.3 million people in the revised plan between June and December 2023.
- On 3 July, the UN in Afghanistan issued its [Strategic Framework for Afghanistan 2023–2025](#), outlining its priorities in support of the Afghan people. The Strategic Framework articulates the UN's approach to addressing basic human needs in Afghanistan, prioritizing the needs and rights of those most vulnerable, including women and girls, children and youth, IDPs, returnees, refugees, and ethnic and religious minorities. The UN Strategic Framework was developed in close consultation with Member States, partners, and various stakeholders.



AFGHANISTAN

- UNHCR has been able to provide the following assistance in Afghanistan in 2023:



- UNHCR and partners reached an estimated 412,700 individuals with emergency assistance in 34 out of 34 provinces countrywide as of end-May. Of the total reached, 187,900 were supported with cash assistance while 224,800 were reached with in-kind and other individual assistance. 133,900 individuals were also assessed while 64,900 potentially benefited from activities in the Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs). Other assistance ranged from protection, core relief items (CRIs) as well as shelter and seasonal support.

- UNHCR joined the newly appointed UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General – Political, Markus Potzel, on a one-day visit to Qarabagh district in Kabul province. The delegation visited a healthcare centre and an integrated primary and secondary school constructed by UNHCR. In meetings with de facto officials, the delegation stressed the importance of upholding the rights of women and girls and ensuring their meaningful inclusion and participation in society.



An Afghan refugee woman receiving cash assistance in Quetta. ©UNHCR Pakistan

- From 25 to 27 June, Japan's Ambassador to Afghanistan, Takashi Okada, visited several UNHCR projects supported by the People of Japan in Bamyan Province, including Dash-e-Essa Khan School, a community centre in Azdhar Valley and a micro hydropower station in Yakawalang. The Ambassador also visited other projects supported by UNESCO and UN Women.

REGIONAL

- On 8 June, UNHCR chaired the first Refugee Consultative Forum in Islamabad with the participation of sector coordinators from FAO, IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, and WFP. The objective of the meeting was to take stock of the progress of the [2023 Afghanistan Situation Refugee Response Plan](#). During the meeting, the importance of maintaining strong coordination was emphasised as well as mitigating the current challenges Afghan refugees and host communities face.
- To support preparedness following the start of Pakistan's monsoon season, UNHCR conducted monitoring visits to flood-affected areas in Sindh province, including Tehsil Sehwin, Jamshoro district, and relief camps in Hyderabad's Tatta and Sajawal districts. UNHCR is monitoring the situation in all provinces, including Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, and liaising with the local authorities to coordinate any response if needed. In 2022, UNHCR launched a [Supplementary Appeal](#) calling for \$66 million to assist more than 650,000 refugees and members of their host communities who were affected by the catastrophic flooding.

CROSS BORDER SITUATION

- To date, some 1,600 IDPs have returned to their places of origin. In 2021 and 2022, over 1.37 million IDPs returned to their places of origin: approximately 1.12 million IDPs returned in 2021 and 254,000 in 2022. The source of these figures are the 363,000 household-level rapid assessments conducted by UNHCR and partners since 10 October 2021 until 1 July 2023. These figures are expected to increase retroactively due to ongoing assessments and considered indicative rather than the overall statistical data of IDP returnees in Afghanistan. Figures may also be underestimated due to the recent downscaling of assessments undertaken in 2023.

- In 2023, 5,836 Afghan refugees voluntarily returned to Afghanistan (94 per cent from Pakistan, 5 per cent from Iran and 1 per cent from other countries). This is five times higher than the number of returns in 2022 during a similar period. To date, UNHCR has provided some \$2.23 million in cash assistance to returnees in Encashment Centres.
- As part of its support to refugees voluntarily returning home from countries of asylum, UNHCR offers a voluntary repatriation package consisting of a one-off cash grant of \$375 to cover transportation and immediate needs upon arrival. In 2023, UNHCR provided some \$1.44 million in cash assistance to returnees in Encashment Centres. Returning refugees also receive basic health care and overnight accommodation (when needed) as well as other services provided by partners present in each Encashment Centre. In the medium to long term, UNHCR and partners continue to support returnees in the 80 PARRs with services such as shelter, education, health, energy, livelihoods, and community infrastructure.

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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