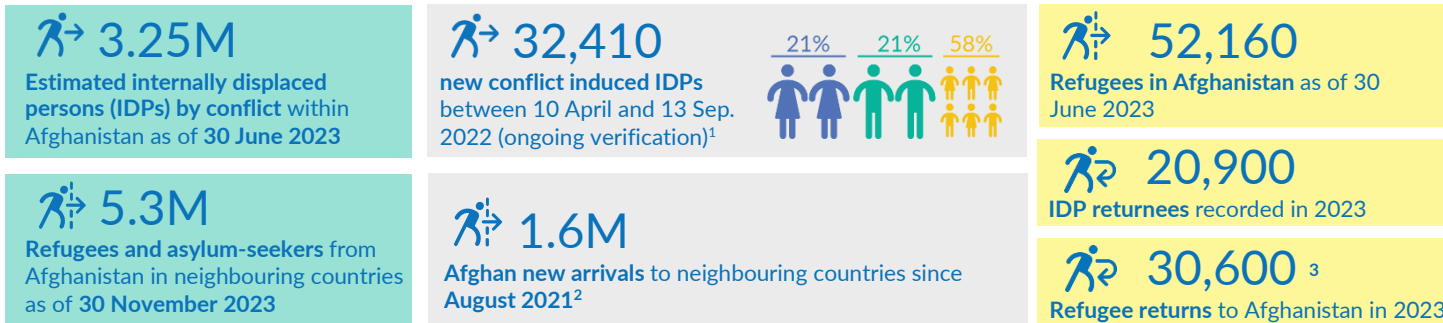


KEY DISPLACEMENT FIGURES



HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR and partners in Afghanistan and Pakistan continued to support the cross-border response following the 3 October [announcement](#) by the Government of Pakistan to return undocumented foreigners residing in the country to Afghanistan from 1 November.⁴ Some 428,300 people returned to Afghanistan between 15 September and 30 November. Mass arrivals back to Afghanistan are adding to the ongoing humanitarian crisis as winter temperatures start to dip – in some locations the minimum already reaching -4°C. Many Afghan returnees are vulnerable, including women and children, who could lose their lives in a harsh winter if left without adequate shelter. For more information on the response, please see the latest [CORE Update](#) and [External Update](#).
- Deportations from Iran and Pakistan continue to be reported. Based on information gathered by UNHCR, some 631,000 Afghans were deported from Iran between January and November 2023. In Pakistan, over 30,700 Afghans were deported between January and November, with 25,862 Afghans deported between 15 September to 30 November. For the latest information, please see the latest [UNHCR-IOM Flash Update](#). UNHCR's [advisory against forced returns to Afghanistan](#) – issued in August 2021 and re-affirmed in February 2023 – continues to remain in effect.
- In Pakistan, the caretaker Government of Pakistan retroactively extended the validity of registration cards for Afghan Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders until 31 December 2023. This follows the two-year extension of PoR cards which ended on 30 June 2023. Although the government has provided assurances that PoR and Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders are exempted from the current phase of the repatriation plan, many Afghans remain anxious. In the meantime, UNHCR has accelerated advocacy efforts with the authorities, calling for a minimum of one year extension from 1 January 2024.
- As part of UNHCR's [response](#) to scale up assistance to those affected by the tragic earthquakes in Afghanistan, various core relief items (CRIs) were distributed to over 2,000 families from 77 villages in Herat. These included some 5,100 blankets, 3,600 family tents, 3,500 plastic tarpaulins, 3,600 metallic buckets, 1,900 gas cookers, 3,600 jerrycans, 3,500 solar lamps, 1,800 kitchen sets, 1,300 traditional heaters as well as 9,900 pieces of laundry soap and 3,600 sanitary materials. In addition, over 8,700 people were reached via awareness raising on the available assistance and services in Injil, Zindajan, Ghoriyan, Karukh, Koshk Rabat Sangi, Gulran and Guzara districts while some 330 individuals received psychosocial support in Herat city and Zindajan and Koshk Rabat Sangi districts. UNHCR continues to support the earthquake response led and coordinated by the UN Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator alongside other humanitarian agencies.

Publishing date: 21 December 2023 | Author: UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP).

¹ Source: OCHA - <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/idps>

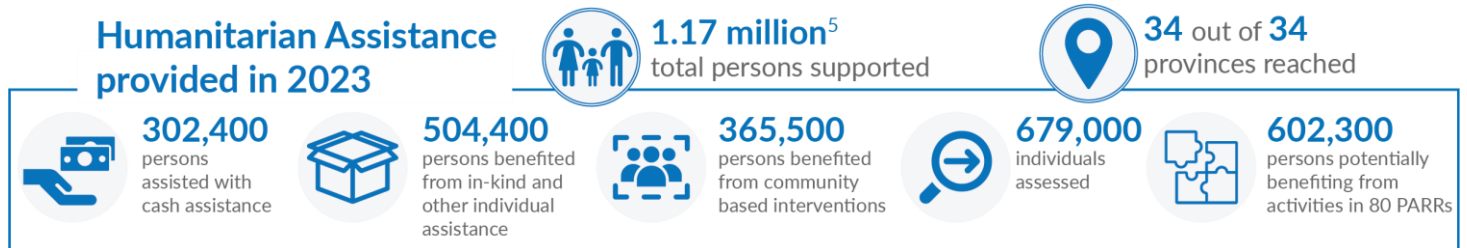
² In Iran, UNHCR is using an average figure according to various government estimates and continues to follow-up with authorities to receive updated and disaggregated data as well as an estimate of how many presently remain in Iran. Of the average 1 million new arrivals since August 2021, some 70,000 Afghans have approached UNHCR. Of the 600,000 new arrivals reported by the Government of Pakistan, some 303,000 have approached UNHCR. According to Government of Uzbekistan sources, some 13,020 Afghan citizens arrived in the country since January 2021. The majority arrived before August 15 with valid visas issued by the Uzbek consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif.

³ As of 31 October 2023.

⁴ An umbrella term that includes all returns including deportations, assisted VolRep and other returns of Afghans of all statuses such as PoR cardholders, ACC holders, and the undocumented. The Government of Pakistan has subsequently announced that Afghan Citizen Cardholders (ACC) and Proof of Registration (PoR) cardholders are exempted. In November, the validity of PoR cards was retroactively extended to 31 December 2023.

- On 6 November, UNHCR Pakistan hosted a technical meeting for [the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees \(SSAR\) Core Group+](#) members chaired by the Netherlands. Discussions touched on Core Group+ members' advocacy efforts and strategic outreach in their respective capitals on the current repatriation plan.

AFGHANISTAN



- UNHCR and partners reached an estimated 1.17 million individuals with emergency assistance in 34 out of 34 provinces countrywide as of end-November. Of the total reached, 302,400 were supported with cash assistance while 504,400 were reached with in-kind and other individual assistance. 679,000 individuals were also assessed while 602,300 potentially benefited from activities in the priority areas of return and reintegration (PARRs). Other assistance ranged from protection, CRIs as well as shelter and seasonal support.
- Following the introduction of the returnee registration tool for those who did not transit through the voluntary repatriation centres (VRCs) in Pakistan, UNHCR has started biometrically enrolling and providing cash assistance to arrivals in the Encashment Centres in Kandahar, Jalalabad, and Kabul. Most recipients are Afghans in possession of PoR cards (including nuclear family members), protection referrals and those with slips/asylum-seeker certificates issued by UNHCR. As of 30 November, 21,100 individuals received cash assistance.
- On 1 November, UNHCR Afghanistan handed over two healthcare centres in Logar province. The Surkhbab Comprehensive Health Centre in the Mohammad Agha PARR – home to 53,479 returnees and 4,388 IDPs – is expected to support around 15,000 people. Chawni Basic Health Centre – located in Pul-e-Alam PARR and home to 40,921 returnees and 30,509 IDPs – is expected to benefit around 10,000 people. This support is part of efforts by UNHCR to bolster healthcare available to returnees via a renewed focus on reproductive health, preventative health, mental health, and other outpatient services.
- Denmark, Finland and the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan carried out a joint visit to Afghanistan in November. The delegation visited the Kabul Encashment Center, where they familiarized themselves with the current repatriation exercise, support provided to returnees and the PARRs.

REGIONAL

- During the reporting period, UNHCR Iran held a protection and resettlement briefing for several embassies and participated in a donor briefing hosted at the Embassy of the Netherlands (with UNICEF, NRC, and WFP) as well a Regional Refugee Response Plan 2024-2025 validation meeting with partner agencies. UNHCR Iran and Brazil also held a joint capacity-building session for Brazilian psychologists on the mental health issues Afghan refugees face ahead of the arrival of Afghans to the country following the issuance of 9,000 humanitarian visas by the Government of Brazil.
- Iran's National Organization for Migration (NOM) officially announced the distribution of Unified Smart ID cards. On 14 November, the Head of NOM stated that one million cards have so far been distributed and that another one million are being printed. Priority is reportedly being given to *Amayesh* card holders who have been requested to approach Kefalat Centers to obtain an appointment. UNHCR is currently advocating for the cost of these cards to be reduced and for vulnerable groups to be exempted.

⁵ These indicators include progress in January that was funded in 2022.



UNHCR steps up its presence at official border crossings as tens of thousands of Afghans arrive from Pakistan
 © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

- UNHCR Iran Representative visited UNHCR Mashhad Sub-Office and Semnan province. During these visits, the Representative met with officials from the Provincial Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs, visited refugee settlements and inaugurated a UNHCR co-funded girls' primary school. In the meantime, UNHCR is continuing to advocate for expanded operational space.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR Pakistan came together with partners and refugees to commemorate 16 Days of Activism. This year's theme - 'UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls' - calls on people to show how much they care about ending violence against women and girls by sharing the actions they are taking to create a world free from violence towards women. In Quetta, a campaign called 'Kites of Hope' organized by a partner was held to highlight the resilience of Afghan refugee communities and showcase the strength of Afghan women in society. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, joint activities with UNFPA, IOM, and a local NGO were held at the City Girls College in Peshawar followed by the distribution of 80 dignity kits to students. In Rawalpindi, UNHCR and partners hosted a panel discussion, where the urgent need to end violence against women was emphasised. 100 refugees and people from host communities also participated in sessions aimed at raising awareness of mental health and gender-based violence. In addition, UNHCR and one of its partners in Rawalpindi also arranged a ceremony to hand over school kits donated by former UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and Special Envoy Angelina Jolie.
- In November, UNHCR Pakistan submitted 90 cases (367 refugees) to resettlement countries. In 2023, 899 cases (3,958 people) have so far been submitted to Australia (1,785), Germany (741), Canada (576), USA (376), Italy (253), United Kingdom (177) France (29), Norway (10), the Netherlands (7) and New Zealand (2). 348 individuals have left for Canada (210), Italy (72), Australia (38), United Kingdom (11), USA (9), the Netherlands (3), Norway (3) and New Zealand (2) in 2023. In Iran, UNHCR submitted 29 cases (76 individuals) to resettlement countries. In 2023, 906 cases (3,200 individuals) have so far been submitted to Australia (2,445), Finland (255), United Kingdom (301), Italy (192), as well as other resettlement countries (7) under an unallocated quota. In 2023, 1,399 individuals left for Australia (479), Finland (708), United Kingdom (77), and 135 individuals to other resettlement countries (Canada, Norway, Finland) under an unallocated quota. Resettlement remains an invaluable durable solution, responsibility-sharing mechanism, and key protection tool for refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or fundamental human rights are at risk.

CROSS BORDER SITUATION

- As of end November, some 20,900 IDPs have returned to their places of origin. In 2021 and 2022, over 1.45 million IDPs returned to their places of origin: approximately 1.15 million IDPs returned in 2021 and 276,700 in 2022. The source of these figures are the 384,000 household-level rapid assessments conducted by UNHCR and partners since 10 October 2021 until 30 November 2023. These figures are expected to increase retroactively due to ongoing assessments and considered indicative rather than overall statistical data of IDP returnees in Afghanistan. Figures may be underestimated due to the recent downscaling of assessments undertaken in 2023.

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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