

Pakistan

MARCH 2024

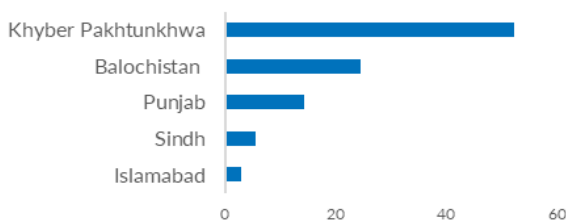
Pakistan is **the fifth largest refugee hosting** country providing safety to some **1.38M registered refugees and asylum seekers** who were forced to flee their countries.

UNHCR supports efforts undertaken by the Government of Pakistan to provide **protection** and **assistance** to refugees and asylum seekers, while strengthening cohesion in host communities.

With a focus on global solidarity, the **Solution Strategy for the Afghan Refugees (SSAR)** guides the strategic direction of refugee programming in **Pakistan**.

REGISTERED REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN PAKISTAN: 1.38MILLION (99%) AFGHANS, 1% OTHERS

Per province



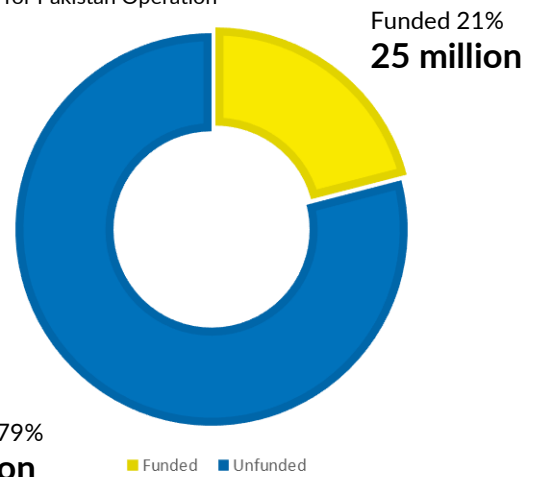
- **68.6 per cent** of Afghan refugees live in urban/semi-urban localities
- **31.4 per cent** continue to reside in the remaining 54 refugee villages

* Data source: UNHCR Operational Data Portal, November 2023 <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/pak>

FUNDING (AS OF 29 FEBRUARY)

USD 120.2 million

requested for Pakistan Operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

260 Staff:

187 National Staff

73 International Staff

1 Country Office in Islamabad

2 Sub-Offices in Peshawar and Quetta

Presence in Chaman, Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat, Loralai, Sukkur, Torkham



Pakistan Impact Areas



Attaining Favourable Protection Environments

Changes in the enjoyment of rights as a result of increasingly favourable conditions for protection.



Empowering Communities & Achieving Gender Equality

Intended shifts in the protection and solutions of persons of concern as a result of advancements in community mechanisms, gender equality, health and livelihoods.



Securing Solutions

Changes in the enjoyment of durable and alternative pathways to solutions for people we serve.

Main Activities

Protection

For more than 40 years, Pakistan has a long and commendable tradition of providing protection to refugees and asylum-seekers. An estimated 1.35 million forcibly displaced people with protection needs are living in Pakistan. These include mainly Afghan refugees holding Proof of Registration (PoR), as well as a small number of non-Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers from other countries such as Myanmar, Yemen, Somalia and Syria.

Pakistan does not have a national asylum system in place nor is it signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. UNHCR continues to advocate for a better access by refugees and asylum seekers to basic rights in the country while enhancing self-reliance among refugees and their host communities for sustainable solutions. UNHCR significantly scaled-up the protection programme in response to the announcement of the Government's of Pakistan's "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan."

- **Registration:** Government of Pakistan - the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), the Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) - and UNHCR with a technical support of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) concluded the Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise (DRIVE) in March 2023. The exercise aimed to verify and update records of the Proof of Registration (PoR) holders and to address the need for new identity documents of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. These smartcards provide faster and safer access to services such as health and education and banking. In 2024, 11 PCM centres will continuously update refugee data that had been collected and verified during DRIVE to further systematize UNHCR's approach to data building and evidence-based programming.
- **Legal Assistance:** UNHCR operates nine (9) Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas. These centres directly secure release of persons of concern who are arrested/detained, conduct legal awareness raising sessions with the community and capacity building activities with law enforcement agencies on the rights of refugees.
- **Community-based protection:** With the support of Outreach Volunteers (OVs), refugee elders and focal points in the community, UNHCR empowers refugees and their host communities to mitigate protection risks, mobilise behavioural change, and to identify community-led initiatives aimed at sustainable solutions. UNHCR also supports 2 Social Cohesion Hubs (1 in Quetta, 1 in Rawalpindi) to bring together the refugee and hosting communities and build existing capacities among its members.
- **Child Protection and Gender-based Violence:** UNHCR and partners implement programmes for child protection and gender-based violence survivors, including case management, psychosocial support, life skills programmes, safe houses and friendly spaces, alternative care, family tracing and reunification, in addition to community outreach and awareness programmes. Prevention, risk mitigation of and response to GBV are also part of the response, with women and girls' empowerment activities.



Statelessness

UNHCR works in partnership to provide legal assistance to stateless Bengali, Bihari and Rohingya communities in Karachi. The legal assistance focuses on acquiring and unblocking of identity documentation, legal advice and awareness raising on importance of identity documentation, birth registration and help to access to basic services. UNHCR also raises awareness on the procedures for birth registration in Pakistan and the importance of basic civil documentation as a measure to prevent statelessness in a protracted situation. At the policy level, UNHCR continues to work with key stakeholders to ensure inclusion of both stateless communities and refugees in national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems and engage through relevant regional mechanisms such as the Bali Process.



Durable Solutions

- **Voluntary Repatriation:** UNHCR supports refugees who express their intention to their country of origin. Two (2) Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa facilitate registered Afghan refugees to voluntarily return home. Considering rising inflation and increased transportation costs, UNHCR adjusted the voluntary repatriation grant to USD 375 per individual. UNHCR assisted a total of 6,039 Afghan refugees to return to their communities through our Voluntary Repatriation Program in 2022, with a significant increase witnessed in 2023 reaching more than 36,000 in the context of the government's repatriation plan. UNHCR is anticipating around 50,000 Afghans will return through the VolRep programme in 2024.
- **Resettlement and complementary pathways:** UNHCR resumed its resettlement programme in 2022 with 3,504 applications to six resettlement countries. Throughout the year 2023, a total of 963 cases comprising 4,198 individuals were submitted to various countries. For 2024, UNHCR aims to increase applications to 5,500 on behalf of Afghans, identifying the most vulnerable people with heightened protection needs for resettlement. Third country resettlement is a tangible form of international responsibility sharing.



Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

UNHCR supports livelihoods and economic inclusion for refugees to build their resilient. Projects are designed to provide livelihood options with a focus on strengthening social and economic capital in refugee and host communities. Assistance focuses on agriculture and artisanal skills alongside different vocational trainings adapted to the local market as well as in Afghanistan and refugees' interests. UNHCR is expanding access to tertiary education opportunities, employment, and financial services. In recognition that voluntary return is the primary durable solution for most of the refugees, a cross-border dimension has been integrated through these efforts. The private sector equally features prominently as a partner to include refugees in supply chains and build new private sector partnerships. To date, nine private sector and industry partners are actively supporting efforts linking refugees to markets.



Education

UNHCR's education strategy aims to increase enrolment and improve the retention rate of the most marginalised refugee children and youth, and host communities. Key objectives include increasing access to quality education services through the provision of safe schools in refugee-hosting areas and refugee villages, training teachers and providing learning materials. Inclusion of refugees in public schools contributes to peaceful co-existence in host communities, maximises investment in public resources and infrastructure and avoids provision of a parallel education system. Approximately 54,000 refugee children are enrolled in 142 refugee village schools directly supported by UNHCR across 54 refugee villages. In addition, more than 8,000 students are enrolled in public schools under the RAHA programme, including both host and refugee students, with 14% being refugees. With a

focus on girls' access to education, UNHCR supports the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Home-Based Girls' Classes in Balochistan, while providing cash-based assistance and transportation allowances for those attending to secondary school. UNHCR also provides tertiary-level scholarships to Afghan refugees between 17 to 30 years old through the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) and advocates at local level for the inclusion of refugees in undergraduate programs that would allow them to contribute to their host communities.



Health & WASH



Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) Programme

RAHA is a government-led programme. UNHCR, together with the Government of Pakistan, implement the RAHA programme, a humanitarian-development nexus initiative. RAHA is a central vehicle for working towards the overarching goals of the SSAR. RAHA constitutes an effort to move away from prolonged dependence on open-ended humanitarian aid by enhancing social cohesion and building empowerment, resilience and productive capacities of refugees and host communities through targeted investments into national public service delivery systems (health, education, livelihoods, social protection etc.) and infrastructure.

UNHCR is contributing to a scale-up of local and central government capacity on health along with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). UNHCR provides support that enables refugees to reach national services, when available, and to support host communities to have better access to public health services. UNHCR has transitioned from support to parallel refugee facilities towards harmonized area-based programmes covering both host communities and refugee villages. Working with the Government of Pakistan, UNHCR will explore options to expand refugees' access to public services in social protection and health insurance schemes.



Access to Energy

In Pakistan, most of the rural population where Afghan refugees live, have no access to electricity and depend heavily on traditional fuels, increasing protection and health risks as well as environmental concerns. Addressing the energy needs of refugees and host communities by improving access to sustainable, clean and affordable energy sources is a priority activity. UNHCR has solarised facilities and water systems in host communities, provided renewable energy appliances, and vocational skills training on operation and maintenance of these tools, along with environmental education for Afghan refugee men and women. Such activities are aimed at improving communities' protection and wellbeing, while also reducing the environmental impact of energy generation and consumption.

In refugee villages, the implementation of solar streetlights is instrumental in addressing energy access challenges. These lights enhance safety and security, providing a well-lit environment for residents during nighttime hours. Moreover, their reliance on renewable energy aligns with sustainable practices, contributing positively to the overall well-being of the community. UNHCR Pakistan Operations has installed solar streetlights in three RVs in 2023 and refugees in 10 more RVs in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces will gain benefits of solar streetlights in 2024.

Climate-friendly interventions and green energy access for refugees and hosting communities



UNHCR procured 26,870 solar portable kits in 2023, which will be distributed among the refugees and hosting communities in KP and Balochistan in the first half of 2024. Each kit is equipped with three lights and one fan, are versatile for use in various environments. They can provide electricity access for up to 18 hours per day while ensuring zero risk of electrocution.

In addition, UNHCR is solarizing 123 public facilities, including 103 educational facilities, 16 health facilities, and 4 livelihood facilities. These projects are expected to contribute 4 Mega-Watts of clean energy, providing uninterrupted and affordable energy to the beneficiaries. Any excess electricity generated will be exported to the national grid where feasible. This initiative is expected to offset approximately 2,700 tons of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), equivalent to 1,500 tons of unburnt coal or 265,226 gallons of unused diesel.

Working with Partners

UNHCR works in coordination with the Government of Pakistan, UN agencies, humanitarian and development organizations, and civil society to find solutions for refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern to UNHCR. UNHCR funds a total of 37¹ partners including 21 national organizations, six government partners, five international non-governmental organizations and five UN Agencies:

- **Governmental:** Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), including the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees at provincial level in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are the main counterpart. At federal level, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Education and Professional training, National Health Regulation and Services, and the Planning Commission are key partners to continue strengthening services and support for refugees and host communities. UNHCR works jointly with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) for registration of Afghan refugees. UNHCR also works in partnership with National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) at the federal level and Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTA) at the provincial level for the youth skill development. UNHCR collaborates with provincial department of health, education, social welfare, home, and tribal affairs along with other provincial and district level government line departments. UNHCR coordinates as well with Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS).
- **UN Agencies and NGOs:**
 - **National:** Inspire Pakistan, Society for Humanitarian Rights & Prisoners (SHARP), Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Imkaan Welfare Organization (IWO), Initiative For Development And Empowerment Axis (IDEA), Khwendo Kor, Hashoo Foundation, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Drugs And Narcotics

¹ UNHCR Islamabad and Peshawar have signed separate partnership agreements with SHARP. Therefore, UNHCR has a total of 38 agreements with 37 partners.

Educational Services For Humanity (DANESH), Society For Empowering Human Resources (SEHER), Water, Environment & Sanitation Society, Pakistan (WESS), Peoples Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) Balochistan, Innovative Development Organization (IDO), Taraqee Foundation (TF), Society for Community Support to Primary Education (SCSPE), Tameer-e-Khalq Foundation (TKF), Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP), Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP), Integrated Regional Support Programme, Pak Mission Society and Frontier Primary Health Care Pakistan (FPHC)

- **UN Agencies and International NGOs:** UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNOPS and ILO, International Rescue Committee (IRC), International Medical Corps, Muslim Hands, Secours Islamique France, Pathfinder International.
- The UNHCR-led inter-agency Refugee Response Plan (RRP) facilitates UN agencies' and other partners' contributions to Pakistan's refugee situation. 32 partners joined the 2022 RRP (Including 10 local NGOs), 56 partners joined the 2023 RRP, (including 30 local NGOs) and 45 partners joined the 2024/2025 RRP (including 17 local NGOs). The RRP 2023 recognizes the on-going deterioration in living conditions for both Afghans and the communities that host them across all sectors, caused by economic hardship, inflation, and the impact of floods and other climate related hazards. Coordination forums such as the Pakistan Refugee Consultative Forum (co-chaired by UNHCR and the Ministry SAFRON/CCAR) are used for strategic and operational planning, resource mobilization and advocacy. UNHCR coordinates its work with thematic working groups, including education, health, food security, livelihoods and resilience, WASH while leading a protection working group. These are co-led by specialized UN agencies and relevant government counterparts and are a valuable coordination mechanism for a joint response.
- **National Goodwill Ambassador:** Actress and activist Mahira Khan uses her voice to raise awareness on behalf of refugees and their host communities in Pakistan and globally.

Core Group of Support Platform for Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

- Committed to a comprehensive refugee response and greater responsibility-sharing, fifteen states and international organizations are members of the Core Group of the Support Platform for Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) at a global level: Asian Development Bank, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Qatar, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, UNDP, United States of America, and World Bank. The current chair of this Group is Qatar with the Netherlands as co-chair.
- In Pakistan, the Local Core Group was established in 2021, duplicating the arrangement at the global level. The local Core Group regularly meets at the ambassadorial and working levels. Under the Local Core Group, at the technical level, a Livelihoods Thematic Working Group (LTWG) and an Education Thematic Working Group (ETWG) have been led by the United States

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds. UNHCR Pakistan benefitted from significant donor support for the Afghan emergency in 2021-2023 and for the Floods Response in 2022-2023.

Country-level earmarked contributions in 2024

Netherlands | European Union | Republic of Korea | Switzerland | Private donors in Saudia Arabia | Private donors in Luxembourg | Germany | Japan

Softly and unearmarked contributions in 2024

Norway | Iceland | Philippines | Private donors

Sweden | Norway | Netherlands | Denmark | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Switzerland | Republic of Korea | Ireland | España con ACNUR | Belgium | Australia | Algeria | Angola | Armenia | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Thailand | Türkiye | Private donors

CONTACTS

Aoife McDonnell, Senior External Relations Officer
mcdonnel@unhcr.org, Tel: +41 22 739 7518