


UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

An earthquake resilient shelter in Shams-e-Khil village of Paktika province, provided by UNHCR. © UNHCR/Hamdar Safi

Shelter Fact Sheet

August 2024

Achievements in 2024



Shelter

- ➔ Number of emergency shelters (tents): **798 HHs (5,586 Inds)**
- ➔ People reached with cash for major shelter repairs: **4,529 Inds (647 HHs)**
- ➔ People reached with cash for shelter construction in earthquake zone area: **5,600 Inds (800 HHs)**
- ➔ People reached with permanent shelter construction: **371 Inds (53 HHs)**



Non-Food Items

- ➔ People reached with non food items: **30,769 inds**



2024 Funding Requirements for Shelter:

\$ 21.90 million

Shelter Needs in Afghanistan

The need for shelter assistance continues to be widely reported across Afghanistan, driven by high numbers of returns, natural crises including earthquakes and floods, and compounded by soaring levels of poverty and unemployment. Vast shelter needs are explicitly depicted in the impact of the Herat Earthquakes, occurring in October 2023, and leaving over 48,000 homes damaged or destroyed, as well as in the floods across the country in 2024, leaving over 18,460 homes damaged or destroyed. Natural disasters exacerbate the erosion of communities' resilience following over 40 years of war, creating dire shelter needs across the country. According to the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, an estimated 6.6 million persons are in need of shelter assistance in Afghanistan in 2024.

Shelter is a priority response for UNHCR in 2024, with a funding requirement of USD 21.90 million to deliver shelter response across the country through the provision permanent shelter solutions, shelter repair assistance, emergency shelter, and non-food item (NFIs) to ensure access to dignified solutions to families facing crisis. To promote long-term shelter solutions, UNHCR's natural disaster resilient shelters are developed to be earthquake resilient, underpinning durability of assistance in earthquake prone regions of the country. Moreover, UNHCR supports families with one-off cash payments in winter months to help offset rising energy costs and ensuring access to sufficient heating.

Access to adequate housing solutions has significant impact on positive protection outcomes, as Shelter assistance helps to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, and decreases reliance on harmful coping mechanisms. Adequate housing further underpins dignity, safety, and privacy for families.

Who is eligible?

In the event of an emergency, such as the Herat earthquakes in 2023 or the floods in 2024, UNHCR delivers emergency shelter assistance to affected families, identified through assessment and application of vulnerability criteria.

In the provision of permanent shelter and shelter repair assistance, the primary target beneficiaries include refugee returnees, returned internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable members of host communities in UNHCR's designated Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs). Shelter assistance beneficiaries are identified through assessment of housing needs and household vulnerabilities, ensuring that aid reaches those in most need and is suitable for the recipient. Interventions take into consideration feasibility of implementation, notwithstanding weather and geographical conditions, as well as access to land, shelter gaps and vulnerabilities.

Similar to other UNHCR programs, a community-based and participatory approach is adopted, and beneficiary selection criteria is developed in consultation with the community. A beneficiary advisory committee is established to assist with the review of assessments, and to ensure that selection aligns with the vulnerability criteria set forth in standard operating procedures (SOPs). The higher a family scores in the score card, the higher priority the family is awarded in receiving assistance.

Working with partners:

UNHCR works in close partnership with international and national partners to ensure coordinated and complimentary programming in Afghanistan, enabling effective targeting of complex challenges and in support of realising objective outcomes in Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs).

In the provision of shelter assistance in 2024, UNHCR is working in partnership with three national NGOs and one international NGO, including ACHRO, NRC, WAW and WSTA, in areas of Bamyán, Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Gardiz and Mazar. Partnerships leverage local capacities and expertise in the provision of shelter solutions, and enable expanded geographical coverage of shelter assistance allowing support through technical overview to reach beneficiaries in remote and wide areas.

Achievements in 2023



Shelter

- ➔ People reached with solar panels: **83,460**
- ➔ People reached with permanent shelter: **33,418**
- ➔ People reached with emergency shelter: **56,994**
- ➔ People reached with shelter repair: **45,290**
- ➔ People reached with transitional shelter: **45,290**
- ➔ People reached with cash assistance for permanent shelter: **8142**



Non Food Items:

- ➔ People reached with CRIs: **101,412**



Effectiveness and quality

UNHCR's multi-functional team conducts regular site visits and spot check visits to ensure technical guidance, monitoring and validation. Post distribution monitoring is further organized by a multi-function team that includes the UNHCR, Implementing Partners, Community members at the completion of shelters construction in a specific geographical area to evaluate effectiveness, adherence to design, quality implementation, and delivery.

UNHCR Shelter Response

UNHCR aims to deliver shelter assistance to the most vulnerable families living in inadequate shelter solutions across the country, ensuring access to adequate, safe, and dignified housing solutions. UNHCR prioritises the provision of permanent and natural disaster resilient shelters, promoting access to durable housing and contributing to sustainable protection and resilience outcomes. UNHCR's shelter assistance is delivered in consultation with the Shelter Cluster, ensuring alignment with technical standards and cluster guidance.

UNHCR's shelter assistance is delivered via cash-based or in-kind modality. Cash-based modalities are applied where local market capacities are able to sustain local procurement of goods by beneficiaries, and to promote stimulation of local economies, and support for local businesses and trade. UNHCR ensures strong technical guidance is provided to beneficiaries receiving cash for shelter construction or repair, ensuring shelter assistance leads to durable housing solutions.

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Father-of-five, Zamir, 45, and his family inspect a new 2-bedroom home which they hope to move into before winter sets in, built by UNHCR with partner, WSTA. He and his family fled Tajik village, in Bamyán, during heavy fighting in 2019, in which their former home was destroyed. He later moved back to his village, but as he was unable to pay rent the family moved into a nearby cave. Their new two-roomed home, with a bathroom, will be fitted with solar panels and a traditional Bukhari heater. "We will have a better life inside this new home", he said. ©UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

Types of Shelter Assistance

- ➔ **Permanent natural disaster resilient shelters:** Prioritised under UNHCR's shelter interventions in Afghanistan, the permanent natural disaster resilient shelters (designed to be earthquake resilient) provides durable shelter solutions – a key concern in Afghanistan's earthquake and natural disasters like floods prone regions. The shelter is built from durable and affordable materials and considers local customs to provide safe and dignified living space, considerably using the locally available materials. The total area of the shelter is 54m² including two rooms, a kitchen, and corridor.
- ➔ **Permanent shelter:** Prioritised under UNHCR's shelter interventions, the permanent shelter provides durable shelter solutions, built from durable and affordable materials, taking local customs into account to provide safe and dignified living space. The shelter is constructed using locally available materials, with an area of 54m² including two rooms, a kitchen, and corridor. The difference between natural disaster-resilient shelters and permanent shelters lies in the use of reinforced concrete for the prior shelter typology.
 - ➔ **Energy Solutions:** Heating solutions in the form of bukharī stoves and solar energy systems are integrated in the provision of permanent shelters as well as natural disaster resilient shelter solutions, ensuring that families have access to fuel efficient heating systems through winter months, and sustainable solar energy sources that are cost-effective to efficiently overcome electricity shortages due to unreliable or non-existent power grid. Solar energy also reduces the need for fossil fuels, helping to lower greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating environmental degradation.
- ➔ **Major and minor shelter repairs:** Many vulnerable families live in damaged shelters, often lacking resources required to repair shelters to adequately provide private, safe, and dignified housing. Through cash-based interventions, UNHCR gives beneficiaries the possibility to repair their own shelters through a one-time off cash installment, enabling improvements to the existing partially damaged permanent shelter. Repairs fall into two categories: major and minor repairs.
- ➔ **Emergency shelter and non food items:** In the event of emergency situations, including conflict and natural crises, UNHCR responds with the delivery of emergency tents and non food items to affected families. Kits distributed include plastic sheets, hygiene items, blankets, kitchen sets, jerry cans, and other basic household items. These relief items ensure immediate shelter and non-food item needs at time of crisis are met.
- ➔ **Seasonal support:** Winters are very harsh across large parts of the country, notably across northern and central regions. With poverty and unemployment soaring, many families do not have the financial means to buy heating fuel and or stoves. Families affected by disaster are particularly vulnerable, often having lost all or most personal properties. To aid families, UNHCR provides seasonal assistance, primarily in cash, to enable families to cover costs of heaters, fuel, and warm clothing.

Contact:

Ajay Vikram Singh
Shelter Officer
singhaja@unhcr.org

Saorlaith Ni Bhroin
Senior External Relations
Officer

nibhroin@unhcr.org
Celine Schmitt
Strategic Partnerships
Adviser
schmitt@unhcr.org

Josephine Karlsson
Reporting Officer
karlssok@unhcr.org

How does it work?

All shelter interventions are initiated with thorough needs assessments in coordination with local stakeholders, and complimented with the development of selection criteria in line with standard operating procedures (SOPs), as well as conduct of market assessment surveys in the instance of cash assistance.

Target beneficiaries are most often identified through UNHCR's Rapid Household Assessment Form (RHAF), a pre-developed kobo tool used to assess and select beneficiaries based on vulnerability criteria and housing needs.

Eligibility scores are applied to ensure transparent and accountable selection processes, enforced further through beneficiary advisory committees, to ensure targeting of those most vulnerable. Eligible households are then registered to receive shelter assistance. In case of cash for shelter, cash is distributed to each beneficiary following a technical training, enabling recipients to purchase needed materials and to conduct shelter works.

Following the completion of work and inspection by UNHCR and partners, a post distribution monitoring exercise is conducted by UNHCR Multi-Functional Teams to assess beneficiary satisfaction with the assistance received, to monitor quality and effectiveness of aid, and to inform future programming.