



Photo: UNHCR/Mariko Hall

UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Hai Kyung Jun, delivered a lecture on statelessness and importance of ensuring everyone has a nationality, to law, diplomacy and international relations students in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

Key figures as of 30 June 2024

22,772*



Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

in Kazakhstan (669), the Kyrgyz Republic (2,754), Tajikistan (10,381), Turkmenistan (13) and Uzbekistan (5)*.

* Based on government reports in mass media, UNHCR estimates there are as many as 106,212 people in Central Asia in a refugee-like situation, including 8,950 forcibly displaced Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan.

36,994



known Stateless people

in Kazakhstan (8,019), the Kyrgyz Republic (60), Tajikistan (3,629), Turkmenistan (2,760) and Uzbekistan (22,496).

In 2024, UNHCR required \$10.03 million to protect refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people across Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.



Funded
60%

Unfunded
40%

As of 30 November 2024

SUB-REGIONAL

- With 21 [pledges submitted from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan](#) at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum – including from government, academia, civil society and UN Country Teams – UNHCR is actively **engaging stakeholders to support implementation of their commitments** to protect forcibly displaced and stateless people. As of 31 December 2024, 10 of the 21 pledges have already been completed.
- On 4 October, UNHCR held a [regional consultative meeting in Almaty on implementation of pledges to the Global Compact on Refugees and efforts to end statelessness](#), with 25 representatives from the Governments of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan attending in-person, and representatives from Global Alliance to End Statelessness Member States (including Switzerland, Bangkok, Philippines and Thailand) joining online.
- On 18 November, UNHCR delivered a **session on the "Protection of Stateless Persons" as part of the 38th Online Course on International Refugee Law** in Russian, organized by the Sanremo International Institute of Humanitarian Law. The presentation included the legal framework for addressing statelessness, and global efforts under the #IBelong campaign and new Global Alliance to End Statelessness, fostering a deeper understanding of statelessness issues and potential solutions.
- Supported by UNHCR, the **Central Asian Network on Statelessness (CANS) held its 8th annual meeting** in Tashkent, from 3 to 5 December, bringing together members and stakeholders from the region to strategize on addressing statelessness. Key topics included the creation of a regional Statelessness Index and reviewing progress of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness.
- The in-person and final phase of the 12-week **Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Distance Learning Programme** was held in Bishkek, from 2 to 5 December, bringing together 38 participants from asylum authorities, national RSD Commissions, judges, and organizations providing legal assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan alongside subject-matter experts to strengthen and enhance skills in RSD processes.
- Between 4 and 8 November, **UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Hai Kyung Jun, were on official mission to Central Asia**, engaging in strategic discussions with key stakeholders in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan to strengthen partnerships and advance UNHCR's objectives in the sub-region. The delegation also met with forcibly displaced and stateless people, hearing about challenges faced and their ongoing needs.



IN FOCUS:

ENDING STATELESSNESS IN CENTRAL ASIA

With 2024 marking the conclusion of the 10-year global #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness, States, UNHCR and partners accelerated efforts throughout the year to achieve the goals of the campaign, aiming to resolve existing situations of statelessness; prevent new cases of statelessness from emerging; and better identify and protect stateless people.

- Building on the concrete gains and momentum of the #IBelong campaign, on 14 October UNHCR launched the [Global Alliance to End Statelessness](#) to continue efforts and commitments to address statelessness.
- On 4 November, [UNHCR and Government of Turkmenistan co-hosted a Ministerial Conference on Ending Statelessness](#), with senior-level officials from across Central Asia gathering in Ashgabat to celebrate the region's achievements toward this goal. Speaking at the event, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, congratulated Turkmenistan in recently resolving all its known cases of statelessness, and encouraged other Central Asian States to accede to the Statelessness Convention and join the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. Participants included delegations from the Governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as USA, OSCE, UN agencies, and other humanitarian organizations.
- At the end of the conference, [delegations endorsed the Ashgabat Declaration on Ending Statelessness in Central Asia](#) which includes key strategic directions to sustain and build on progress achieved across the sub-region to reduce and prevent statelessness. Through this new declaration, States support:



The declaration was published on 18 December in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek, English and Russian languages.

- UNHCR partners Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, and Legal Clinic Adilet in the Kyrgyz Republic, have officially joined the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, becoming the first civil society organizations in Central Asia to do so, alongside the Central Asia Network on Statelessness, and Turkmenistan.

The Kyrgyz Republic and Turkmenistan are the only countries in the world to resolve all known statelessness cases on their territories.

WATCH ALSO



Watch also: [How did Central Asia solve so many statelessness cases?](#)

KAZAKHSTAN

State Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol

- In October, UNHCR partner Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (BHR) **launched a project to introduce a human rights training manual for police officers**, which will include issues related to refugees and stateless people. Conducted in cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights under the President of Kazakhstan, and supported by the Embassy of Canada, the project includes a series of trainings at all educational institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- UNHCR partner Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (BHR) **participated in the November pre-session on Kazakhstan's 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Report** in Geneva, addressing implementation of recommendations regarding refugees and stateless people.
- On 16 October, UNHCR **delivered a presentation on refugee protection and statelessness to 24 students and faculty at QAZIITU University in Uralsk**, covering the historical background and legal framework of international protection for refugees and stateless persons.
- **UNHCR delivered opening remarks in the “Human Rights Protection in Kazakhstan: Challenges and Perspectives” international conference** in Astana on 10 December 2024, organized by the Kazakhstan Human Rights Commissioner to celebrate the day of Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UNHCR promoted further implementation of the refugee convention’s provisions in legislation of Kazakhstan as well as accession to both statelessness conventions, emphasizing the truly universal, indivisible nature of the rights, covering non-citizens as much as citizens, and how they translate into States’ commitments.
- On 12 December, **UNICEF and UNHCR signed a new Letter of Understanding** to expand joint efforts in protecting and improving the lives of forcibly displaced and stateless children and women in Kazakhstan. Through this partnership, the two organizations will work together to ensure access to education, healthcare, and legal identity papers for thousands of children and families.
- Throughout this period, UNHCR **continued bilateral discussions and regular engagement with key government counterparts** to advance protection of forcibly displaced and stateless people, including the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Human Rights Commissioner, Commissioner for Rights of Socially Vulnerable Categories of Population, Department for the Coordination of Employment and Social Programs.

Protecting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- UNHCR, together with partner Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (BHR), **conducted border monitoring missions to Almaty International Airport** on 3 October, and at a **checkpoint on the Kazakh-Russian border in West Kazakhstan Region** on 15 October, assessing admission practices and evaluating the crossing points’ compliance with international standards. Information sessions were delivered to the Border Guards Service on the rights of asylum-seekers in line with national asylum legislation, the 1951 Refugee Convention, and other international instruments. Almaty Airport's transit zone, along with other international airports in Kazakhstan, have UNHCR signage with information for asylum-seekers and refugees.

While in West Kazakhstan, UNHCR met with a family of asylum-seekers from Ukraine to assess the protection needs of forcibly displaced people in this region, and identify any protection risks and concerns.

- On 11 October, **UNHCR participated in public discussions on the draft Concept of Inclusive Policy** – an event attended by Vice Minister of Labor and Social Protection of Kazakhstan, alongside representatives from civil society. The discussion focused on the key elements of the draft policy and its potential impact on vulnerable populations, including refugees. UNHCR emphasized the importance of including provisions for disabled refugees and asylum-seekers.

WATCH ALSO



Photo: UNHCR / Aliya Syzay

Watch also: [How higher education is empowering refugee youth in Kazakhstan to unlock their potential](#)

- **DAFI scholar and refugee, Armin Talebi, joined the second UN Youth Advisory Board meeting** online on 22 November 2024. The event brought together 25 young leaders from across Kazakhstan to collaborate in advancing UN programmes and the SDGs.
- With the support of UNHCR, a **Kazakhstani Supreme Judge participated in the International Association of Refugee and Migration Judges Asia Pacific Chapter conference** held in Melbourne, Australia, 25 to 27 November. The conference focused on "Addressing Vulnerabilities in Processes, Systems, and Decision Making in Refugee and Migration Cases", with a range of sub-themes, including statelessness, judicial resilience, credibility, detention, artificial intelligence, deportations, and removals.
- On 1 December, UNHCR **participated in the annual Charity Bazaar** organized by the Association of Spouses of Ambassadors, showcasing and selling traditional Afghan dresses made by refugees in Kazakhstan. The dresses were provided by partner Red Crescent Society, with proceeds from the sales donated back to them to support procurement of educational books for refugee youth and to reimburse contributors for materials.
- On 5 December, **UNHCR and partner Red Crescent Society convened a meeting between refugees and asylum-seekers in Almaty, along with Chair of the Committee on Migration of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population, and representatives of Almaty City Administration.** During the meeting, refugees and asylum-seekers discussed challenges faced, including access to basic services, such as social protection, healthcare, and banking, and due assistance from local city administration on asylum issues.
- Together with the Committee on Migration of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population, UNHCR **convened a two-day training on 5 and 6 December for employees of local executive bodies from across Kazakhstan to promote unified application of the national law on refugees** and relevant by-laws, international standards, and the Refugee Convention. The workshop was attended by 43 participants, including Chair and Head of the Refugee Unit of the Committee on Migration, as well as UNHCR and NGO partners.
- In 2024, UNHCR provided **cash assistance** to 359 vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeker families (reaching 493 individuals) to help them cover basic needs, including 54 disbursements for medical assistance.

Ending Statelessness

- Between July and December 2024, the Committee of Migration Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan – supported by UNHCR and partners Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (BHR) and Sana Sezim – conducted a **nationwide campaign to: enhance identification and documentation of people with undetermined nationality**; reduce statelessness; strengthen the protection environment; and align national legislation with international standards.

As part of the campaign, throughout October joint **outreach missions were conducted to Almaty and Shymkent, and Akmola, Almaty, Atyrau, Mangystau, Pavlodar, Turkestan, West Kazakhstan, Zhambyl, and Zhetysu regions** across Kazakhstan. Representatives from UNHCR, partners, and the Migration Service Committee consulted over 600 people with undetermined nationality or without identity documentation, providing legal advice and support to address their status issues. Meetings were held with local government bodies involved in statelessness and citizenship determination to help improve inter-agency cooperation and streamline procedures.

- On 28 and 29 November, UNHCR and the Migration Service Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted a **workshop to review the outcomes of the second country-wide campaign to identify undocumented individuals and those with undetermined nationality**, and exchange experiences implementing existing Statelessness Determination Procedures. The workshop was attended by 44 participants, including Chair and representatives from the Migration Service Committee and its regional departments, UNHCR, and NGOs.
- UNHCR held a **public lecture on 2 December at Narxoz University in Almaty**, engaging 40 students in discussions about the recently launched Global Alliance to End Statelessness. The lecture highlighted the key achievements of Central Asia in addressing statelessness, including the resolution of over 200,000 cases across the region over the past decade .



Efforts to End Statelessness directly link to target 9 of Sustainable Development Goal 16: to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030.

THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

State Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol

- On 17 December, the Legal Aid Service of the Kyrgyz Republic's Ministry of Justice hosted an event marking the **First** Congress of Paralegals in Kyrgyzstan. A key outcome of this congress was the creation of the Paralegal Association. In the Kyrgyz Republic, paralegals play a vital role in providing accessible legal and advisory assistance to vulnerable groups, such as refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people.
- Throughout this period, **UNHCR continued advocacy efforts to promote the rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people**, including regular engagement with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, including meetings with the Ministries of Labor, Social Security and Migration; Digital Development; Education; Foreign Affairs; and Justice, as well as the Ombudsman Institute, General Prosecutor's Office.

Protecting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- On 4 October, a joint selection committee – comprising representatives from UNHCR, partner Legal Clinic Adilet, and a DAFI alumna – reviewed the 11 applications received for new DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarships. **Five candidates were selected to receive DAFI Scholarships for the 2024-2025 academic year** – two men and two women (one candidate withdrew due to family reasons) – to study medicine, IT and engineering. In total, nine refugee students in the Kyrgyz Republic are able to study at tertiary level thanks to the DAFI scholarship programme.
- Together with the National Center of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Prevention of Torture, on 16 October **UNHCR held a roundtable "Discussion on the Guidelines for Assessing the Risk of Torture or Ill-Treatment in Relation to Persons, including Asylum-Seekers, in Case of Their Extradition to the Requesting State."** The event was attended by 28 representatives of 13 organizations and government agencies, including Supreme Court, General Prosecutor's Office, State Committee for National Security, Border Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration. The event concluded with discussion on way forward, including potential adoption of the document through a Plenum Resolution of the Supreme Court or a Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers.
- On 16 October, UNHCR partner Legal Clinic Adilet held a **yoga and meditation session with 25 refugees and asylum-seeker women** in Bishkek. The



activity sought to provide the women – most of whom have limited interactions outside of the home due to child and homecare responsibilities – with an outlet for psychosocial relief.

- On 22 October, **UNHCR delivered a session on "Refugee Protection: Access to Territory" at the OSCE Working Group for Border Service**, hosted by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Border Service of the State Committee on National Security (SCNS) of the Kyrgyz Republic. The 10 participants of the three-day *Working Group on developing and implementing a course on conflict management skills and working in multi-ethnic border communities* represented the Border Guard Service, the Military Institute under the General Staff of the Armed Forces, and the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- On 22 October, UNHCR partner Legal Clinic Adilet, supported by a guest doctor, held an **information for 17 refugees and asylum-seekers on available healthcare resources**. The doctor presented information on the flu, differentiating it from acute respiratory infections, the importance of flu vaccinations, and the need to consult a doctor for treatment. Additionally, participants were informed about medical insurance, including its benefits, how it works, and the required documentation. The Kyrgyz Republic has partially implemented its 2021 Global Refugee Forum pledge to provide healthcare and social protection to refugees and asylum-seekers on par with citizens.
- In line with global standard operating procedures for cash assistance, between 23 October and 17 December, UNHCR and partner Legal Clinic Adilet **conducted household assessments of 52 families** in Bishkek, Chui Region, and Osh who had requested financial support. Such assessments help to qualitatively verify the standards of living and overall income or wealth of the families. Two families declined to participate in the assessment and withdrew their requests for financial assistance.
- From 31 October to 2 November, UNHCR and the Border Guard Service of the State Committee for National Security held a **two-day seminar for 27 participants focusing on improving the qualifications of checkpoint supervisors**. Sessions included International Refugee Protection and Arrival Procedures for Asylum Seekers at Checkpoints on the Territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.

- On 12 November, UNHCR partner Legal Clinic Adilet conducted an **information session on the national e-enrolment system** to support 15 asylum-seekers in Bishkek to enroll their children in public schools. In accordance with the Refugee Convention, refugee and asylum-seeker children in the Kyrgyz Republic have access to primary and secondary education on par with citizens.
- Three members of the Refugee Youth Group in the Kyrgyz Republic – together with UNHCR, other UN and State agencies, international organizations, and NGOs – attended an event on 25 November organized by the Ministry of Labor, Social Security, and Migration and UN Women to mark the start of the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence under the 2024 local theme "Whole-of-Society Actions Towards Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women and Girls in Kyrgyzstan"**. The three refugee youth shared their perspectives in the thematic discussion on "A Zero-Tolerance Model for Gender-Based Violence".
- Between October and December, UNHCR supported **33 refugees and asylum-seekers with vocational training and language courses**:
 - 4 refugees participated in **vocational training courses on social media management, sewing, and cosmetology**. All were later provided with financial assistance to purchase necessary equipment – such as cosmetologist’s starter kit, sewing machine and overlocker – to help start their own businesses and generate income.
 - 12 refugees and asylum-seekers **completed a 12-week Russian language course**, after which four of them were able to secure employment and improve their livelihoods.
 - 17 refugees and asylum-seekers **completed a two-month (September and October) English language course** offered by the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) (As the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, AUCA pledged to provide language courses for the refugee community).
- In 2024, UNHCR provided **cash assistance** to 68 very vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeker families (reaching 275 family members) to support them to cover their basic or emergency needs. In addition, 57 children were provided with financial assistance to help them purchase school supplies for the new academic year.

Ending Statelessness

- In support of a 2019 Global Refugee Forum pledge by the Kyrgyz Republic to intensify work on studying the experience of other State parties, and at the request of the Coordination Council for Human Rights under the Cabinet of Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, on 18 December **UNHCR partner Legal Clinic Adilet submitted a draft Resolution and law on accession to the 1954 and 1961 UN Statelessness Conventions**.

READ ALSO



Read also: [“My life changed for the better after getting citizenship.”](#)

TAJIKISTAN

State Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol

- Together with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, IOM, UNICEF, UN Women, and WFP, on 7 and 8 October, UNHCR co-organized a **two-day workshop in Dushanbe on "Navigating Partnerships with the United Nations" for current and potential civil society partners**. Around 75 participants attended the workshop focusing on aligning NGO and UN priorities and efforts, and familiarizing participants with the UN Partner Portal for partnership development.
- On 25 October, **UNICEF and UNHCR signed a new Letter of Understanding** to expand joint efforts in protecting and improving the lives of refugee and stateless children and women in Tajikistan. Through this partnership, the two organizations will work together to ensure access to education, healthcare, and legal identity papers for thousands of children and families. Their joint focus on issues such as birth registration and youth empowerment aim to create a safer, more inclusive future for all refugee and stateless people in the country.
- On 16 and 17 December, UNHCR conducted a **two-day workshop on proGres V4** – UNHCR's registration and identity management system – to support NGO partners working with refugees and stateless people in Tajikistan to use the tool more effectively and efficiently for service delivery. Sessions included recording assistance, utilising the legal and protection modules, and reviewing monitoring forms to ensure accurate and effective data collection.
- Throughout this period, UNHCR **continued regular engagement with key government counterparts** to advance protection of forcibly displaced and stateless people, including representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Ombudsperson's Office, State Committee for National Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense.

Protecting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- On 2 October, UNHCR convened a **townhall meeting with 40 refugees and asylum-seekers** in J. Rasulov district of Sughd Province to discuss their concerns and protection needs. Participants highlighted: i) eligibility for multiple family members to enroll in the DAFI scholarship program, ii) lack of resettlement opportunities, iii) promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, iv) access to sports activities, and v) pathways for refugees to obtain Tajik citizenship.
- UNHCR and partner Inson va Adolat, together with the Education Centre of the Supreme Court of Tajikistan, conducted a **two-day training, on 2 and 3**

October, for 26 trainee judges on the legal status of refugees. Topics included UNHCR's mandate, International Refugee Law, access to territory, introduction to Refugee Status Determination procedure, legal guarantees for asylum-seekers and refugees, refugees' rights to education, healthcare, employment, and entrepreneurship.

- On 8 October, UNHCR hosted a **field visit to Vahdat (where most refugees in Tajikistan reside) for OSCE Programme Office** in Dushanbe, including the Ariana Learning Centre (established by a former DAFI scholar and now providing courses to both refugees and local community), the ITCC (Afghan Education Center), and the Vahdat Youth Centre. A focus group discussion was held with 10 representatives of the Women's Council, focusing on local challenges and opportunities for refugee integration and empowerment.



To support livelihoods, self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion, UNHCR partners with private companies to implement apprenticeship programmes for refugees. After completing such a programme, Zaynab is now the manager of a local supermarket.

- On 18 October, UNHCR partner Inson va Adolat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science, held a **roundtable discussion on "The Legal Status of Refugees and Their Right to Access Education"**. The event brought together 15 representatives from the Ministry, district education departments in refugee-residing areas, and the Agency for Monitoring of Education and Science, to discuss access to education for refugee children, the importance of education for refugee integration, and equal opportunities for refugees in higher education.
- On 29 October, UNHCR held a **townhall meeting with 65 refugees in Rudaki district** to discuss their concerns and protection needs. During the meeting,

participants discussed the educational programs and livelihood opportunities available through UNHCR's partners, highlighting resources that can aid in skill development and economic integration. The session also addressed taxation issues affecting asylum-seekers and refugees, aiming to clarify uncertainties and ensure participants are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

- On 7 November, UNHCR **signed a joint workplan with the Border Troops of the State Committee for National Security of Tajikistan**. Among other initiatives, the workplan includes installation of a container in which to provide medical aid and child-care, a first aid station, and a mother-and-child room at the Pyanji-Poyon crossing point on the border with Afghanistan to enhance support and protection services available.
- As part of the UNDP Supporting Women's Legal Education Project, on 8 November, UNHCR and partners Right and Prosperity and Inson va Adolat hosted **specialized training sessions for 25 aspiring female lawyers** from the Union of Advocates of Tajikistan. The initiative offers a structured internship program designed to overcome academic, professional, and social barriers that contribute to the gender gap in Tajikistan's justice sector, providing participants with hands-on experience and career development support through mentorship by seasoned advocates and specialized training on topics often omitted from law school curricula. UNHCR's session focused on global and national practice in refugee protection, and partner-led sessions highlighted human rights mechanisms specifically related to refugees and stateless people.
- On 14 November, UNHCR partner Inson va Adolat held a **contest on refugee rights for two teams of five law students each from Tajik National University and Russian-Tajik (Slavonic) University**. The competition featured presentations, tests, open-ended questions, and case studies to build understanding of refugee rights and legal mechanisms, engage future legal professionals in the principles of international protection, and strengthen their capacity to advocate for vulnerable populations.
- On 20 November, UNHCR partner Inson va Adolat convened a **roundtable on refugee rights with 25 participants from the Passport Registration Service under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Department of Citizenship and Work with Refugees, and MIA Academy**, to discuss challenges faced by asylum-seekers and refugees in Tajikistan. An expert from the MIA Academy delivered a presentation on the "Legal Status of Refugees in International Law and Tajik Legislation," fostering an exchange on legal frameworks and protection mechanisms.
- UNHCR and partner Refugees, Children and Vulnerable Citizens (RCVC) – in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Vahdat city and the Committee of

Women and Family Affairs of Vahdat – held an **Empowerment Forum and Fair on 3 December as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign**. Held at the Vahdat Youth Centre, the event brought together government counterparts, IOM, UNFPA, UN Women, and civil society organizations to promote gender equality and community engagement among forcibly displaced people and the host community.

- On 3 December, UNHCR and partners Refugees, Children and Vulnerable Citizens (RCVC) and Inson va Adolat, started receiving emergency calls to the hotline reporting arbitrary deportation of Afghan citizens. As of the end of December, UNHCR is aware of as many as 96 Afghan citizens who were forcibly returned to Afghanistan, including the refolement of at least 80 refugees and asylum-seekers. On 7 December, **UNHCR issued a public statement calling on Tajikistan to halt forcible return of Afghan refugees and uphold international protection standards and commitments**. UNHCR and partners continue to advocate and follow-up at the highest levels. With a vast majority of those deported being male and family breadwinners, through Inson va Adolat, UNHCR is providing assistance to family members left behind.

UNHCR is aware of as many as 96 Afghan citizens who were forcibly returned to Afghanistan, including the refolement of at least 80 refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR calls on the Government of Tajikistan to uphold international protection standards.

- On 30 December, UNHCR conducted a **handover ceremony at the Vahdat Youth Centre of the recently renovated IT classroom**. With most refugees in Tajikistan residing in Vahdat, UNHCR provides targeted support to the Youth Centre, recognizing its vital role within the community. To improve the quality and accessibility of IT classes for both refugee and local youth, the classroom has also been equipped with 10 computers, projector and screen, and new furniture.
- In 2024, UNHCR **supported 997 refugees (69% women) with livelihoods activities**, including vocational training, apprenticeship program, business training, provision of tool kits and small grants and connecting to employment.
- In 2024, UNHCR provided **multi-purpose cash grants to 178 vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers** to support them to cover their basic or emergency needs. A further 100 people received disability allowances and 196 received medical reimbursements.

Ending Statelessness

- On 1 October, UNHCR partner Chashma held a **roundtable discussion in Bokhtar city on "Prevention of Statelessness: Strengthening Cooperation between NGOs and Local Authorities in the Khatlon Region"**. The event was attended by the Deputy Head of the Passport and Registration Service (PRS) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, along with heads of regional PRS offices from 20 target districts in Khatlon region.
- In collaboration with UNHCR Moldova, from 7 to 10 October 2024, UNHCR Tajikistan conducted a **study visit for seven government officials and two NGO representatives to Chisinau to learn from statelessness best practices of Moldova**. The visit included the Migration Accommodation Centre in Chisinau where foreigners identified as being irregularly on the territory are put in detention/public custody, with some detainees applying for stateless status in the absence of any documentation. Discussions were held with the migration authority about statelessness determination procedures, integration programmes for stateless people, access to free legal assistance and interpretation services at both administrative and judicial levels.

- On 11 December, UNHCR and the Ministry of Justice hosted a **roundtable event on progress achieved during the 10-year #IBelong campaign, and in support of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness**. Eighteen participants attended, including representatives from the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour, Migration, and Employment of the Population, civil registry offices, and UNHCR NGO partners.

READ ALSO



Read also: [Emerging from the shadows: ending statelessness in Central Asia](#)

TURKMENISTAN

State Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol State Party to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions

Ending Statelessness

- At the UNHCR Executive Committee Meeting in Geneva, on 15 October the **Government of Turkmenistan announced that it had officially resolved all known cases of statelessness on its territory, becoming only the second country in the world to do so**. Granting citizenship to more than 32,000 people including refugees and stateless people in recent years, the Government of Turkmenistan attributed its achievement to a combination of strong political will, legislative reform, international cooperation and the modernization of civil identification and registration systems. On 15 October, Turkmenistan **officially submitted its application to join the new Global Alliance to End Statelessness – the first State in Central Asia to become a member**.

The Government of Turkmenistan has officially resolved all known cases of statelessness on its territory, and joined the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

- Ahead of the Ministerial Conference on Ending Statelessness in Central Asia, on 6 November **UNHCR conducted an information session for over 30 journalists in Ashgabat**. The session sought to familiarize media with the topic and terminology to support accurate reporting on statelessness at the conference and going forward.
- While on official visit in Ashgabat, on 7 November, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Hai Kyung Jun, delivered a **lecture on statelessness and the importance of ensuring everyone has a nationality** for over 150 students from the faculties of Law, Diplomacy, and International Relations at Institute of International Relations, the International University for Humanities and Development, and Magtymguly Turkmen State University in Ashgabat.

UZBEKISTAN

- On 11 December, UNHCR delivered two lectures on **the protection of rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people** for over 100 students majoring in international relations and law at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy and the Tashkent State University of Law. Students were also informed about the main results of the global #IBelong campaign and new opportunities within the new Global Alliance to End Statelessness.
- On 13 December, UNHCR convened a **training on “Statelessness and Asylum: Legal Insights” for 38 students of the Legal Clinic of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy** in Tashkent. The one-day training covered key topics related to international legal frameworks on asylum and statelessness, including UNHCR’s mandate, global efforts to end statelessness, and strategic litigation. Participants discussed issues such as the prevention of statelessness, achievements of the #IBelong Campaign in Central Asia, and tools for addressing asylum, nationality, and statelessness cases.

Protecting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- Together with the UN Country Team in Uzbekistan, on 24 November, **UNHCR met with Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan, Ismatulla Irgashev**, in Termez, highlighting protection of forcibly displaced Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan. UNHCR also gave a tour of its Humanitarian Logistics Hub, including the recently completed solar panel farm installed in partnership with LONGi Green Technology Co.
- As part of a wider global partnership with LONGi Green Technology Co Ltd, UNHCR is implementing an afforestation project to **bolster environmental protection in Termez and mitigate the impacts of extreme weather, while providing income generation and employment opportunities** for forcibly displaced Afghan citizens and vulnerable members of the host community. On 22 November, UNHCR, together with project partners UNDP, UNECE, and the Government of Uzbekistan, conducted a joint monitoring mission of project sites.



With over 70% of forcibly displaced people coming from or living in countries that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, UNHCR contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 13: To take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

- From 17 to 19 December, UNHCR, in collaboration with IOM, **distributed winter clothing items** donated by Fast Retailing/ UNIQLO to 132 forcibly displaced and 65 vulnerable host community families in Termez. The clothing is one part of a larger contribution from UNIQLO also distributed to refugees, asylum-seekers, and host community in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Responding to Emergencies

- On 15 November, UNHCR announced the **completion of a groundbreaking project to solarize the UNHCR Humanitarian Logistics Hub** in Termez. Part of a wider UNHCR-LONGi climate action partnership, the 700kW solar photovoltaic powerplant is expected to generate around 989,993kWh of electricity annually, reducing the Hub’s reliance on the electricity grid and lowering carbon emissions by approximately 495 metric tons per year.

READ ALSO



Read also: [Solarization of the Emergency Stockpile in Uzbekistan Completed](#)

- As of 31 December 2024, UNHCR has managed a **total cargo turnover of 721 trucks and four airlifts from its Humanitarian Logistics Hub in Termez** to support emergency responses in Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Iran, Moldova, Myanmar, Poland, Pakistan, Romania, and Tajikistan, totalling 7,197 metric tons of relief items – including blankets, solar lamps, plastic sheets, family tents, jerrycans, buckets, refugee housing units and kitchen sets.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- As a member of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan UN Country Teams and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, UNHCR engages with governments, UN and development partners, international financial institutions and others across Central Asia to ensure refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people are not left behind in States' achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Representatives from the Governments of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan came together in Almaty to discuss implementation of pledges to the Global Compact on Refugees and efforts to end statelessness.

Thank you for the support

UNHCR is grateful for contributions directly to operations in Central Asia, as well as donors of unearmarked and flexible funding, including:



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See also:

- unhcr.org/centralasia for the latest news and stories
- reporting.unhcr.org/kazakhstan for 2025 strategy, budget and funding updates
- data.unhcr.org/en/situations/central_asia for population figures and data.

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UNHCR maintains email and phone 'hotlines' across the four countries for anyone in need of information or consultation on refugee and asylum issues. People forced to flee can find key contacts and updated information about asylum procedures in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on help.unhcr.org/centralasia, in English, Russian and Dari.



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