

# Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran

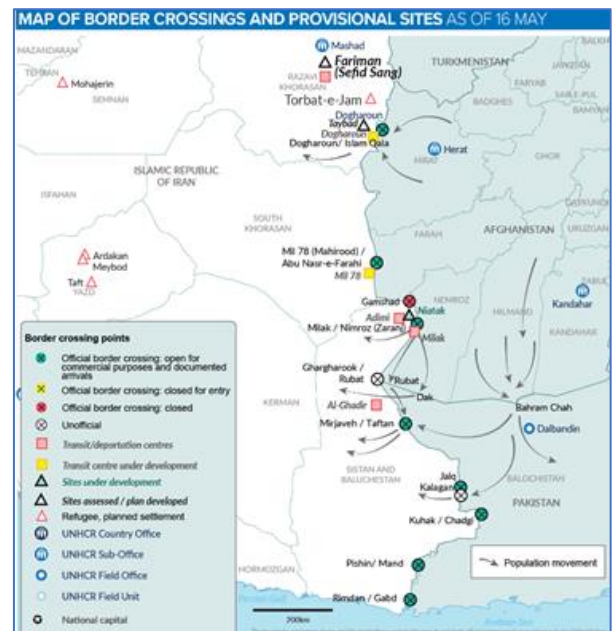
16 May - 15 June 2022

## KEY FIGURES

Over **822,546** persons have been internally displaced in Afghanistan since the start of 2021, of which 20% are women and 60% are children. Approximately **170,000** have now returned to their previous places of residence, as the security situation improves.

According to evolving estimates by the Government of Iran, approx. **500,000** to **1 million** Afghans have arrived in Iran in 2021<sup>1</sup>. Some **39,107** Afghans who arrived in Iran from 1 January 2021 to 11 June 2022 have approached UNHCR requesting assistance and protection. The 2022 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Afghanistan situation, launched in January 2022, estimates that **274,000** new arrivals will remain in Iran.

New arrivals add to the in situ Afghan population already in Iran. Based on the information provided by BAFIA, **800,000** refugees are currently in the country (of whom **780,000** are Afghans and **20,000** Iraqis).



## HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2022 headcount exercise was a Government led census of the undocumented Afghan population and an important step to regularize their presence in Iran. Whilst the legal implications of participation in the 2022 Headcount are still unclear, it is understood that those who participate will be afforded a certain level of protection including against refoulement and access to services. Conversely, as a timebound exercise, the 2022 Headcount cannot be understood as a comprehensive ongoing registration mechanism. Official statements announcing harsh measures for undocumented Afghans who fail to participate in the 2022 Headcount are particularly of concern to UNHCR in the absence of an open, functional, transparent and easily accessible asylum system in Iran<sup>2</sup>.
  - The cost of registration and participation in the ongoing headcount exercise for undocumented Afghans is 270,000 Rials per individual at Pishkhan centres, and 310,000 Rials per individual at Kefalat Centres.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR relies on the Government of Iran for the information and data on displaced people, including the Afghan population in Iran. According to various government estimates, 500,000-1,000,000 Afghans have newly fled to Iran since the deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan in 2021. As the situation in Afghanistan remains volatile, UNHCR foresees that Afghans will continue to flee to Iran in the coming months. Based on UNHCR estimates, 65% of all new arrivals are returned by the government, and smaller percentages include people who will continue moving to Turkey and the EU, and those who chose to come to Iran for economic or family reasons before returning to Afghanistan voluntarily. UNHCR estimates that by the end of 2022, 274,000 new arrivals will remain in Iran and will need protection and assistance.

<sup>2</sup> The deadline for the headcount exercise was extended from 22 to 30 June 2022.

- UNHCR Iran provides complementary information on the headcount exercise on its website (both in [Persian](#) and [English](#)) and on its [Instagram account](#) for undocumented Afghan nationals.
- The review of the bill on establishing the National Migration Organization (NMO) is ongoing in the Internal Affairs and Councils Committee of the Parliament, according to the head of the Councils Committee on [12 June 2022](#). The establishment of the NMO is introduced as part of a broader general parliamentary draft bill called "Regularization of Foreign Nationals. This draft bill is still under review and may undergo several revisions before being submitted to the parliament. Meanwhile, UNHCR is reviewing its provisions and implications for our operations and PoCs and is closely monitoring the developments in the parliament on establishing this new organization. UNHCR has requested BAFIA to facilitate a meeting with the members of the parliament (given the fact that UNHCR is restricted from reaching out to them directly) to further explain UNHCR's mandate, structure, and efforts to advocate for more support for Iran.

## DISPLACEMENT TO IRAN

- From 20 May to 2 June, the UNHCR Field Office Tehran (FOT) has received, screened and registered in ProGres around 150 newly arrived Afghan households. Based on the accounts provided by them, over 40% of them have entered Iran in the course of March-May 2022. This indicates a continued arrival of the Afghans to Iran. Such concerns as deteriorating economic conditions, former membership in the social groups and/ or affiliation with international organization and general insecurity have been cited as the main driver for their flights. Requests for support with resettlement to a third country as well as financial assistance to help sustain them have been noted as the main reasons of approach to the UNHCR FOT.
- UNHCR's Sub-Office in Shiraz has established contact with the BAFIA in Charmahal Bakhtiari province, a "No-Go Area" (NGA) for Afghan nationals since 2012, for the first time in the context of the ongoing headcount exercise. Due to the NGA status, UNHCR had not previously engaged with this provincial BAFIA. The following information has been obtained:
  - **115** Afghans with valid residence status are present in the Charmahal Bakhtiari province, of which **27** Amayesh cardholders and 88 passport holders. All of them are born or married to Iranian women, with the marriages having been lawfully registered.
  - An estimated **500-600** undocumented Afghans reside in the province, including those with expired Amayesh cards or LPs.
- The Fariman facility is located approximately 80 km away from Mashhad in Khorasan Razavi province and functions as a transit/reception area where BAFIA hosts newly arrived Afghans who voluntarily report themselves to border guards for assistance and asylum at Khorasan Razavi province border points. According to the manager of Fariman facility, some **2,300** individuals who were previously in Fariman have since been given Laissez-Passers and been allowed to leave to urban settings in Mashhad. Currently, **156** families/ **841** individuals, to whom UNHCR distributed WASH kits, remain in the facility while it was reported that there were **250** families/ **1,200** individuals at the end of 31 May. According to the Head of the Fariman Facility, some families departed to urban Mashhad; they have been screened and may receive documentation when they are relocated to Torbat-e-Jam refugee settlement or allowed to move to urban settings. UNHCR appreciated the hybrid approach and reiterated that it is essential to be clear on the definition and policy of the government as this dictates the level of UNHCR/international agencies' engagement/ disengagement.



Visit to a facility accommodating new arrivals in Fariman

## RETURNS TO AFGHANISTAN

- Afghans who are apprehended while trying to enter Iran continue to be returned to Afghanistan by the Government of Iran despite UNHCR's non-return advisory and advocacy for those fleeing conflict to be provided asylum. Through the analysis of available data and information, **UNHCR estimates that 65% of all newly arriving Afghan asylum seekers are deported from Iran by the Government.** In

February 2022, UNHCR issued a [Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan](#), superseding the previously issues non-return advisory in August 2021. In the same vein, UNHCR continues to call on asylum States to ensure that Afghans whose claim for international protection was rejected prior to the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban are able to lodge a fresh or subsequent claim, on the basis that the current situation in Afghanistan amounts to changed circumstances that may give rise to a need for international protection as refugees or otherwise.

## THE REGIONAL RESPONSE PLAN (RRP) 2022

- A dashboard giving an overview of the RRP response by humanitarian partners (UNHCR, WFP, NRC and RI), covering Q1 (1 January – 31 March 2022) can be accessed [here](#). The interactive dashboard consists of an overview of key achievements, overview of the funding tracker, activities reported by agencies, and population groups reached by RRP activities at a provincial level.
- A Refugee Response Group (RRG, formerly the RECG) meeting was held on May 26. UNHCR provided an update on situation vis a vis new arrivals in Torbat E Jam and Fariman as well as the ongoing headcount exercise being undertaken by GIRI. In addition to this, key guidelines being developed by the Protection Sector outlining protection considerations in relation to partner engagement in Torbat e Jam and similar sites was provided for RRG input and endorsement on way forward.
- Inter-Agency coordination has been initiated for the Fariman site with the purpose of responding to the needs of persons of concern who are at the Fariman facility. UNHCR has planned to organize the distribution of core-relief items (e.g. blankets) and non-food items (e.g. stationary packs for children under 10 years old).

## FUNDING NEEDS

The total [interagency regional funding needs](#) under the RRP in 2022 are:

- **USD 623 million.**
- Including almost **USD 263.7 million for UNHCR** alone.

For Iran, under the RRP in 2022, interagency needs are:

- **USD 259 million.**
- Including **USD 119.4 million for UNHCR**

## FUNDING UPDATE

As of 20 June 2022, UNHCR's **overall programs in Iran** (regular and emergency programming) were **75% funded**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to the operation in Iran, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programs with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds. Whilst interest in the current emergency is relevant and opportune, UNHCR wishes to also highlight ongoing regular programming needs which are severely underfunded.

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Earmarked contributions for the Iran operation amount to some **USD 40.2 million**.

**Germany** 16.9 million | **EU** 7.4 million | **Italy** 5.6 million | **United Kingdom** 3.4 million | **Japan** 1.5 million  
**France** 1.0 million | **Republic of Korea** 0.7 million | **UN Programme On HIV/AIDS** 0.06 million

### SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

**Private donors USA** 12.1 million | **France** 11.5 million | **Austria** 10.6 million | **Denmark** 7.6 million | **Private donor Australia** 6.4 million | **Australia** 4.4 million | **Switzerland** 4.3 million | **Netherlands** 4 million

**Private donors Australia Germany** 3.4 million | **Private donors United Kingdom** 3.0 million | **Spain** 2.3 million

#### MAJOR UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions:

**Sweden** 99.3 million | **Norway** 72.5 million | **Netherlands** 37.2 million | **Denmark** 35.6 million | **Private donors Spain** 32.7 million | **Germany** 27 million | **Private donors Japan** 21.8 million | **France** 18.5 million | **Switzerland** 18.4 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 16.4 million | **Private donors USA** 15 million | **Belgium** 11.9 million | **Ireland** 11.8 million | **Italy** 10 million

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