

Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran

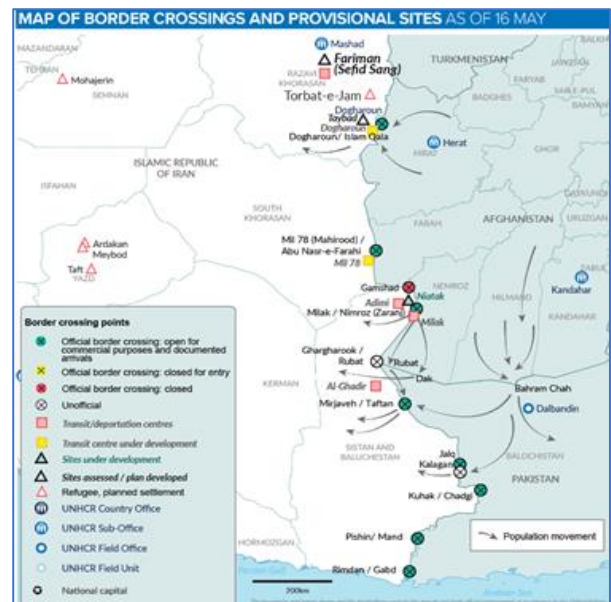
16-30 June 2022

KEY FIGURES

Over **822,546** persons have been internally displaced in Afghanistan since the start of 2021, of which 20 per cent are women and 60 per cent 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 came to Iran in 2021¹. Arrivals have continued during 2022 due to further deterioration of the human rights and socio-economic situation in Afghanistan.

Some **40,714** Afghans who arrived in Iran from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2022 have approached UNHCR requesting assistance and protection (*of whom 27,816 from 1 January to 31 December 2021 and 12,898 from 1 January to 30 June 2022).



The 2022 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Afghanistan situation, estimates that **274,000** of the new arrivals/ asylum seekers, including those that have arrived in 2021, will remain in Iran by end of 2022.

DISPLACEMENT TO IRAN

- The Headcount exercise for undocumented Afghans, which began in April, ended on 30 June 2022. According to the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA), some **2.1** million Afghan nationals had been registered in the recount programme. The Government of Iran is currently analyzing the results of the headcount which will be shared with UNHCR in due course. Those who participated in the headcount exercise have received headcount slips valid until 22 October 2022. The validity of the headcount slip might be extended until the government decides the exact type of documentation to be provided to counted Afghans. Most importantly, the headcount slips will seemingly provide Afghans temporary protection against forced return. UNHCR is following up with authorities regarding the results and will monitor the situation to identify possible challenges and opportunities for further advocacy with BAFIA. In a meeting with the Director General of BAFIA Central, UNHCR emphasised the need to consider giving another chance to those who have not undergone the headcount exercise, but who may yet be in need

¹ 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..

of international refugee protection. UNHCR will continue to provide legal support and counseling to persons of concern regarding their documentation status by UNHCR Hired Lawyer (UHLS).

- The Government of Iran, through BAFIA, has launched a new round of *Amayesh* and *Hoviat* cards renewal for all Afghans and Iraqi refugees. According to the announcement issued by BAFIA, the validity date of the current *Amayesh* 16 and *Hoviat*² 15 cards will be extended till 22 September in order to prevent interruptions in the provision of services to the refugees. While seeking further information from BAFIA on the renewal process, UNHCR is also exploring how to support the Government for the effective undertaking of the exercise.

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.** These numbers could change, following the conclusion of the headcount exercise as different government representatives have iterated the government's stance to deport those who did not participate in the headcount exercise. UNHCR during its meetings with BAFIA continues to advocate against the forced return of Afghans who have not undergone the headcount exercise, but who may yet be in need of international refugee protection. February 2022, UNHCR issued a [Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan](#), superseding the previously issued 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.
- By the end of June, UNHCR facilitated the repatriation of **173** returnees to Afghanistan and one returnee to Iraq. This represents a 75% decrease compared to the **706** returns facilitated in the same period in 2021, which can be attributed to instability and continued fragile conditions in Afghanistan.

THE REGIONAL RESPONSE PLAN (RRP) 2022

- A joint high-level BAFIA-UN/INGO mission to Niatak, Sistan and Baluchistan, took place from 28-29 June to jointly review the progress of the Niatak site and prioritize activities to be completed for new arrivals in anticipation of their move. The mission was led by the Director General of BAFIA Central, Mr. Rezadoust, with the presence of the UNHCR Acting Representative and Representatives from UNICEF, UNFPA, as well as Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Relief International. The visit to the site by the inter-agency mission helped to clarify commitments by agencies on the provision of various services to the settlement, stressing the need for coordinated efforts on protection, education, livelihoods, and health services to be initiated in parallel to infrastructural development. The mission also visited a multi-purpose community centre in Zahedan run by Pars Development Actors (PDA) and NRC with education, life skills training, and livelihood opportunities provided to refugees and informal school for undocumented children run by the PDA. Following the site visit,



BAFIA-UN/INGO mission



On-going construction at Niatak Site

² *Amayesh* cards are issued to registered Afghans refugees and *Hoviat* cards are issued to registered Iraqi refugees by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

a coordination meeting was held in the provincial capital of Zahedan together with BAFIA as well as relevant local authorities. BAFIA assured more frequent technical visits will be facilitated to Sistan Baluchistan while also mentioning that it may take time to change the status of the province from no-go area for foreign nationals.

- For the Torbat E Jam (TeJ) settlement, agencies continued coordinating to support the relocations of new arrivals from Fariman. On WASH, UNHCR received a letter from BAFIA requesting interventions related to the water network in the settlement, including for assessment, design, extension, and implementation. Designs for WASH blocks that will be constructed under a Relief International-UNICEF agreement in TeJ have been shared with BAFIA for review and approval, with the preparations for tendering ongoing in parallel. BAFIA Central has also approved construction of communal WASH blocks. These developments are considered positive since UNHCR and partners have consistently advocated, in line with global policy, for refugees to be accommodated and integrated in urban settings or existing settlements.

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 28 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 Germany 3.4 million | **Private donors United Kingdom** 3.0 million | **Norway** 2.8 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 | **United Kingdom** 28.1 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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