

Afghanistan

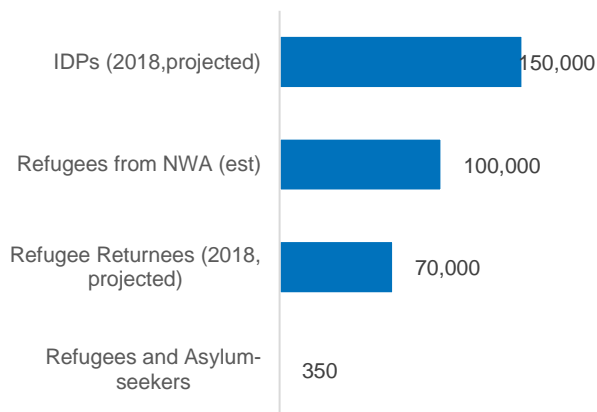
February 2018

In 2017, **58,817** refugees have returned to Afghanistan from neighboring and non-neighboring countries (**57,411** Pakistan).

17,168 individuals have been newly displaced by conflict since 1 January 2018 and profiled by OCHA as internally displaced persons (IDPs).

87,247 Pakistani refugees from North-Waziristan Agency biometrically registered in Khost province and verified in Paktika province.

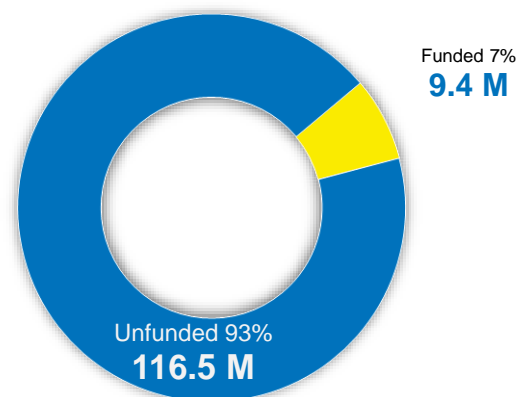
PROJECTED POPULATION OF CONCERN IN 2018



FUNDING (AS OF 13 FEBRUARY 2018)

USD 125.8 M

requested for Afghanistan



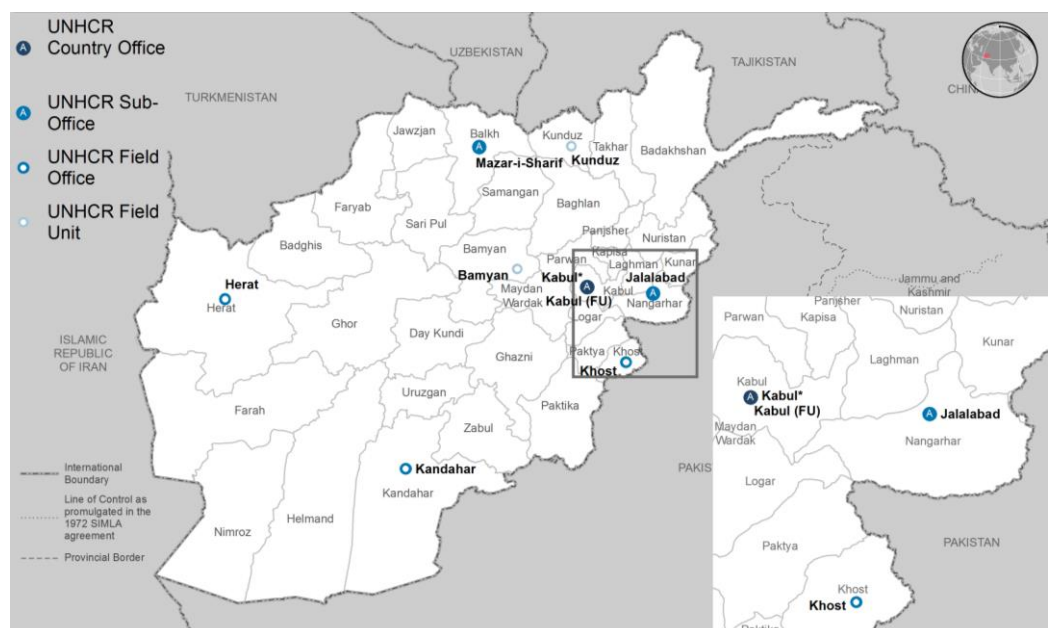
UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

205 National Staff
29 International Staff
15% female / 85% male

Offices:

- 1 Country Office in Kabul
- 2 Sub Offices in Jalalabad and Mazar
- 6 Field Offices in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Kunduz, Bamyan



Main Activities

Repatriation

UNHCR Facilitated Voluntary Repatriation (VolRep) Programme

UNHCR continues to facilitate voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran in conditions of safety and dignity, under the Tripartite Agreements with the respective Governments and UNHCR. The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) is the regional platform for Afghan refugees (Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan). UNHCR's facilitated Voluntary Repatriation programme from Pakistan entered a three-month winter break from 1 December 2017 to 28 February 2018.

- In 2017, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of 58,817 individuals (98% from Pakistan, 2% from Iran and other countries).

Cash Grant

Through protection monitoring, UNHCR has identified that unconditional cash grants to returnees are one of the most effective means to prevent, reduce, and respond to protection risks and vulnerabilities. The cash grant remains a key component of UNHCR's Protection Strategy to assist returnees to meet their immediate humanitarian needs, as well as transport to their place of origin or destination. UNHCR provides cash assistance of an average of US\$200 per person through its four Encashment Centres.

- In 2018, UNHCR assisted 170 individuals who returned to Afghanistan with cash grants (117 from Iran, 35 from Tajikistan, 12 from India and 6 from Pakistan who were processed in 2017), as of 14 February.

Management of Encashment Centres

UNHCR in coordination with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR/DoRR) and its implementing partners manages four Encashment Centres, located in Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat and Kabul. In addition to cash grants, a range of services including basic health screening, referrals to emergency services and vaccinations for children (Ministry of Public Health supported by WHO and UNICEF), mine risk awareness (UNMAS and the Danish Demining Group (DDG)), educational information, referral for information and legal assistance to obtain civil documentation (*tazkira*), child friendly spaces and a transit facility for overnight accommodation is provided by the Ministry of Public Health supported by WHO and UNICEF.

At the Centres, UNHCR also conducts household level interviews to assess the voluntary nature of return, return trends and protection risks in asylum and during return. During interviews persons with specific needs are identified by UNHCR and DoRR/MoRR and referred to service providers for assessment and potential assistance.

Refugee Returnees and IDPs

Protection Monitoring

UNHCR systematically and regularly collects, verifies and analyses information over an extended period of time to identify violations of rights and protection risks for IDPs, returnees and host communities for the purpose of informing effective responses. Protection risk analysis helps to inform the overall humanitarian response and uphold the Centrality of Protection. UNHCR's protection monitoring is the basis to plan interventions for persons with specific needs and community based interventions; and assists UNHCR and partners in overall programme planning and response, as well as supplies evidence for advocacy efforts.

UNHCR, in collaboration with Orange Door Research and Viamo, is using mobile data collection to enhance the analysis of the data collected through protection monitoring, its better categorisation and most importantly – systematisation of the



Arezo works at the UNHCR call center in Kabul and conducts protection/returnee monitoring of returnees and internally displaced persons through phone surveys. ©UNHCR/ S. Rich

evidence to inform advocacy and interventions. Analysis of the collected data is key to its effective usage: UNHCR is in the process of developing a new analytical framework that will inform the key priorities and areas of work.

- In 2017, 106,912 persons of concern were reached through protection monitoring

Returnee Monitoring

Returnee monitoring is an integral part of the protection monitoring system in Afghanistan: it consists of three components: monitoring upon arrival at the Encashment Centre; regular phone surveys of the representative sample upon settlement of returnees in communities and monitoring of returnees in their communities using a community based approach. UNHCR has also signed a project partnership agreement (PPA) on an inter-agency information centre (implemented by UNOPS, and funded by UNHCR and WFP) in December 2017. The centre will refer concerns received through calls to UNHCR and appropriate agencies for follow-up, and provide a basis for a feedback mechanism to the Government.

Persons with Specific Needs (PSN)

UNHCR's People with Specific Needs (PSN) programme provides targeted assistance on an individual basis to people with acute vulnerabilities and protection risks amongst UNHCR persons of concern: documented returnees, refugees, conflict-induced IDPs. Extremely vulnerable individuals from the local communities and undocumented returnees are also considered as beneficiaries, on an exceptional basis. The main objective of the program is to mitigate and respond to the individual emergency protection risks putting in place the self-reliance of each individual when designing a response.

- In 2017, 7,265 persons with specific needs have been provided with targeted protection assistance (in-kind or cash), indirectly supporting nearly 51,000 persons.

Community based Protection Measures

UNHCR supports community based protection measures, to reduce protection risks and vulnerabilities while fostering peaceful coexistence and reintegration of returnees and IDPs with local/host communities. These measures include: community support infrastructure facilities, in-cash and in-kind support for subsistence, promoting representation in community decision-making structures, and skills development for employment, particularly focused on women and youth.

The measures focus on community empowerment in line with the existing job market demand and include: (i) innovative approaches such as UNHCR's Global MADE51 for artisans' development and Graduation approach for the most vulnerable; and (ii) establishing/promoting linkages with the Afghanistan Government's National Priority Programmes, development agencies initiatives, and fostering partnerships with the local and international private sector to link to medium and longer term interventions for sustainability.

- In 2017, 23 high return/displacement communities were targeted with community protection measures, which has benefitted nearly 80,000 families (over 500,000 individuals). In 2018, UNHCR plans to reach over 100 communities, benefitting nearly 2 million Afghans.



Returnees construct anti-flood canal as part of community based protection cash-for-work initiative to support community assets and infrastructure in Kabul province. ©UNHCR/ S. Rich



Walikhani, a returnee and beneficiary of UNHCR's Community Protection Measures for livelihoods development, milks his cow in Kabul province. UNHCR has supported four cow farms, each with ten cows for ten persons of concern. ©UNHCR/ S. Rich

Winterisation

As lead Agency of the Emergency Shelter/NFI Cluster, UNHCR participates in year-end inter-agency efforts to address seasonal vulnerability. To cope with an unexpectedly harsh 2017/18 winter, UNHCR planned the distribution of unconditional cash assistance (approximately US\$200) for assessed/selected vulnerable persons of concern in all 34 provinces. The distribution of cash supports local markets, as beneficiaries purchased items such as heating fuel, warm clothing, household goods, and food. Winter blankets and clothes (from UNIQLO) will additionally be distributed for the identified most vulnerable families.

- From November 2017 to January 2018, UNHCR and partners distributed winter assistance to 54,309 families.

Protection Cluster and Emergency Shelter/Non Food Items Cluster

UNHCR's presence and active involvement in the inter-agency humanitarian coordination mechanisms and leadership of the Protection Cluster (including co-leadership of the Housing, Land and Property Task Force) and the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES/NFI) Cluster remains crucial to promote efficiency and responsiveness of coordination and response.

- In 2017, 22,559 families (137,974 individuals) received NFIs following emergency assessments.

Efforts are directed towards action oriented and cross cutting coordination. To that aim, UNHCR is leading a review process of protection priorities for Afghanistan within the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), to refocus on the protection of civilians and displacement related protection concerns, as well as mobilizing relevant stakeholders for longer term interventions to strengthen the protective environment. UNHCR is also reinforcing coordination between regional and national levels by documenting protection concerns and engaging in advocacy to ensure response.

UNHCR promotes protection mainstreaming analysis in all sectors of the Humanitarian Response Plan, to ensure the protection of civilians remains the first priority given the increasing scale, complexity, and geographical scope of the conflict in Afghanistan and rising civilian casualties. In light of this, UNHCR is working closely with UNAMA and UNMAS to prevent risks related to IED/Mine/UXO as well as to promote respect of International Humanitarian Law by parties to the conflict.

Durable Solutions

Tripartite Commission and Quadripartite Steering Committee meetings

The **29th Tripartite Commission** (Afghanistan, Pakistan and UNHCR) and **20th Tripartite Commission meetings** (Afghanistan, Iran and UNHCR) – hosted by the Government of Afghanistan – took place on 30 November 2017 in Istanbul. All parties reaffirmed their commitment to work together to ensure the voluntary return of Afghan refugees in safety and dignity, and to joint resource mobilisation to support solutions and host communities in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The **5th Quadripartite Steering Committee meeting** (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and UNHCR) – hosted by the Government of Afghanistan – also took place on 1 December 2017 in Istanbul. The Governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and UNHCR reaffirmed the significance and relevance of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) to continue to implement reintegration and lasting solutions for Afghan refugees in the region and committed to a continuation of the SSAR, although it has not yet been endorsed by the Governments of Pakistan and Iran.

UNHCR Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran offices have worked together on the 2018-19 UNHCR regional strategy under the umbrella of the SSAR for enhancing resilience and co-existence through greater responsibility-sharing, including strengthened partnership with development stakeholders.

DiREC and national policy framework support

As an active member of the DiREC Technical and Finance Working Groups and co-chair of the DiREC Policy Working Group, UNHCR supports the GoIRA to implement the Policy Framework for Return and Displacement and the related national Action Plan and provincial Action Plans. UNHCR advocates with Government ministries and development actors for the needs of returnees and IDPs in national policy frameworks, development plans (Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF)) and priority programmes and mainstreaming of protection issues. UNHCR also advocates for the implementation of the IDP Policy (2013) and Policy Framework for Return and Displacement (2016).

The Humanitarian and Development Nexus

UNHCR works to strengthen the link between humanitarian and development through partnerships with development actors (mainly the World Bank) and the private sector to ensure access to documentation, livelihoods and essential services and to facilitate the representation of women in community decision making.

- In November 2017, UNHCR and the World Bank Group signed a data sharing agreement to better support reintegration of Afghan refugee returnees through strengthened data collection and analysis.

Herat and Jalalabad

To implement policy into action, UNHCR spearheaded two inter-agency initiatives on durable solutions in Herat and Nangarhar provinces with national and provincial ministries and Agencies (UNICEF, WHO, IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat, WFP and FAO). These initiatives translate national plans into provincial planning and joint programming in areas of high return and displacement. In Herat UNHCR and partners contributed with construction of shelter, a clinic and a school, in Jalalabad UNHCR and partners, with line departments and Agencies, are conducting a joint market assessment and designing sustainable livelihoods programmes through strengthened partnerships with development actors and the private sector.

- In February 2018, the proposed site in Jalalabad has been approved/selected by the provincial DiREC.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Khost and Paktika

Afghanistan is hosting Pakistani refugees who fled North Waziristan Agency in 2014 in Khost and Paktika. UNHCR has completed biometric registration in Khost and verification in Paktika where access is limited due to insecurity. Owing to cultural barriers and the reluctance of some to share biometric information, some refugee families have not yet registered. In 2018, UNHCR Khost is in the process of conducting biometric registration at Gulan refugee camp for the un-registered populations in Khost and Paktika. The total population is estimated to be approximately 100,000.



Pakistani refugee boys drink from the stand pipe (water fountain) established in Gulan refugee camp in Khost province, as part of UNHCR's WASH interventions. ©UNHCR/ S.Rich

UNHCR leads camp management and coordination in Gulan refugee camp which hosts over 17,000 Pakistani refugees but many have settled in host communities and benefit from UNHCR and partner's

community based protection measures. With the emergency phase of displacement over, UNHCR is transitioning to a protection strategy built on targeted assistance to persons with specific needs and designed to build capacity, self-reliance and resilience, while coordinating with partners and advocating with donors to ensure continuity of essential services for the refugee population; including basic health care, WASH, and education among others.

Urban Refugees and Asylum Seekers

UNHCR prioritizes interim solutions for urban asylum-seekers and refugees pending the passage of a national refugee law and implementation of a national asylum framework. UNHCR conducts registration and, in some cases, refugee status determination (RSD), as a protection tool. Local integration is currently unattainable for legal, social, economic and other reasons, and resettlement opportunities are scarce, while the nature of certain refugee claims will continue to prevent their return to the country of origin in conditions of safety and dignity. The provision of targeted subsistence allowance and assistance to PSNs (cash-based and in-kind) aims to reduce their vulnerability. Through advocacy with the Government of Afghanistan, UNHCR mitigates protection risks, including detention and refoulement and has developed agreements with line ministries to ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees have access to basic services such as education and health care.

Working with Partners and Coordination

- UNHCR's direct counterpart in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) is the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR). UNHCR is also working with numerous line ministries.
- Within the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and UN Country Team (UNCT), UNHCR is working with UN agencies. UNHCR also works with international and national NGOs, the World Bank and the private sector.



UNHCR and IOM Representatives (centre) and staff at the joint strategic workshop to strengthen partnerships for return and reintegration, protection and data in Kabul ©E. Schwoerer

○ On 7 February, UNHCR and IOM held a one-day strategic workshop to strategize on strengthening partnership for synergies and collaboration in Afghanistan. UNHCR and IOM agreed to establish three working groups on return and reintegration, protection, and data; a joint plan with practical short to mid-term goals and activities for 2018 is being developed.

■ UNHCR is part of the Tripartite/Quadripartite mechanisms established with the Governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran to plan coordinate and undertake repatriation of Afghan refugees and the implementation of the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).

■ In line with the regional framework of the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR is an active member of the Government

of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) Displacement and Return Executive Committee (DiREC), co-chairs the related Policy Working Group and is a member of the Technical and Finance Working Groups.

- UNHCR advocates and works with development actors to support the Government's policies and national priority programmes for interim and longer term solutions.
- UNHCR works with 18 national and 10 international partners to implement programmes across the country.
- UNHCR leads the Protection and the Emergency Shelter and NFI Clusters. The two Clusters are co-chaired: Protection with NRC and ES/NFI Cluster with IOM.
- UNHCR also leads coordination of the Pakistani refugee response in Khost and Paktika provinces.
- UNHCR is co-leading the Durable Solutions Working Group with the Government, at the national and sub-national levels to strengthen the links between humanitarian and development for reintegration of returnees and IDPs.
- UNHCR Afghanistan works closely with UNHCR Iran and Pakistan for a regional approach to anticipate challenges and align efforts including advocacy and fundraising and share best practices and lessons learned; as well as on cross-border programming for livelihoods.
- UNHCR maintains close relationships with the donor community through donor briefings, consultations and regular dialogue and coordinating visits, among others.
- UNHCR is working to harmonize data and strengthen information management to enhance protection outcomes. Through an inclusive and participatory approach UNHCR is engaging with Persons of Concern to UNHCR to generate data and evidence-based results to demonstrate the impact of UNHCR programmes, identify gaps for strategic direction and programming, and inform the wider humanitarian community.

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed regionally and directly to the operation (as at 13 February 2018).

Australia | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Canada | China | Denmark | Estonia | European Union | Finland | Germany | Iceland | Indonesia | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Monaco | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Serbia | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Sweden | Switzerland | Thailand | Turkey | United Kingdom | United Arab Emirates | United States of America | UN Peacebuilding Fund | Uruguay
| Private Donors |

1. All financial information contained in this update is indicative and does not constitute official UNHCR financial reporting.
2. Unrestricted and regional funds mentioned above include all sub-regional and regional contributions worldwide.

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Operational data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/afg>