

# Pakistan

30 June 2020

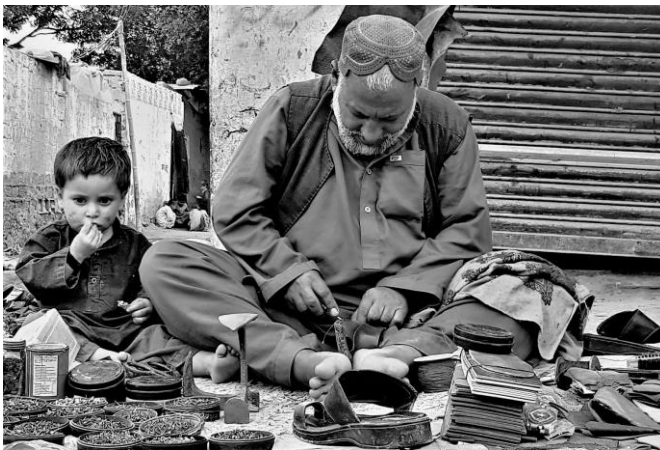
**\*28** registered refugees who returned to Afghanistan between 1 January – 30 June 2020

**5,904** Afghan refugees whose births were registered between 1 January – 30 June 2020

**12,060** Afghan refugees who have received legal assistance between 1 January – 30 June 2020

Personal protective equipment (PPEs) was provided to the health workers in **54** refugee villages to protect themselves during the pandemic

**2,145** individuals (Afghan refugees and Pakistanis) received livelihoods assistance



In an Afghan settlement in Karachi, an Afghan refugee's daily struggle consists of repairing shoes for other refugees. His joy comes from caring for his grandson. © UNHCR/S. Altaf

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin	Total persons of concern
Afghan refugees with proof of registration (PoR) cards	1,421,946
Afghan mandate refugees (without PoR cards)	3,015
Somalia (refugees)	181
Others (refugees)	341
Asylum-seekers	9,713

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff

**\*\*198** national staff

**36** international staff

### Offices

**One** Country Office in Islamabad

**Two** Sub-Offices in Peshawar and Quetta

**Presence** in Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat and Loralai



In Panian refugee village, an Afghan refugee is busy hand painting bed feet in order to provide his community members with a good night's sleep. ©UNHCR/S. Altaf

\* The voluntary repatriation process was suspended on 30 November 2019 for the winter break and resumed from 2 March 2020. It was suspended again on 17 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan. Please refer to the UNHCR Afghanistan Situation Data Portal and the UNHCR Pakistan website for the latest updates.  
 \*\* Affiliate workforce is included.

## Working with partners

- UNHCR collaborates closely with the Government of Pakistan. It works jointly with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), as well as the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the Commissionerates for Afghan Refugees at the provincial level.
- UNHCR partners with a range of national and international non-governmental organizations to provide protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as collaborates with non-implementing partners, such as the World Bank, sister UN agencies and private sector partners.

## Main activities

### Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

- The regional multi-year Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) provides a framework for cooperation between humanitarian and development actors to address the needs of Afghan refugees and the communities that host them. It supports the pursuit of durable solutions, as well as youth empowerment through education, the development of vocational skills and livelihoods training. The SSAR was previously extended until 2021.
- Aligned with the SSAR, a dedicated Support Platform for SSAR was launched on 16 December 2019, one day prior to the Global Refugee Forum. The Support Platform seeks to achieve: (i) enhanced international solidarity and burden-sharing for the Afghan refugee situation, resulting in stronger political and financial commitments to achieve solutions; (ii) additional investments and expanded partnerships for coherent humanitarian and development responses that increase absorption capacity for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, while easing the burden on host communities in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan; and (iii) sustained visibility for the Afghan situation by linking the SSAR to the Global Compact on Refugees, enabling the sharing of regional good practices and lessons learned, showcasing the positive contributions of refugees to their host country and community and advocating for the implementation in the subregion of unassigned pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum.
- A High-Level Meeting on the Support Platform for the SSAR was convened by the United Nations High Commissioner on 6 July 2020. During the event, several States participated, took the floor to make remarks and expressed their interest in joining an action-oriented Core Group of the Support Platform.

### Protection and durable solutions

- **Voluntary repatriation:** UNHCR usually operates two Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Pakistan where refugees wishing to repatriate to Afghanistan must deregister. From November to the end of February, voluntary repatriation was temporarily suspended during the winter months. On 2 March 2020, UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme resumed, but it was suspended until further notice on 17 March due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The centres remained closed during the reporting period.
- UNHCR continued to implement its cash assistance programme, which is similar to the Federal Government's *Ehsaas* emergency cash programme where vulnerable families receive Rs.12,000 to cover a four-month period. The emergency assistance will help an initial 36,000 eligible refugee families to meet their urgent needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The refugees began receiving cash assistance in the month of May.
- **Legal assistance:** UNHCR operates nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas. Eight of these centres are run by UNHCR's partner, SHARP. The remaining centre is run by another partner, SEHER.

- In June 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of 1,865 persons of concern. During the month, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for 31 arrested/detained persons of concern and secured the release of all. In most cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested persons of concern before they were formally charged by law enforcement. Also, the majority were released within 24 hours. In addition, ALAC partners represented in court 14 persons of concern who had been charged under the Foreigners Act (dealing with the unauthorized stay of foreigners) and other preventive laws (allowing preventive detention of persons acting in a manner prejudicial to the integrity, security and defence of the country and public order). These interventions resulted in court-ordered releases.
- During the reporting period, partner staff provided individual legal counselling to 170 persons of concern who visited the ALACs, as well as legal advice to 1,231 persons of concern through the ALAC helplines. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modification, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) information, and the asylum application process were the main issues addressed when providing assistance. Out-of-court legal assistance was also given to 415 persons of concern, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.
- UNHCR and ALAC staff organized a legal camp in June, reaching five people. Refugees shared various issues affecting their communities. Partner staff informed refugees of free legal aid available and helpline services.

**In June:**

- *A total of 1,865 individuals received legal assistance;*
- *31 individuals were arrested/detained and all were released;*
- *14 individuals were provided with court representation;*
- *170 individuals received individual legal counselling; and*
- *1,231 people were assisted through ALAC helplines.*

**Community-based protection**

- Some 14,000 vulnerable refugees were provided with information on COVID-19 prevention and referral mechanisms through UNHCR's helplines and counselling by telephone.
- More than 16,300 refugee Outreach Volunteers, community committees and community leaders were reached with information on UNHCR's cash assistance programme through in-person visits, WhatsApp and counselling by telephone, along with the distribution of 15,200 cash assistance posters and flyers.
- Some 9,700 refugees attended sensitization sessions organized by refugee Outreach Volunteers, shuras and community mobilizers in small groups countrywide.
- Approximately 3,000 active Outreach Volunteers and community committee members received PKR 500 (USD 3) mobile top-up cards to continue their efforts in sharing information with refugee communities and in providing UNHCR with updates on the current situation during the pandemic. These Outreach Volunteers and community committee members play a vital role in spreading key messages on COVID-19 through tele-outreach within their communities.
- The distribution of cash incentives for school teachers in refugee villages has commenced. So far, 90 per cent of the teachers have received their incentives through online transfers, while the rest are expected to receive their incentives in the coming weeks.
- As part of the broader response to COVID-19, pandemic sensitization of Outreach Volunteers and refugee elders is ongoing. During the reporting period, 49 Outreach Volunteers, focal points and elders participated in these sessions where discussions were focused on the Government's approved messages on COVID-19 prevention measures, basic "do's and don'ts" along with psychological first aid.

- A three-day online workshop was organized by UNHCR's partner, ICMC, in Islamabad for eight refugee children and youth to learn to work with oil paints and pastels. The facilitator was internationally renowned artist, Michael Henry Ferrell. This activity was part of World Refugee Day activities. This year's theme was "Everyone Can Make a Difference. Every Action Counts".

### Education

- All UNHCR-supported schools in refugee villages were closed in March. They remained closed during the reporting period as per the directives of the Government of Pakistan.
- As part of preparations for the reopening of schools in September, UNHCR is upgrading WASH facilities in refugee village schools and procuring hygiene materials.
- Some 413 DAFI scholars continued to be supported by UNHCR in 2020.

### Health

- UNHCR Sub-Office in Quetta provided 5,000 N95 facemasks to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority in Balochistan for onward distribution to public health facilities.
- Health education sessions on tuberculosis awareness and COVID-19 prevention measures were conducted in the refugee villages of Zar Karez in Loralai District and Posti and Chaghi in Chaghi District, Balochistan. Some 109 individuals participated in 54 health sessions which were conducted while maintaining social distancing protocols. In addition, 108 households were visited to collect information regarding possible cases of COVID-19.
- All health facilities in the refugee villages of Surkhab and New Saranan in Pishin District, Chaghi and Posti in Chaghi District, and Mohammad Khail in Quetta District remained functional during the month of June 2020.
- UNHCR Sub-Office in Peshawar provided 10,000 N95 facemasks, 155,000 surgical facemasks, 1,700 250ml bottles of hand sanitizer and 45,600 pairs of surgical gloves to UNHCR partners to protect their staff while working for refugee communities. The protective equipment was provided to the following partners: Project Directorate Health (PDH); Frontier Primary Health Care (FPHC); International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC); Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRCs); Initiative for Development and Empowerment Axis (IDEA); Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP); and the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR).
- **Community engagement:** During the reporting period, nearly 1,500 health education sessions were conducted by male and female community health workers with some 6,400 participants. The topics addressed in sessions included prevention and awareness of COVID-19, malaria, diarrheal diseases, acute respiratory infections and dengue. Referral to district health hospitals were also discussed. Additionally, as part of community engagement, approximately 1,400 meetings were conducted with village health committees, religious leaders and shuras. Some 4,808 refugees participated in these meetings. *Pesh Imams* (prayer leaders) continued to play a key role in the prevention of COVID-19 at their mosques.
- Partners have adopted the policy of "No Mask, No Entry" at health facilities.
- **Social Stigma:** A certain level of fear has been noted among refugees and host communities regarding medical care in government hospitals. As a result, those who may have been infected with COVID-19 face stigma and often delay before seeking health care. UNHCR, in collaboration with its partners, is working to develop a strategy to address such issues of social stigma that create barriers to accessing health services.



## Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme

- Since 2009, UNHCR, together with the Government of Pakistan, has implemented the RAHA programme, an initiative which supports the implementation of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. Through RAHA, a wide variety of projects have been carried out in the sectors of education, health, livelihoods, infrastructure, water, sanitation and social protection. In 2019, the RAHA programme marked 10 years. During this decade, RAHA supported more than 4,250 projects which aligned with UNHCR's livelihoods, education and health strategies, all aiming to ensure greater inclusion of Afghan refugees in public systems and structures.
  - All the necessary groundwork has been completed for the implementation of the 15 projects in 2020, but a delay in implementation was expected due to COVID-19.
- *In total, 4,273 projects have been completed since 2009.*
  - *12.4 million beneficiaries in the projects implemented in 47 districts of Pakistan.*
  - *14 projects in 2019.*
  - *15 projects in 2020.*

## External/donors relations

### Earmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 30 June 2020)<sup>1</sup>

Australia | Canada | Denmark | European Union | IRTHI-NAMA Women Advancement Establishment | Japan | Norway | Switzerland | United Nations Development Programme | United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS | United States of America | Miscellaneous private donors

### Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 30 June 2020)<sup>2</sup>

Denmark | France | Germany | Norway | Netherlands | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | Private donors in Japan | Private donors in the Republic of Korea | Private donors in Spain

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## LINKS

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Data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/pak>

<sup>1</sup> Contributions to Pakistan are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.

<sup>2</sup> Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Only donors who have contributed \$10 million or more are indicated.

