

Pakistan

November 2020

Overview

COVID-19 cases continued to increase during the month of November. Over 3,000 cases were recorded daily during the last week of the month, and the trend persisted. Total number of cases as of 30 November was 398,024, with 8,025 deaths. Out of the total 48,576 active cases, 2,543 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 were hospitalized. For the first time in five months, the country's case positivity rate climbed to nearly 10 per cent. The Government responded to this second wave by closing educational institutions and imposing fresh restrictions on restaurants and public gatherings. However, the general public appeared to ignore most precautionary measures, as they continued to visit shopping areas and mosques in large numbers. Government hinted that it may adopt stricter measures to counter the rapid spread of the virus.



During a visit to Pakistan, Mr. Indrika Ratwatte, Director for UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific, marked the distribution of emergency cash assistance to 50,000 vulnerable refugee families on 10 November 2020. ©UNHCR/A. Shahzad

UNHCR's regular activities continued to take place while adhering to Standard Operating Procedures for COVID-19. In this regard, UNHCR staff and management visited refugee villages and hosting areas regularly to interact with partners and refugees, keep aware of the situation on the ground and monitor activities.



Social Protection

Cash distribution to the most vulnerable refugee families continued in the course of November. A total of 58,000 families received this assistance which mirrors the Government's *Ehsaas* emergency cash program, where vulnerable families receive Rs.12,000 (approximately \$77) to cover a 4-month period. Cash assistance is being disbursed in 55 districts across Pakistan through an innovative partnership with the Pakistan Post.

58,000 vulnerable refugee families have so far received emergency cash assistance.



With more than over half of the cash distributions completed, UNHCR and partners conducted a post-distribution survey and interviews with refugees that received the assistance. ©UNHCR/Z. Saleah



Communication with Communities

UNHCR and partners continued to visit refugee villages and communities in urban areas to raise awareness of COVID-19. Community mobilizers, refugee Outreach Volunteers and partner staff supported small group trainings and awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 prevention and mitigating measures for different groups of their community, including youth. During the month of November, a total of 623 community-based protection awareness sessions were conducted through UNHCR and partner staff. Some 2,300 female and

3,300 male refugees, Outreach Volunteers, refugee elders, community committee members and youth participated.

16,300 refugee Outreach Volunteers, community committees and community leaders and 9,700 refugees helped UNHCR reach out to the Afghan refugee population.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

In November, WASH interventions in 14 government health facilities near refugee villages were completed in KP province. These included the provision of clean drinking water, the repair of hand-washing areas, and the repair or reconstruction of toilets. UNHCR continued to train community resource persons to manage WASH-related activities in refugee villages. So far, 380 community resource persons have been trained and 4,590 individuals have directly benefited from hygiene sessions.



Information materials such as posters helped convey important messages on the prevention of COVID-19 infections. A refugee reads a poster in a refugee village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. © SRSP

169 water, sanitation and hygiene projects have been completed by UNHCR and partners in the COVID-19 response.



Health

UNHCR continues to procure additional health equipment for distribution to partners and government health facilities. To raise awareness of health issues, community health workers conducted 781 health education sessions with 4,180 participants on the prevention of COVID-19, acute and chronic diseases as well as referrals. Similarly, meetings were conducted with *shuras*, community members and religious leaders in refugee villages and hosting areas.

So far, more than 530,000 masks, 841,000 gloves and 4,000 gowns have been distributed.



Despite COVID-19 restrictions, UNHCR staff continued to visit and interact with partners and refugees. Mr. Bernard Inkoom, Head of the Sub-Office in Peshawar, visited Akora refugee village and interacted with the partner staff at the Mother and Child Health Centre. ©UNHCR/M. Arif

Funding

Reflected within the revised UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, UNHCR's global appeal amounts to \$745 million. UNHCR has so far received \$471 million, or 63 per cent of the requirements. In Pakistan, UNHCR's requirements amount to \$20.6 million. UNHCR has received generous contributions from the Governments of Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as from the European Union. UNHCR has also received in-kind donations of soap and disinfectants from the private sector partner, Unilever, and in-kind donations of hand sanitizer and reusable sanitary clothes from private sector donors from the Republic of Korea.

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