

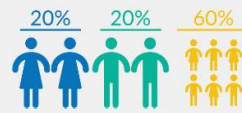
KEY DISPLACEMENT FIGURES

 **3.4M**

Estimated internally displaced persons (IDPs) by conflict within Afghanistan as of 1 December 2021¹

 **699,123**

Estimated total conflict induced IDPs within Afghanistan since 1 January 2021²


 **72,481**

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Afghanistan as of 31 December 2021

 **2.2M**

Refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan in neighboring countries as of 31 December 2020

 **141,200**

Reported newly arrived Afghans in need of international protection to neighbouring countries since 1 January 2021³

HIGHLIGHTS

- The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has continued to deteriorate, particularly since the onset of the harsh winter season, which has made travel and access country more challenging, including by air. More than half of the population of the country is currently dependent on life-saving and essential assistance and, as the UN Secretary General has [stated](#), virtually all people could face acute poverty without a more concerted effort from the international community. The situation remains particularly difficult for internally displaced people, many of whom live in makeshift shelters in basic conditions, away from their places of origin.
- In view of the situation, UN and NGO partners launched joint response plans on 11 January appealing for over \$5 billion in aid to deliver vital humanitarian relief to 22 million people in Afghanistan, as well as 5.7 million refugees and host communities in five neighbouring countries. The Humanitarian Response Plan for responding inside Afghanistan requires \$4.44 billion – the largest humanitarian appeal ever launched for a country – and includes needs to support internally displaced people. UNHCR leads on the emergency shelter and non-food item (ES/NFI) cluster and protection cluster of the inter-sector response inside the country.
- Furthermore, the Regional Refugee Response Plan requires \$623 million in funding for 40 organisations working in neighbouring countries in protection, health and nutrition, food security, shelter and non-food items, water and sanitation, livelihoods and resilience, education and logistics and telecoms. At the launch of the response plan, the High Commissioner for Refugees underscored the risk of further displacement both within the country and throughout the region if the international community does not step-up support rapidly.
- In response to the situation inside Afghanistan, UNHCR has continued to scale up its humanitarian assistance, particularly with the onset of the winter season. In 2021, UNHCR in total supported some 1.15 million people with emergency assistance, which included cash for winterization to more than a quarter of a million people, and shelter assistance to nearly 100,000 people. Since the beginning of 2022 [1-15 January], UNHCR has provided the following assistance to displaced persons and people in need:

Emergency Assistance provided in 2022 (as of 15 January)



28,000* persons supported



17 provinces reached



15,300 persons benefited from cash for winterization



6,000 persons benefited from cash assistance for Protection needs



1,400 persons benefited from core relief items



1,000 persons benefited from cash for rent, shelter/shelter repair



900 persons benefited from cash for Reintegration (CARE)



800 persons benefited from insulation kit distribution

Legend: **XXX** assistance provided in 2022

*The total persons supported may include multiple counting of beneficiaries receiving assistance through more than one activity during the reporting period.

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¹ This figure comprises the 2020 year-end figure of 2.9M (Source: UNHCR), the total estimated conflict induced IDPs within Afghanistan since 1 January (Source: OCHA), excluding the estimation of IDPs which have returned to their places of origin (Source: UNHCR).

² Source OCHA, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/idps>

³ The number of new arrivals includes those who approached UNHCR and Partners in Tajikistan (5,710) and Iran (29,350), those collected largely through key informant interviews in Pakistan (89,350), new arrivals reported by the Government of Uzbekistan (13,020), as well as the Afghans who were kept by the Iranian authorities at border locations (3,780) since 1 January 2021, although only 738 individuals of the latter group remain in the country. The vast majority of those interviewed report leaving Afghanistan for security-related reasons. The overall number of Afghans with international refugee protection needs is likely to be much higher. The increase on the overall figure does not necessarily reflect the displacement of that same period, but rather the date of assessment.

- In addition, finding solutions for internally displaced people, particularly as now much of the previous conflict has stabilised, remains a priority for UNHCR. In the last two weeks, UNHCR provided nearly a 1,000 internally displaced people with cash to help them reintegrate into their places of origin upon return, as well as cash for transportation to nearly 500 people to help them to return safely to their places of origin. Out of the nearly 700,000 new IDPs since January of 2021, UNHCR estimates that nearly 170,000 have so far returned to their places of origin, largely to the southern and north-eastern regions of the country.
- While UNHCR and the UN continues to have humanitarian access to most of the country, there remains limited female presence in the field. In many locations, field access of female staff remains conditional to the presence of a Mahram and specific clothing, particularly in rural areas. There is need for continued dialogue and advocacy with the de facto authorities to ensure the full participation of women and girls in public life and allowing female humanitarian workers to conduct missions freely. Restrictions on women's involvement in humanitarian activities directly impacts on the ability of women and girls to access critical services across the country.



Mohammad Sadiq 58, pictured with some of his children. Mohammed has 12 in his family. As Mohammed has no work they are behind on the rent but cash help and from UNHCR has helped. But says he needs a lot more, as "I am old man and no one will employ me." © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

REGIONAL

- UNHCR has recorded 141,210 newly arriving Afghans who may be in need of international protection to neighbouring countries since the start of 2021 (full breakdown in footnote 3). The overall number of Afghans in need of international protection are thought to be higher. The majority of those interviewed report leaving Afghanistan for security-related reasons. Basic needs cited by those newly arriving Afghans interviewed in Iran and Pakistan include access to shelter, livelihoods, food and documentation, with a large majority of those undocumented Afghans in Iran also citing concerns regarding detention and forced return.
- In Iran, UNHCR has seen an increase in the number of approaches by newly arrived Afghans in need of international protection. Most Afghans fleeing to Iran are doing so in an irregular manner through unofficial border crossings and with the help of smugglers, as official border points remain closed for entry to persons without valid passports and visas intending to seek asylum. Local media citing the Iranian authorities continue to estimate upwards of 5,000 newly arriving individuals per day into Iran. In Pakistan, Afghans with Tazkira cards are able to cross in Chaman. At Torkham, locals from the Shinwari tribe are able to cross with passports. Afghans in critical medical conditions are also allowed to enter Pakistan at both crossings on humanitarian grounds.

- Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have closed their borders with Afghanistan, though some new arrivals have still been recorded. According to Government of Uzbekistan sources, some 13,020 Afghan citizens arrived in the country since January 2021. The majority arrived before August 15 with valid visas issued by the Uzbek consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif. This group is currently unwilling and unable to return and UNHCR considers that they may be in need of international protection.
- Deportations of Afghans to the country continue to be a concern. In January to date, for instance, UNHCR has observed an average daily deportation rate of over 1,100 Afghans from Iran. UNHCR continues to call on countries to keep their borders open to those seeking safety, as well as draw to attention UNHCR's non-return advisory for Afghanistan, calling for a bar on forced returns of Afghan nationals in the current circumstances.
- In 2021, nearly 1,400 refugee returnees from neighbouring countries were supported by UNHCR to return and reintegrate in Afghanistan. In the first six months of 2021, the returnee average was around 191 individuals per month, with a peak in March of 265. There was a clear drop in the second half of the year figures, where the monthly average returnee figure drops to 36. 84% of the returnees in 2021 arrived in the first 6 months of the year.

