

Afghanistan

February 2022

The humanitarian crisis is ongoing in Afghanistan and so is the response to assist the Afghan people. Despite enormous challenges UNHCR along with other UN and humanitarian agencies have undertaken a massive operation in Afghanistan through the

recent winter. UNHCR continues to mobilize resources to deliver life-saving assistance to millions of Afghans facing starvation in harsh conditions amidst the economic collapse. The 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) estimates that

some 24.4 million of the Afghanistan's estimated 42 million population will need protection and humanitarian support this year. UNHCR is also working with others to broaden humanitarian access for further interventions.

KEY INDICATORS

480,000

of persons assisted so far in 2022 including 118,000 who received emergency aid

- **74,248 individuals**
Provided with cash assistance
- **44,297 individuals**
Provided with in-kind and other assistance
- **364,455 individuals**
Benefited from services in the 55 PAARs
- **15,655 individuals**
Assessed

POPULATION OF CONCERN

As of 28 February

Asylum-seekers and refugees	72,453
Internally displaced Afghans	3.4M*
Refugee returnees in 2022	92**
Refugee returnees 2021/2022	1,455

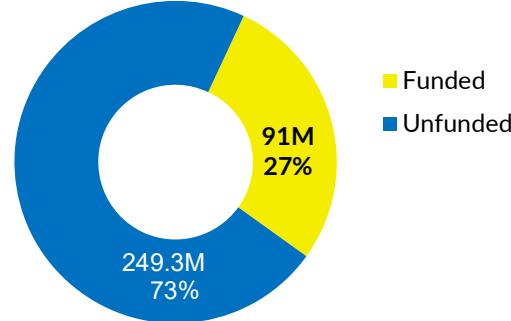
*Estimates of IDPs in Afghanistan are provided by OCHA.

**Refugee returnees represent those who have returned from Jan 2021 to Feb 2022 (Source: UNHCR)

FUNDING (AS OF 01 MARCH 2022)

USD 340.3 million

requested for the Afghanistan Operation



Joint-UN Agencies Field Mission to Paktika, South-East Afghanistan between Jan 29 – 3 Feb ©UNHCR

Update on Achievements

Operational Context

Afghanistan is still experiencing a staggering humanitarian crisis on an unprecedent level and scale. The severity of the situation is further exacerbated by the potential for insecurity, political and economic uncertainty, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 700,000 new conflict-related displacements have been jointly verified since the beginning of 2021 – 80 per cent of them women and children. 3.4 million people are estimated to be displaced internally due to conflict while more than 2 million are refugees in neighboring countries. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), some 24.4 million of Afghanistan's estimated 42 million population will need humanitarian and protection assistance this year.



Emergency Shelter Kits (ESK) and Core Relief Items (CRI) distribution in Badghis Province © UNHCR

Key Developments



UNHCR Afghanistan's Community-Based Protection interventions focus on life-saving assistance through improving access to essential services that enhances protection environment which mitigates further protection risks, as well as support for resilient and peaceful communities. Fostering local integration as well as decreasing pressure on the shared resources in communities is important, particularly in the areas of high displacement and return, pursued through interventions that buttress UNHCR's area-based programming in the priority areas of return and reintegration (PARRs).

As the lead Protection agency, UNHCR monitors the protection environment through inter-agency frameworks and its community-based protection monitoring mechanisms. This approach ensures that protection risks are mitigated, specific needs are addressed and that the people of concern including

the most vulnerable individuals are able to meet their basic needs through financial, in-kind assistance and referral to appropriate services in response to protection and socioeconomic risks.

Achievements and Impact

- During the first two months of 2022 (Jan-Feb), UNHCR provided nearly 60,000 individuals with protection support and assistance, which include various forms of protection monitoring in the areas of refugee return and other locations through refugee returnees monitoring, persons interviewed during border monitoring and households monitored/assessed. As the key protection assistance and support, refugee returnees received voluntary repatriation grants; in-kind assistance and referrals; individuals including persons with specific needs (PSNs) were provided with cash for their basic needs and other support while others received psycho-social support (PSS). DAFI students and urban refugees also received various support enhancing access to higher education. Under the Communicating with Community (CwC) and Accountability to Affected People (AAP) approach, UNHCR Protection team also handled some 1,732 phone calls, sent 373 tailored email responses, and provided 6,269 queries on general information requested. 298 urban refugees were provided with monthly cash support. The interventions have significantly helped to reduce protection risks, restore the dignity of beneficiaries, and mitigate some of the gaps created by the ongoing socio-economic crisis in the country.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- To effectively respond to the growing protection needs of affected populations in Afghanistan, UNHCR plans to assist some 490,000 beneficiaries in 2022 under its community-based protection framework. In addition to the global economic impact of COVID-19, events in Afghanistan after August 2021, have severely affected the coping mechanisms of vulnerable population groups in the country and increased the protection risks of internally displaced people, refugee returnees, as well as some 72,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in the country. UNHCR is continuing its advocacy and mobilizing resources for the protection of all the targeted affected populations in need of protection services.



Education is part of UNHCR Afghanistan's multi-faceted approach implemented to benefit affected communities through construction of schools to facilitate access to an inclusive learning environment for those in need including groups with specific needs. UNHCR's interventions focus on building on past achievements in the 55 Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs), which seek to build long-term solutions for affected communities.

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR as part of efforts to improve access to education, UNHCR constructed of 37 schools including three girls' schools, two internet cafés, and one Youth Learning Centre in 2021. In 2022, UNHCR is supporting the upgrading of existing educational facilities and will construct new schools in the 55 PARRs. This support has effectively responded to the education needs of conflicted affected children and continues to promote peaceful coexistence with host communities.
- With the support of UNHCR, Afghan students, who are returning refugees, started courses in February at Afghan universities. UNHCR provided 40 students - 50 percent of them women benefiting from DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarships with a monthly cash grant. By opening a programme for qualified returnees in Afghanistan, DAFI is

supporting returning refugees to continue their education. The DAFI programme serves as a foundation for social and professional development, allowing its scholars to build careers in competitive fields of employment and thereby also contributes to the progress of their respective countries.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Education for women and girls requires continuous advocacy efforts to help them continue their education at schools. There is also a need to ensure that existing education systems are resourced – including teachers and supporting staff's salaries – and appropriate measures to ensure service continuity.



Afghan students (returning refugees) benefiting from DAFI Scholarships. © Ahmadi, UNHCR



Achievements and Impact

- End of February, 22,339 women and girls received sanitary kits as part of a life-saving assistance intervention by UNHCR. In addition, UNHCR provided 1,405 persons with psycho-social support during the reporting period. During 2021, UNHCR improved access to health services through construction of 10 health clinics and provided of Mental Health and Psychosocial Services (MHPSS).

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Risks associated with economic collapse and increase in humanitarian needs are further compounded by armed conflict, climate change, insufficient health services and the COVID-19 pandemic. This could potentially drive additional internal displacements as well as force Afghans to seek refuge outside the country.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Achievements and Impact

- End of February, UNHCR had provided life-saving multi-sectoral assistance to more than 120,000 new IDPs and those affected by the armed conflict. In addition, cash for winterization was provided to 56,950 people to among others, support their food security and nutrition needs.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- According to the World Food Programme (WFP) February 2022 Afghanistan Countrywide Monthly Market Price Bulletin, prices of main food commodities in Afghanistan are now significantly higher than in the first half of 2021 - prior to the withdrawal of international forces and collapse of the previous government. A regular food basket now costs more than 82 per cent of the average family income. It is estimated that 95 per cent of Afghans are now facing food insecurity- some 23 million people, over half of the country's population facing acute food insecurity. The value of the local currency incrementally decreasing putting a further strain on household income and expenditure.



WATER AND SANITATION

Achievements and Impact

- In 2021, UNHCR supported 40 communities through improving access to WASH and infrastructure facilities including construction of two water distribution schemes, and two solar-powered water wells. Over January and February this year, UNHCR provided 15,459 people with core relief items including jerry cans and buckets to store clean drinking water.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Shortage of safe drinking water and water for handwashing have led to watery diarrhoea outbreaks, particularly among children.



SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIS)

Shelter

- A core part of UNHCR's work is providing access to adequate shelter to persons in need. In Afghanistan, UNHCR is responding to the emergency in terms of tent distribution and installation, construction and maintenance of emergency shelter kits and shelter rehabilitation. UNHCR provides shelter support to refugee and IDP returnees to repair their partially damaged homes in their areas of origin, including the provision of cash for minor repairs. UNHCR also works on repair of essential services infrastructure and public facilities in the PAARs.

CRIs

- UNHCR provides non-food items to internally displaced persons, returnees and vulnerable host community members based on needs. The standard family kit of core relief items is intended for the average household of seven and it comprise high thermal blankets, jerry cans, plastic sheets, kitchen sets and solar lamps. Supplementary and seasonal items are also distributed and can include winter jackets, and hygiene kits.

Achievements and Impact

- Between January and February, UNHCR distributed 3,500 emergency shelter kits, and a total of 1,106 people received cash for rent and shelter repair. The assistance helped to empower beneficiaries address their shelter repair needs and pay rent so that they wouldn't be evicted from their accommodations.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The refusal of *de facto* authorities across all provinces to allow for the participation of female staff in the full spectrum of humanitarian response – particularly during assessments – has caused delays to operational activities.



ACCESS TO ENERGY

Achievements and Impact

- In February, UNHCR provided 1,960 people with clean energy support including distribution of solar equipment to ensure consistent lighting, facilitating home-based livelihood opportunities, children's education, fostering safer environments, and mitigating against protection risks including gender-based violations.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

Fostering local integration as well as decreasing pressure on the shared resources in communities is important, particularly in the areas of high displacement and return, which is being pursued through interventions that buttress UNHCR's area-based programming in PARRs. Under the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR is supporting refugees who voluntarily decide to repatriate and is conduct returnee monitoring upon their arrival to collect real-time information on return trends, reasons, and to understand their protection situation during the return and reintegration progresses.

Achievements and Impact

- Between January and February this year, UNHCR supported 15,907 individuals with cash assistance for reintegration (CARE), entrepreneurship and business support assistance, and to benefit from constructed schools, clinics/infrastructure.
- UNHCR continues investments in crucial areas such as health and education to support the sustainable reintegration of refugees and IDPs who previously returned to their areas of origin or may do so in the future, as well as the local communities and displaced people living in areas of return.
- Since 2021, UNHCR enhanced livelihood opportunities for 2,300 persons through market-based vocational and technical trainings including job placement and business support.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Achievements and Impact

- To leverage work being undertaken by humanitarian agencies to strengthen the sustainable reintegration, self-reliance and durable solutions potential for returnees, refugees, and IDPs, UNHCR has engaged strategically with key donors and supporters of the Core Group of the SSAR Support Platform and other actors such as the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, UN-Habitat, UN Children's Fund, the Aga Khan Network, BRAC, United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP), International Labor Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Health Organization (WHO) and various NGOs around key thematic areas. UNHCR also continues to engage with the private sector, members of the host community and civil society organizations, promoting inclusion and participation.

- UNHCR will continue to engage on a regional level through the Quadripartite Steering Committee of the SAAR and in Afghanistan through the One-UN and UN Transitional Engagement Framework to support and provide life-saving assistance and facilitate access to basic services for people of concern, as well as identifying and providing support for durable solutions. In addition, UNHCR will continue to lead the Protection Cluster and the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster. UNHCR is also leading the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Working Group, co-leading the Return and Reintegration Working Group with IOM and co-chairing the Housing Land and Property Task Force with UN-Habitat.



Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR scaled up its winter response programme to protect and IDPs, refugee and IDP returnees as well as affected host communities.

Working in partnership

UNHCR is working within the inter-agency collaboration frameworks involving UN and other humanitarian agencies. UNHCR, as lead agency for the Protection, Camp Management and Camp Coordination (CCCM) Working Group and Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Item (ES-NFI) Clusters, is advocating for the centrality of protection in the humanitarian response in Afghanistan, such as increased operational presence and accelerated localization and partnership modalities. A strong focus is maintained not only on emergency response but also on middle-longer-term solutions for IDPs as well as returnees and vulnerable in the displacement affected communities.

Further, to consolidate the gains and enhance the complementarities for solutions, UNHCR has initiated and expanded partnerships with diverse actors in Afghanistan, including UN agencies – United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Habitat, International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Women, International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), private sector - Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, (ACCI), Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI), international non-governmental organizations -Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) BRAC, and development actors – the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and German Agency for International Cooperation GIZ). In this regard, UNHCR signed Letters of Intent (LoIs) with UNDP, ILO, UN-Habitat, UN Women, FAO, UNODC, AKDN/AKAH, BRAC, and AWCCI aiming at “strengthening cooperation between the organizations in addressing the complex challenges of displacement and achieving the collective objectives in the PARRs as well as other areas of origin and or areas of displacement”. To operationalize the partnerships, corresponding Action Plans have been devised for each LoI outlining key areas of complementarity and the joint programmes are currently ongoing. Alongside, UNHCR engages with the De facto authorities to ensure the access to PoC and to provide timely assistance to meet their needs.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

Earmarked Contributions | USD

Earmarked contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 91 million**.

Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan  15.8 million

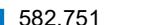
European Union  9.0 million

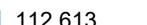
Switzerland  4.3 million

Italy  1.7 million

Norway  1.7 million

Canada  1.6 million

Luxembourg  582,751

Estonia  112,613

Pooled fund  500,000

Others  96,337

Indicative allocation of funds and...  55.7 million

Other Softly Earmarked Contributions | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of softly earmarked contributions that can potentially be used for this operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region.

Germany 95.9 million | United States of America 34.9 million | Private donors Australia 15.9 million | Austria 11.8 million | France 11.5 million | Private donors Germany 5.8 million | Private donors Spain 5.6 million | Private donors Denmark 5.1 million | Denmark 4.8 million | Netherlands 4.1 million | Norway 4.1 million | Private donors United Kingdom 3.9 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 3.1 million | Japan 2.9 million | Private donors USA 2.3 million | Private donors Canada 2.1 million | Canada | Czechia | Iceland | Ireland | Jersey | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | New Zealand | Poland | Slovakia | Slovenia | Spain | Private donors

Unearmarked Contributions | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Norway 80 million | Private donors Spain 75.9 million | Sweden 75.4 million | United Kingdom 40.4 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 38.8 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Private donors Japan 30.9 million | Germany 26 million | Japan 23.4 million | France 20.2 million | Private donors Italy 19.6 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Sweden 15.5 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Italy 10.7 million | Private donors USA 10.6 million | Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Austria | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | South Africa | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private donors

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UNHCR Afghanistan is grateful for contributions by the following donors



OPERATIONAL UPDATE

