

KEY DISPLACEMENT FIGURES


 **3.25M**

Estimated internally displaced persons (IDPs) by conflict within Afghanistan as of 30 June 2023

 **512,000**

 Total returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan since 15 September 2023¹
 **52,160**

Refugees in Afghanistan as of 30 June 2023

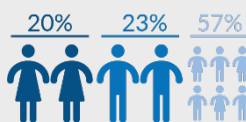
 **31,600**

IDP returnees recorded in 2023

 **5.3M**

Refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan in neighbouring countries as of 30 November 2023

 **2,000**

 Refugee returns to Afghanistan in 2024²

 **1.6M**

 Afghan new arrivals to neighbouring countries since August 2021³

HIGHLIGHTS

- In January, UNHCR and partners released the summary of the [2024-2025 Regional Refugee Response Plan \(RRP\)](#) for the Afghanistan situation outlining the strategic priorities partners in Iran and Pakistan will pursue. The evolution of the RRP into a multi-year plan advances multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approaches in support of Afghans and their host communities via community-based interventions, cross-border collaboration, and durable solutions within the framework of the [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees](#). This transition will enable UNHCR and partners to deliver greater opportunities for longer-term resilience, inclusion, and solutions and ensure more predictable funding. The proposed activities in 2024-2025 will be supported by over 50 partners: 13 UN agencies, 19 international non-governmental organizations and 19 national non-governmental organizations. The inter-agency funding appeal for 2024 amounts to \$620 million which is needed to provide protection and assistance to some 7.3 million people. The full RRP will be released in the coming weeks.
- In January, a joint senior-level mission from UNHCR HQ and RBAP visited Afghanistan and Pakistan to assess UNHCR's cross-border response. The delegation included the Director for International Protection, Director for the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply, Head of Protection Service for the Asia-Pacific region and Chief of Section (Staff Welfare). During the visit to Pakistan from 17 to 21 January, the delegation met with legal aid partners and visited a Proof of Registration Card Modification Centre, Voluntary Repatriation Centre and a UNHCR warehouse in Peshawar. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the delegation met with the provincial authorities and refugees, including new arrivals. In Islamabad, the delegation met with several donors, partners, and government counterparts, including the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry for States and Frontier Regions, to discuss the 'Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan' and proposed screening mechanism for new arrivals. From 21 to 24 January, the delegation was in Afghanistan and paid courtesy visits to the Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation and Acting Director General of UN/International Conferences at the de facto Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Jalalabad, the delegation met with several stakeholders, including the Acting Deputy Governor of Nangarhar Province and the Acting Director of the Department of Refugees and Repatriation, and visited the Torkham border and reception facilities.
- The number of returnees entering Afghanistan from Pakistan continued to decline with over 500,000 returns recorded since 15 September 2023. In Afghanistan, UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance to Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum seeker certificate holders and other protection referrals. Since 15 September 2023, some 77,500 individuals who returned from Pakistan have been provided with cash assistance in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad Encashment Centres, including over 45,000 PoR card holders. It is expected that returns will take up again shortly. For more information, please see the latest [External Update](#).
- In Iran, the UNHCR [donated life-saving medical equipment](#) to Shohadaye Tajrish Public Hospital, as part of a \$30 million multi-year procurement programme aimed at making healthcare more accessible to refugees and host communities. The handover ceremony was attended by the UNHCR Representative and officials from the National Organization for Migration of the Ministry of Interior – UNHCR's main operational government counterpart – and Ministry of Health and Medical Education. In addition to this, UNHCR donated 18 ambulances and five mobile laboratories.

Publishing date: 23 February 2024 | Author: UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP).

¹ An umbrella term that covers all returns, including deportations, assisted VolRep and other returns of Afghans of all statuses such as Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, and the undocumented. The Government of Pakistan has subsequently announced that ACC and PoR cardholders are exempted. In November, the validity of PoR cards was retroactively extended to 31 December 2023. Advocacy by UNHCR is ongoing.

² This category includes all refugee returnees as well as PoR card holders who returned without passing through the established Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRC) set up in Pakistan.

³ In Iran, UNHCR is using an average figure according to various government estimates and continues to follow-up with authorities to receive updated and disaggregated data as well as an estimate of how many presently remain in Iran. Of the average 1 million new arrivals since August 2021, over 77,000 Afghans have approached UNHCR. Of the 600,000 new arrivals reported by the Government of Pakistan, over 323,000 have approached UNHCR. According to Government of Uzbekistan sources, some 13,020 Afghan citizens arrived in the country since January 2021. The majority arrived before 15 August 2021 with valid visas issued by the Uzbek consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif.

AFGHANISTAN:



- UNHCR and partners reached an estimated 48,300 individuals with humanitarian assistance in 27 out of 34 provinces countrywide in January 2024. Of the total reached, 12,900 were supported with cash assistance while 35,400 were reached with in-kind and other individual assistance, including protection, core-relief items (CRI) distributions, shelter and seasonal support. 32,400 individuals were also assessed for needs.

REGIONAL

- In Iran, officials from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' International Cooperation Bureau in Tokyo, the Embassy of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency visited UNHCR's Field Office in Tehran on 23 January. UNHCR briefed the delegation on the humanitarian response and organized a visit to a school built by UNHCR with Japanese funding. In addition, officials from the Swiss Embassy in Tehran and the Immigration Attaché from Islamabad visited UNHCR's Field Office to learn more on UNHCR's work in Iran. Switzerland is one of UNHCR's governmental partners in Iran.
- In January, UNHCR Pakistan submitted 59 cases (203 refugees) for resettlement to Canada, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. 41 individuals departed to Australia, Canada and New Zealand. 32 people also departed via complementary pathways. In Iran, UNHCR submitted 210 cases (783 individuals) to resettlement countries. 31 cases (120 individuals) departed for Australia, Finland, Italy, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Resettlement remains an invaluable durable solution, responsibility-sharing mechanism, and key protection tool for refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health, or fundamental human rights are at risk.
- As part of ongoing efforts to provide equal, meaningful and safe access to digital technologies and opportunities, UNHCR Pakistan partnered with SABAQ Foundation – an educational technology company – to launch “Digital Learning: a Connected Education Programme” for Refugee Village schools. In January, SABAQ visited five schools in Chaghi District to gain a better understanding of the situation on the ground. Following this, SABAQ will compile an inception report to pave the way for the introduction of digital learning opportunities for refugee students.
- In Pakistan Balochistan, 405 people (48 per cent women) from Chaghi, Lejay Karez, Posti, Saranan, Surkhab, Malgagai, Mohammad Khail Refugee Villages and the Urban Cohesion Hub in Quetta were successfully enrolled in certified skills training programmes. These programs cover several skills such as tailoring, mobile repairs, gardening well as livestock management. The skills training is aimed at encouraging women to pursue employment and self-reliance opportunities while contributing positively to the local economy.

CROSS BORDER SITUATION

- Over 1.46 million IDPs returned to their places of origin between 2021 and 2023. The source of these figures are the 402,900 household-level rapid assessments conducted by UNHCR and partners from 10 October 2021 to December 2023. These figures are expected to increase retroactively due to ongoing assessments and considered indicative rather than the overall statistical data of IDP returnees in Afghanistan. Figures may also be underestimated due to the recent downscaling of assessments undertaken in 2023.
- Deportations from Iran and Pakistan continued to be reported. Based on information collected by UNHCR Afghanistan, some 691,000 Afghans were deported from Iran in 2023. In Pakistan, some 29,958 Afghans were deported since 15 September. For more information, please see the latest UNHCR-IOM Flash Update. UNHCR's advisory against forced returns to Afghanistan – issued in August 2021 and re-affirmed in February 2023 – remains in effect until security, rule of law and the human rights conditions improve enough in the country to allow for safe and dignified return.

⁴ The total number of persons supported may include multiple counting of beneficiaries receiving assistance through more than one activity during the reporting period.



UNHCR steps up its presence at official border crossings as tens of thousands of Afghans arrive from Pakistan © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UNHCR is grateful to donors who have supported UNHCR programmes as part of the [Afghanistan situation](#) with earmarked and softly earmarked contributions:

Canada | European Union | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Republic of Korea | The Netherlands | Norway | Private donors Qatar | Spain | Switzerland | United States of America | Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan | Country-based Pooled Funds

UNHCR is also grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked funds which allow us to respond in an agile manner where the needs are greatest:

Belgium | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | The Netherlands | Norway | Private donors Italy | Private donors Japan | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors Spain | Private donors United Kingdom | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom