

# Pakistan

DECEMBER 2024

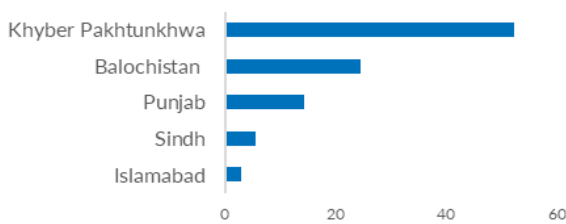
Pakistan is **the fifth largest refugee hosting** country providing safety to some **1.52M registered refugees and asylum seekers** who were forced to flee their countries.

UNHCR supports efforts undertaken by the Government of Pakistan to provide **protection** and **assistance** to refugees and asylum seekers, while strengthening cohesion in host communities.

With a focus on global solidarity, the **Solution Strategy for the Afghan Refugees (SSAR)** guides the strategic direction of refugee programming in **Pakistan**.

## REGISTERED REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN PAKISTAN: 1.52MILLION (99%) AFGHANS, 1% OTHERS

### Per province



- **68.6 per cent** of Afghan refugees live in urban/semi-urban localities
- **31.4 per cent** continue to reside in the remaining 54 refugee villages

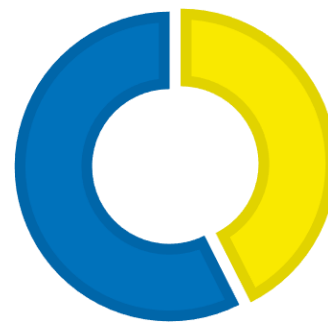
\* Data source: UNHCR Operational Data Portal, September 2024  
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/pak>

## FUNDING (AS OF 31 DECEMBER)

USD 120.2 million

requested for Pakistan Operation

Funded 44 %  
**53 million**



Unfunded 56%  
**66 million**

## UNHCR PRESENCE

**356 Staff:**

**300 National Staff**

**56 International Staff**

**1** Country Office in Islamabad

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

**Presence** in Chaman, Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat, Loralai, Torkham



## Pakistan Impact Areas



### Attaining Favourable Protection Environments

Changes in the enjoyment of rights as a result of increasingly favourable conditions for protection.



### Empowering Communities & Achieving Gender Equality

Intended shifts in the protection and solutions of persons of concern as a result of advancements in community mechanisms, gender equality, health and livelihoods.



### Securing Solutions

Changes in the enjoyment of durable and alternative pathways to solutions for people we serve.

## Main Activities

### Protection

For more than 40 years, Pakistan has a long and commendable tradition of providing protection to refugees and asylum-seekers. An estimated 1.52 million forcibly displaced people with protection needs are living in Pakistan. These include mainly Afghan refugees holding Proof of Registration (PoR), as well as a small number of non-Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers from other countries such as Myanmar, Yemen, Somalia and Syria.

Pakistan does not have a national asylum system in place nor is it signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. UNHCR continues to advocate for a better access by refugees and asylum seekers to basic rights in the country while enhancing self-reliance among refugees and their host communities for sustainable solutions. UNHCR significantly scaled-up the protection programme in response to the announcement of the Government's of Pakistan's "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan."

- **Registration:** Government of Pakistan - the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), the Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) - and UNHCR with a technical support of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) concluded the Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise (DRIVE) in March 2023. The exercise aimed to verify and update records of the Proof of Registration (PoR) holders and to address the need for new identity documents of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. These smartcards provide faster and safer access to services such as health and education and banking. In 2024, 11 PCM centres will continuously update refugee data that had been collected and verified during DRIVE to further systematize UNHCR's approach to data building and evidence-based programming.
- **Legal Assistance:** UNHCR operates nine (9) Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas. These centres directly secure release of persons of concern who are arrested/detained, conduct legal awareness raising sessions with the community and capacity building activities with law enforcement agencies on the rights of refugees.
- **Community-based protection:** With the support of Outreach Volunteers (OVs), refugee elders and focal points in the community, UNHCR empowers refugees and their host communities to mitigate protection risks, mobilise behavioural change, and to identify community-led initiatives aimed at sustainable solutions. UNHCR also supports two Social Cohesion Hubs (1 in Quetta, 1 in Rawalpindi) to bring together the refugee and hosting communities and build existing capacities among its members.
- **Child Protection and Gender-based Violence:** UNHCR and partners implement programmes for child protection and gender-based violence survivors, including case management, psychosocial support, life skills programmes, safe houses and friendly spaces, alternative care, family tracing and reunification, in addition to community outreach and awareness programmes. Prevention, risk mitigation of and response to GBV are also part of the response, with women and girls' empowerment activities.



## Statelessness

UNHCR works in partnership to provide legal assistance to stateless Bengali, Bihari and Rohingya communities in Karachi. The legal assistance focuses on acquiring and unblocking of identity documentation, legal advice and awareness raising on importance of identity documentation, birth registration and help to access to basic services. UNHCR also raises awareness on the procedures for birth registration in Pakistan and the importance of basic civil documentation as a measure to prevent statelessness in a protracted situation. At the policy level, UNHCR continues to work with key stakeholders to ensure inclusion of both stateless communities and refugees in national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems and engage through relevant regional mechanisms such as the Bali Process.



## Durable Solutions

- **Voluntary Repatriation:** UNHCR supports refugees who express their intention to their country of origin. Two (2) Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa facilitate registered Afghan refugees to voluntarily return home. Considering rising inflation and increased transportation costs, UNHCR adjusted the voluntary repatriation grant to USD 375 per individual. UNHCR assisted a total of 6,039 Afghan refugees to return to their communities through our Voluntary Repatriation Program in 2022, with a significant increase witnessed in 2023 reaching more than 36,000 in the context of the government's repatriation plan. UNHCR is anticipating around 50,000 Afghans will return through the VolRep programme in 2024.
- **Resettlement and complementary pathways:** UNHCR resumed its resettlement programme in 2022 with 3,504 applications to six resettlement countries. Throughout the year 2023, a total of 963 cases comprising 4,198 individuals were submitted to various countries. For 2024, UNHCR aims to increase applications to 5,500 on behalf of Afghans, identifying the most vulnerable people with heightened protection needs for resettlement. Third country resettlement is a tangible form of international responsibility sharing.



## Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

UNHCR has continued to prioritize the livelihoods and economic inclusion of refugees, empowering them to build resilience and achieve self-sufficiency. In Pakistan, UNHCR is dedicated to supporting vulnerable Afghan refugees and local communities through a wide range of livelihood initiatives. These include vocational and technical skills training for youth across four provinces, with a focus on ICT. Since 2018, in collaboration with NAVTTC, UNHCR has equipped 11,000 refugees and local Pakistani youth with vocational and technical skills and start up kits. As part of its sustainable livelihoods approach, UNHCR has implemented the Poverty Graduation Programme, which has provided essential support to over 900 Afghan refugee families in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Through this program, refugees have received assistance in areas such as food security, agriculture, and livestock. Additionally, 2,000 women in these regions have benefited from enhanced artisanal skills training, thanks to partnerships with nine private sector and industry organizations that are helping link refugees to local markets. UNHCR has also fostered youth entrepreneurship by offering training and startup assistance to 500 Afghan refugee youth at the National Incubation Centres, nurturing innovation and business acumen among both refugees and host communities. Furthermore, a labour market survey conducted in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) has helped identify key sectors for refugee employment and income generation. The insights gained from this study have enabled UNHCR to refine and align its strategies to better meet market demands.



## Education

UNHCR's education strategy aims to increase enrolment and improve the retention rate of the most marginalised refugee children and youth, and host communities. Key objectives include increasing access to quality education services through the provision of safe schools in refugee-hosting areas and refugee villages, training teachers and providing learning materials. Inclusion of refugees in public schools contributes to peaceful co-existence in host communities, maximises investment in public resources and infrastructure and avoids provision of a parallel

education system. More than 56,000 refugee children are receiving education in primary and secondary education in 142 refugee village schools directly supported by UNHCR across 54 refugee villages. In addition, more than 8,000 students are enrolled in public schools under the RAHA programme, including both host and refugee students, with 14% being refugees. With a focus on girls' access to education, UNHCR supports the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Home-Based Girls' Classes in Balochistan, while providing cash-based assistance and transportation allowances for those attending to secondary school. In 2024, 1,600 refugee girls enrolled in ALP. UNHCR also provides tertiary-level scholarships to Afghan refugees between 17 to 30 years old through the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) and advocates at local level for the inclusion of refugees in undergraduate programs that would allow them to contribute to their host communities.



### Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) Programme

RAHA is a government-led programme. UNHCR, together with the Government of Pakistan, implement the RAHA programme, a humanitarian-development nexus initiative. RAHA is a central vehicle for working towards the overarching goals of the SSAR. RAHA constitutes an effort to move away from prolonged dependence on open-ended humanitarian aid by enhancing social cohesion and building empowerment, resilience and productive capacities of refugees and host communities through targeted investments into national public service delivery systems (health, education, livelihoods, social protection etc.) and infrastructure.



### Health & WASH

UNHCR is contributing to enhance the capacity of provincial and central government line departments especially in the areas of health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to deliver quality inclusive public health services. UNHCR support in refugee hosting districts to strengthen public health system to the hospitals - mostly as infrastructure upgrades and provision of high-end medical equipment, improves quality and coverage of those of health services, that benefit both refugee and host communities. UNHCR is seeking inclusion of refugees in the government social protection and health insurance schemes. While majority of the refugees living in urban areas receive health services from the hospitals and health facilities of the Government of Pakistan, UNHCR also supports primary healthcare services through static and mobile health teams in some isolated and rural refugee villages. In 2024, UNHCR partners reported 75,792 consultations and 1,250 counselling sessions. UNHCR support to the national public health system saves lives, and benefit both refugees and host communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh.



### Access to Energy

In Pakistan, most of the rural population where Afghan refugees live, have no access to electricity and depend heavily on traditional fuels, increasing protection and health risks as well as environmental concerns. To address these challenges, UNHCR has implemented various initiatives, including the solarization of community facilities and water systems, sustainable energy access at the household level through the solar home systems, distribution of renewable energy appliances such as solar lamps, solar school bags and energy efficient cooking stoves, and vocational training in the maintenance of these technologies. Additionally, both Afghan men and women have received environmental education aimed at fostering sustainable practices. One key intervention has been the installation of solar streetlights in 13 refugee villages, improving safety and security by illuminating public spaces at night, promoting the use of renewable energy, and reducing the community's environmental footprint. The solarization of three major hospitals (two in KP and one in Balochistan) is underway, the environmental impact of these efforts is substantial, with a projected reduction of 5,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually equivalent to conserving 2,500 tons of coal or 500,000 gallons of diesel. Economically, the shift to solar energy is equally transformative. These initiatives are estimated to save more than USD 1 million annually in electricity costs, freeing up valuable resources that can be redirected toward other essential services for refugee and host communities.

## Climate-friendly interventions and green energy access for refugees and hosting communities



In 2024, UNHCR Pakistan had successfully distributed and installed over 35,000 solar home systems to support refugees and host communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan. Each solar kit is designed to include three lights and a fan, capable of delivering up to 18 hours of electricity daily. Importantly, the systems are engineered to be shock-free, enhancing safety for families living in diverse and often challenging environments.

In parallel, UNHCR has embarked on a broader energy transformation by installing solar energy systems in 125 public facilities, encompassing 103 schools, 16 healthcare centers, and four vocational training centers, with surplus energy integrated back into the national grid, further supporting national energy resilience.. These installations boast a combined capacity of six megawatts, ensuring uninterrupted and affordable electricity access to essential institutions. This initiative significantly enhances public service delivery by enabling students to learn in well-lit classrooms and patients to receive care in reliable healthcare settings.

## Working with Partners

UNHCR works in coordination with the Government of Pakistan, UN agencies, humanitarian and development organizations, and civil society to find solutions for refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern to UNHCR. UNHCR funds a total of 31 partners including 19 national organizations, five government partners, five international non-governmental organizations and two UN Agencies:

### ■ Governmental:

Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), including the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees at provincial level in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are the main counterpart. At federal level, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Education and Professional training, National Health Regulation and Services, and the Planning Commission are key partners to continue strengthening services and support for refugees and host communities. UNHCR works jointly with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) for registration of Afghan refugees. UNHCR also works in partnership with National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) at the federal level and Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTA) at the provincial level for the youth skill development. UNHCR collaborates with provincial department of health, education, social welfare, home, and tribal affairs along with other provincial and district level government line departments. UNHCR coordinates as well with Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS).

### ■ UN Agencies and NGOs:

**National:** Inspire Pakistan, Society for Humanitarian Rights & Prisoners (SHARP), Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Imkaan Welfare Organization (IWO), Initiative For Development And Empowerment Axis (IDEA), Khwendo Kor, Hashoo Foundation, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Drugs And Narcotics Educational Services For Humanity (DANESH), Society For Empowering Human Resources (SEHER), Water, Environment & Sanitation Society, Pakistan (WESS), Peoples Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) Balochistan, Innovative Development Organization (IDO), Taraqee Foundation (TF), Society for Community Support to Primary Education (SCSPE), Tameer-e-Khalq Foundation (TKF), Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP), Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP), Integrated Regional Support Programme, Pak Mission Society and Frontier Primary Health Care Pakistan (FPHC)

**UN Agencies and International NGOs:** UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNOPS and ILO, International Rescue Committee (IRC), International Medical Corps, Muslim Hands, Secours Islamique France, Pathfinder International.

The UNHCR-led inter-agency **Refugee Response Plan (RRP)** facilitates UN agencies' and other partners' contributions to Pakistan's refugee situation. 32 partners joined the 2022 RRP (including 10 local NGOs), 56 partners joined the 2023 RRP, (including 30 local NGOs) and 45 partners joined the 2024/2025 RRP (including 17 local NGOs). The RRP recognizes the challenges faced by both Afghans and the communities that host them across all sectors. Coordination forums such as the **Pakistan Refugee Consultative Forum** (co-chaired by UNHCR and the Ministry SAFRON/CCAR) are used for strategic and operational planning, resource mobilization and advocacy. UNHCR coordinates its work with thematic working groups, including education, health, food security, livelihoods and resilience, WASH while leading a protection working group. These are co-led by specialized UN agencies and relevant government counterparts and are a valuable coordination mechanism for a joint response.

- **National Goodwill Ambassador:** Actress and activist Mahira Khan uses her voice to raise awareness on behalf of refugees and their host communities in Pakistan and globally.

### Core Group of Support Platform for Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

- Committed to a comprehensive refugee response and greater responsibility-sharing, fifteen states and international organizations are members of the Core Group of the Support Platform for Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) at a global level: Asian Development Bank, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Italy, IOM, Japan, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Qatar, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, UNDP, United States of America, and World Bank. The current chair of this Group is the Netherlands.
- In Pakistan, the Local Core Group was established in 2021, duplicating the arrangement at the global level. The local Core Group regularly meets at the ambassadorial and working levels. Under the Local Core Group, at the technical level, a Livelihoods Thematic Working Group (LTWG) and an Education Thematic Working Group (ETWG) have been led by the United States

## 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. UNHCR Pakistan benefitted from significant donor support for the Afghan emergency in 2021-2023 and for the Floods Response in 2022-2023.

### Country-level earmarked contributions in 2024

United States of America | Netherlands | European Union | Republic of Korea | Switzerland | Denmark | Canada | Private donors in Luxembourg | Private donors in China | Private donors in Saudi Arabia | Germany | Private donors in the Netherlands | Japan | Other private donors

### Softly and unearmarked contributions in 2024

Australia for UNHCR | Denmark | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | Australia | Norway | Private donors in Italy | Finland | Ireland | Iceland | Philippines | Private donors

Sweden | España con ACNUR | Norway | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Japan for UNHCR | Denmark | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | France | Private donors in the Republic of Korea | Germany | Switzerland | Private donors in Italy | Republic of Korea | Belgium | Ireland | Private donors in the Netherlands | Sweden for UNHCR | Australia | Algeria | Angola | Armenia | Austria | Bulgaria | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Thailand | Türkiye | Uruguay | Private donors

### CONTACTS

**Uzma Irum Saad**, External Relations Associate [[jirum@unhcr.org](mailto:jirum@unhcr.org)]