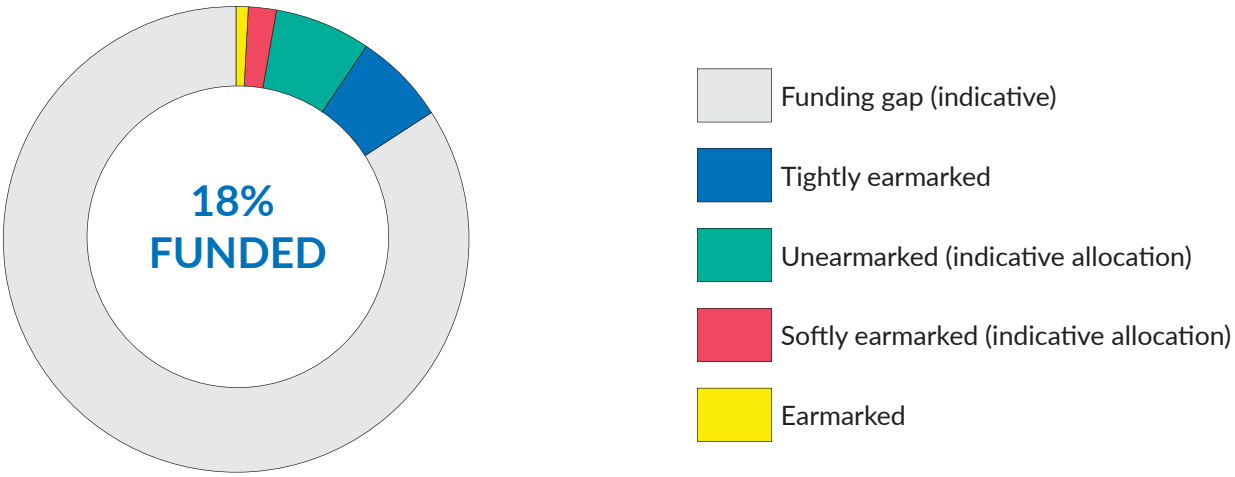
CONTEXT

A new enactment by the Cabinet of Ministers dated 7 December 2025, mandated all foreign national residents to have basic insurance coverage and obliges the Ministry of Interior to ensure the insurance coverage of the foreign national applicants when issuing or extending residence. The enactment also stipulated that non-resident foreign nationals with legal stay in the country could benefit from insurance by paying the health insurance premium fee, and in the absence of insurance, all health services provided will cost them as per health tourism fees, or at least as per private sector fees.

On 24 December, the Employment Deputy of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare (MCLSW), reported the issuance of 13,000 visas out of 23,000 applications for the newly introduced work visas for labour-intensive jobs. Previously, the Head of CAFIA, Mr Yar-Ahmadi, announced that only the head of households may obtain this visa, which is valid for nine months, followed by a mandatory three-month stay outside the country.

Following his recent visit to the Dogharoun border crossing, the Deputy Governor of Khorasan Razavi for Security and Law Enforcement reported that biometric registration of foreign nationals has officially started at Dogharoun, enabling authorities to better monitor entries and exits based on fingerprints, iris scans, and facial data rather than documents alone. He noted that linking the biometric system to foreign nationals' databases now allows identification of individuals' previous residency and judicial records in Iran and announced that the same biometric registration system will soon be expanded to Mashhad Shahid Hashemi Nejad Airport to enhance oversight of foreign nationals' residence, movement, accommodation, and employment in the province.

FUNDING UPDATE



USD 140 MILLION
UNHCR's financial requirements 2025

USD 114 MILLION
Funding gap 2025

UNHCR RESPONSE

PROTECTION

Reception, Enrolment & Communication with Communities

From 1 January to 31 December 2025, UNHCR's five sub-offices received a total of **283,060** inquiries through various communication channels. Of these, **58,133** were received via the helpline, **35,917** through email, **95,935** through the online contact form, **5,442** via mailbox submissions, and **87,633** through in-person visits at reception gates.

The primary reasons for contacting UNHCR included requests for financial assistance, resettlement, and registration. Among those who contacted UNHCR, **32,052** individuals were identified as having specific needs and were subsequently invited for complementary interviews to support UNHCR's enrolment process and the verification of additional required data for potential assistance.

In addition, the UNHCR Help page served as a key information resource, recording **1,091,867** unique visitors and **2,286,303** total visits during the reporting period.

Legal Assistance

UNHCR-hired lawyers have supported **10,525** individuals referred by UNHCR from 1 January to 31 December 2025, in addition to **1,724** who were assisted in Dispute Settlement Committees. The legal services are key for the forcibly displaced persons to access rights and services in line with the national legislation.

Protection of Women and Children & Psychosocial Counselling

In 2025, UNHCR has identified **4,793** children with specific protection needs, many of whom–some **3,209**– are not attending school or are at risk of dropping out. While all cases were provided counselling, UNHCR has conducted a thorough assessment for **346** cases, prioritized based on their vulnerability. UNHCR also carried out best interest assessments for **191** children and provided psychosocial support, legal aid, and other available services. UNHCR identified **3,557** refugee w omen at risk, and **362** of the GBV cases were assessed and provided counselling and psychosocial support, legal aid, cash assistance, and access to health care services.

Additionally, **1,485** persons have participated in psychosocial counselling sessions conducted by the UNHCR-hired psychological counsellors since the beginning of 2025. The counselling sessions were conducted both in person and remotely.

Cash Assistance

The cash instalments provide crucial support to vulnerable refugees, including those with special protection needs and disabilities, helping them meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life by making their own, dignified choices on how to use the support. From January to the end of December 2025, a total of **39,584** individuals (**9,649** households) received cash assistance amounting to **USD $1,823,726** [1]. Of this total, **8,953** individuals received cash disbursements in November- December alone.

Returns to Afghanistan

As of 13 December, over 1.8 million Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan in 2025. The latest Situation Update can be accessed here.

Voluntary Repatriation

From January to 31 December 2025, **1,263** Afghans have returned to Afghanistan through UNHCR's Voluntary Repatriation Programme for Amayesh cardholders wishing to return to Afghanistan.

[1] Planning rate 1 USD ~ IRR 639,191

UNHCR RESPONSE

SOLUTIONS

Education

UNHCR supports Iran's education system, particularly in refugee-hosting areas where classroom sizes reach up to **50** students—far exceeding the national standard. The construction of the planned four schools in 2025 was underway. On average, a 12-classroom school, hosting **720** students in double-shifts, costs **USD 800,000**, to which UNHCR contributes between 70 – 90 per cent, the rest being covered by the Ministry of Education.

According to government figures, approximately **300,000** refugee students have enrolled nationwide for the 2025–2026 academic year. The total number is projected to increase to between **350,000 and 370,000** students. This is a significant decrease from **600,000** students in the previous year.

Health

UNHCR, in partnership with Iran Health Insurance Organization (IHIO) and the Center for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (CAFIA), launched in February the 11th cycle of the Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) scheme to ensure refugees have access to essential medical services. This includes primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare.

As in previous cycles, **95,000** vulnerable refugees holding a valid Amayesh card, Hoviat card, or valid Laissez-Passer —including those with specific medical conditions such as haemophilia, thalassemia, kidney failure, kidney transplant, and multiple sclerosis—can register for free medical coverage at designated government counters nationwide.

Furthermore, UNHCR, in partnership with Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME) and the Center for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (CAFIA), provided support to personnel cost of health staff of **26** health posts in most refugee populated areas. Besides, UNHCR supported procurement of medicine and medical equipment through local and international markets for nationwide distribution. Additionally, thanks to Iran's inclusive policies, primary healthcare remains available to all nationwide– regardless of status or documentation.

Livelihoods

Under the Iranian labour law, refugees holding Amayesh or Hoviat cards can obtain temporary work permits allowing them to work legally in specific job categories–primarily in the construction and agriculture sectors. UNHCR works in partnership with government institutions and NGOs to support vulnerable members and the host community with skill-building opportunities, aiming to improve prospects for employment and self-reliance. In 2025, UNHCR supported some **1,000** refugees and vulnerable host communities with vocational and technical training.

Resettlement and complementary pathways

During the month of December 2025, UNHCR submitted six refugees for resettlement consideration to Brazil, and one refugee to Finland under UAQ. The total number of submissions from January to December 2025 reached **2,247** refugees, including newborns. Another **103** refugees departed for different countries in December 2025, bringing total departures from Iran during 2025 to **1,349** refugees

Complementary pathways continue to provide impactful alternatives to traditional resettlement. Between 1 January and 31 December 2025, a total of **1,095** individuals were supported across all Complementary Pathways.

UNHCR IRAN MAP

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official

POPULATION FIGURES

As of November 2025, UNHCR estimates that around **2.5 million** forcibly displaced people of different documentation statuses reside in Iran, including some **770,000** refugees with Amayesh (760,000 Afghans) and Hoviat cards (12,000 Iraqis).

REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN

UNHCR Iran closed its Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) covering 2024–2025, implemented jointly with Pakistan, and will transition into a Country Refugee Response Plan (CRRP) in 2026. As part of this shift, UNHCR is liaising with sector Leads and Co-Leads to review the conclusion of the regional RRP and present a new country-level CRRP with more emphasis on inter-sector coordination. The 2026 CRRP will be shaped around newly selected partners and sector-identified priorities. Meanwhile, the final reporting and results of the Regional Refugee Response Plan will be finalized and disseminated in due time in coordination with the Regional Bureau.

RRP PARTNERS

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