

Pakistan

29 February 2020

***6,220** registered refugees who returned to Afghanistan between 1 March – 30 November 2019

4,603 Afghan refugees whose births were registered between 1 January – 29 February 2020

1,569 Afghan refugees who have received legal assistance since 1 January 2019

146 schools supported by UNHCR for **56,000** refugee students

5,288 patients treated in **38** health facilities supported by UNHCR

2,145 persons (Afghan refugees and Pakistani nationals) received livelihood assistance



Afghan refugee carpet weavers smile at their carpet factory in Turkman refugee village near Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (C) UNHCR/S. Rich

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin	Total persons of concern
Afghan refugees with proof of registration (PoR) cards	1,420,673
Afghan mandate refugees (without PoR cards)	3,025
Somalia (refugees)	181
Others (refugees)	342
Asylum-seekers	9,524

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff

156 national staff

35 international staff

Offices

One Country Office in Islamabad

Two Sub-Offices in Peshawar and Quetta

Presence in Haripur, Karachi, Kohat



Afghan refugee boys walk back to their homes after attending a school in Khazana refugee village in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (C) UNHCR/A. Shahzad

* The voluntary repatriation process stopped on 30 November 2019 for the winter break and will resume from 2 March 2020. Please refer to the UNHCR Afghanistan Situation Data Portal and the UNHCR Pakistan website for the latest updates.

Working with partners

- UNHCR collaborates closely with the Government of Pakistan. It works jointly with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), as well as the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the Commissionerates for Afghan Refugees at the federal and provincial levels, respectively.
- UNHCR partners with a range of national and international non-governmental organizations to provide protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as collaborates with non-implementing partners, such as the World Bank, sister UN agencies and private sector partners.

Main activities

Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

- The regional multi-year Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) provides a framework for cooperation between humanitarian and development actors to address the needs of Afghan refugees and the communities that host them. It supports the pursuit of durable solutions, as well as youth empowerment through education, the development of vocational skills and livelihoods training. During the last quadripartite meeting held in June 2019 in Islamabad, all parties agreed to extend the SSAR to 2021.
- Aligned with the SSAR, a dedicated SSAR Support Platform was launched on 16 December 2019, one day prior to the Global Refugee Forum. The platform seeks to achieve: (I) enhanced international solidarity and burden-sharing for the Afghan refugee situation, resulting in stronger political and financial commitments to achieve solutions; (ii) additional investments and expanded partnerships for coherent humanitarian and development responses that increase absorption capacity for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, while easing the burden on host communities in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan and (III) sustained visibility for the Afghan situation by linking the SSAR to the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum, enabling the sharing of regional good practices, prioritization of gaps and meeting the needs to work towards enhanced international burden- and responsibility-sharing.

Protection and durable solutions

- **Voluntary repatriation:** From March until the end of October, UNHCR operates two Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Pakistan where refugees wishing to repatriate to Afghanistan must deregister. From November to the end of February, voluntary repatriation is temporarily suspended during the winter months. When refugee returnees choose to return voluntarily, they receive a cash grant of approximately \$200 per person upon arrival at one of three UNHCR Encashment Centres in Afghanistan.
- **Legal assistance:** UNHCR operates nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas in four provinces. Eight of these centres are run by UNHCR partner SHARP. The remaining centre is run by UNHCR partner SEHER.
- In February 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of 2,245 persons of concern. During the month, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for 32 arrested/detained persons of concern and secured the release of all. In most cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested persons of concern before they were formally charged by the law enforcement agencies. Also, the majority were released within 24 hours. In addition, ALAC partners represented in court 11 persons of concern who had been charged under the Foreigners Act (dealing with the unauthorized stay of foreigners) and other preventive

laws (allowing preventive detention of person acting in a manner prejudicial to the integrity, security and defence of the country and public order). These interventions resulted in court ordered releases.

- Partner staff provided individual legal counselling to 411 persons of concern who visited the ALACs, as well as legal advice to 535 persons of concern through ALAC helplines. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modification, Afghan Citizen cards (ACC) information and asylum application process were the major areas requiring assistance during the reporting period. Out-of-court legal assistance was also provided to 205 persons of concern, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.
- UNHCR and ALAC staff organized a total of 48 legal camps and shura meetings, reaching 1,038 participants (47 per cent of whom were women) during the reporting period. Some 60 per cent of the legal sessions were held in refugee villages and the remaining sessions took place in urban areas in Pakistan. Through these legal sessions, refugees shared various issues affecting their communities. UNHCR partner staff informed refugees of free legal aid available and UNHCR helpline services.

Community-based protection

- UNHCR facilitated a countrywide information dissemination campaign on the new policy for uncollected PoR cards at the PoR Card Modification Centres, including outreach in various refugee settlements, targeting both male and female refugees. Along with the information sessions, information leaflets and a poster were also distributed within the refugee communities.
- The first batch of seven Afghan refugee girls from Kot Chanda refugee village's Mianwali school to pass their examinations with A+ grades appeared in the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Examination Sargodha in Punjab. The school is funded by UNHCR and run by the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees in Punjab province. This was the first such batch to pass the exam.
- Outreach volunteers and refugee community members in the I-12 Afghan settlement in Islamabad led an initiative to convert a communal meeting place into a school. The community also engaged with a non-governmental organization, Alight, to support this initiative by funding three teachers and supporting the school to gradually prepare students to integrate into nearby public schools.

Education

- UNHCR continued to support access to education in refugee villages and encourage the inclusion of refugee children in the national structures. By improving public facilities near refugee villages, refugee children are welcomed in schools. This benefits host and refugee communities and contributes to social cohesion.
- There are 433 DAFI scholars who continue to be supported by UNHCR in 2020.

In February:

- *a total of 2,243 individuals received legal assistance;*
- *32 individuals were arrested/detained and all were released;*
- *11 individuals were provided with court representation;*
- *411 individuals received individual legal counselling; and*
- *535 people were assisted through ALAC helplines.*

UNHCR supports:

- *146 schools;*
- *30 satellite classes;*
- *51 home-based schools;*
- *433 DAFI scholars; and,*
- *Teacher student ratio 1:41.*

Health

- UNHCR supported the provision of maternal and child health services in refugee villages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Refugee women and children enrolled in preventive and reproductive health care programmes received antenatal, pre-natal and postnatal care. WHO, UNICEF and the Government of Pakistan's health department, together with the support of UNHCR's partners, conducted polio eradication campaigns in refugee villages. An Expanded Programme Immunization component of these campaigns has been officially transferred to the provincial health department. Afghan refugees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa now have access to these services in public health facilities.
- Community health workers conducted training sessions on basic information and preventative measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in all refugee villages. The health education materials with pictorial presentations developed by World Health Organization and Pakistan's Centre for Disease Control are being used during the health education sessions. The translation of a few health education materials in local languages such as Pashto are being completed. Other documents are in process.

In February:

- *32 health facilities were supported;*
- *4,838 patients treated;*
- *1,128 antenatal care cases treated;*
- *999 deliveries conducted by trained birth attendants; and*
- *1,071 postnatal care cases addressed.*

Livelihoods

- UNHCR prepared for the launch a MADE51 project to support 120 Afghan refugee artisan women to produce crafts for high-end markets through potential local social enterprises (LSEs) in Islamabad, Karachi and Peshawar. The project will help refugee women earn an income and achieve self-reliance.
- UNHCR, in partnership with Sharper/FNKAsia, provided skills training to 50 Afghan refugee women in Karachi. Refugees produce fashion jewellery and will ultimately become part of the supply chain of Sharper/FNKAsia. The aim of the project is to ensure that they can earn an income on a sustainable basis.

Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme

- Since 2009, the Government of Pakistan has implemented the RAHA programme, an initiative which supports the implementation of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. Through RAHA, a wide variety of projects have been carried out in the sectors of education, health, livelihoods, infrastructure, water, sanitation and social protection. In 2019, UNHCR Pakistan is celebrating 10 years' achievements of RAHA. During this decade, RAHA has supported more than 4,250 projects which align with UNHCR's livelihoods, education and health strategies aiming to ensure that Afghan refugees are included in public systems and structures.

- *In total, 4,273 projects have been completed since 2009.*
- *12.4 million beneficiaries in the projects implemented in 47 districts of Pakistan.*
- *14 projects in 2019.*
- *15 projects in 2020.*

External / donors relations

Earmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 29 February 2020)¹

Denmark | European Union | Japan | United Nations Development Programme | Miscellaneous private donors

Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 29 February 2020)²

Denmark | Germany | Norway | Netherlands | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom

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Data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/pak>

¹ Contributions to Pakistan are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.

² Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Only donors who have contributed \$10 million or more are indicated.

