

# Pakistan

2-15 May 2020

## Overview

- The number of COVID-19 cases in Pakistan continues to rise, with the total number growing to more than 36,000 on 15 May 2020, and sadly, with 779 deaths being recorded.<sup>1</sup> No new case has been reported among refugees over the past two weeks, but three Afghan refugees have died so far.
- From 9 May 2020, Pakistan started a phased approach to easing the lockdown restrictions. It aims to reduce the impact of such restrictions on the economy, including on daily wage earners. Factories, offices and shopping areas have been allowed to reopen. Public transportation remains suspended, and international flights will not resume before June. Following the reopening of markets after two months, people crowded commercial areas for Ramadan and Eid shopping. Overcrowding was witnessed, prompting the Government to caution people to observe the precautionary measures.
- On 7 May 2020, the United Nations issued a revised appeal – amounting to \$6.7 billion – in order to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19 and stem the spread of the coronavirus in fragile countries. In this latest iteration of the appeal, Pakistan's requirements have been included. UNHCR's revised global appeal has also increased from \$255 million to \$745 million.
- The Government's Ehsaas emergency cash assistance programme has reached some 7.5 million deserving Pakistani families, expending nearly Rs.92 billion (approximately \$572 million). Families receive Rs.12,000 (approximately \$77) to help meet their most urgent needs for four months.

## Operational highlights

UNHCR continued its support the Government's response with additional funds and activities and advocated the inclusion of refugees, whenever possible. Meanwhile, UNHCR's core activities are impacted but continue while abiding by the Government measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.

## Social protection

- On 12 May 2020, UNHCR announced an emergency cash assistance programme for the most vulnerable refugee families in Pakistan. UNHCR Deputy Representative, Mr. Iain Hall, and the Chairman/Director General of the Pakistan Post Office Department, Mr. Akhlaque Rana, signed an Agreement for the disbursement of the emergency cash. The Federal Minister for SAFRON, Mr. Mehboob Sultan, was also present on the occasion. Over the past weeks, UNHCR and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, with the collaboration of partners, volunteers and refugee community leaders, have carried out extensive vulnerability assessments to identify the neediest refugee families. Those eligible for the emergency assistance include refugees with disabilities or serious medical conditions, as well as single parents. UNHCR's emergency cash assistance mirrors the Government's BISP/Ehsaas emergency cash programme, where vulnerable families are receiving Rs.12,000 (approximately \$77) covering a four-month period. The disbursement of cash will start from the week of 18 May 2020. UNHCR has carried out an information campaign to inform refugees about UNHCR's emergency cash programme.
- In the context of Pakistan's new Humanitarian Response Plan (as part of the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan), UNHCR is leading the Protection Working Group following the National Disaster



*UNHCR Deputy Representative and the Director General of Pakistan Post sign an agreement on the disbursement of emergency cash assistance for vulnerable refugee families. © UNHCR/A. Shahzad*

<sup>1</sup> For the latest official statistics on COVID-19, please visit the Government of Pakistan's portal: <http://covid.gov.pk/stats/pakistan>.

Management Authority (NDMA)'s notification on the constitution of Sector Working Groups at the federal and provincial levels. On 8 May 2020, the Protection Sector held a coordination meeting co-chaired by NDMA and UNHCR. The Terms of Reference of the Protection Working Group have been agreed, and the mapping of agencies providing protection services is in process. Coordination will ensure comprehensive responses to the challenges posed by COVID-19 with a focus on all vulnerable groups.

### Health

- UNHCR, through partners, is distributing medical supplies, including surgical masks, gloves, gowns and infrared thermometers, to frontline medical and partner staff working in health facilities in the refugee villages and communities. Health facilities in the refugee villages remain operational and are supporting information dissemination on COVID-19, maternity and reproductive health services, and health education.



UNHCR staff with community elders and the health committee in the refugee village in Basu Mera, Haripur © UNHCR/ A. Ali

### WASH

- UNHCR is finalizing arrangements for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities in 21 Mother and Child Health (MCH) Centers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. This activity will focus on strengthening capacity to continue providing health services to refugees with measures in place to stop the spread of COVID-19. The activities will include the repair of toilets, hand-washing areas and water systems. Incinerators and waste bins will also be provided.

### Communicating with communities

- UNHCR and partners continue to visit refugee villages and communities in urban areas to raise awareness of COVID-19. Community mobilizers, refugee Outreach Volunteers and partner staff support small group trainings and awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 prevention and mitigating measures for different groups of their community, including youth.

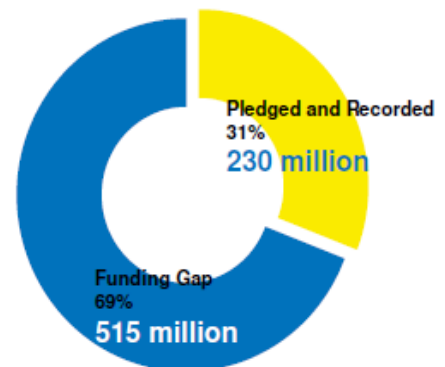
### Funding needs

The funding requirements indicated in the revised UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 now amounts to approximately \$6.7 billion. Following this revision, UNHCR also revised its appeal – now amounting to \$745 million for the next nine months. As of 11 May 2020, UNHCR had received \$230 million, or 31 per cent of the requirements.

In Pakistan, UNHCR's requirements reach \$20.6 million. Since the launch of the appeal, UNHCR in Pakistan has received the generous contributions of \$2.4 million from the Government of the United States of America and \$1 million from the Government of Japan. UNHCR is immensely grateful for their swift support of the COVID-19 response.

### USD 745M

Requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally until the end of the year:



### Contacts

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