

Pakistan

16 June – 1 July 2020

Overview

- The number of COVID-19 cases in Pakistan continues to grow. As of 1 July, the total number of cases reached 213,470, with 4,395 deaths being recorded.¹ Seventeen refugees have tested positive, and sadly, four have died.
- Restrictive measures and the more extensive use of smart lockdowns have continued. Educational institutions and many offices remained closed, and public gatherings banned. However, more people were seen in marketplaces and public spaces. Pakistan's international airports were opened from 20 June for regular flights. Domestic flights were allowed to operate with precautionary measures in place.
- Speaking at the 13th meeting of the Friends of Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (FOSSAR) on 24 June, the Federal Minister of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Mr. Mehboob Sultan, described the strain of hosting refugees and the decline in support for Iran and Pakistan. He called for more equitable responsibility and burden-sharing by the international community. He also emphasized how the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on refugees, particularly the daily wage earners. The Ambassador of Germany, H.E. Mr. Bernhard Schlagheck, hosted this meeting in Islamabad. On the occasion, the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan, Mr. Shukrullah Atif Mashal, noted that refugees are key stakeholders in the Afghan peace process. He expressed concern over the pending extension of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards and the access of undocumented Afghans and Afghan citizen card (ACC) holders to basic services. UNHCR's Representative, Ms. Noriko Yoshida, briefed on the Support Platform for the SSAR and the importance of additional investments to achieve solutions. She informed that the Support Platform's "Core Group" would be created for strengthened action and engagement towards attaining the three principal SSAR goals.

Operational highlights

Social protection

- More than 5,000 vulnerable Afghan families have so far received UNHCR's emergency cash assistance. The distribution of this support to another 22,000 families is underway in the first phase of the programme. UNHCR now plans to distribute cash assistance to a total of 70,000 vulnerable refugee families. The emergency support mirrors the Government's *Ehsaas* emergency cash programme, where vulnerable families receive Rs.12,000 (approximately \$77) to cover a four-month period. Those eligible for the emergency assistance include refugees with disabilities or serious medical conditions, as well as single parents.
- In line with the Pakistan COVID-19 Socio-economic Assessment and Response Plan 2020, the United Nations Country Team supported the development of provincial-level socio-economic response plans. UNHCR worked closely with relevant agencies to ensure the inclusion of refugees within these provincial response plans.
- Although the UNHCR-supported schools in refugee villages remain closed due to COVID-19, UNHCR continued to pay teachers using online transfers. Similarly, beneficiaries of a livelihoods project in



Refugees are among the most vulnerable members of society – at risk in the pandemic due to limited access to sanitation supplies. UNHCR continues to supply refugees with items for personal hygiene. © UNHCR/ H. Habib Khan

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

Quetta, Balochistan continued to receive their incentives despite workshops being closed. Students supported through UNHCR's DAFI scholarship programme also received educational grants.

Communicating with communities

- Routine health education and engagement of refugee communities, including through refugee village health committees, *shuras* and religious leaders, continued across Pakistan. During health education sessions conducted by male and female community health workers, participants were sensitized to the prevention of COVID-19, malaria, diarrheal diseases, acute respiratory infections and dengue fever. Information on referrals was also shared.
- UNHCR intensified its messaging regarding the elimination of myths, misperception and stigma surrounding COVID-19 in refugee communities. Awareness-raising efforts were carried out through regular community interactions, messaging on social media platforms and telephone calls.



UNHCR staff in discussions with refugee community elders in Chaman, Balochistan to sensitize them to COVID-19 and other issues. Information materials were also distributed. © UNHCR/ H. Karim

Health

- UNHCR distributed personal protective equipment (PPEs) to the refugee Outreach Volunteers in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Outreach Volunteers were also sensitized to the proper use of PPEs during community awareness sessions. A distribution plan for additional PPEs, including KN95 face masks, surgical face masks, disinfectants and surgical gloves, was under way. In Balochistan, UNHCR provided PPEs to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority for onwards distribution to health staff in government health facilities.
- UNHCR procured more PPEs from local and the international markets to be distributed to health staff and community members.

WASH

- In Balochistan, UNHCR has completed the installation of six handpumps in refugee villages and host communities. In addition, nine locations have been identified for water supply schemes where work is expected to commence shortly. In Saranan and Surkhhab refugee villages, three boreholes will be drilled to ensure the availability of safe drinking water.
- WASH-related rehabilitation activities were ongoing. The technical assessment of WASH facilities in 19 refugee villages and 21 Mother and Child Health Centres were completed. The assessment of WASH facilities in 35 refugee village schools was also undertaken.

Funding needs

In line with the revised UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, UNHCR's own revised appeal amounts to \$745 million. As of 1 July 2020, UNHCR had received \$262 million, or 35 per cent of the requirements.

In Pakistan, UNHCR's requirements amount to \$20.6 million. Since the launch of the appeal, UNHCR has received generous contributions from the Governments of the United States of America and Japan. UNHCR also received an in-kind donation of soap and disinfectants from private sector partner, Unilever. UNHCR is making preparations to receive an in-kind donation of hand sanitizer and reusable sanitary clothes from private sector donors in the Republic of Korea.

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USD 745M

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

