

Pakistan

31 May 2020

***28** registered refugees who returned to Afghanistan between 1 January – 31 May 2020

5,904 Afghan refugees whose births were registered between 1 January – 31 May 2020

10,195 Afghan refugees who have received legal assistance between 1 January – 31 May 2020

Personal protective equipment (PPEs) was provided to the health workers in **54** refugee villages to protect themselves during the pandemic

2,145 individuals (Afghan refugees and Pakistanis) received livelihood assistance



Afghan refugee children live in Sector I-12 settlement, Islamabad, home to about 3,000 Afghan refugees. (C) UNHCR/Roger Arnold/Islamabad, Pakistan

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin	Total persons of concern
Afghan refugees with proof of registration (PoR) cards	1,421,946
Afghan mandate refugees (without PoR cards)	3,015
Somalia (refugees)	181
Others (refugees)	344
Asylum-seekers	9,713

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff

****193** national staff

36 international staff

Offices

One Country Office in Islamabad

Two Sub-Offices in Peshawar and Quetta

Presence in Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat and Loralai



Baraat Khan, 82-year-old Afghan refugee, lives in Sector I-12 Afghan settlement, Islamabad along with his family. He has spent more than 40 years in Pakistan and appreciates the cooperation of Pakistani people. UNHCR/Asif Shahzad/Islamabad, Pakistan

* The voluntary repatriation process was suspended on 30 November 2019 for the winter break and resumed from 2 March 2020. It was suspended again on 17 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan. Please refer to the UNHCR Afghanistan Situation Data Portal and the UNHCR Pakistan website for the latest updates.
 ** Affiliate workforce is included.

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 provincial level.
- 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. The SSAR was previously extended until 2021.
- Aligned with the SSAR, a dedicated Support Platform for SSAR 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, enabling the sharing of regional good practices and lessons learned, showcasing the positive contributions of refugees to their host country and community and advocating for the implementation in the subregion of unassigned pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum.
- Preparations were under way for a High-Level Session on the Support Platform for the SSAR to be held on 6 July 2020. The event will be hosted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Protection and durable solutions

- **Voluntary repatriation:** UNHCR usually 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 was temporarily suspended during the winter months. On 2 March 2020, UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme resumed, but it was suspended until further notice on 17 March due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The centres therefore remained closed during the reporting period.
- UNHCR signed the contract with Pakistan Post to provide one-time cash assistance to registered refugees in Pakistan. The emergency cash assistance is similar to the Federal Government's *Ehsaas* emergency cash programme, where vulnerable families receive Rs.12,000 to cover a four-month period. The emergency assistance will help an initial 36,000 eligible refugee families to meet their urgent needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The refugees began receiving cash assistance in the month of May.
- **Legal assistance:** UNHCR operates nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas. Eight of these centres are run by UNHCR's partner, SHARP. The remaining centre is run by another partner, SEHER.

- In May 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of 1,488 persons of concern. During the reporting period, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for 38 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 law enforcement. Also, the majority were released within 24 hours. In addition, ALAC partners represented 17 persons of concern in court, who had been charged under the Foreigners Act (dealing with the unauthorized stay of foreigners) and other preventive laws (allowing preventive detention of persons acting in a manner prejudicial to the integrity, security and defence of the country and public order). These interventions resulted in court-ordered releases.
- During the reporting period, partner staff provided individual legal counselling to 78 persons of concern who visited the ALACs, as well as legal advice to 1,158 persons of concern through the ALAC helplines. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modification, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) information, and the asylum application process were the major areas requiring assistance during the reporting period. Out-of-court legal assistance was also provided to 197 persons of concern, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.
- No training sessions for law enforcement personnel were held due to COVID-19 containment measures implemented by the Government of Pakistan. Such measures have also had an impact on legal awareness sessions for refugees.
- ALAC staff have been telephoning refugee community representatives to inform them about the emerging situation due to COVID-19 pandemic. ALAC teams made 763 calls to 562 locations and communities in the Sindh, Punjab and Islamabad during the reporting period. Communities were advised to comply with the measures taken by the local and provincial administrations and any restrictions imposed to control the spread of COVID-19.

In May:

- *A total of 1,488 individuals received legal assistance;*
- *38 individuals were arrested/detained and all were released;*
- *17 individuals were provided with court representation;*
- *78 individuals received individual legal counselling;*
- *1,158 people were assisted through ALAC helplines; and*
- *197 people received out-of-court legal assistance.*

Community-based protection

- Previously, the Protection Unit in Peshawar conducted a virtual training workshop on emergency referral pathways and guidelines for remote sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) case management for 14 partner staff from the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees/Community Development Unit and SHARP. UNHCR staff, who are working on and providing specialized services to child protection cases, SGBV survivors and persons with specific needs, also participated. Plans are under way to organize similar training for provincial government authorities, including female law enforcement offices and staff of the Department of Social Welfare. These officials are part of the updated referral pathway.
- The Community-Based Protection team in Quetta conducted an orientation session, attended by 447 Outreach Volunteers (OVs) and Community Committees (CCs), including refugee leaders, on the criteria and data collection tools for COVID-19 emergency cash assistance for refugees. These sessions were conducted via telephone and in-person, while maintaining the precautionary measures of social distancing. To support the data collection exercise and information dissemination, PPE items were distributed amongst all the OVs and CC members.

Education

- All UNHCR-supported schools in refugee villages were closed in March. They remained closed during the reporting period as per the directives of the Government of Pakistan. UNHCR continued to support teachers and explore alternative learning modalities in order to ensure the continuity of education. However, the availability of electricity and internet connectivity were challenges for refugee children.
- Some 413 DAFI scholars continued to be supported by UNHCR in 2020.

Health

- In Balochistan, UNHCR partner, Taraqee Foundation, conducted 36 sessions in three targeted refugee villages on awareness and the prevention of tuberculosis and COVID-19. Some 138 individuals participated from community by maintaining distancing protocols. In addition, 72 households were visited to collect information regarding presumptive cases.
- All the private and community-run health facilities in refugee villages remained functional during the month of May. Refugees were also able to access health services in public hospitals located in nearby cities.
- In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, approximately 1,000 health sessions on COVID-19 were conducted by community health workers, social mobilizers and health staff on the prevention and stigma management, using the department of health approved pictorial and narrative materials in which some 4,800 individuals participated. Compliance with physical distancing was maintained, and PPEs were used during the sessions. In addition, preventative messages were transmitted through loudspeakers as part of mass awareness campaign.
- Hand-washing points, with the availability of soap, are operational in all health facilities, both for health services providers and patients. Physical distancing and triage methods are in place. Thermal screening and sanitization are carried out. A refresher training on COVID-19 prevention and preparedness was provided to 60 community health workers (i.e. 15 women and 45 men).
- **Community engagement:** As part of the community engagement process, social mobilizers, community health supervisors and field supervisors conducted a total of 610 meetings with *shuras* and villages health committees to facilitate and support the ongoing COVID-19 response activities in the refugee villages. Some 1,600 individuals participated.
- Religious clergies (Pesh-Imam) were actively involved in the response to COVID-19 by delivering preventative targeted health messages from mosques, using the loudspeakers. Some of the Pesh-Imams are already the members of the village health committees and *shuras*. Notably, Pesh-Imams invited partners during the Friday prayer to deliver the preventative messages on COVID-19.
- UNHCR support visits continued in refugee villages in accordance with the plan to assess the ongoing activities and provide possible assistance. UNHCR during the reporting week provided 10,000 surgical face masks, 20,000 disposable gloves, 300 hand sanitizers - 250ml each, 60 pectoral and narrative (Pashto) banners on physical distancing, 60 pectoral and narrative (Pashto) banners on stigma prevention. The health facilities based and field staff including the volunteers are using PPE and the IEC materials have been displayed in health facilities and community centres and are being applied for awareness-raising.
- **Maternity services:** Due to socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on refugees, UNHCR has waived the fees for deliveries in the four health facilities in districts of Swabi, Nowshera, Haripur and Mansehra in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for four months. The operational and logistical costs, human resources, supplies and medicines will be paid by UNHCR.

Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme

- Since 2009, UNHCR, together with 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, the RAHA programme marked 10 years. During this decade, RAHA supported more than 4,250 projects which aligned with UNHCR's livelihoods, education and health strategies, all aiming to ensure greater inclusion of Afghan refugees in public systems and structures.
 - All the necessary groundwork has been completed for the implementation of the 15 projects in 2020, but a delay in implementation was expected due to COVID-19.
- *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 31 May 2020)¹

Canada | Denmark | European Union | IRTHI-NAMA Women Advancement Establishment | Japan | Norway | Switzerland | United Nations Development Programme | United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS | United States of America | Miscellaneous private donors

Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 31 May 2020)²

Denmark | Germany | Norway | Netherlands | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | Private donors in Spain | Private donors in the Republic of Korea

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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.

Pakistan: UNHCR Presence 2020

