

Pakistan

31 October 2020

***857** registered refugees who returned to Afghanistan between 1 January – 31 October 2020

11,891 Afghan refugees whose births were registered between 1 January – 31 October 2020

21,529 Afghan refugees who have received legal assistance between 1 January – 31 October 2020

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

2,295 individuals (Afghan refugees and Pakistanis) received livelihoods assistance



Afghan refugee women weaving carpet in Quetta, Balochistan. © UNHCR/Humera Karim

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin	Total persons of concern
Afghan refugees with proof of registration (PoR) cards	1,427,104
Afghan mandate refugees (without PoR cards)	3,011
Somalia (refugees)	181
Others (refugees)	341
Asylum-seekers	9,723

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff

****213** national staff

39 international staff

Offices

One Country Office in Islamabad

Two Sub-Offices in Peshawar and Quetta

Presence in Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat and Loralai



Carpet weaving project in Quetta, Balochistan supports some 100 women to learn a set of skills for a lifetime. © UNHCR/Humera Karim

** 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 and resumed on 17 August 2020. 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 Support 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.

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 and resumed on 17 August 2020.
- **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 October 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of 2,542 persons of concern. During the month, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for 39 persons of concern arrested/detained 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 in court seven 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 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 577 persons of concern who visited the ALACs, as well as legal advice to 758 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 main issues addressed when providing assistance. Out-of-court legal assistance was also given to 318 persons of concern, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.
- UNHCR and ALAC staff organized 40 legal camps and *shura* meetings, reaching 836 people. Some 13 legal sessions were held in refugee villages whereas 27 legal sessions took place in urban areas. 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.
- Fewer training sessions of law enforcement personnel as part of advocacy under the legal aid programme have been held due to COVID-19 containment measures implemented by the Government of Pakistan. Such measures have also had an impact on awareness sessions on topics such as legal services available to refugees.
- On communicating with communities, ALAC teams have been calling refugee community representatives to keep them informed of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the area of Punjab and Islamabad alone, ALAC teams made 456 calls to the communities during the month of October. Refugee communities were advised to comply with orders from the local and provincial administrations. ALAC teams have been encouraged to maintain a proactive approach throughout the situation and share daily situation reports.

In October:

- *A total of 2,542 individuals received legal assistance;*
- *39 individuals were arrested/detained and all were released;*
- *7 individuals were provided with court representation;*
- *577 individuals received individual legal counselling; and*
- *758 people were assisted through ALAC helplines.*

Community-based protection

- Countrywide, a total of 623 community-based protection awareness sessions were conducted through UNHCR and partner staff in which 2,334 female and 3,318 male refugees, outreach volunteers, elders, focal persons, community committee members and youth were targeted. The content of these sessions was access to basic services, health, child protection, prevention and response to gender-based violence, renewal of refugee cards and asylum seeker certificates, identification and referral of persons with specific needs, community participation, mobilization and engagement.

Education

- All UNHCR-supported schools in refugee villages were reopened by the end of September with strict adherence to the Standard Operating Procedures for the safe school reopening.
- UNHCR and partners continue to work to improve the WASH facilities in refugee village schools and provision of hygiene materials.
- 413 DAFI scholars continued to be supported by UNHCR for their academic studies

Livelihoods

- By the end of the reporting period, 40,000 vulnerable refugee households collected their cash assistance. UNHCR plans to target a total of 70,000 of the most vulnerable refugee families in Pakistan.
- UNHCR, in partnership with NAVTTC, has launched vocational and technical skills training for 1,510 registered refugees and host Pakistani youth. The six-month

trainings will be provided in UNHCR's priority districts with high refugee population density.

Health

- **COVID-19 prevention and response activities:** During the month of October, community health workers conducted 1,449 health education sessions with 7,628 participants on the prevention of COVID-19 in 41 refugee villages. The sessions focused on social stigma and physical distancing.
- **Community engagement:** Some 1,141 meetings were conducted with the *shura* and religious leaders with a total of 5,781 participants. Religious leaders (Pesh Imams) continued delivering messages on the prevention of COVID-19 from their mosques. A "no mask, no entry" policy and triage system were being implemented in health facilities. There were no positive cases detected in refugee villages.
- **Routine health activities:** Some four maternity centres continued to provide 24 hours, seven days a week services during October and conducted 491 deliveries. Some 131 obstetric emergencies were referred to the public district hospitals for advanced medical management. Moreover, the community health volunteers referred a total of 3,915 patients for different ailments to the nearest public health facilities and maternity centres.
- **Balochistan:** Some 54 sessions were conducted in three targeted refugee villages of Zar Karez (Loralai District) and Posti and Chaghi (Chaghi District) in Balochistan regarding awareness on tuberculosis and COVID-19 prevention measures. A total of 265 individuals from the refugee community participated by maintaining distancing. In addition, 120 households were visited to collect information regarding possible cases.
- All the private and community-run health facilities remained functional in the refugee villages of Surkhab and New Saranan (Pishin District), Chaghi and Posti (Chaghi District), and Mohammad Khail (Quetta District).
- A polio campaign was conducted from 26 October to 31 October 2020 in the refugee villages of Posti, Chaghi, Katwai, Ghazgi Minara, Zar Karez and Killa Saifullah.

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.
 - *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.*
- 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.

External/donors relations

Earmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 22 October 2020)¹

Australia | Canada | China | Denmark | Dr. Kin Chung Lam | European Union | IRTHI-NAMA Women Advancement Establishment | Japan | Korea | Lam Kin Chung Morning Sun Charity Fund | Norway | Qatar (Educate A Child) | Sheikh Thani Bin Abdullah Bin Thani Al-Thani Humanitarian Fund | Switzerland | United Nations Development Programme | United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS | United States of America | Miscellaneous private donors, including The Big Heart Foundation

Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 22 October 2020)²

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

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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.

