

# Afghanistan

April 2022

Afghanistan continues to face an unprecedented humanitarian crisis due to severe economic situation leading to rising poverty, natural disasters (drought and floods) and the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, over **700,000** conflict-related internal displacements were recorded -80 per cent of them

women and children. The total number of IDPs due to conflict countrywide is now estimated at 3.5 million. Some 24.4 million people – 59 per cent of Afghanistan's estimated 42 million population- will need humanitarian and protection assistance in 2022. This is largely influenced by spiralling

food insecurity, dangerous levels of malnutrition, eroded livelihood opportunities, as well as displacement and increasingly complex protection risks and needs. UNHCR remains engaged with partners to deliver life-saving assistance to those in need.

## KEY INDICATORS

# 791,800

# of persons assisted so far in 2022 including some **312,400** who received emergency assistance as of 30 April 2022

- **153,800** individuals  
Provided with cash assistance

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- **158,600** individuals  
Provided with in-kind and other assistance

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- **479,400** individuals  
Benefited from services in the 55 PARRs

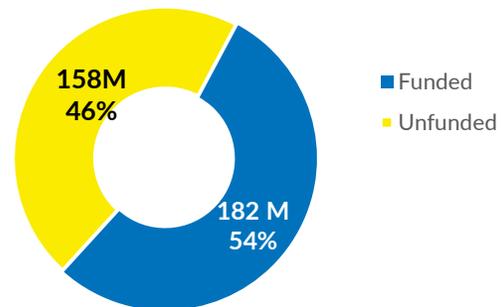
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- **77,800** individuals  
Assessed

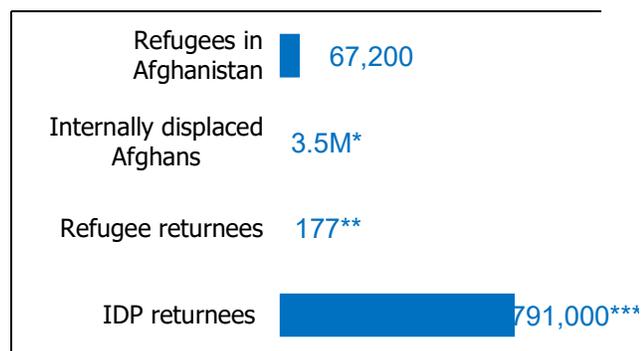
## FUNDING (AS OF 05 MAY 2022)

# USD 340.3 million

requested for the Afghanistan Operation



## POPULATION OF CONCERN AS OF 30 APR 2022



Estimates of IDPs in Afghanistan are provided by OCHA.

\*\*Refugee returnees represent those who have returned from Jan 2021 to Feb 2022 (Source: UNHCR Returnee Monitoring)

\*\*\*IDP returnees are those who went back to their communities in 2021 (Source: UNHCR Rapid Assessment)



During one of his field missions, UNHCR Afghanistan Rep – Leonard Zulu listens to a female beneficiary in Jalalabad in the east of the country through a translator. Photo © Ulfat Kazemi, UNHCR

# Update on Achievements

## Operational Context

Afghanistan continues to experience an overwhelming humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions and scale. The severity of the situation is further exacerbated by the increasing potential for insecurity, continued political and economic uncertainties, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 700,000 conflict-related displacements have been jointly verified since the beginning of 2021 – 80 per cent of them women and children. Overall, 3.5 million people are estimated to be displaced internally countrywide due to conflict while more than 2 million are refugees in neighboring countries. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), some 24.4 million of Afghanistan’s estimated 42 million population will need humanitarian and protection assistance this year. According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis conducted in January and February this year by the World Food Programme (WFP), Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), and other NGOs, about 19.7 million people in Afghanistan are facing acute hunger.



Afghan women supported by UNHCR to do artisanal work for livelihood in Herat, north-western Afghanistan under the MADE51 Project. Photo © Maitrevi Gupta, UNHCR

## Key Developments



### PROTECTION

UNHCR Afghanistan’s Community-Based Protection interventions focus on life-saving assistance through improving access to essential services that enhance the protection environment which mitigates further protection

risks, as well as support for resilient and peaceful communities. Fostering local integration as well as decreasing pressure on shared resources in communities is critical, particularly in the areas of high displacement and return, pursued through interventions buttressing UNHCR's area-based programming in the 55 Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs).

As the lead Protection agency, UNHCR monitors the overall protection environment through inter-agency frameworks and its community-based protection monitoring mechanisms. This approach ensures that protection risks are mitigated, specific needs addressed, and that the people of concern including the most vulnerable individuals can meet their basic needs through financial, in-kind assistance and referral to appropriate services in response to protection and socio-economic risks.

### Achievements and Impact

- From 1 January to 30 April, UNHCR provided some **281,151** individuals with protection support and assistance (ranging from protection monitoring in areas with refugee returnees and other locations) to interviews during border and household monitoring and assessments. As the key protection assistance and support, refugee returnees received voluntary repatriation grants and in-kind assistance and referrals for persons with specific needs - PSNs. Individuals including persons PSNs were provided with cash for their basic needs and other support while others received psycho-social support (PSS). Urban refugees also received various support to enhance access to higher education. Under the Communicating with Community (CwC) and Accountability to Affected People (AAP) approach, UNHCR Protection team also handled phone calls, responded to e-mails, and provided queries on general information requested. These interventions have significantly helped to reduce protection risks, restore the dignity of beneficiaries, and mitigate some of the gaps created by the ongoing socio-economic crisis in Afghanistan.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- To effectively respond to the growing protection needs of affected populations in Afghanistan, UNHCR plans to assist some **490,000** beneficiaries in 2022 under its community-based protection framework. In addition to the global economic impact of COVID-19, events in Afghanistan after August 2021 have severely affected the coping mechanisms of vulnerable population groups in the country and increased the protection risks of internally displaced people, refugee returnees, as well as some **67,200** refugees and asylum-seekers in the country. UNHCR is continuing its advocacy and mobilizing resources for the protection of all the targeted affected populations in need of protection services.



## EDUCATION

UNHCR and other partners are continuing their advocacy with relevant officials in Afghanistan as part of broader international efforts to pressure the de facto authorities to change their decision on secondary education for girls. Some donors including the World Bank recently suspended projects worth some **600** million dollars in protest of a ban on the education of teenage girls. UNHCR Afghanistan's multi-faceted approach to education is benefiting affected communities through the construction of schools to facilitate access to an inclusive learning environment including to groups with specific needs. These interventions focus on building on past achievements in the **55** Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs), which seek to build long-term solutions for affected communities.

### Achievements and Impact

- In April, UNHCR started the distribution of over **29,000** student backpacks as part of the Chinese financial contribution for UNHCR Afghanistan activities. The exercise is targeting pupils in Kabul, Bamiyan, Mazar, Kandahar, Herat and Nangarhar. Because secondary girls are not currently allowed to go to school, only girls at the primary level, and boys in both primary and secondary schools are receiving the backpacks.
- In further efforts to improve access to education, UNHCR constructed **37** educational institutions in 2021 in **33** of the **34** provinces in Afghanistan. Among them were three girls' schools, two internet cafés, and one Youth Learning Centre. In 2022, UNHCR is providing support to the upgrading of existing educational facilities and will construct new schools in the **55** PARRs. This support has effectively responded to the education needs of conflict-affected children and continues to promote peaceful coexistence with host communities. When the UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi visited Afghanistan earlier this year, he witnessed the opening of a UNHCR-constructed **12**-classroom girls' school to provide the education to some **1,200** Afghan female students.

- With the support of UNHCR and under the DAFI Scholarship scheme, some 40 Afghan refugee returnee students, started courses in February at universities across Kabul. 50 percent of them are women benefiting from the scholarships with a monthly cash grant of US\$250. In addition, UNHCR provides US\$200 to each student as stationery costs bringing the total for one academic year to US\$450. The programme is expected to be expanded to other areas - Jalalabad in Nangarhar Province and Mazar in Balkh Province for 20 additional beneficiaries. By opening a programme for qualified returnees in Afghanistan, DAFI is supporting returning refugees to continue their education. The DAFI programme serves as a foundation for social and professional development, allowing its scholars to build careers in competitive fields of employment and thereby also contribute to the progress of their respective countries.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Education for women and girls requires continuous advocacy efforts to help them continue their learning. There is also a need to ensure that existing education systems are resourced including supporting teacher and staff salaries – and putting in place appropriate measures to ensure service continuity. UNHCR will continue mobilizing resources to the extent possible to address some of the gaps as part of its protection interventions.



## HEALTH

### Achievements and Impact

- By the end of April, UNHCR provided 4,242 dignity and hygiene kits as part of life-saving assistance. In addition, UNHCR provided 8,196 persons with psycho-social support during the reporting period. In 2021, UNHCR improved access to health services through construction of 10 health clinics and provided Mental Health and Psychosocial Services (MHPSS). With the assistance, beneficiaries' physical, mental, and psychological wellbeing was supported.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Risks associated with economic collapse and increase in humanitarian needs are further compounded by sporadic armed conflict, climate change, insufficient health services and the COVID-19 pandemic. This could potentially drive additional internal displacements as well as force Afghans to seek refuge outside the country.



## FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR provided life-saving multi-sectoral assistance to more than 248,562 new IDPs and those affected by armed conflict by the end of April. In addition, cash for winterization was provided to 93,748 people to support their food security, nutrition, and other needs.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Prices of basic food commodities such as wheat flour, rice, cooking oil, pulses and sugar increased slightly by the end of April compared to the third week of March 2022. This, according to a World Food Programme monthly assessment finding, was mainly because of decrease in supply and global price increases further exacerbated by the depreciation of the Afghan currency. This put further strain on household income and expenditure. Conversely, prices of diesel declined by at least 4 per cent during the last week of March due to increase in supply from market sources. It is estimated that in 2022 some 24 million people - over half of the country's population face acute food insecurity.



## WATER AND SANITATION

### Achievements and Impact

- In 2021, UNHCR supported some **56,000** individuals in **40** communities through improving access to WASH and infrastructure facilities including construction of two water distribution schemes and two solar-powered water wells. Between January and April this year, UNHCR provided **15,459** people with core relief items including jerry cans and buckets to store clean drinking water.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Shortage of safe water for drinking and handwashing have led to watery diarrhoea outbreaks, particularly among children.



## SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIS)

### Shelter

- A core part of UNHCR's work is providing access to adequate shelter to persons in need. In Afghanistan, UNHCR is responding to the emergency through tent distribution and installation, construction and maintenance of emergency shelter kits and shelter rehabilitation. UNHCR provides cash for shelter support to refugee and IDP returnees to repair their partially damaged homes in their areas of origin. UNHCR also works on repair of essential services infrastructure and public facilities in the PARRs.

### Achievements and Impact

- Between January and April, UNHCR distributed **3,500** emergency shelter kits, and a total of **1,556** people received cash for rent and shelter repair. The assistance helped beneficiaries address their shelter repair needs and facilitated the payment of rent.

### CRIs

- UNHCR provides non-food items to internally displaced persons, returnees and vulnerable host communities based on needs. A standard family kit of core relief items is intended for the average household of seven and it comprises high thermal blankets, jerry cans, plastic sheets, kitchen sets and solar lamps. Supplementary and seasonal items are also distributed and can include winter jackets and hygiene kits.

### Achievements and Impact

- Between January and April, UNHCR distributed **74,056** core relief items, and **4,242** hygiene and dignity kits for women.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The de facto authorities continue to impose restrictions on female staff in the full spectrum of humanitarian response in some provinces– particularly during assessments, causing delays to operational activities such as identifying vulnerable female beneficiaries in need of specialized support.



## ACCESS TO ENERGY

### Achievements and Impact

- So far in 2022, UNHCR has provided **14,000** people with clean energy including distribution of solar equipment. The support ensures reliable lighting, facilitates home-based livelihood opportunities, children's education, fostering safer environments, and mitigating against protection risks including gender-based violence.



## REINTEGRATION/COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

Fostering local integration as well as decreasing pressure on the shared resources in communities is important, particularly in the areas of high displacement and return, which is being pursued through interventions that buttress UNHCR's area-based programming in PARRs. Under the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR supports refugees who voluntarily decide to repatriate and conducts returnee monitoring to collect real-time information on return trends, reasons for return, their protection situation during the return and reintegration.

### Achievements and Impact

- Between January and April this year, UNHCR supported **46,131** individuals with cash assistance for reintegration (CARE); **3,760** persons with entrepreneurship and business support assistance while **35,600** benefited from construction projects including schools, clinics, and other infrastructure. Also, **2,015** individuals received cash/vouchers for business start-ups.
- UNHCR continues investments in crucial areas such as health and education to support the sustainable reintegration of refugees and IDPs who previously returned to their areas of origin or may do so in the future. The investments also benefit local communities and displaced people living in areas of return.
- Since 2021, UNHCR has enhanced livelihood opportunities for **2,300** persons through market-based vocational and technical trainings including job placement and business support.



## DURABLE SOLUTIONS

### Achievements and Impact

- To leverage on the work being undertaken by humanitarian agencies aimed at strengthening sustainable reintegration, self-reliance, and durable solutions for returnees, refugees, and IDPs, UNHCR is engaged strategically with key donors and supporters of the Core Group of the SSAR Support Platform and other actors. They include the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, UN-Habitat, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), BRAC, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Labor Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Health Organization (WHO) and various NGOs around key thematic areas. UNHCR also continues to engage with the private sector, members of the host community and civil society organizations to promote inclusion and participation.
- UNHCR will continue to engage on a regional level through the Quadripartite Steering Committee of the SSAR and in Afghanistan through the One-UN and UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF) to support and provide life-saving assistance and facilitate access to basic services for people of concern, as well as identifying and providing support for durable solutions. In addition, UNHCR will continue to lead the Protection Cluster and the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster. UNHCR is also leading the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Working Group, co-leading the Return and Reintegration Working Group with IOM, and co-chairing the Housing Land and Property Task Force with UN-Habitat.



## CASH BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBIs)

UNHCR Afghanistan implements cash-based intervention (CBI) activities across all 34 provinces, and in the 55 PARRs – adopting a whole-of-community approach that addresses the protection, assistance and solutions related needs of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, and members of the host community. Cash assistance is delivered primarily through contracted financial service providers from the private sector. A standardized vulnerability assessment tool is used to collect information on household vulnerability, capacities, and coping strategies. This assessment data is analysed against set indicators to determine eligibility to the different cash programmes. To ensure that cash assistance is used for the intended purposes and delivered in accordance with UNHCR standards, rigorous monitoring mechanisms are in place including third-party post-distribution

monitoring. All of these are to ensure quality programming, integrity of processes and accountability to affected populations.

### Achievements and Impact

- For the first four months of 2022 (Jan-Apr), UNHCR provided cash assistance to **153,800** affected individuals. The assistance which covered a wide range of services helped beneficiaries address their protection, assistance, and solution needs.



### LOGISTICS

### Achievements and Impact

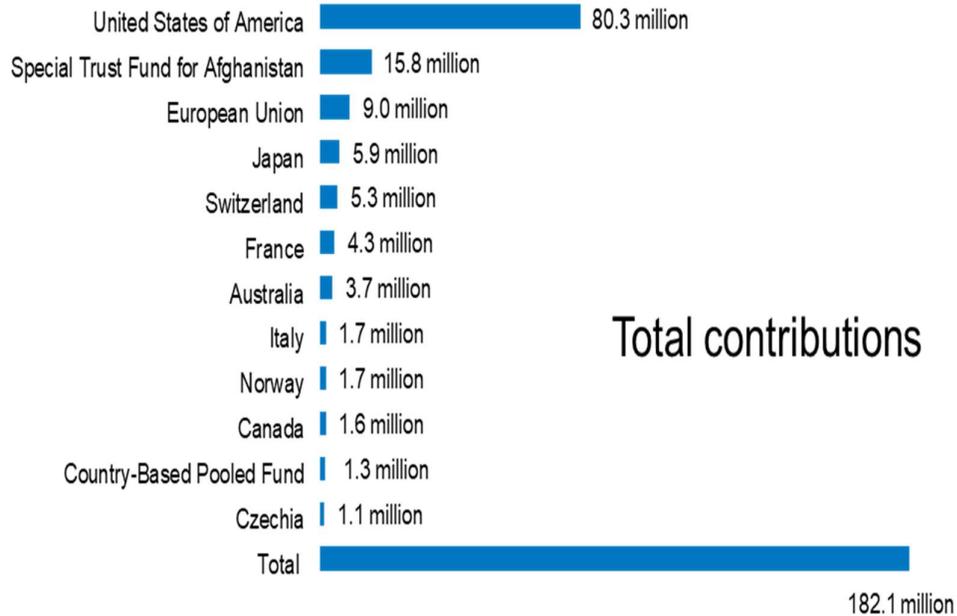
UNHCR scaled up its winter response programme to support IDPs, refugee and IDP returnees as well as affected host communities. This has enabled UNHCR to effectively respond to the basic needs of affected communities and support their recovery process through CRIs, cash, shelter, and other protection services.

### Working in partnership

- UNHCR has expanded its partnerships with diverse actors in Afghanistan, including UN agencies, the private sector, and international non-governmental organizations. The agencies include United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Habitat, International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Women, International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the private sector - Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, (ACCI), Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI) and international non-governmental organizations -Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) BRAC, and development actors - the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).
- In this regard, UNHCR signed Letters of Intent (LoIs) with UNDP, ILO, UN-Habitat, UN Women, FAO, UNODC, AKDN/Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), BRAC, and AWCCI aimed at "strengthening cooperation among the organizations in addressing the complex challenges of displacement and achieving the collective objectives in the PARRs as well as other areas of origin and or areas of displacement". To operationalize the partnerships, corresponding action plans have been devised for each LoI outlining key areas of complementarity and on-going joint programmes. UNHCR also engages with the de facto authorities to ensure access to persons of concern and to provide timely assistance to meet their needs.

### Financial Information as of 05 May 2022

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.



### LINKS

Global Focus: Afghanistan | Operational Data Portal: Afghanistan | @UNHCRAfg | Facebook | Pandemic depends hunger for displaced people the world over | UNHCR highlights needs of forcibly displaced in Afghanistan

### Contacts:

Tony Aseh – External Relations Officer: [aseh@unhcr.org](mailto:aseh@unhcr.org)

Tom Winston Monboe – Associate Reporting Officer: [monboe@unhcr.org](mailto:monboe@unhcr.org)

UNHCR Afghanistan is grateful for contributions by the following donors



UNHCR AFGHANISTAN OPERATIONAL MAP 2022

