

Pakistan

Working environment

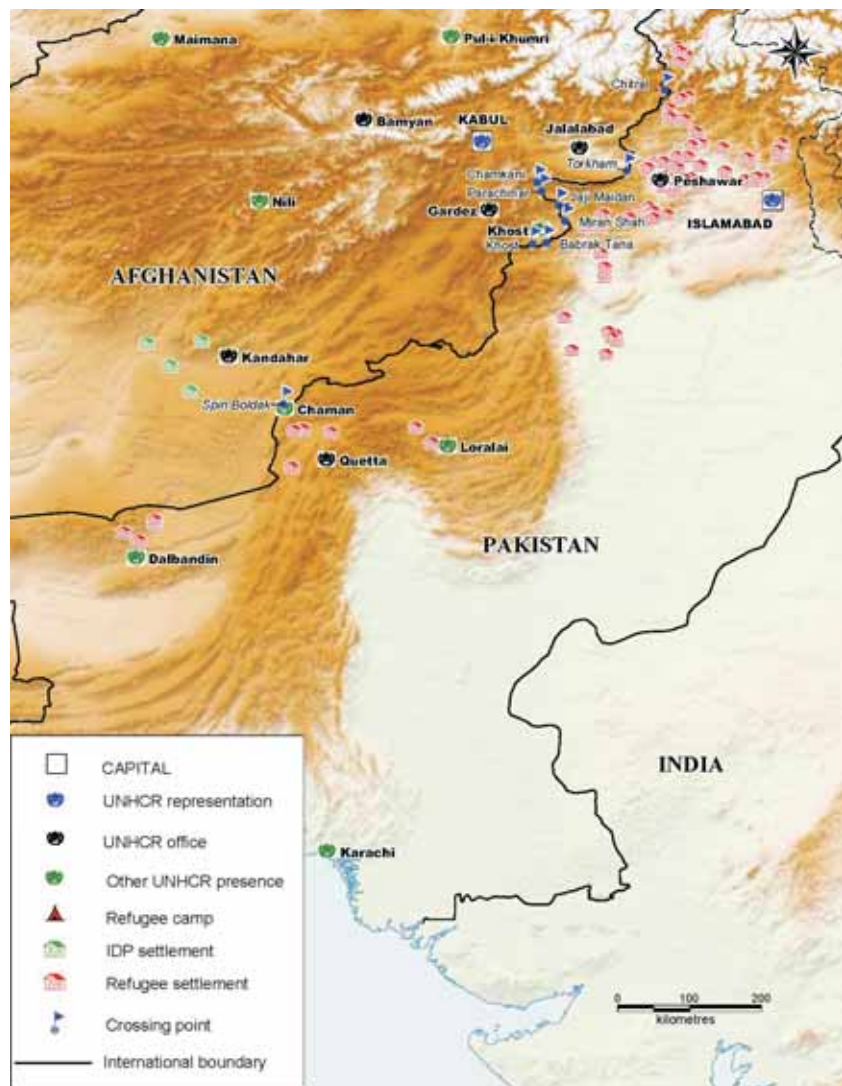
The context

Pakistan has been host to one of the world's largest refugee populations for more than 27 years. It is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, but Pakistan has generally respected the principles of international protection. Since March 2002, nearly 3.2 million Afghans have repatriated with UNHCR's assistance. However, some 2.1 million registered Afghans remain in Pakistan. UNHCR continues to work with the Government of Pakistan to find comprehensive solutions for the remaining population. Voluntary repatriation is the preferred solution for the majority of Afghans in Pakistan, but this option is hampered by the limited absorption capacity in Afghanistan.

The pace of repatriation, which had declined in recent years, picked up in 2007. This followed the introduction of an improved return package and the application of new return procedures linked to the registration of Afghans from October 2006 to February 2007. Between March and mid-August 2007, more than 300,000 Afghans voluntarily repatriated from Pakistan, including more than 200,000 unregistered Afghans who returned home during a six-week grace period agreed upon by the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Unregistered Afghans are considered illegal migrants in Pakistan.

The political and security situation in Pakistan remains tense, especially along the border with Afghanistan. Insecurity and restricted access to parts of the country have hampered UNHCR's ability to assist and protect refugees.

At the end of July, Katcha Gari camp (65,000 people) was closed, and Jalozaï (110,000) is scheduled to be closed in early 2008. Refugees affected by the closure of camps can choose to repatriate voluntarily or relocate to another camp in Pakistan. New camp closures will be discussed and agreed on by UNHCR and the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan at Tripartite Commission meetings.



The Tripartite Agreement, which governs the voluntary repatriation of Afghans, was signed in August 2007 and is valid until the end of 2009.

The needs

Though the Afghan population and the number of camps have decreased due to repatriation and camp closures, the population remaining in camps continues to need support in the areas of water, sanitation, health and basic education.

More than 2.15 million Afghan citizens were registered in the Pakistani Government's registration exercise that ended in February 2007. Those above five years of age received Proof of Registration cards valid till the end of 2009, recognizing them as Afghan citizens living temporarily in Pakistan. Based on the registration database, UNHCR is conducting pilot protection profiling

exercises to identify individuals with specific needs, those needing continued international protection, and those who may or may not be able to return to Afghanistan. This information will allow governments, UNHCR and its partners to seek solutions for different groups. UNHCR is also identifying camps for closure and consolidation.

The Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative aims to promote co-existence by rehabilitating refugees-hosting areas and upgrading facilities to benefit both the Afghan and Pakistani communities. In 2007, pilot projects were implemented in the health sector, while the UN Development Programme began assessing environmental and livelihood needs in affected areas.

Total requirements
2008: USD 18,374,173
2009: USD 18,884,942

Main objectives

- Provide international protection and durable solutions to refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Identify people of concern to UNHCR within the registered Afghan population and develop and implement a strategy for durable solutions.
- Develop comprehensive solutions for refugees and a regional policy framework on Afghan displacement and migration issues. Promote adoption and implementation of the latter by all concerned stakeholders.
- Ensure the inclusion of refugee affected and hosting areas and Afghan populations in the national development agenda and area development programmes supported by other UN agencies and the UN “Delivering as One” initiative.
- Take coordinated action to close camps and consolidate services, with emphasis on a community-based approach to address the specific needs of vulnerable populations.

Key targets for 2008 and 2009

- Some 540,000 (regional planning figure) Afghans from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran repatriate voluntarily.
- An estimated 1,000 refugees with specific protection needs are resettled.
- The RAHA initiative is integrated into the UN “Delivering as One” initiative.

Strategy and activities

The focus of UNHCR’s intervention is shifting from traditional humanitarian assistance to protection. Targeted interventions will be based on profiling of the Afghans who were issued a Proof of Registration card. In addition, a countrywide network of Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALAC) has been providing Afghans with information on legal matters and the situation in their country of origin. These centres also render free legal aid and help build the capacity of the local authorities in refugee law and increase their awareness of the voluntary repatriation programme. The ALACs are instrumental in seeking remedies for Afghans arrested under the Foreigners Act.

UNHCR provides community-based humanitarian assistance to nearly one million Afghans living in 85 camps, mainly focusing on the provision of education, health and water. Traditional care and maintenance activities will be gradually phased out as services for Afghans are integrated into the national agenda. In the short term, UNHCR is sponsoring pilot RAHA projects to improve health services, benefiting both the local and host communities. The Office is also focusing on strengthening the refugee community’s involvement in health care, HIV and AIDS, education, and water management.

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2008		Dec 2008 - Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees ¹	Afghanistan	1,000,000	1,000,000	900,000	900,000	750,000	750,000
Asylum-seekers	Afghanistan	2,500	2,500	5,000	5,000	10,000	10,000
Others of concern	Afghanistan	1,150,000	1,150,000	1,050,000	1,050,000	900,000	900,000
Total		2,152,500	2,152,500	1,955,000	1,955,000	1,660,000	1,660,000

¹ The number of refugees is an estimation. According to a Government and UNHCR registration exercise completed in February 2007, some 2.15 million Afghans were registered and are considered of concern to UNHCR. Of these, an estimated 976,000 live in camps and some 1,176,000 outside camps, some of whom may be refugees but receive no assistance from UNHCR except access to facilitated voluntary repatriation. The refugee figure is currently under review.



UNHCR/B. Baloch

UNHCR staff process an unregistered Afghan repatriating from the Hayatabad UNHCR repatriation centre, Peshawar.

Networks for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence are in place to coordinate all the relevant actors providing support in this area. The networks cover training, development of a shared database and referral mechanisms at the camp level. They also include a tracking system within UNHCR.

UNHCR is advocating for more investment in areas of high potential for return in Afghanistan and for a framework linking Pakistan and Afghanistan that covers border control, visa and entry systems, seasonal labour migration, management of legal and illegal migration, asylum systems, refugee assistance and returns.

Constraints

The deteriorating security situation in the border areas and restrictions on access are of great concern to UNHCR, as they may result in the secondary displacement of Afghans and the displacement of Pakistanis, as well as jeopardizing assistance operations and the safe return of Afghans. The lack of infrastructure and jobs in Afghanistan hinders sustainable return, and may discourage Afghans living in Pakistan from leaving. Furthermore, bilateral tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan may reduce the asylum space for Afghans.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence

	2008	2009
Number of offices	3	3
Total staff	166	166
International	23	23
National	137	137
UNVs	5	5
JPOs	1	1

Coordination

The Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) continues to be UNHCR's main government interlocutor. As Pakistan is one of the pilot countries for UN reform, the UN Country Team is developing joint programmes through five thematic working groups related to the Millennium Development Goals. Refugees have been identified as a cross-cutting issue and all UN agencies and the Government must commit to giving due consideration to refugee matters when formulating and implementing development programmes.

Partners

Implementing partners

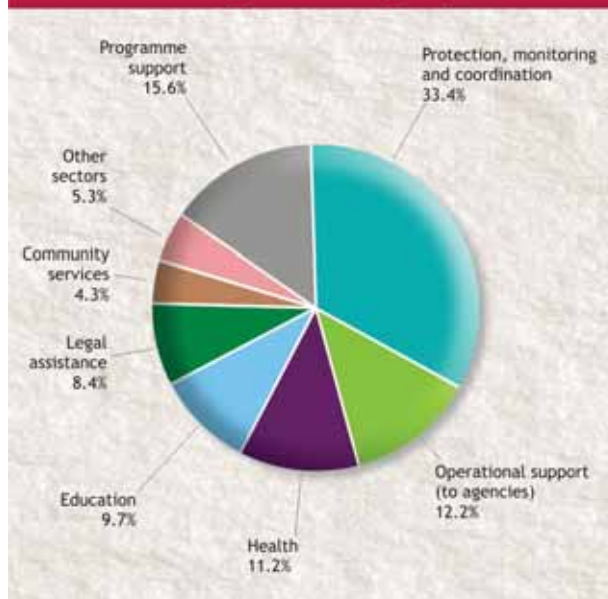
Government: Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, Ministry of States and Frontier Regions, National Database and Registration Authority.

NGOs: Afghan Medical Welfare Association, American Refugee Committee, Association of Medical Doctors of Asia, Basic Education and Employable Skills Training, Basic Education for Afghan Refugees, Catholic Relief Services, Church World Services (USA), Health Net International (Netherlands), International Rescue Committee (USA), Kuwait Joint Relief Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council, Ockenden International (UK), Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Save the Children Federation (USA), *Sayyed Jamal-ud-din* Afghani Welfare Organization, Society for Community Support to Primary Education, Society for Humanitarian Rights and Prisoners, Struggle for Change, Taraqee Foundation, The Frontier Primary Health Care, Union Aid for Afghan Refugees.

Operational partners

NGOs: Afghan Health Training Project, *Darus-Salam*, Humanitarian Medical and Relief Body, International Medical Corps, *Médecins Sans Frontières*, Mercy Corps International, Qatar Charity.

2008-2009 Biennial Programme Budget by sector



Budget (USD)

Activities and services	2007			2008	2009
	Annual Programme Budget	Supp. Programme Budget	Total	Annual Programme Budget	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	7,093,855	71,580	7,165,435	6,143,685	6,288,455
Community services	663,039	-	663,039	877,670	741,670
Domestic needs	51,803	1,835,570	1,887,373	98,000	275,207
Education	2,170,020	-	2,170,020	1,891,954	1,710,498
Health	2,926,933	-	2,926,933	2,117,802	2,070,482
Legal assistance	1,328,284	-	1,328,284	1,479,668	1,640,668
Operational support (to agencies)	1,487,657	-	1,487,657	2,105,887	2,421,426
Sanitation	139,500	-	139,500	62,293	62,293
Transport and logistic	164,030	641,448	805,478	261,094	360,366
Water	368,832	-	368,832	445,730	392,730
Total operations	16,393,952	2,548,598	18,942,550	15,483,783	15,963,795
Programme support	2,659,611	-	2,659,611	2,890,391	2,921,146
Total	19,053,563	2,548,598	21,602,161	18,374,173	18,884,942

Note: The Supplementary Programme Budget excludes a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.