

# ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



## Working environment

### The context

The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to host one of the largest refugee populations in the world. As of December 2011, according to the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA), the total number of refugees registered with the authorities stood at some 882,700, including some 840,200 Afghans and 42,500 Iraqis. Close to 3,500 Iraqi refugees registered with UNHCR are awaiting a decision from the

authorities on their legal status. Most refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran reside in urban areas, with only 3 per cent living in settlements.

Between January 2002 and July 2012, UNHCR assisted some 902,000 Afghan refugees to return home voluntarily. Some 28,000 Iraqi refugees have also been assisted to return home since 2003. In May 2012, an international stakeholders' conference endorsed the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees presented by the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, and facilitated by UNHCR.

## Planning figures for the Islamic Republic of Iran

TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	JAN 2013		DEC 2013	
		TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR
Refugees	Afghanistan	818,910	818,910	797,130	797,130
	Iraq	44,260	44,260	41,760	41,760
	Various	80	80	80	80
Asylum-seekers	Afghanistan	80	80	40	40
	Various	20	20	10	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>863,350</b>	<b>863,350</b>	<b>839,020</b>	<b>839,020</b>

Afghan refugees selling pistachios for a living in Dashte-Zahmatkeshan.



UNHCR / M. H. SALEHIARA

In 2013, the UNHCR programme in the Islamic Republic of Iran will have two goals: to support voluntary repatriation and to enhance refugees' self-reliance in preparation for sustainable return to their country of origin or resettlement in a third country.

There have been positive developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran. These include the decision to issue work permits to refugee women, the de-linking of payment for work permit fees from re-registration of refugee cards, extension of a health insurance scheme for refugees, and permission for refugee girls admitted to universities to obtain student visas within the country.

Pursuant to an initiative proposed by BAFIA, some Afghan refugees have begun exchanging their refugee cards for passports and residence permits. UNHCR is working closely with the authorities to ensure that protection safeguards are upheld during the process.

### • The needs

The global economic downturn and the removal of subsidies in the Islamic Republic of Iran have led to a significant rise in the cost of medicine, health care, education and other social services. Inflation has been boosted by multiple increases in fuel and energy costs. Based on the vulnerability assessment/registration undertaken by the Government in the context of the refugee re-registration exercise in 2011, it is estimated that some 200,000 Afghan refugees are in urgent need of additional assistance in urban areas.

Some of these vulnerable refugees will also require food assistance. At present, WFP food distribution is limited to refugee settlements. Inadequate financial support has left gaps in health care as State resources are overstretched. Moreover, refugees' lack of access to full medical insurance makes them vulnerable in case of ill-health.

## Main objectives and targets for 2013

### Basic needs and essential services

- The health status of the refugee population is improved.
  - ☞ About 300,000 registered refugees have access to free primary health care.
  - ☞ At least 80 per cent of the refugee population benefits from health insurance covering secondary and tertiary treatments.
  - ☞ The medical referral system is maintained.
- The population of concern has optimal access to education.
  - ☞ Adult education is provided for 3,000 refugees.
  - ☞ Five educational facilities are constructed.
  - ☞ More than 280,000 registered refugees have access to primary and secondary education.

### Community empowerment and self-reliance

- Self-reliance and livelihoods are improved.
  - ☞ Access to self-employment and small-business opportunities is facilitated for 5,000 refugees.

- ☞ Entrepreneurship and business training is provided for 5,000 refugees.

### Durable solutions

- The potential for voluntary return is realized.
  - ☞ Cash grants are given to 15,000 refugees opting to return home.
  - ☞ A minimum of four cross-border meetings are held in support of returns to Afghanistan and Iraq.
  - ☞ All vulnerable refugees assisted by UNHCR to repatriate benefit from health screening.
- The potential for resettlement is realized.
  - ☞ Some 5,000 refugees are resettled.

## UNHCR's presence in 2013

□ Number of offices	5
□ Total staff	127
International	12
National	110
UNVs	1
Others	4

Government statistics indicate that some 300,000 refugees are working in the construction, agriculture and production sectors. This is a source of concern for both the Government and Iranian citizens in view of the high unemployment rate within the country.

All existing settlements need repairs to their health, education, water and sanitation infrastructure. Recent UNHCR monitoring missions have revealed that the school enrolment rate in the settlements is generally lower than that among refugees residing outside them.

Solutions are needed for some 82,000 Afghan refugees with specific needs, including women and children at risk of violence and/or survivors of violence, unaccompanied and separated children, and refugees with mental, physical and genetic disabilities.

Although some Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran perceive the socio-economic conditions inside Afghanistan as being very poor and unsafe, nonetheless UNHCR will continue provide country of origin information updates and provide assistance to those considering and opting for voluntary return.

### | Strategy and activities |

The primary goal of UNHCR in the Islamic Republic of Iran is to implement durable solutions for registered refugees through voluntary repatriation, resettlement and sustainable reintegration. This will be achieved by: facilitating and enhancing voluntary repatriation and assisting sustainable reintegration in returnee areas; enhancing resettlement; empowering refugees to return through improved access to education and health care; and diversifying livelihood training and opportunities.

Although UNHCR will advocate with the Government to maintain a legal framework for the continued stay of Afghan and Iraqi refugees, voluntary repatriation remains the preferred solution for these groups. UNHCR will try to increase cash grants to each family, without limits on the number of family members. In collaboration with the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan and Iran, UNHCR will evaluate the conditions in regions of return in Afghanistan and support interventions in the areas of water, electricity, access to roads, shelter, health, education and access to diversified livelihood opportunities, with a focus on food security.

UNHCR will continue advocating for the contact group of concerned Governments to offer larger resettlement quotas, emphasizing the urgent needs of female-headed households and vulnerable groups, including refugees with chronic medical conditions.

Projects focused on building human capital will empower refugees to contribute to rebuilding Afghanistan and facilitate their reintegration. The projects will address assistance gaps in the sectors of education, health and livelihoods both in Afghanistan and in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Vocational, professional and trading courses will be provided to refugees. These courses will take into consideration labour market needs inside Afghanistan. Training will be complemented by micro-projects for refugee graduates. These will provide the graduates with the necessary capital to practice a trade and new skills that can be used upon their return to Afghanistan.

#### ● Constraints

Refugees are especially hard hit by the deteriorating economic situation inside the country, as they remain unprotected by social safety nets. The economy continues to suffer from hyper-inflation, substantially increasing operating costs.

### | Organization and implementation |

#### ● Coordination

As the main counterpart of UNHCR in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs has the overall responsibility for coordinating refugee affairs in the areas of protection, health, education, yearly re-registration, issuance of travel permits, management of refugee settlements and coordination with governmental departments.

The Government, UN agencies and NGOs have bilateral and tripartite cooperation agreements with UNHCR for the provision of direct and indirect assistance to refugees in a number of specific areas. The Ministry of Health has been the main counterpart for primary health care services and access to government health care facilities. The Ministry of Education is the main entity responsible for the education of refugee children and literacy training courses for adults and out-of-school refugees. UNHCR has cooperation agreements with the Technical and Vocational Training

Organization, while the International World Relief Foundation is empowering refugee women through training courses and support for home-based microbusinesses.

## Financial information

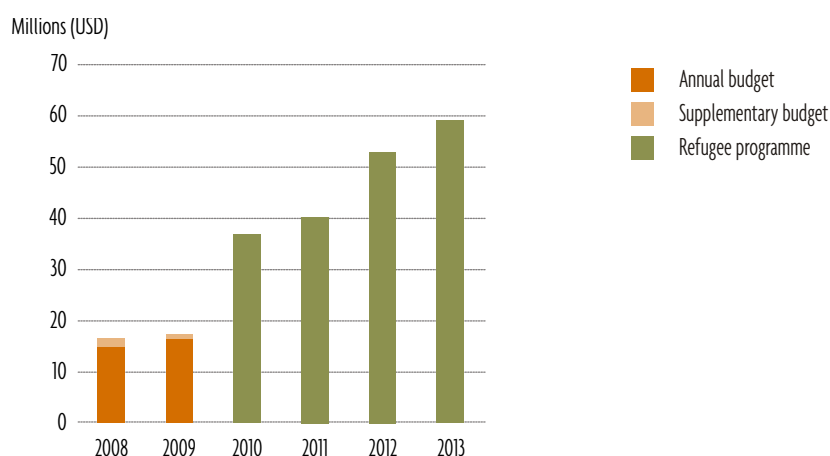
The 2013 budget of USD 59.6 million shows a 12 per cent increase over that of 2012, mainly attributable to the overall increase in the cost of operating in the Islamic Republic of Iran, due to rising prices for basic goods and services.

## Consequences of a funding shortfall

- Some 50 per cent of planned livelihood activities would not be implemented.

- Around 50 per cent of planned infrastructure rehabilitation in settlements would not be undertaken.
- Up to 12,000 vulnerable refugees in need of medical support for non-life-threatening conditions would not be assisted.
- More than 1,000 adult and out-of-school refugees would be excluded from literacy courses.
- Construction of three additional education units would be deferred or cancelled and 50 per cent of vulnerable refugee students would not receive school supplies and uniforms.
- 50 per cent of vulnerable female refugees of reproductive age would not receive sanitary kits.

## UNHCR's budget in the Islamic Republic of Iran 2008 – 2013



## 2013 UNHCR's budget in the Islamic Republic of Iran (USD)

BUDGET BREAKDOWN	REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	TOTAL
<b>Favourable protection environment</b>		
International and regional instruments	12,369	12,369
Law and policy	170,170	170,170
Access to legal assistance and remedies	855,633	855,633
Public attitude towards persons of concern	391,200	391,200
Subtotal	<b>1,429,371</b>	<b>1,429,371</b>
<b>Fair protection processes and documentation</b>		
Reception conditions improved	177,600	177,600
Registration and profiling	187,106	187,106
Refugee status determination	111,843	111,843
Individual documentation	425,231	425,231
Civil registration and civil status documentation	343,709	343,709
Subtotal	<b>1,245,489</b>	<b>1,245,489</b>
<b>Security from violence and exploitation</b>		
Prevention and response to SGBV	905,972	905,972
Freedom of movement and reduction of detention risks	106,737	106,737
Protection of children	490,340	490,340
Subtotal	<b>1,503,050</b>	<b>1,503,050</b>

## PARTNERS

### Implementing partners

#### Government agencies

Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs  
 Medical Services Insurance Organization  
 Ministry of Education  
 Ministry of Health  
 State Welfare Organization  
 Technical and Vocational Training Organization

#### NGOs

Association for Protection of Refugee Women and Children  
 Chain of Hope Charity Organization  
 Imam Khomeini Relief Committee  
 International World Relief Foundation  
 Iraqi Refugee Aid Council  
 Organization for Defending Victims of Violence  
 Rebirth Charity Organization  
 Society for Recovery Support  
 Society to Protect Children Suffering from Cancer

#### Others

UNDP  
 UNIDO

### Operational partners

#### NGOs

Caritas  
 Danish Refugee Council  
 Family Planning Organization  
 Global Partners  
 International Consortium for Refugees in Iran  
 Médecins Sans Frontières  
 Nippon International Cooperation for Community Development  
 Norwegian Refugee Council  
 Operation Mercy  
 Relief International

#### Others

FAO  
 IOM  
 UNAIDS  
 UNDP  
 UNESCO  
 UNFPA  
 UNICEF  
 UNIDO  
 UNODC  
 WFP  
 WHO

BUDGET BREAKDOWN	REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	TOTAL
<b>Basic needs and essential services</b>		
Health	21,215,527	21,215,527
Reproductive health and HIV services	430,463	430,463
Water	465,231	465,231
Sanitation and hygiene	2,076,802	2,076,802
Shelter and infrastructure	4,645,231	4,645,231
Basic domestic items	444,737	444,737
Services for people with specific needs	2,615,601	2,615,601
Education	6,340,046	6,340,046
Subtotal	<b>38,233,638</b>	<b>38,233,638</b>
<b>Community empowerment and self-reliance</b>		
Community mobilization	101,852	101,852
Co-existence with local communities	215,231	215,231
Self-reliance and livelihoods	5,765,694	5,765,694
Subtotal	<b>6,082,777</b>	<b>6,082,777</b>
<b>Durable solutions</b>		
Comprehensive solutions strategy	1,045,864	1,045,864
Voluntary return	7,655,503	7,655,503
Resettlement	1,153,063	1,153,063
Subtotal	<b>9,854,430</b>	<b>9,854,430</b>
<b>Leadership, coordination and partnerships</b>		
Coordination and partnerships	174,231	174,231
Donor relations and resource mobilization	531,023	531,023
Subtotal	<b>705,254</b>	<b>705,254</b>
<b>Logistics and operations support</b>		
Logistics and supply	220,231	220,231
Operations management, coordination and support	284,049	284,049
Subtotal	<b>504,280</b>	<b>504,280</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,558,289</b>	<b>59,558,289</b>
<b>2012 Revised budget (as of 30 June 2012)</b>	<b>53,221,255</b>	<b>53,221,255</b>