

AFGHANISTAN



| Overview |

Operational highlights

- The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR) continues to be the policy framework within which UNHCR Afghanistan pursues its repatriation and reintegration objectives. The second quadripartite meeting on the SSAR, hosted by the Government of Afghanistan, was held in January 2013 between the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, and UNHCR. Subsequently, a portfolio of projects for 2014 that will benefit returnees in Afghanistan, linked to the multi-year regional SSAR, was finalized.
- Since 2002, 5.8 million Afghan refugees have returned home of whom 4.7 million assisted by UNHCR and the Government. Representing some 25 per cent of Afghanistan's entire population, returnees remain a key population of concern to UNHCR. In 2013, 39,600 refugees returned during the year – 60 per cent fewer than the 98,500 returnees in 2012.
- Returns from Pakistan decreased by 63 per cent and by 46 per cent from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Uncertainty in the transition years, particularly with planned elections in 2014 and the scheduled withdrawal of international security forces in

UNHCR's presence | 2013

Number of offices	8
Total personnel	294
International staff	32
National staff	256
JPOs	1
UN Volunteers	4
Others	1

Afghanistan, influenced refugees' decisions not to return, with many adopting a "wait-and-see" approach.

- UNHCR will advocate for the use of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) to deliver community-based programmes in high return areas. A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted in late 2013 to identify gaps which will facilitate targeted programming by

humanitarian and development partners. UNHCR will continue to address the humanitarian needs of returnees residing outside the high-return areas.

- On 25 November 2013, Afghanistan’s national policy on internally displaced people (IDPs), which provided a framework for emergency response and durable solutions for IDPs, was presented by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and later endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers.
- Rapid urbanization affected the needs of refugees, IDPs and the urban poor, who struggled to access basic services, including water, shelter, healthcare, education and livelihoods. This growing trend exceeded UNHCR’s capacity to respond.

- The MoRR, in close collaboration with UNHCR, completed a draft of the Law on Asylum and Refugees in Afghanistan. As there is no national legislation mechanism on asylum and refugee issues, UNHCR conducted refugee status determination.
- Based on a letter of intent signed by the UN Resident Coordinator in Afghanistan, in February 2013, UNHCR, ILO, and UNDP identified gaps in services and areas of overlap by mapping their country programmes. UNHCR and FAO also developed a joint programme to promote agriculture-based livelihood skills for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, so that they could eventually reintegrate sustainably in Afghanistan.

People of concern

By year-end, some 70 people were recognized as refugees; another 70 were seeking asylum in Afghanistan; and more than 16,000 individuals were living in a refugee-like situation. Furthermore, 124,000 people were internally displaced, bringing the total number of conflict-induced IDPs to more than

630,000 by the end of 2013. Of the 39,600 Afghans who voluntarily repatriated to Afghanistan in 2013, about 31,200 had come from Pakistan, some 8,200 from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and 200 from other countries.

Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Various	70	70	39	39
People in a refugee-like situation	Pakistan	16,800	16,800	51	51
Asylum-seekers	Various	70	70	36	50
IDPs	Afghanistan	631,300	631,300	51	51
Returned IDPs, including people in an IDP-like situation	Afghanistan	21,800	21,800	51	51
Others of concern	Afghan returnees of concern to UNHCR	275,500	275,500	50	50
Returnees (refugees)*	Pakistan	31,200	30,400	51	50
	Islamic Rep. of Iran	8,200	8,200	51	50
	Various	200	150	51	50
Total		985,140	984,290		

* Demographic breakdown of returnees refers to all returnees

| Results in 2013 |

Achievements and impact

The following matrix contains examples of objectives and targets set for UNHCR's programme interventions in this operation in 2013. Short commentaries on the

end-year results and impact on people of concern are provided, including indications of why targets may not have been met.

2013 activities	People of concern (PoC)	2013 comprehensive target	2013 year-end result
BASIC NEEDS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES			
Shelter and infrastructure established, improved and maintained			
Result/impact: A shelter assistance programme saw over 7,600 returnee families enjoy access to safe housing, a minimum standard of privacy and a social and economic livelihood base.			
Gaps: The needs of a considerable number of vulnerable families were unfortunately not met through this objective, due to a lack of funding and difficulties in land tenure. Shelter remained one of returnees' most pressing needs.			
% of households living in adequate dwellings	Afghan returnees	100%	16.8%
	Internally displaced Afghans	100%	62%
# of long-term/permanent shelters provided	Afghan returnees	6,500	1,279
	Internally displaced Afghans	656	404
SECURITY FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION			
Risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) reduced and quality of response improved			
Results/impact: UNHCR prioritized protection within high return areas, focusing on the prevention of, and response to, SGBV, and the empowerment of women, men and children – including community mobilization and co-existence. Through a partner, the organization ran 10 SGBV projects and awareness sessions for all returnees on women's rights, human rights and the law on elimination of violence against women.			
Gaps: Due to insecurity and related access challenges, and also owing to the sensitivity of the topic in the country, women and girls continued to face SGBV challenges in various situations, including while attending school, obtaining identification cards, participating in local decision-making structures, and making choices regarding marriage. Furthermore, standard referral and response mechanisms for SGBV survivors did not exist.			
Extent to which known SGBV survivors receive support	Afghan returnees	35%	20%
	Internally displaced Afghans	30%	20%
# of advocacy interventions for women's rights and gender equality	Afghan returnees	50	10
	Internally displaced Afghans	20	5
FAIR PROTECTION PROCESSES AND DOCUMENTATION			
Quality of registration and profiling improved or maintained			
Results/impact: By year-end, a new Population Movement Tracking (PMT) database was available internally. UNHCR profiled some 154,000 persons (over 124,000 of whom were displaced in 2013) in this database, which enabled it to record information on IDP protection needs more comprehensively.			
Gaps: There is still need for review and improvement of the PMT.			
% of IDPs for which sex and age disaggregated data is available	Internally displaced Afghans	100%	100%
# of PoC profiled		200,000	154,164
FAVOURABLE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT			
Law and policy developed or strengthened			
Results/impact: In the absence of an applicable law on refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR continued assessing asylum claims.			
Gaps: The national refugee and asylum-seekers law drafted in 2012 was reviewed by UNHCR in 2013 and subsequently submitted to the Ministry of Justice for the official processes of adoption through the Council of the Ministers and Parliament.			
Extent law or policy consistent with international standards	Refugees and asylum-seekers	60%	0%
# of instances of UNHCR commentary on legal act and drafts provided		20	20
DURABLE SOLUTIONS			
Potential for voluntary return realized			
Result/impact: Since 2002, 5.8 million Afghan refugees had returned home, 4.7 million with UNHCR and Government assistance. In 2013, 39,600 Afghans repatriated voluntarily to Afghanistan, 31,200 came from Pakistan; 8,200 from the Islamic Republic of Iran; and 200 from other countries – a marked decrease in returns from previous years.			
Gaps: The low absorption capacity particularly in the 'high-return' areas following significant returns between 2002 and 2005, and resulting insufficient basic services even for the local population, have affected return rates. Additionally, many refugee returnees faced difficulties, particularly initially, in re-establishing themselves within their communities and in exercising their social, economic, civil, political and cultural rights to the same extent as their host communities.			
% of PoC with intention to return who have returned voluntarily	Afghan returnees	100%	100%
# of verifications of voluntary return		172,000	38,766

Partners

Implementing partners

Government agencies:

Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, provincial Departments of Refugees and Repatriation, of Education and of Public Health.

NGOs:

Afghan Agency for Integrated Development, Afghan Bureau for Reconstruction, Afghan General Help Coordination Office, Afghan Planning Agency, Afghan Public Welfare Organization, Afghan Unique Development Organization, Afghanistan National Construction Coordination, Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation, Agency of Consultancy for Training, Ansari Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan, Assistance for Health, Education and Development, Central Afghanistan Welfare Committee, Cooperation Center for Afghanistan, Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, Coordination of Rehabilitation and Development Services for Afghanistan, Development and Care Group, Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan, Emerging Leaders Consulting Services, Green Way Organization, High Afghanistan Rehabilitation Organization, Human Dignity Society, Human Resources Development Agency, Humanitarian Action for the People of Afghanistan, Intersos – Italy, Mediothek Afghanistan, New Consultancy and Relief Organization, New Irrigation Organization, Norwegian Project Office - Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan, Organization for Development Care and Gender, Organization for Relief Development, Organisation of Human Welfare, Razi Social Development Organization, Reconstruction and Social Services for Afghanistan Organization, Relief International, Sanayee Development Organization, Shafaq Reconstruction Organization, Shelter Now International, The Liaison Office – Afghanistan, Voluntary Association for the Rehabilitation of Afghanistan, War Child UK, Watan's Social and Technical Services Association, Women for Afghan Women, Youth Assembly for Afghanistan Rehabilitation

Others:

Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, UNOPS

Assessment of results

While the year began with an exceptionally high rate of returns, numbers decreased drastically in ensuing months, with 39,600 refugee returnees at the end of the year – 60 per cent fewer returns than in 2012. Deteriorating security conditions, particularly in remote areas, led to shrinking humanitarian space and little incentive for refugees to return, given the planned elections in 2014 and the scheduled withdrawal of international security forces. Scarce resources, limited basic infrastructure and few livelihood or employment opportunities also discouraged returns in the absence of reintegration perspectives.

The Afghan Government's limited capacity to deliver basic services and the lack of access to certain areas owing to insecurity and conflict also created challenges for monitoring programmes.

The Office provided transportation and reintegration cash grants for almost 39,000 refugee returnees via centres where they could also access health care, legal advice/counselling, medical screening and vaccinations, as well as mine-awareness education. UNHCR also constructed over 1,200 shelter units in high-return areas and distributed core relief items (CRI) to households; assisted 50,000 vulnerable returnees with winterization packages, including CRI, hygiene items and fuel; facilitated access to clean water for some 69,000 returnees and local community members; and carried out 30 livelihood or vocational training projects in 10 locations, benefitting well over 4,000 returnees.

UNHCR-distributed CRI (18,000 kits) helped 111,000 conflict-induced IDPs to meet their basic needs, while winter assistance bolstered the living conditions of 73,000 IDPs (over 10,000 families) and 3,000 individuals identified as having specific needs – of whom 1,400 received direct cash assistance while the remaining 1,600 were assisted through the cluster referral system. Shelter remained one of the most pressing needs faced by returnees and IDPs – particularly in large cities, owing to land issues. IDP families in particularly difficult circumstances benefited from some 350 UNHCR-constructed shelters.

In rural areas, access to education continued to be a challenge with the nearest school often too far away, high-school fees unaffordable for many IDP families, and a lack of female teachers in isolated areas making it difficult for girls to attend school.

A lack of access to livelihoods also remained a major obstacle for IDPs across the country. In north and west Afghanistan mainly, 15 livelihood, cash-for-work and education projects benefited over 7,500 IDPs.

Scarcity of potable and irrigation water was a major issue throughout Afghanistan.

Working with others

The MoRR continued to be UNHCR's main government counterpart for voluntary repatriation and sustainable return and reintegration. In 2013, UNHCR continued to work with the MoRR and relevant ministries to operationalize memorandums of understanding signed with various line ministries aimed at ensuring that national priority programmes included returnees in their planning and as beneficiaries. The Office also encouraged the re-establishment of a national steering committee, led by the MoRR, to facilitate the joint implementation and monitoring of initiatives undertaken through the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee as part of the SSAR in Afghanistan.

At a provincial level, the Departments of Refugees and Repatriation participated in an assessment jointly conducted by UNHCR and other partners to identify gaps and understand the needs of returnees, IDPs and the host community.

The organization actively engaged in the CCA/UNDAF process for 2014-2019 so that refugee returnees and IDPs featured prominently in development priorities jointly identified by the UN Country Team (UNCT). It also initiated specific discussions aimed to ensure the complementarity of work of FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women and targeted NGO partners.

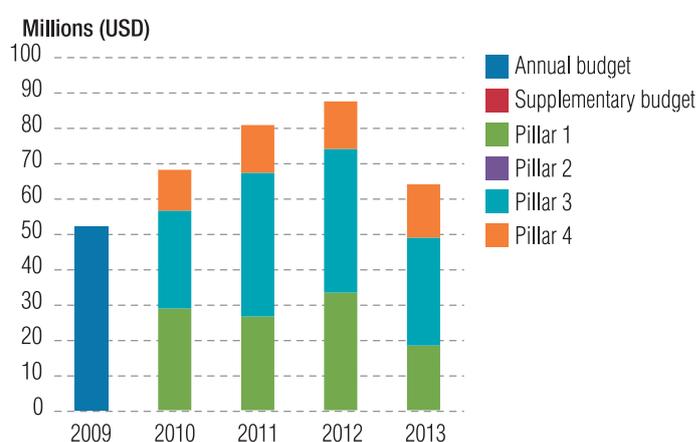
Cooperation with the UNCT and relevant UN agencies to align the SSAR with the Secretary-General's Durable Solutions Framework for IDPs and Refugees, for which Afghanistan is one of the pilot countries, continued.

UNHCR remained the lead agency for the protection cluster, the co-lead agency of the emergency shelter and non-food items cluster, and co-chair of the national and regional IDP task force. Close collaboration with OCHA and IOM continued.

Financial information

For the first time since 2008, the comprehensive budget – which amounted to USD 131.4 million – was six per cent lower than in 2012. This coincided with a drop in returnee figures, associated with increased uncertainty surrounding the security and political situation. The level of funding available for this operation allowed for expenditure of USD 63.9 million – 49 per cent of the overall requirements.

Expenditure in Afghanistan | 2009 to 2013



Budget, income and expenditure in Afghanistan | USD

Operation	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
FINAL BUDGET	38,231,787	65,790,765	27,352,674	131,375,226

Income from contributions ¹	13,622,424	17,546,135	9,500,949	40,669,507
Other funds available / transfers	4,705,169	12,995,773	5,778,439	23,479,381
Total funds available	18,327,593	30,541,908	15,279,388	64,148,888

EXPENDITURE BY OBJECTIVE

Favourable Protection Environment

Law and policy	1,133,630	0	0	1,133,630
Access to legal assistance and remedies	0	1,713,960	736,843	2,450,803
Subtotal	1,133,630	1,713,960	736,843	3,584,433

Fair Protection Processes and Documentation

Registration and profiling	0	0	1,551,905	1,551,905
Subtotal	0	0	1,551,905	1,551,905

Operation	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
<i>Security from Violence and Exploitation</i>				
Prevention and response to SGBV	0	1,241,215	538,653	1,779,868
Subtotal	0	1,241,215	538,653	1,779,868
<i>Basic Needs and Essential Services</i>				
Health	1,136,676	0	0	1,136,676
Water	0	1,866,349	585,728	2,452,077
Shelter and infrastructure	0	10,083,145	2,217,928	12,301,073
Basic and domestic items	1,229,743	3,569,506	3,134,121	7,933,371
Services for people with specific needs	0	0	589,973	589,973
Education	1,133,630	1,338,794	538,653	3,011,076
Subtotal	3,500,049	16,857,794	7,066,403	27,424,246
<i>Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance</i>				
Self-reliance and livelihood activities	0	3,423,268	1,277,778	4,701,046
Subtotal	0	3,423,268	1,277,778	4,701,046
<i>Durable Solutions</i>				
Voluntary return	13,123,066	1,042	0	13,124,108
Reintegration	0	1,359,389	0	1,359,389
Subtotal	13,123,066	1,360,431	0	14,483,497
<i>Logistics and Operations Support</i>				
Logistics and supply	-137	137	3,178,575	3,178,575
Operations management, coordination and support	0	3,523,567	0	3,523,567
Subtotal	-137	3,523,704	3,178,575	6,702,142
Balance of instalments with implementing partners	570,985	2,421,536	706,158	3,698,679
Total	18,327,593	30,541,908	15,056,315	63,925,816

¹ Income from contributions includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM) Reserve. Contributions towards all pillars are included under Pillar 1.