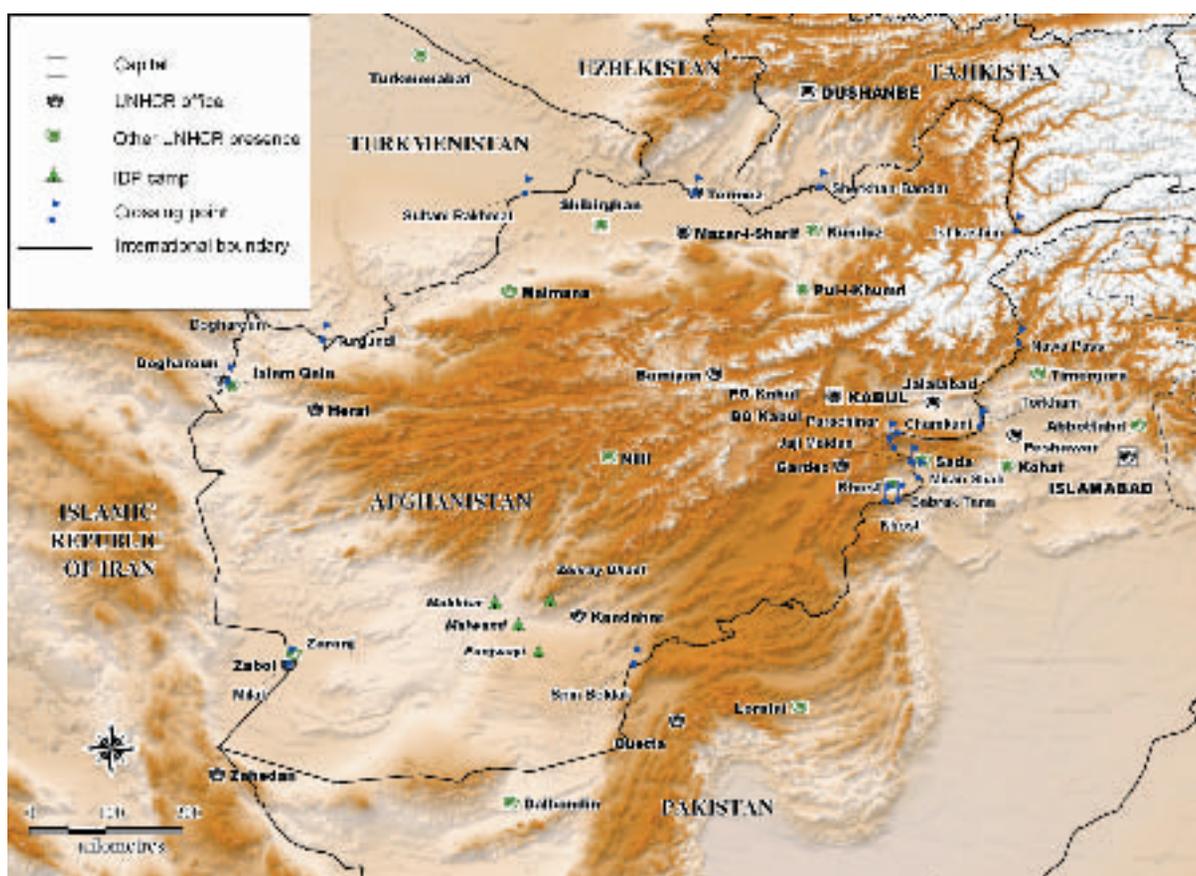


Afghanistan



Main objectives

- Support the Government of Afghanistan in the development of strategies that address the reasons for displacement of Afghans in the region.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Afghan Government to plan, manage and assist the return, reintegration and protection of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- Facilitate the voluntary return of Afghans from Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and other host countries; support the reintegration of returnees for an initial period by addressing obstacles to physical, legal and material safety and advocate the inclusion of returnees in all major development plans.
- Monitor the situation of returnees and IDPs and ensure that their rights are protected.
- Facilitate the repatriation of IDPs and provide assistance to support their reintegration.

- Ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees have access to fair and efficient refugee status determination (RSD) procedures in Afghanistan and that their needs are addressed and solutions facilitated through governmental mechanisms.

Planning figures		
Population	Jan 2006	Dec 2006
Returnees	605,000	605,000
Returnee IDPs	55,000	50,000
IDPs	50,000	-
Asylum-seekers	30	150
Refugees	10	140
Others of concern	-	5
Total	710,040	655,295

Total requirements: USD 60,978,721

Working environment

Recent developments

The first Afghan parliamentary elections in over 30 years took place in September 2005 without major incidents, a landmark event in Afghanistan's political transition. It is anticipated that by 2006 the milestones of Afghanistan's transition, as outlined in the Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions, (so-called "Bonn Agreement"), will have been completed with the possible exception of elections for district councils, whose representatives constitute one third of the seats of the *Meshrano Jirga*, the upper house of Parliament. The completion of the political transition will allow further consolidation of the powers of the elected authorities and an expansion into the provinces of the authorities of the Afghanistan. Civil service reforms will gradually introduce a system of public administration based on merit.

Despite gradual improvements in the delivery of public services, Afghanistan remains a country with some of the poorest basic social indicators, including high infant, child and maternal mortality rates and low literacy rates, as well as weak structures for the care of extremely vulnerable individuals. Public services, transport infrastructure, electricity and water management remain very basic and do not meet the standards familiar to Afghans when they were in exile. While the effects of drought might be mitigated in many areas, water management in rural areas remains a challenge, as is housing and access to land for the many returnees who do not own land or property in Afghanistan. Another significant challenge for return and reintegration is the high proportion of returnees dependent on seasonal or intermittent wage labour (25 per cent) or without any regular sources of income (10 per cent).

It is expected that there will be a gradual improvement in the overall human rights situation, in particular with regard to abuses by local commanders and their armed supporters, provided that they are disarmed, disbanded and their ability to act

with impunity is addressed. However, confiscation and occupation of land and property and property disputes remain significant problems. A challenge for UNHCR and other actors will be how to improve access to effective remedies for grievances or human rights violations.

The security situation, however, remains a concern in the south and south-east of the country where anti-government groups are still active; in general, the level of insurgency in the country has risen. By 2006, capacity building and deployment of the new Afghan National Army (ANA) and police are expected to reach a stage where these forces can increasingly be counted on to intervene and stabilize the security situation in different parts of the country. Areas of higher insecurity are expected to persist, with warlords maintaining their fiefdoms; however, these will be of limited geographical scope.

There are still over 3.3 million Afghans residing in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Positive developments in the political arena, coupled with some policies and measures likely to be pursued vis-à-vis refugees in the neighbouring countries, could prompt another significant return movement. The improvement of the security situation for minorities in the north of the country and the end of the drought in the southern and western parts of the country will allow for a discontinuation of assistance and for a proactive approach towards durable solutions in 2006.

Constraints

The increased insecurity has had a direct impact on reconstruction, economic development and the expansion of state authority, particularly in the south and east, covering approximately one-third of the country. Security remains a problem overall and has seriously deteriorated in some parts. Attacks have intensified on national and international forces and on electoral, governmental and humanitarian workers. An increasing number of attacks against members of the international community have resulted in significant reductions, or even suspension, of activities. In May 2005, Jalalabad experienced its worst riot and attack since the fall of



IDPs loading their belongings in a truck that will take them to their homes in the north of the country. *UNHCR / T. Irwin*

the Taliban. UN and international NGO premises, including UNHCR's, were systematically attacked and damaged. UNHCR's guesthouse was looted and set on fire. Crime is also on the increase with threats of kidnapping of international staff, especially in Kabul.

There are many complaints about forced eviction and the illegal occupation of land throughout the country. Many returnees own no property at all. Although some have access to land, it is frequently insufficient to support their families. Landlessness is often cited as an obstacle to return.

There is also a marked increase in anti-government activities, seemingly exacerbated by growing dissatisfaction with the lack of socio-economic development, weak local administration and resentment towards the Coalition forces. Under such circumstances, remote project monitoring in

relatively unsafe areas has increased UNHCR's reliance on national structures and national NGOs.

The Government's capacity remains limited at the central and provincial level. Corruption is reportedly widespread and the high turnover of officials often makes sustained dialogue with interlocutors difficult.

The impact of a new NGO law, which came into effect in June 2005, remains to be seen. The new legislation prohibits NGOs from undertaking any construction work, and requires the payment of income tax by staff. Further clarification of this law is needed.

There has been a marked decrease in traditional humanitarian funding, yet development funding has not increased substantially. This is having a negative impact on the reintegration of returnees.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

UNHCR will be supporting the Afghan repatriation scheme for the fifth year in 2006. The Afghanistan operation continues to form an integral part of the regional operations covering Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Close strategic and operational coordination will continue, especially with the Pakistani and Iranian authorities. The aim will be to support the transition of the refugee problem under international supervision to a broader framework for managing different kinds of population movements. Discussions will also be pursued with the concerned Governments in order to promote a dialogue on cross-border movements, including migration for labour purposes, and to address the situation of Afghans who, for a variety of reasons, are not yet expected to return.

Security measures will be maintained, permitting protection monitoring of both categories of returnees (former refugees and internally displaced people). Obstacles to safe and dignified return and reintegration will continue to be identified. The national capacity to monitor, document and intervene will be increased through a partnership with the Afghan Human Rights Commission and in cooperation with other human rights and rule of law actors. Although in 2005 Afghanistan acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, UNHCR will continue to assist the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR) in managing refugee protection in accordance with international standards, as well as in its negotiations with asylum countries on new tripartite agreements. The Office will ensure that legal instruments such as tripartite agreements are upheld and enforced. It is also expected that durable solutions will be found by the end of the year for the remaining internally displaced people, either through voluntary return to their places of origin or through local settlement.

Assistance

The voluntary repatriation operation will continue and it is anticipated that some 600,000 refugees will return from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the same manner, return and local settlement of internally displaced people will progress further, allowing UNHCR to cease its assistance activities in the IDP settlements by the end of 2006. The programme will be geared towards helping refugees and internally displaced people make informed decisions on return through efficient mass information activities, "go and see" and "come and inform" visits, and cash and transport grants to help those returning to their area of origin or choice.

Since 2002, UNHCR has taken concrete measures to include gender and age considerations in assistance programmes. For example, "safe houses" have been set up for unaccompanied deportees and victims of sexual and gender-based violence (involving domestic violence, the risk of "honour" killings or forced marriages). Monitoring and referral mechanisms have been established and continue to be operated to identify the most vulnerable individuals during the return process and ensure that they are provided with the necessary immediate support. The shelter programme will specifically target those with acute needs, such as families headed by widows or elderly people, and those with disabled family members.

UNHCR will maintain, in a more structured manner, its advocacy role vis-à-vis donor governments, financial institutions and development actors to enlist their support in facilitating the reintegration of the returnees. Simultaneously, the Office will continue its policy of promoting the coverage of returnees by major national development programmes.

Desired impact

Returning refugees and internally displaced people will have access to the necessary information to make informed decisions for voluntary and safe returns. Refugees and internally displaced people will also have access to national protection and

urable solutions. The situation in areas of return will be monitored to ensure that the rights of returning internally displaced people and refugees are protected regardless of their gender, ethnic or tribal affiliation. Asylum-seekers will have access to UNHCR protection, including refugee status determination procedures and assistance when required.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

UNHCR will maintain 16 offices in Afghanistan: a Representation in Kabul, four sub-offices, three field offices and eight field units employing 504 staff members (38 international and 466 national staff).

Coordination

It is expected that the Government of Afghanistan will maintain its Consultative Group process to facilitate the coordination of aid, as part of its National Development Strategy. UNHCR participates in the Consultative Group for Refugees and Social Protection and advocates the mainstreaming of reintegration issues into the design and implementation of national development and reconstruction programmes. The inter-agency cooperation in Afghanistan has developed steadily, and UNHCR will increasingly aim to link up with less traditional partners so as to benefit from their expertise and programmes. UNHCR works in close cooperation with UNAMA, other UN agencies, bilateral agencies and a large number of national and international NGOs. It also supports the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation in its coordination role, and works closely with the Ministries of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and of Urban Housing and Development, as well as with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

Offices

Kabul (Field office and the Office of the Representative)
 Bamiyan
 Gardez
 Herat
 Islam Qala
 Jalalabad
 Kandahar
 Khost
 Kunduz
 Maimana
 Mazar-i-Sharif
 Nilli
 Pul-i-Khumri
 Shiberghan
 Zaranj

Partners

Government agencies

Counter-Narcotics Department
 Ministry of Public Health
 Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
 Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development

NGOs

Abu Muslim Khorasany Rehabilitation Unit
 Afghan Bureau for Reconstruction
 Afghan Construction and Rehabilitation Unit
 Afghan Health Development Services
 Afghan Planning Agency
 Afghan Public Welfare Organisation
 Afghan Women's Skills Development Centre
 Afghan/German Help Coordination Office
 Agency for Rehabilitation of Engineering, Education, Culture and Agriculture
 Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
 Central Asia Development Group
 Christian Children's Fund/Child Fund Afghanistan
 Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
 Falhat Welfare and Construction Organization
 Ghor Rehabilitation and Construction Organization
 Hewad Reconstruction Service
 Human Dignity Society
 Humanitarian Action for People of Afghanistan
 Humanitarian Aid for Women and Children
 Humanitarian Assistance Society
 Independent Humanitarian Service Association

Japan Emergency NGO
 Javed Rehabilitation Organization for Afghanistan
Malteser Hilfsdienst
 Masood Akbar Construction Agency
Medica Mondiale
 Narcotic Control and Rehabilitation of Afghanistan
 Norwegian Refugee Council
 Organization for Humanitarian Assistance
Organizzazione Internazionale Umanitaria per l'Emergenza
 Reconstruction and Employment Unit for Afghan Refugees
 Rural Capacities Development Committee
 Samaritan's Purse
 Sanayee Development Foundation
 Save the Children Japan
 Sina Association Rehabilitation Service
 Society for Health and Education
 Tribal Liaison Office
 Urozgan Construction Agency
 Vocational and Relief Organization for Afghan Widows, Orphans and Disabled People
 Voluntary Association for the Reconstruction of Afghanistan
 Watan Social and Technical Services Association
 Welfare and Development Society for Social Services
 Women's and Reconstruction Organization of Yasir for Afghanistan
 Youth Assembly for Afghanistan Rehabilitation
 ZOA Refugee Care Afghanistan

Others

Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
 British Broadcasting Corporation
 German Technical Corporation
 ILO
 United Nations Human Settlements Programme
 UNV

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	13,182,154
Community services	180,000
Domestic needs	7,575,777
Health	277,440
Income generation	4,766,000
Legal assistance	3,392,000
Operational support (to agencies)	2,749,618
Shelter/other infrastructure	12,420,698
Transport/logistics	10,435,096
Water	1,000,000
Total operations	55,978,783
Programme support	4,999,938
Total	60,978,721