

Afghanistan



Main objectives

- 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 Afghan refugees with an initial reintegration package including a cash grant, food and non-food items.
- Support the Governments of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan in the development of strategies that address the reasons for displacement of Afghans throughout the region.
- Monitor the situation of returnees and IDPs and ensure that their rights are protected.
- Increase assistance to potential areas of return and eliminate obstacles to return in those areas.
- Ensure that returnees are included in all major national development plans in line with the "4Rs" strategy (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction).

- Provide assistance to IDPs who cannot currently return to their home areas and build Afghan Government capacity to implement its National IDP Strategy.
- Encourage the Government to sign the UN Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol.

Planning figures		
Population	Jan 2005	Dec 2005
Returnees	910,000	605,000
IDPs	100,000	5,000
IDP returnees	90,000	95,000
Asylum-seekers	32	32
Refugees	5	10
Total	1,100,037	705,042

Total requirements: USD 64,191,028

Working environment

Recent developments

Preparations for national elections began at the end of last year following the successful conclusion of the *Loya Jirga* (Grand Assembly) in December 2003 to approve a new constitution. A presidential election, scheduled for October 2004, is due to be followed by parliamentary elections in early 2005. In-country voter registration has been high; and agreements on out-of-country registration were concluded in July between IOM and the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.

The Government has met a number of the commitments laid down in the work plan endorsed at the Berlin Conference in the first quarter of 2004, notably in the areas of public administration, fiscal management, and some aspects of the private sector. More needs to be done, however, in the areas of the rule of law, land management, disarmament and the narcotics trade.

Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) activities were launched in early 2004. The initiative has been held back by numerous obstacles, including an apparent reluctance to disarm on the part of some powerful provincial leaders despite ostensible cooperation with (and even integration into) the central government authorities.

The Afghan National Army and Police Force have grown in size and effectiveness thanks to training programmes, but are still in need of support. NATO has taken over control of the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul and established Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the north of the country. NATO has also increased its presence in the run-up to the elections.

Sustained support from the international donor community is essential for a major expansion of national development plans. Although socio-economic conditions have improved in the cities, many rural areas remain seriously underdeveloped. Poverty and drought - compounded by insecurity - are likely to retard or even prevent the future return and reintegration of those originating from the south and east.

Despite the uncertainties, more than 700,000 Afghans returned home from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan during the first nine months of 2004, bringing the total number of returns since March 2002 to some 3.5 million. The number of IDPs has dropped to just over 100,000 and a process of IDP camp consolidation has been carried out.

Constraints

Security remains patchy and has seriously deteriorated in some parts of the country. Attacks have intensified on national and international forces and on electoral, governmental, and humanitarian workers in eastern and southern Afghanistan. Several UN workers have been murdered and property burned down, with other serious acts of violence in the north and west. Some of these attacks were attributed to terrorists, others were perpetrated by groups involved in factional and criminal activities.

Wide-ranging civil service reforms are urgently required to build the capacity of the public sector. Key areas include the national army, police force, judicial reform commission, human rights commission, civil service commission, commission for restitution of property, and the electoral commission.

Human rights abuses have continued in 2004, especially in the north, north-east, and the west. In some areas, women are becoming trapped in abusive situations because of a lack of legal and social support systems. Although reports of human rights abuses do not suggest that returnees are at any greater risk than the rest of the population, this is an area of great concern to UNHCR. There is widespread illegal taxation, illegal occupation of land, and discrimination against minorities, particularly in the northern part of the country, preventing the return of many IDPs and refugees to their places of origin.

Complaints about forced eviction and the illegal occupation of land recur throughout the country. Many returnees own no property at all; and although some have access to land, it is frequently insufficient to support their families.



Afghanistan: Returnees back home - at the Kabul Encashment Centre. More than 3.5 million people have returned since December 2001.
UNHCR / Lana Slezic / GlobalAwareAfghanistan

Landlessness is an often-cited obstacle to return. UNHCR and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) are helping the Government to address the land issue.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

In 2005, UNHCR will facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees and their reintegration within their communities. UNHCR will work with the Afghan Government, governments of neighbouring countries, the ILO and IOM to devise new approaches to Afghan displacement within the region. The aim will be to support a transition from a refugee problem under international supervision to a bilateral migration scheme agreed and administered by the concerned countries themselves.

Protection monitoring of both returnees and displaced populations will continue to the extent permitted by security constraints. Capacity building of Afghan institutions will be stepped up. Existing partnerships with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, non-governmental organizations and other UN bodies will be enhanced.

UNHCR will take steps to assist the Government in drafting refugee legislation as part of preparations to accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol. Training of law enforcement and judicial officials on refugee and human rights law will remain a priority. The focus on returnee women will be increased, with particular attention paid to the prevention of gender-based violence. Returnees will continue to receive legal advice from the Norwegian Refugee Council's Legal Aid Centres.

The Office will ensure that legal instruments such as tripartite agreements and the Presidential Decree on the Dignified Return of Refugees are upheld and enforced. UNHCR will strive to ensure that the rights of all women and men, girls and boys are protected during and after return. UNHCR will assist the Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) in its negotiations with asylum countries to conclude new tripartite agreements.

Assistance

Inside Afghanistan, UNHCR will focus on more limited but targeted activities designed to facilitate the reintegration of returnees, particularly the most vulnerable, with a special focus on the needs of women.

UNHCR will continue to provide transport and cash assistance to returning refugees and IDPs, in cooperation with the Governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Under current planning scenarios, UNHCR will further reduce its shelter programme to 10,000 units in 2005, and will focus activities on the most needy. UNHCR will also promote the return of desperately needed professionals, especially doctors and teachers. There will be an increase in cash-for-work programmes and income-generating activities for both women and men. Again, these initiatives will be carefully targeted to those areas where they will have the greatest impact.

The Office will maintain its policy of promoting the inclusion of returnees into major national development programmes and explore further linkages with development actors, and bilateral institutions. It will concentrate on encouraging development activities in areas from which large numbers of people have fled, in order to remove obstacles to return.

The Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD) and development actors such as UNDP, FAO, WFP, and ILO will provide leadership in addressing IDP problems. Recent efforts to foster self-reliance will continue, with the majority of assistance given in the form of food-for-work.

UNHCR will be the main advisor to the Government-chaired Consultative Group on returnees and IDPs. UNHCR will continue its efforts (initiated in 2004) to support government departments in the provinces. It will also continue capacity building and the secondment of staff to ministries and their provincial departments, as part of the Office's programme to enable the Government to take responsibility for protecting and assisting returnees and IDPs.

Desired impact

UNHCR will ensure that return is voluntary and safe. The sustainable reintegration of refugees and IDPs will enable them to contribute to the reconstruction of the country. UNHCR will strive to ensure that the rights of all returnees, regardless of their gender or ethnic or tribal affiliation, are protected. To this end, UNHCR will contribute to the strengthening of the Afghan Government and the

partnerships which must underpin UNHCR's work in Afghanistan if it is to achieve a lasting impact.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

A total of 18 offices (two in Kabul) will be maintained during 2005: one Chief of Mission Office in Kabul, four sub-offices, three field offices and ten field units employing 520 staff members (50 international staff and 470 national staff).

Coordination

UNHCR works in close cooperation with UNAMA, other UN agencies, and a large number of national and international NGOs. It supports the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) in coordinating the plans of other UN agencies and NGOs working with returnees and IDPs, and works closely with the MRRD and the Ministry of Urban Housing and Development and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

Offices	
Kabul	Maimana
Bamiyan	Mazar-i-Sharif
Gardez	Nilli
Herat	Pul-i-Khumri
Islam Qala	Qala-i-Naw
Jalalabad	Shiberghan
Kandahar	Spin Boldak
Khost	Zaranj
Kunduz	

Partners
Government agencies
Afghan Planning Agency
Counter-Narcotics Department
Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development
Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled
Ministry of Public Health
Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
Ministry of Urban Housing and Development
Ministry of Women's Affairs

NGOs

Abu Muslim Khorasani Rehabilitation Unit
 Afghan Bureau for Reconstruction
 Afghan Extremely Vulnerable Individual Services
 Afghan Health Development Services
 Afghan Murad Reconstruction Development Organization
 Afghan Public Welfare Organization
 Afghan Reconstruction and Welfare Organization
 Afghan Women's Skills Development Centre
 Afghan/German Help Coordination Office
 Afghanistan Reconstruction and Development Unit and Bureau for Rural Rehabilitation
 Afghanistan Rehabilitation and Development Centre
 Agency for Rehabilitation of Villages
 Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan
 Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
 Ansari Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan
 Association of Experts in the Field of Migration and Development Cooperation
 CARE
 Central Asia Development Group
 Christian Children's Fund/Child Fund Afghanistan
 Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
 Department of Social Affairs and Works
 Drug Control Department
 Emergency Health and Build Field Programme
 Ghor Rehabilitation and Construction Organization
GUARDIANS
 Health Net International
 Hewad Reconstruction Services
 Human Dignity Society
 Humanitarian Action for the People of Afghanistan
 Humanitarian Assistance Europe Foundation
 Humanitarian Assistance Society
 Independent Humanitarian Service Association
 Institution for Relief and Rehabilitation of Afghanistan
Organizzazione Internazionale Umanitaria per l'Emergenza
 International Rescue Committee
 Islamic Relief Agency
 Javid Rehabilitation Organization for Afghanistan
Malteser Hilfsdienst
Medica Mondiale
 Norwegian Refugee Council
 Ockenden International
 Organization for Humanitarian Assistance
 Peace Winds Japan

Reconstruction Agency of Mashriq

Reconstruction and Employment Unit for Afghan Refugees
 Reconstruction Pioneers
 Samaritan's Purse International Relief
 Save the Children (Sweden)
 Sherzad Reconstruction Organization
 Sina Association Rehabilitation Service
 Society for Health and Education
 South-West Reconstruction Council for Afghanistan
 Southern Western Afghanistan and Balochistan Association for Coordination
 United Rehabilitation Bureau
 Urogan Construction Agency
 Voluntary Association Rehabilitation for Afghanistan
 Watan Social and Technical Services Association
 Women Activities and Social Services Association
 Youth Assembly for Afghanistan Rehabilitation
 Zoa Refugee Care (Afghanistan)

Others

Afghan Independent Commission for Human Rights
 Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
 British Broadcasting Corporation
 German Technical Corporation
 National Lawyers' Association of Afghanistan
 The United Nations Human Settlement (UN HABITAT)

Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and coordination	13,163,863
Community services	781,800
Domestic needs	550,000
Health	255,306
Income generation	6,799,241
Legal assistance	4,804,670
Operational support (to agencies)	3,244,376
Shelter/other infrastructure	6,805,000
Transport/logistics	21,792,004
Water	1,550,000
Total operations	59,746,260
Programme support	4,444,768
Total	64,191,028