

TAJIKS: REPATRIATION, REINTEGRATION AND LOCAL SETTLEMENT

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Facilitate and monitor the voluntary repatriation of Tajik refugees from asylum countries in Central Asia; promote their reintegration in Tajikistan; assist the Government of Tajikistan to strengthen its capacity to ensure the safe and dignified return of Tajik refugees to their places of origin; promote the local integration of Tajik refugees who do not wish to repatriate from their countries of asylum.

Impact

- Around 4,700 Tajiks repatriated with UNHCR's assistance. Working with other international organisations, and with the authorities, UNHCR helped returnees to repatriate in safety to their places of origin (mainly in the Khatlon region) and settle peacefully.
- Through negotiations, an agreement was reached with the Governments of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan to undertake local integration projects (for 10,140 and 14,000 Tajik refugees respectively). The projects were scheduled to commence in early 2000.

Persons of Concern

| COUNTRY/ TYPE OF POPULATION | TOTAL IN COUNTRY | OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED | PER CENT FEMALE | PER CENT < 18 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Kyrgyzstan (Refugees) | 10,140 | - | - | - |
| Kazakhstan (Refugees) | 5,400 | 400 | - | - |
| Turkmenistan (Refugees) | 17,000 | 17,000 | - | - |
| Tajikistan (Returns in 1999)* | 4,700 | 4,700 | - | - |

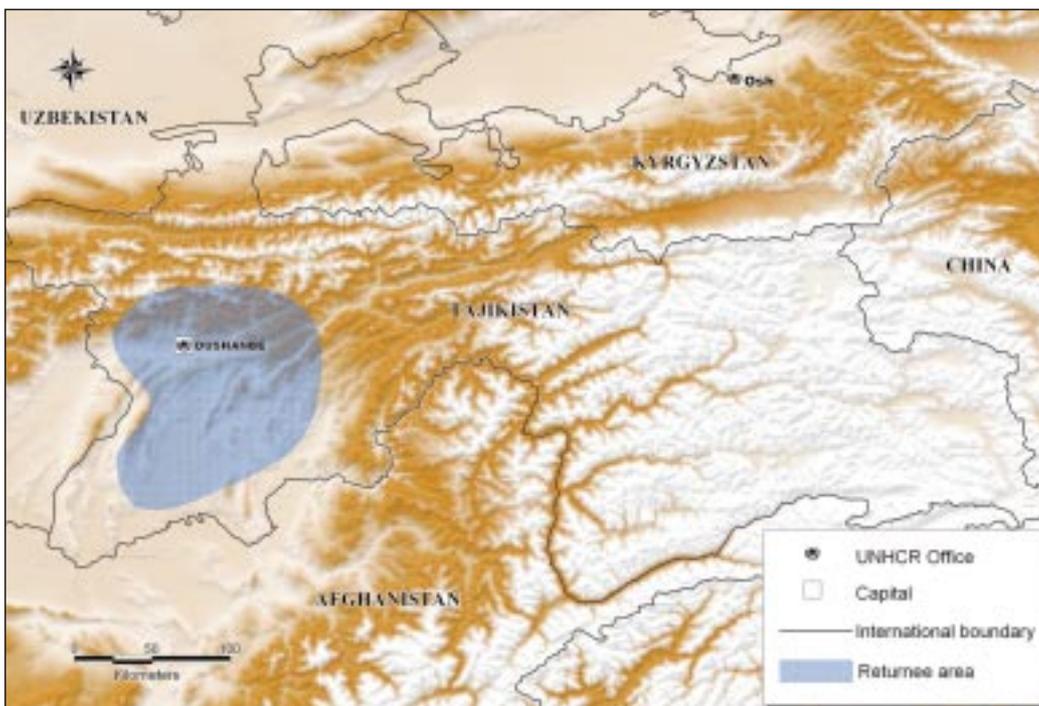
* Since the beginning of the repatriation operation in 1993, approximately 48,000 Tajiks have returned home, most of whom were assisted by UNHCR.

Income and Expenditure (USD)

| WORKING BUDGET* | INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS | OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE** | TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE | TOTAL EXPENDITURE* |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 3,253,553 | 2,443,763 | 816,826 | 3,260,589 | 3,198,037 |

* Includes costs at Headquarters.

** Includes opening balance and adjustments.



WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

The civil war in Tajikistan ended with the signing of the 1997 Peace Accord in Moscow. Approximately 40,000 refugees, and the majority of IDPs, have returned to Tajikistan between 1993 and 1998. Presidential elections were held in Tajikistan and discussions continued with the opposition on holding parliamentary elections in early 2000. However, despite progress on political and economic reform (such as the creation of monetary and fiscal systems and the privatisation of several State-run enterprises) reconciliation has been hampered by slow implementation of the law on the formation of political parties. UNHCR's reintegration projects have contributed substantially to the spirit of community participation upon which reconciliation depends.

UNHCR started promoting the local integration of those Tajik refugees who wish to remain in their asylum countries. As a result of negotiations, agreement was reached with the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan for the local integration of some 10,140 and 14,000 Tajiks respectively. The process of granting Kyrgyz citizenship was set in motion, and UNHCR started focusing its activities on local integration. In Turkmenistan, the planning of local integration projects started in September, when government approval was granted. In order to ensure their successful integration, efforts were made to see that the local population would also benefit from these projects.

Constraints

The security situation in Tajikistan continued to pose a constraint in terms of freedom of movement of people, including UN staff, and supplies. The repatriation of Tajiks from Turkmenistan did not resume in September 1999, after the summer hiatus, owing to the lack of agreement for transit through Uzbekistan. Hostilities in southern Kyrgyzstan in late 1999 hampered the programme as travel by road was impossible.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

UNHCR continued to monitor protection issues in Tajikistan, primarily in the Khatlon region, the main area of return. Although the returnees suffered the effects of economic recession as acutely as the rest of the population, their security was largely undisturbed, without any reported harassment or threats to per-

sonal safety or property. There were still a small number of unresolved issues concerning cases of illegal house occupations, most of which were being settled peacefully among the parties. Many returnees (mainly women and children) had lost their identity documents and were unable to afford the high costs of obtaining new documentation. A local NGO was hired by UNHCR to provide free legal advice to returnees in this situation.

Protection of Tajik refugees in Kazakhstan improved, as the country acceded, in January 1999, to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

In Turkmenistan the introduction of a new visa regime left the Tajik refugees in a legal vacuum. A solution was finally found, when it was agreed that Tajik holders of UNHCR certificates would enjoy the protection of the authorities of Turkmenistan.

In Kyrgyzstan, significant progress was achieved with the signature of a bilateral agreement with Tajikistan on a simplified procedure whereby Tajiks of Kyrgyz ethnicity who had arrived before 1994 could acquire Kyrgyz citizenship.

Activities and Assistance

Following a joint Swiss/UNHCR evaluation mission in March 1999, the project objectives for the repatriation/reintegration programme in Tajikistan were modified, to reduce emphasis on the shelter component of the reintegration programme.

Community Services: Efforts to promote peace and acceptance of returnees in their communities included art and sports competitions and a workshop on community development. A conference on conflict resolution was also organised, involving UN agencies, NGOs and the authorities.

Crop Production: About 3,000 returnee families were provided with seeds, tools and fertiliser, enabling them to increase their food production and generate additional income. Clinics and schools received agricultural inputs as an incentive for staff.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: A cash grant was provided to all returnees. Plastic sheeting and blankets were provided as part of the repatriation package.

Education: Five schools were rehabilitated in Tajikistan

for the benefit of 2,632 returnee children. UNHCR promoted access to education for all refugee children (particularly at the primary level) and advocated with the authorities for health education and the introduction of measures to uphold children's rights. Secondary level students were helped to develop professional skills at technical schools.

Food: A total of 2,453 Tajik returnees received a four-month food ration (flour, vegetable oil and sugar) to help them during the initial period after arrival. This enabled them to engage in other activities such as the construction of shelters and agriculture. In Kazakhstan, food was purchased for returnees in transit.

Health/Nutrition: Four health centres were rehabilitated and equipped in Tajikistan, providing easier access to health services in regions with a high concentration of returnees. A joint UNHCR/UNFPA project on teenage pregnancy, birth control and HIV/AIDS awareness was implemented.

Legal Assistance: In Kyrgyzstan, the Office supported the involvement of local authorities and NGOs in seminars and conferences on refugee – related issues.

Operational Support (to Agencies): UNHCR's operational partners were assisted with their administrative and operational support costs.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: In Tajikistan, the reconstruction of 136 houses was undertaken, for 708 recent returnees.

Transport/Logistics: Buses and trucks were rented, and trains and aircraft chartered, for the transportation of the 4,670 returnees from the countries of asylum. In Tajikistan, fuel was provided for the transportation of returnees to their areas of origin. In Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, the Office organised the transportation of returnees and their belongings.

Water: A water-supply system and wells were repaired and cleaned in returnee communities in Tajikistan, reducing the incidence of water-borne diseases among the returnees and local population.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

The repatriation programme covered five countries in Central Asia, and required the involvement of staff

in all seven offices. The offices in Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan were responsible for processing applications for voluntary repatriation and organising transport, whereas the office in Uzbekistan facilitated the transit of returnees from Turkmenistan. UNHCR's staffing in the five countries consisted of 22 international staff, including four JPOs, two UNVs carrying out regional functions, and 60 national staff. These figures include a regional structure of five international staff who were assigned in different capitals.

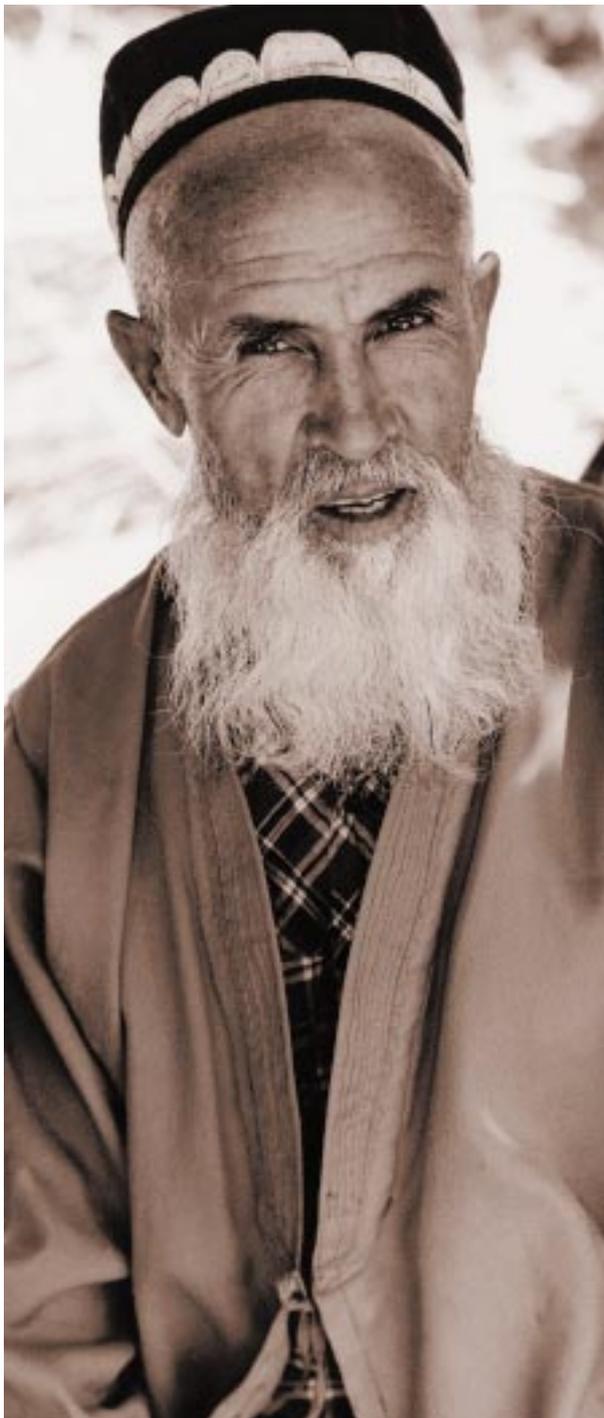
Working with Others

In Tajikistan, UNHCR worked closely with the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, the UN Observer Mission and other UN agencies. Regular meetings were organised to discuss security issues, humanitarian assistance and the question of longer-term development. UNHCR also worked closely with OSCE and IOM; the latter implemented the transport of Tajik returnees from Turkmenistan. Evaluation missions were undertaken jointly with UNDP and UNFPA to settlements where Tajik refugees were integrating, in addition to the joint Swiss/UNHCR evaluation mission mentioned earlier.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

UNHCR successfully repatriated some 4,700 Tajik refugees from their countries of asylum to Tajikistan. Despite security constraints, the returnees were able to reach their places of origin in safety and dignity.

Important landmarks for UNHCR, and for the region, were the Kyrgyz and Turkmen authorities' agreement to allow the local integration of some 24,000 Tajik refugees. UNHCR will step up its field monitoring capacity to enhance the potential for success of these programmes. Unless the security situation in Central Asia improves, however, sporadic incidents of violence are likely to trigger new population displacements which will impede the programme. The question of bridging the gap between reintegration assistance and longer-term development has not yet been resolved. It would be highly desirable to secure the rapid involvement of other, more development-oriented organisations in returnee areas in Tajikistan (especially since UNHCR is planning to reduce its activities over the next two years). The UN inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms already in place will play an important role in reaching this goal.



Offices

Tajikistan
 Dushanbe
Kazakhstan
 Almaty
Kyrgyzstan
 Bishkek
 Osh
Turkmenistan
 Ashgabat
Uzbekistan
 Tashkent
 Termez

Partners

NGOs
 Refugee Children and Vulnerable Citizens

Other
 UNOPS
 WFP
 FAO

Voluntary Contributions (USD)

| Donor | Income | Contribution |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Canada | 200,000 | 200,000 |
| Japan | 370,000 | 370,000 |
| Sweden | 284,242 | 284,242 |
| Switzerland | 324,675 | 324,675 |
| United States of America | 1,250,000 | 1,250,000 |
| Dr. A. Mannan (CAN) | 14,846 | 14,846 |
| TOTAL | 2,443,763 | 2,443,763 |

Financial Report (USD)

| Programme Overview | Current Year's Projects | notes | | |
|---|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------|-------|
| Opening Balance | 986,755 | (1) | | |
| Income from Contributions | 2,443,763 | (1) | | |
| Other Funds Available | (169,929) | | | |
| Total Funds Available | 3,260,589 | (5) | | |
| Expenditure | 3,198,037 | (1) (5) | | |
| Closing Balance | 62,552 | (1) (5) | | |
| Expenditure Breakdown | | | Prior Years' Projects | notes |
| Protection, Monitoring and Coordination* | 793,789 | | 6,128 | |
| Community Services | 16,725 | | 0 | |
| Crop Production | 49,913 | | 160,000 | |
| Domestic Needs / Household Support | 114,286 | | 44,360 | |
| Education | 246,300 | | 142,087 | |
| Food | 49 | | 26 | |
| Health / Nutrition | 94,465 | | 79,303 | |
| Income Generation | 0 | | 27,577 | |
| Legal Assistance | 4,250 | | 3,109 | |
| Livestock | 0 | | 72,423 | |
| Operational Support (to Agencies) | 72,191 | | 982,324 | |
| Shelter / Other Infrastructure | 76,439 | | 2,295,179 | |
| Transport / Logistics | 209,770 | | 11,537 | |
| Water | 25,125 | | 0 | |
| Instalments with Implementing Partners | 412,334 | | (1,880,059) | |
| Combined Projects | 577,666 | | (577,666) | |
| Sub - total Operational | 2,693,302 | | 1,366,328 | |
| Administrative Support* | 336,933 | | 0 | |
| Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries | 3,030,235 | (5) | 1,366,328 | (6) |
| Unliquidated Obligations | 167,802 | (5) | 0 | (6) |
| TOTAL | 3,198,037 | (1) (5) | 1,366,328 | |
| Instalments with Implementing Partners | | | | |
| Payments Made | 922,775 | | 1,952,533 | |
| Reporting Received | 510,441 | | 3,832,592 | |
| Balance | 412,334 | | (1,880,059) | |
| Outstanding 1 January | 0 | | 1,902,015 | |
| Refunded to UNHCR | 0 | | 21,956 | |
| Currency Adjustment | 0 | | 0 | |
| Outstanding 31 December | 412,334 | | 0 | |
| Unliquidated Obligations | | | | |
| Outstanding 1 January | 0 | | 1,372,912 | (6) |
| New Obligations | 3,198,037 | (1) (5) | 0 | |
| Disbursements | 3,030,235 | (5) | 1,366,328 | (6) |
| Cancellations | 0 | | 6,584 | (6) |
| Outstanding 31 December | 167,802 | (5) | 0 | (6) |

*Includes costs at Headquarters.

Figures which cross reference to accounts

(1) Annex 1 to Statement 1

(5) Schedule 5

(6) Schedule 6