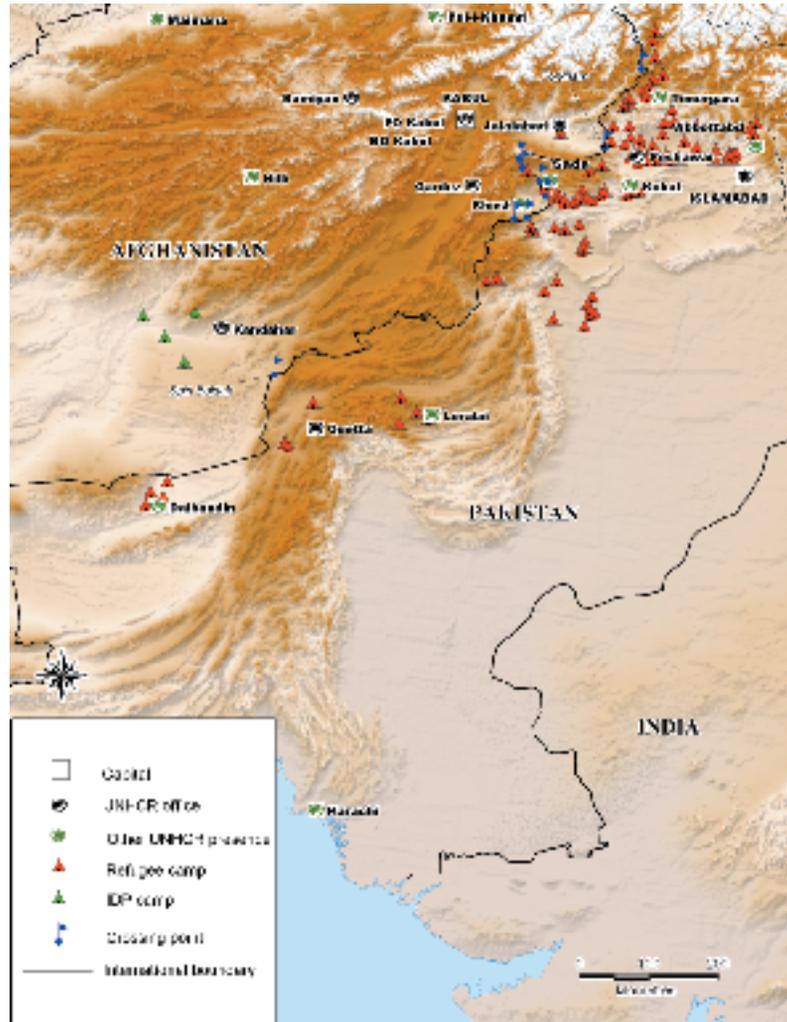


Pakistan

Main objectives

- Convince the Government of Pakistan that not all Afghans may be willing or able to repatriate in the near future and may require solutions other than repatriation.
- Facilitate the repatriation of Afghans from rural and urban areas.
- Provide international protection and assistance to Afghan refugees and non-Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Ensure progressive dialogue on a broader legal framework for temporary migration and population movements to and from Pakistan.
- Promote the coverage by national and provincial development programmes of areas currently or recently hosting refugees, and elicit the support of donors and the UN Country Team.
- Ensure a cost-effective use of resources and management of assets without compromising the security or welfare of staff.



Planning figures		
Population	Jan 2006	Dec 2006
Afghanistan (refugees)	1,123,600	832,000
Afghanistan (asylum-seekers)	8,600	8,600
Various (asylum-seekers)	750	750
Nigeria (asylum-seekers)	430	430
Somalia (refugees)	360	360
Various (refugees)	330	330
Total	1,134,070	842,470

Total requirements: USD 23,327,170

Working environment

Recent developments

Pakistan is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or to the 1967 Protocol and regulates all stay, entry and movement of foreigners through the Foreigners' Act of 1946. Therefore, in the absence of national asylum laws and procedures, UNHCR carries out refugee status determination under its mandate for non-Afghans in need of international protection. From UNHCR's perspective this is an unsatisfactory operational environment. However, it should be noted that although no Afghans and only a limited number of non-Afghans possess official documentation issued by the Government, very few asylum-seekers or refugees have been arrested, detained or deported recently.

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNHCR and the Government of Pakistan in 2004, a census of Afghans in Pakistan was undertaken in early 2005, confirming the presence of some three million Afghans in Pakistan. As agreed in the MoU, not all Afghans are of concern to UNHCR.

By September 2005, some 391,000 Afghans had returned to Afghanistan, two thirds of them from the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in 2005. This brings the total number of returnees from Pakistan to more than 2.6 million. Almost half this year's returnees are from camps (a greater proportion than in 2004).

The camp closure and consolidation exercise continued through 2005. In April, the Government stated its intention to close two camps in Baluchistan to which humanitarian agencies have only limited access. Subsequent to the closure of refugee villages in South Waziristan in mid-2004, all camps in North Waziristan were closed on national security grounds by the Government. In addition, 31 camps in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (Bajaur and Kurran Agencies) are being closed, as well as a settlement in Islamabad. The majority of those in the selected camps have now returned to Afghanistan.

UNHCR has been actively engaged in discussions on the future of the Afghan population in Pakistan through a series of strategic consultations and dialogue with the Government and key stakeholders. A Federal Government task force, including relevant government actors and selected international organizations, has been established to coordinate future policy developments regarding Afghans. Exchanges on these occasions have reaffirmed the continued pre-eminence of repatriation as the preferred solution but recognized that many Afghans will remain in Pakistan for a long time to come. The Government of Pakistan has requested international support for refugee-affected and hosting areas. UNHCR has provided some initial technical support to assist the Government to assess needs and programme options.

The large magnitude earthquake which hit south Asia in October 2005 caused enormous loss of life and major damage in parts of northern Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. In the case of Pakistan, some 880,000 Afghan refugees live in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), an area which has been severely affected by the disaster. In response to the request by the Government of Pakistan to the Secretary-General for assistance, United Nations acted immediately on launching an emergency operation for the victims of the earthquake. The Office coordinated the overall camp management response primarily in the areas where refugee and local populations are located together and provided multi-sectoral assistance to the most needy, together with its partners.

Constraints

Despite the positive progress achieved in resolving many aspects of Pakistan's long-standing refugee situation, implementation of operations continues to face some constraints. Frequent changes in state personnel responsible for refugee affairs, both at provincial and federal level, have caused delays in policy implementation and inadequate consultation on various matters.



Census of Afghans in the town of Lahore. Most of the thousands of Afghan refugees there work as rubbish collectors and live in a slum by the Ravi river. *UNHCR / J. Redden*

Strategy

Protection and solutions

UNHCR will intensify its efforts to find comprehensive durable solutions for Afghans in Pakistan. The census results will facilitate the design of a registration exercise planned for implementation in early 2006, subject to the availability of funds. It is expected that the resulting documentation will offer the Government the basis upon which to organize the future management of the Afghan population.

Field protection and interventions to address bonded labour and the issuance of birth certificates for refugee children will continue. Legal advice and counselling through partners operating advice and legal aid centres in the provinces will also continue.

The programme for assisting refugee-affected and hosting areas envisages addressing the adverse

impact on areas where refugees had lived previously and improving the living conditions of both Pakistani and Afghan communities. UNHCR will work with the existing poverty alleviation programmes of the Government of Pakistan and within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.

The preferred durable solution for Afghans in Pakistan will remain voluntary repatriation. The Tripartite Agreement that terminates in March 2006 will be renegotiated for a possible extension until the end of 2006. Much depends on the state-building process in Afghanistan. Efforts will be made to identify the mechanisms which would allow future repatriation to take place under a bilateral arrangement between the two countries. In addition, UNHCR, in partnership with ILO and IOM, is encouraging dialogue and cooperation on managing cross-border population movements.

Resettlement has remained a durable solution for certain categories of Afghan and non-Afghan refugees, particularly women-at-risk or refugees with

security problems. When they identify those in need of resettlement, UNHCR and its partners will bear in mind the strategic objective of developing and enhancing a burden-sharing approach to protection. Furthermore, UNHCR will maintain its advocacy efforts as part of the search for solutions.

Assistance

There will be a shift from direct material assistance to a more dynamic protection regime involving an intensive outreach approach directed at Afghan and non-Afghan persons deemed to be of concern to UNHCR. A more field-oriented protection presence, including community services, is required to identify issues affecting groups in need of special assistance, such as female-headed households, victims of sexual and gender-based violence and children under bonded labour.

Refugee villages are settlements where UNHCR and its operational partners are providing limited humanitarian assistance such as potable water, primary education and basic health services. The degree of dependence and assistance will vary from settlement to settlement, according to economic opportunities in the surrounding area. It is expected that a number of refugee villages, and the assistance provided to them, will be consolidated as the number of residents decreases.

Desired impact

It is expected that in future the broad range of approaches now deployed by UNHCR, some of them relatively recent, will take root. These approaches include voluntary repatriation, registration, identification of temporary alternatives to return, bilateral cooperation on population movements, the development of interventions for areas currently or recently hosting refugees, and the rationalization of traditional assistance pro-

grammes. Although not all Afghans who will remain in Pakistan are of concern to UNHCR, the Office will maintain its international protection function and focus on the most vulnerable persons.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

UNHCR will continue to operate from the branch office in Islamabad, sub-offices in Peshawar and Quetta and a field office in Karachi with a total of 215 staff (32 internationals, 174 nationals, one JPO and eight UNVs/secondments).

Coordination

UNHCR's activities will continue to be carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and with the support of national and international NGOs and UN agencies. In the context of its comprehensive solutions strategy, UNHCR will continue its cooperation with different government ministries and develop new interlocutors within the development assistance community.

Offices
Islamabad
Abbottabad
Dalbandin
Karachi
Kohat
Loralai
Mohammad Kheil
Peshawar
Quetta
Timergara

Partners
Government agency
Ministry of Kashmir and Northern Areas and States and Frontier Region
NGOs
Afghan Medical Welfare Association
American Refugee Council
Association for Medical Doctors of Asia
Basic Education and Employable Skills Training
Basic Education for Afghan Refugees
Caritas Pakistan
Church World Service
Danish Committee for Afghan Refugees
Frontier Primary Health Care
Health Net International
International Rescue Committee
Kuwait Joint Relief Committee
Ockenden International
Pakistan Red Crescent Society
Save the Children Federation (USA)
SAVERA Counselling Service
Society for Community Support for Primary Education
Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid
Struggle for Change
<i>Sayyed Jamal-Ud-Din Afghani</i> Welfare Organization
Taraqee Foundation
Union Aid for Afghan Refugees
Water Environmental and Sanitation Society
Others
Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid-ALACs services in Karachi
UNV

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	8,906,090
Community services	583,043
Domestic needs	201,130
Education	3,333,038
Health	3,653,507
Income generation	150,000
Legal assistance	1,807,449
Operational support (to agencies)	1,310,271
Sanitation	86,007
Shelter/other infrastructure	77,157
Transport/logistics	151,261
Water	459,758
Total operations	20,718,711
Programme support	2,608,459
Total	23,327,170

Pakistan