

Pakistan

Working environment

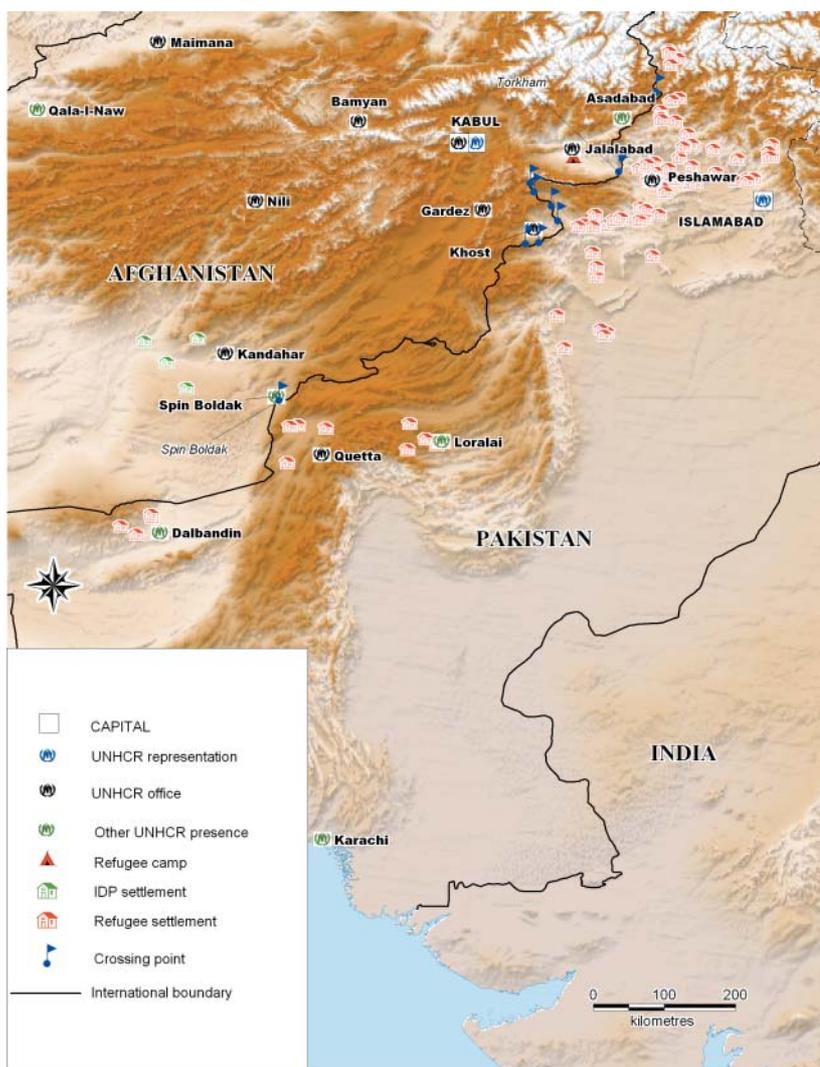
The context

Pakistan has hosted one of the largest refugee populations in the world for more than two decades. Even though it is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, the Government of Pakistan has generally respected international protection principles. UNHCR continues to work with the Government to find solutions for the Afghan refugees remaining in Pakistan. Voluntary repatriation remains the preferred solution; since March 2002 more than 2.8 million Afghans have returned to their country with UNHCR's assistance.

However, security has worsened in some parts of the country, especially in Baluchistan, where restrictions on movement are often imposed. Conditions are also difficult in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) along the Afghan border, to which the United Nations has no access. In general, however, Afghan refugees in Pakistan have enjoyed a very tolerant regime, thanks to the generosity of the Pakistani people and the Government's respect for international standards.

The level of voluntary repatriation — some 133,000 returnees in 2006 — has fallen significantly from previous years. This is largely due to the reluctance of many long-staying refugees, who are well established in Pakistan, to uproot themselves once again. Others are fearful of returning home to areas of tribal conflict, or are too poor to make new lives for themselves in their war-ravaged homeland. Indeed, the Pakistani authorities have delayed the closure of four large camps as planned (in the face of resistance from Afghans).

Following the devastating earthquake that affected the North-West Frontier Province and Pakistan-administered Kashmir in October 2005, UNHCR was quick to respond to the Government's request for help. Under the framework of the new inter-agency "cluster approach", UNHCR took direct responsibility for camp management. By the end of August 2006, the Office was able to



close its offices in the earthquake-affected areas and hand over follow-up activities to an NGO partner.

The needs

Based on a census conducted by the Government and UNHCR in March 2005, it was estimated that some 2.5 million Afghans remained in Pakistan in August 2006. Of these, approximately a million were living in 85 settlements in the North-West Frontier Province and in ten settlements in Baluchistan. An assessment carried out in the settlements indicated that the refugee communities still need basic assistance in the areas of education, health, water and sanitation.

The Government and UNHCR agree that not all Afghans remaining in Pakistan are of concern to the Office. These people require solutions that go beyond humanitarian assistance. The March 2005 census provided a better profile of the Afghan population which will help in the search for comprehensive solutions. The next step,

registration of those Afghans covered by the census, is to be concluded in late 2006. Registered Afghans will receive a *Proof of Registration* document, valid for three years and renewable, allowing them to stay legally in Pakistan. The document will also help in the implementation of new return arrangements planned for 2007 and beyond.

Though only 22 per cent of Afghans in the country have invoked security concerns as their reason for not returning home, the 2005 census revealed that the majority of those originating from the border provinces do not intend to go back soon. Accordingly, UNHCR has started discussions with the Government to move from traditional basic assistance exclusively for Afghans to local development initiatives in refugee-affected areas that would also benefit the local Pakistani population.

The first phase of these initiatives, an assessment of needs in the areas of health, education, water and sanitation, will be completed by late 2006. The second phase, implemented under the leadership of UNDP, will include development-oriented interventions.

Total requirements: USD 19,053,563

Main objectives

- Ensure that international protection and durable solutions (voluntary repatriation and, to a much lesser extent, resettlement) are provided to Afghan and non-Afghan asylum-seekers and refugees.
- Help create an environment in which comprehensive solutions to Afghan displacement issues are adopted and supported by all concerned.
- Promote initiatives targeting selected refugee-affected areas, within provincial and national development plans, with the support of donors and UN agencies.
- Facilitate the development of a broad policy framework for the management of the temporary stay of the Afghan population in Pakistan.

- Promote the self-reliance of refugees in camps while ensuring that the most vulnerable among them have access to basic services.

Key targets for 2007

- Voluntary repatriation of 300,000 Afghans.
- *Proof of registration* documents distributed to some 2.5 million people.
- Resettlement of 800 refugees who have special protection needs.
- Inclusion of refugee-assistance projects in national development programmes.

Strategy and activities

UNHCR's multi-year strategy for Pakistan is based on the premise that a bilateral accord between Pakistan and Afghanistan to find practical solutions for Afghan refugees needs to be promoted.

Data generated from the census and registration mentioned above will help in designing a range of solutions for Afghans. These would include a renewed tripartite agreement whereby UNHCR would help the respective Governments to manage population movements.

By promoting the development of areas affected by refugees and incorporating such interventions into the national development plan, UNHCR will move its focus away from traditional assistance programmes and towards self-reliance, special needs and protection issues. During this transitional period, interventions to tackle the issue of forced labour and ensure the issuance of birth certificates for refugee children will continue, as will the provision of legal advice and counselling through partners.

Resettlement remains an important durable solution for certain categories of Afghan refugees, particularly women at risk and refugees with security problems. UNHCR will

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2007		Dec 2007	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Afghanistan	997,260	997,260	801,960	801,960
	Various	410	410	340	340
Asylum-seekers	Afghanistan	1,600	1,600	1,100	1,100
	Various	580	580	530	530
Total		999,850	999,850	803,930	803,930



The UNHCR Iris Verification Centre in Hayatabad Peshawar marked the 100,000 Afghan return of the year in July 2006.
UNHCR / B. Baloch

also continue refugee status determination for non-Afghans in need of international protection and pursue durable solutions through voluntary repatriation or resettlement.

In this gradual phasing down of basic assistance programmes, UNHCR will continue to help refugee communities to assume more responsibilities in the management of water supplies, health care and education.

Constraints

The deterioration of the security situation in the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan and the lack of infrastructure and job opportunities in Afghanistan continue to be major concerns.

Without the political and financial engagement of all partners (including the Government of Pakistan, donor countries, UN agencies and NGOs), development initiatives in the refugee affected areas will not succeed. Such support would also help move these programmes into the mainstream of national development programmes.

Organisation and implementation

UNHCR presence

Number of offices	6
Total staff	176
International	28
National	140
UNVs	7
JPOs	1

Coordination

UNHCR's activities will continue to be carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions. In order to support the transition period, UNHCR will work closely with provincial authorities, donor countries, the UN Country Team and NGO partners. It will also solicit support from non-traditional multilateral and bilateral development agencies, specialized agencies, the representatives of the Afghanistan Government in Pakistan and the refugee communities. This collaboration was formalized by the creation of a federal-level task force by the Pakistan authorities. UNHCR's programme is aligned with the UN Millennium Development Goals and regional development initiatives.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government: Ministry of States and Frontier Regions.

NGOs: Afghan Medical Welfare Association, American Refugee Committee, Association of Medical Doctors of Asia, Basic Education and Employable Skills Training, Basic Education for Afghan Refugees, Caritas (Pakistan), Church World Service (USA), Health Net International (Netherlands), International Rescue Committee (USA), Kuwait Joint Relief Committee, Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid, Ockenden International (UK), Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Save the Children Federation (USA), *Savera* Counselling Services, *Sayyed Jamal-ud-din Afghani* Welfare Organisation, Society for Community Support to Primary Education, Society for Humanitarian Rights and Prisoners, Struggle for Change, *Tataqee* Foundation, The Frontier Primary Health Care, Union Aid for Afghan Refugees.

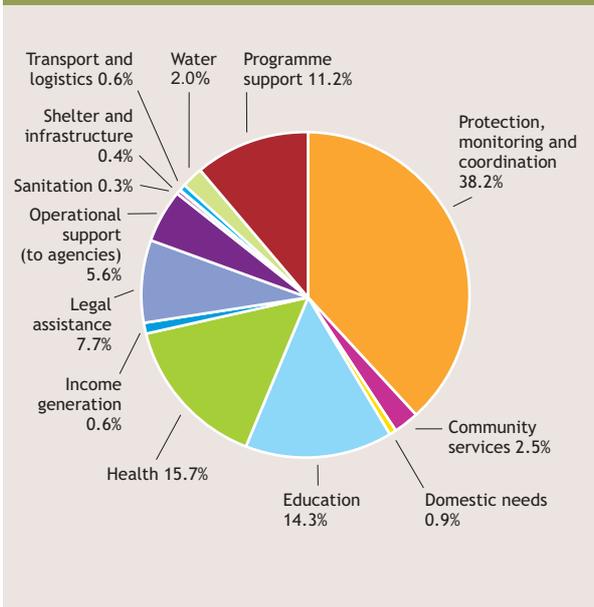
Others: UNV.

Operational partners

UN Country Team.

Budget (USD)		
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget	
	2006	2007
Protection, monitoring and coordination	8,906,090	7,093,855
Community services	583,043	663,039
Domestic needs	201,130	51,803
Education	3,333,038	2,170,020
Health	3,653,507	2,926,933
Income generation	150,000	0
Legal assistance	1,807,449	1,328,284
Operational support (to agencies)	1,310,271	1,487,657
Sanitation	86,007	139,500
Shelter and infrastructure	77,157	0
Transport and logistics	151,261	164,030
Water	459,758	368,832
Total operations	20,718,711	16,393,952
Programme support	2,608,459	2,659,611
Total	23,327,170	19,053,563

2006 Annual Programme Budget by sector



2007 Annual Programme Budget by sector

