

Returnees fill containers with water in Chamtala, Afghanistan. Up to 20,000 litres of fresh water are supplied daily by UNHCR.



**Afghanistan**  
**Islamic Republic of Iran**  
**Pakistan**

# South-West Asia

## | Working environment |

South-West Asia continues to host one of the world's largest and most protracted refugee situations. Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran host some 2.7 million registered Afghan refugees, including many who have been displaced for more than 30 years. This is also a region which experiences instability and has been regularly affected in recent times by serious natural disasters.

By August 2011, Pakistan had seen the voluntary

repatriation of some 34,000 Afghan refugees. Facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees will continue to be UNHCR's main priority in 2012.

In addition to approximately 1.7 million refugees, Pakistan also has some 420,500 internally displaced persons (IDPs). UNHCR will continue to work with other humanitarian actors to support the Government of Pakistan's efforts to address the protection and basic needs of this group.





The Islamic Republic of Iran hosts more than 1 million Afghan refugees. UNHCR supports the Government in three main areas of assistance: health, education and livelihoods. This includes its support for the re-registration of Afghan refugees and partial payment of the refugees' premiums under the Health Insurance Scheme.

In Afghanistan, UNHCR protects and assists more than 1.3 people, while at the same time facilitating the return of Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and neighbouring countries. The security situation in Afghanistan has taken a turn for the worse in 2011, and a rising number of security incidents around the country have added new constraints to accessing those in need of assistance.

UNHCR continues to support the efforts of the Afghan Government through its collaboration with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation and its district offices throughout the country. In addition to taking the lead in the protection and emergency shelter cluster working groups and the IDP Task Force, UNHCR supports the voluntary repatriation of refugees and IDPs through various assistance schemes.

In 2011, UNHCR has been working with the Governments of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to advocate for a more robust engagement of the international community in support of a comprehensive multi-year (2012-2014) strategy to address the Afghan displacement situation.

## | Strategy |

The need for a comprehensive solutions framework in South-West Asia is widely acknowledged. Such a strategy would include the facilitation of voluntary repatriation, along with enhanced and targeted community-based reintegration interventions in high return areas of Afghanistan. For those who are unlikely to return in the near future, UNHCR is exploring with the Government of Pakistan alternative stay arrangements.

Preparations are ongoing for the Afghan Stakeholders Conference scheduled for early 2012. The Conference will establish a platform for dialogue among relevant stakeholders from Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. A three-year (2012-2014) road map will be drawn up and will include the identification of strategic partnerships and the investments required to achieve a set of comprehensive solutions to the displacement issues that have risen as a result of the conflict in Afghanistan.

At the country level, UNHCR is working to link its voluntary repatriation programmes in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to the various development projects targeting returnees in Afghanistan. It will also put in place adequate measures to address issues related to IDPs, statelessness and reintegration. Finally, it will review and adjust its operational strategy to the evolving situations in some areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

UNHCR's operation in Pakistan will focus on supporting the Government in implementing its Afghan Management and Repatriation Strategy. This includes prioritizing voluntary repatriation, expanding the Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme, and putting in place effective mechanisms while exploring alternative arrangements for those remaining in Pakistan. UNHCR will also continue to advocate for the Government's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the development of its national legislation.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNHCR will put in place sustainable voluntary repatriation and resettlement programmes, as well as a legal framework for those who are unable to leave the country in the near future. It will support returnees in Afghanistan through its Transitional Solutions Initiative, which includes assistance in the areas of shelter, income generation, livelihoods, water and education. UNHCR also aims to provide up to 20,000 homes for returnee families. For IDPs in Afghanistan, UNHCR will continue to advocate for protection interventions and durable solutions.

### | Constraints |

Military operations present challenges in Afghanistan, where the situation remains volatile and unstable, particularly in areas that have been handed over to the national security forces. An average of 100 security incidents are reported daily; the humanitarian community, including the UN, are specifically targeted in some of them.

As a consequence, the UN has access to only about half the country and the delivery of much-needed assistance to the

newly displaced has been difficult. UNHCR continues to rely on its networks of local partners, including government line departments, to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Socio-economic instability is another constraint in the subregion. As a result of the gloomy economic climate in the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNHCR has observed a sharp increase in the number of vulnerable refugees who have been identified to be in need of assistance. Inflationary pressures and an increase in the number of vulnerable refugees have led to a significant increase in the cost of UNHCR's current and planned programmes in the country. In the case of Afghanistan, competition for scarce resources such as land, water and access to employment have hindered sustainable reintegration and will present additional challenges.

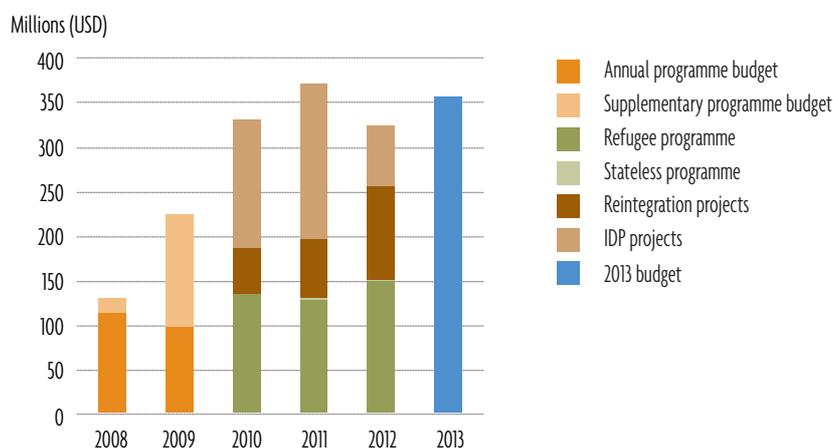
### | Operations |

UNHCR's operations in **Afghanistan**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran** and **Pakistan** are covered in separate chapters.

### | Financial information |

The 2012 budget for South-West Asia is approximately USD 326 million. The overall budget in this subregion has continued to increase, with a sharp increase in 2010 and 2011 primarily due to the emergency assistance programme in response to the floods in Pakistan in 2010.

## UNHCR's budget in South-West Asia 2008 – 2013



## UNHCR Budget in South-West Asia (USD)

OPERATION	2011 REVISED BUDGET	2012					2013
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	TOTAL	
Afghanistan	100,153,130	43,410,753	0	77,535,733	18,622,584	139,569,070	148,320,229
Islamic Republic of Iran	40,178,139	53,216,250	0	0	0	53,216,250	59,158,540
Pakistan	233,553,176	53,752,066	821,992	28,786,518	50,168,643	133,529,219	152,295,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>373,884,444</b>	<b>150,379,068</b>	<b>821,992</b>	<b>106,322,252</b>	<b>68,791,227</b>	<b>326,314,538</b>	<b>359,774,469</b>