

Afghanistan

Main Objectives

- Develop the capacity of the Islamic Transitional Authority of Afghanistan (ITAA) to plan, manage, and assist the return, reintegration, and protection of refugees and IDPs.
- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees through transport, logistical support, and initial reintegration interventions, such as providing shelter and clean water in returnee areas.
- Work with the authorities to identify solutions for IDPs, such as return or temporary relocation, and provide support to those who are unable to return.
- Broaden the engagement of other actors in reintegration activities for returnees within the ITAA's National Development Framework (NDF).
- Help the authorities to deal with reintegration issues as an integral element of all major national programmes.
- Promote the rights of returnees and conduct systematic monitoring of the return and reintegration process.



Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2003	Dec. 2003
Returnees ¹	1,700,000	2,900,000
Asylum-Seekers	2,000	2,000
Total	1,702,000	2,902,000

¹ More than 1.7 million refugees returned from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2002. In 2003, UNHCR expects that a further 1.2 million refugees will return. UNHCR will also assist 300,000 IDPs to go home.

took place between March and July, the majority of refugees coming from urban areas in Pakistan. Most have settled in Kabul province, the eastern province of Nangahar, the Shomali plain and the provinces of Baghlan, Kunduz, Balkh and Faryab. While many IDPs have returned to their homes in the north, centre, and west, there has been renewed displacement to and within the south. People have moved to the south from the north due to ethnic tensions, while others have been displaced within the south as a result of the four year drought, which continues to affect this area.

The mass movement of people back to their homes is in itself a measure of optimism about their country's future. At the same time, it places

Working Environment

Recent Developments

Between March and the end of September 2002 more than 1.7 million Afghans repatriated from Pakistan and Iran under the ITAA /UNHCR's assisted repatriation programme. In addition, 230,000 IDPs received assistance to return to their homes, while 400,000 went home on their own. Most returns



Upon their arrival home, Afghan returnees go through mine-awareness training at Kabul's Pul-i-Charkhi distribution center.
UNHCR / N.Behring

unprecedented demands on a fragile economy, exposes old ethno-political wounds, and represents a huge challenge for the new Government and the different countries and organisations that have pledged to help rebuild Afghanistan.

UNHCR has provided the logistical facilities and infrastructure for the registration and transport of returning refugees and for the distribution of relief items to them. UNHCR has also gathered and shared comprehensive and detailed data on returnee destinations. This data enables UNHCR and other agencies to provide assistance where it is most needed and ensure co-ordination of protection activities. However, ensuring that returns are sustainable and that the current causes of displacement are overcome will require more integrated, longer-term and larger-scale programmes. The Government's draft National Development Framework accords a high priority to the reintegration

of refugees and IDPs and promotes the strategy of treating all major national programmes as parallel approaches to reintegration.

Constraints

Security in Afghanistan is fragile and volatile. International peacekeepers remain confined to Kabul, and the central Government has to work hard to maintain authority over the provinces, where inter-factional violence can easily break out. Coalition forces continue to carry out activities in some parts of the country.

UNHCR protection monitoring reports reveal that people returning to some areas are subject to looting, extortion, and harassment by local commanders. Pashtuns living in the south say that they still feel that the situation in the north is too precarious for them to return, despite government efforts to



ensure stability. Their fears are not assuaged by Pashtuns who continue to leave the north and west, seeking refuge in the south.

Although some parts of the country have seen rain this year for the first time in five years, and WFP estimates that overall agricultural production has increased by more than 80 per cent since last year, many Afghans still face endemic food insecurity. The protracted drought has deepened rural poverty across large parts of the country, and there are concerns that if people become desperate they may migrate from rural areas to the cities in unmanageable numbers.

Strategy

Protection and Solutions

In view of the varied and unpredictable conditions in many parts of Afghanistan, UNHCR will continue to facilitate rather than promote voluntary return. Priority will be given to gathering accurate information about areas of return and passing it on to potential returnees in neighbouring countries and further afield. The Office will also build on efforts to obtain more detailed data on the refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan as well as on IDPs in order to help them achieve their goals.

Returnee monitoring will remain the cornerstone of the protection strategy in Afghanistan, along with the training of counterparts in ministries and local authorities. UNHCR acts on reports of harassment and discrimination, taking up cases both locally and with the central Government. Since protection is an essential element to reintegrating returnees in home communities, UNHCR will expand its programme of training workshops, maintaining a special focus on promoting awareness of gender-related issues.

IDPs displaced from the north and northwest by ethnically-targeted violence will not return until they are confident they can do so in safety. A joint ITAA/UN commission is liaising between IDP groups in the south and the authorities in the north in an effort to establish guarantees and thus pave the way for safe and voluntary return. UNHCR will try to conduct confidence-building measures to promote peaceful inter-ethnic co-existence.

Assistance

In 2003, UNHCR will continue to support repatriation whilst stepping up reintegration assistance. The transport grant system for returnees will be maintained, as will distributions of food and domestic items such as blankets and kitchen sets through the 38 warehouses and distribution centres established in 2002.

UNHCR will sponsor a rural returnee shelter programme with the aim of giving shelter materials to returnees, who will thus be able to build (or re-build) 60,000 homes. Priority will be given to large families, widows and households headed by women. Water will be another major focus. Where feasible, shallow wells will be dug. Where water tables are low, tube wells will be constructed. UNHCR will provide community services and establish some income-generating and employment projects such as small-scale road construction, which also improves local infrastructure and services. UNHCR will emphasise training and support for women's groups as a means of mobilising communities to participate in returnee programmes.

IDPs who have not been displaced for protection-related reasons will be offered assistance to return to areas of origin whenever climatic and economic conditions permit. Those who cannot return will receive assistance where they are. Returning IDPs and refugees will receive similar packages of food and relief items. Host communities will also benefit from community-based programmes (wells, irrigation canals, health facilities, employment programmes, etc).

Desired Impact

UNHCR aims to ensure sustainable return that is voluntary, safe, and gradual and to deliver initial

installation support (relief items and transport grants, rural housing, water and sanitation, income generation). Internal displacement will be stabilised and durable or temporary solutions found for IDPs. In areas of high return, UNHCR will put in place longer-term programmes, which are also of immediate relevance to returnees, thus paving the way from repatriation and reintegration to rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Organisation and Implementation

UNHCR currently runs 25 offices throughout Afghanistan and employs 630 staff members, of whom 540 are Afghan nationals. The Office of the Chief of Mission returned to Kabul from Islamabad at the beginning of 2002.

Co-ordination

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established in 2002. UNHCR works in close co-operation with this mission, especially with the Designated Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) for Humanitarian and Development Affairs, as well as the DSRSG for Political Affairs (whose remit includes protection and human rights). The Office supports the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation in co-ordinating the plans and activities of other UN agencies and NGOs working with Returnees and IDPs. UNHCR will intensify co-operation with longer-term development agencies, such as UNDP and the World Bank, and consolidate existing co-operation with the triangle of reintegration ministries (Refugees and Repatriation, Rural Reconstruction and Development, and Housing and Urban Development). UNHCR will strive to give those ministries the resources and expertise to take over responsibility for managing, co-ordinating and implementing the return and reintegration programme.

Offices
OCM Kabul
Kabul (supervising Field Units Bamyan)
Gardez (supervising Field Units Ghazani, Khost)
Herat (supervising Field Units Chagcaran, Farah, Islam Qala, Qala-I-Nau)
Jalalabad (supervising Field Units Asadabad, Mehtarlam Mohmand Dara, Torkham)
Kandahar (supervising Field Units Daman, Dilaram, Laskargah, Spin Boldak, Zaranj)
Mazar-I-Sharif (supervising Field Units Faizabad, Maimana, Pul-I-Khumri, Kunduz, Sar-I-Pul)
Islamabad (Liaison Office)

Partners

Government Agencies

Ministry of Public Health and

Ministry of Repatriation

NGOs

Action Contre la Faim

Afghan Construction and Logistic Unit

Afghan Literacy Organisations

Afghan National Construction Co-ordination

Afghan Planning Agency

Agence d'aide coopération technique et développement

Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan

ALISEI

Ansari Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan

ARDU/BRR

British Broadcasting Corporation

Bureau for Rural Rehabilitation and Afghan Reconstruction and Development Unit Consortium

CARE International

Central Asia Development Group

CESVI

Christian Children Fund

Cooperative Housing Foundation International

Cooperazione Internazionale COOPI

Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance

Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees

FOCUS

FOCUS-Humanitarian Assistance Europe Foundation

Guardians

Heart Professionals Shura

Health Net International

Heward Reconstruction Service

International Catholic Migration Committee

International Rescue Committee

InterSOS

Islamic Relief Agency

JEN

Khurasan Development & Rehabilitation Agency

MADERA

Medicos Do Mondo – Portugal

National Lawyers Association of Afghanistan

Norwegian Project Office / Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan

Norwegian Refugee Council

Organisation for Humanitarian Assistance

OXFAM

People in Need Foundation

Kandahar Drug Control and Co-ordination Unit

Samaritan's Purse International Relief – SPIR

Save the Children Sweden

Sherzaad Reconstruction Organization

SOLIDARITES

Solidarités France

South-Western Afghanistan and Baluchistan Association for Co-ordination

Voluntary Association for the Rehabilitation of Afghanistan

Watan Rehabilitation Organisation

ZOA

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

Budget (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	0
Community Services	90,000
Domestic Needs	240,000
Education	0
Income Generation	0
Health Nutrition	0
Legal Assistance	100,000
Operational Support (to Agencies)	50,000
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	0
Transport / Logistics	120,000
Water	0
Total Operations	600,000
Programme Support	0
Total	600,000