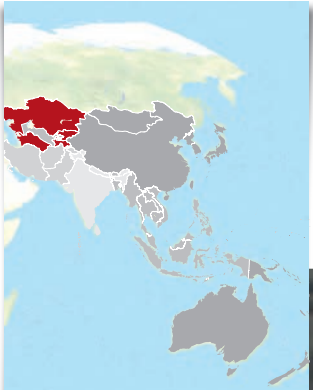


CENTRAL ASIA



UNHCR

2013 GLOBAL REPORT

Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan

Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Uzbekistan



A young Afghan refugee welcomes the opportunity to study in Kazakhstan

UNHCR / Zh. DOSSOVA



| Overview |

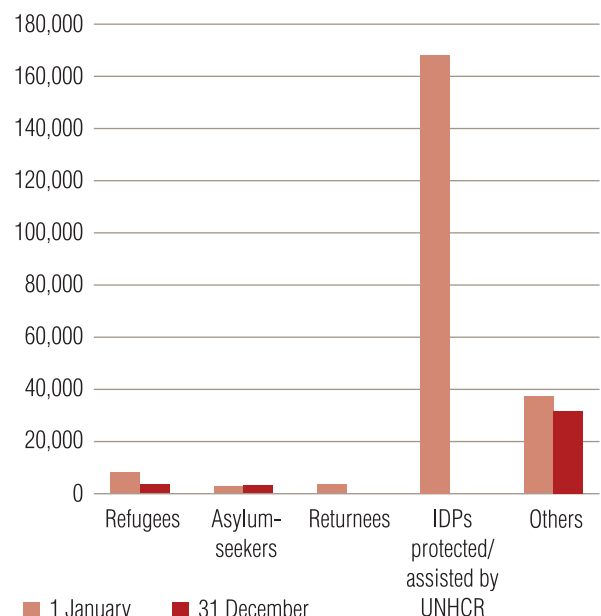


Highlights

- UNHCR prioritized improving access to and the quality of refugee status determination (RSD) procedures in Central Asia. The Office provided an electronic refugee registration database system to authorities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to enable them to maintain records, facilitate needs assessments and support solution identification.
- In the subregion, governments were assisted to improve national refugee legislation and policies to ensure compliance with international standards. In Kazakhstan, an inter-ministerial working group was established to discuss issues of concern with UNHCR. A similar working group was established in Tajikistan to discuss a revision of the refugee and citizenship laws. The Turkmenistan Government began to explore ways of strengthening its partnership with UNHCR.
- Countries in Central Asia hosting large populations of stateless people or people at risk of becoming stateless continued to make significant progress in addressing these issues. As a result of the distance learning programme on statelessness organized for State authorities in the subregion, more interest in the Statelessness Conventions was generated.

- The second Ministerial Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration was held in Almaty on 5 June 2013, to address challenges of mixed migration in the region and the operationalization of the Almaty Process.

People of concern to UNHCR in Central Asia | 2013



- Country-specific contingency plans and response strategies were developed in preparation for the conclusion of the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF's) mission in Afghanistan. Emergency preparedness was further strengthened through consultations and training sessions held with United Nations, relevant government and NGO partner agencies.
- Where appropriate, UNHCR pursued resettlement as a durable solution, and continued to advocate for the local integration of refugees in accordance with UNHCR's comprehensive solutions strategy for Central Asia, developed in 2013.

| Results in 2013 |

Working environment

All Central Asian States, with the exception of Uzbekistan, have acceded to the 1951 Convention and adopted national refugee laws. Further work is required to align national laws with international standards of refugee protection.

The Central Asian Governments are concerned about their national security and have welcomed broader regional cooperation, particularly in response to increasing concerns regarding transnational terrorism. They are also conscious of the uncertain consequences of ISAF's withdrawal and the possibility of mixed migratory flows from Afghanistan into the subregion.

Achievements and impact

Kazakhstan

In January 2013, Kazakhstan adopted a law on identity documents and amended several legislative acts which allow refugees and asylum-seekers to obtain individual identification numbers. This facilitated civil transactions, including civil registration, bank operations, tax payments, obtaining of authorization documents, and registration of business activities. UNHCR continued to advocate for amendments to the national education legislation to benefit refugee and asylum-seeker children and for the inclusion of refugees in the National Unified Health Care System.

The management of the asylum-seeker and refugee registration database was handed over to the Migration Police Department, under the Ministry of the Interior, and officials were trained to utilize it properly. Three seminars on the improvement of RSD procedures were organized for State RSD officials, including country of origin information sessions on Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic, from where the majority of asylum-seekers originated. The Government has agreed to run a country-wide campaign on the reduction and prevention of statelessness in 2014, in line with UNHCR's strategic objectives for the subregion.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is a pilot country for the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Decision on Durable Solutions. Capacity-building of local authorities has been one of the priority areas of UNHCR's programme in the country. In line with the new People's Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations Concept, as well as the National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017, UNHCR established close cooperation with 15 local offices of the State Agency on Local Self-Governance and Inter-Ethnic Relations in southern provinces. Protection monitoring continued in 44 locations affected by the June 2010 conflict. UNHCR's project proposal on trust and confidence building between local communities and authorities has been approved for 24 months, effective January 2014.

The Regulation on Citizenship Procedures of the Kyrgyz Republic, for which UNHCR provided substantive inputs, entered into force in August 2013. People with undetermined legal status and possessing expired identification documents can access the procedure to regularize their legal status and subsequently apply for permanent residence and citizenship in the Kyrgyzstan Republic. In 2013, Kyrgyzstan allowed 14,000 people to exchange their invalid former Soviet Union passports for Kyrgyz passports.

High-level officials from different government and UN agencies have reviewed the contingency plan for Kyrgyzstan. To strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, UNHCR donated non-food items from its stockpile.

Tajikistan

An inter-ministerial working group, led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOI), was formed to prepare the contingency plan for a potential refugee influx following the ISAF withdrawal from Afghanistan. UNHCR provided technical expertise on humanitarian emergency preparedness and management at the inter-ministerial meetings held in May and July 2013. The MOI has put forward a draft national contingency plan for approval by the authorities.

The State working group, composed of nine officials representing the MOI, the Executive Apparatus of the President, the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, the State Committee of National Security, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reviewed the citizenship law of Tajikistan and submitted it to Parliament for approval. The revisions include UNHCR's recommendation to align the citizenship law with both Statelessness Conventions. The working group members participated in the Regional Roundtable on Statelessness and went on study visit to Hungary in 2013. They will participate in a stateless mapping exercise planned for 2014.

New database equipment and software were provided to the Passport Registration Service of MOI to support and improve refugee registration processes in accordance with international standards.

Turkmenistan

UNHCR continued to advocate for the socio-economic rights of stateless people and mandate refugees; strengthening of the national asylum system; and capacity building of national institutions. Turkmenistan, the first country in Central Asia to be party to both Statelessness Conventions, adopted in July 2013 a new law on citizenship, which incorporated recommendations by UNHCR and is in line with international standards. Between 2011 and 2013, close to 4,000 individuals were granted Turkmen citizenship, and over 6,000 additional applications were still under consideration.

Constraints

Inconsistencies between national legislation and international standards, as well as national security concerns, continued to affect asylum policies and the protection of refugees in the subregion. In some countries, this has affected UNHCR's ability to cooperate effectively with concerned authorities regarding refugee rights. Unfortunately, there were more than 25 cases of *refoulement* in the region.

In Tajikistan, refugees and asylum-seekers are prohibited from residing in urban areas by the provisions of two Presidential Resolutions.

Operations

Kazakhstan

UNHCR and its partners worked to secure access for refugees and asylum-seekers of all ages to formal education, long-distance learning programmes, life skills and vocational training, and internet services. Refugee and asylum-seeker children between six and seven years were enrolled in summer school to better prepare them for admission to primary school. School uniforms, textbooks and classroom supplies were

provided to the most vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeker children. Regular language and accelerated training courses, as well as art and sport activities, were organized for refugee children and youth.

Some 48 refugees and asylum-seekers, almost 70 per cent women, benefitted from vocational courses such as hairdressing, sewing, cookery and computer literacy. A mini-grant programme benefitted some 30 vulnerable refugee families.

Kyrgyzstan

Food aid packages were distributed to all new arrivals (more than 200 people) and about 150 vulnerable refugee households (nearly 700 people). UNHCR provided blanket and food aid packages at the onset of winter to further support refugees and asylum-seekers.

Approximately 590 youth benefitted from Russian and English language and computer literacy training in addition to having access to information sources about job openings.

About 170 civil registration officers, local self-governance officials, social workers, and officials from State population service centres participated in capacity-building training on statelessness legislation.

Tajikistan

Some 150 children benefitted from language courses. Free computer literacy classes were provided in five locations. Vocational training on cooking, hairdressing, confectionary, accounting, sewing, electricity and plumbing was provided for 450 young refugees. UNHCR supported 116 individuals in securing jobs. Three refugees who submitted business plans were granted micro-credit loans by First Micro Finance Bank, marking the first time that refugees in Tajikistan have had access to bank loans. Six students were supported for their higher education through the DAFI scholarship programme. Local school administrations agreed to waive tuition fees for economically vulnerable families who could not afford to pay. Financial and material assistance including warm clothing and shoes, newborn baby kits, bedding, food, and sanitary kits, were provided to vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeker households. Some 420 children were provided with school uniforms through funds raised locally.

Turkmenistan

In 2013, UNHCR facilitated a study visit for 15 high-ranking Government officials to Turkey. The visit aimed to observe and learn from Turkey's experience in addressing the influx of Syrian refugees. UNHCR has been actively involved in the joint Turkmenistan and UN Strategic Advisory Board, and continues to advocate to include refugees and stateless people in the Government's social and economic programmes and to provide support to vulnerable refugees.

| Financial information |

The overall budgetary requirements for operations in Central Asia in 2013 stood at USD 18.1 million. Funding available amounted to USD 9.5 million, leaving a shortfall of some 48 per cent. As a result, UNHCR could not address many of the needs of

refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless and other people of concern. The most critical gaps were in the areas of medical assistance, livelihood generation, social services, education and activities related to the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

Budget and expenditure in Central Asia | USD

Operation		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
Kazakhstan Regional Office	Budget	5,261,283	1,861,891	499,339	7,622,513
	Expenditure	3,010,220	1,166,922	332,661	4,509,803
Kyrgyzstan	Budget	3,135,829	815,368	3,546,100	7,497,298
	Expenditure	1,590,899	370,460	995,999	2,957,358
Tajikistan	Budget	1,813,679	129,169	0	1,942,848
	Expenditure	1,180,036	91,165	0	1,271,201
Turkmenistan	Budget	487,572	554,017	0	1,041,589
	Expenditure	349,477	413,308	0	762,785
Total budget		10,698,363	3,360,446	4,045,439	18,104,248
Total expenditure		6,130,631	2,041,855	1,328,660	9,501,147

Voluntary contributions to Central Asia | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
CENTRAL ASIA OVERALL					
Private donors in the Republic of Korea				71	71
Russian Federation				150,000	150,000
United States of America				2,500,000	2,500,000
CENTRAL ASIA OVERALL Total				2,650,071	2,650,071
KAZAKHSTAN REGIONAL OFFICE					
Kazakhstan				184,999	184,999
KAZAKHSTAN REGIONAL OFFICE Total				184,999	184,999
KYRGYZSTAN					
Kyrgyzstan				67,014	67,014
Private donors in Switzerland	9,000		21,000		30,000
United Nations Delivering as One Funds		118,800			118,800
KYRGYZSTAN Total		9,000	118,800	21,000	67,014
TURKMENISTAN					
Turkmenistan				81,792	81,792
TURKMENISTAN Total				81,792	81,792
Total		9,000	118,800	21,000	2,983,876
					3,132,676

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM)