



Afghanistan Situation

Operational Update



Income generating project, Afghanistan

UNHCR/R. Arnold

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION OPERATIONAL UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2009

1. OVERVIEW

Rising insecurity dominated developments in the region in 2009, affecting the lives of nationals and refugees alike in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In Pakistan, the volatile security situation saw over two million people leave their homes in the country's North West Frontier Province. Insecurity in Pakistan also saw the periodic suspension of the voluntary repatriation programme for Afghan refugees, as well as the refugee programme in Balochistan. Three UNHCR staff members were killed on duty in Pakistan in 2009 and one was abducted and held by insurgents for two months. As a result, UNHCR has and continues to regularly review its operating procedures in Pakistan and take appropriate mitigating measures.

Insecurity, limited economic opportunities, and the uncertainty surrounding the elections in Afghanistan this year, has had a clear impact on repatriation. Just 53,500 Afghans have returned to their homeland as of end of August 2009, a fifth of the number that returned in 2008. Such a reduction was not initially foreseen for 2009. However, gradual return is more conducive to sustainable reintegration in the current context. Competition for land, water, natural resources, and employment is growing sharper. Conflict and poverty underpin internal displacement, informal settlement in urban areas, and irregular migration generating increasingly complex challenges.

Security conditions have also caused frequent closures of the Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Pakistan. Nonetheless, the demand for and interest in return has evidently declined. The uncertainty over Afghanistan's stabilization is likely to continue affecting repatriation as well as displacement in Afghanistan. The Office in Afghanistan has already made significant adjustments this year to further enhance the operation's ability to meet both sudden and complex instances of displacement and to further strengthen protection capacity.

Despite the challenging conditions in Afghanistan, continued investment in refugee return and reintegration is needed more than ever. In line with the key objectives of the Refugee Returnee and IDP (RRI) Sector Strategy of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) highlighted last November at the Kabul Conference, the mainstreaming of reintegration into national development programmes in high return areas is needed to stabilize return movements and increase absorption capacity. Since 2002, over 5.6 million Afghans have returned to their homeland. This figure represents a 20 percent increase in the estimated population of Afghanistan, a huge socio-economic challenge for such a poor country.

Against this backdrop of a deteriorating situation and shrinking absorption capacity in Afghanistan, there have been positive developments in both Pakistan and Iran in 2009 towards expanding the protection space and improving conditions for the remaining registered Afghans. Some 1.7 million registered Afghans remain in Pakistan and some 935,000 registered Afghans remain in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In Pakistan there is a commitment to extend the Proof of Registration (PoR) cards for Afghan citizens in Pakistan until the end of 2012 and the government is revising its Strategy for the Management of Afghans. Progress has also been made in the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) coexistence programme with the launch of a USD 140 million five year appeal in May 2009. A RAHA programme cell has been established in the Ministry for States and Frontiers Region (SAFRON), a joint UN programme support unit is being set up within UNHCR to lend expertise and build the capacity of the Provincial Management Units. In Iran, the authorities have completed the re-registration of refugees and are issuing work permits to registered Afghan refugees. UNHCR and

the authorities are working on a strategy to improve the living conditions of registered Afghan refugees, including better access to health and education facilities in Iran.

UNHCR remains committed to supporting the voluntary and gradual repatriation of registered Afghan in Pakistan and Iran as the best guarantor for the sustainable reintegration of Afghans in their homeland.

2. VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

Voluntary repatriation levels are far lower than anticipated this year due to the sharp deterioration of security in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. In Pakistan the voluntary repatriation centres (VRCs) were closed for much of the repatriation season due to security concerns, disrupting the repatriation programme. The rise in insecurity, limited economic opportunities and concerns over the election in Afghanistan have affected the rate of return. As of mid September 2009, some 53,500 Afghans had voluntarily repatriated with UNHCR assistance. The majority, some 48,300, returned from Pakistan while some 5,000 repatriated from Iran, and just under 200 returned from non-neighbouring countries, most of which have signed Tripartite Agreements with Afghanistan. This compares to 278,000 registered Afghans that returned with UNHCR assistance in 2008.

As well as the considerable impact of security, other factors have also influenced the repatriation this year and will influence trends in the years to come. During the 2002-2005 period, referred to as the 'era of mass return', the majority of Afghans that returned had been displaced for a relatively short period of time and were able to reintegrate into their home communities, mostly in rural areas, with few major difficulties. In many instances, they brought capital, assets, skills and ideas that have contributed to Afghanistan's recovery process. By contrast, the majority of the remaining registered Afghan population in neighbouring countries (1.7 million in Pakistan, 0.9 million in Iran) have been in exile for more than quarter of a century. Half have never lived in Afghanistan. The majority have no land or house in Afghanistan, and for over two decades have been used to living in urban areas. The upsurge in violence in Afghanistan since 2006 has rekindled refugees' concerns not only about security and the political stability of their country, but the viability of supporting their families in their homeland under current conditions. The gap between the living conditions and economic opportunities in Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries is considerable.

UNHCR return and reintegration models are evolving to match emerging political, and operational challenges in Afghanistan and the region. This process takes into account social and economic developments among the long-staying registered Afghan population in the neighbouring countries and the changing circumstances in Afghanistan itself. Due to the increased vulnerability of returnees coupled with the sharper reintegration challenges in Afghanistan, UNHCR has strengthened its emergency response capacity to address critical returnee needs on arrival in Afghanistan. The challenge has been to deliver an emergency response in adverse security conditions, addressing immediate basic needs with the provision of tents, kitchen sets, blankets, trucked water, food and healthcare in coordination with others, until more sustainable solutions can be found.

a) Pakistan

Of the total 48,320 Afghans that returned by mid September 2009, the majority (58%) repatriated from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), with about 21 percent returning from Balochistan, 9 percent returning from Sindh, 12 percent from Punjab and Islamabad, and less than one percent from Pakistan Administered Kashmir (AJK). Some 67 percent returned from urban areas, while 33 percent returned from camps or refugee settlements. The limited operation of the VRCs can be seen as a major factor in reduced numbers of voluntary returns from Pakistan in 2009. In Peshawar, NWFP, the 2009 voluntary repatriation operation began in April (a month later than usual) yet was suspended four times before mid-June, after which it has not resumed. In Balochistan, voluntary

repatriation started in June (some three months later than usual) and was suspended indefinitely at the end of July 2009.

Those Afghans that did return cited the high cost of living and law enforcement activities as reasons for leaving Pakistan. Of the 48,320 persons that returned, just 3,500 repatriated from Buner, Swat, Dir, Hangu and Malakand districts of NWFP and the Mohmand Agency – all regions impacted by insecurity. It therefore seems that for many, despite the challenges, remaining in Pakistan was preferable to returning to Afghanistan this year. Since 2002, UNHCR has supported some 3,543, 454 Afghans return from Pakistan. The regular Tripartite Meetings have been an important forum to discuss initiatives to support Afghans in Pakistan as well as the modalities and conditions of return.

b) Iran

From January to mid September, 4,996 Afghan registered refugees repatriated to Afghanistan with UNHCR's assistance. Most returning refugees came from urban settings in Iran, with the highest numbers returning from Fars, Kerman, Khorasan, Esfahan and Tehran.

Low voluntary repatriation figures from Iran over the past three years, reflect the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, the socio-economic challenges the country faces, and the relatively predictable standard of living among Afghan registered refugees in Iran. UNHCR has assisted with the return of more than 863,752 since 2002, when the voluntary repatriation programme began under the auspices of the Tripartite Agreements between Iran, Afghanistan and UNHCR, and the Office looks forward to resuming Tripartite Commission meetings in the future.

c) Non-neighboring countries

Of the 181 Afghans who returned to Afghanistan from non-neighbouring countries between January and August 2009. The majority, 125, returned from countries that have Tripartite Agreements with Afghanistan. Seven countries have signed Tripartite Agreements with Afghanistan.

3. REINTEGRATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Durable return is closely linked with progress towards national security, political stability and economic development. The adoption of the **Refugee Return and IDP (RRI) Strategy within the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)** and its affirmation in Kabul at an International Conference on Return and Reintegration in November 2008, signalled the Government's awareness that to sustain refugee return, key ministries needed to mainstream returnee requirements into their national development programs. Despite security and political challenges, progress has been made in refining both institutional arrangements and national programme design to advance the Refugee Returnee and IDP (RRI) sector strategy of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). UNHCR's principle counterpart is the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) which is the government entity responsible for convening the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), a key mechanism established for delivering the ANDS. In parallel, UNHCR has worked with the Ministries of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Housing and Urban Development and Education to address key obstacles to return and sustainable reintegration this year.

Work has begun to assess the impact of micro-finance, water and the national solidarity programme on refugee and IDP returns. Mechanisms are in place to commission research, evaluate findings, and provide insight and practical direction to policymakers and programme managers for the inclusion of returnees. UNHCR is contributing to the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) surveys and, in cooperation with the World Bank, supporting analysis of the links between displacement and poverty. It shares its extensive database on returnees and the remaining Afghan populations in

Pakistan and Iran as well as its regular reporting on population movements with a wide range of stakeholders so as to guide sectoral and geographical targeting of national programmes.

UNHCR's own interventions are within the framework of the RRI sector strategy of the ANDS. Country wide needs assessments confirm that the main needs for returnees remain land, shelter, water and livelihood opportunities and continue to inform the prioritization of resources.

Since 2002, UNHCR has supported the construction of more than 181,000 shelters in rural areas benefiting over 1 million homeless returnees. Unmet shelter needs remain high as UNHCR meets only a portion of total needs with its resources. This year 8,100 shelters are being constructed. At the request of Afghan authorities, since 2002 UNHCR has focused its shelter programme in rural areas. However, with the changing profile of returnees as well as increased urban migration, this dimension of reintegration now needs to be addressed. UNHCR has successfully piloted a new one-room shelter design that can provide an extension for returnees staying with host families or emergency shelter for extremely vulnerable returnees who have nowhere to stay. In 2010, with sufficient resources, UNHCR aims to roll out the new design. UNHCR leads the **Emergency Shelter Cluster (ESC)** together with the NGO *Care* as Deputy Lead. This year the ESC has worked to improve beneficiary selection including women-headed households, shelter package content and technical improvements, earthquake mitigation measures and developing a rapid assessment tool to map populations in need of emergency shelter in situations similar to the spring floods.

From 2002 until end August 2009, 9,415 **water** points have been completed under UNHCR's water programme in high or potential return areas, as well as those hit by drought. The water needs in Afghanistan are so overwhelming that prioritizing returnee and IDP areas for water interventions in national programs is a constant challenge, hence UNHCR's sustained engagement in this vital sector.

In 2009, UNHCR has supported a limited number of **community based income-generation projects** targeting districts of high return. This is an area of intervention that has tremendous impact. UNHCR aims to expand it in order to better support the capacity of receiving communities to absorb returnees. Cash for work projects in rural areas in particular create employment opportunities and lasting community assets benefiting larger numbers of people. UNHCR's priority intervention is cleaning and rehabilitating irrigation canal systems as it improves agricultural opportunities for surrounding communities as well as the daily wage labour. UNHCR also provides emergency cash assistance to **Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs)** so they can buy basic supplies. The project, coordinated by UNHCR, MoRR and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), seeks to expand social protection services and networks as well as provide assistance to at-risk returnees and IDPs such as persons with acute medical needs, unaccompanied women, the elderly and minors, victims of gender-based violence, persons living with disabilities, and survivors of severe violence or torture.

UNHCR continues to provide technical assistance to the MoRR and its provincial offices in support of the **Land Allocation Scheme (LAS)**. Established in 2005 by presidential decree, its aim is to provide vulnerable landless returnees and IDPs with a plot of land. Land issues are particularly complex in Afghanistan and generate constant challenges. But some technical improvements have been advanced through the work of the Technical Committee (TC) comprising representatives from key ministries, UNHCR, and the Programme Implementation Unit (PIU) of the land allocation scheme established in 2008. UNHCR has seconded staff to the PIU to strengthen the overall technical rigor of the scheme. To date, there are 17 land allocation sites. At the end of July 2009, some 266,703 applications for plots of land have been registered by the Land Allocation Commission (LAC), 64,141 beneficiaries have been selected, 41,765 families have paid for their plot of land, 38,242 plots have been distributed and 9,242 families have moved to their newly acquired piece of land.

As in 2008, **emergency response** interventions have been initiated to meet the urgent needs of groups of extremely vulnerable refugee returnees without shelter or land. Last year a group of 30,000 Afghans returned from Pakistan due to camp closure under such conditions to *Chamtala* and

other locations in the eastern region and were living in tents in the desert. This year under similar conditions some 1,500 Afghans returned from Iran to the northern province of *Sar e Pol* after two decades of exile to find their houses destroyed and land occupied. A transit camp was established in the desert and full services provided to support this vulnerable group. The security and logistical constraints of establishing a camp in such a remote and barren part of Afghanistan have been considerable. UNHCR emergency stocks had already been much depleted responding to displacement situations this year. Inter-agency cooperation and timely in-kind support from the international humanitarian community helped to provide an effective response. When complex land issues can be resolved, it is anticipated that the group will move to their places of origin in *Sozma Qala district* and 300-400 additional shelters will need to be constructed alongside the installation of more permanent water facilities and provision of food and income generating projects to help sustain their return. The situation this year has underlined the need for UNHCR to strengthen its emergency response capacity to not only support increasingly complex displacement scenarios but also an emerging trend of extremely vulnerable refugee returnees.

4. ASSISTANCE TO REGISTERED AFGHANS IN HOST COUNTRIES

a) Pakistan

In May 2009, UNHCR alongside other UN agencies launched a USD 140 million appeal, endorsed by the Government of Pakistan, for the **Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA)** programme. The One UN RAHA programme aims to facilitate the transition from humanitarian to development oriented assistance to Afghans and the communities hosting them, in line with the shift from large scale repatriation to more gradual return and the need to support Pakistan's management of the Afghan population in the medium term. While the Refugee Affected (RA) component will repair the adverse impact on infrastructure, environment and health systems in areas once inhabited by refugees, the Hosting Areas (HA) component will support basic services to benefit Afghans and Pakistani populations in education, water and sanitation, health and livelihood sectors.

The five year RAHA programme will be implemented in 21 districts of Pakistan, mostly in the provinces of Balochistan and NWFP, and six urban areas of Sindh and Punjab, which have hosted the most Afghans. The programme will benefit some 2.5 million Pakistanis and Afghans and strengthen the Pakistan Government's governance and public service delivery. Following a workshop and call for proposals in July 2009, 35 project proposals totaling USD 5 million have been submitted by local and international NGOs for projects in 2009. A Project Evaluation Committee comprising SAFRON, UNHCR, UNDP and GTZ is reviewing proposals, and some USD 4 million is available for projects this year. The SAFRON Ministry has established a RAHA cell to provide secretariat support to various stakeholders. A joint-UN programme unit is being established in UNHCR with the support of the German Government. Plans are also underway to extend RAHA activities to areas hosting persons affected by the humanitarian situation this year.

b) Iran

In 2009, UNHCR's budget in Iran was increased by USD 3 million, or over 20 per cent to support health and education activities run under the Ministry of Health (USD 1.5 million) and the Ministry of Education (USD 1.5 million). This was coordinated with the Ministry of Interior through the Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA). The additional funding has been provided to strengthen access of refugees to primary, secondary and tertiary health care in accordance with UNHCR's health guidelines. Registered Afghans continue to access government hospitals, although at a higher cost than Iranian nationals. Support to the Ministry of Education and training was provided to increase school enrolment of refugee children, with a focus on free access at the primary level for girl children and others from vulnerable families. UNHCR is now also encouraging post-primary education for the majority of refugee children. UNHCR and the Iranian government continue

to support vocational skills training and between 2007 and 2009, some 5,730 registered refugees have benefited from technical skills training. Small NGOs are also providing Life Skills Training to refugees in close coordination with the BAFIA under the Ministry of Interior.

5. PROTECTION

a) Afghanistan

In 2009, UNHCR strengthened its protection outreach to support the sustainable return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs and the protection needs of displaced persons in Afghanistan.

The **Afghanistan Protection Cluster** (APC) was strengthened in 2009 with the creation of a dedicated UNHCR Senior Protection Officer post to lead the Office's work in this area. UNHCR is chair of the Protection cluster, supported by two deputy co-Chairs (NRC and UNAMA-HR/ OHCHR). The Office is strengthening its leadership on displacement issues, striving to ensure an operational focus to the work of the protection cluster, and in conjunction with the Government of Afghanistan and other key partners, efforts are underway to refine national IDP policies, guidelines and practical tools to address the complex array of displacement issues. The APC has four working groups including the Internal Displacement Task Force; the Land, Housing and Property Task Force; the Child Protection and Children in Armed Conflict (UNSC 1612) Sub-Cluster; and the Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster. UNHCR continues to support the Trust Fund for the prevention of violence against women.

UNHCR's work on **displacement** in Afghanistan has required close monitoring of the evolving situation and a strengthened emergency preparedness this year. It is expected that this will be maintained and intensified over the medium term. There are broadly four displacement scenarios that have been identified requiring UNHCR's direct engagement: (1) conflict induced displacement primarily in the south but also in the east and west of Afghanistan, (2) the spill over effects of insecurity in the border areas of Pakistan resulting in movements of mixed Pakistani and Afghan populations into eastern Afghanistan, (3) conflicts over disputed access and ownership to land and property leading to displacement, and finally (4) the secondary displacement of refugee returnees unable to return to their places of origin for protection reasons or extreme vulnerability.

Following the national IDP profile released in December 2008, the figures have now been updated to over 250,000 IDPs. The situation is fluid and is being monitored closely. Assistance is provided wherever possible, such as the emergency response to 2,000 displaced families in the south last month. UNHCR is building up NFI stocks for over 100,000 families to provide additional support to displaced persons and vulnerable returnees over the winter, to respond to ongoing displacement, as well as maintain a contingency stock for 30,000 families to strengthen UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response capacity. UNHCR has also continued to play an instrumental role in facilitating solutions for IDPs in the south. Some 7000 IDPs in Kandahar and Helmand provinces have been supported by UNHCR to return to their places of origin this year, primarily in the North and Northwest. It is hoped that this will also enhance the prospects for the local integration of the remaining population.

In 2009, UNHCR Afghanistan contributed to the elaboration of **revised eligibility guidelines** to assist states to assess the claims of Afghan asylum seekers abroad. The new guidelines issued on 17 July 2009 take a nuanced approach to the assessment of Afghan asylum seekers, recognising that, notwithstanding the deteriorating security conditions in Afghanistan, not all Afghans abroad are refugees or otherwise in need of international protection. The guidelines emphasise the importance of conducting a case-by-case analysis, and consulting fresh sources of country of origin information in the rapidly evolving context of Afghanistan.

b) Pakistan¹

As part of its revised strategy for the Management of Afghans in Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan in March 2009, in a joint communiqué with UNHCR, announced its intention to extend the Proof of Registration (PoR) cards for registered Afghans for three years. The July 2009 Tripartite meeting in Kabul confirmed the agreement to extend the PoR cards and the current Tripartite Agreement between the Governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR until the end of 2012.

While Pakistan is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the 1.7 million registered Afghans PoR cards by and large continue to enjoy protection from *refoulement* and freedom of movement within the country. The PoR card is part of a temporary protection regime and permits holders to temporarily reside in Pakistan and to benefit from UNHCR's protection and assistance.

The 'Proof of Registration Card Modification' (PCM) project under the **Registration Information Project for Afghan Citizens (RIPAC)** continues to correct and update information of PoR card holders and register new-born babies of registered Afghan families. By the end of July 2009, almost 40,000 Afghans had accessed the five PoR card modification (PCM) centers established in 2008. Eighty percent of the modifications were made to register newborn babies or for children who reached the age of five to receive their PoR card.

UNHCR is currently in negotiations with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to convert the PoR card into a 'smart card'. The **Smart Card for Afghan Citizens** project will capture updated bio-metrics and demographic information, including addresses. It will facilitate the speedy verification of the registration status of Afghans, thereby avoiding prolonged detention that is increasingly occurring in the current security situation as the authorities are not always aware of the protected status of Afghans with PoR cards. The project will also help the government comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as birth certificates will be issued to all registered Afghan children when they visit centers to convert their PoR cards in 2010. The Smart Card for Afghan Citizens is being developed in parallel to the planned conversion of all Pakistani ID cards into smart cards by NADRA. It is envisaged that these developments in civil registration will, in time, facilitate access of Afghans to health and education services and other rights as defined under the Millennium Development Goals. Some USD 8.5 million is required to fund the Smart Card for Afghan Citizens project in 2010.

In the absence of national refugee law and government procedures, UNHCR continues to conduct individual **refugee status determination (RSD)** under its mandate, more than 60% of which are Afghans. In the first half of 2009, 53 Afghan cases (205 individuals) have been submitted for resettlement and 41 Afghan refugees have departed for a third country, mainly Australia and Canada.

c) Iran

Since April 2009, the government has been undertaking a re-registration process (**Amayesh IV**) and has distributed some 893,000 cards to Afghan refugees. BAFIA expects to issue some one million Amayesh IV cards before the end of 2009. The government has facilitated the distribution of Amayesh IV cards to vulnerable registered Afghans through granting a full exemption of the requested municipality tax to large categories of people. Others outside the government's vulnerability criteria have been assisted by UNHCR, where appropriate.

Over the past year, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (GIRI) has taken a series of positive measures to improve the predictability and sustainability of the stay of registered Afghan

¹ Please see separate UNHCR Update on Pakistan for more information on the humanitarian situation in Pakistan.

refugees in the country. The 300,000 **Temporary Work Permits (TWPs)** available to eligible Afghan refugees by the end of 2008 have been mostly distributed across the country this year. All male Afghan registered refugees between 18 and 60 years of age were requested to apply for a TWP, while it was optional for females. In July 2009, the Iranian President notified the Ministries of Interior and Education and Technology to treat the **enrolment of all school-age children** in the same manner, regardless of whether they were Iranian nationals or lawful foreign residents such as registered refugees. This has helped remove barriers to enrolment of registered refugee children. Furthermore, in May 2009, the government cancelled a previous decision made in December 2008 to prevent registered Afghan (and Iraqi) refugees from taking university entrance exams. The new regulations require refugee students to hold a valid national passport and an Iranian student visa, but do not preclude them from studying at universities.

In July 2009, BAFIA and UNHCR signed a Joint Statement to address the issue of registered Afghans in the declared '**no-go area**' of Khuzestan province who had neither relocated nor repatriated before 22 September. The statement reiterated prior options, but also provides for a one-year extended stay provided the registered Afghans commit to either voluntary repatriate or relocate to a designated 'go-area' before 1 July 2010. A similar Joint Statement was signed the same month by BAFIA and UNHCR for the registered Afghan refugees who lawfully reside in Hormozgan province, after the latter was also declared a 'no-go area' by the government this year. The 80,000 formerly registered Afghan refugees in the province of Sistan & Baluchistan (declared a 'no-go area' in April 2007) who had remained within the province despite the passing of successive deadlines to either relocate or repatriate have recently had their LPs extended.

The general living conditions for registered Afghans (and Iraqi) refugees are expected to deteriorate due to high inflation, rising unemployment, and if the government proceeds, as announced, to replace its current subsidy of basic commodities with relief assistance to destitute Iranian families only. For these reasons, in addition to the deteriorating security and economic situations in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the irregular movement of undocumented Afghans transiting Iran and of registered Afghan refugees from Iran to third countries like Turkey is expected to increase.

For the first time in 2009, the Iranian Government participated in the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement in Geneva in June, indicating its support for **resettlement** out of Iran while at the same time calling for more effective burden sharing from traditional resettlement countries which take relatively few refugees from Iran each year. Following the facilitation of visas by the authorities for a resettlement selection mission, more refugees have been selected for resettlement this year.

6. SECURITY

The security situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan has worsened considerably during the course of 2009 and has been subject of close and regular review. Humanitarian agencies workers are increasingly at risk and the United Nations and its partner agencies have been deliberately and fatally targeted by anti-government elements in both countries. UNHCR has increased its investment in security for both Pakistan and Afghanistan this year.

In **Pakistan**, the decline of the security situation has been rapid and severe. Four UN personnel – of which three were UNHCR staff members - were killed and one UNHCR international staff member was kidnapped this year. The deteriorating security situation has impacted UN field activities. The situation is critical in Balochistan and NWFP, while relatively stable in Sindh and Punjab provinces. UN activities were suspended in Balochistan after the killing of a UNHCR staff member in Quetta in February 2009 and kidnapping of UNHCR's Head of Sub Office Quetta. Activities resumed in May to be suspended again since July following further threats to the UN in Balochistan. Recent events point to a continuing high threat level in NWFP as well as other parts of Pakistan.

UNHCR has increased resources available to mitigate the risk to staff and partners to respond to the rapid deterioration of security, and additional resources are being identified to further support the operation. Unlike the Afghanistan operation which was established with systems and measures to operate in a heightened risk environment since 2002, in Pakistan major adjustments have had to be made quickly to enhance the safety and security of staff, implementing partners and assets in an operation long established for a stable situation. Security personnel has been increased, physical protection measures around the premises have been enhanced, armoured vehicles, body armour and communications equipment have been procured to increase protection during movement and security awareness and training of staff is being increased.

In **Afghanistan** with the elections the focus of much activity, the number of security incidents exceeded 1,000 a month for the first time ever in May 2009. It has remained consistently high since. This year has seen an increase in improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bomber attacks and abductions, and a change in operational tactics. Increasingly complex attacks involving small groups fighting their way into establishments before suicide bombers detonate their bombs have occurred in Kandahar, Kabul, Gardez, Jalalabad and Khost. Access remains a problem for humanitarian assistance agencies. About 50 per cent of the country is officially designated as being accessible to the UN. It is notable that the highest areas of refugee return are the central, eastern, and northern regions which are relatively more secure. UNHCR continues to have better access to these areas and is able to conduct more extensive operations there than in the more volatile southern and south eastern regions. Following a review of protective measures required to maintain operations in this environment, an additional USD 1.3 million is being allocated to Afghanistan to meet enhanced UNDSS Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS).

In the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, following the Presidential elections of June 2009, security concerns prompted the UN SMT to advise UN staff to take precautionary measures.

7. FUNDRAISING

The budget approved by the Executive Committee for the Afghanistan Situation (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) in 2009 was USD 87,665,540. The current AB budget for the Afghanistan Situation is USD 97,404,978, an increase of USD 9.7 million². Pakistan has needed an additional USD 3 million so far, mostly for security needs. In Iran, a USD 3 million operational increase was for health and education projects with the authorities. In Afghanistan, in order to address complex displacement issues this year, it has been necessary to reallocate resources from the cash grant to allow for the procurement of non food items. This reallocation of resources was possible due to the lower than anticipated rate of return this year. However, additional resources have also been required to address displacement issues, as well as security needs.

As of mid-September, the Afghanistan Situation is 94% funded having received earmarked contributions at the country and sub-regional level totaling USD 91,779,186 against total requirements of USD 97,404,978. UNHCR would like to thank donors who have contributed to the Afghanistan Situation so far.

With funding received to date, the Afghanistan Situation still requires USD 5.6 million before the end of the year.

² This excludes two SBs in the region; namely the USD 141 million SB for the Humanitarian Situation in Pakistan, as well as the USD 27 million SB also in Pakistan for the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) project (USD 5.4 million each year over 5 years) that comprises UNHCR's allocation of the overall USD 140 million project established by UN agencies in May 2009.



**Contributions to the Annual Budget (AB) for South-West Asia
Afghanistan Situation**

as of 22 September 2009

2009 Contributions versus Budget (USD)

	Subregional earmarking	Afghanistan	Iran	Pakistan AB	Total
Original Budget 2009	110,000	54,347,491	13,273,109	19,934,940	87,665,540
Revised Budget 2009	1,687,923	55,896,417	16,587,696	23,232,942	97,404,978
Australia		1,294,964		1,264,209	2,559,173
Belgium		1,404,494			1,404,494
Canada		2,396,166			2,396,166
Denmark		1,717,328			1,717,328
European Commission	1,577,923	10,060,419	2,407,900	1,555,568	15,601,810
France		393,701			393,701
Germany		3,196,931	1,317,523		4,514,454
Greece			66,524		66,524
Italy		527,009			527,009
Japan		11,115,702	2,604,587	4,234,256	17,954,545
Netherlands		3,676,471	5,162		3,681,633
Norway		1,690,043			1,690,043
Spain			348,675	348,675	697,350
Sweden	7,542,263	2,076,638		1,300,390	10,919,291
Switzerland		652,742			652,742
United Kingdom		350,877			350,877
United States of America	25,000,000	1,300,000		3,914	26,303,914
Private donors in Australia		12,889			12,889
Private donors in Canada		2,957			2,957
Private donors in Japan		2,097	105,567		107,664
Private donors in Luxembourg				87	87
Private donors in Spain		402			402
Private donors in Switzerland		572			572
Private donors in USA		223,561			223,561
Total Earmarked Contributions	34,120,185	42,095,963	6,855,938	8,707,099	91,779,186
Funding level against revised budget		75%	41%	37%	94%

Summary Funding Situation

2009 Budget	97,404,978
Total Available Funds	91,779,186
Funding Shortfall	5,625,792