

Annual Results Report

2024

Tajikistan

Acknowledgements

UNHCR would like to thank all the stakeholders that contributed data and evidence to this report and reviewed their progress against the joint results of the strategy, including forcibly displaced and stateless people, host communities and host governments, United Nations agencies, and international and national non-governmental organizations, civil society and private sector. Their contributions enable us to create positive changes in the lives of the people we serve.

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Note:

The baseline values presented in this document reflect previous year's progress when available. If such data is not available, strategy baseline values are used instead.

Downloaded date: 28/05/2025

Table of Contents

Section 1: Context and Overview

- 1.1 - Changes to the Operational Context
- 1.2 - Progress Against the Desired Impact
- 1.3 - Challenges to Achieving Impacts
- 1.4 - Collaboration and Partnerships

Section 2: Results

- 2.1 - Outcomes and Achievements
- 2.2 - Age, Gender and Diversity

Section 3: Resources

- 3.1 - Financial Data
- 3.2 - Resources Overview

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

- 4.1 - Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

Tajikistan's economy remained fragile and sensitive to external shocks throughout 2024. The Russian Federation's migration policy changes resulted in pushbacks of Tajik migrants, leading to a decline in remittances – a vital economic lifeline – and increasing pressure on the local labour market. This economic fragility further compounded the challenges faced by refugees and asylum-seekers in the country.

Amid these economic pressures, the refugee recognition rate in Tajikistan reached nearly 100% in 2024. However, the country faced an increase in the number of refugees and asylum-seekers, rising from 8,483 in 2023 to 12,945 in 2024. UNHCR supported 5,307 new arrivals with their asylum applications – a five-fold increase from the previous year and 26 times more than in 2022. During this period, 3,611 people were granted refugee status, including some who had arrived in 2023.

The growing number of school-aged children further highlighted the strain on Tajikistan's asylum system. In 2024, only 42% of these children were enrolled in education, a sharp decline from 87% in 2018, which reflected the mounting pressure on the education sector and the urgent need for strengthened support to ensure access to learning opportunities.

In the absence of a resettlement programme in Tajikistan, refugees relied heavily on complementary pathways, particularly to Canada. According to IOM data, 790 refugees departed for various countries, 665 of whom were known to UNHCR – a steep decline from 2,967 in 2023. 66 refugees voluntarily repatriated to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, more than double the 29 in 2023. The limited availability of solutions highlighted the critical need for alternative pathways.

Meanwhile, Tajikistan's strict border policy remained unchanged, denying entry to asylum-seekers without visas. In 2024, Government security personnel carried out deportations that did not align with international refugee law, forcibly returning at least 102 people to Afghanistan, including 86 refugees and asylum-seekers. Not all cases were reported to UNHCR, hindering efforts to monitor and address protection needs.

Refugees in Tajikistan continued to face restrictions on areas of residence, limiting their rights, freedom of movement, and livelihood opportunities. With no safeguards from arbitrary refoulement and no pathway to naturalization in place, local integration remained out of reach for many.

These developments reflected a troubling trend, with refugees in Tajikistan increasingly trapped in limbo as they await durable solutions amid mounting challenges. The need for stronger advocacy with the Government and development partners to create more meaningful pathways for integration has become more urgent than ever.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

Refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people enjoy unhindered access to territory with zero cases of refoulment, asylum procedures, effective status determination and right to appeal negative decisions

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	100.00%
Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%

Tajikistan’s closed border policy remained in place throughout 2024, with no cross-border movements recorded during the year. Those seeking asylum were required to present valid travel documents and visas and register in areas prescribed by Resolution 325. Despite these strict entry requirements, UNHCR and its partners registered 5,307 new arrivals – five times more than the 1,054 recorded in 2023 – and supported them in lodging their asylum applications. According to Government statistics, some 2,280 people were granted refugee status (compared to 651 in 2023), while only four asylum applications were rejected. This resulted in a refugee recognition rate of 99.9%, continuing the positive trend from the previous year.

However, challenges persisted. From October 2024 at least 86 asylum-seekers and refugees were refouled to Afghanistan without procedural safeguards, court orders or due process. UNHCR consistently raised concerns with the Tajik authorities at various levels and through platforms. To strengthen border management practices, UNHCR and a legal partner worked with the Border Guards Service and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Border Management Staff College to train border guard personnel on ensuring asylum-seekers’ access to territory and proper referral mechanisms for registration and documentation. In addition, nine state practitioners received training in refugee status determination.

In parallel, UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNDP jointly advocated for legal amendments to guarantee universal birth registration and prevent childhood statelessness. These efforts focused on ensuring birth registration and certification for all children, regardless of the availability of parental documents – an essential step toward reducing statelessness and protecting children’s rights.

2. Impact Area: Realizing Rights in Safe Environments

Refugees and asylum seekers can fully exercise their rights for basic services, including the right to health and education and are able to achieve meaningful socio-economic integration through enhanced livelihood opportunities and self-reliance programmes

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%

Refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people were excluded from national surveys, leaving their economic conditions unmeasured. While no cases of refugees and asylum-seekers living below the poverty line (set at 323 TJS or \$32 per month) were officially identified, limited socio-economic inclusion coupled with ongoing protection concerns/arbitrary deportations and national security dominance over refugee issues made it increasingly difficult for some families to meet basic needs. UNHCR provided limited cash assistance to the most vulnerable individuals. Most refugees and asylum-seekers lived in urban areas, while stateless people were concentrated in rural regions. Internal assessments in 2024 found their living conditions to be generally safe, with access to essential amenities such as clean water, electricity, and sanitation.

Under the National Refugee Law, refugees and asylum-seekers had equal access to healthcare services. However, high costs made essential care inaccessible to many, particularly those with chronic illnesses. UNHCR offered limited medical assistance to those most in need, providing free consultations to 604 people – 340 of whom were female – and delivering medical information sessions to 180 people, half of whom were female. Home visits were conducted for 81 people with home visits, supporting those unable to seek care independently.

Further support included disability allowances for 100 people, including 44 women; medicine for 24 people, half of whom were female; and 196 reimbursements of medical expenses, including 109 women. In addition, 10 people, including four women, received wheelchairs, while 100 tonometers and 100 glucometers were distributed to address specific health needs.

4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

Refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people are provided avenues for naturalization, regularization of their legal stay and status and are able to fully exercise their right to voluntary repatriation

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	29	66
4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2	0
4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,697	665
4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed		
Stateless Persons	3,390	2,414

In 2024, voluntary repatriation requests increased despite Afghanistan's political instability, driven by economic hardship, deportations, and limited local integration. UNHCR assisted in the voluntary repatriation of 66 refugees – more than double compared to the 29 in 2023 – reflecting the difficult choices many refugees faced.

Pathways to durable solutions remained limited. Naturalization for refugees in Tajikistan remained an elusive goal, and UNHCR did not facilitate resettlement. While some refugees accessed complementary pathways like Canada's sponsorship programme. According to IOM data, 790 people departed through private initiatives – only 665 of whom were known to UNHCR – a significant drop from the 2,697 departures in 2023 due to fewer opportunities. In response, UNHCR continued consulting with refugees on available pathways, seeking alternative solutions in the absence of resettlement or naturalization prospects.

Efforts to address statelessness remained a priority for UNHCR and its partners, reflecting a longstanding commitment under the #IBelong campaign to end statelessness, which ended in 2024. Since the campaign's inception, 63,495 stateless or people at risk of statelessness, as well as those with undetermined nationality, had been identified – 45,318 of whom were women and girls. UNHCR and partners provided assistance to 61,806 people, supporting them to confirm their Tajik nationality or legalize their status through residence permits or naturalization.

In 2024 alone, partners identified and registered 2,718 people, while 2,414 were assisted with solutions. Consistent with previous years, women and girls represented around 70% of the newly identified stateless population, with 34% being children. Most of those identified were holders of USSR birth certificates or passports or lacked valid proof of nationality while about 3% fell under the scope of the Amnesty Law, which ended in December 2022.

Despite these challenges, UNHCR continued its commitment to supporting efforts to end statelessness, strengthening the capacity of the Government and local authorities to assist stateless people and those at risk.

Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual(2024)
3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work			
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.52%	99.02%
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	0.00%	0.00%
3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education			
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	59.00%	47.66%

3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education			
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	30%	27.36%
3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark			
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	94.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

The Government of Tajikistan maintained a strict border policy with Afghanistan, permitting entry only to people holding Tajik visas. Legal entry and residence in designated areas were prerequisites for access to the State's refugee status determination procedure. However, the absence of referral mechanisms from the border authorities and the lack of border access for UNHCR and its partners meant they were unable to monitor compliance with the principle of nonrefoulement.

Tajikistan's refugee status determination procedures required urgent strengthening to meet minimum procedural and quality standards. UNHCR's exclusion from the Refugee Status Determination Commission within the Ministry of Interior prevented it from assessing the process, including the quality of interviews or decisions. As a result, the protection space for asylum-seekers remained narrow and critical safeguards were missing.

Despite sustained advocacy, refoulement persisted. In 2024, 86 refugees and asylum-seekers were enforced without access to legal aid or due process. These returns not only undermined protection standards but also deeply impacted the livelihoods of the remaining refugee population, many of whom feared leaving their homes.

Judicial oversight of refugee status determination remained limited, with courts upholding negative decisions. The situation of 127 UNHCR-registered mandate refugees and asylum-seekers remained precarious, as they lived in legal limbo with no prospects of integration. UNHCR continued to engage with partners, including the Government at various levels, to halt refoulement and advocate for better protection mechanisms.

Resolution 325, which prohibits the residence of refugees and asylum-seekers in certain areas, continued to impede their rights, restricting freedom of movement and choice of living location. This constraint not only hampered their access to work but also compounded challenges in securing essential services and integrating locally. Accessing financial institutions remained a persistent challenge for refugees and asylum-seekers.

There were significant delays in receiving the necessary authorization from the Executive Apparatus of the President to work in selected districts on statelessness. However, legal amendments in 2025 were expected to close gaps in legislation, strengthening safeguards for universal birth registration and preventing future cases of statelessness.

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

In 2024, UNHCR strengthened partnerships with national and international stakeholders to enhance the protection, inclusion, and solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless people. These collaborations advanced UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2022-2026, the Global Compact on Refugees, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As part of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, UNHCR engaged with the UN country team and donor coordination council to ensure refugees' inclusion in national development strategies, focusing on their legal protection, social inclusion and economic opportunities.

UNHCR continued its engagement with the Government of Tajikistan to strengthen legal frameworks and improve refugees' access to protection. The Refugee Law Review working group, in collaboration with the Passport Registration Service, advanced legislative reforms, while the Ministry of Justice promoted universal birth registration. Key progress included the formation of an inter-agency legal analysis group, a study tour to Moldova, and continued advocacy for Tajikistan's accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. A work plan was developed with Border Guards to enhance referral mechanisms for asylum-seekers, while ongoing collaboration with the Passport Registration Service focused on facilitating naturalization and developing solutions for stateless people.

During the year, UNHCR also collaborated with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and its Border Management Staff College to conduct multiple training sessions for border guards on international refugee law and humanitarian border management. Private sector engagement expanded, with companies like Auchan, Coca-Cola and Hilton providing vocational training, apprenticeships and jobs for refugees and asylum-seekers. A joint initiative with the Japan International Cooperation Agency continued, offering business training, social media marketing and entrepreneurship development, including toolkits for selected entrepreneurs. This initiative aimed to foster self-reliance and improve economic stability among refugees.

To strengthen advocacy against refoulement and improve refugee support coordination, UNHCR regularly convened protection working group meetings with UN agencies and key international actors. UNHCR's four funded partners focused on providing legal assistance, social services and reducing statelessness. The launch of the Implementing Partner Management Committee process paved the way for a more strategic and streamlined approach in 2025, including a reduction in the number of NGO partners to strengthen efficiency and impact.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

Asylum seekers at the border have access to territory, benefit from functional referral mechanisms and improved reception facilities

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
01.1.1 Number of people registered on an individual basis	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5,307
01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5,204

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Tajikistan tightened border controls with Afghanistan, requiring valid travel documents and visas for asylum-seekers. Many Afghan nationals unable to secure Tajik visas in Afghanistan turned to intermediaries, sending passports to Tajikistan or neighbouring countries with diplomatic missions. Despite these restrictions, the number of arrivals increased. UNHCR’s legal partner registered 5,307 people, including 5,194 new arrivals, 85 in-situ and 28 newborns.

Despite challenges in engaging with Parliament engagement and revising support for refugee law, UNHCR continued its advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, resulting in the creation of a Passport Registration Service working group alongside legal partners. Although only one meeting took place in 2024, progress remained promising. In November, a work plan with the Tajik Border Troops was signed, though it did not include provisions for joint border monitoring. UNHCR monitored the Afghan-Tajik border situation through seven voluntary repatriation trips and four indirect monitoring visits, which occurred during the delivery of border personnel training.

A State-run temporary accommodation centre in Hissar for vulnerable asylum-seekers has remained closed since late 2023 due to insufficient funding, staffing and referral mechanisms. UNHCR has been advocating for State funding to re-open the centre. To strengthen national asylum systems, UNHCR ran 19 specialized training sessions for Government officials on refugee protection, border management and asylum

procedures. The sessions, held in collaboration with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Border Management Staff College, the Beyond Border Management Programme for Central Asia, and the Stabilization of Tajikistan's southern border region with Afghanistan project, aimed to enhance the multi-stakeholder approach to protection-sensitive policies and improve asylum access.

2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

Asylum-seekers can enjoy fair and efficient RSD procedures with the possibility of appealing negative decisions in court

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR's legal partner provided 4,593 consultations and assisted 1,225 people in lodging asylum applications. By year-end, Tajikistan had around 12,945 asylum-seekers and refugees, a notable increase from 8,483 in 2023, with 2,280 people granted refugee status. UNHCR advocated for the reinstatement of its observer status in the Refugee Status Determination Commission and conducted three capacity-building and training sessions for State officials and judiciary members on refugee status determination.

UNHCR's partner legally defended 21 cases to prevent document seizures, detention and deportation. The Ministry of Internal Affairs' Department of Citizenship and Work with Refugees reported four asylum rejections, but those affected did not seek UNHCR support, raising concerns about the potential for refoulement.

3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

National legislative and procedural frameworks are reformed/harmonized to enable stateless people to have access to documentation (birth certification) and non-discriminatory education and are not penalised for illegal entry

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol			
None	Unknown	Progressing toward alignment	Progressing toward alignment
3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness			
None	Not yet aligned	Progressing towards alignment	Progressing toward alignment

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
03.1.1 UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness	
Stateless Persons	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Having previously provided substantial technical and expert support to the Tajik Parliament to review the old and draft a new refugee law for Tajikistan, UNHCR and its partner, Right and Prosperity, advocated to revive the process in 2024 with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. A specialized working group was formed from the staff of the Passport Registration Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, also comprising representatives from UNHCR and legal NGOs, Right and Prosperity and Inson va Adolat. The working group held a promising and productive first meeting in late 2024.

UNHCR, UNICEF and UNDP advocated for reforms to Tajikistan's civil registration system, with the goal of achieving universal birth registration. A joint work plan signed between the Ministry of Justice and UNHCR established a working group to analyze civil registration law. This effort aligned with Tajikistan's 2019 High-level Officials Meeting pledge to finalize the reform of the civil registration and achieve universal birth registration. UNHCR and its partners proposed legal amendments to remove barriers preventing people with undetermined nationality from registering their children at birth. To support reforms, UNHCR provided technical expertise, facilitated a study tour to Moldova and organized a roundtable discussion. This roundtable gathered representatives from partner agencies and State institutions to review the results of a decade of joint efforts under the #IBelong campaign to end statelessness and the findings of the Ministry of Justice's working group. The Ministry of Justice proposed key legal amendments, including removing fines for late birth registration and lifting restrictions on registering children born to undocumented parents. These changes sought to prevent new cases of statelessness at birth.

UNHCR, through its legal partner, stepped up advocacy for amendments to the 2015 Citizenship Law to eliminate barriers preventing foundlings from obtaining nationality. These proposals were submitted to the Government via the Ministry of Internal Affairs and were pending a decision at year-end.

6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

Asylum-seekers and refugees can enjoy fair adjudication with regards to their appeals and fair trial processes

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4,593

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR successfully established a productive collaboration with Tajikistan's Supreme Court, building on efforts that began in 2020 with the first training sessions for judges at the Supreme Court's Training Centre. This partnership led to the development of guidelines for judges on considering administrative cases under article 499 of the Code on Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Tajikistan, which addresses violations of the residence regime. To support the effective implementation of these guidelines, specialized training sessions were conducted, and the topic "Protection of refugee rights in the judicial system" was incorporated into the judge training curriculum.

In 2024, the Judicial Training Centre of the Supreme Court recommended organizing seminars for judicial trainees. As a result, two seminars were held for 51 trainees, marking the first time seminars were tailored specifically for trainees. This expansion of judicial training beyond sitting judges contributed to enhancing legal expertise on administrative case procedures in Tajikistan.

UNHCR's legal partner provided 4,593 legal consultations and assisted in lodging 1,424 asylum applications. They also offered legal representation to 21 asylum-seekers and refugees, particularly in deportation cases and document seizure situations by State Committee for National Security staff. In a positive development, the Ombudsman's Office requested input from UNHCR for the first time since 2019 regarding UNHCR's mandate. This allowed UNHCR to provide insights on asylum and statelessness issues and advocate for greater transparency in addressing these challenges.

8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

Refugees and asylum seekers in vulnerable situations are included and benefit from state social protection system and have access to cash assistance provided by international organizations or the State

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	62.90%	100.00%	15.33%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)

08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,279

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR successfully advocated for refugees' inclusion in the Government's National Action Plan for Social Protection Development Strategies for 2024-2026. Refugees feature prominently in three key areas of the strategy, including in indicators and mechanisms for the monetary and multidimensional assessment of poverty levels across various population groups, the development of a legal framework and mechanisms for integrating refugees into the State-funded social insurance system, and ensuring access for refugees with disabilities to benefits and other State social guarantees by including them in the National Register of People with Disabilities.

As refugees and asylum-seekers were not integrated into national social protection schemes, UNHCR worked with funded partners to address the needs of the most vulnerable refugee households. However, the surge in asylum-seekers in 2024 increased demand for financial support. UNHCR provided guidance to its partners, directing targeted cash assistance to vulnerable groups, including single-headed households, people with disabilities, children, and older refugees. This assistance helped cover housing, food, education and healthcare expenses, benefitting more than 830 households and over 1,760 people, at least 860 of whom women and girls.

Overall, UNHCR's work with partners significantly enhanced the lives of refugees and asylum-seekers by strengthening their financial security, with continuous advocacy and capacity-building efforts laying the foundation for future long-term sustainability.

13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

Refugees and asylum seekers have access to an increased number of livelihood opportunities, along with unhindered access to employment

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	25.38%	80.00%	36.47%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,220

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR expanded its partnerships with the Government, private sector and development partners to promote the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers. Advocacy efforts focused on

securing legislative changes, access to skills training and enhancing work opportunities. By year-end, 1,382 refugees were employed or self-employed, including 472 women. An additional 158 people secured job placements, 182 participated in apprenticeships, and 309 underwent vocational training. Entrepreneurship and business training reached 192 refugees, with 80 receiving cash assistance and 90 receiving equipment. At least half of participants in nearly all livelihoods' programmes were women. UNHCR collaborated with the private sector to advance refugees' socioeconomic inclusion through skills training, apprenticeships and job placements. Renewed letters of understanding with large brands fostered a fair work environment, enabling refugees to showcase their talents, with around 30 being retained as regular employees.

To highlight the benefits of refugees' economic inclusion, UNHCR collaborated with the private company T&Z and the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies to present a refugee-designed fashion collection at fashion weeks and festivals in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Afghan refugee craftswomen also showcased their work, talent and resilience at the Istravshan International Festival, Ozara.

As part of global partnership efforts, UNHCR strengthened cooperation with the World Bank, offering expert guidance on refugee response and the link between protection and economic inclusion. Collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency supported 25 refugees in starting small businesses, providing training and tool kits.

UNHCR also engaged with financial service providers, including the National Bank of Tajikistan, to advance refugees' financial inclusion. It participated in an inter-agency feasibility study on cash transfer payments, incorporating refugee-related questions for financial service providers.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

Refugees and asylum seekers realize their right to return in an informed and dignified way

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	153

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan was facilitated on a case-by-case basis, following updated procedures. Despite the worsening security and human rights situation in Afghanistan, voluntary repatriation requests increased from 29 in 2023 to 66. In addition, more than 90 people approached UNHCR and its partners for country-of-origin information. UNHCR could not track spontaneous returns, meaning the actual number of repatriated refugees may have been higher.

Refugees frequently cited socioeconomic challenges in Tajikistan as the primary reason for their return, with a few exceptional cases related to health issues or marriages in their country of origin. Towards the end of the year, deportations of Afghan nationals, particularly male breadwinners, led to the return of their wives and children from Tajikistan to reunite with them. Some refugees also cited the closure of the Canadian Sponsorship Programme for 2025 as the reason for their return. There was further speculation that some may have relocated to other asylum countries or sought routes to the United States or Europe. While UNHCR did not promote voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan in 2024 due to the ongoing volatile and

unpredictable situation, it facilitated repatriation requests for those who made an informed, voluntary decision to return home.

To support the smooth and sustainable reintegration of returnees in Afghanistan, UNHCR ensured that relevant documents were issued in the country of asylum, informed UNHCR's counterparts in Afghanistan, and guided returnees on accessing cash and in-kind assistance.

In 2024, a thorough assessment was conducted on current country-of-origin information, including peace initiatives and socioeconomic developments in areas of origin for forcibly displaced and stateless people. This effort was carried out in cooperation with UNHCR in Afghanistan. UNHCR also worked closely with the Main Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Border Guards at checkpoints to ensure families returned in safety and dignity.

16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

Asylum seekers and stateless people are provided avenues for naturalization (for stateless people) and regularization of their status and documentation (mandate refugees)

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
16.1.1. Government Social protection system is inclusive of forcibly displaced and stateless people	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Partially
Stateless Persons	Partially
16.2.1 Number of people supported by UNHCR to acquire nationality, permanent residency status or to access naturalization procedures	
Stateless Persons	2,414

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Tajik citizenship was accessible in most confirmed statelessness cases, particularly following the adoption and implementation of the Amnesty Law (2019–2022). In 2024, partners provided legal counseling to those who regularized their stay. After 2.5 years, this group became eligible for Tajik citizenship through an expedited process.

Access to basic services, including social protection, was limited for undocumented people at risk of statelessness and people with undetermined nationality, as most services required valid identification documents. UNHCR made gradual progress in addressing this by facilitating solutions, with a focus on women and children. In 2024, UNHCR identified 2,718 people at risk of statelessness, while 2,414 successfully obtained legal status through stay regularization, birth registration, nationality confirmation or

the issuance of valid identification documents.

UNHCR also organized awareness-raising initiatives to enhance public understanding of statelessness reduction efforts and strengthen collaborative responses. These efforts included 11 posts across multiple social media platforms, a video on the #IBelong campaign to end statelessness covering Central Asia, six visual stories for an #IBelong roundtable, a dedicated event on the campaign's progress, and a comprehensive web article on statelessness.

Most asylum-seekers and refugees lived in urban and semi-urban areas, where they could access basic services and decent work opportunities. Living alongside local communities fostered peaceful coexistence and, to some extent, supported local integration.

In the absence of a functioning national asylum system, UNHCR recognized 127 refugees. Their precarious status meant they did not have access to all the rights accorded by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. UNHCR continued to advocate for a practical solution with the Government.

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

Age, gender, and diversity, and community-based protection approaches were integral to UNHCR's operations in Tajikistan, guiding every stage of planning, implementation, monitoring, advocacy and service delivery.

In 2024, UNHCR strengthened the role of community-based protection across its programmes and activities by increasing its dialogue with refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people and conducting four town hall meetings, along with other ad-hoc meetings and participatory assessments.

Forcibly displaced and stateless people in Tajikistan had multiple functioning communications channels to report protection or assistance needs, access information or request services, including 24/7 hotlines, home visits, messenger apps, email, and in-person counseling. In 2024, around 1,950 people used at least one of these channels.

UNHCR applied the age, gender and diversity principle across its activities, focusing particularly on engaging forcibly displaced women in livelihoods and education programmes. Of the 309 refugees and asylum-seekers who participated in UNHCR-supported vocational training opportunities, 223 were women. Of the 1,382 employed or self-employed refugees, 472 were women. Cash grants and equipment tools were provided to 90 people, including 80 women, to promote self-employment.

UNHCR also prioritized school enrolment for refugee, asylum-seeking and stateless children. Of the 1,439 children enrolled in primary and secondary education in 2024, 672 (47%) were girls. However, of the 3,385 primary and secondary school-aged children, only 42% of school-aged children were enrolled, mainly due to economic challenges, concerns about the quality of national education, and families opting for private learning centres in anticipation of potential relocation to Canada. In 2024, UNHCR identified and registered 2,718 people at risk of statelessness, providing solutions to 2,414 of them. Women and girls accounted for 70% of the newly identified cases with 45% of those at risk being children.

Section 3: Resources

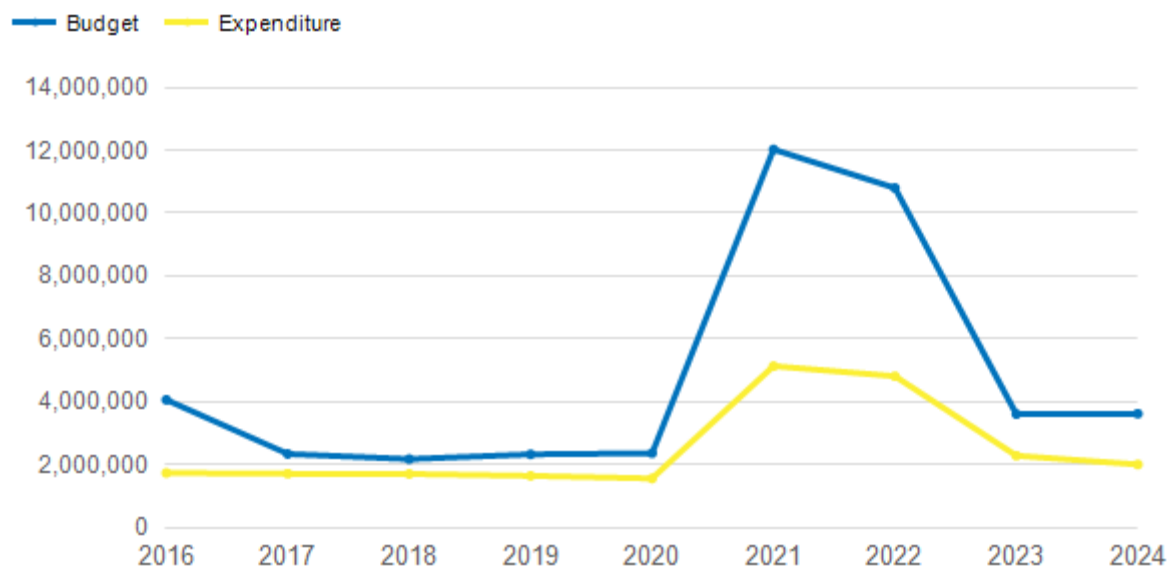
3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

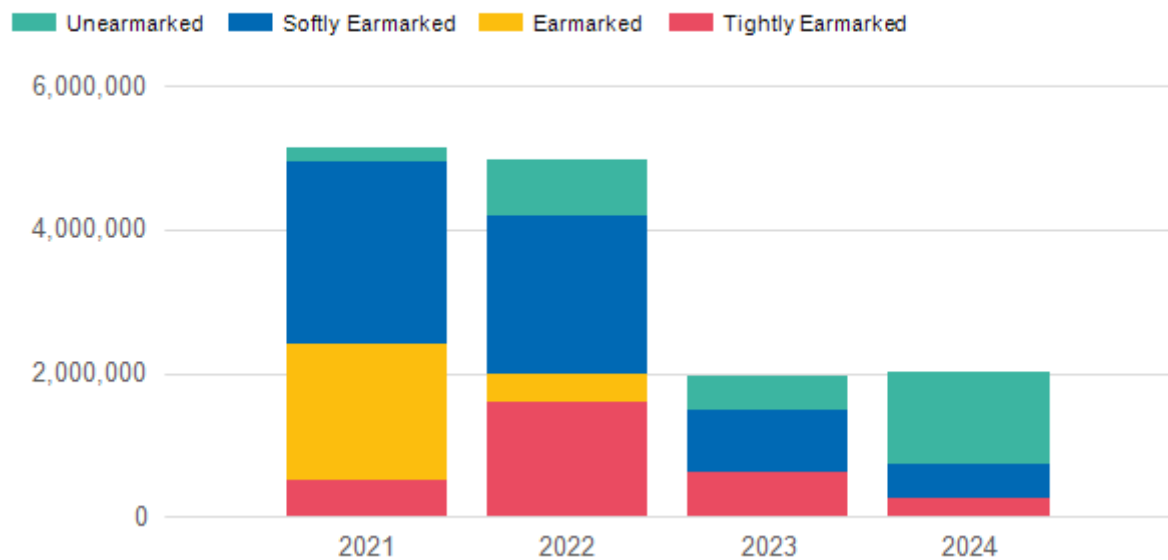
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	841,168	614,521	73.06%	614,521	100.00%
IA2: Assist	1,760,500	710,796	40.37%	710,796	100.00%
IA4: Solve	1,022,542	688,492	67.33%	688,492	100.00%
Total	3,624,210	2,013,809	55.57%	2,013,809	100.00%

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	507,334	296,266	58.40%	296,266	100.00%
OA2: Status	56,834	59,002	103.82%	59,002	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	116,500	113,594	97.51%	113,594	100.00%
OA6: Justice	160,501	145,659	90.75%	145,659	100.00%
OA8: Well-being	1,012,250	401,710	39.68%	401,710	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	748,250	309,086	41.31%	309,086	100.00%
OA14: Return	168,250	112,586	66.92%	112,586	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	854,292	575,906	67.41%	575,906	100.00%
Total	3,624,210	2,013,809	55.57%	2,013,809	100.00%

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

In 2024, despite funding challenges, UNHCR remained steadfast in its support for forcibly displaced and stateless people in Tajikistan, prioritizing protection services and livelihoods assistance. While the geographical scope of its work remained unchanged, UNHCR sought to broaden its partner base to enhance the services provided.

The year also saw an influx of new arrivals, prompting UNHCR to re-prioritize its resources to address their immediate needs, with a focus on cash assistance, livelihoods support and access to education. Border monitoring and advocacy efforts were scaled down due to the continued closure of Tajikistan’s land borders,

with most asylum-seekers arriving by air with visas.

Although UNHCR secured additional funding from its existing donor base, exploring innovative financing mechanisms and securing resources from new donors and the private sector remain key priorities for future development.

Through strategic resource allocation and targeted partnerships, UNHCR was able to maximize its impact in Tajikistan, ensuring the most pressing needs of forcibly displaced and stateless people were met despite ongoing funding constraints.

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

In 2024, UNHCR faced significant challenges in Tajikistan, particularly following a surge of over 5,000 new arrivals – exceeding the 2021-2022 Afghan emergency. As resources shifted toward addressing urgent protection needs such as legal aid and documentation, support for integration and self-reliance programmes was limited.

Economic inclusion efforts were underfunded, leaving many refugees with no choice but to take low-wage informal jobs or return to Afghanistan. Barriers to work authorization and diploma recognition continued to restrict access to formal employment and refugees remain excluded from national protection and employment schemes. Despite advocacy efforts, systemic policy changes have yet to materialize. Funding constraints also meant that targeted cash assistance for the most vulnerable was limited, with the increase in new arrivals requiring stricter targeting criteria.

Looking ahead, UNHCR will rebalance funding allocations to ensure self-reliance and economic inclusion programmes receive sufficient support, while maintaining core protection services and targeted financial assistance for the most vulnerable. Advocacy efforts will be redoubled, with a focus on driving systemic policy changes that offer sustainable impact and long-term solutions for refugees and stateless people. This will involve increased engagement with Government institutions and the private sector to improve the legislative framework and establish sustainable employment pathways. Greater inter-agency coordination will facilitate better strategic planning, while efforts to optimize resource allocation through data-driven decision-making will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of UNHCR programmes. By fostering long-term integration, economic independence and systemic policy reforms, UNHCR aims to create a more sustainable and inclusive framework for refugees and stateless people in Tajikistan.



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