

Pakistan

31 August 2020

***71** registered refugees who returned to Afghanistan between 1 January – 31 August 2020

6,589 Afghan refugees whose births were registered between 1 January – 31 August 2020

15,874 Afghan refugees who have received legal assistance between 1 January – 31 August 2020

Personal protective equipment (PPEs) was provided to the health workers in **54** refugee villages to protect themselves during the pandemic

2,295 individuals (Afghan refugees and Pakistanis) received livelihoods assistance



Dressed in her traditional clothes and wearing colourful bangles, four-year-old Afghan refugee Khatima shows her hands, decorated with henna. © UNHCR/H. Karim

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin	Total persons of concern
Afghan refugees with proof of registration (PoR) cards	1,422,588
Afghan mandate refugees (without PoR cards)	3,015
Somalia (refugees)	181
Others (refugees)	341
Asylum-seekers	9,717

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff

****214** national staff

36 international staff

Offices

One Country Office in Islamabad

Two Sub-Offices in Peshawar and Quetta

Presence in Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat and Loralai



UNHCR Representative in Pakistan, Ms. Noriko Yoshida, and the UNHCR Head of Sub-Office in Peshawar, Mr. Bernard Inkoom, visit the Proof of Registration Card Modification Centre in Peshawar. © UNHCR/Z. Saleah

* The voluntary repatriation process was suspended on 30 November 2019 for the winter break and resumed from 2 March 2020. While it was suspended again on 17 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan, UNHCR resumed the voluntary repatriation programme on 17 August 2020. Please refer to the UNHCR Afghanistan Situation Data Portal and the UNHCR Pakistan website for the latest updates.

** Affiliate workforce is included.

Working with partners

- UNHCR collaborates closely with the Government of Pakistan. It works jointly with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), as well as the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the Commissionerates for Afghan Refugees at the provincial level.
- UNHCR partners with a range of national and international non-governmental organizations to provide protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as collaborates with non-implementing partners, such as the World Bank, sister UN agencies and private sector partners.

Main activities

Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

- The regional multi-year **Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)** provides a framework for cooperation between humanitarian and development actors to address the needs of Afghan refugees and the communities that host them. It supports the pursuit of durable solutions, as well as youth empowerment through public education, the development of technical and vocational skills and livelihood opportunities, and a strengthened public health system. The SSAR was previously extended until 2021.
- A dedicated Support Platform for the SSAR was launched in late 2019. The Support Platform seeks to achieve: (i) enhanced international solidarity and burden-sharing for the Afghan refugee situation, resulting in stronger political and financial commitments to achieve solutions; (ii) additional investments and expanded partnerships for coherent humanitarian and development responses that increase absorption capacity for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, while easing the burden on host communities in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan; and (iii) sustained visibility for the Afghan situation by linking the SSAR to the Global Compact on Refugees, enabling the sharing of regional good practices and lessons learned, showcasing the positive contributions of refugees to their host country and community and advocating for the implementation in the subregion of unassigned pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum.
- A High-Level Meeting on the Support Platform for the SSAR was convened by the United Nations High Commissioner on 6 July 2020. The High Commissioner launched a report on “A Partnership for Solidarity and Resilience” with integrated projects designed to respond to the most urgent priority needs in the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. These projects have been identified jointly by the Governments of all three countries, UNHCR and other key stakeholders. Denmark, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United States, as well as the European Union, UNDP and the World Bank, agreed to become members of the Core Group of the SSAR Support Platform. Building on this momentum, the inaugural meeting of the Core Group with representatives of the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan) will be convened on 7 October 2020.

Protection and durable solutions

- **Voluntary repatriation:** UNHCR operates two Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRC) in Pakistan where refugees wishing to repatriate to Afghanistan must deregister. From November to the end of February, voluntary repatriation was temporarily suspended during the winter months. On 2 March 2020, UNHCR’s voluntary repatriation programme resumed, but it was suspended again on 17 March due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Voluntary repatriation activities resumed on 17 August 2020. Currently, Afghan refugee families are being deregistered in view of their voluntary return through the Voluntary Repatriation Centre near Quetta, Balochistan. However, repatriation

activities at the Voluntary Repatriation Centre in Azakhel, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains suspended due to some challenges at Torkham border crossing point.

- **Legal assistance:** UNHCR operates nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas. Eight of these centres are run by UNHCR's partner, SHARP. The remaining centre is run by another partner, SEHER.
- In August 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of 1,831 persons of concern. In the course of the month, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for 81 persons of concern arrested/detained and secured their release of all. In most cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested persons of concern before they were formally charged by law enforcement. Also, the majority were released within 24 hours. In addition, ALAC partners represented in court two persons of concern who had been charged under the Foreigners Act (dealing with the unauthorized stay of foreigners) and other preventive laws (allowing preventive detention of persons acting in a manner prejudicial to the integrity, security and defence of the country and public order). These interventions resulted in court-ordered releases.
- During the reporting period, partner staff provided individual legal counselling to 228 persons of concern who visited the ALACs, as well as legal advice to 957 persons of concern through the ALAC helplines. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modification, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) information, and the asylum application process were the main issues addressed when providing assistance. Out-of-court legal assistance was also given to 417 persons of concern, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.
- UNHCR and ALAC staff organized eight legal camps and *shura* meetings, reaching 144 people. Three legal sessions were held in urban areas and five in refugee villages. Through these legal sessions, refugees shared various issues affecting their communities. UNHCR partner staff informed refugees of free legal aid available and UNHCR helpline services.
- On communicating with communities, ALAC teams have been calling refugee community representatives to keep them informed of the COVID-19 pandemic. In August, ALAC teams made 620 calls to refugee communities in the area of responsibility of the Country Office in Islamabad. Refugee communities were advised to comply with orders from the local and provincial administrations. ALAC teams have been encouraged to maintain a proactive approach throughout the situation and share daily situation reports.

In August:

- *A total of 1,831 individuals received legal assistance;*
- *81 individuals were arrested/detained and all were released;*
- *2 individuals were provided with court representation;*
- *228 individuals received individual legal counselling; and*
- *957 people were assisted through ALAC helplines.*

Community-based protection

- Some 2,979 active refugee Outreach Volunteers (OVs) and community committee members countrywide facilitated UNHCR and its partners in rolling out the second phase of the cash-based intervention (CBI). These OVs and community committee members are playing a vital role in transmitting information on COVID-19 through tele-outreach within their communities.
- In the district of Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, OVs, with the help of the district team, took the initiative of supporting a tree plantation project. The forest department provided 200 trees of different kinds for planting. Also, one fruit plant was given to each community member in order to thank them for their support. The campaign continued throughout the month. OVs from different refugee clusters took an active part.

- The community-based protection team in Quetta conducted six bimonthly meetings with 21 males and 31 female OVs. The team also discussed the UNHCR cash-based assistance and its second phase. Furthermore, 22 community meetings were held with outreach volunteers and community members at different locations in Quetta. The cash-assistance programme and the role of OVs and elders in this intervention were discussed.
- In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UNHCR team expanded community-based protection activities in the district of Timergara. They conducted four community sessions separately with male and female groups to support the inclusion of community elders and OVs in community-based protection activities. In total, 48 male and 55 female community members participated.
- OVs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa arranged informal gatherings of community members to disseminate information regarding preventive measures/Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to contain the spread of COVID-19 after their businesses/shops were reopened. The same information was shared on their WhatsApp groups for wider dissemination.
- The interim notification for PoR card holders from the Ministry of SAFRON in order to not to face harassment or adverse action, pending the decision by the Government to extend the validity of PoR cards, has been actively shared with refugee elders, focal persons and community networks through community gatherings and WhatsApp groups.
- In Balochistan, UNHCR's partner also conducted six training workshops on child protection for community members, including children, families and members of community-based networks. A total of 49 men and 38 women participated. Similarly, nine capacity-building sessions were conducted on the theme of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and self-care in refugee villages. These sessions were attended by 49 men and 63 women.

Education

- All UNHCR-supported schools in refugee villages were closed in March. They remained closed during the reporting period and are expected to reopen in mid-September 2020, as per the directives of the Government of Pakistan.
- As part of the preparations for the reopening of schools in September, UNHCR has been upgrading WASH facilities in refugee village schools and procuring hygiene materials.
- Some 413 DAFI scholars continued to be supported by UNHCR.

Livelihoods

- As of 31 August 2020, 21,879 vulnerable Afghan refugee families were identified to receive UNHCR's emergency cash assistance through Urgent Money Orders (UMOs). Of this number, 20,924 households already collected their cash. UNHCR Pakistan plans to target a total of 70,000 of the most vulnerable refugee families. This assistance is being carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and with the Pakistan Post. The UNHCR cash assistance programme mirrors the Government's *Ehsaas* emergency cash programme, where vulnerable Pakistani families receive Rs.12,000 (approximately \$77) to cover a four-month period.
- UNHCR launched a MADE51 project that focuses primarily on addressing the income generation issues of 100 registered refugee women in Quetta, Karachi, Islamabad, and Peshawar. The project aims to improve their income-generating capacity as well as to provide access to wider markets and the opportunity to capitalize on their artisanal skills. The refugee artisans are linked with local social enterprises (LSEs) in Pakistan. The LSEs are working with the refugee women, supporting their activities through marketing.
- In 2020, UNHCR has been successfully providing livelihood opportunities to 3,000 Afghan refugee households through a poverty graduation project in the

Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. This approach is used to provide maximum livelihood support to refugees.

Health

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- As of August 2020, the community health workers conducted 1,582 health education sessions with 8,856 participants on the prevention of COVID-19 in 41 refugee villages. The main focus of these sessions was the prevention of COVID-19, social stigma and physical distancing. Similarly, a total of 1,252 meetings in which 7,439 individuals attended were conducted with the support of *shura* and religious leaders. Religious leaders (Pesh Imams) continued to share supportive messages on the prevention of COVID-19. A “no mask, no entry” policy and triage system continued to be implemented in health facilities, and fortunately, there were no positive cases identified in refugee villages.
- Awareness-raising of tuberculosis continued during the reporting month. A total of 1,041 individual were screened. Some 330 presumptive cases were identified. In total, 48 individuals tested positive for tuberculosis and were referred for treatment.
- Regarding maternity services, these services were provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week and, during the reporting period, 539 deliveries were conducted. Approximately 160 obstetric emergencies were referred to the public district hospitals for more advanced medical management. As of August 2020, the community health volunteers referred a total of 4,020 patients for different ailments to the nearest public health facilities and maternity centres.

Balochistan

- Social mobilization activities to create awareness among the refugee community on the prevention of COVID-19 and tuberculosis continued during the reporting month. The champions in the fight against tuberculosis conducted 60 awareness-raising sessions in Zar Karez in the district of Loralai and Posti and Chaghi in the district of Chaghi. These sessions were attended by 162 refugees who maintained distancing protocols during their participation. In addition, 115 households were visited to collect information about possible tuberculosis cases.

Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme

- Since 2009, UNHCR, together with the Government of Pakistan, has implemented the RAHA programme, an initiative which supports the implementation of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. Through RAHA, a wide variety of projects have been carried out in the sectors of education, health, livelihoods, infrastructure, water, sanitation and social protection. In 2019, the RAHA programme marked 10 years. During this decade, RAHA supported more than 4,250 projects which aligned with UNHCR’s livelihoods, education and health strategies, all aiming to ensure greater inclusion of Afghan refugees in public systems and structures.
 - *In total, 4,273 projects have been completed since 2009.*
 - *12.4 million beneficiaries in the projects implemented in 47 districts of Pakistan.*
 - *14 projects in 2019.*
 - *15 projects in 2020.*
- All the necessary groundwork has been completed for the implementation of the 15 projects in 2020, but a delay in implementation was expected due to COVID-19.

External/donor relations

Earmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 25 August 2020)¹

Australia | Canada | Denmark | Dr. Kin Chung Lam | European Union | IRTHI-NAMA Women Advancement Establishment | Japan | Norway | Qatar (Educate A Child) | Republic of Korea | Switzerland | United Nations Development Programme | United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS | United States of America | Miscellaneous private donors, including The Big Heart Foundation

Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 25 August 2020)²

Denmark | France | Germany | Italy | Norway | Netherlands | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | Private donors in Japan | Private donors in the Republic of Korea | Private donors in Spain | Private donors in Italy

CONTACTS

Marie-Claude Poirier, External Relations Officer

poirier@unhcr.org, Tel: +92 51-2600860, Mobile: +92 300-0540320

Uzma Irum, External Relations Associate

irum@unhcr.org, Tel: +92 51-2600860, Mobile: +92 322-5088668

LINKS

Website: <http://unhcrpk.org>

Twitter: [@UNHCRPakistan](https://twitter.com/UNHCRPakistan)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UNHCR-Pakistan>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/unhcrpakistan/>

Data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/pak>

¹ Contributions to Pakistan are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.

² Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Only donors who have contributed \$10 million or more are indicated.

