



UNHCR Representation to Central Asia

Living in a remote area of Tajikistan, Mrs. Tamarakhon and her family had never confirmed their citizenship of the country. Without identity documents, the family had difficulties accessing basic rights, such as education, healthcare and employment. With the support of UNHCR and its partner, and through the Government of Tajikistan's commitment to end statelessness, Mrs. Tamarakhon and her family have now been recognised as citizens and received identity documents. (Photo: UNHCR/ Muhammadkhuja Davlyatov)

Key figures as of 01 January 2024

20,111*



Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

in Kazakhstan (753), the Kyrgyz Republic (1,457), Tajikistan (8,483), Turkmenistan (13) and Uzbekistan (5)*.

* Based on government reports in mass media, UNHCR estimates there are 9,400 people in Uzbekistan in a refugee-like situation.

37,819



known Stateless people

in Kazakhstan (7,892), the Kyrgyz Republic (21), Tajikistan (3,827), Turkmenistan (3,583) and Uzbekistan (22,496).

In 2024, UNHCR requires \$10.03 million to protect refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people across Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.



Funded
24%

Unfunded
76%

As of 31 May 2024

SUB-REGIONAL

- With 21 [pledges submitted from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan](#) at the 2023 **Global Refugee Forum** – including from government, academia, civil society and UN Country Teams – UNHCR is actively engaging various stakeholders to support implementation of their commitments to advance protection of forcibly displaced and stateless people.
- As the 10-year global **#IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness** concludes in 2024, States, UNHCR, and partners are accelerating efforts to achieve the goals of the campaign, including accession to the Statelessness Conventions. Turkmenistan is the only country in Central Asia that has acceded to the Statelessness Conventions.



The #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness directly links to target 9 of Sustainable Development Goal 16: to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030.

- On March 7, **UNHCR delivered a session on statelessness in Central Asia and the Almaty Process** to some 20 students from the University of

Tokyo in Japan who were in Almaty as part of their course “What University of Tokyo Students Can Do for Peace”.

- In collaboration with the National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan, on 17 May UNHCR convened the **‘Central Asian Conference on Ensuring Birth Registration to Prevent Statelessness’** in Tashkent, attended by over 40 participants from the Governments of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, international organizations and local authorities. The conference explored six key topics, including: Establishing universal birth registration systems and integrating them with education, health and social services; Leveraging technology for efficient birth registration; Best practices in universal birth registration in the region; and Protecting the rights of stateless children and children of unknown parents.
- On 22 May, UNHCR conducted a hybrid **Risk Management and Compliance training** for 21 UNHCR Risk Focal Points and Treatment Owners, and 26 NGO partner staff across Central Asia, to strengthen capacity on areas such as Risk Identification and Mitigation, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and Fraud and Corruption.

KAZAKHSTAN

State Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol

- On 4 April, UNHCR and partner Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law participated in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) Steering committee meeting, hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which the UN Country Team **presented the 2023 UN Annual Results Report and 2024 plans** to representatives of the government.
- In collaboration with 11 other UN organizations, **UNHCR contributed to the UN&ME photo exhibition**, organized by the Resident Coordinator’s Office. The exhibition opened on 5 April in Astana, featuring photos and personal stories of 30 individuals supported by the United Nations in Kazakhstan, including refugee students Yasamin and Sulaiman, and formerly stateless person, Akhat.
- On 18 and 19 April, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law delivered a **presentation on refugee protection** to 27 students at Narxoz University in Almaty, and a guest lecture **on statelessness** to 25 students and six faculty members at Turan University in Astana, covering the historical background and legal framework of international protection of refugees and stateless people.
- On 26 April, UNHCR delivered a presentation to 25 students at Maqsut Narikbayev University in Astana, promoting the **new online course, “International Legal Protection Framework for Refugees and Stateless Persons.”** Developed by UNHCR in collaboration with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (Sanremo), the course offers a comprehensive introduction to the foundational principles of the international refugee protection regime and statelessness. The independent elective course for bachelor students pursuing law-related disciplines is scheduled for launch in mid-2024 at Maqsut Narikbayev University, fulfilling its 2023 Global Refugee Forum pledge.
- Together with colleagues from other UN agencies, on 27 April UNHCR participated in a **tree-planting event** in Astana as part of a citywide cleanup campaign, coinciding with the observance of International Mother Earth Day. Organized in collaboration with local authorities, the activity aimed to promote environmental conservation and sustainable development within the community.

Protecting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- In March, UNHCR partner Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law initiated a **court appeal to suspend a February decision made by authorities in Kazakhstan to terminate the refugee status of three refugee families** – including from Afghanistan – who have been living peacefully in the country for over a decade. For those from Afghanistan, the decision was based on the perceived fundamental change in circumstances in the country of origin which had been the basis for the initial recognition as refugees. UNHCR is advocating with authorities to suspend the application of a cessation and prevent any refoulement.
- **New Rules for generation of Individual Identification Number (IIN)** for foreigners and stateless people temporarily staying in Kazakhstan, took effect on 15 March. The Ministry of Internal Affairs approved new rules on 26 February, following UNHCR advocacy, **enabling use of a refugee certificate as a valid identity document**. In Kazakhstan IINs serves as a key element for accessing multiple commercial and governmental services.
- **Amended rules for public services related to population documentation and registration, including provisions for refugees**, took effect on 16 March. In Kazakhstan, refugees are considered ‘temporary residing’ foreigners, and are issued with only one-year residency permits, renewable annually. In 2020, a new system for registering temporarily residing foreigners was introduced, which did not include refugees. Without such registration, refugees were excluded from accessing various rights and services, such as targeted social (monetary) assistance to which they are entitled. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, following UNHCR advocacy, approved new rules on 29 February. UNHCR is advocating for asylum-seekers to be included in the registration system.
- From 26 February to 1 March, UNHCR partner Red Crescent Society conducted a **monitoring mission of the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in the Shymkent region**, consulting with recipients of multi-purpose cash and education grants, and meeting with authorities to discuss their access to healthcare, vaccination for children, primary education and employment.
- In the lead up to International Women’s Day, on 6 March **UNHCR hosted the "Women Talks" online event**, connecting 12 young women with Damel Mektepbayeva, the first Kazakhstani woman admitted to NASA University and former dean of Kozybayev University, and Kamila Tuyakbayeva, a gender rights activist and Y-PEER international trainer. The event targeted female DAFI students, and was open to the broader youth community in Kazakhstan.
- On 13 March, UNHCR and partner Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, submitted **recommendations and comments to the draft “Rules for the registration and consideration of asylum applications”**, advocating for quality asylum procedures, access to territory, upholding the principle of confidentiality, uniform requirements for medical check-ups of asylum-seekers, fair and transparent decisions based on the latest country of origin information, and consideration of special procedures for persons with specific needs. As a result, a standardized procedure for undergoing mandatory medical examination has been introduced.
- On 29 March, UNHCR – together with the Committee on Legislation and Judicial reform of the Mazhilis of Parliament of Kazakhstan – convened a **thematic meeting “On issues of the legal status of refugees in Kazakhstan”** for the Members of the Parliament. Attended by representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labor and Social Protection of Population, Internal Affairs, Healthcare and Justice; the General Prosecutor office; UNHCR and the Kazakhstan International Bureau of Human Rights and Rule of Law. UNHCR presented an analysis of national legislation and practices concerning refugees in Kazakhstan – available in [English](#), [Kazakh](#), and [Russian](#) languages – and the [Kazakh version of the Handbook for Parliamentarians – A Guide to International Refugee Protection and Building State Asylum Systems](#), developed jointly by UNHCR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The handbook seeks to inform parliamentarians about the founding principles and obligations of international refugee law, and mobilize their support for establishing and maintaining fair and effective national asylum systems, in line with international standards.



The April DAFI club meeting included sessions delivered by Y-PEER on promoting health, including sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, and gender equality. (Photo: UNHCR/ Aiya Siyaz)

- UNHCR participated in the 5 April **Partners Forum for Health**, convened by the Ministry of Healthcare, **calling on the government to ensure refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare**, in line with the Refugee Convention. Established by the Ministry of Healthcare, with the support of the World Health Organization, the Partners Forum for Health aims to support the country's efforts to improve the health and well-being of people in Kazakhstan by fostering collaboration between the government, and international and development organizations.

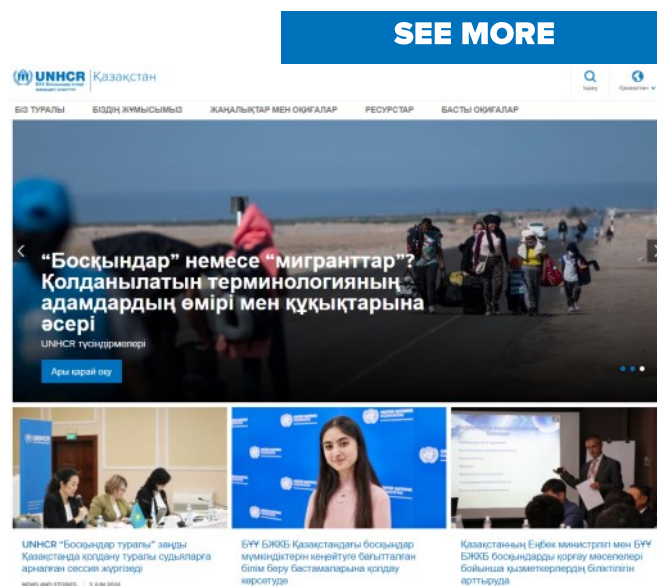
- On 9 April, UNHCR and partner Red Crescent Society held an **information session on higher education scholarship opportunities** for six refugees and foreigners, covering details such as selection stages and required documentation, and encouraging interested applicants to apply. UNHCR also hosted a DAFI club meeting for nine of its refugee student participants, which included a practical training session delivered by Y-PEER – an international Youth



Peer Education Network created by UNFPA – on **promoting health, including sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender equality**, and other related issues among young people.

- In collaboration with **KazGASA University in Almaty**, on 10 April, UNHCR hosted a screening of film **"The Swimmers"** for 30+ students. Following the screening, students engaged in discussion and participated in a quiz, providing the opportunity for reflection and dialogue on the experiences and challenges faced by refugees, and fostering empathy and understanding among the attendees. This was the fourth such screening convened by UNHCR at universities in Kazakhstan.
- As part of preparation for the 2024 UN Common Country Analysis (CCA), on 22 April, **seven refugees and 10 asylum-seekers met with the CCA national consultant** in two focus groups, providing deeper information on the diverse needs and challenges faced by forcibly displaced people in Kazakhstan, as well as their aspirations.
- On 29 April, UNHCR partner Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law delivered a **presentation on protection of asylum-seekers and refugees, and implementation of the Refugee Convention**, at a roundtable discussion at KazNU named after Al-Farabi University in Almaty.
- UNHCR facilitated two online **information sessions for 13 refugees and asylum-seekers, on 13 May and 24 May, about the Refugee Innovation Fund**. The sessions outlined the eligibility criteria, objectives, and selection process of the global UNHCR-led initiative. Two applications were subsequently submitted by refugee-led groups in Kazakhstan.

- In May, UNHCR **launched the Kazakh language website** – unhcr.org/centralasia/kk.



- UNHCR held a two-day **judicial training** in Astana, 30 and 31 May, with the aim of supporting **judges to uniformly apply the provisions of the national Refugee Law and related by-laws when handling asylum-related cases** in line with the Refugee Convention and international standards. It is the first such training for judges organized in Kazakhstan after the transfer of asylum functions to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection in 2022. Twenty judges from the Judicial Boards for Administrative cases of regional courts, courts in Astana, Almaty, and Shymkent, and specialized district and equivalent administrative courts, as well as representatives from UN and humanitarian partners gathered for the training. Sessions on existing judicial practice on asylum cases in Asia-Pacific, Europe and the Middle East were delivered by guest judges and experts from New Zealand, the Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, and Ukraine.
- In February 2024, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of Kazakhstan announced that the Concept of Inclusive Policy will be adopted, with the aim of creating a society in which every citizen, regardless of individual developmental characteristics, has the opportunity to live a decent life and realize their potential. To ensure no one is left behind, on 28 May, UNHCR discussed **development of the Concept of Inclusive Policy with the Ministry**, outlining the vulnerable situation of forcibly displaced populations, challenges faced by refugees and asylum-seekers with disabilities in the country, and advocating for their inclusion in the draft Concept. UNHCR has shared written recommendations with the Ministry.

- By order of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Population, dated 22 May, a **sample refugee certificate produced in accordance with international requirements and standards for machine-readable travel documents was approved**. The order comes into force on 9 June 2024. In 2019, Kazakhstan pledged to issue International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standard Machine-Readable Convention Travel Documents to refugees. With this document, refugees recognized by Kazakhstan will be permitted to travel internationally, including to pursue complementary pathways opportunities such as scholarships and employment.
- So far in 2024, UNHCR has provided **cash assistance** to 122 vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeker families (reaching 169 individuals) to help them cover basic needs, including 15 disbursements for medical assistance.

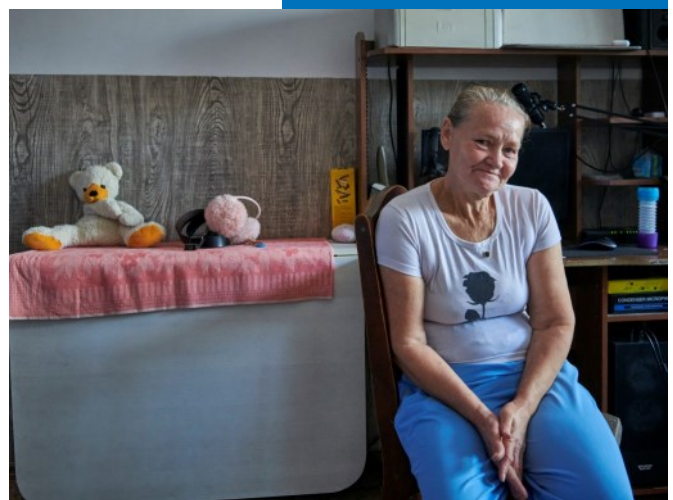
Ending Statelessness

- On 9 April, UNHCR **signed its second joint annual workplan with the Migration Service Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs**. The workplan covers a range of joint actions aimed at improving conditions for stateless people and those at risk of statelessness, including: undertaking a second joint country-wide identification and documentation campaign to map and resolve the statelessness situation; establishing a mechanism for registering people with undetermined nationality; developing amendments to establish legislative safeguards and facilitate naturalization to reduce statelessness; and implementing capacity-building activities for Migration Service staff.
- In March, UNHCR partner Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (BHR) ran a **public awareness campaign in the Almaty metro**, screening a video that draws attention to the issue of statelessness and emphasizes everyone's right to a nationality. Individuals facing issues due to lack of legal identity are invited to contact BHR and local migration authorities.
- On 11 April, UNHCR partner Legal Center for Women's Initiatives "Sana Sezim" **delivered a lecture on international legal standards to prevent and reduce statelessness** for 32 international relations and law students of the M. Auezov South Kazakhstan University.
- **New rules approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 12 April significantly improve the process for determining the legal status of people in Kazakhstan** who have no proof of citizenship of Kazakhstan or another State. Made based on UNHCR recommendations, these changes are expected to streamline the process of determining statelessness, provide clearer communication to applicants, and ensure a more transparent and accountable system. Under the new rules, individuals will receive a

certificate confirming their application for statelessness status determination, with the application period reduced from 45 to 30 days. The authenticity of documents regarding the absence or termination of previous citizenship will be verified through diplomatic channels of the Kazakhstan Ministry of the Foreign Affairs. Applicants will receive written notification of the results, and have the right to be heard before a decision on refusal is made. The rules also grant applicants the right to appeal decisions in accordance with the Administrative Procedural Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

- As part of efforts to support the justice system in Kazakhstan to ensure the protection and rights of children, particularly those vulnerable to statelessness and lack of documentation, on 15 April UNHCR delivered a **lecture during an online training for juvenile court judges, organized by the Academy of Justice under the Supreme Court**. UNHCR partners Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law and Legal Center for Women's Initiatives "Sana Sezim" shared their practical experience with participants on establishing birth registration for undocumented persons through judicial bodies.
- On 17 April, Legal Center for Women's Initiatives "Sana Sezim" delivered a guest **lecture on international and national standards to prevent and reduce statelessness** for 40+ students of the Humanitarian and Legal Faculty of Shymkent University. Providing both theoretical information and real-life accounts from individuals enduring statelessness – some for more than 20 years – the lecture aimed to raise awareness among students about the challenges faced by undocumented persons and the importance of protecting their rights.

READ ALSO



Read also: [“I was born here. This is my motherland.” Having lived in Almaty all her life, Natalya never gave up hope to confirm citizenship.](#)

THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

State Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol

- With UNHCR support, at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, the **Kyrgyz Republic pledged to provide refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and persons who have applied for the status of Kairylman, access to State-provided legal aid by 2024.** On 29 February, the **Kyrgyz Republic fulfilled this pledge**, with the President signing a law strengthening State-guaranteed legal assistance. Key improvements including expanding the categories of individuals eligible for qualified free legal assistance in civil and administrative proceedings to include foreign citizens, stateless persons, and refugees in administrative proceedings.
- From 20 to 29 March, UNHCR partner Legal Clinic Adilet conducted **seminars on international and national asylum, citizenship, and statelessness legislation for 29 law enforcement officers** and 17 border guards; on refugees and asylum-seekers' right to education for 15 school administrators; and on public healthcare services and access to State medical care for 16 representatives from national health centers, birth centers, and the medical insurance fund.

Protecting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- The Kyrgyz Republic still hosts 113 (out of a total of 251) refugees recognized by UNHCR under its global mandate, before national authorities commenced asylum procedures. Despite living peacefully in the Kyrgyz Republic for over a decade, speaking Kyrgyz and/or Russian, and having family links with the country, without legal status mandate refugees have no access to socio-economic rights or services, including legal employment, healthcare or social protection. UNHCR continues to meet and advocate with authorities for regularization of their status. On 29 April, the **Ministry of Digital Development organized a platform to discuss the issue of regularizing the legal status of mandate refugees**, attended by representatives of the Ministry of Digital Development, the Civic Registration Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Committee on National Security, and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration.
- On 15 and 16 April, Legal Clinic Adilet delivered a **series of seminars for over 30 refugees, facilitated by a qualified psychologist, focusing on psychological resilience, stress relief techniques, and self-care strategies.** On 22 April, a further information session was held for 10 asylum-seekers on the negative impact of iron deficiency.



UNHCR partner convened a series of seminars, facilitated by a qualified psychologist, focusing on psychological resilience, stress relief techniques, and self-care strategies. (Photo: Adilet/ Daniyar Israilov)

- On 23 and 24 April, UNHCR **conducted a training on proGres v4** – UNHCR's registration and identity management tool – for nine UNHCR and partner Adilet staff. Introduction of proGres v4 enables UNHCR to streamline data management, and ultimately facilitate protection, assistance and solutions to asylum-seekers and refugees.
- From 25 to 26 April, UNHCR – together with partner staff and a guest judge from Moldova – conducted a **two-day training for 15 judges, three prosecutors, and two staff from the Office of the Ombudsperson.** The training covered national and international legislation on refugees, country of origin information, and case analysis, with judges also sharing best practices for appealing asylum applications in courts.
- On 25 April, UNHCR partner Adilet held an information session on financial **literacy basics for 10 refugees and asylum-seekers** in Bishkek.
- In discussions with the refugee community, UNHCR and Adilet heard that Afghan women were facing challenges during pregnancy, lacked awareness of contraception methods, and sometimes struggled to access information on hygiene. In response, on 30 April, Legal Clinic Adilet facilitated a **training on prevention and early detection of diseases, women's reproductive health, hygiene, and**

psychological well-being for 10 refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan. The women also requested financial assistance to support with these issues.

- On 10 May, the Office of the Ombudsperson presented its 2023 **annual report to the Parliament** of the Kyrgyz Republic. The report **mentions the issue of ethnic Kyrgyz entering the asylum procedure to avoid criminal prosecution for illegal border crossing**, and recommendations to consider a migration amnesty for those who entered the country irregularly.
- On 10 May, UNHCR held a **training session for 20 participants from the National Center for Preventing Torture** on analyzing extradition requests, and providing legal expertise to prevent expulsion, extradition, and deportation of asylum-seekers.
- On 12 May, the **Kyrgyz Republic refouled one person who was pending access to the asylum procedure to their country of origin**. The General Prosecutor's Office has been made aware of the case and the individuals' pending asylum registration request.

Despite UNHCR interventions, in 2023 the Kyrgyz Republic refouled three asylum-seekers to their countries of origin.

- On 17 May, Legal Clinic Adilet hosted an information **session** for six Afghan women refugees and asylum-seekers about **free educational courses and training opportunities** available to them.
- One **individual identified as being at risk of refoulement was successfully registered in May as an asylum-seeker** by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration, while in detention. While containing provisions protecting refugees from extradition, the Criminal Procedure Code of the Kyrgyz Republic has unclear clauses regarding access of asylum authorities to register asylum claims while in detention. UNHCR continues to advocate improvements to legislation and practices to secure access to asylum procedures and to strengthen non-refoulement safeguards.
- So far in 2024, UNHCR has provided **cash assistance** to 45 very vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeker families (reaching 177 family members) to support them to cover their basic or emergency needs.

TAJIKISTAN

State Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol

- From 15 to 26 April, UNHCR conducted a **monitoring mission to Ayni, Panjakent, and Khujand sub-regions** of Sughd Province, meeting with local authorities, implementing partners, and forcibly displaced and stateless people. In Ayni and neighboring areas, UNHCR monitored partner activities and met with local authorities, stateless people and people with undetermined nationality. In Penjikent, UNHCR delivered an **information session to 15 members of the "Lyuli" nomadic ethnic group** on the necessity of birth and child registration as well

as the importance of obtaining identification documents. In Khujand, UNHCR monitored partner activities with refugees and stateless people.

Protecting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- On 1 March, UNHCR participated in a **conference between young Afghan female activists and UN agencies in Tajikistan** – facilitated by UN Women and OMID International – briefing participants about the operation and presenting information on livelihood opportunities, education programmes, and communication channels available. The activists raised concerns about their situation in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, including lack of education, unemployment, and limited freedom of movement.
- On 6 March, UNHCR and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Tajikistan Office held an **official handover event for two renovated classrooms at the Youth Center of Vahdat city**. The joint project aims to promote socio-economic inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in Tajikistan through skills learning and livelihoods development, as well as contribute to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence through enhancement of local infrastructure. The event was dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship, with 25 refugees receiving equipment to support their business plans developed through this initiative.



In Panjakent, UNHCR spoke members of the "Lyuli" nomadic ethnic group on the necessity of birth and child registration and the importance of obtaining identification documents. (Photo: UNHCR/ Muhammadkhuja Davlyatov)



Renovated with the support of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the two classrooms at the Youth Center of Vahdat city provide a safe and appropriate space for skills learning and livelihoods development activities for refugees and asylum-seekers in Tajikistan. (Photo: UNHCR/ Muhammadkhuja Davlyatov)

- On 1 April, UNHCR conducted an **information session for 50 refugees at the Youth Center of Vahdat city on the Talent Beyond Boundaries labor mobility programme**, sharing success stories and providing advice to candidates on the application process. A demonstration on navigating the platform and creating profiles was presented, offering participants a hands-on experience.
- On 12 April, UNHCR met **with Afghan community leaders in Dushanbe** to discuss ways to improve cooperation and better represent the refugee community in Tajikistan. Participants spoke about resuming cooperation, selecting new community leaders who represent all ethnicities, and securing funding to support community projects and continue operation of the community office.
- From 17 to 19 April, UNHCR visited Khujand in Sughd Province, **connecting with handicraft companies and visiting their workshops** to explore opportunities for a joint project to support Afghan refugee artisans. In Jabbor Rasulov district, on 19 April, UNHCR monitored how recipients of toolkits and grants were using the assistance provided, finding most beneficiaries actively involved in their businesses.
- On 18 April, as part of the EU-funded OSCE “Stabilization of Tajikistan’s southern border region with Afghanistan” project, UNHCR delivered a one-day **session on refugee law to 20 participants of the train-the-trainers course for Tajik Border Troops**. UNHCR and partner Inson va Adolat covered global displacement trends, UNHCR mandate, international protection principles, balance of asylum and national security, and national asylum related legislation.
- On 2 May, UNHCR delivered a one-day **training on international refugee law to 26 senior border guard officials from 14 OSCE countries at the OSCE Border Management Staff College** in Dushanbe. Topics included UNHCR’s mandate and global displacement trends, refugee protection in mixed migration flows, and asylum and national security.
- On 28 May, UNHCR conducted a half-day **training for legal partners and UNHCR Protection staff on the Legal and Physical Protection modules of proGres v4** – UNHCR’s registration and identity management tool. The training sought to support accurate recording of protection cases and follow up interventions.
- On 31 May, UNHCR and Inson va Adolat convened a **roundtable discuss for 20+ members of the Tajik Bar Association called “Legal representation in adjudication of the civil and administrative offenses cases against refugees and asylum-seekers”**. Building on existing cooperation, the event aimed to strengthen the capacity of lawyers and provide a forum for exchange of experience.
- So far in 2024, UNHCR has provided **cash assistance to 177 refugees** – including multi-purpose cash grants, disability allowances, and medical reimbursements – and **supported 136 refugees with livelihoods activities** such as vocational and business training, and apprenticeships.

Ending Statelessness

- On 16 March, UNHCR partner Right and Prosperity” participated in a meeting of the inter-agency working group on changes and amendments to the Law on Citizenship, **lobbying for inclusion of provisions to avoid loss of Tajik citizenship if granted citizenship of another State, and for Tajikistan’s accession to the Statelessness Conventions.**
- In March, UNHCR partner Chashma conducted a series of **information sessions with stateless people and people with undetermined nationality in**

Khatlon region, and met with the staff of the Passport Registration Service, to build understanding of the legal provisions pertaining to documentation and citizenship issues.

- On 25 May, UNHCR **signed a joint workplan with the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan**, supporting the government’s ongoing efforts to end statelessness. The plan envisages conducting a comprehensive legal analysis towards achieving every child’s birth registration to prevent statelessness at birth, and conducting a study visit to Moldova to learn from best practices, with the aim of lead Tajikistan acceding to the Statelessness Conventions.

TURKMENISTAN

State Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol State Party to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions

- On the initiative of Turkmenistan, and co-sponsored by 86 States, Resolution “2025 – International Year of Peace and Trust” was adopted at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in March 2024. To launch the year, the **Conference “Promoting Peace: implementing strategies to strengthen trust between countries”** was held in Ashgabat on 11 April, bringing together representatives of foreign diplomatic missions, foreign ministry employees, parliamentarians, specialists from the Institute of State, Law and Democracy and the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan, university faculty and students at the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with high-ranking leaders of international organizations joining remotely. UNHCR Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific delivered a pre-recorded message in the session “Political, humanitarian and diplomatic mechanisms for resolving conflicts and building confidence”, alongside statements from UN Assistant Secretary General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, and IOM Regional Director for South-East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- On 30 April, UNHCR held a **[training for 20 employees of the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan and partners on asylum and statelessness](#)** in Ashgabat. The training focused on the international legal framework, specific procedures for status determination, and rights of these people under international law, with the aim of enhancing the capacity of the State Migration Service to identify and protect stateless people and refugees. While in Ashgabat, UNHCR met with three mandate refugees, discussing residence permits, naturalization, travel documentation, access to higher education, and cash assistance.
- On 1 May, UNHCR held a **seminar for staff of the Office of the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan on**

statelessness and asylum, aiming to strengthen their capacity to identify and address the needs of vulnerable forcibly displaced and stateless people in detention facilities and at borders. The sessions focused on refining the skills necessary for recognizing signs of vulnerability, understanding legal frameworks, and implementing best practices to ensure protection and support for affected populations.

- On 2 May, as part of the 2024 joint workplan with the Government of Turkmenistan, UNHCR conducted a **training for judges on asylum and statelessness**, in Ashgabat. The session aimed to strengthen the capacity of judges to effectively address asylum, nationality, and statelessness cases. This was the first such event organized in Turkmenistan that included both district level and supreme court judges. Participants discussed disputes regarding documentation of people, asylum and statelessness cases, and possibilities of further collaboration.

READ ALSO



Read also: [Even more than a fighting spirit: Mustafa – Afghan refugee and professional kickboxer.](#)

Ending Statelessness

- In the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council in April, **Turkmenistan reported significant efforts in protecting the rights of refugees and stateless people**, including by granting citizenship to nearly 30,000 individuals, and residence permits to nearly 6,000 people, since its independence. Turkmenistan supported two Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights recommendations related to statelessness:
 - 99.33: “Effectively implement ... the Action Plan for the Elimination of Statelessness until 2024”;
 - 99.146: “Step up efforts to fully implement the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Statelessness”.



As part of the 2024 joint workplan with the Government of Turkmenistan, UNHCR conducted a training to strengthen the capacity of district level and supreme court judges to effectively address asylum, nationality, and statelessness cases. (Photo: UNHCR/ Sergiu Gaina)

UZBEKISTAN

- The National Human Rights Center of Uzbekistan, together with the country's office in Geneva, convened a hybrid event for the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council in April, reaffirming Uzbekistan's full commitment to the Universal Periodic Review process. **Uzbekistan supported five recommendations related to the situation of refugees and stateless people**:
 - 135.11: “Consider ... accession to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees”;
 - 135.23: “Ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees”;
 - 135.24: “Ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees”;
 - 135.131: “Ensure that the level of social protection benefits allocated to persons with disabilities, older persons, refugees and asylum-seekers is sufficiently high, and periodically review the level of social benefits”;
 - 135.219: “Promote the protection of migrants and refugees”.
- On 13 May, UNHCR held a one-day **information session on statelessness and asylum for 20 staff of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights** of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, with participants – representing all regions – discussing ways to identify vulnerable groups in need of international protection, and international standards for the reduction and prevention of statelessness. A further one-day **information session on statelessness and asylum** was held on May 14 for 15 staff of the **Center for Advanced Training of Lawyers** of the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan and the lawyers working in Samarkand and neighbouring regions. Uzbekistan is

the only country in Central Asia that has not yet acceded to the Refugee Convention, and does not have a national asylum system. Uzbekistan also hosts the largest stateless population in the sub-region.

- On 15 May, UNHCR conducted a **training for over 20 Ministry of Interior staff**, from various regions of Uzbekistan, to enhance their capacity to identify and protect stateless people and people in need of international protection. The session focused on the international and national legal frameworks, specific procedures for status determination, and the rights of these individuals under both international and national law.
- On 16 May, UNHCR conducted a workshop **to initiate UN Country Team discussion and plan of action to implement its commitment to the UN Common Pledge 2.0**, and integrate persons in need of international protection and stateless people in ongoing projects and policy advocacy of agencies. Eighteen heads of agencies and focal points from nine organizations and the Resident Coordinator's Office participated in the workshop.

Protecting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- The UN and European Union submitted a **joint letter on exit visas and asylum for Afghan citizens** in Uzbekistan to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Internal Affairs, requesting facilitated legal avenues for their continued stay, and advocating for establishment of national asylum legislation.
- So far in 2024, UNHCR has provided **cash assistance** to three mandate refugees to help them cover their basic needs.



The Regional Humanitarian Logistics Hub, located within the Termez Cargo Centre, will be the first UNHCR facility equipped with LONGi renewable energy equipment. LONGi and UNHCR signed a global partnership agreement in December 2023 comprising Climate Action, Energy Equity, and Green Transformation projects. (Photo: UNHCR/ Elyor Nemat)

Responding to Emergencies

- On 30 May, [UNHCR and LONGi Green Energy Technology Co Ltd. launched phase one of a joint climate action and solar energy project that seeks to reduce carbon emission of UNHCR emergency and preparedness stockpiles globally.](#)



Representatives of LONGi, Termez Cargo Centre, and the United Nations attended the launch ceremony of the solarization project, which will contribute to minimizing the environmental footprint of humanitarian assistance.

- As of 31 May 2024, UNHCR has **dispatched 721 trucks** from its Regional Humanitarian Logistics Hub in Termez to support emergency responses in Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Iran, Moldova, Poland, Pakistan, Romania, and Tajikistan, transporting 7,247 metric tons of relief items – including blankets, solar lamps, plastic sheets, family tents, jerrycans, buckets, refugee housing units and kitchen sets.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- As a member of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan UN Country Teams and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, UNHCR engages with governments, UN and development partners, international financial institutions and others across Central Asia to ensure refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people are not left behind in States' achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





Both refugees from Afghanistan, Armin and Tabasum are studying medicine with the support of the DAFI scholarship programme. Eighteen refugee youth in Kazakhstan are currently studying at tertiary level thanks to DAFI, the Bologna Process, and direct scholarships from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. (Photo: UNHCR/ Aiya Siyaz)

Thank you for the support

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See also:

- unhcr.org/centralasia for the latest news and stories
- reporting.unhcr.org/kazakhstan for 2024 strategy, budget and funding updates
- data.unhcr.org/en/situations/central_asia for population figures and data.

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VISIT THE UNHCR
CENTRAL ASIA WEBSITE

UNHCR maintains email and phone 'hotlines' across the four countries for anyone in need of information or consultation on refugee and asylum issues. People forced to flee can find key contacts and updated information about asylum procedures in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on help.unhcr.org/centralasia, in English, Russian and Dari.