



**SITUATION SUMMARY**

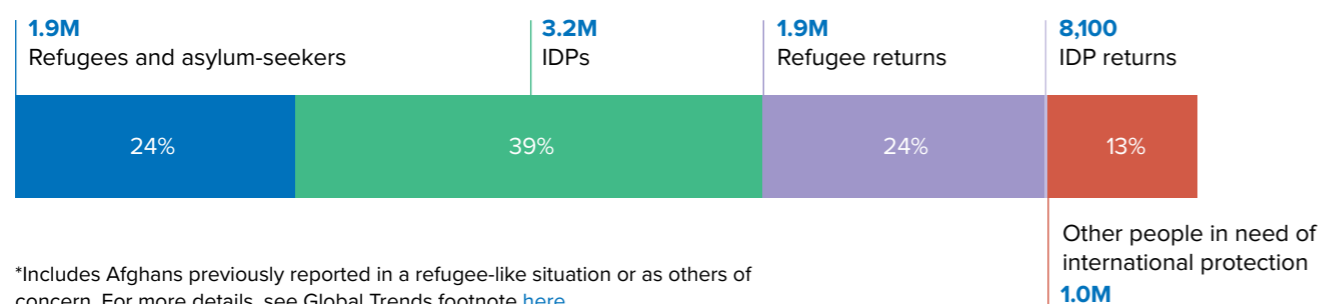
Afghan returnees cross back into their country through the Islam Qala border in Herat province amid a sharp increase in mass returns from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Many arrive with few belongings after deportation or forced departure. © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

# Afghanistan situation

Country operations involved in the response: Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan multi-country office, Pakistan

## 2025 year-end population figures

**8.1 million** Afghan refugees, IDPs, returnees (Refugees and IDPs) and Other people in need of international protection\*



\*Includes Afghans previously reported in a refugee-like situation or as others of concern. For more details, see Global Trends footnote [here](#).

## Context

Afghans faced a highly complex protection environment marked by heightened instability, large-scale population movements and persistent underfunding. Policy shifts in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan accelerated deportations and returns in adverse circumstances, while conditions in Afghanistan constrained prospects for safe and sustainable reintegration, placing significant pressure on host communities and humanitarian systems.

Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan remained acute, driven by economic decline, fragile public services and ongoing insecurity. Earthquakes in August and November strained already fragile coping mechanisms, while new restrictions on women and girls heightened protection risks and reduced access to services and livelihoods. Bans on Afghan women working for the United Nations further disrupted the delivery of essential assistance.

These pressures were compounded by developments in neighbouring countries. In March, the Islamic Republic of Iran introduced a return and regularization scheme affecting more than 2 million Afghans who had previously held temporary documentation. In April, Pakistan announced that Proof of Registration card holders, alongside Afghan Citizen Card holders, would be required to return to Afghanistan. [An estimated 2.9 million](#) people returned or were deported to Afghanistan in 2025, most in adverse circumstances with limited resources or prospects for self-reliance. More than 3,400 Afghan refugees departed through resettlement and other pathways, while nearly 2,000 others accessed complementary pathways.

As conditions worsened inside Afghanistan and across the region, displacement pressures remained high and dangerous onward movements continued. Reversing these trends will require predictable support to host countries, principled approaches to returns and strategic investment in longer-term solutions.

## UNHCR in action

As large-scale returns to Afghanistan accelerated, UNHCR delivered targeted protection and humanitarian assistance in the priority areas of return and reintegration (PARRs), focusing support on communities under the greatest strain.

UNHCR reached some 1.9 million Afghans through protection and reintegration support in the PARRs. It provided protection assistance to 692,300 returnees and disbursed financial aid to nearly 500,000 upon arrival to help meet immediate needs. UNHCR also distributed core relief items to more than 220,000 returnees and facilitated transportation for some 31,000 people so they could reach their intended destinations. Protection monitoring remained central to the response, with over 100,000 border monitoring interviews conducted to assess protection risks and inform operational priorities and advocacy.

Following earthquakes in August and November, UNHCR rapidly scaled up emergency assistance to affected communities. It delivered financial aid to more than 8,500 families to meet urgent needs and distributed over 5,600 family tents to people who had lost their homes. UNHCR also provided mental health and psychosocial support to 5,100 people affected by loss, displacement and trauma.

### Major achievements

- 1.9 million** Afghans reached with protection and reintegration support
- 692,300** returnees received protection assistance
- 500,000** returnees received financial aid on arrival
- 100,000+** border monitoring interviews conducted to assess protection risks
- 95,000** vulnerable refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran covered by health insurance
- 140** refugee schools supported in Pakistan, reaching 49,000+ children in primary education

Alongside emergency response efforts, UNHCR also advanced longer-term and resilience-oriented interventions across the region. In Pakistan, solar energy systems were installed in 54 public facilities and 6,505 households, expanding clean energy capacity while reducing emissions and costs. UNHCR supported education delivery in around 140 refugee schools, enabling more than 49,000 children to access primary education. Some 92,000 learners were enrolled in the national education system and around 260 students pursued tertiary education.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNHCR expanded Afghan refugees' access to essential services and bolstered self-reliance. Health insurance coverage for 95,000 of the most vulnerable – including those with chronic conditions – enabled access to life-saving health care and reduced financial barriers to treatment. UNHCR also supported livelihoods through vocational training for more than 1,000 refugees – mostly women – in market-relevant skills such as tailoring, digital literacy and agriculture. In parallel, UNHCR maintained close contact with communities through its [helpline](#), which handled over 58,000 enquiries.

### Coordination and partnerships

Given the scale and regional dimensions of Afghan displacement, UNHCR focused on sustaining coordinated responses across countries of asylum and return. In Afghanistan, the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, engagement with stakeholders aimed to expand humanitarian access, address protection risks and support responses to large-scale returns in line with international protection standards.

UNHCR and partners supported host countries through coordinated regional frameworks, including the [Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Afghanistan Situation \(2024-2025\)](#) and the [Support Platform of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees](#). These mechanisms remained central to advancing international engagement and responsibility-sharing in a context of declining resources and growing needs. Through these efforts, governments, development actors, UN agencies and civil society organizations supported host communities, strengthened protection monitoring and promoted more coherent approaches to solutions.

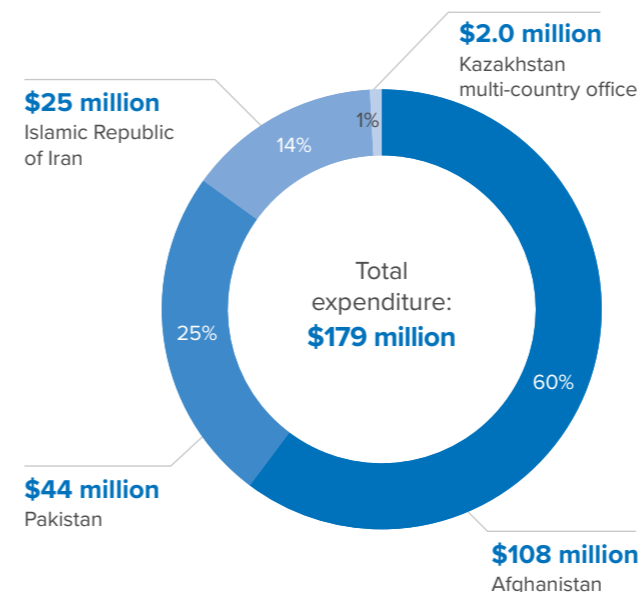
Despite these coordination structures, declining resources affected the scale and predictability of the response. Meaningful international engagement, adequate support to host countries and principled approaches to returns will remain critical to mitigating protection risks and supporting reintegration.

### Use of flexible funding

Following August's devastating earthquake in Afghanistan, UNHCR [quickly provided](#) emergency shelter, core relief items and protection assistance to affected families through flexible funding. This support was critical in the immediate aftermath, enabling life-saving assistance to reach affected communities and sustaining support as needs evolved beyond the immediate emergency phase.

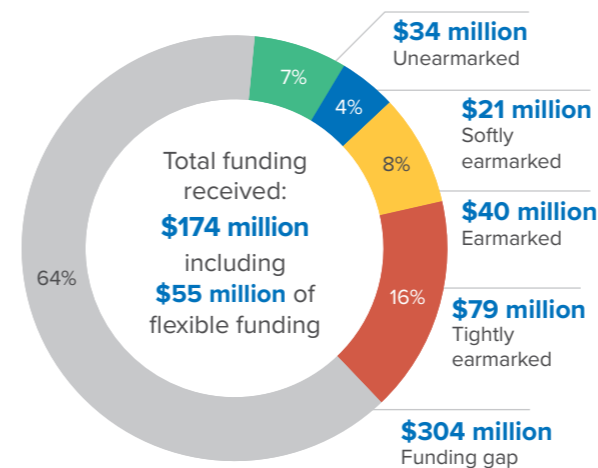
### Financial overview

#### Expenditure by operation

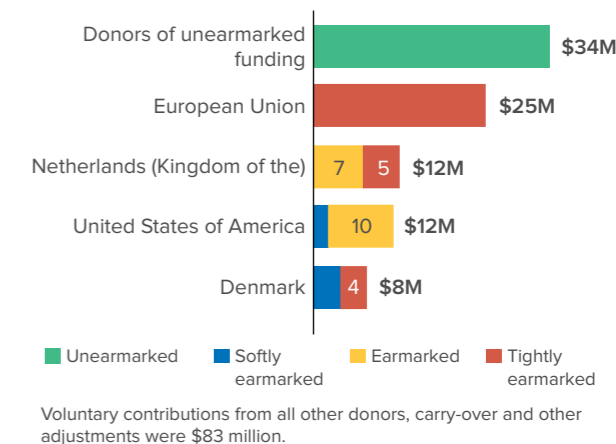


#### Funding received

In 2025, UNHCR required a total of **\$478 million** to address the emergency situation in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, but received only **36%** of that amount.



#### Top 5 donors



#### Operational spotlight

In Afghanistan, UNHCR partnered with fintech platform HesabPay to deliver [digital financial aid](#) to displaced and returnee families with limited access to formal banking services. In 2025, more than 120,000 households received support through digital wallets, enabling rapid and secure access to funds. This approach provided a critical lifeline for vulnerable families by enabling faster access to assistance when it was needed most.