

# Annual Results Report

**2025**

**Kazakhstan MCO**

## Acknowledgements

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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.

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# Section 1: Context and Overview

## 1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

Central Asia is situated at the crossroads of continents, with the Russian Federation to the north, Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to the south, and China to the east. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan share borders with Afghanistan, and most refugees in Central Asia are from Afghanistan.

Central Asian governments differed in their approach to the situation in Afghanistan. With some cultural and religious links to Central Asian countries, Afghan citizens had previously entered the region for tourism, work or education purposes, facing relatively few obstacles to social integration. Since August 2021, however, Central Asian countries have enforced a strict border regime, permitting entry only to Afghan nationals who hold valid ID and have valid visas, primarily for tourist, education, business or diplomatic purposes.

The governments of all Central Asian countries continued to view the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers through a national security lens, limiting the development of a full, favourable protection environment and restricting access to rights and services for forcibly displaced people. In Tajikistan, this reinforced security-based approach led to a sharp escalation in deportations throughout 2025. This included the mid-year issuance of 15-day ultimatums to Afghan refugees and the forced return of people holding valid residency or UNHCR documentation. As a result of these deportations, there were reported cases of secondary movement of recognized refugees from Tajikistan to other Central Asian countries.

UNHCR also engaged with the UN country team and governments to follow up on recommendations accepted by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan during the fourth cycle of the respective Universal Periodic Review in 2025.

During the year, Central Asian governments increasingly engaged with the de facto authorities in Afghanistan while still adhering to United Nations decisions and resolutions. Kazakhstan was the first in the region to remove the Taliban from its registry of terrorist organizations at the end of 2023, followed by the Kyrgyz Republic in September 2024. Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have accepted de facto authorities' diplomatic envoys to their countries. In 2024, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan agreed with the de facto authorities to establish transport corridors. Nonetheless, the de facto authorities' ongoing construction of the Qosh Tepa Canal in Afghanistan on the Amu Darya river, which would significantly reduce Turkmenistan's and Uzbekistan's access to essential irrigation water, has intensified water security threats in a sub-region already severely affected by climate change.

Sanctions on the Russian Federation since the start of the war against Ukraine triggered a significant drop in Central Asian currencies against the United States' dollar. Currency fluctuations and elevated inflation rates impacted all Central Asian countries, increasing the price of food and other essential items, and further straining the purchasing power of vulnerable groups. These developments have also impacted operational costs for UNHCR, including higher expenses for partnership agreements as well as direct implementation.

Ongoing political, social, economic and security developments in the region – including the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, war in Ukraine, and increased security measures jeopardizing asylum-seekers' access to protection – risked affecting efforts to strengthen asylum systems, facilitate the local integration of refugees, and eradicate statelessness across Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

## 1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

### 1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

**Incidence of statelessness is reduced.**

**Refugees and asylum-seekers enjoy unhindered access to the country's territory and efficient status determination procedures.**

Indicator			
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual (2025)
<b>1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.94%	99.42%
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	100.00%
<b>1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.30%	100.00%
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	94.44%
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	Data not available	100.00%
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.06%	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%

Refugees and asylum-seekers had some access to territory, fair and efficient recognition and fundamental rights in 2025 across the region but challenges remained. Some refugees accessed these rights through advocacy, including with UN country teams, government donors, and civil society stakeholders.

In 2025, Kazakhstan recognized 34 asylum-seekers as refugees while 90 applications were rejected. UNHCR and its partners, intervened with the relevant authorities to ensure access to asylum procedures for two people in Kazakhstan. Their asylum applications were initially refused registration due to a strict interpretation of the five-day deadline for lodging an asylum claim. In addition, three asylum-seekers who had been held in the airport transit zone were granted access to the territory and asylum procedures. UNHCR engaged with both asylum and border authorities to support the registration of their applications and entry into the country.

Meanwhile, in the Kyrgyz Republic, 22 asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees but 141 applications were rejected, including 120 from Afghanistan. Concerns remained regarding access to protection for forcibly displaced and stateless people. Despite UNHCR and OHCHR joint interventions, six asylum-seekers awaiting registration with the asylum authority were refouled on the grounds of illegal stay. At the same time, UNHCR's advocacy yielded some positive developments. At least three asylum-seekers in detention were granted access to refugee status determination procedures and the General Prosecutor's Office confirmed in writing in response to a UNHCR note verbale that extradition proceedings would be suspended until the refugee status determination process was completed.

In 2025, the law on the Akyikatchy (Ombudsman) of the Kyrgyz Republic was elevated to constitutional status, resulting in the dissolution of the National Centre for Prevention of Torture. The Ombudsman's Institute subsequently advanced towards "Ombudsman+" structure. Previously, UNHCR, utilizing the mandate of the NPM in the form of an independent National Centre, had access to asylum-seekers in detention. While it is not clear whether the new NPM will remain independent under the revised structure, the transition may negatively impact adherence to the principle of non-refoulement and effective access to procedures.

Entry to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan required valid visas in 2025. In Turkmenistan, no new asylum-seekers had been registered since 2005 and UNHCR could not verify refoulement or access to asylum. In Uzbekistan, UNHCR strengthened authorities' understanding of legal frameworks protecting forcibly displaced people, while advocating for their access to territory and the establishment of national asylum procedures. Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan increasingly reported rejected visa extension requests and feeling compelled by the authorities to return to Afghanistan.

Tajikistan continued to maintain strict border policies in 2025, with no mass cross-border movements recorded. Asylum-seekers were required to present valid travel documents and visas obtained outside Afghanistan due to a lack of diplomatic relations between the countries. They also needed to register in designated areas under Government Resolution 325.

Despite these constraints, UNHCR and partners registered 1,879 new arrivals and supported their asylum applications. Government data indicated 879 people were granted refugee status, while no applications were rejected, resulting in a 100% recognition rate and raising concerns about the quality of State refugee status determination processes.

Serious protection concerns persisted as 1,668 asylum-seekers and refugees were refouled to Afghanistan without safeguards, due process or court orders. UNHCR advocated for non refoulement with the authorities and provided joint training on the protection of forcibly displaced and stateless people with the Border Troops Forces Guards Service and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Seven State practitioners also received in-depth refugee status determination training.

Some positive developments were made in the region towards ending statelessness in 2025. The Kyrgyz Republic adopted a statelessness determination procedure and had granted citizenship to 733 stateless people by the end of the year. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan reduced its stateless population by 20% to under 16,000.

In parallel, with support from donors, UNHCR advanced identification and solutions for stateless people and those at risk of statelessness, focusing on implementing recent civil registration amendments to ensure universal birth registration and prevent childhood statelessness. As a result, another 1,857 people were able to confirm their citizenship or legalize their status, including two people who received Tajik citizenship and 446 children who obtained birth certificates.

## 4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

**Refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people actively participate in the social and economic life of host countries, exercise their rights, and enjoy durable solutions.**

Indicator			
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual (2025)
<b>4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4	0
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	2
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	250	362
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
<b>4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement</b>			

Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	1
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Data not available	0
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
<b>4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7	1
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10	0
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5,100	1,216
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1	0
<b>4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed</b>			
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	1,348	1058
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	59	733
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	3,500	1,857
Turkmenistan	Stateless Persons	2,597	0
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	1,320	4,000
<b>4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13	20
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	21	22
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4	1
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5	0

UNHCR advocated for long-lasting solutions that empowered refugees, particularly mandate refugees, to rebuild their lives.

In Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs amended rules on individual identification numbers (IIN), allowing asylum-seekers with valid identity documents to obtain an IIN, which enabled their access to public and private services. Refugees and asylum-seekers continued to face restrictions accessing formal employment given their temporary residency status, which limited their ability to fully participate in the social and economic life of the country. Many relied on informal work to sustain themselves, while the most vulnerable received cash assistance from UNHCR.

UNHCR and partners provided legal assistance to people with undetermined nationality, supporting them to acquire or confirm citizenship of Kazakhstan, or be recognized as stateless.

Through its partner, UNHCR provided consultations and referrals for 60 stateless people and people with undetermined nationality in the Kyrgyz Republic. Four subsequently acquired citizenship while four others were granted statelessness status. A statelessness determination procedure adopted in 2025 addressed previous difficulties in proving that an application had been submitted by introducing an interim certificate for applicants. It also established a stateless person certificate that could serve as a travel document.

Turkmenistan legalized the status of one mandate refugee by providing them with a residency permit.

In Uzbekistan, all five mandate refugees continued living legally in the country with residency permits, which had been granted to them in 2023. They must reside in the country legally for five years to qualify for permanent residency.

In Tajikistan, voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan was facilitated on a case-by-case basis under updated procedures. Despite a worsening security and human rights situation in Afghanistan, requests for voluntary repatriation increased significantly: from 29 in 2023 and 90 in 2024 to 357 refugees in 2025. In 2025, a total of 357 refugees received support from UNCHR to facilitate their voluntary return.

Pathways to durable solutions remained limited. Naturalization for refugees in Tajikistan were an elusive goal as UNHCR does not implement resettlement programmes in Central Asia. Any relocation to third countries takes place through private sponsorship schemes independently operated by various host countries. Some refugees accessed complementary pathways such as Canada's sponsorship programme, while 1,216 people reportedly departed through private initiatives. 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. This reflected a longstanding commitment under the #IBelong campaign to end statelessness, which ended in 2024. In 2025, partners identified and registered 1,371 people, while 1,857 were assisted with solutions. Consistent with previous years, women and girls represented around 70% of the newly identified stateless population and just over a third (34%) were children. UNHCR and its partner provided legal assistance and representation to people with undetermined nationality, supporting them to either acquire or confirm their citizenship of Tajikistan, or to be recognized as stateless and receive a residency permit.

## Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual(2025)
<b>2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	94.44%
Kyrgyzstan	Others of Concern	100.00%	100.00%
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
<b>2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	48.14%	97.98%
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	94.08%	94.44%
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	94.27%	94.80%
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	41.67%
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Data not available	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
<b>3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	25.64%	50.00%
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	94.08%	94.44%

Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7.67%	7.03%
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.94%	99.42%
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	0.00%	0.00%
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.15%	41.67%
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Data not available	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
<b>3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	89.71%	48.36%
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	0.00%
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	0.00%
<b>3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	63.12%	42.24%
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	0.00%
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Data not available	0.00%
<b>3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark</b>			
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.30%	100.00%
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.06%	100.00%
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%

## 1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

UNHCR experienced financial turbulence and realignment across the region in 2025, resulting in a significant reduction in staff. The closure of UNHCR's national office in Kazakhstan (Astana), alongside substantial staff cuts across operations in Kazakhstan (Almaty), the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan constrained its capacity to sustain advocacy efforts and implement planned activities.

Across the sub-region, the operating environment for asylum procedures remained complex, with national frameworks and broader policy considerations influencing refugee recognition processes and overall access to protection. Economic and regional dynamics also continued to shape migration governance and related decision-making.

Amid changing migration dynamics, the Kyrgyz Republic became a destination country for migrants and

asylum-seekers. In response, the Government introduced additional migration control measures, which had implications for individuals awaiting registration and resulted in forced returns.

Limited progress was observed in addressing the legal status of mandate refugees in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Turkmenistan. While some individuals have resided in these countries for extended periods and are well integrated, the absence of legal status continued to constrain access to rights, services and long-term solutions, including naturalization.

Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkmenistan have refugee legislation, national asylum systems and national refugee status determination procedures. Refugee recognition rates had declined in recent years although slight improvements had been observed in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic since 2023. Turkmenistan received no asylum applications during the year.

The sub-region continued to receive people arriving from Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Most opted for alternative legal stay arrangements rather than seeking asylum, with only a limited number submitting asylum applications.

Land and air borders remained closed to Afghan citizens lacking valid identification and visas, limiting access to asylum procedures in Central Asia.

Frequent turnover of Government personnel also hindered operational efficiency, requiring continued engagement and capacity-building efforts. This contributed to slower and lower quality decision making while they familiarized themselves with their roles. Limited State budget allocations to asylum offices, including interpretation services, also affected procedural efficiency.

As commercial ties with the de facto authorities in Afghanistan strengthened, the number of rejected asylum claims and residence permits of Afghan citizens increased.

In Kazakhstan, Afghan nationals, including refugees and asylum-seekers, encountered challenges in accessing financial services (opening or renewing of bank cards), which in turn affected access to formal employment opportunities.

UNHCR continued to advocate for accelerated naturalization for stateless people and prevention of new cases of statelessness, including among children.

Uzbekistan has not yet acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. As a result, access to formal protection mechanisms and related social and legal rights remains limited, despite continued engagement by UNHCR and partners.

In Tajikistan, entry and residency requirements remained restrictive. The absence of referral mechanisms at the border and lack of UNHCR access prevented non-refoulement monitoring. While recognition rates remained relatively high, the refugee status determination procedure remained an area for further strengthening. UNHCR was excluded from the Inter-Ministerial National Commission responsible for refugee status determination, leaving asylum-seekers without key procedural safeguards.

Cases of refoulement persisted and escalated in 2025. Afghan nationals, including mandate refugees, were detained and forcibly deported without due process, often despite holding valid documentation. Reports of confiscated documents and forced returns affecting men, women and children living legally in Tajikistan, deepened fear within the refugee community and compounded the precarious situation of mandate refugees living in prolonged legal limbo. Restrictions under Tajikistan Resolution No. 325 of 2000 further limited movement, access to livelihoods, and essential services.

Recent legal amendments aimed at strengthening birth registration and reducing statelessness in Tajikistan represent positive steps; however, implementation challenges remain, including administrative capacity constraints and widespread financial vulnerability among forcibly displaced and stateless people.

## 1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

As an active UN country team member and an integral part of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) in each country, UNHCR engaged with the Governments, United Nations, international financial institutions, diplomatic partners and others to ensure forcibly displaced and stateless people were not left behind in States' achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

UNHCR contributed to the development of the new UNSDCF cycles for 2026–2030 in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, ensuring each country's framework reflected efforts to strengthen the protection environment for forcibly displaced and stateless people under the respective outcome areas. It also constructively engaged with responsible government entities, including but not limited to ministries, presidential administrations, prosecutor generals' offices, border guards services, the judiciary, ombudspersons' offices and various committees, including those focused on migration, social policy, security and human rights.

Since the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019, governments, academia, NGO consortia, and the UN in Central Asia have made 38 pledges in support of the Global Compact on Refugees, aimed at enhancing protection and advancing solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless populations. As of the end of 2025, 11 pledges were fulfilled. UNHCR continues to support pledging entities, including UN Country Teams in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan that committed to the Common Pledge 2.0, in translating commitments into concrete actions.

In the spirit of the main Sustainable Development Goals principle to leave no one behind and in support of the Global Compact on Refugees, UN country teams in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan were integrating collective commitments to the UN Common Pledge 2.0 into country-level UN plans, including the UNSDCF, and supporting Government plans. Supporting the UN Country Team's implementation of its commitment to the UN Common Pledge 2.0, in 2025 the technical-level group was reshaped to focus on forced displacement and statelessness.

In Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic, UNHCR signed letters of understanding with UNICEF, contextualizing cooperation within the UNHCR-UNICEF Global Strategic Framework and expanding joint efforts to protect and improve the lives of forcibly displaced and stateless children and women.

Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, UNHCR consulted with development agencies, international financial institutions and the private sector to identify areas for cooperation and the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless people in their projects. UNHCR continued working closely with the European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

With private sector support and in collaboration with UN partners and the Government of Uzbekistan, UNHCR conducted climate action programmes to transform the Global Stockpile Termez into a fully solarized facility and to support income generation for forcibly displaced Afghan citizens and vulnerable host community members through cash-for-work programmes.

Targeted messages for key partners advocated for the rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people.

Collaboration with universities and the private sector enhanced educational and other learning opportunities for refugees and promoted their legal awareness as potential future policymakers and practitioners.

In Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic, UNHCR contributed to UN country team submissions for the UN Human Rights Council as part of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review for both countries. They advocated for the rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people.

With UNHCR advocacy in the Kyrgyz Republic, all UNHCR-specific recommendations were supported by the Government. UNHCR advocacy in Kazakhstan contributed to the Government's support for

recommendations to guarantee the right to seek asylum and uphold the principle of non-refoulement, as well as to amend national legislation to ensure refugees and asylum-seekers have access to state social security programmes.

In 2025, despite financial challenges and significant staff reductions, UNHCR sustained key partnerships with national authorities in Tajikistan, UN agencies and international stakeholders to advance protection, inclusion and solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless people.

Engagement under the UNSDCF ensured continued advocacy for the inclusion of refugees and stateless people in national development strategies. UNHCR supported the Government of Tajikistan in strengthening legal frameworks through the Refugee Law Review working group and cooperation with civil registry authorities to promote universal birth registration, while also advocating for accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Work with the Passport Registration Service advanced naturalization pathways, solutions for stateless people and the digitization of asylum case registration.

UNHCR and the OSCE delivered multiple workshops on refugee law and humanitarian border management, while private sector partners, such as Auchan, Coca Cola and Hilton, expanded training and employment opportunities. Collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency continued to foster refugees' self-reliance through business and entrepreneurship support. To strengthen protection coordination and advocacy against refoulement, UNHCR convened regular protection working group meetings, while funded partners delivered legal aid, social services and statelessness reduction activities.

## 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.

Refugees and asylum seekers benefit from efficient and functional referral mechanisms.

Stateless people gain improved access to civil registration and identity documentation and all children born in the country are registered with a civil authority.

##### Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator				
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis</b>				
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.30%	100.00%	97.98%
<b>1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority</b>				
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials</b>				
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	97.98%
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	94.08%	100.00%	94.44%

##### Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	218
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,017
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	12
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	446
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	7
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	1,857
Turkmenistan	Stateless Persons	0

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugees and asylum-seekers benefit from efficient and functional referral mechanisms.

To support the Government of Kazakhstan's pledge to establish border referral procedures and ensure

unhindered access to territory and asylum procedures, UNHCR and partners evaluated admission procedures and reception facilities for asylum-seekers at two of its land borders and three of its international airports. Around 30 border guards were trained in asylum-seekers' rights and international principles of protection regarding access to territory and asylum.

UNHCR delivered training on response and referral mechanisms during mass influx situations to 36 representatives of key Government agencies and humanitarian actors in Kazakhstan. The training focused on strengthening inter-agency coordination and referral pathways in the event of a large-scale arrival of forcibly displaced people. Participants included representatives from the Border Guard Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry for Emergency Situations, Ministry of Healthcare, local authorities, and the Red Crescent of Kazakhstan. The training also served as a platform for sharing best practices, with representatives from the Republic of Moldova and Slovakia presenting their experiences in effectively managing refugee influxes.

With no new asylum applications registered by the Government of Turkmenistan in 15 years, UNHCR could not monitor its referral mechanisms.

UNHCR was involved in the development of the UN country team contingency plan in Turkmenistan for a potential refugee influx during the escalation of the situation in Iran and Israel in the summer of 2025. UNHCR provided technical guidance, advice on protection standards, and expertise on planning for emergency reception, registration and referral mechanisms

In the Kyrgyz Republic, UNHCR conducted training for 20 border officers covering access to territory and non-refoulement principles as well as referral mechanism under the national legislation. As part of a joint UN Peacebuilding Fund project with the IOM, UNODC and UNDP, UNHCR established a dedicated section on access to asylum procedure in a newly developed app "Digital Border". The app aims to provide live information on border check points to all crossing the border for various reasons, including to seek asylum in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Tajikistan maintained strict control over its border with Afghanistan in 2025, with asylum-seekers requiring valid travel documents and entry visas. Many Afghan nationals who were unable to secure Tajik visas in Afghanistan resorted to intermediaries, sending their passports to Tajikistan or to neighbouring countries where Tajik diplomatic missions were located. There were fewer new arrivals in 2025 than in 2024. UNHCR's legal partner registered 1,902 people during the year, including 1,879 new arrivals, two people who were already in-situ, and the birth of 22 babies. The previous year, 5,194 new arrivals had been recorded. To strengthen national asylum systems, UNHCR and its legal partner ran 10 specialized training sessions for Government officials on refugee protection, border management and asylum procedures. A few other sessions, held in collaboration with the 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. UNHCR monitored the Afghan-Tajik border situation through 14 voluntary repatriation trips and indirect monitoring visits, which occurred during the delivery of border personnel training.

All five countries continued statelessness reduction and prevention efforts in 2025, including through ensuring universal birth registration and improving statelessness determination procedures.

In Kazakhstan, sustained UNHCR advocacy contributed to Article 65 of the Code on Marriage and Family being declared unconstitutional, requiring legislative amendments to prevent children from being left without a determinable nationality. UNHCR supported reform efforts by sharing international best practices with Kazakhstan's Ministry of Justice. In 2025, amendments to Article 187 of the Code were adopted, allowing children born outside medical facilities to mothers without identity documents to be registered on the basis of maternity-issued certificates.

UNHCR supported Kazakhstan by providing technical expertise and recommendations to improve laws and the effectiveness of statelessness determination procedures. UNHCR and partners provided legal assistance to people with undetermined nationality, supporting them to acquire or confirm citizenship of Kazakhstan, or be recognized as stateless.

In Uzbekistan, UNHCR and the National Center for Human Rights organized a series of information

sessions and trainings for judges, NGO and legal clinic staff, and Ministry of Internal Affairs personnel on nationality and statelessness. The sessions covered the international legal framework and standards for the reduction and prevention of statelessness, as well as birth registration, statelessness determination procedures and good practice. The joint event with the Ministry of Internal Affairs shared ongoing work, current approaches and updated statistics, and discussed future perspectives and potential legislative amendments to resolve the remaining stateless people in the country.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, through its legal partner, UNHCR conducted one training session for 70 people working with its population registration system on the newly adopted statelessness determination procedure.

## 2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

### Asylum seekers access fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures

#### Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator				
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision</b>				
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1.00	90.00	90.00
<b>2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation</b>				
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim</b>				
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

#### Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	Yes
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	Yes
Turkmenistan	Stateless Persons	No

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Access to asylum procedures, and fair and efficient refugee recognition, did not tangibly improve in 2025 in the sub-region.

UNHCR facilitated the sub-regional refugee status determination learning programme, which includes a 12-week online phase followed by a four-day residential workshop. Held annually, the programme aims to enhance the quality of refugee status determination procedures across Central Asia and strengthen the capacity of relevant staff. The course incorporated thematic webinars during its online phase and focused on practical case studies during a workshop, which focused on responding to the region's asylum caseload. It was the first time people from Uzbekistan were among the 40 participants, who also came from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. They included staff from asylum units, members of refugee status determination commissions, judges, representatives of the General Prosecutor's Office, the ombudsperson's office, the presidential administration, the national security services, national human rights institutions and NGOs.

In Kazakhstan, UNHCR and partners trained 18 representatives of territorial units responsible for refugee status determination procedures across two days, focusing on interviewing techniques, use of country-of-origin information, credibility assessments and the application of national asylum legislation in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol.

To enhance reliable statistics on forcibly displaced populations and support governments in developing rights-based, internationally aligned legislative and policy frameworks, UNHCR, together with IOM, convened the Regional Technical Experts Group on Migration Data Management under the Almaty Process. The 2025 meeting, hosted by Kazakhstan as Chair, brought together more than 20 technical experts from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. UNHCR dedicated a session to the importance of quality data on refugees and asylum-seekers for evidence-based policy formulation, planning and monitoring, as well as the need for robust data protection safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of information relating to forcibly displaced people.

UNHCR and OHCHR intervened in cases of hindered access to asylum procedures and one case at risk of refoulement in the Kyrgyz Republic. The high rejection rate, including of Afghan refugees, indicated that national RSD procedures were not applied fairly. UNHCR and its legal partner conducted 13 capacity building activities on asylum and refugee protection, including extradition and international standards, as well as the State's obligations to strengthen their awareness of asylum and statelessness issues for 296 law enforcement officers; staff of the Ombudsman's Office; refugee unit staff of the Ministry of Labour, Social Development and Migration; judges and prosecutors; and legal academia and other.

Uzbekistan has not yet ratified the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol and still lacks a national asylum system. Consequently, people requiring international protection do not have access to registration, RSD procedures or other forms of protection. At the 2018 and 2023 sessions of the Universal Periodic Review in the Human Rights Council, Uzbekistan supported recommendations to ratify the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol and establish a national asylum system. At the 2018 review, Uzbekistan also supported recommendations to ratify the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

In 2025, UNHCR and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) advocated in Uzbekistan for an Afghan family whose visa extension was rejected, placing them at risk of forced deportation.

By the end of the year, Tajikistan hosted approximately 11,858 asylum-seekers and refugees. In 2025, UNHCR's legal partner continued to play a central role in facilitating access to asylum procedures, delivering 3,296 legal consultations and supporting 1,879 people to submit asylum applications. Throughout the year, UNHCR sustained its advocacy with Government counterparts for the restoration of its observer role in the refugee status determination commission, while also strengthening national refugee status determination capacities through three training and capacity-building activities targeting State officials and members of the judiciary, with a focus on first instance decision-making and appeals.

To safeguard access to territory and protect against penalization, UNHCR's legal partner provided representation in 17 cases involving document confiscation, detention or deportation of asylum-seekers and refugees. While the Department of Citizenship and Work with Refugees reported no asylum rejections during the year, this trend continued to underscore persistent structural weaknesses in the quality and credibility of the refugee status determination process, including limited individual assessment and insufficient procedural safeguards.

At the same time, UNHCR advanced complementary initiatives to enhance fairness and efficiency in asylum procedures, including expanded engagement with development partners, improvements in data collection and its digitizing, further analysis and targeted capacity development. These measures contributed to gradual improvements in procedural awareness among frontline officials and increased consistency in the handling of asylum claims, even as systemic challenges remain.

### 3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

#### Asylum seekers access fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures

**National legislative and procedural frameworks are reformed to ensure stateless people can access documentation such as (birth certificates) and non-discriminatory education without penalties for illegal entry**

**Safeguards against statelessness are incorporated into national legal frameworks and stateless people are protected through determination procedures that meet international standards.**

#### Core Outcome Indicators

Country	Population Type	Indicator		
		Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol</b>				
Kazakhstan	None	Progressing toward alignment	Progressing toward alignment	Progressing toward alignment
<b>3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness</b>				
Kazakhstan	None	Progressing toward alignment	Progressing toward alignment	Progressing toward alignment

#### Core Output Indicators

Country	Population Type	Indicator
		Actual (2025)
<b>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</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	Yes
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	Yes
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	Yes
Turkmenistan	Stateless Persons	No
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	Yes

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

By the end of the year, Tajikistan hosted approximately 11,858 asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR's legal partner continued to play a central role in facilitating access to asylum procedures for them, delivering 3,296 legal consultations and supporting 1,879 people to submit asylum applications. Throughout the year, UNHCR sustained its advocacy with Government counterparts for the restoration of its observer role in the refugee status determination commission, while also strengthening national capacities through three training and capacity-building activities targeting State officials and members of the judiciary, with a focus on first instance decision-making and appeals.

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At the same time, UNHCR advanced complementary initiatives to enhance fairness and efficiency in asylum procedures, including expanded engagement with development partners, improvements in data collection and its digitizing and further analysis, and targeted capacity development efforts. These measures contributed to gradual improvements in procedural awareness among frontline officials and increased consistency in the handling of asylum claims, even as systemic challenges remain.

In Kazakhstan, as a result of sustained UNHCR advocacy, Article 65 of the Code on Marriage and Family was declared unconstitutional, requiring legislative amendments to prevent children from being left without a determinable nationality.

UNHCR shared examples of international best practices with the Ministry of Justice to support expanding the grounds for birth registration of children born outside medical institutions. In 2025, Kazakhstan adopted amendments to Article 187 of the Code on Marriage and Family, allowing the registration of children born outside medical facilities to mothers without identity documents on the basis of maternity-issued certificates as the legal basis for registration.

In early 2025, following long-standing joint UNHCR, UNDP and UNICEF advocacy, the Government of Tajikistan adopted a new Law on the State Registration of Civil Status Acts, replacing the 2006 legislation. The new law establishes a unified framework for the registration of births, marriages and deaths, introduces greater flexibility for late registration, and permits registration in cases where parents or applicants lack identity documents, based on requests from medical or guardianship authorities. These amendments represent an important step toward reducing barriers to civil documentation and preventing statelessness.

While certain operational modalities are to be further clarified through subordinate regulations, including procedures for births occurring outside medical facilities and cases requiring judicial intervention, UNHCR and its partner have continued targeted legal advocacy with the Ministry of Justice and relevant authorities to ensure implementing regulations provide clear, accessible and child-sensitive procedures.

The objective is to guarantee timely birth registration, prevent gaps in legal identity, and ensure no child is left at risk of statelessness due to administrative or procedural obstacles.

From July to December 2025, UNHCR and its partner supported the birth registration of more than 520 children who lacked civil documentation and were at risk of statelessness. Assistance included legal counselling and representation, support with document preparation, and financial assistance to cover state fees for the most vulnerable families. As a result, more than 380 children were successfully registered and issued birth certificates, in close coordination with the Ministry of Justice and local civil registry offices – strengthening their access to legal identity and related rights, including education and social services.

UNHCR supported the drafting of statelessness determination procedures in the Kyrgyz Republic that was adopted in February 2025. UNHCR provided six recommendations to four laws and bylaws to improve harmonization of the national legislation with international standards of statelessness prevention. In 2025, the government of the Kyrgyz Republic developed a draft law on accession to both statelessness conventions, signifying strong commitments to further align its legislation with the international standards. In 2024, the Government reported 875 people with undermined nationality, of which

581 were naturalized by the end of 2025.

Tajikistan advanced its national safeguards against statelessness through continued reforms of the civil registration system. Its new Law on State Registration of Civil Status Acts harmonized procedures for registering births, marriages and deaths, expanded options for late registration, and allowed birth registration even when parents or applicants lacked identity documents. Under the new law, registrations may be initiated through submissions from medical institutions or guardianship bodies, contributing to improved access to legal identity for vulnerable groups.

Some implementation modalities – particularly those related to births occurring outside medical facilities and procedures involving judicial authorities – still required clarification, which were expected to be addressed through secondary regulations. UNHCR, with its legal partner, continued joint advocacy with civil society, including through contributions to the UPR 4th cycle shadow report. The report is an independent, non-governmental submission that evaluates a UN Member State's human rights record. Efforts focused on promoting clear, accessible, and protection-sensitive implementing procedures to ensure timely birth registration, access to civil documentation, and prevention of statelessness. This engagement aims to ensure that all children born in Tajikistan can obtain a birth certificate and secure their legal identity. Despite recent reforms, Tajikistan has not acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. While some legislative safeguards exist, notable gaps remain, including the absence of a formal statelessness determination procedure and insufficient protections against statelessness at birth. As a result, the overall scale of statelessness in the country remains undetermined.

## 6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

### Asylum-seekers and refugees benefit from fair adjudication of appeals and trial processes

#### Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance</b>		
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,296
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	446
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	82
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	1,371

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, UNHCR and its legal partner further strengthened cooperation with Tajikistan's Supreme Court and its Judicial Training Centre, further advancing earlier initiated capacity building efforts. This partnership resulted in the development and rollout of judicial guidelines for adjudicating administrative cases under Article 499 of the Code on Administrative Offenses, which commonly affect asylum-seekers and refugees facing penalties for residence-related violations. Targeted training sessions were delivered by the Head of the Judicial Training Centre and a former Supreme Court judge to support the consistent application of these guidelines. As a result, the topic "Protection of refugee rights in the judicial system" has been proposed for renewed inclusion in the national judicial training curriculum, with UNHCR's continued support.

UNHCR's legal partner provided 3,296 legal consultations and assisted with the submission of 1,879 asylum applications. Legal representation was offered in 17 cases involving asylum-seekers and refugees, particularly where individuals faced deportation risks or the seizure of documents by the State Committee for National Security. These interventions contributed to improved access to fair procedures and

strengthened safeguards against refoulement.

Additionally, the Ombudsman's Office incorporated inputs from UNHCR into its annual report, creating an important platform to raise systemic concerns related to asylum procedures and statelessness. This engagement supported greater transparency and reinforced national accountability mechanisms in the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.

## 8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

**Refugees and asylum seekers are included in state social protection systems and access cash assistance from international organizations or the State**

**Refugees and asylum seekers receive financial support to meet their basic needs.**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Country	Population Type	Indicator		
		Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items</b>				
Kazakhstan	Host Community	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	28.64%	32.29%	37.45%

### Core Output Indicators

Country	Population Type	Indicator
		Actual (2025)
<b>08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	254
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	399
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,393
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	708

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Tajikistan remained de-facto excluded from national social protection schemes in 2025, even though they are included de-jure in the Government's National Action Plan for Social Protection Development Strategies for 2024–2026. Despite this formal inclusion, no significant progress was made toward their actual integration.

UNHCR remained the primary and most substantial provider. Most other agencies working with refugees implemented activities focusing on areas such as skills development, vocational training and coexistence projects, rather than cash or in-kind assistance.

The cost of food, clothing, medicines, rent and utilities continued to rise in 2025, greatly diminishing the purchasing power of refugees and asylum-seekers. As they remained ineligible for social protection, UNHCR used cash assistance to help the most vulnerable meet their basic needs.

UNHCR provided multi-purpose cash assistance to 477 asylum-seekers and refugees in Kazakhstan.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, multi-purpose cash assistance helped 399 asylum-seekers and refugees to cover their basic and emergency needs. Education grants were provided to 75 forcibly displaced children while 41 people were supported to obtain medical insurance, enabling them to access health services on par with citizens.

UNHCR updated its cash assistance standard operating procedures, increasing the amount of financial assistance aligned with the State-calculated minimum expenditure basket. Direct transfers were made to beneficiaries' bank accounts through a financial service provider. The process of reviewing assistance eligibility was also updated to include household assessment results, providing the review committee with broader data on applicants' vulnerability.

One mandate refugee in Uzbekistan and one mandate refugee in Turkmenistan received multipurpose cash assistance.

Given that refugees and asylum-seekers in Tajikistan remained outside the national social protection schemes, vulnerable people – including single-headed households, people with disabilities, children and older refugees – accessed targeted cash assistance to meet their basic needs. This assistance supported families to cover essential expenses, such as housing, food, education and healthcare.

In Tajikistan, in total, 1,701 people, or 326 households, were supported with multipurpose cash grants. Cash assistance for 220 people with chronic diseases helped cover healthcare expenses, including 129 disability allowances, while 459 students used education grants to cover the cost of school uniforms and school supplies.

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

**Refugees and asylum seekers access more livelihood and employment opportunities.**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator				
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider</b>				
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	82.37%	82.37%	95.55%
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	94.35%	94.35%	94.44%

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions</b>		
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	8

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In Kazakhstan, during the 2025-2026 academic year, 10 young refugees – most (eight) of them women – were studying at tertiary level through the DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship programme. UNHCR organized a series of activities for DAFI students and young refugees, including training sessions focused on healthy habits, gender equality, HIV and AIDS prevention, bullying prevention and leadership skills. A summer camp was held with partners for teenage refugees, providing

workshops on entrepreneurial skills, digital marketing, personal branding, presentation skills and financial literacy.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, UNHCR supported eight refugees and asylum-seekers to seek sustainable livelihoods through vocational training and language courses. Through other charitable organizations, 28 refugees and asylum-seekers sought sustainable livelihoods through vocational training and language courses.

Through the DAFI refugee scholarship programme, seven refugee students pursued higher education. One mandate refugee was included in the UN Youth Advisory Board, empowering them to advocate the rights of their community.

In Uzbekistan, with private sector donor support, UNHCR extended a joint project with UNDP focused on enhancing the resilience of communities to extreme weather events and environmental risks. It focused on sand and dust storms experienced by regions bordering Afghanistan. Aligned with national afforestation efforts, the project supported income generation for forcibly displaced Afghan citizens and vulnerable host community members, engaging them in tree-planting activities through a cash-for-work programme while mitigating the damaging impact of the storms.

In 2025, livelihood activities were significantly reduced in Tajikistan due to UNHCR funding challenges and the absence of an implementing partner. Nevertheless, UNHCR implemented the joint project with JICA, to promote livelihoods and enhance self-reliance among refugees and local communities. 55 refugees and local community members completed basic business training, and 25 of them received toolkits to launch their business.

UNHCR supported the bakery class at the Children and Youth Creativity Center in Rudaki. Under the Peaceful Coexistence project, the training classroom was equipped with essential items, including a confectionery worktable, an air conditioner, and a mixer, to enhance the delivery of quality vocational courses for both refugee and local youth. To date, over 20 refugees have participated in the class, strengthening their practical skills and improving their prospects for employment and self-reliance. UNHCR provided winterization support to schools in Rudaki, where many refugees in Tajikistan reside, to ease pressure on local education infrastructure amid a surge in new arrivals from Afghanistan and ongoing electricity outages.

UNHCR also supported a small-scale joint initiative with the OSCE and UN partners through the TechXtile Hub of Excellence and the LOOM (Learning, Opportunity, Optimization and Mastery) programme, where 13 refugees completed a four-month course in textile and graphic design.

In 2025, 41 students pursued higher education at local universities of Tajikistan through the DAFI programme, contributing to their personal development and long-term self-reliance. During the year, 10 students graduated, three were deported, and 28 continued their studies.

## 14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

**Refugees and asylum seekers exercise their right to return in an informed and dignified manner**

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	418
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In Tajikistan, 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 and 90 in 2024 to 357 refugees known to UNHCR in 2025,. In addition, more than 418 people approached UNHCR and received counselling on voluntary repatriation. UNHCR could not track spontaneous returns and record all counseling sessions, meaning the actual number of repatriated refugees and counseling provided was likely higher.

Throughout 2025, deportations of Afghan nationals from Tajikistan became a significant driver of return movements. In particular, the removal of male breadwinners during the second half of the year directly triggered the departure of their wives and children, who returned to Afghanistan to reunite with deported family members. While some refugees cited ongoing social and economic hardship in Tajikistan as a contributing factor in their decision to leave, deportations and pressure from law enforcement were a primary catalyst for family-wide returns.

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

## 16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

**Forcibly displaced and stateless people access pathways for naturalization, status regularization and documentation, and are included in public welfare, social, health and education services alongside nationals**

**Refugees/Asylum- seekers and stateless people are offered pathways to naturalization or regularization of status and documentation.**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Country	Population Type	Indicator		
		Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems</b>				
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	15.94%	0%	0.00%
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	94.35%	94.35%	94.44%

### Core Output Indicators

Country	Population Type	Indicator
		Actual (2025)
<b>16.1.1. Government Social protection system is inclusive of forcibly displaced and stateless people</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Partially
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	Limited
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	Partially
<b>16.2.1 Number of people supported by UNHCR to acquire nationality, permanent residency status or to access naturalization procedures</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	9
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1

Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	733
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	2

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Most governments in the sub-region continued to refrain from resolving protracted refugee situations. With all avenues for integration under national legislation exhausted, UNHCR supported mandate refugees in 2022 to submit petitions to Presidential Administrations in each country, requesting an exceptional grant of citizenship – 18 in Kazakhstan, 120 in the Kyrgyz Republic, 10 in Turkmenistan and six in Uzbekistan.

In 2025, one mandate refugee was granted residency in Turkmenistan, bringing the number of mandate refugees able to stay there legally to five out of 12.

Uzbekistan regularized the stay of all five mandate refugees. However, authorities in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic made no progress in regularizing the stay of the remaining mandate refugees. Without legal status, they were unable to access their social and economic rights and services, including lawful employment, healthcare and social protection. UNHCR continued to follow up with the authorities on this issue.

Following UNHCR advocacy in Kazakhstan, refugee identification cards were added to the list of official documents residents could use to apply for individual identification numbers. These numbers are essential to accessing commercial and Government services in Kazakhstan. Going forward, these individual identification numbers were to be issued to all new refugees. The Government of Kazakhstan included provisions for disability recognition and access to social services for refugee children. New rules for population documentation in Kazakhstan integrated refugees and asylum-seekers into the national registration system.

UNHCR partners in the Kyrgyz Republic interviewed, counselled and conducted legal assessments with asylum-seekers, assisting in the submission of asylum applications. Following UNHCR advocacy, the Kyrgyz Republic adopted a new regulation granting refugees and asylum-seekers access to health care on par with citizens. In 2025, at least 41 refugees and asylum-seekers obtained medical insurances.

### Other Core Output Indicators

Country	Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>07.1.1 Number of people consulted through Participatory Assessments</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	0
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	150
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	60
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0
Turkmenistan	Stateless Persons	0
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	0

<b>07.2.1 Number of people who used UNHCR- supported feedback &amp; response mechanisms to voice their needs/ concerns/feedback</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	72
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	10
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	815
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,100
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10
<b>07.3.1 Number of people who received protection services</b>		
Kazakhstan	Stateless Persons	446
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,053
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,296
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	11,831
Uzbekistan	Stateless Persons	0
<b>15.1.1 Country issues machine-readable travel documents</b>		
Kazakhstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Kyrgyzstan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Kyrgyzstan	Stateless Persons	Yes
Tajikistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Tajikistan	Stateless Persons	Yes
Turkmenistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Uzbekistan	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No

## 2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

Data collected by UNHCR and its partners in the sub-region's five countries was disaggregated by age, gender and diversity, including specific needs. Although this data is used to design programmes and inform strategic priorities, it is not always available from authorities.

UNHCR maintained email and phone 'hotlines' across the five countries for anyone requiring information or consultation on refugee and asylum issues. People forced to flee could find key contacts and updated information about asylum procedures in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in English, Russian and Dari on [www.help.unhcr.org/centralasia](http://www.help.unhcr.org/centralasia).

To collect further information on specific protection needs and adjust programming accordingly, UNHCR conducted meetings with refugees and stateless people in Tajikistan, focusing on livelihoods and refugee status determination procedures in 2025.

With the revision of standard operating procedures for cash assistance in the Kyrgyz Republic, UNHCR conducted home assessment visits using an inclusive questionnaire that allowed data collection not only on age and gender but also on disability and accessibility, to better address expressed and observed needs.

UNHCR met with mandate refugees in Uzbekistan to understand their situation and livelihood needs, as well as employment opportunities available to those who obtained residency. In Turkmenistan, meetings

highlighted existing challenges in accessing formal employment after obtaining residency status.

Refugee and stateless people were integrated into national development programmes to improve their social and economic status. Active UNHCR participation in structures and teams – such as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, national strategies and plans, and working groups including on human rights, gender, and youth – was an important reminder that refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people will not be left behind in the sustainable development of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

## Section 3: Resources

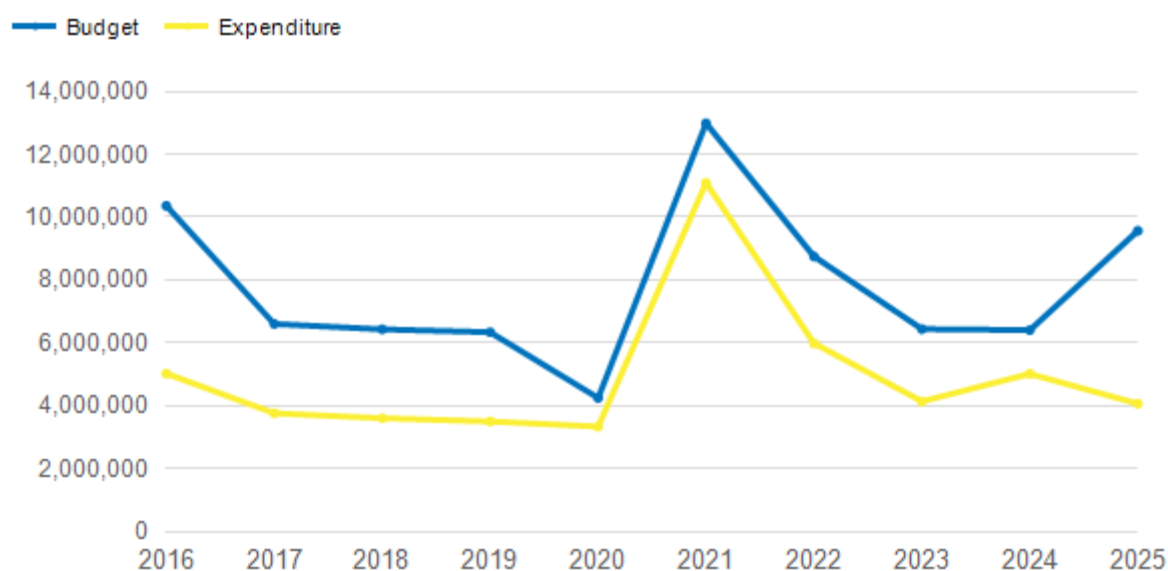
### 3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

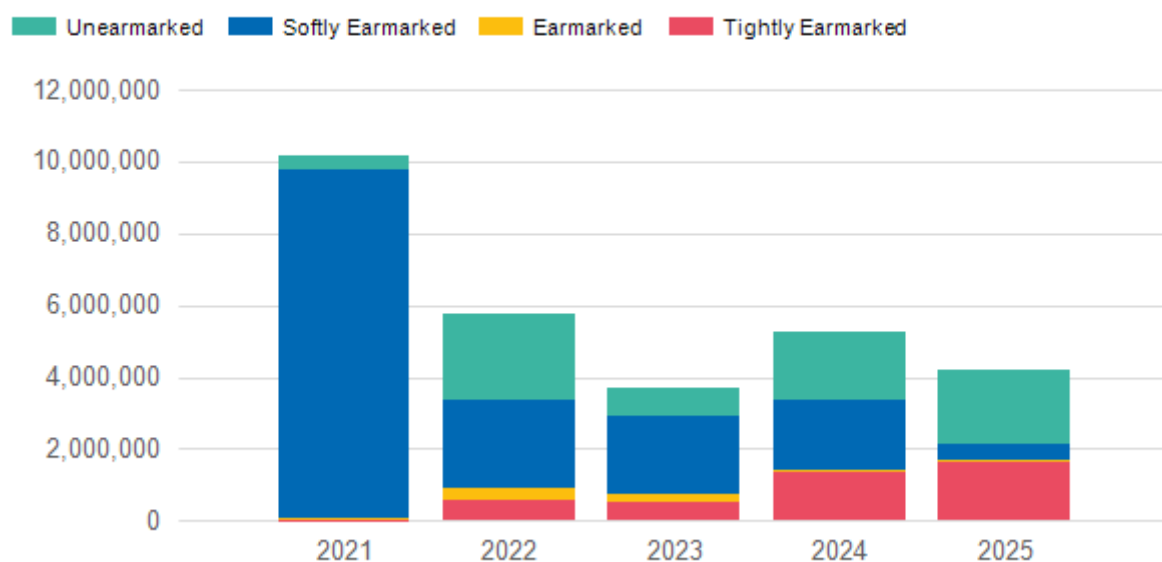
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	5,149,028	1,722,435	33.45%	1,722,435	100.00%
IA4: Solve	4,416,902	2,365,489	53.56%	2,346,687	99.21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,565,929</b>	<b>4,087,924</b>	<b>42.73%</b>	<b>4,069,122</b>	<b>99.54%</b>

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	2,533,371	745,713	29.44%	745,713	100.00%
OA2: Status	1,545,105	500,252	32.38%	500,252	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	1,069,678	653,292	61.07%	653,292	100.00%
OA6: Justice	567,602	266,855	47.01%	266,855	100.00%
OA8: Wellbeing	1,310,532	752,732	57.44%	752,732	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	997,294	291,105	29.19%	272,303	93.54%
OA14: Return	513,373	267,610	52.13%	267,610	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	1,028,974	610,365	59.32%	610,365	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,565,929</b>	<b>4,087,924</b>	<b>42.73%</b>	<b>4,069,122</b>	<b>99.54%</b>

Budget and Expenditure Trend



### Contributions Trend by Type



## 3.2. Resources Overview

In 2025, implementation took place in a challenging political and operational context marked by increased forced returns and a significant reduction in operational capacity, including the downsizing of 78 per cent staff positions and the closure of the field office in Kazakhstan.

UNHCR's programme focused on access to quality national asylum, durable solutions for refugees and reducing statelessness, with a cross-cutting focus on partnerships. Funds were mostly utilized for activities to ensure life-saving cash support to vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees, access to asylum, improve status determination procedures, provide legal counselling services, and advocate for harmonization of local frameworks with the 1951 Convention.

In response to the increased vulnerability of asylum-seekers and refugees and new budget limitations, UNHCR increased resource mobilization efforts. Unearmarked and softly earmarked funding enabled UNHCR to support governments' inclusive policies, and advocate for protection space for refugees and asylum-seekers.

## Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

### 4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

UNHCR maintained its programmes and activities across Central Asia through proactive engagement and close collaboration with forcibly displaced and stateless people, the United Nations, governments, civil society, academia, donors and other partners.

Amid global humanitarian funding constraints that limited operational capacity, UNHCR strengthened internal coordination and prioritized interventions to maximize protection impact. Expanding needs, combined with constrained resources, reinforced the importance of broad partnerships, which proved pivotal safeguarding protection space – fostering inclusion and supporting integration.

Where resources permitted, UNHCR pursued joint activities and projects at the regional and country levels, leveraging partnerships to implement programmes that bridge humanitarian and development objectives. Challenges faced by host governments, such as shifting priorities, limited budget allocations, and evolving political contexts require careful planning and investment to sustain effective responses.

Partnerships with experienced local NGOs and efforts to strengthen localization remained central to UNHCR's implementation model. Consistent with the humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach, UNHCR worked alongside development partners and international financial institutions to link humanitarian assistance with longer-term, sustainable solutions.

UNHCR will continue to maintain strong engagement with governments, advocating for the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers and ensuring that no one is left behind. Collaboration with a broad range of partners across the sub-region will support the advancement of protection, the reinforcement of national asylum systems, and the promotion of sustainable solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless people. These efforts underline UNHCR's commitment to strategic, inclusive, and context-sensitive programming that responds to evolving needs and priorities.



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