

# PAKISTAN

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## INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Support the voluntary repatriation of Afghans in safety and dignity. UNHCR will register all Afghans wanting to return home and provide them with basic non-food items.
- Provide protection and emergency assistance to newly arrived Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and maintain a level of preparedness to respond to a potential refugee influx.
- Provide protection and community-based assistance to Afghans in existing refugee villages.
- Promote resettlement for those refugees for whom this may be the only durable solution.
- Provide, in co-ordination with NGOs and governmental institutions, additional support mostly in health and education, to vulnerable urban Afghan refugees pending their repatriation or resettlement.
- Identify suitable durable solutions (i.e. repatriation or resettlement) for non-Afghan refugees. Provide protection and basic assistance to them during their stay in Pakistan.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRESS ACHIEVED, AND CONSTRAINTS

Following the departure of the Taliban and the establishment of the Afghanistan Interim Administration (AIA), UNHCR's Pakistan programme underwent a major reorientation. The Office prepared for a massive repatriation operation, while still providing basic relief items (tents, blankets and kitchen sets) to some 300,000 Afghans who fled Afghanistan in the aftermath of 11 September. Limited assistance was also provided to long-staying Afghan refugees in the country.

At the beginning of the year, refugees continued to arrive in Pakistan's south-eastern province of Baluchistan. By mid-February, UNHCR had pre-registered some 46,000 new arrivals at the Killi Faizo staging camp. The refugees were then transferred to new camps in the Chaman area.

In mid-February, the Government of Pakistan ordered the indefinite suspension of pre-registration, leaving some 20,000 Afghans stranded at the Chaman border near Quetta. Over the next four months, UNHCR and its partners negotiated with the authorities on critical life-saving assistance for them. At the same time, UNHCR, in co-ordination with the AIA pursued a voluntary return programme for these new arrivals and offered to relocate those who could not return to their places of origin to temporary camp sites near Kandahar.

More than 100,000 new arrivals were transferred from urban areas in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Baluchistan and the makeshift Jalojai camp, to 16 new camps in those provinces. By the end of June, after the relocation of these Afghan refugees, and following the start of the repatriation operation, the population in the new camps stood at just over 200,000.

UNHCR in co-operation with several international and local NGOs, provided assistance in the form of water, education and community services to the Afghans. WFP arranged monthly food distributions.

By March 2002, UNHCR had facilitated the return of over one million urban Afghans from Pakistan. UNHCR registered returnees at seven fixed Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRCs): three in the NWFP, two in Karachi, one in Islamabad and one in Quetta. Way stations were established in NWFP, Sindh and Baluchistan, allowing

Afghans travelling long distances to rest before continuing their journey home.

As a result of the high demand for voluntary repatriation (sometimes up to 10,000 Afghan refugees approached the VRC in one day), UNHCR opened a scheduling centre and deployed mobile teams to regulate the daily flow of returns. The Office also increased its planning figures for 2002, from 400,000 to 1.2 million persons. At the same time, UNHCR curtailed the transportation grants given to Afghans returning to provinces bordering Pakistan, such as Nangarhar and Kandahar, in order to avoid distributing transportation grants to the same individual/family twice. The Office also refined the verification processes in order to reduce the number of fraudulent applications for voluntary repatriation. From January to June 2002, UNHCR rejected over 20 per cent of the applications received.

In Pakistan, UNHCR worked with the Government, UN agencies and NGOs on the repatriation operation. Sub-agreements were signed with eight partners to implement the voluntary repatriation operation, which is labour-intensive, and requires the rapid recruitment of staff.

According to Government estimates, some 1.2 million Afghan refugees live in the long-standing villages in NWFP and another 215,000 in Baluchistan. Few refugees repatriated to their place of origin from the old camps, with the exception of the Afghans from the Nasir Bagh camp, a twenty-year old site. By the end of May 2002, most of the Afghans repatriating from the Nasir Bagh camp had returned to Afghanistan with UNHCR assistance or had relocated on their own. The Office provided

those remaining in the old camps with some limited assistance in primary education, basic health care, community services and safe drinking water. Providing safe drinking water has been a challenge for UNHCR, due to the ongoing drought in the country. The Office, in co-ordination with UNDP, is in the process of discussing/planning the rehabilitation of some refugee-hosting areas, in order to reduce the burden of long-staying Afghans on the Government and people of Pakistan.

Cases of long-staying refugees are continuously being submitted for resettlement. Immediately after 11 September, the prospect for the resettlement of refugees diminished as embassies reduced their operating capacities, and resettlement countries became more stringent with their criteria for resettlement. UNHCR will review long-standing cases in the second half of 2002 and will counsel refugees to consider other options, such as voluntary repatriation, if applicable.

From January to May 2002, some 1,340 refugees applied for resettlement, of which 1240 were Afghan and 100 non-Afghan. From January to June 2002, only 300 Afghans were resettled. 1,250 refugees were accepted for resettlement, but still remain in Pakistan.

By June 2002, UNHCR had recognised 1,020 persons as refugees and provided them with basic assistance. Most were from Iran, Iraq and Somalia. Durable solutions were provided for non-Afghan refugees through resettlement or repatriation, where applicable.

**Progress as measured against indicators**

<b>Impact/Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Actual Progress</b>
Provided protection and humanitarian assistance for newly arrived Afghan refugees in camps.	UNHCR registered some 300,000 new arrivals and moved them into 16 officially recognised camps located in Baluchistan and NWFP. The Office deployed additional staff to Baluchistan to provide humanitarian assistance and to meet the needs of the Afghan refugees.
400,000 Afghans voluntarily repatriated to their place of origin in conditions of safety and dignity.	Over one million Afghans registered for and received assistance to repatriate home from March to June 2002. The voluntary repatriation operation was supported by

	seven VRCs, four scheduling centres, one referral centre, three way stations, and four mobile teams, which are in place and operational. UNHCR closed the Nasr Bagh camp.
Refugees living in camps had access to health care, water, and education.	UNHCR provided medical assistance to the refugees. The Office also provided them with soap bars and detergent, as well as chlorine powder to purify the water. UNHCR collected and disposed of garbage and solid waste from all the camps, and as a result, there were no outbreaks of epidemic diseases reported in the camps. The Office provided new arrivals with standard food rations, avoiding high malnutrition amongst the refugees. UNHCR built primary schools and provided textbooks to refugee children. More than 132,000 children from the existing camps enrolled in 450 schools.
Development of protection-based solutions, such as resettlement for Afghan and non-Afghan refugees, for whom return is not a viable option.	From January to June 2002, 300 Afghans and 20 Iraqis were resettled in a third country. 1,250 refugees were accepted for resettlement, but remain in Pakistan pending final authorisation for travel.

### REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY-DECEMBER 2002

In addition, to pursuing the initial objectives, the Office will implement the following specific priorities:

- Provide vulnerable refugees in the existing camps with vocational skills-training in trades useful for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan through the help of local and international NGOs.
- Carry out a re-registration in the new camps in Baluchistan and NWFP, in order to better assess the needs of refugees.
- Further integrate the needs of women and children into the assistance programme in

Pakistan. UNHCR in co-ordination with its implementing partner will provide individual counselling, non-formal education, as well as opportunities for women to participate in income-generating projects.

- Evaluate and streamline the assistance programme to better meet the needs of the remaining refugees in the existing camps, in light of the ongoing repatriation.
- To better ensure the sustainability of the assistance programme, devolve a greater degree of responsibility to implementing partners for the provision of protection and humanitarian assistance for refugees.

### Financial Data (USD)

Annual Programme Budget				Supplementary Programme Budget			
Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available	Obligation Level	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available	Obligation Level
24,771,574	24,796,519	18,025,256	12,154,550	0	28,982,603	13,912,556	14,744,470