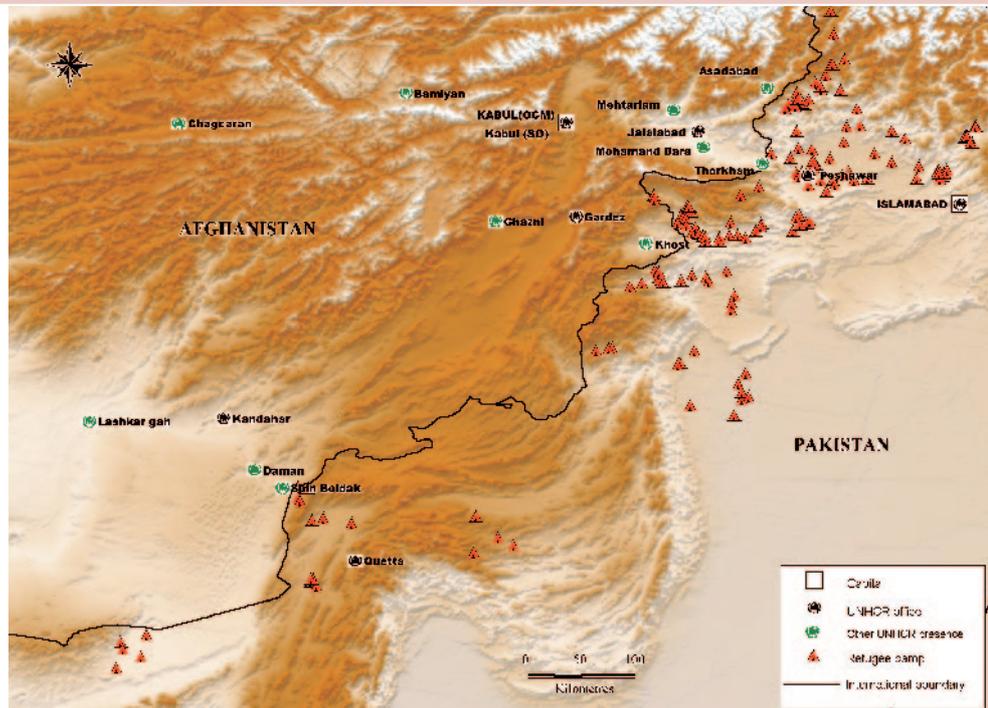


Pakistan

Main Objectives

- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees.
- Provide international protection to Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers unable to repatriate in the near future.
- Make maximum use of partnerships with UN agencies and implementing partners to deliver better assistance to vulnerable refugees living in camps.
- Seek durable solutions for refugees (Afghan and others) including repatriation where feasible and resettlement where appropriate.
- Continue consolidation of the new camps established as a result of post-September 2001 emergency.



Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2003	Dec. 2003
Refugees	1,500,000 ¹	900,000
Asylum-Seekers	1,400	1,400
Total	1,501,400	901,400

¹ Estimate of number of refugees living in refugee villages and receiving assistance.

Working Environment

Recent Developments

Pakistan continues to host one of the world's largest refugee populations, including some 1.5 million Afghans living in refugee villages in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Baluchistan and Punjab. The Government estimates that there are in addition around 1.6 million Afghans in urban centres in NWFP, Baluchistan, Punjab and Sindh. The number of Afghan refugees increased by roughly 215,000 after the 11 September attacks and the subsequent strikes against Afghanistan. These new refugees are currently hosted in the 16 new camps built after September 2001.

One of the main developments in 2002, following the peace agreement for Afghanistan that was signed in Bonn in December 2001, was the massive return of Afghans to their home country.

Between March and September 2002 UNHCR assisted some 1.5 million Afghan returnees. Most of them went back from urban areas: Peshawar, Karachi, Quetta, Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The challenge for 2003 will be to assist those among the remaining urban refugees who want to go home, and to find alternative solutions for those who cannot go back or do not wish to do so.

Aware of Afghanistan's limited capacity to absorb massive numbers of returnees, the Government of Pakistan has indicated that Afghans will not be forced to leave – despite strong public pressure to see refugees depart. The Government does, however, hope that many of the refugees will depart promptly, particularly those settled in urban areas, or that they will at least leave the urban areas and

move to the existing camps. UNHCR and the Government have reached a broad understanding that they will jointly address the issue of the refugees who want to stay in Pakistan, in accordance with international standards.

Constraints

Pakistan has not acceded to the 1951 Convention on the status of refugees and the current protection situation is determined by the Government's asylum policies, which include the continued closure of the border and the enforcement of the Foreigners Act. Under this law, foreigners not in possession of valid permits are categorised as illegal immigrants and may therefore be arrested and even deported.

Despite the Government's assertions that Afghans will not be forced to go home, UNHCR has found itself obliged to raise its concerns (as it has with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran) regarding the forcible return of Afghans.

It is extremely difficult to protect and assist refugees in the new camps located in the tribal areas near the border with Afghanistan, especially in Baluchistan where four years of drought have drastically lowered water tables. Security (for refugees and for aid workers) in this part of the country is fragile, and a number of implementing partners have withdrawn from the area over the course of the year.

Strategy

Protection and Solutions

The present planning assumption is that up to 600,000 persons will opt to return in 2003. UNHCR will, as in 2002, register Afghans for voluntary repatriation, interview candidates to ensure that return is voluntary and the refugees really intend to return for good. Border monitors will oversee all border crossings to make sure that the return takes place in a safe and dignified manner. (More information on the repatriation operation can be found in the Addendum to this Appeal).

UNHCR will continue its efforts to create a favourable asylum regime in Pakistan so that new asylum-seekers are allowed to enter and all refugees have access to internationally accepted minimum standards of protection. The office plans to carry out further surveys of the Afghan refugee population as the first step in an effort to find durable solutions, particularly for those who do not wish to return home. Many of those living in the refugee settlements have been in Pakistan for up to 20 years. Some have seen children and grandchildren born in exile. Novel solutions will have to be found: such as legitimising long-term residence and securing the right to work in Pakistan. UNHCR will try to promote refugee law and rights, and establish legal advice centres for refugees.

UNHCR is planning to use a community-based approach to address the problems experienced by some female refugees in Pakistan. Animators, trainers, volunteers and committees drawn from the female camp population will ensure that medical and health personnel are trained to recognise and counsel cases of sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR will also train its staff and the staff of NGOs working with refugees on the rights of children, and establish children's groups and youth groups in the camps. By doing this, UNHCR hopes to raise awareness and stimulate more work with Afghan children and youth in the refugee villages.

The Office will endeavour to ensure the protection of non-Afghan refugees in Pakistan. These refugees are mostly Somali (44 per cent), Iraqis, principally Kurdish in origin (27 per cent), and Iranians (23 per cent). Some six per cent are of other nationalities. They live mostly in Islamabad and Rawalpindi and women head around 45 per cent of the households. The Government considers all non-Afghan refugees to be "illegal migrants" thus they have no legal access to employment or public services. The majority wish to be resettled, but many have already been rejected several times by different resettlement countries. Voluntary repatriation may thus be the only solution for some of these refugees and therefore repatriation counselling will be intensified. If refugees are unable or unwilling to return, UNHCR will make special requests to the Government to ask for exceptional authorisation for them to seek employment in Pakistan.



Afghan refugees wishing to return home are registered at the Takhta Baig Transit Centre near Peshawar. Upon reaching their destination, each family receives a plastic tarpaulin, soap and a hygiene package from UNHCR, plus wheat flour from an implementing partner.
UNHCR / P. Benetar

Assistance

UNHCR principally assists people living in refugee villages and camps, providing only very limited support to refugees in the urban centres of Peshawar, Quetta, Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Afghans who arrived in 2000 and 2001 and who are living in the new camps will continue to receive basic assistance (including food and domestic items such as kitchen sets, jerry cans and blankets), in addition to community-based healthcare, primary education, and clean water and sanitation facilities. Refugees who arrived earlier will continue to have access to community based assistance but will receive no food or household items.

The aim of the water supply schemes is to give camp residents at least 15 litres of water per person per day. Refugees can receive primary healthcare at the basic health units, and education at the primary schools in the refugee villages. UNHCR will encourage refugees to keep up and improve basic

services themselves, and train community members in areas such as healthcare. UNHCR will continue to work on the links it established in 2002 with other agencies (notably UNDP) in order to rehabilitate refugee-impacted areas.

The organisation will also continue to provide some basic assistance to the mostly Somali, Iraqi and Iranian refugees, the majority of whom live in or near the capital. These refugees, who are seen as “illegal immigrants” by the authorities, are nevertheless allowed to remain in Pakistan pending the identification of a durable solution elsewhere. During this time UNHCR provides them with basic assistance including subsistence allowances, healthcare and education.

Desired Impact

UNHCR will facilitate the voluntary return of Afghans to their homes, in safety and dignity, and endeavour to ensure the protection and security of those

refugees who remain in Pakistan. The office will focus on increasing refugees' self-reliance and participation in community-based activities in refugee villages. It will also advocate the rehabilitation of refugee-impacted areas and try to encourage development agencies to help with this important task.

Organisation and Implementation

Management Structure

While all issues related to the voluntary repatriation and initial reintegration of Afghan refugees are co-ordinated from Kabul, the UNHCR Representative for Pakistan is responsible for the Pakistan country programme.

Co-ordination

UNHCR activities are carried out in collaboration with the Government and with the support of national and international NGOs and UN agencies. Activities relating to the repatriation operation are closely co-ordinated with organisations working in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, and tripartite contacts have been established between the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan and UNHCR.

Offices

Islamabad

Peshawar
Quetta
Karachi

Partners

NGOs

Action Contre la Faim
Afghan Medical Welfare Association
BEST
Church World Service
Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
Frontier Primary Health Care
Health Net International
International Catholic Migration Committee
International Rescue Committee
Intersos
Kuwait Joint Relief Committee
Mercy Corps International
Ockenden International
Pakistan Red Crescent Society
Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani Welfare Organisation
Save the Children Fund
Savera Counselling Services
Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid
Skills for Employment and Self-Employment
Union Aid for Afghan Refugees

Budget (USD)

Country	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	3,478,006
Community Services	856,897
Domestic Needs	985,511
Education	7,962,418
Food	268,915
Health	6,200,597
Legal Assistance	1,713,560
Operational Support (to Agencies)	1,041,531
Sanitation	419,735
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	400,000
Transport/Logistics	152,581
Water	1,063,155
Total Operations	24,542,906
Programme Support	2,082,413
Total	26,625,319