

# PAKISTAN

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## INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Support the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees, by making transportation available and offering repatriation grants.
- Protect and assist new arrivals and work with the Government to identify those in need of international protection through joint screening committees.
- Continue limited community-based assistance in refugee villages.
- Conduct skills-training and literacy classes for refugee women to increase self-sufficiency.
- Provide a rapid response for vulnerable refugees, especially women-at-risk and refugees facing security problems, for whom resettlement may be the only durable solution.
- Work with a network of NGOs to support vulnerable urban non-Afghan refugees.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

### *Afghan Refugees*

The Government of Pakistan enforced its decision to close its border with Afghanistan in January and thereby prevented significant numbers of asylum-seekers from entering Pakistan. The authorities considered the estimated 180,000 Afghans who entered the country without travel documents as illegal migrants. A number of Afghans were deported and the general harassment of the Afghan population, which amounts to more than 2 million, worsened. The Government opposed the registration of recently arrived Afghans in the makeshift camp of Jalozai and allowed only limited assistance to reach the camp. Despite the support of key donor countries and the UN country team, UNHCR's attempts to pursue registration through negotiations with the Government at

the central and provincial levels remained unsuccessful. The UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Kenzo Oshima, as well as the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, visited the region in March. They encouraged the Government to work with the UN to provide assistance to the new arrivals, while assuring them of the UN's commitment to provide aid to the internally displaced in Afghanistan. In May, UNHCR offered to undertake a joint screening exercise with the Government to determine the status of the Jalozai population and requested that screening be conducted at the relevant border points to ensure that Afghans in need of international protection could continue to seek and enjoy asylum in Pakistan.

The Government's counterproposal rejected screening of new arrivals, focused on the screening of the Afghans in Jalozai and in the refugee village of Naserbagh, and insisted on the immediate deportation of those not in need of protection. Although deportations were temporarily suspended, the residents of Naserbagh were given notice of eviction by 30 June as the Government planned to implement a low-income housing scheme in the area. As a result of the negotiations a screening mechanism was set up in Naserbagh and Jalozai to safeguard the rights of those in need of international protection.

Voluntary repatriation, which had been interrupted in November 2000, could not be resumed due to increased fighting, drought and deteriorating humanitarian conditions inside Afghanistan. However, as the living conditions for Afghans in Pakistan worsened, people began returning spontaneously. WFP agreed to support the voluntary repatriation of Jalozai residents, irrespective of their areas of return, and the voluntary repatriation of Afghans living elsewhere in Pakistan to areas conducive to return. WFP reduced the food package from

300 to 150 kg of wheat (citing resource constraints), UNHCR decided to increase the repatriation grant for future repatriation from Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000, to partially compensate for the steady devaluation of the Pakistani currency.

In order to safeguard those in need of international protection, negotiations with the Government continue. The negotiations are based on a draft Memorandum of Understanding that recognises the option of voluntary repatriation but stresses the importance of identifying those in need of international protection, who should be allowed to stay in Pakistan, at least temporarily.

Refugees who were transferred from Jalozai to New Shamshatoo camp received adequate assistance in terms of health, water, sanitation, domestic needs, shelter, education and community services from UNHCR and NGOs with independent funding. In contrast, Afghans who were not allowed by the Government to move remained subject to difficult and cramped conditions in the Jalozai camp. Eventually UNHCR, NGOs and private donors obtained permission to provide basic assistance in order to mitigate these conditions. Thus, from April onwards the refugees enjoyed a reasonable level of health care and water supplies, although shelter and sanitation facilities remained inadequate. Pending an agreement by the government to allow for the registration of the camp population and the allocation of more land, lack of space and the ability to provide targeted assistance continue to be the main problems.

As UNHCR has not been able to register some 2,000 families, who arrived in Akora Khattak in May 2000, these families have not received assistance. To remedy the situation, UNHCR and WFP agreed to a joint assessment of the needs of this population.

The majority of the Afghan refugees live in some 200 refugee villages with access to basic health services, including

immunisation, mother and child health care as well as reproductive health services. UNHCR procured medicines for all the health units while refugees contributed towards medical services, the purchase of basic drugs and maintenance of the health units. Community health workers played a key role in strengthening the linkage between the refugee community and the health units. Three National Polio Immunisation campaigns were successfully conducted in the refugee camps.

UNHCR funded 361 primary schools that were attended by 133,983 children. UNHCR tried to increase enrolment of female students through the establishment of girls' schools and classrooms, hiring of female teachers and home-based schools for older or married girls. However, the recruitment of female teachers, especially in the remote refugee camps, proved difficult. In the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) 16 new schools were established, eleven for girls, three for boys and two for co-education. School management committees and parents-teacher associations involved parents in the education of their children and created a feeling of ownership and responsibility. All schools received textbooks and classroom supplies.

UNHCR maintained the water supply schemes to ensure safe drinking water. The refugees themselves paid for maintenance, electricity and fuel through the water management committees. While the objective had been to supply 25 litres of water per day per person, the refugees received on average only 15-20 litres per day per person due to the drought and the frequent breakdowns of the 20 year old water distribution system. In Baluchistan 90 per cent and in the NWFP 50 per cent of shallow wells and hand pumps were affected by the lowering water table. In some areas even the deep tube wells were affected. Whenever feasible, shallow wells were dug and hand pumps installed to back-up the existing water systems.

A total of 1,646 persons were submitted for resettlement, of which 956 were women at risk and 652 were individuals facing

legal/physical protection problems. So far, 772 persons have been accepted, 92 have been rejected and 771 are waiting for a decision. To date, 575 persons have actually departed. Although the total number of resettled has already exceeded the total reached in 1999, the majority of departures were cases that had already been submitted in 2000.

A notable achievement was the successful implementation of the Women-at-Risk referral project, under which 219 persons

were resettled. Of those resettled, the majority went to the US, with smaller numbers settling in Australia, Canada and Europe. During the first months of the year only a few resettlement submissions were made due to a number of problems, including the implementation of new refugee status determination procedures, which involved the hiring and training of new staff. These problems have now been overcome.

**Progress as measured against selected indicators**

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Number of persons/ families who have repatriated in the course of 2001	No repatriation took place due to prevailing conditions in Afghanistan
Number of refugees verified to be new arrivals and transferred to New Shamshatoo and receiving adequate assistance	Some 4,260 families/21,000 individuals were verified and transferred to New Shamshatoo, while 80,000 individuals remained in Jalozai after the Government halted the operation
Number of children who have acquired or consolidated knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding relevant education.	133,983 children attended 361 UNHCR-funded primary schools
Increased overall enrolment and retention ratios, especially among girls	Overall there was a 7.5 per cent increase in enrolment compared to 2000. However, there were signs of a decrease in girls' enrolment attributed to the closure of the WFP oil-for-education programme
Malnutrition rate among children under 1 year compared to WHO standards, i.e. under 5 per cent	Malnutrition rate 2.7 per cent
Vaccination coverage for children under 1 year compared to the WHO standard of 95 per cent TT vaccination coverage for women of reproductive age compared to the WHO standard of 80 per cent	Vaccination coverage 95 per cent TT vaccination coverage 70 per cent

***Non-Afghan Refugees***

There are 1,200 non-Afghan refugees living in urban centres. The majority of them are Somalis (35.5 per cent), Iranians (22.1 per cent) and Iraqis (22.1 per cent). All received UNHCR subsistence allowances and medical and educational assistance as required. The community centre, which had been closed in 2000 due to lack of funds, was re-opened.

The Government continued to tolerate the presence of these non-Afghan refugees pending the identification of a durable solution. In the first six months, 295 persons were submitted for resettlement, of which 11 were women at risk and 229 had legal/physical protection concerns. Of all submissions, 105 were accepted and 49 were rejected, while most are still awaiting a decision. To date, 427 refugees have departed.

### Progress as measured against selected indicators

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Number of registered refugees who receive subsistence allowances	On average 355 cases received subsistence allowances every month
Number of registered refugees who receive medical assistance	107 refugees received outpatient care and 21 inpatient care. Nine asylum-seekers received medical assistance
Number of children receiving primary education	80 out of 107 school-age children were accepted at and attended educational institutions

### REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY – DECEMBER

UNHCR will continue to focus on the protection of refugees and the creation of an improved asylum regime, which ensures the respect for and adherence to internationally accepted standards for the treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees. Comprehensive assistance for new arrivals, limited community-based support in refugee villages, repatriation assistance for those who return voluntarily, and capacity-building measures for governmental institutions and NGOs will continue.

UNHCR faces a new challenge with regard to non-Afghan refugees who meet the resettlement criteria, but whose submissions have been rejected by several countries and whose resettlement files have been closed. The Somali refugees are a case in point, as most resettlement countries have a policy of resettling Somali refugees only from Africa. UNHCR will therefore explore the possibility of obtaining legal residence permits on an exceptional basis for these refugees. Furthermore, UNHCR will:

- Identify those in need of international protection and negotiate with the Government in order to ensure that those identified are allowed to remain in Pakistan, and that new arrivals are screened.
- Continue to provide community-based assistance to refugees so that they have access to health care, primary education and potable water, but pursue discussions with the Government, donors, and implementing partners to identify ways for UNHCR to hand over these activities to partners, while retaining a co-ordinating role.
- Facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to areas where repatriation is feasible and sustainable.
- Hold discussions with resettlement countries to secure places for the increasing number of refugees who approach the office seeking resettlement opportunities and who meet the resettlement criteria. For the remainder of the year, UNHCR's target is to submit 3,600 persons for consideration to third countries.
- Continue to work with two local NGOs to assist the urban Afghan refugees.

### FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available <sup>1</sup>	Total Funds Obligated
<b>APB</b>	18,377,812	21,923,881	12,563,871	9,930,814

<sup>1</sup>Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the regional, sub-regional and/or country level, opening balance and adjustments.