

Progress Report  
2014

# Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees







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Photo: UNHCR/S.Rich

Cover Photo: UNHCR/S.Rich

## KEY FIGURES

**2.6 million**

Afghan refugees worldwide

**2.5 million**

Afghan refugees hosted by the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan

**5.8 million**

Afghan refugee returnees since 2002

**20%**

of the total population in Afghanistan are returnees

**24,400**

Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan resettled in third countries from 1996-2014

**50%**

of Afghan refugees are children

**8,600**

Number of claims lodged by Unaccompanied or Separated Children from Afghanistan in 2014

## INTRODUCTION

After more than three decades of protracted displacement, Afghan refugees still constitute the world's largest protracted refugee population under UNHCR's mandate, with some 2.6 million persons. While Afghan refugees are dispersed across more than 70 countries, an overwhelming 95 per cent of them (approximately 2.5 million) continue to be hosted by just two countries - the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan. The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR) remains the main regional framework for joint interventions aimed at identification and implementation of lasting solutions and providing support to host countries. Developed by the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, with the support of UNHCR, the SSAR was endorsed by the international community in May 2012. It is structured around the following five key outcomes:

- Support to voluntary repatriation
- Access to shelter and essential social services for refugees, returnees and host communities
- Improved and diversified livelihood opportunities and enhanced food security
- Social and environmental protection of refugees and returnees, as well as assistance and support to host communities
- Capacity development of national authorities, associations, organizations and communities concerned with refugees, returnees and host communities

Since 2012, there have been concerted efforts by the three Governments and UNHCR to operationalize the strategy, including the development of country specific portfolios of projects in 2014.<sup>1</sup> More than 50 Government agencies, humanitarian and development actors, including UN agencies, international organizations and NGOs were engaged in the formulation of the country specific portfolios, which were designed around the interlinked sectors of education, health and livelihoods.

According to the projects listed in these portfolios, the total financial requirements for all partners involved in the SSAR in the three countries amounted to USD 707 million in 2014 (please see Annex I for more information). The portfolios offer an integrated framework for multilateral cooperation and coordination in each country.

UNHCR and its partners have developed and implemented projects within this framework based on assessed needs and available resources. The present progress report details the key operational achievements in each country by UNHCR and its partners, under the five outcomes of the SSAR in 2014.

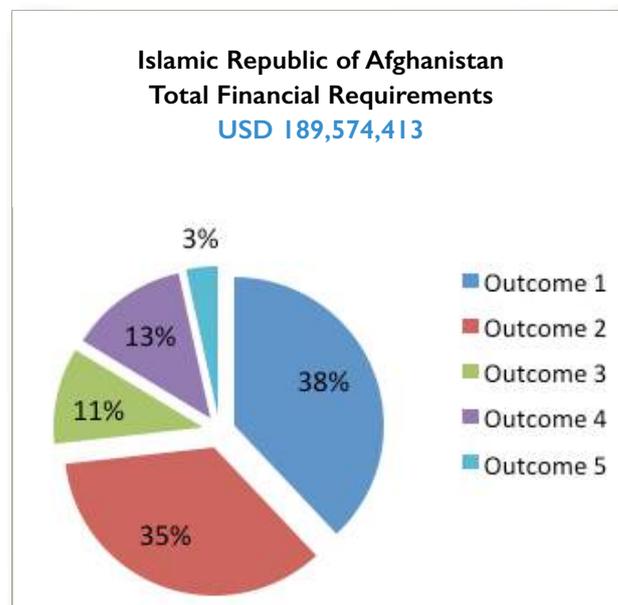
<sup>1</sup> The respective country portfolios of projects for the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan are available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4f9016576.html>

# KEY OPERATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

## Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

### Outcome 1: Support to voluntary repatriation

- In 2014, a total of 16,957 Afghan refugees voluntarily repatriated from the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan. The provinces receiving the highest numbers of returnees in Afghanistan include Kabul, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Baghlan and Kandahar.
- In view of the rising commodity prices and transportation costs, the cash grant provided to returnees was increased from USD 150 to USD 200 per person to cover transportation expenses and initial reintegration activities.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with local partners provided assistance to 1,616 vulnerable individuals (60 per cent male and 40 per cent female). Approximately 9 per cent of the total beneficiaries were local community members.
- 3,429 vulnerable returnees families were provided with winterization packages including NFIs, hygiene items, and fuel.
- Border monitoring was conducted in order to track population movements and provide information to returning refugees. A total of 1,909 interviews were conducted. Information was gathered on return trends, push/pull factors and information received prior to departure regarding the conditions in the country of origin, to ensure that return continues to be both well-informed and voluntary.
- Returnee monitoring targeted nearly 700 families across the country. Monitoring was conducted using mobile teams to identify protection issues that could affect reintegration including the lack of documentation or lack of access to healthcare, education facilities and other basic services.
- In coordination with UNHCR's Pakistan office, one go-and-see visit was organized to Laghman province, aiming at enabling refugees in Pakistan to make an informed decision on return. Teams were composed of refugee elders (male and female) and UNHCR staff from both countries.



## Outcome 2: Access to shelter and essential services

### Land/Shelter

- A total of 3,038 shelter units were constructed in return areas (503 in Central and Central Highlands, 844 in Northern, 368 in Western, 300 in South-eastern and 1,023 in Eastern Regions), benefitting 18,228 individuals. Of the 503 shelters in the Central and Central Highlands Regions, 263 were constructed through the provision of cash-transfer approach.

Impact indicators	Baseline	Target	Year-End
% of households living in adequate dwellings	17	100	51.12
Performance Indicators			
# of Long-term/permanent shelter provided and sustained	N.A.	5,943	3,038

### Access to essential social services

- 167 community-based projects were implemented in return areas across the country in order to promote peaceful coexistence and relieve any possible tensions within the community. The majority of the projects were related to access to water. These included 142 potable-water wells, a hydropower/electrical project, a water-supply project, flood-protection walls (four projects), and the rehabilitation of a water-irrigation system.
- The construction of a water-pipe scheme, the purification of existing water points and the construction of 170 tube wells, supported under the SSAR, benefited 1,224 returnees and host community members. One wind-powered electricity plant was constructed which benefitted 1,795 persons.
- Six schools were constructed (including boundary walls for schools, provision of school furniture, solar lighting, and rehabilitation of co-educational rooms).

## Outcome 3: Improved and diversified livelihood opportunities and enhanced food security

- 15 vocational-training and livelihood projects were implemented for vulnerable returnees in five regions of the country, reaching over 5,800 returnees. The main focus was to empower vulnerable women, men and youth through marketable job skills, providing productive assets and enhancing business-development skills. The skills covered by these trainings included weaving and handicrafts, carpentry, tailoring and plumbing, bee keeping, animal husbandry/livestock management, agriculture/saffron production and community technology access.
- Cross-border activities took place with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Improved information sharing on the labor market and the support network of public and private sector entities in Afghanistan will improve the effectiveness of job placement initiatives in facilitating voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration.

#### **Outcome 4: Social and environmental protection of refugees and returnees, as well as assistance and support to host communities**

- The Information, Counseling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) programme targeting returnees, refugees, IDPs, and extremely vulnerable local community members was implemented in collaboration with UNHCR's partners. The ICLA programme reached a total of 98,682 beneficiaries, 6,569 of which were provided support through UNHCR projects in Kandahar, Kunar and Jalalabad. ICLA registered 132 legal cases (1,593 individual beneficiaries) and of these cases 78 were resolved.
- Capacity-building activities targeting legal practitioners and members of informal conflict-resolution mechanisms, such as shuras and jirgas took place. A total of 46 trainings reaching 1,237 participants were facilitated.

#### **Outcome 5: Capacity development of national authorities, associations, organisations and communities concerned with refugees, returnee and host communities**

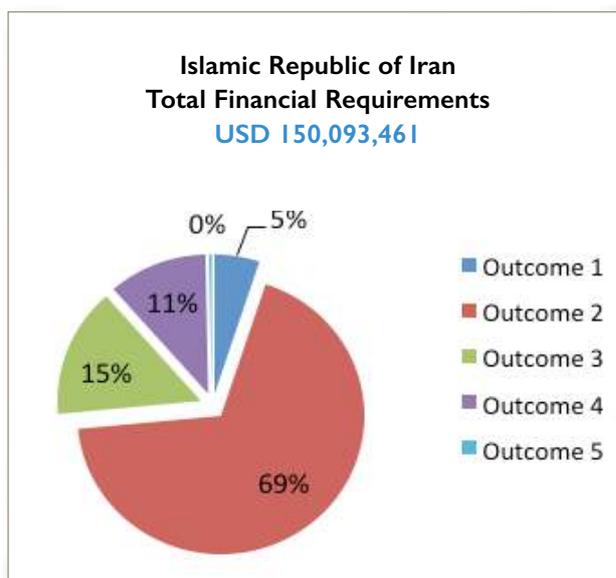
- A legal assistance project was implemented in Kandahar to facilitate access to formal and informal justice systems in order to resolve disputes and problems faced by returnees, IDPs and vulnerable members of the community. Capacity building on formal and informal justice systems and right-awareness trainings were provided. 122 housing, land and property documents were provided, family disputes and loan recoveries mediated, eight trainings for 351 informal justice representatives conducted, 181 civil documentation-cases registered, and 246 community-right awareness and outreach sessions provided.
- A total of 67 community-based groups, including female shuras/associations, were formed. These actively participated in the implementation of initiatives to reduce the risk of SGBV in the communities.
- Stronger coordination has been established through SGBV Sub-Cluster, the Gender Working Group, the UN Joint Task Force, the Psychosocial Support Working Group, the Child Protection in Emergency Sub-Cluster, the Trafficking Task Force, and the Elimination of Violence against Women Special Fund. Technical support was provided to diverse bodies such as agencies, working groups and task forces providing SGBV prevention and response.

<b>SSAR Outcomes</b>	<b>Funds received and spent by UNHCR and its partners in Afghanistan (USD)</b>	<b>Financial Requirements for UNHCR and its partners for Afghanistan (USD)</b>	<b>Total Financial Requirements in the SSAR portfolio</b>
1.Voluntary Repatriation	10,727,931	41,012,147	72,077,558
2.Access to essential services and shelter	12,727,938	33,735,529	66,728,576
3.Livelihoods and Food Security	5,225,420	11,659,448	19,927,076
4.Social and Environmental protection and resettlement	6,558,750	14,668,064	24,361,625
5.Capacity Development	2,040	2,040	6,479,578
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,242,079</b>	<b>101,077,288</b>	<b>189,574,413</b>

# Islamic Republic of Iran

## Outcome 1: Support to Voluntary Repatriation

- In 2014, a total of 4,456 refugees returned to Afghanistan from the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- In order to ensure that refugees make informed decisions on voluntary repatriation, information relevant to facilities in Afghanistan as well as voluntary repatriation procedures were made available through the publication of flyers and bulletins.
- The health clinic at Dogharoun near the border, provided medical assistance to 3,278 refugees in need of medication and treatment prior to their voluntary repatriation. Special attention was paid to children, unaccompanied elderly refugees, unaccompanied or pregnant women and persons with disabilities.



## Outcome 2: Access to Shelter and Essential Services

### Education

- For the 2013-2014 school year, nearly 326,670 Afghan refugee children enrolled in the formal education system, an increase of 7 per cent compared to the previous year.
- Five new schools were constructed to accommodate 1,903 Afghan children. Two schools were renovated to assist 324 children. In addition, 3,621 over-aged and out-of-school children were enrolled in literacy programmes.

Impact indicators	Baseline	Target	Year-End
% of primary school-aged children enrolled in primary education	72	85	80
% of secondary school-aged young people enrolled in secondary education	72	75	72
Performance indicators			
# of PoC enrolled in literacy classes	N.A.	5,000	3,621
# of PoC participating in UNHCR supported school-based sports/recreation activities	N.A.	8,750	7,973
# of educational facilities constructed or improved	N.A.	10	16
% of primary school graduates (successful completion of final grade)	N.A.	85	75



## Health

Photo: UNHCR/S.Rich

- Through joint collaboration between the Ministry of Interior, ASIA Insurance Company and UNHCR, the private health insurance scheme in 2014 covered nearly 220,200 vulnerable refugees, including about 2,000 with special diseases (renal failure, hemophilia, thalassemia, multiple sclerosis and cancer).
- Primary health care, including vaccinations, antenatal care, maternal and child health, and family planning, was provided, free of charge, to all refugees in 15 settlements and 29 urban locations.
- Almost 100 Afghan refugee children suffering from various types of cancer received medical treatment. In addition, 172 Afghan refugee children received cardiac, orthopedic and corrective surgeries.

Impact indicators	Baseline	Target	Year-End
Extent persons of concern have access to primary health care (%)	78	85	80
Extent persons of concern have access to secondary and tertiary health care (%)	25	55	27
Performance indicators			
# of health facilities equipped/constructed/rehabilitated	N.A.	157	134
# of persons referred to secondary and tertiary medical care	N.A.	59,000	55,004



### Outcome 3: Improved and Diversified Livelihood Opportunities and Enhanced Food Security

- Approximately 2,447 refugees received more than 50 different vocational training courses.
- 150 female refugees took part in vocational and entrepreneurship training to enable them to establish home-based small enterprises.
- A revolving loan fund provided micro-credit and banking services, creating employment opportunities for 45 refugees and contributed to the improved livelihoods of 225 indirect beneficiaries in their households.
- Food assistance was provided to around 28,000 vulnerable Afghan refugees inside 11 official settlements located in nine provinces in order to meet their essential needs and energy requirements by improving food consumption.

Impact Indicators	Target	Year-End
% of persons of concern (18-59 yrs) earning at least minimum wages for more than 6 months per year	11	4.92
% of persons of concern using banking services (e.g. savings, loans, transfers)	3	1.2
Performance Indicators		
# of Afghan refugees earning incentives/wages from partner and from community contracting projects	2,000	1,328
# of Afghan refugees enrolled in formal national institutions for certified skills training	5,000	2,597
Number of small business associations formed/supported	200	418



#### **Outcome 4: Social and environmental protection of refugees and returnees, as well as assistance and support to host communities**

- BAFIA has undertaken the periodic renewal of Amayesh cards.<sup>2</sup>
- Approximately 4,570 Afghan refugees received legal assistance from 15 UNHCR hired lawyers throughout the country.
- UNHCR's Outreach, Networking and Assistance Programme assisted approximately 3,250 vulnerable refugees. The programme, while aiming at empowering the refugee communities and at helping them move towards self-reliance, supported refugees to cope with unexpected challenges and to rebuild their capacity to resume normal life.
- Community based rehabilitation services, including physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy, assistance for visual and auditory impairments and mental health services, were provided in three provinces for 696 refugees and 3,480 indirect beneficiaries in their families.
- 1,328 refugees received training and daily income in return for their participation in the activities to promote sustainable community-based management for the preservation and restoration of natural resources.

<sup>2</sup> Amayesh cards enable refugees to access basic services and facilitate the issuance of work permits. This registration scheme started in 2003 and the registration has been carried out periodically. The current refugee population figure is based on the previous Amayesh 9 registration exercise carried out in 2013 and the most recent Amayesh 10 registration exercise will be completed in 2015.

## Outcome 5: Capacity development of national authorities, associations, organizations and communities concerned with refugees, returnees and host communities

- In February 2014, a donor briefing was held in Tehran where the High Commissioner launched the 2014 SSAR Portfolio of Projects in the presence of the Deputy Minister of Interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran and 108 participants including embassies, governmental organizations, national NGOs, international NGOs as well as UN Agencies.
- In June 2014, the ‘High-Level Consultations on the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees: The way forward in the Islamic Republic of Iran’ was co-hosted by the Government of Switzerland and UNHCR in Geneva. It was attended by the High Commissioner, the Minister of Interior of Iran as well as representatives from 30 governments, 12 UN and international organizations and six international and Iranian NGOs. The participants of the conference assessed where the implementation of the SSAR stood and urged the international community to provide political and financial support to address unmet needs.

SSAR Outcomes	Funds received and spent by UNHCR and its partners in the Islamic Republic of Iran (USD)	Financial Requirements for UNHCR and its partners for the Islamic Republic of Iran (USD)	Total Financial Requirements in the SSAR portfolio
1. Voluntary Repatriation	1,902,046	3,037,035	7,619,901
2. Access to essential services and shelter	18,931,589	49,643,126	102,694,176
3. Livelihoods and Food Security	3,057,226	6,992,867	22,540,207
4. Social and Environmental protection and resettlement	4,042,384	5,027,907	16,764,203
5. Capacity Development	44,701	103,540	474,974
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,977,946</b>	<b>64,804,475</b>	<b>150,093,461</b>

# Islamic Republic of Pakistan

## Outcome 1: Support to Voluntary Repatriation

- A total of 13,000 Afghan refugees voluntarily repatriated from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2014.

- Voluntary repatriation was facilitated through two Voluntary Repatriation Centers (VRCs) in Peshawar and Quetta. In addition to deregistration, the VRCs offer overnight stay facilities and basic health services. Exit interviews, border monitoring and identification of specific needs were carried out to record any protection and/or security concerns returnees might have faced or foresee within the overall objective

of ensuring the voluntariness of returns. Information about the voluntary repatriation process and reintegration conditions in Afghanistan was disseminated through media/mass information campaigns, Shura (consultative) meetings and distribution of information leaflets in order to help refugees make an informed decision on return. More than 1,200 sessions were conducted to this effect, along with 66 focus group discussions.

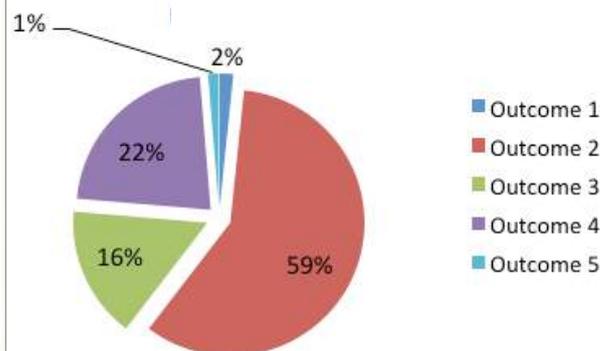
## Outcome 2: Access to Shelter and Essential Services

### Access to quality education

- Free primary education was provided to over 77,000 Afghan refugee children residing in refugee villages – an increase of 3,000 from 2013 – through 174 conventional schools (including 127 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 38 in Balochistan), 48 satellite classrooms and 13 early child education centers with a total of 1,455 teachers. Particular attention was on increasing girls' enrolment and retention, including through 18 home-based schools.
- To address the challenge of retention of teachers in Afghan refugee schools, over 200 teachers (more than 50 per cent are female) were included in a two-year mandatory teacher training diploma course, which is recognized both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The increase of female teachers is also expected to improve access to education by girls.
- Through the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme, 18 education projects were implemented in schools across 12 districts. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, 11 RAHA projects in six districts improved the capacity of 29 Government schools and provided a better learning environment for 12,200 pupils, including both Afghan refugees and Pakistani students. In Balochistan, five RAHA projects improved the capacity of eight Government schools and benefitted nearly 5,500 students. This provided much needed support and infrastructure in form of classrooms, latrines, and furniture.
- Tertiary education was provided through DAFI scholarships for 74 students and UNHCR supported an additional 30 scholarships. Efforts are ongoing to negotiate scholarship quotas from higher education institutions. The Allama Iqbal Open University in Islamabad has offered scholarships for Proof of Registration (PoR) card<sup>3</sup> holders in its undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programs in various academic disciplines under distance learning.

<sup>3</sup> The Proof of Registration (PoR) cards regulates the temporary stay of registered Afghans in Pakistan. They are due to expire in December 2015. However, the draft policy on voluntary repatriation and management of Afghan nationals beyond 2015 includes a proposal for the extension of the PoR cards until the end of 2017.

Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
Total Financial Requirements  
USD 367,400,802



### Access to health care and other essential services

- UNHCR has been providing primary health care services to Afghan refugees in Refugee Villages, across the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Punjab through Basic Health Units (BHUs) run by partners. These services include curative services for common diseases, preventive programmes for routine vaccination, tuberculosis, malaria control programmes. UNHCR supported BHUs provided services to nearly 580,000 patients. Reproductive health services were provided in 62 health facilities in three provinces.
- UNHCR has started the implementation of a new Five-Year health strategy (2013-18) that allows for progressive and responsible disengagement from existing parallel systems (BHUs) and thereby for prioritization of UNHCR's assistance to the most vulnerable refugees.
- In Punjab, 20 refugee committees (nine male and 11 female) were supported through capacity-building sessions on SGBV, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and polio. These committees disseminated these messages to the rest of the population.
- RAHA sanitation and water supply projects benefitted over 22,000 people in KP and more than 36,000 people in Balochistan. Improvements of sanitary conditions included construction/rehabilitation of latrines, household and communal waste management trainings and individualized hygiene awareness in refugee villages. 11,510 community members were trained through water and hygiene sessions.

Impact indicators	Baseline	Target	Year-End
Extent persons of concern have access to primary health care (%)	95	100	95
Performance indicators			
# of community health workers	N.A.	2,700	2,533
# of health facilities equipped/constructed/rehabilitated	N.A.	62	16
# of health workers trained in collaboration with MoH, or other external partners	N.A.	450	646
# of monthly reports received from partners on the delivery of health services to PoCs	N.A.	62	62
# of persons referred to secondary and tertiary medical care	N.A.	1,000	255



**Outcome 3: Improved and Diversified Livelihood Opportunities and Enhanced Food Security**

- Under a RAHA project, 790 individuals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (70 per cent female) were trained through vocational training projects in 18 trades ranging from traditional handicrafts to industrial crafts. Projects offered apprenticeship placements at the end of the training period as well as facilitation of market linkages for entrepreneurs. Trainings are offered in Quetta, Loralai, Pishin (in Balochistan) and Haripur and Mansehra (in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

Impact indicators	Target	Year-End
% of Afghan refugees (18-59ys) earning at least minimum wages for more than 6 months per year	40	30
Performance indicators		
# of UNHCR supported technical programmes that are accredited	195	18



Photo: UNHCR/S.Rich

#### **Outcome 4: Social and environmental protection of refugees and returnees, as well as assistance and support to host communities**

- Legal coverage was provided to 97 per cent of persons of concern in refugee-hosting areas against a target of 90 per cent, through ten Advice and Legal Centres (ALACs) across the four provinces and through legal camps conducted as part of the community outreach.
- Over 384 refugee community committees were established in refugee villages, including women and youth groups, to mobilize community engagement. These committees have played a significant role, particularly in awareness-raising and promoting efforts to increase school enrolment and reduce dropouts. Three comprehensive participatory assessments were conducted in refugee villages and among urban populations. 321 sensitization and awareness raising sessions were held on various topics including elimination of domestic and gender-based violence, child labour, dangers of early marriage and the importance of education. As part of the SGBV Strategy, a total of 492 sensitization sessions were conducted and survivors were referred for psychosocial, legal, medical and livelihoods support.



### **Outcome 5: Capacity development of national authorities, associations, organizations and communities concerned with refugees, returnee and host communities**

- The Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) at the federal level and Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CARs) at the provincial levels received technical and material support.
- A series of awareness-raising sessions on refugee and human rights law were conducted for key counterparts including police officers, public prosecutors, judiciary, and border officials, totaling more than 1,930 participants.
- The SSAR Pakistan portfolio of projects was launched in Islamabad in May 2014 jointly by the Government of Pakistan and UNHCR.

<b>SSAR Outcomes</b>	<b>Funds received and spent by UNHCR and its partners in Pakistan (USD)</b>	<b>Financial Requirements for UNHCR and its partners for Pakistan (USD)</b>	<b>Total Financial Requirements in the SSAR portfolio*</b>
1. Voluntary repatriation	3,710,740	5,645,729	6,043,481
2. Access to essential services and shelter	16,832,430	60,359,246	215,763,767
3. Livelihoods and food security	989,280	22,143,250	58,657,750
4. Social and environmental protection and resettlement	13,325,559	20,260,010	82,180,898
5. Coordination and supporting role	8,342,092	10,056,846	4,754,906
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,200,102</b>	<b>118,465,081</b>	<b>367,400,802</b>

\* The Portfolio of Projects for Pakistan was approved by the National Steering Committee as a multi-year portfolio.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Total Financial Requirements 2014 (all partners included in the portfolios)

Summary Requirements per Outcome (in USD)				
SSAR Outcome	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	Islamic Republic of Iran	Islamic Republic of Pakistan	Total
Outcome 1: Voluntary Repatriation	72,077,558	7,619,901	6,043,481	85,740,940
Outcome 2: Access to Essential Social Services and Shelter	66,728,576	102,694,176	215,763,767	385,186,519
Outcome 3: Livelihoods and Food Security	19,927,076	22,540,207	58,657,750	101,125,033
Outcome 4: Social and Environmental Protection, Resettlement	24,361,625	16,764,203	82,180,898	123,306,726
Outcome 5: Capacity Development	6,479,578	474,974	4,754,906	11,709,458
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>189,574,413</b>	<b>150,093,461</b>	<b>367,400,802</b>	<b>707,068,676</b>

## Annex 2: Funds received and spent and financial requirements for UNHCR and its partners in 2014

SSAR Outcomes	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan		Islamic Republic of Iran		Islamic Republic of Pakistan	
	Funds received and spent by UNHCR and its partners	Financial Requirements for UNHCR and its partners	Funds received and spent by UNHCR and its partners	Financial Requirements for UNHCR and its partners	Funds received and spent by UNHCR and its partners	Financial Requirements for UNHCR and its partners
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,242,079</b>	<b>101,077,288</b>	<b>27,977,946</b>	<b>64,804,475</b>	<b>43,200,102</b>	<b>118,465,081</b>

Photo: UNHCR/S.Rich





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