

CENTRAL ASIA



2014 - 2015
GLOBAL APPEAL

Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan

Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Uzbekistan



A sewing workshop in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, is helping to boost refugee women's self-reliance (January 2013)

UNHCR / A. ABDRAKHMANOVA



Overview



Working environment

Central Asia continues to progress towards political and socio-economic stability. Although all of the Central Asian States, with the exception of Uzbekistan, have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and adopted national refugee laws, the level of refugee protection does not always comply with international standards.

With major political and security changes due in Afghanistan in 2014, there is a potential risk of mixed migratory flows into Central Asian States, and of new refugee movements within the region. In light of these possibilities, Central Asian Governments have recognized the importance of broader regional cooperation on refugee issues.

UNHCR will pursue its advocacy efforts and action for improvements to national asylum systems. The Office assists States with emergency preparedness. It also

promotes accession to the Statelessness Conventions while working with Governments to prevent and resolve cases of statelessness and to develop national procedures to manage mixed migratory flows within Central Asia.

Following the Second Ministerial Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration in June 2013 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, UNHCR will continue to support the Almaty Process, a regional cooperation framework for managing migration issues.

Elsewhere in the region, the Government of **Turkmenistan** has promulgated a new nationality law incorporating many recommendations by UNHCR, including the right of refugees to apply for naturalization. The Government has also agreed to waive citizenship fees for stateless people registered jointly by the authorities and UNHCR in 2011.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, a Government restructuring at the beginning of 2013 saw the ministry with responsibility for refugee affairs renamed as the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth. In March 2013, the citizenship law was amended to simplify naturalization procedures for foreign spouses of Kyrgyz citizens, helping to reduce the risk of becoming stateless for these spouses. Three years after the June 2010 ethnic clashes in South Kyrgyzstan, UNHCR continues to help the Government to reintegrate some 375,000 people affected by the conflict.

In **Kazakhstan**, UNHCR maintains close links with the Government through an inter-ministerial working group on asylum. The working group has helped to strengthen the capacity of national officials dealing with refugees and asylum-seekers, of whom Kazakhstan hosts some 600. In addition, there are approximately

7,300 officially registered stateless people in the country. Preparations were made in 2013 for a comprehensive registration of stateless people in 2014.

Tajikistan hosts some 4,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly of Afghan origin. They cannot choose their place of residence, as they are not allowed to live in the major cities, including Dushanbe. In 2013, UNHCR has donated equipment and helped introduce new software that provided the Government with a modern refugee registration system. The organization has also helped the Government to revise its citizenship law and participated in a working group that has amended the national refugee law. Both laws are now awaiting approval by Parliament.

Even though **Uzbekistan** has no legal or administrative framework on refugees and asylum, its policies since the early 1990s have been tolerant towards registered refugees holding UN certificates. However, incidents of deportation, arbitrary detention and harassment of refugees by law enforcement agencies have occurred. Uzbekistan has not acceded to any international instrument on statelessness. National legislation defines stateless people and regulates all matters related to their stay in the country, including the issuance of identity and travel documents. UNHCR has not had a presence in Uzbekistan since 2006, and currently assists 142 refugees in the country, predominantly of Afghan origin, through UNDP.

| Response |

Strategies

UNHCR's main strategies in Central Asia are to:

- protect refugees and asylum-seekers;
- reduce and prevent statelessness while advocating for Governments in the subregion to accede to the Statelessness Conventions;
- prepare an optimal response capacity to deal with emergencies, especially a possible influx of refugees from Afghanistan in 2014;
- preserve asylum space within mixed migratory flows, specifically through continued support to the Almaty Process; and
- ensure that refugee status determination (RSD) procedures comply with international standards, while also seeking durable solutions and promoting the self-reliance of refugees.

Challenges

Refugee laws in Central Asia are not fully consistent with international standards. Furthermore, States' preoccupations with perceived cross-border threats and national security have had a negative impact on asylum policies and the protection of refugees. UNHCR foresees that political reform and development are prerequisites for a favourable protection environment and the sustainable reintegration of people of concern in the region.

Operations

In **Kazakhstan**, UNHCR will work with the Government to ensure the procedural integrity of the State asylum system. The Office is also liaising with the Government and lawmakers on a revision of asylum-related legislation that is not in conformity with international standards, particularly with regard to social services and naturalization. Advocacy for Kazakhstan's accession

| Implementation |

to the Statelessness Conventions will continue, as will efforts to devise a joint action plan to register and protect stateless people.

In view of the evolving security situation in Afghanistan, **Tajikistan** could become a destination for new waves of asylum-seekers. UNHCR will give priority to improving emergency preparedness through joint planning with the Tajik Government and other relevant actors. The recently completed

countrywide verification exercise of urban refugees in Tajikistan has contributed to a better understanding of the profile and needs of the population of concern: this will assist in the design and the implementation of protection and durable-solutions programmes.

Turkmenistan is at the forefront of efforts to address statelessness in the Central Asian region by depositing the instrument of accession on 29 August 2012, and became the 46th

State Party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. UNHCR will help the Government to bring its nationality legislation in line with the Statelessness Conventions. Special efforts will be made to secure access to asylum procedures and protection against *refoulement* for all people of concern, while government partners will be assisted to develop their emergency preparedness and response capacity.

In 2014 and 2015, UNHCR in **Kyrgyzstan** will pursue the sustainable reintegration of those who were displaced following the June 2010 ethnic violence. At

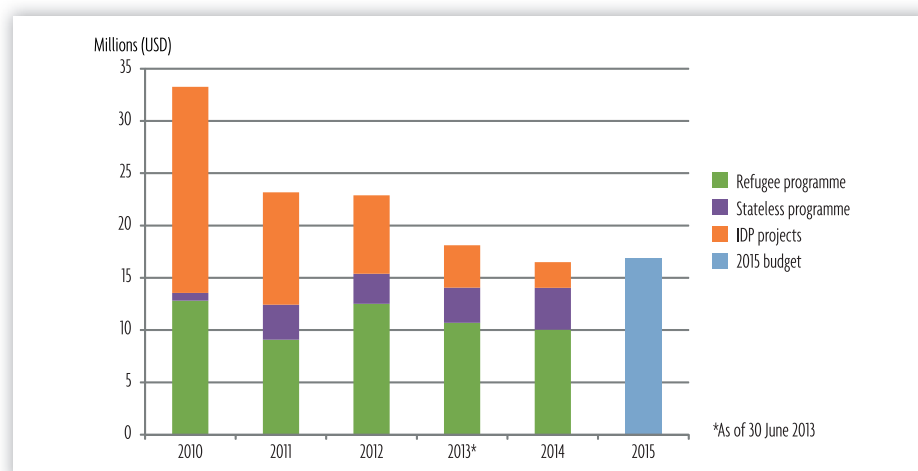
the same time, it will continue to gradually disengage from assisting internally displaced people (IDPs) through the implementation of projects designed as part of the Peace Priority Plan submitted to the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). Kyrgyzstan has been designated as a pilot country for the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee Decision on Durable Solutions. This has provided an additional platform for UNHCR to strengthen its advocacy for the sustainable reintegration of conflict-affected populations and the engagement of PBSO in Kyrgyzstan.

In **Uzbekistan**, UNHCR will continue to provide services for refugees through UNDP. A senior UNHCR liaison officer will be deployed to Tashkent to discuss with the Government the reopening of the UNHCR office in the country, while advocacy with the Uzbek Government at the regional and bureau levels will continue.

Financial information

When ethnic violence in June 2010 led to mass displacement in southern Kyrgyzstan, UNHCR reopened and strengthened its field offices in Osh and Jalalabad. As a result, the budgetary requirements for Central Asia increased dramatically. Emergency interventions continued through the first half of 2011 and were replaced by efforts in aid of reconciliation and peacebuilding in 2012 and 2013. The budget requirements for 2014 and 2015 will be scaled down, with the 2014 budget for Central Asia set at USD 16.5 million, covering needs in refugee and stateless programmes as well as IDP projects.

Budgets for Central Asia | 2010–2015



Budgets for Central Asia | USD

Operation	2013 REVISED BUDGET (as of 30 June 2013)	2014			TOTAL	2015
		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
Kazakhstan Regional Office	7,622,513	4,863,774	2,385,500	90,350	7,339,624	8,520,327
Kyrgyzstan	7,497,298	2,848,575	1,081,575	2,366,817	6,296,968	5,515,522
Tajikistan	1,942,848	1,904,159	93,878	0	1,998,038	2,154,157
Turkmenistan	1,041,589	423,588	434,795	0	858,383	635,574
Total	18,104,248	10,040,097	3,995,748	2,457,167	16,493,012	16,825,579