

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



Working environment

The context

The Islamic Republic of Iran hosts the second largest group of long-staying refugees in the world. As of March 2010, according to information provided by the country's Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA), there were some 1,065,000 refugees registered with the authorities, of whom approximately 1,021,600 were Afghans and 43,800 were Iraqis. In addition, there

are some 4,000 Iraqi refugees, whom UNHCR was authorized to register pending the grant of legal status by the authorities. The majority of refugees in the country reside in urban areas, while approximately 3 per cent live in settlements.

UNHCR has assisted with the return of more than 870,000 refugees since 2002, when voluntary repatriation began under the auspices of the Tripartite Agreements between the Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan and UNHCR. These agreements came back into force on 28 June 2010, after three years of suspension, and aim to create conditions conducive to voluntary

Planning figures for the Islamic Republic of Iran

TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	JAN 2011		DEC 2011	
		TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR
Refugees	Afghanistan	1,022,500	1,022,500	1,022,500	1,022,500
	Iraq	47,900	47,900	47,900	47,900
	Uzbekistan	40	40	40	40
	Various	50	50	50	50
Asylum-seekers	Afghanistan	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
	Iraq	30	30	30	30
	Various	100	100	100	100
Total		1,072,620	1,072,620	1,072,620	1,072,620



Afghan girls attend class in Rafsanjan camp, Kerman province.

UNHCR / S. ZENDELI

repatriation. It was agreed to reactivate 10 Dispute Settlement Committees to assist refugees prior to their voluntary repatriation, as well as four Voluntary Repatriation Centres (two in 2010 and two in 2011).

The number of registered Afghan refugees opting for voluntary repatriation has declined over the last several years due to a combination of factors, including concerns about security and socio-economic problems in Afghanistan. Some 70 per cent of the registered Afghan and Iraqi refugees remaining in the Islamic Republic of Iran have lived in the country for 20 to 30 years.

In July 2010 the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran conducted a census of undocumented Afghan nationals irregularly residing in the country, as part of a Comprehensive Regularization Plan. More than 1.5 million people were registered in this process. The Government also finalized its *Amayesh V* re-registration of Afghan refugees in 2010. Those considered vulnerable or financially destitute continued to be granted exemption from payment of municipality taxes, which are otherwise mandatory for urban Afghan registered refugees.

Some 300,000 Temporary Work Permits (TWPs) were distributed in 2009, enabling registered Afghan refugees to work legally in the country and receive benefits. However, the procedures for the re-issuance of TWPs have yet to be put in place, and solutions to assist destitute Afghan refugees who cannot afford the high fees will need to be identified.

Registered Afghan refugees in Khuzestan province have been permitted to relocate to refugee settlements within the province or opt to repatriate voluntarily. The identified refugee settlements need rehabilitation. Registered Afghans in Hormozgan province have been authorized to remain there until 1 July 2011. During this time the refugees will need to opt

Main objectives and targets

Fair protection processes

- Strengthen the protection of registered Afghan and Iraqi refugees and the asylum environment.

Basic needs and services

- Support the Ministries of Health and Education to improve refugees' access to health and education institutions.
 - ➔ The primary school enrolment rate of refugee children rises from 72 to 75 per cent.
 - ➔ More vulnerable refugees gain access to secondary and tertiary health care services.
 - ➔ All refugees have access to primary health care.

Durable solutions

- Increase resettlement targets.
 - ➔ Some 3,000 persons or 600 families are resettled in 2011.
- Support the voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan and Iraqi refugees.
 - ➔ Approximately 15,000 Afghans and Iraqis repatriate voluntarily.

UNHCR's presence in 2011

□ Number of offices	8
□ Total staff	119
International	10
National	102
JPOs	2
Others	5

PARTNERS

Implementing partners

Government agencies:

Literacy Movement Organization
 Ministries of Health and Health Training; Education and Training; Labour and Social Welfare; Interior-Bureau of Alien and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA)
 Technical and Vocational Training Organizations
 State Welfare Organization (*Behzisti*)

NGOs:

Iraq Refugee Aid Council
 Society to Protect Children Suffering from Cancer

Operational partners

Others:

UNICEF
 WFP

for voluntary repatriation or relocation to the western region of the country.

The limited number of resettlement places is a major constraint for UNHCR in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since 2000, resettlement has been used primarily as a protection tool, for fewer than 1,000 refugees each year. In 2009, some 540 Afghan refugees and 30 Iraqi refugees were accepted by resettlement countries. The Government has called for more effective burden sharing by resettlement countries, both at the 2009 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, and at the UN General Assembly in 2009. UNHCR continues its advocacy for larger resettlement quotas and more flexible profiles.

| The needs |

The main findings of participatory assessments in 2010 focused on four themes: livelihoods, health, education and voluntary repatriation. Results indicated that the most pressing needs among refugees in both settlements and urban areas relate to:

- (i) limited access to medical insurance and the high cost of medical expenses;
- (ii) difficulties in covering education expenses and school tuition fees;
- (iii) limited opportunities for income generation and low job security;
- and (iv) limited or ambiguous community-management structures.

Based on these findings, UNHCR will endeavour to ensure that its partners, particularly the Government, continue to address the pressing needs of people of concern. UNHCR will support the Government with assistance in the health and educational sectors, and build self-reliance among refugees, especially those with specific needs.

| Strategy and activities in 2011 |

Resettlement opportunities for refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran need to be significantly increased. A contact group of potential countries of resettlement was created in 2010 to consider this issue. During the 2010 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, this group indicated its willingness to double resettlement places in 2011 and increase resettlement in subsequent years. Resettlement countries are also considering funding services and assistance to refugees in the communities where they live.

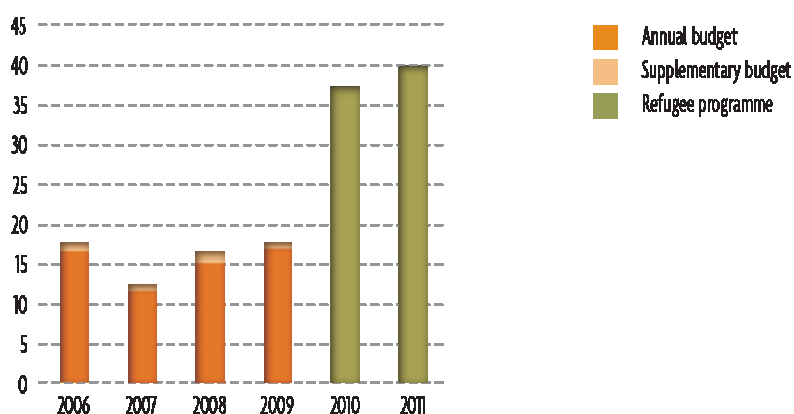
The Office will advocate for the granting of temporary work permits (TWPs) to eligible registered Afghan and Iraqi refugees, and encourage the authorities to exempt vulnerable refugees from the requirement of obtaining new identity cards and work permits. It will seek to ensure that any repatriation of registered Afghan and Iraqi refugees is voluntary, and will assist this repatriation on an individual basis.

UNHCR will focus on enhancing refugees' livelihood capacities through vocational training, enabling vulnerable refugee families to acquire skills for gainful employment. It will also work with the Ministries of Education and Health to facilitate the access of urban refugees to education and primary health care. Meanwhile, the Office will cover the educational needs for children out of school, adolescents and adults, through literacy classes.

The Office will work with the Government to introduce projects in refugee-affected and hosting areas. It will also advocate that the Government grant

UNHCR's budget in Islamic Republic of Iran 2006 – 2011

Millions (USD)



official status to the Iraqi refugees who have been registered and recognized on a *prima facie* basis.

The Dispute Settlement Committees will provide free legal aid to registered Afghan refugees willing to repatriate, while the Voluntary Repatriation Centres will provide them with information and other assistance.

○ Constraints

It is anticipated that the security and economic conditions in Afghanistan will remain difficult, limiting the numbers of Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran who are able to opt for voluntary repatriation. Despite being given temporary work permits, refugees will face difficulties in obtaining work from Iranian employers, particularly as the demand for jobs among the local population is high. The re-issuance of refugee cards and temporary work permits will continue to be a costly exercise. The overall situation may drive Afghan refugees to join irregular movements to third countries, particularly Turkey.

The limited number of resettlement countries and resettlement places is a major constraint for UNHCR.

The general living conditions of registered Afghan and Iraqi refugees are expected to deteriorate as a result of high inflation and the decision to remove subsidies on basic goods from September 2010. Registered refugees are not included in the authorities' plan to provide a cash allowance to destitute Iranian families.

Organization and implementation

○ Coordination

BAFIA is UNHCR's main operational counterpart, but partnerships with the State Welfare Organization (*Behzisti*), Literacy Movement Organization (LMO), charities and orphanages will be broadened. UNHCR will also foster close partnerships with the Ministries of Health and Education on initiatives in their respective areas. Local NGOs will be supported to assist refugees.

Resettlement opportunities will be enhanced in 2011 through a referral mechanism with BAFIA, *Behzisti*, other government authorities and NGOs. UNHCR will also work with the Ministry of Labour on refugee employment issues.

UNHCR works with WFP in the Food Assistance Programme in the refugee settlements. In 2011, WFP will provide food to vulnerable refugees in established refugee settlements, including four new ones in Yazd and Sarvestan.

Financial information

The end of governmental subsidies on basic goods in the Islamic Republic of Iran will have a significant impact on refugees, and will require an increase in the budget to strengthen self-reliance and livelihoods identified through an assessment with stakeholders, the Government, refugees and NGO partners. More funding is also needed to provide optimal access to education and enhance registration and profiling. Activities focusing on the health sector have grown progressively since 2006.

Consequences of a 20 – 40 per cent funding shortfall

- Some 30 per cent of vulnerable refugees will not receive assistance.
- UNHCR will not be able to pursue resettlement, repatriation and the relocation of refugees in Khuzestan.
- UNHCR's ability to advocate on behalf of persons of concern will be curtailed.

2011 UNHCR Budget for the Islamic Republic of Iran (USD)

RIGHTS GROUPS AND OBJECTIVES	REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	TOTAL
Favourable protection environment		
National legal framework	236,296	236,296
Cooperation with partners	126,432	126,432
National development policies	168,458	168,458
Public attitudes towards persons of concern	122,057	122,057
Access to territory	29,929	29,929
Non-refoulement	38,680	38,680
Subtotal	721,852	721,852
Fair protection processes and documentation		
Registration and profiling	1,876,996	1,876,996
Access to asylum procedures	75,512	75,512
Refugee and stateless definitions	168,911	168,911
Fair and efficient status determination	75,512	75,512
Civil status documentation	471,392	471,392
Subtotal	2,668,322	2,668,322
Security from violence and exploitation		
Gender-based violence	333,300	333,300
Protection of children	421,778	421,778
Freedom of movement	141,533	141,533
Non-arbitrary detention	141,533	141,533
Access to legal remedies	898,637	898,637
Subtotal	1,936,782	1,936,782
Basic needs and essential services		
Nutrition	692,517	692,517
Water	266,332	266,332
Shelter and other infrastructure	1,585,792	1,585,792
Basic domestic and hygiene items	538,986	538,986
Primary health care	6,227,367	6,227,367
HIV and AIDS	997,421	997,421
Education	6,311,213	6,311,213
Sanitation services	558,660	558,660
Services for groups with specific needs	3,389,740	3,389,740
Subtotal	20,568,029	20,568,029
Community participation and self-management		
Participatory assessment and community mobilisation	269,196	269,196
Community self-management and equal representation	336,701	336,701
Camp management and coordination	256,556	256,556
Self-reliance and livelihoods	5,236,605	5,236,605
Subtotal	6,099,058	6,099,058
Durable solutions		
Durable solutions strategy	811,222	811,222
Voluntary return	2,357,594	2,357,594
Resettlement	1,326,252	1,326,252
Subtotal	4,495,068	4,495,068
External relations		
Donor relations	175,564	175,564
Resource mobilisation	194,524	194,524
Partnership	188,690	188,690
Public information	218,831	218,831
Subtotal	777,610	777,610
Logistics and operations support		
Supply chain and logistics	470,648	470,648
Programme management, coordination and support	2,213,739	2,213,739
Subtotal	2,684,387	2,684,387
Total	39,951,108	39,951,108
2010 Revised budget	37,018,562	37,018,562