

## United Kingdom

February 2022

**13,210** people, including dependants, were offered protection by the United Kingdom (UK) between September 2020 and September 2021, of whom 10,725 were recognised as refugees.

**1,171** people were granted protection through resettlement schemes between September 2020 and September 2021, a 46 per cent decrease from the previous year owing in part to the pandemic.

The UK launched the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (**ACRS**) on 6 January. UNHCR will support part of the ACRS by resettling refugees from countries of asylum to the UK.

### POPULATION OF CONCERN\*

|                              |                |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Refugees                     | <b>135,912</b> |
| Asylum-seekers               | <b>83,912</b>  |
| Internally displaced persons | <b>0</b>       |
| Stateless persons            | <b>3,968</b>   |
| Total population of concern  | <b>223,578</b> |

### TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN\*

| Refugees               |               | Asylum-seekers         |              |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Iran (Islamic Rep. of) | <b>21,011</b> | Albania                | <b>9,758</b> |
| Eritrea                | <b>14,503</b> | Iran (Islamic Rep. of) | <b>6,726</b> |
| Sudan                  | <b>11,412</b> | Iraq                   | <b>6,503</b> |

\*Data source: UNHCR 2021 Mid-Year Statistical Report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

### COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

**Advocacy:** Since the start of the crisis, UNHCR has worked with the Home Office and the NGO sector to identify gaps in the Government's response to COVID-19 as it applies to asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants, and recommend measures to address them. UNHCR staff liaise with the Government to coordinate response in the areas of detention, resettlement, asylum decision-making and statelessness.

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### UNHCR publishes observations on UK asylum reforms

In October 2021, UNHCR submitted legal observations as written evidence to the House of Commons finding that the asylum legislation was [fundamentally at odds](#) with the Government's commitment to uphold its international obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention. [The observations were updated and re-published](#) in January 2022 to reflect amendments to the Bill during its progress through Parliament.

#### UNHCR publishes evaluation of 'Alternatives to Detention' pilot

[The report finds](#) that supporting asylum-seekers in the community rather than detention ensures they are able to make informed decisions about their future, in a more humane environment.

### UNHCR PUBLISHES GUIDANCE ON HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN SAFE SPACE



In December 2021, UNHCR [published a short guidance paper](#) on how to create safe spaces for women who live in the UK and who are refugees, asylum-seekers or survivors of trafficking. As a community-based project, it trains such women to create safe spaces for other women while offering computer and language training.

The guidance was created as a result of a two-day training on sexual and gender-based violence, carried out in partnership with Refugee Women Connect.

## Key Priorities

- **Asylum procedures:** Through the Quality Protection Partnership, UNHCR has recently completed a review of policies and practices with regard to the processing of asylum claims by people who may be victims of trafficking, and of screening and registration procedures throughout the country. UNHCR will publish reports in 2022 with recommendations for improvement.
- **Resettlement and complementary pathways:** The UK formally opened the ACRS on 6 January 2022. The UK aims to resettle or relocate more than 5,000 people in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years. The scheme will have three main pillars. [Starting in Spring 2022, UNHCR will support one of these](#), resettling Afghan refugees from countries of asylum to the UK.
- **Advocacy:** UNHCR submitted written evidence to the Home Office and the Houses of Parliament outlining our observations on the Nationality and Borders Bill. In October 2021 UNHCR gave oral evidence to the [Bill Committee](#) and [Human Rights Committees](#) scrutinising the legislation. UNHCR also gave oral evidence to the [Home Affairs Committee](#) on UNHCR's response to the situation in Afghanistan in September 2021.
- **Capacity-building:** Through the Quality Protection Partnership, UNHCR has assisted with the development of the Home Office's new Foundation Training Programme for asylum decision-makers.
- **Detention monitoring:** The independent evaluation of the Action Access 'Alternative to Detention' pilot was [published in January 2022](#). The Pilot offered supported accommodation; financial subsistence; legal counselling; and wider support with health, well-being and social inclusion to a selected group of vulnerable women who would have otherwise been detained. The evaluation report found that the pilot was more cost-effective than detention and enabled the participants to make informed decisions about

their future. The Home Office accepted all the recommendations of the evaluation report. A second pilot is currently underway.

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with civil society groups including Refugee Week, the Families Together coalition and other partners to better protect people forced to flee their homes and to support them to live their lives in the UK with dignity and respect.
- External engagement with UK media, civil society and government has focused on two key issues. First, UNHCR has repeatedly and clearly voiced concerns at provisions in asylum legislation before Parliament that breaches commitments under the Refugee Convention. The second concerns the situation in Afghanistan, where UNHCR has called for UK humanitarian aid and supported the establishment of a new resettlement route.

## Statelessness

- The UK ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 1959 and the 1961 Convention in 1966. A [Statelessness Determination Procedure](#) (SDP) was established in 2013 enabling stateless people to apply for status recognition. UNHCR published an audit of the procedure and a Participatory Assessment of stateless persons as part of our work with UK authorities to improve the the SDP. UNHCR's Observations on the pending Nationality and Borders legislation highlighted provisions allowing for broad discretion in the deprivation of nationality without notice.

## UNHCR Presence in United Kingdom

### Staff:

11 National Staff  
6 International Staff

### Offices:

1 Branch Office in London

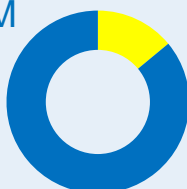
## Financial information (22 February 2022)

### Financial requirements

USD 2.6 M

Funding gap  
86%

2.2 M



Funded  
14%

0.4 M

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