



AFGHANISTAN



| UNHCR's presence in 2012 | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Number of offices | 6 |
| Total staff | 351 |
| International staff | 29 |
| National staff | 314 |
| JPO staff | 1 |
| UNVs | 5 |
| Others | 2 |

Overview

Operational highlights

- A multi-year Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) to support voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration and assistance to host countries was adopted by the Governments of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan in May 2012.
- These three countries and UNHCR agreed to form a Quadripartite Steering Committee to coordinate and guide the implementation of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees.
- The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR) with support from UNHCR, coordinated closely with 12 of the line Ministries who had agreed to prioritize the development of high return areas through the National Priority Programme.
- A total of 94,000 refugees returned to Afghanistan in 2012 under UNHCR's assisted voluntary repatriation programme, which offered the returnees grants to cover transportation and initial return needs; counselling in health, legal and social matters; and mine-risk awareness programmes.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government agencies:

Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR), Department of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR) at the field level, Department of Public Health, DPH, at the field level

NGOs:

Afghan Agency for Integrated Development, Afghan Community Rehabilitation Unit, Afghan General Help Coordination Office, Afghan Planning Agency, Afghan Public Welfare Organization, Afghan Society Relief and Care Organization, Afghan Unique Development Organization, Afghanistan Reconstruction and Planning Department, Afghanistan Rehabilitation and Education Programme, *Agence d'aide à la coopération technique et au développement*, Agency for Farming Support, Agency of Consultancy for Training, Alflah Institute of Higher Education, Ansari Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan, Central Afghanistan Welfare Committee, Communication Development and Social Affairs Charity Organization, Cooperation Center for Afghanistan, Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, Coordination of Rehabilitation and Development Service for Afghanistan, Danish Refugee Council, Development and Care Group, Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan, Development of Afghan Women Organization, Engineering Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan, Green Way Organization, *Gruppo Volontariato Civile*, Human Dignity Society, Human Resources

Development Agency, Humanitarian Action for the People of Afghanistan, Humanitarian Organization for Local Development, International Rescue Committee, InterSoS - Italy, Justice and Civil Society Support Organization, Mediothek Afghanistan, New Consultancy and Relief Organization, Norwegian Project Office-Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan, Norwegian Refugee Council, Organization for Relief Development, Organization of Human Welfare, Reconstruction and Social Services for Afghanistan Organization, Sanayee Development Organization, Shafaq Reconstruction Organization, Social Service Organization for Afghan Returnees, The Liaison Office, UN Office for Project Services, United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Nations Identity for Gender Equality & Empowerment of Women, Voluntary Association for the Rehabilitation of Afghanistan, Warchild UK, Watan Social and Technical Services Association

Others:

ILO, Maastricht University

Operational partners

Government agencies:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Urban Planning and Development, Ministry of Water and Agriculture, Ministry of Women Affairs

Others:

UNDP, WFP, IOM, UNICEF

- In Afghanistan, UNHCR commissioned three surveys in 2012 to evaluate its current strategic direction with the view to facilitating a more results-based approach for 2013 and beyond.
- The Government of Afghanistan, with the support of UNHCR, agreed to develop a national policy on internally

displaced people (IDPs) aimed at preventing displacement, responding to needs and providing sustainable durable solutions for displaced people.

- At the end of 2012, the MoRR completed the draft of the Refugee Law for Afghanistan, as a follow-up to its pledge in 2011. UNHCR worked closely with the Ministry on the draft.

People of concern

In 2012, UNHCR's main populations of concern were: Afghans who had recently returned to Afghanistan (mainly from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran); and IDPs who fled their homes in past decades owing to the volatile security situation in the country.

| Type of Population | Origin | Total | Of whom assisted by UNHCR | Per cent female | Per cent under 18 |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Refugees | Various | 80 | 80 | 40 | 27 |
| People in a refugee-like situation | Various | 16,100 | 16,100 | 50 | 58 |
| Asylum-seekers | Various | 50 | 50 | 45 | 73 |
| IDPs | Afghanistan | 486,300 | 486,300 | 47 | 44 |
| Returned IDPs, including people in an IDP-like situation | Afghanistan | 18,800 | - | 47 | 44 |
| Others of concern | Afghan returnees of concern to UNHCR | 879,400 | 879,400 | 49 | 56 |
| Returnees (refugees) ¹ | Pakistan | 83,400 | 80,000 | 50 | 58 |
| | Islamic Rep. of Iran | 15,000 | 15,000 | 50 | 58 |
| | Various | 150 | 100 | 50 | 58 |
| Total | | 1,499,280 | 1,477,030 | | |

¹The demographic breakdown of returnees refers to the total 98, 550 Afghan returning refugees.

| Report on 2012 results |

Achievements and impact

Favourable protection environment

- Legal assistance was provided to returning refugees and IDPs through the Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance Project (ICLA) which helped register more than 2,200 cases in 2012. Of these, some 800 were fully resolved. The ICLA network focused on reintegration, property disputes and family law.
- UNHCR recognized a total of 75 people as refugees, and there are 51 asylum-seekers in Afghanistan, as well as some 16,200 individuals in a refugee-like situation.
- Three refugees were resettled and four resettlement submissions were sent in 2012.
- UNHCR provided information and legal counselling on refugees status determination (RSD) procedures to 270 Afghans. Individuals in a refugee-like situation are mostly in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. Many seek permission to remain in Afghanistan until they can return to their places of origin, and require shelter and assistance.

- UNHCR and IOM completed a study on mixed migration which identified various categories of people involved in movements within and from Afghanistan and the specific protection challenges faced by different displaced groups.
- A planned memorandum of understanding between the MoRR and the Ministry of Public Health envisages providing asylum-seekers and refugees access to national services.
- The Humanitarian Access Standard Operating Procedures were revised in preparation for the updating of the Humanitarian Access map in 2013.
- More than 25 training sessions on IDP protection and response, coordination, monitoring and data management were conducted for the benefit of local authorities, including the Department of Refugees and Repatriation, NGOs and UN agencies.

Fair protection processes

- While UNHCR responded to conflict-induced displacement with immediate emergency assistance, it began to focus more extensively on interventions to facilitate durable solutions, in particular vis-à-vis IDP returns, and on creating an environment conducive to local integration.

- UNHCR strengthened its monitoring capacity through partnerships with Afghan NGOs, and identified partners to help in assessing IDP movements in the areas bordering Pakistan. Information collected from the NGOs is fed into a real-time database platform, Population Movement Tracking (PMT). This tracks the magnitude of movements and their causes and indicates the protection and assistance needs of IDPs. A data-cleaning exercise in 2012 analysed existing IDP caseloads, while also reviewing the PMT questionnaire and database.

Basic needs and services

- UNHCR provided a total of 550 emergency shelter units to IDPs and returning IDPs, including 400 in Kandahar (Southern Region) and 150 in Jalalabad (Eastern Region), with a further 1,000 shelter units for IDP returnees under construction in the South at the end of 2012. One-room shelters are still deemed appropriate by the Shelter and NFIs Cluster as Afghan law views a two-room shelter as a permanent structure, which may not be built as a temporary solution.
- At the end of 2012, a total of 3,100 people with specific needs were identified and assessed. Some 52 per cent of them were found to be refugee returnees and 19 per cent IDPs. Of 3,100 assessed cases, 2,200 received assistance and some 1,400 were given cash assistance, mostly to launch small businesses or pay for medical assistance.
- UNHCR organized a winterization campaign targeting some 20,000 vulnerable Afghan returnee families (118,000 individuals), including IDPs, returnees and those living in destitute conditions in informal settlements.
- Some 246,000 people displaced by conflict received NFI packages consisting of a minimum of six blankets, one plastic sheet, two jerry cans, a cooking gas cylinder, a kitchen set and a plastic bucket.
- Income-generation activities for IDPs focused on cash for work to provide a temporary income solution for families. UNHCR livelihoods and cash for work projects targeted 2,660 IDP households, or an estimated 16,000 individual IDPs. Another 3,800 IDP households benefited from vocational training programmes targeting both men and women.
- Some 4,300 IDP households (26,000 individuals) benefited from UNHCR's water projects across Afghanistan. Activities included well and water point construction and canal rehabilitation.

Durable solutions

- More than 94,000 Afghans returned home voluntarily with UNHCR assistance, some 79,000 from Pakistan, 15,000 from Iran and 86 from non-neighbouring countries such as India and the Russian Federation. Each refugee returnee received a voluntary repatriation grant after identity confirmation at one of the five encashment centres.
- UNHCR and other Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster members provided emergency response assistance, collectively, to some 90,000 conflict-induced IDPs in 2012. UNHCR continued to facilitate IDP returns through the provision of shelter packages and livelihood options.

- Three refugees departed for resettlement and four resettlement submissions were made.
- UNHCR and the MoRR coordinated closely with the 12 line ministries who have agreed to prioritize the development of high return areas through the National Priority Programmes.
- Discussions with the Resident Coordinator which began towards the end 2012 will look into ways to integrate the SSAR with the Secretary-General's initiative on Durable Solutions for IDPs and Refugee Returnees.

Logistics and operational support

- UNHCR, through its implementing partner, the Danish Refugee Council, covered the management of all stock, as well as transportation of goods from the central warehouse in Kabul to field locations.

Assessment of results

Given the general trend of urbanization in the country, most IDPs and returnees are not going back to their places of origin, preferring instead to stay in urban or semi-urban areas where basic services, including shelter, schools, hospitals and livelihoods, are more easily available. UNHCR's assistance in 2013 will also look more closely into assisting beneficiaries in urban areas.

Efforts were made in preventing violence against women, girls and boys in 2012. More such activities will be mainstreamed into projects in 2013, taking into account cultural sensitivities.

The focus of UNHCR's work in Afghanistan will remain on protecting and assisting refugees and IDPs as the numbers of both are expected to increase due to the general lack of security in the country.

Returnees

As a consequence of a "surge" through increased assistance to refugees opting to return from Pakistan, the rate of voluntary returns did not abate during the early months of winter from October through December 2012. Some 20,500 returnees availed themselves of the additional assistance and returned voluntarily in the last three months of the year. The figure of 94,000 returns in 2012 represents an increase of more than 21,000, in comparison with 2011.

The MoRR and UNHCR had planned to pilot activities in 22 of the 48 jointly identified areas of high return; however constraints only enabled the targeting of projects in 12 of the prioritized high-return areas in 2012. The projects provided improved access to basic services, including health care, education, livelihoods and vocational training, cash for work and community mobilization, directly benefiting nearly 156,000 Afghan returnees and host-community members. As part of the programme some 1,900 shelter units (two-room unit plus repair kits) were constructed for returning refugees, and a further 100 shelter units provided for vulnerable local families.

UNHCR will reinforce its advocacy with the Government and development partners to ensure that the returnees benefit from development activities, thereby making their return sustainable. UNHCR and ILO undertook a livelihoods assessment in 22 of the piloted high return areas, the preliminary results of which were

shared with Government partners. The final report is currently under review. The Letter of Intent signed with UNDP and ILO should also provide a platform for enhanced cooperation and joint-programming.

IDPs

UNHCR is moving its focus to IDP return and the creation of environments conducive to local integration while maintaining emergency response capacity. As cluster lead for Protection, Shelter and NFIs, UNHCR coordinates activities with all partners.

Constraints

The low absorption capacity of fledgling urban centres in the more remote provinces of Afghanistan, and the challenges facing the humanitarian community to respond comprehensively, largely due to limited access, have led to secondary displacement to other parts of the region or the country. Armed conflict or human rights violations have, in some cases, been compounded by food insecurity, natural disasters and tribal conflict.

The space for humanitarian action in Afghanistan is severely restricted. Large parts of the country are classified as hostile environments inaccessible to most agencies. Many people of concern are unable to return to their villages of origin because they cannot afford to rebuild their damaged properties. Although IDPs and other civilians are entitled to recover their property or receive compensation for their losses, this right has been repeatedly violated. Disputes over land and property are another concern faced by returning IDPs.

Working with others

The MoRR and its provincial departments continued to be UNHCR's main institutional counterparts for repatriation, sustainable return and IDPs. MoRR staff are present at all five voluntary repatriation centres in Afghanistan, play an active role in identifying and assisting the most vulnerable and are active in the development of policy and implementation of sustainable refugee reintegration activities. UNHCR and MoRR work with other relevant ministries, such as the ministries covering Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Education, Public Health, Agriculture, and Water.

More active engagement of other key partners was sought, in particular with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. UNHCR is working with other UN agencies to develop tailored joint programmes to mobilize resources. The joint programmes not only boost coordination among UN and other key partners but also encourage development actors to undertake projects.

In its role as lead for Protection and the Emergency Shelter and NFIs clusters, and co-chair of national and regional IDP task forces, UNHCR supported better coordination of inter-agency activities in Kabul and in the regions. UNHCR continues to work closely with OCHA and IOM, as the designated agency for the coordination of natural disaster-induced displacement, assistance to vulnerable deportees and migration issues.

The Central Emergency Relief Fund contributions for 2012 enabled UNHCR to provide winterization packages as a preventive measure against the harsh Afghan winters, such as the one experienced in 2011-2012.

The risk of forced recruitment increases for children during displacement as they are often deprived of protective community or family structures. Sustainable reintegration efforts are facing challenges that include insufficient infrastructure, natural resources and job opportunities in places of origin. Indeed, people of concern cite a lack of basic economic and social rights as the main obstacle to sustainable return and integration, even ahead of security and justice.

A significant protection challenge to overcome will be the weakness of formal state structures of authority at the regional level, as evidenced by the spread of shadow Taliban governance in several parts of the country. Development needs make it increasingly difficult for UNHCR to secure sufficient resources to support returning refugees.

Unmet needs

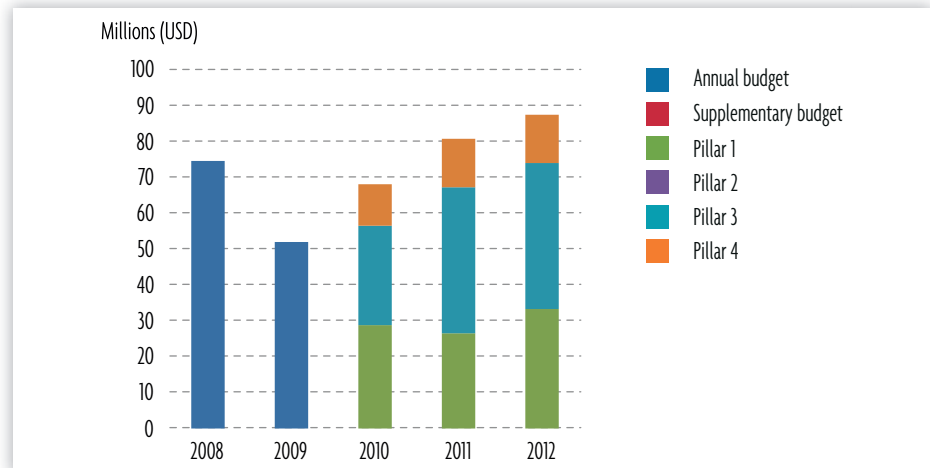
- UNHCR could not provide targeted NFIs to all families and individuals with special needs, including women and children at risk.
- UNHCR was able to conduct interventions in only 12 of the 22 prioritized pilot high-return areas for Afghan returnees. As a result, it was only possible to reach some 100,000 returnees in the remaining 10 pilot areas.
- Some 200,000 IDPs could not benefit from UNHCR interventions.
- UNHCR was only able to implement projects aimed at improving infrastructure, livelihoods and housing for returnees in 12 locations out of the planned 48 locations.

Financial information

The financial requirements for UNHCR's operation in Afghanistan amounted to USD 139.7 million in 2012, and the level of funding allowed the operation to expend USD 87.3 million. The relatively high level of repatriation and the need to respond to the growing numbers of IDPs helped garner funds.

Key donors emphasized the importance of supporting repatriated Afghan refugees with protection and sustainable reintegration measures, as well as IDPs through appropriate protection activities, material assistance, advocacy and emergency response. Nonetheless, stronger efforts are needed to improve livelihood opportunities and services and address poverty in Afghanistan. Joint resource mobilization by the Government, UNHCR and development partners towards the outcomes of the Solutions Strategy will be imperative to ensure a meaningful impact.

Expenditures for Afghanistan | 2008 to 2012



Budget, income and expenditure in Afghanistan | USD

| | PILLAR 1 Refugee programme | PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects | PILLAR 4 IDP projects | Total |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| FINAL BUDGET | 43,425,747 | 77,616,776 | 18,622,582 | 139,665,105 |
| Income from contributions ¹ | 19,613,567 | 24,877,236 | 8,116,435 | 52,607,237 |
| Other funds available / adjustments / transfers | 13,652,015 | 15,786,846 | 5,317,418 | 34,756,279 |
| TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE | 33,265,582 | 40,664,082 | 13,433,853 | 87,363,517 |

EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN

Favourable Protection Environment

| | | | | |
|---|----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Law and policy | 0 | 0 | 910,559 | 910,559 |
| Access to legal assistance and remedies | 0 | 3,065,555 | 490,040 | 3,555,595 |
| Subtotal | 0 | 3,065,555 | 1,400,599 | 4,466,154 |

Fair Protection Processes and Documentation

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| Registration and profiling | 0 | 0 | 376,458 | 376,458 |
| Status determination procedures | 604,418 | 0 | 0 | 604,418 |
| Subtotal | 604,418 | 0 | 376,458 | 980,876 |

Security from Violence and Exploitation

| | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------|----------------|
| Prevention and response to SGBV | 0 | 367,993 | 0 | 367,993 |
| Freedom of movement and detention risk reduced | 302,209 | 0 | 0 | 302,209 |
| Subtotal | 302,209 | 367,993 | 0 | 670,201 |

Basic Needs and Essential Services

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Health | 1,531,119 | 484,925 | 337,141 | 2,353,185 |
| Water | 0 | 1,754,290 | 1,057,465 | 2,811,755 |
| Sanitation and hygiene | 0 | 523,614 | 188,229 | 711,843 |
| Shelter and infrastructure | 0 | 10,095,793 | 1,349,520 | 11,445,313 |
| Basic and domestic items | 309,922 | 2,561,240 | 962,337 | 3,833,500 |
| Education | 0 | 2,243,437 | 0 | 2,243,437 |
| Subtotal | 1,841,041 | 17,663,298 | 3,894,693 | 23,399,033 |

| | PILLAR 1 Refugee programme | PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects | PILLAR 4 IDP projects | Total |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance</i> | | | | |
| Self-reliance and livelihoods | 0 | 4,951,815 | 2,882,014 | 7,833,828 |
| Subtotal | 0 | 4,951,815 | 2,882,014 | 7,833,828 |
| <i>Durable Solutions</i> | | | | |
| Voluntary return | 19,642,439 | 519,097 | 229,881 | 20,391,417 |
| Reintegration | 302,716 | 3,130,794 | 856,993 | 4,290,503 |
| Integration | 302,209 | 0 | 0 | 302,209 |
| Resettlement | 458,286 | 0 | 0 | 458,286 |
| Subtotal | 20,705,650 | 3,649,891 | 1,086,874 | 25,442,415 |
| <i>Leadership, Coordination and Partnerships</i> | | | | |
| Coordination and partnerships | 0 | 733,936 | 376,458 | 1,110,394 |
| Emergency management | 0 | 0 | 752,916 | 752,916 |
| Donor relations and resource mobilization | 2,497,421 | 2,201,807 | 1,129,375 | 5,828,603 |
| Subtotal | 2,497,421 | 2,935,743 | 2,258,750 | 7,691,913 |
| <i>Logistics and Operations Support</i> | | | | |
| Logistics and supply | 6,272,480 | 0 | 0 | 6,272,480 |
| Operations management, coordination and support | 181 | 2,229,336 | 0 | 2,229,517 |
| Subtotal | 6,272,661 | 2,229,336 | 0 | 8,501,996 |
| Balance of instalments with implementing partners | 1,042,182 | 5,800,452 | 1,534,464 | 8,377,099 |
| Total | 33,265,580 | 40,664,082 | 13,433,853 | 87,363,515 |

Income from contributions includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM) Reserve. Contributions towards all pillars are included under Pillar 1.