



# South-West Asia

## Major developments

The year was remarkable for both Afghanistan and its neighbours. Following the establishment of a new, internationally-recognised administration in 2001, almost 1.8 million Afghans returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, and the Central Asian Republics. Most of the former refugees returned with assistance from UNHCR, the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation and the governments of the neighbouring countries. Large numbers also went back “spontaneously”, with no assistance at all. In addition, UNHCR and its partners helped 400,000 IDPs to go home, providing them with assistance similar to that given to returning refugees.

To support this massive return, UNHCR re-oriented its activities throughout the region. Going beyond its long-standing role as provider of protection and assistance to refugees who had resided for years in the neighbouring countries, UNHCR rapidly put together a regionally co-ordinated repatriation and reintegration operation.

Afghanistan  
Islamic Republic of Iran  
Pakistan



Based on information gathered in surveys in Pakistan and through discussions with refugees and authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNHCR and the Afghan authorities originally planned to assist up to 1.2 million returnees – both refugees and IDPs. Within weeks of the launch of the operation from Pakistan on 1 March, it was clear that many more were going to return.

The return movement reached a peak in May. During the most hectic week, almost 100,000 people passed through the ten voluntary repatriation centres set up in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the seven centres established in Pakistan. At the centres, successful applicants were provided with a voluntary repatriation form, which served as a travel document guaranteeing the receipt of a travel grant and other assistance inside Afghanistan (wheat from WFP and plastic sheeting, soap, and sanitary materials from UNHCR).

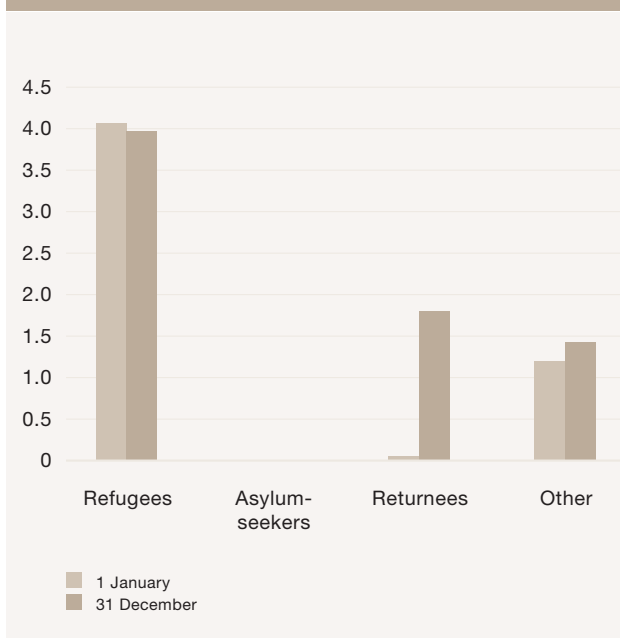
Within the global framework of reconstruction, UNHCR focused on protection monitoring and meeting returnees' most immediate needs, princi-

pally shelter and drinking water. At the same time, it developed partnerships with other agencies that have greater expertise in areas such as health and education. The aim was to make sure that clinics and schools were established or rehabilitated in areas of return.

Looking further ahead, the organisation has concentrated on building links with development actors from outside, and with three key ministries in the new Afghan government (those responsible for refugees and repatriation, rural reconstruction and development, and housing and development).

Despite the successful return of nearly two million people, more than three million refugees remain in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. In both countries, UNHCR has sought to create favourable asylum regimes and procedures within which asylum-seekers and refugees have access to internationally-accepted minimum standards of protection, as well as providing a limited level of humanitarian assistance.

Persons of concern to UNHCR  
(in millions)



## Challenges and constraints

The massive rate of return posed a logistical challenge in itself. Registration of prospective returnees was one of the most problematic areas, particularly in Pakistan, as it became increasingly difficult to verify which candidates were genuine. UNHCR hopes to have resolved this issue by introducing iris recognition technology, which scans and captures an image of the eye so that anybody attempting to pass through the system a second time will be recognised.

The pace of return also presents a challenge to the new authorities in Afghanistan and the international organisations working to help them. Despite initial efforts by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and UNDP to accelerate the reconstruction process by carrying out preliminary needs-assessments immediately after the signing of the Bonn agreement, the establishment of development projects on the ground has so far been gradual.

After more than 20 years of instability, and following the almost total destruction of the limited infrastructure in place, Afghanistan's capacity to absorb returnees is inevitably extremely limited. Although some people have returned with new skills acquired abroad, and are thus able to contribute to the reconstruction of the country, most who have

gone back are young, uneducated and unskilled. Only 20 per cent of returnees claim to have any land or property. Therefore, the vast majority find it very difficult to support themselves, and need urgent assistance to get their families re-established.

The situation is further exacerbated by the drought. Although rain has fallen in parts of the country recently, and crop yields are reported to be higher than in recent years, they still only match those of 1978, when the population was half of today's estimated 25 million. Environmental experts fear that the effects of the drought in southern Afghanistan, the south-eastern part of the Islamic Republic of Iran and south-western Pakistan could be felt for years to come

Another impediment is the fragile security situation in Afghanistan. Although much progress has been made, pockets of insecurity remain, and inter-factional disputes continue to disrupt progress and prevent people from returning to their places of origin.

The fact that huge numbers of Afghans repatriated in 2002 comes as something of a relief to the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Both countries still host large populations of Afghans who are widely regarded as a social and economic burden by the local populations. This puts considerable pressure on the Governments to find ways to reduce the numbers of Afghans living in their countries. Nevertheless, the Government of Pakistan has agreed that repatriation should take place at a gradual pace over the next three years, and that it should be voluntary. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has assured UNHCR that registered Afghans will not be deported.

## Progress towards solutions

Although UNHCR continues to provide limited assistance to Afghans living in camps, towns and villages in countries of asylum, voluntary repatriation is likely to remain the principal route to a durable solution for the problem.

To help ensure that returnees were able to reintegrate into their home communities, UNHCR focused on supporting the new Afghan Government in estab-



Afghanistan: Afghan returnees from Pakistan after five years in exile. *UNHCR / N. Behring*

lishing and implementing a legal framework that covers the rights of returnees. It is also concentrating on ensuring that government development plans take account of the presence, potential contribution and needs of returnees. UNHCR is working to help the Government strengthen its presence in the provinces in order to increase nationwide effectiveness in dealing with returnee issues.

At the same time, in spite of the fact that many of the protection-related issues that caused people to leave the country have been resolved, much still needs to be done to improve general living conditions. For this reason, UNHCR will continue to facilitate (rather than promote) voluntary repatriation.

The organisation is aware that although many more people are likely to return, it is possible that some Afghans, who have either been born in exile or spent a large part of their life in the Islamic

Republic of Iran or Pakistan, will not want to move to Afghanistan. For these people, it will be necessary to explore alternative solutions.

## Operations

UNHCR's operations in Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan are described in separate country chapters.

## Funding

Donors responded generously to UNHCR's appeal for its Afghan repatriation and reintegration operation, fully funding the USD 271,068,213 programme. The budget was an integrated one, covering both the Annual and Supplementary programmes in all three countries.

## Voluntary Contributions – Restricted / Earmarked (USD)

Earmarking <sup>1</sup>	Donor	Annual Programme Budget		Supplementary Programme Budgets	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
<b>Afghanistan</b>					
	Belgium	0	0	986,207	986,207
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung (GFR)</i>	0	0	99,108	99,108
	<i>España con ACNUR (SPA)</i>	117,674	257,854	0	0
	European Commission	176,056	176,056	9,342,028	9,349,915
	Germany	0	0	4,181,234	4,181,234
	Holy See	0	0	25,000	25,000
	Italy	0	0	1,208,547	1,208,547
	Japan	1,750,000	1,750,000	29,591,254	29,591,254
	Japan Association for UNHCR (JPN)	87,131	87,131	0	0
	Luxembourg	0	0	739,896	739,896
	Norway	0	0	119,190	119,190
	Private Donors Afghanistan	0	0	3,160	3,160
	Private Donors Austria	0	0	1,112	1,112
	Private Donors Bahrain	0	0	7,000	7,000
	Private Donors Cyprus	0	0	1,761	1,761
	Private Donors Germany	0	0	76,814	76,814
	Private Donors Japan	8,403	8,403	0	0
	Private Donors Netherlands	0	0	239	239
	Private Donors Sweden	0	0	1,000	1,000
	Private Donors United States of America	0	0	1,955	1,955
	Saudi Arabia	0	0	500,000	500,000
	Shin-Nyo-En Foundation (JPN)	42,017	42,017	0	0
	Soroptimist International (JPN)	21,538	21,538	0	0
	Sweden	0	0	4,854,369	4,854,369
	United States of America	2,202,445	2,202,445	0	0
	USA for UNHCR (USA)	0	0	146,250	146,250
	World Conference on Religion (JPN)	0	0	163,268	163,268
<b>Islamic Republic of Iran</b>					
	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR (FRA)</i>	11,833	11,833	0	0
	European Commission	0	0	2,650,087	2,650,087
	Germany	492,126	492,126	117,400	117,400
	Ireland	259,067	259,067	0	0
	Japan	750,000	750,000	4,750,000	4,750,000
	Switzerland	400,447	400,447	0	0
	United States of America	6,075,000	6,075,000	0	0
<b>Pakistan</b>					
	China	0	0	33,600	33,600
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung (GFR)</i>	256,343	256,343	0	0
	<i>España con ACNUR (SPA)</i>	0	238,492	0	0
	European Commission	1,109,358	1,109,294	5,306,172	5,306,180
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Earmarking <sup>1</sup>	Donor	Annual Programme Budget		Supplementary Programme Budget	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
<b>&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>					
	Ireland	302,245	302,245	0	0
	Japan	750,000	750,000	2,250,000	2,250,000
	Private Donors Austria	4,478	4,478	0	0
	Qatar Charitable Society (QATU)	0	0	355,000	355,000
	Rotary International, Pakistan	0	0	30,837	30,837
	Switzerland	790,312	790,312	0	0
	United States of America	7,970,000	7,970,000	0	0
	USA for UNHCR (USA)	194,000	194,000	0	0
<b>South-West Asia</b>					
	<i>Amitié sans Frontières (MCO)</i>	0	0	25,907	25,907
	<i>Argentina con ACNUR (ARG)</i>	0	0	7,059	7,059
	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR (FRA)</i>	0	0	136,599	136,599
	Australia	0	0	5,652,911	5,652,911
	Australia for UNHCR (AUL)	0	0	105,598	105,598
	Brunei Darussalam	0	0	163,310	163,310
	Canada	465,839	465,839	3,308,344	3,308,344
	Denmark	911,300	911,300	4,056,651	4,056,651
	Egyptian Federation for Construction and Building Construction (ARE)	0	0	179,900	179,900
	<i>España con ACNUR (SPA)</i>	0	0	993,784	963,410
	European Commission	0	0	880,282	880,282
	Finland	218,723	218,723	2,329,396	2,329,396
	Finnish Refugee Council (FIN)	0	0	60,740	60,740
	France	215,890	215,890	647,668	647,668
	Germany	0	0	495,540	495,540
	Islamic Association of Bahrain (BAH)	0	0	10,000	10,000
	Japan	250,000	250,000	8,250,000	8,250,000
	Japan Association for UNHCR (JPN)	0	0	710,088	710,088
	Kuwait	0	0	450,000	450,000
	Liechtenstein	0	0	67,114	67,114
	Mainichi Social Welfare Foundation (JPN)	0	0	26,515	26,515
	Netherlands	2,187,227	2,187,227	7,033,380	7,033,380
	New Zealand	0	0	496,000	496,000
	Norway	709,421	709,421	3,121,461	3,121,461
	Pakistan Petroleum Exploration Association (PAK)	0	0	23,872	23,872
	Private Donors Austria	0	0	32	32
	Private Donors Canada	0	0	5,581	5,581
	Private Donors China	0	0	472	472
	Private Donors Germany	0	0	473	473
	Private Donors Greece	0	0	38,483	38,483
	Private Donors Indonesia	0	0	194	194
<b>&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>					

Earmarking <sup>1</sup>	Donor	Annual Programme Budget		Supplementary Programme Budget	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
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	Private Donors Iran	189	189	0	0
	Private Donors Italy	0	0	1,168,397	1,168,397
	Private Donors Japan	0	0	11,224	11,224
	Private Donors Korea	0	0	18,992	18,992
	Private Donors Luxembourg	0	0	3,200	3,200
	Private Donors Malaysia	0	0	2,272	2,272
	Private Donors Mexico	0	0	278	278
	Private Donors Monaco	0	0	4,018	4,018
	Private Donors Pakistan	0	0	864	864
	Private Donors Switzerland	0	0	211	211
	Private Donors United Kingdom	0	0	505,863	505,863
	Private Donors United States of America	0	0	3,585	3,585
	Republic of Korea	0	0	662,962	662,962
	Saudi Arab Red Crescent Society (SAU)	0	0	194,482	194,482
	Shin-Nyo-En Foundation (JPN)	0	0	50,000	50,000
	Sweden	469,484	469,484	1,407,129	1,407,129
	Switzerland	0	0	847,598	847,598
	Toyota Motor (JPN)	0	0	559,701	559,701
	UK for UNHCR (GBR)	0	0	126,273	126,273
	UN Association (CAN)	0	0	152,575	152,575
	United Kingdom	0	0	7,812,500	7,812,500
	United States of America	5,000,000	5,000,000	32,725,000	32,725,000
	USA for UNHCR (USA)	0	0	153,293	153,293
	Zakat House (KUW)	0	0	200,000	200,000
	Zenkoku Tobacco Union (JPN)	0	0	52,715	52,715
<b>Total</b>		<b>34,198,546</b>	<b>34,577,154</b>	<b>153,482,974</b>	<b>153,460,495</b>

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the Donor Profiles.

### Budget and Expenditure (USD)

Country	Revised Budget			Expenditure		
	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total
Afghanistan	7,401,676	139,051,330	146,453,006	6,634,954	134,185,846	140,820,800
Islamic Republic of Iran	23,368,626	6,032,414	29,401,040	20,785,559	4,424,737	25,210,296
Pakistan	23,913,619	27,766,831	51,680,450	21,188,422	26,057,880	47,246,302
Regional Projects <sup>1</sup>	4,530,337	533,122	5,063,459	4,364,435	507,982	4,872,417
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,214,258</b>	<b>173,383,697</b>	<b>232,597,955</b>	<b>52,973,370</b>	<b>165,176,445</b>	<b>218,149,815</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes emergency preparedness in the region, in-kind donations for Afghan refugees and tertiary scholarships for Afghan refugees in the region.