

Pakistan

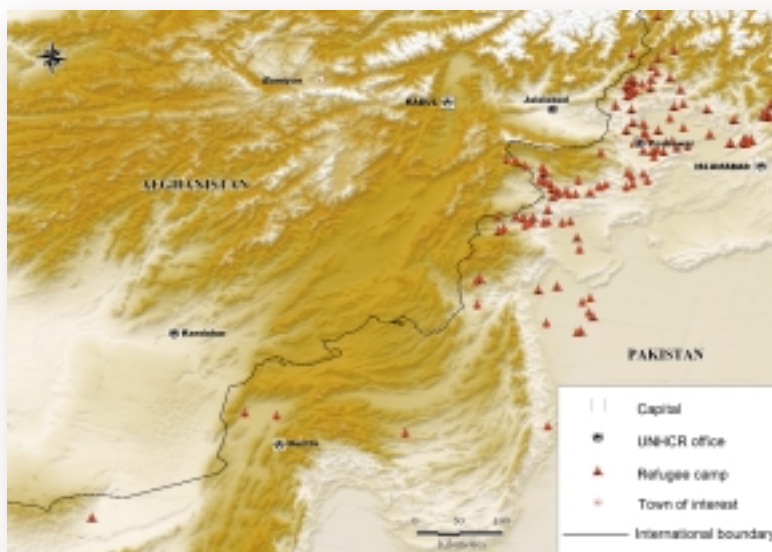
AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of 100,000 Afghan refugees; provide protection and assistance to new arrivals; continue limited community-based assistance in refugee villages; ensure rapid protection of vulnerable refugees; identify suitable durable solutions outside Pakistan for non-Afghan refugees.

Impact

- UNHCR assisted 75,967 persons to return voluntarily to Afghanistan, mostly to the eastern provinces.
- About 172,000 Afghans are known to have crossed into Pakistan - into Baluchistan or the North West Frontier province (NWFP) - fleeing abysmal humanitarian, economic and environmental conditions. Many more are also believed to have entered the country and travelled to cities or joined relatives already living in Pakistan.
- 1,708 people were resettled in third countries; 70 urban-based women-at-risk and their families accounted for 299 of them.
- Refugees received community-based assistance in the form of education, healthcare, water and community development.



Main Refugee Origin/Type of Population	Persons of Concern			
	Total in Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Afghanistan (Refugees)	2,000,000	1,200,000	53	52
Islamic Rep. of Iran (Refugees)	500	500	-	-

Revised Budget	Income and Expenditure (USD)			
	Annual Programme Budget			
	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
17,913,028	6,962,902	9,573,375	16,536,277	16,366,676

¹Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

²Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.



WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

Intensifying war, crippling drought, human rights abuses, and a ruined economy prompted many Afghans to cross into Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan, however, maintains that a legitimate government peacefully controls more than 90 per cent of Afghanistan, that fleeing Afghans do so purely for economic reasons, and that the international community should address population displacements inside Afghanistan. In December, when the UN Security Council passed a resolution imposing additional sanctions on the Taliban, the Government of Pakistan vehemently opposed the imposition of new sanctions, and drew the Security Council's attention to the humanitarian consequences these may trigger, including the likelihood of new refugee influxes and Pakistan's inability to cope.

Constraints

Against the backdrop of the international community's diminishing support for Afghan refugees, the rapidly deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the increasing likelihood of a new influx, Pakistan made a gradual shift in policy towards Afghan refugees. The refugee problem is no longer addressed in purely humanitarian terms, but has instead become entangled in a broader political debate.

Overall, the Afghan population in Pakistan did not make any significant progress towards self-reliance, neither in the urban areas nor in the refugee villages, and they were still only able to make an extremely limited financial contribution towards education, health and water services. A regional drought halved herds in Baluchistan Province, left orchards abandoned and the economy devastated. The Afghan refugee population was seriously affected in terms of access to adequate water for human and animal consumption, and employment opportunities.

Funding

UNHCR's financial constraints began to bite just as Pakistan was reassessing its policy on Afghan refugees. Budget cuts and the resulting suspension of key activities conveyed a perception (which UNHCR tried in vain to assuage) that Pakistan would be left to shoulder the burden almost single-handedly in the event of a new influx. Notwithstanding the impact of budget cuts on the health and general well-being of Afghan refugees, the most costly measure in human and political terms was the suspension of the repatriation programme six weeks before the end of the year, reducing the number of repatriating refugees by 25,000. Allowances for non-

Afghan refugees were reduced by 25 per cent and the Government reacted by asking for their prompt departure from Pakistan. Some of the affected refugees reacted violently, putting staff at risk.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

Efforts to carry out the protection mandate were severely constrained by an increasingly complicated legal and political environment, and the absence of an institutionalised asylum system that makes a distinction between genuine refugees and illegal migrants. All new arrivals were categorised as illegal immigrants following the adoption of new legislation in July requiring Afghans to possess either refugee permits issued by the Commissioner for Afghan refugees or valid Pakistani visas. UNHCR strove to make every use possible of the legal system in its efforts to protect refugees among new arrivals. Some 36,000 new arrivals in NWFP were transferred to New Shamshatoo where they received basic assistance. UNHCR was denied access to protect and assist newly arriving refugees and hundreds of Afghans were deported on the grounds of "illegal stay". Meanwhile, a decision to close the border with Afghanistan in November received broad popular support. In Baluchistan, negotiations were held to determine how UNHCR could meaningfully protect and assist new arrivals categorised *en bloc* as illegal immigrants by the authorities. Several proposals to assist the new arrivals were submitted by UNHCR, but all were turned down. As refugees continued to pour into Jalozai camp, initiatives to identify a new site failed to secure the Government's agreement by the end of the year.

The Tripartite Repatriation Commission met twice to discuss, among other things, assistance for returnees, rehabilitation of returnee areas, enforcement of the general amnesty law for all returnees, and exemption from military duty for one year upon return. The Government of Pakistan and the Taliban both expressed concern about the disparity between levels of assistance provided to returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan; UNHCR pledged to eliminate the gap in 2001. Minimal funding of reconstruction and rehabilitation in Afghanistan resulted in returning families receiving limited support, and frustrated attempts to encourage group repatriation. Verification teams endeavoured to ascertain that people seeking assistance were truly intending to remain in Afghanistan, in order to allay concerns about the so-called revolving door phenomenon.

UNHCR continued to submit applications for the resettlement of both Afghan and non-Afghan refugees. A sharp increase in Afghan “security cases” and women-at-risk reflected the increased dangers for those perceived as opponents of the Taliban, and for women without male support (usually urban and educated). In 2000, there were 359 resettlement cases (involving 3,159 persons) compared to 203 (830 persons) the previous year; 279 of them (1,229 persons) were classified

services; UNHCR provided basic subsistence allowances, educational assistance and medical care.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: Villages became more self-reliant with refugees participating actively in service delivery and community support systems. The impact of community development was evident in increased accept-



as women-at-risk. Of the non-Afghan, mainly urban refugee population, 55 per cent were single men while 45 per cent were households with children headed by women. Many of the women fell into the at-risk category, having no adult male relatives to provide support and protection. Regarded by the Government as illegal migrants, they had no legal access to work or public

ance of female education, women’s participation in decision-making, and more female committees and social action groups. Special emphasis was placed on ensuring the involvement of the community in all activities in New Shamshatoo as soon as refugees started to be transferred from Jalozai. UNHCR initiated a network of some 15 national NGOs to give limited indirect

support to needy urban Afghan refugees. A mechanism was set up for consultation and referral, and some 20 network members were trained on UNHCR's protection mandate and policy priorities.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: Each newly arrived family in New Shamshatoo received three quilts, one jerrycan, one kitchen set and one kerosene stove. Due to funding constraints, refugees had initially to rely on basic relief items provided by NGOs and charitable organisations.

Education: One third of the school age population in villages (124,043 children including 35,400 girls) benefited from primary school education in 361 UNHCR-funded schools. A similar number attended NGO-funded religious or self-help schools, but the remainder had no access to education. UNHCR succeeded in increasing female enrolment by building girls' schools or classrooms, organising double shifts (to double the number of pupils using a single classroom) and hiring female teachers. In Baluchistan, 50 home-based schools were established for 1,054 older or married girls. In Punjab, the number of girls attending school exceeded that of boys. Activities to benefit the environment were carried out at schools, such as the planting of 11,000 trees in school premises in NWFP.

Health/Nutrition: All refugees living in refugee villages had access to preventive and curative health services. Community participation was organised through a network of 11,114 volunteer health workers of whom 4,711 were women. Complete antenatal and postnatal care was provided for refugee

women. Some women were treated for complications further to medical termination of pregnancy. Blood grouping was introduced to detect rhesus incompatibility, previously a very significant cause of neonatal mortality. NGOs offered family planning services. Counselling services for sexually transmitted diseases were strengthened.

Income Generation: In Baluchistan, 1,225 women took part in the Group Guaranteed Lending Scheme, which provided limited credit to women on a group basis. The funds were used for income generation projects in carpet-weaving, animal husbandry, poultry farming and tailoring. Despite the programme's success, 660 women withdrew, mainly due to an ongoing national debate about the incompatibility of usury with Islamic teachings. In Punjab, a similar small-loans programme benefited men and women who participated in wool-spinning, carpentry, trading, tailoring, and other enterprises. The projects have had far-reaching results, contributing to literacy and the acquisition of technical skills for refugee women. Gender awareness has been raised and living standards have improved for the poorest, most vulnerable Afghan families.

Legal Assistance: UNHCR funded an NGO to assist with the registration of new applications for refugee status by Afghans and non-Afghans and to provide legal assistance for asylum-seekers, refugees in detention and others in precarious security or legal situations; it also helped with personal status issues such as divorce and notary procedures. Paralegal staff hired by UNHCR also conducted refugee status determination interviews, and made assessments and recommendations on individual cases, based on country of origin research and information. This assistance contributed to the speedy and effective provision of international protection and durable solutions for persons of concern.

Operational Support (to Agencies): UNHCR covered the cost of operational support for various agencies implementing activities in the sectors of health, education, water, legal assistance and community services.

Sanitation: Overall community participation was essential for the implementation of sanitation activities, including the digging of communal latrines, the use of mosquito nets, cattle sponging and the removal of stagnant water in order to prevent malaria and other endemic diseases. Spraying was carried out in refugee villages with a high incidence of malaria.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: Tarpaulins and plastic sheets were distributed to 2,089 families in New Shamshatoo. A total of 2,300 families received tents. NGOs constructed 800 mud-brick houses using their own funds.

Transport and Logistics: Relief items were transported from central warehouses to refugee villages. Inland transport costs, storage fees and clearing and handling charges on all incoming relief items were covered. Edible oil was stored, transported and distributed to Afghan



refugees through a network of refugee schools, health units and vocational projects.

Water: Due to the drought, each refugee in New Shamshatoo received 15-20 litres of water a day instead of 25 litres. Refugee water management committees were responsible for the running costs of the water distribution system and 25 per cent of major repairs. Outreach workers engaged the community in discussions to ensure that women's concerns were addressed and to spread awareness of water conservation. In Baluchistan, UNHCR supported a refugee village consolidation programme designed to rationalise the geographical pattern of refugee villages. Refugee families were encouraged to relocate to ensure more efficient use of water resources; thus transport was provided. The project was hampered by a degree of opposition from the receiving host community, as well as reluctance on the part of the affected refugee population, despite their desperate condition. Nevertheless consolidation activities went ahead, with the expectation that more refugees will gradually move to improved villages in the course of 2001.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

UNHCR's projects and activities in Pakistan were implemented by an office in Islamabad, supported by offices in Peshawar and Quetta. A total of 91 staff, of whom 23 were international and 68 national staff, administered UNHCR's programme in 2000.

Working with Others

UNHCR worked in close co-operation with 18 national and international NGOs and with the Government of Pakistan, through the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees. In 2000, the emphasis on developing partnerships with other UN agencies, the World Bank and NGOs marked the beginnings of a slight but significant shift in UNHCR's role. The move away from traditional implementing partner relationships involves a greater willingness to rely on other agencies' financial and operational contributions. The results can be seen in terms of strengthened co-ordination and synergy. The scope for bolder moves in this direction will be tested during 2001.

OVERALL ASSESSEMENT

In general, the objectives were satisfactorily met despite budget cuts and delays in the receipt of funds. Effective

implementation and co-ordination with implementing partners resulted in the prompt mobilisation of resources by NGOs to increase the assistance to new arrivals. The change in the Government's asylum policy towards Afghans and the lack of a substantive dialogue with the Government of Pakistan in reviewing current approaches on strategies emerged as major political constraints.

Offices

Islamabad
Peshawar
Quetta

Partners

Government Agencies

Ministry of States and Frontier Regions and Northern Areas

NGOs

Afghan Medical Welfare Association
Church World Service
Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
Frontier Primary Health Care
Health Net International
International Rescue Committee
Kuwait Joint Relief Committee
Mercy Corps International
Ockenden Venture
Pakistan Red Crescent Society
Radda Barnen
Rifah Foundation
Savera Counselling Services
Save the Children Fund – USA
Sayyad Jamaluddin Afghani Welfare Organisation
Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid
Union Aid for Afghan Refugees

Other

Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects		Prior Years' Projects	
		notes		notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,991,527		7,718	
Community Services	273,430		63,546	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	2,298,127		269,453	
Education	2,312,849		1,151,096	
Health / Nutrition	2,389,030		790,285	
Income Generation	35,445		16,813	
Legal Assistance	467,820		14,914	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	446,007		(85,912)	
Sanitation	248,264		0	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	52,625		34,053	
Transport / Logistics	51,527		16,436	
Water	273,669		121,133	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	2,909,016		(2,013,007)	
Sub-total Operational	13,749,336		386,528	
Programme Support	1,661,426		113,907	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	15,410,762	(3)	500,435	(6)
Unliquidated Obligations	955,914	(3)	0	
Total	16,366,676	(1) (3)	500,435	

Instalments with Implementing Partners

Payments Made	8,548,018		494,070	
Reporting Received	5,639,002		2,507,077	
Balance	2,909,016		(2,013,007)	
Outstanding 1 January	0		2,750,807	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		312,419	
Currency Adjustment	0		(18,288)	
Outstanding 31 December	2,909,016		407,093	

Unliquidated Obligations

Outstanding 1 January	0		749,606	(6)
New Obligations	16,366,676	(1)	0	
Disbursements	15,410,762	(3)	500,435	(6)
Cancellations	0		249,171	(6)
Outstanding 31 December	955,914	(3)	0	(6)

Figures which cross reference to Accounts:

(1) Annex to Statement 1

(3) Schedule 3

(6) Schedule 6