

COUNTRY OPERATION PAKISTAN

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Verify, register and assist up to 100,000 Afghan refugees requesting repatriation; mobilise assistance for returnees inside Afghanistan; provide a sound education for all school-age Afghan children in refugee villages (especially girls); provide security and primary health care for all vulnerable Afghan refugees in refugee villages; increase self-reliance by encouraging refugees (particularly women) to participate more actively in community activities; resettle 3,000 Afghan refugees with security concerns and 750 non-Afghan refugees; and provide material and legal assistance to needy non-Afghan refugees pending the identification of an appropriate durable solution.



Persons of Concern

| MAIN REFUGEE ORIGIN/ TYPE OF POPULATION | TOTAL IN COUNTRY | OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED | PER CENT FEMALE | PER CENT < 18 |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Afghan Refugees* | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 53 | 52 |
| Non-Afghan Refugees | 2,015 | 2,015 | 46 | 55 |
| Asylum-seekers | 460 | 0 | - | - |

* The Government of Pakistan estimates that there may be up to two million Afghan refugees in urban areas.

Impact

- UNHCR assisted 91,834 Afghans to repatriate voluntarily by providing transportation and a reintegration package. The needs of return communities were ascertained and duly incorporated into all relevant plans. This approach made their return more viable, despite the volatile situation in Afghanistan. Some 830 Afghan refugees were resettled, including 594 vulnerable women, 230 individuals with security problems and six refugees seeking family reunion.
- A total of 1.2 million Afghan refugees continued to receive humanitarian assistance from UNHCR and its partners in 203 refugee villages. Some 116,700 refugee children attended primary school (one third of them girls) and vulnerable refugees had access to basic preventive and curative health services.
- Among the non-Afghan refugees, an average of 2,200 persons received monthly assistance throughout the year; whereas 997 individuals were resettled.

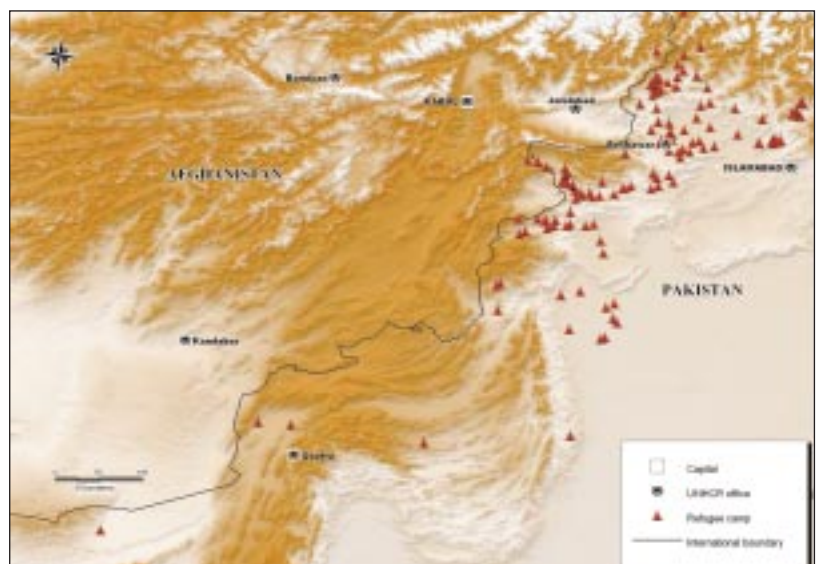
Income and Expenditure - SP Activities (USD)

| WORKING BUDGET | INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS* | OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE** | TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE | TOTAL EXPENDITURE |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 2,976,105 | 377,667 | 2,981,448 | 3,359,115 | 2,886,431 |

* Includes contributions earmarked for the Afghan Repatriation and Reintegration Operation.

** Includes opening balance and adjustments.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.



WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

The complex cultural and increasingly ethnic and sectarian conflict between the Taliban and the United Front in northern Afghanistan continued unabated. The Taliban's military offensive in July (intended to capture the Shomali valley) coupled with serious violations of human rights in the Shomali plains and Panshir valley, resulted in new refugee flight. About 100,000 Afghans were reported to have entered Pakistan, of whom 30,000 were assisted by UNHCR and NGOs in Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). In Baluchistan, the majority of the newly arrived refugees were of Hazara origin and settled in Quetta town. UNHCR gave them a one-off relief package and food was supplied by WFP. In NWFP, they were offered a relief package and food assistance when they settled in a designated refugee village.

Despite the fragile situation inside Afghanistan in 1999, some 91,800 Afghan refugees, mainly Pashtoons, decided to repatriate voluntarily to Taliban-controlled areas. Although UNHCR did not actively promote repatriation, those who expressed a wish to return were helped to do so. UNHCR verified that their return was voluntary (through interviews) and registered them in order to provide repatriation assistance. This assistance was provided at four distribution points inside Afghanistan (Helmand, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Khost).

The majority of the remaining Afghan refugee population in Pakistan (some 1.2 million people in 203 officially recognised refugee villages) struggled for self-reliance against a backdrop of deteriorating economic and social conditions. Given their links with the local population and their traditional migratory movements, the Government of Pakistan tolerated their freedom of movement and access to employment, but there was mounting pressure for their return to Afghanistan or at least to the refugee villages. The Government estimates that two million Afghan refugees live in urban areas without assistance.

Constraints

Political and economic instability led people in Pakistan to blame Afghan refugees for problems ranging from unemployment to crime, and to call for their expulsion. Some individual Afghan refugees continued to face acute protection problems due mainly to their perceived opposition to the Taliban. Refugee women who lacked the support of family and traditional social structures

were also particularly vulnerable. The change of government in Pakistan had no visible impact on the situation of non-Afghan refugees. But economic decline meant reduced informal employment opportunities, and continued dependence on humanitarian assistance.

Funding

Operations in Pakistan continued to suffer from underfunding. Requests for health and educational services have increased, but resources have not kept pace with demand, despite the current policy of encouraging financial participation from the refugees. Community participation, however, is increasingly constrained by the economic hardship faced by the refugees. Some NGO partners with independent funding announced their planned withdrawal with no replacement in sight.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

Pakistan is party neither to the 1951 Convention nor the 1967 Protocol and has no national legislation on asylum. UNHCR continued to review the files of Afghans requesting resettlement based on security considerations, including women at risk. In December, the Government officially informed UNHCR of its new policy regarding Afghans, who are no longer considered *prima facie* refugees. In their view, Afghanistan had a legitimate government controlling 90 per cent of the territory and refugees could therefore safely return to their homes in these areas. Only Afghans travelling with valid documents were to be authorised to enter Pakistan. The Government launched a campaign to "motivate refugees to repatriate" at the beginning of the year. The change of government in October 1999 did not alter this policy. In practice, cross-border movements continued, and only members of certain minority groups were detained as the provisions of the Foreigners' Act were more strictly implemented. This mainly affected refugees living in urban areas, particularly the Hazaras in Quetta.

UNHCR also protected some 2,400 non-Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers (mainly Iraqis, Iranians and Somalis). As the Government does not recognise non-Afghans as refugees, UNHCR remained responsible for determination of their status. In 1999, 670 individuals were interviewed and 171 recognised as refugees. One Somali refugee repatriated and 997 refugees of various nationalities were resettled. UNHCR also began to review the claims of previously rejected Somali asylum-seekers.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: Community networks were developed and strengthened. The Action for the Rights of the Child (ARC) project continued to provide training on gender, disability, community mobilisation and child development for UNHCR, government and NGO staff. Members of the Social Welfare Committees attended training courses regularly, and new topics such as repatriation, refugee rights, mine-awareness and women's rights were introduced, in addition to hygiene and the environment. Drug awareness, peace education, child exploitation and conservation principles were discussed in children's and youth groups. An evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the Community Services Unit in Peshawar recommended that the Unit should adopt a more advisory role, and that UNHCR staff should be trained to take over monitoring of community-based projects.

These recommendations will be implemented in 2000. Non-Afghan refugees received counselling and some were successfully encouraged to make use of vocational training and micro-credits to start up small businesses. About 70 women attended language and computer courses. Activities for children and adolescents included table tennis, group discussions, a day-care centre and a programme offering computer, English and typing classes.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: A total of 91,834 Afghan refugees (16,105 families) repatriated in 1999, mostly to the south-eastern provinces of Afghanistan. They received assistance packages consisting of 300 kgs of wheat (provided by WFP), 5,000 Pakistani rupees and one tarpaulin per family. A monthly average of 2,200 non-Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers received subsistence allowances because they were not allowed to work.

Education: Overall school enrolment increased by 11 per cent (female enrolment increased by 36 per cent). In Baluchistan, almost all the girls in the Home-Based Girl Schools passed their year-end exams. Despite growing awareness and demand for education, cultural barriers and limited resources (including qualified female teachers) were a problem, especially in remote and less safe areas. Education was closely monitored, teachers were trained or given refresher courses and text books were improved. Disabled refugees were helped to attend classes more regularly. Some 3,240 refugees (38 per cent women) benefited from vocational-skills training in tailoring, embroidery, carpet-

weaving, carpentry and welding. Roughly 70 per cent of the male graduates subsequently found employment. The courses also reinforced environmental awareness by focusing on solid waste management, use of fast-growing woods and the preservation of rare trees. Some 1,200 children, too old to join a formal primary school system, were also given a chance to attend school, after which 71 per cent found work, either as employees or self-employed. The deteriorating socio-economic situation caused many male students in higher grades to drop out and look for work.

Some 630 non-Afghan refugee children, including those with special needs and adolescents, received educational grants to attend private schools (they were not allowed to attend state schools). Vocational training courses in computer science, English, French, tailoring, cooking and typing were available until May, when they had to be interrupted due to lack of funding.

Health/Nutrition: Malaria was on the rise in the region, including a high relapse rate for vivax. Some 292,800 refugees sought treatment at medical centres. The malnutrition rate among refugee children under five was three per cent. Immunisation coverage reached 95 per cent of the refugee population while 50 per cent of women of reproductive age received typhoid and tetanus vaccinations and 60 per cent of infants were protected from tetanus. A joint programme with UNFPA covered safe motherhood, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and STD/HIV/AIDS awareness. Health staff were trained in the use of the new Health Information System while the Pharmacy Management System was evaluated and revised. Training was given to 125 health workers in DOTS (Directly Observed Short-Term Treatment) for TB.

A total of 1,053 non-Afghan refugees visited the Medical Counsellor. Whenever possible, they were referred to government health facilities, but when government services were unavailable or in urgent situations they were referred to private practitioners. Some 390 refugees were partially reimbursed for medical expenses.

Income Generation: Despite initial difficulties due to the opposition of some conservative groups to the involvement of women in commercial activities, 701 refugees were enrolled in the Group Guaranteed Lending and Savings scheme in Baluchistan, and another 73 in NWFP and Punjab. The recovery rate for loans was above 80 per cent in NWFP and above

96 per cent in Punjab. Small businesses (shoe-making, tailoring, embroidery, carpet-weaving, carpentry, food preservation, welding and tinsmithing) were set up by the most vulnerable refugees (mainly adolescents and women) allowing them to improve the living conditions of their families.

Legal Assistance: A series of workshops were organised for UNHCR and government officials in Islamabad, NWFP and Baluchistan to discuss international standards for voluntary repatriation. A total of 46 repatriation monitors and facilitators were hired to support the repatriation operation in Peshawar and Quetta. They observed the principal routes between the refugees' departure points and the border (using vehicles equipped with radios). Some were posted at border crossing points, enabling refugees to return safely with their household goods. Funds covered the monitors' salaries and related costs, diesel, maintenance and repair of vehicles and equipment, office supplies, advertising/printing costs and security services.

Operational Support (to Agencies): The overhead costs of four international operational partners were covered. In addition, 23 staff were seconded to UNHCR in Pakistan to provide technical and administrative support. Funds covered their salaries and related staff costs.

Sanitation: Insecticides were procured and distributed to the refugees for malaria control. This allowed for spraying of refugee villages between June and September and kept the incidence of malaria under control.

Transport/Logistics: Returning refugees repatriated both individually and in groups. Those returning in groups were taken in trucks hired from local commercial companies to several locations inside Afghanistan. Funding was provided for the transport of relief items (medical supplies and peace packs) between Islamabad and field locations as well as storage costs at Azakhel warehouse in Peshawar.

Water: The Water Management Committees received support for: the repair and maintenance of supply systems; shallow wells; hand pumps; and chlorination (carried out with the help of outreach workers). This ensured an adequate supply of clean water. Refugees in the three provinces paid for electrical charges themselves and works were undertaken to replace faulty and ageing equipment.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

UNHCR operated out of three offices in Islamabad, Quetta and Peshawar with a total of 20 international (four of which have regional responsibilities) and 66 national staff. Another 69 staff assisted the Office under project arrangements. Close co-ordination between offices in Pakistan and Afghanistan allowed for more accurate targeting of reintegration activities.

Working with Others

UNHCR worked with 21 operational partners: ten international and nine national NGOs, one foundation and one government agency. Many national NGOs performed well, but they need further support to improve their management and operational capacity. Regular co-ordination meetings and joint field assessments took place with all partners. UNFPA agreed to provide a reproductive health project, and WFP continued to provide food for new arrivals, cooking oil for refugee families with girls at school and wheat for repatriating refugees. Regular discussions were held with UNICEF on issues related to education.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Although many Afghan refugees in Pakistan have reached a certain degree of self-reliance, vulnerable groups are still dependent on humanitarian assistance. As donor support dwindles, increased demand for health and educational services will only be met through increased efficiency and community participation. Any decrease in assistance would not only damage relations with the Government, but also worsen the already poor public image of the refugees, leading indirectly to increased protection problems.

As socio-economic conditions in Pakistan worsened, refugees were increasingly compelled to leave the refugee villages in search of a livelihood. According to government sources, there were more Afghan refugees in urban areas than in the refugee villages. This trend is expected to continue and UNHCR's policy regarding urban refugees may therefore need to be reviewed.

Without a political solution in Afghanistan, no exit strategy can be considered: the current uncertainties effectively preclude any reduction in assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Efforts should instead be

directed towards facilitating voluntary repatriation and strengthening participation, skills and awareness within the refugee community to increase self-reliance.

Offices

Islamabad
Peshawar
Quetta



Partners

Government Agencies

Government of Pakistan

NGOs

Afghan Medical Welfare Association
Church World Service
Danish Committee for Aid to Afghani Refugees
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
COPE (Basic Education for Afghan Refugees)
Frontier Primary Health Care
Health Net International
International Rescue Committee
Kuwait Joint Relief Committee
Mercy Corp International
Ockenden International
Pakistan Red Crescent
Radda Barnen
Save the Children Fund (USA)
SAVERA Counselling Services
Sayyad Jamaluddin Afghani Welfare Organisation
Serving Emergency Relief and Vocational Enterprises
Skills for Employment and Self Employment Agency
Society for Human Right and Prisoners Aid
Union Aid for Afghan Refugees

Other

RIFAH Foundation

Financial Report (USD)

| Expenditure Breakdown | Current Year's Projects | | | Prior Years' Projects | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | General Programmes | Special Programmes | Total | General Programmes | Special Programmes | Total |
| Protection, Monitoring and Coordination | 2,392,471 | 300,280 | 2,692,751 | 35,189 | 8,853 | 44,042 |
| Community Services | 291,790 | 0 | 291,790 | 311,151 | 0 | 311,151 |
| Domestic Needs / Household Support | 804,925 | 1,723,189 | 2,528,113 | 463,496 | 20,508 | 484,004 |
| Education | 2,505,151 | 0 | 2,505,151 | 1,863,112 | 0 | 1,863,112 |
| Health / Nutrition | 2,423,912 | 0 | 2,423,912 | 1,519,346 | 0 | 1,519,346 |
| Income Generation | 36,027 | 0 | 36,027 | 33,116 | 0 | 33,116 |
| Legal Assistance | 17,666 | 377,239 | 394,905 | 5,543 | (139,297) | (133,754) |
| Operational Support (to Agencies) | 788,278 | 916 | 789,194 | 180,842 | 0 | 180,842 |
| Sanitation | 129,526 | 0 | 129,526 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Transport / Logistics | 67,392 | 12,949 | 80,342 | 12,268 | 0 | 12,267 |
| Water | 226,844 | 0 | 226,844 | 162,517 | 0 | 162,517 |
| Instalments with Implementing Partners | 2,586,896 | 0 | 2,586,896 | (4,341,252) | 142,396 | (4,198,856) |
| Combined Projects | 39,826 | 0 | 39,826 | (39,826) | 0 | (39,826) |
| Sub - total Operational | 12,310,704 | 2,414,573 | 14,725,276 | 205,501 | 32,459 | 237,960 |
| Administrative Support | 405,363 | 350,508 | 755,871 | 3,452 | 2,293 | 5,745 |
| Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries | 12,716,067 | 2,765,081 | 15,481,148 | 208,953 | 34,753 | 243,706 |
| Unliquidated Obligations | 634,657 | 121,350 | 756,007 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 13,350,724 | 2,886,431 | 16,237,155 | 208,953 | 34,753 | 243,706 |
| Instalments with Implementing Partners | | | | | | |
| Payments Made | 8,393,699 | 0 | 8,393,699 | 118,394 | 307,382 | 425,776 |
| Reporting Received | 5,806,803 | 0 | 5,806,803 | 4,459,646 | 164,987 | 4,624,632 |
| Balance | 2,586,896 | 0 | 2,586,896 | (4,341,252) | 142,396 | (4,198,856) |
| Outstanding 1 January | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5,133,117 | (146,845) | 4,986,273 |
| Refunded to UNHCR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 87,848 | 0 | 87,848 |
| Currency Adjustment | 0 | 0 | 0 | (540,107) | 4,449 | (535,658) |
| Outstanding 31 December | 2,586,896 | 0 | 2,586,896 | 163,911 | 0 | 163,911 |
| Unliquidated Obligations | | | | | | |
| Outstanding 1 January | 0 | 0 | 0 | 714,305 | 111,871 | 826,175 |
| New Obligations | 13,350,724 | 2,886,431 | 16,237,155 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Disbursements | 12,716,067 | 2,765,081 | 15,481,148 | 208,953 | 34,753 | 243,706 |
| Cancellations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 505,352 | 77,118 | 582,470 |
| Outstanding 31 December | 634,657 | 121,350 | 756,007 | 0 | 0 | 0 |