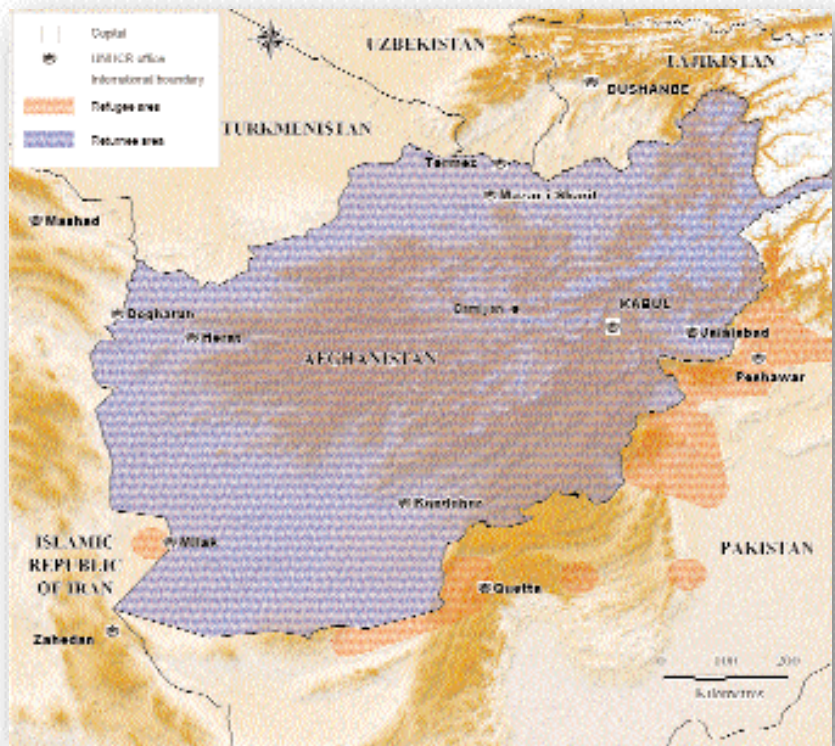


Afghanistan

Main Objectives

- Promote emergency assistance to internally displaced and conflict/drought affected communities with a view to saving lives, while not compromising the right to asylum.
- Identify through monitoring of movements of return at borders and movements of internal displacements the most vulnerable Afghan returnees and IDPs to enable measures aimed at enhancing their protection and addressing their needs.
- Deliver assistance to potential returnee areas with a view to creating an environment conducive to voluntary and sustainable return of refugees and IDPs.
- Support voluntary repatriation, as soon as conditions permit, of Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and ensure that the process adheres to international standards.
- Support returnees' reintegration by identifying, through returnee monitoring, and addressing the needs in the areas of return, including access to basic services, as well as ensuring that basic human rights are respected.
- Establish linkages with other development agencies, especially UNDP, ensuring that returnees are included when planning for the country's economic recovery and other long-term development programmes.



Afghanistan

PLANNING FIGURES

Population	Jan. 2002	Dec. 2002
Returns from Islamic Republic of Iran ¹	1,455,000	1,690,000
Returns from Pakistan	2,368,000	2,423,000
Total	3,823,000	4,113,000

¹ It is estimated that 15,000 will repatriate with the assistance of UNHCR while 220,000 Afghans (returning without seeking assistance) will be assisted only with transit arrangements and in-country transport.

TOTAL REQUIREMENTS • USD 9,492,176

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Recent Developments

At the time of going to print, planning for possible 2002 activities in Afghanistan has not yet been finalised, owing to the rapidly changing situation following the terrorist attacks on 11 September. These activities will be presented in an Addendum

to this Appeal, which will be published once the new needs assessments are completed and the Supplementary Programme approved.

The bombing campaign against international terrorism has further exacerbated the hardship the people of Afghanistan face after 21 years of conflict. During the month of October, people in the main cities fled the bombing and deteriorating security situation and took refuge in the countryside. This raised the number of internally displaced (IDPs) in Afghanistan to over 1.2 million. It is estimated that the number of vulnerable persons in Afghanistan, including IDPs, will reach over 6 million. An estimated 130,000 persons filtered through unofficial border points to neighbouring countries, mainly Pakistan.

In addition to the military action, and the destruction and neglect of Afghanistan's agricultural and economic infrastructure due to the internal conflict, Afghans are confronted with the effects of drought. The drought has severely affected 2.5 million farmers and deprived over a million people of their coping-mechanisms. The humanitarian crisis, the conflict, the abysmal human rights situation and the growing poverty have caused new waves of massive displacement within and from Afghanistan. It has also reduced the prospects of voluntary repatriation as a durable solution – in the short and medium term – for large numbers of the estimated 4 million Afghans in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in Pakistan.

However, even during the military strikes in Afghanistan, some, albeit few, Afghans continue to return (without UNHCR facilitation) to the country. They feel that they have no other alternative as they face increasingly difficult economic and social conditions in the countries of first asylum or wish to reunite with their families during such difficult times. They are aware that the security conditions are bad, that it will be economically difficult to re-establish livelihoods, and that they

face the danger of landmines and unexploded ordinance. In addition, there are areas in Afghanistan where life-saving programmes in shelter, water and income generation could continue to be implemented through a network of local NGOs who are willing and able to access areas of return to continue with these programmes.

Voluntary repatriation and initial reintegration of returnees remain important components of the strategy for Afghanistan. UNHCR and its partners have agreed to facilitate voluntary return to targeted areas of origin, where an absorption capacity exists and can be increased, conditions are conducive to return and main gaps in reintegration assistance can be addressed.

With regard to the rights of returnees, both sets of authorities in Afghanistan have issued declarations of amnesty for returnees. The amnesties include provisions for:

- non-discrimination on account of gender, ethnic origin and religion;
- non-recruitment for military activities for one year after return; and
- recovery of property.

Through systematic monitoring at places of return, UNHCR will not only gather information about the gaps in their basic needs but also raise awareness of the local authorities and returnee communities about the rights of returnees as contained in the declarations of amnesty. Currently there is no presence of international staff in Afghanistan. However, the UN, including UNHCR, remain active on the ground although in selected safe areas only, through NGO partners and through presence of local staff. It is expected that this situation will improve to allow a gradual return of all categories of humanitarian workers. Possibilities for direct interventions by UNHCR are rather limited in the current circumstances. However, both limited presence and awareness-raising will have beneficial effects on the overall protection situation of returnees.

Constraints

The continuing conflict, drought and the growing poverty in Afghanistan, as well as deteriorating conditions in countries of asylum, are the main challenges for UNHCR. Voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity and as a durable solution is hard to achieve under the present circumstances. The need to monitor the

Returnee village in Khaki Jabar. UNHCR/R. Colville.



consequences of return and the provision of initial reintegration assistance are of paramount importance. In addition, the role of other agencies in reconstruction and economic recovery is crucial in the stabilisation of Afghanistan in general and towards sustainability of returnees in particular. The conflict will probably continue to be characterised by violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. In addition, environmental degradation, widespread presence of landmines, food insecurity, a systematic brain-drain, high levels of unemployment, large population movements, and the collapse of state institutions or even the emergence of a fragile governance, will be the context in which voluntary repatriation is expected to take place.

Another decisive factor determining the degree to which protection monitoring and assistance can be provided is the security environment under which the international community will be able to operate within Afghanistan. The high number of vulnerable persons, including IDPs, in Afghanistan has a constraining impact on voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration of refugees, which is the statutory responsibility of UNHCR. The exit strategy is contingent upon the ability and resources of all agencies concerned to find solutions to the crisis, which should result in stable local communities.

STRATEGY

Protection and Solutions

UNHCR's involvement in the humanitarian operations in Afghanistan stems from its overall mandate for providing protection and solutions for Afghan refugees. The activities in Afghanistan are closely linked to and co-ordinated with the Afghan refugee situation in the neighbouring countries mainly in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in Pakistan. Afghanistan is the country of origin for the largest protracted refugee situation in the world. For the last ten years UNHCR has facilitated the return of over four million Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. In 2002, UNHCR expects to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to Afghanistan safely and in dignity; however, the numbers of returnees can only be estimated after the situation inside Afghanistan has, at least partially, stabilised.

UNHCR will monitor return movements at borders and the consequences of the return, assist the returnees to re-establish themselves, and contribute towards creating conditions inside Afghanistan that are conducive to a sustainable reintegration. UNHCR protection and assistance activities include: maintaining and expanding a monitoring team of protection staff; providing to the most needy shelter materials, water, wage labour opportunities (especially for women), education, skills training, health, sanitation and other community services; and responding to the needs of vulnerable communities including

the IDPs. These labour-intensive activities will require UNHCR's continued presence in Afghanistan.

In addition to returns organised by UNHCR, there are refugees who are expected to return spontaneously. There are also returnees who were excluded as refugees under the screening process in both the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and deportees. Assistance will be provided for these persons, taking into account the needs as well as the capacity of their host communities to receive them. The assistance will be similar to that given to people returning under UNHCR's auspices.

UNHCR will also provide assistance to vulnerable persons including IDPs in areas with large returnee concentrations and where limited attention and support is available from other agencies. A substantial part of these activities will be covered by the budget of the Supplementary Programme. IDPs, like many of the refugees, are victims of conflict and drought. As part of a joint UN response to the humanitarian crisis, UNHCR will provide assistance together with UNOCHA, other UN agencies, and international NGOs, in order to meet the immediate needs. The ultimate purpose of this intervention is to create conditions conducive for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration of returnees.

Assistance

Returnees will be assisted with standard repatriation packages comprising of cash and household items, covered by the budgets of UNHCR in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is also expected that WFP will continue to provide the standard package of wheat. UNHCR will provide shelter assistance to the returnees and will increase the communities' absorption capacity by constructing or rehabilitating water sources, repairing health clinics, establishing hygienic facilities, providing assistance to schools and support income generating and wage labour opportunities. In July 2001, UNHCR also decided to provide emergency assistance (shelter and other non-food items) to some 50,000 IDPs in Badakshan, Balk, Baghlan, Faryab, Kunduz, and Herat Provinces. Following the September crisis, the assistance will expand to cover emergency needs of vulnerable communities, including IDPs. Additional resources under the supplementary programme will cover this assistance.

When deciding on the location and accessibility of water sources with regard to providing safe drinking water, UNHCR will take into account the fact that it is the women and children who are the main water collectors. Micro-credit schemes in the central, eastern and southern regions of Afghanistan, will also be developed to benefit female-headed households. Women will also receive special home-based vocational and literacy training.

The operational environment in Afghanistan hampers activities benefiting women, as the complete segregation of sexes remains the rule. In spite of the restrictive policies of the

authorities and the traditional social environment, UNHCR continues to work with Afghan women. UNHCR will pursue its goal to employ female national staff to undertake returnee monitoring in order to ensure that the needs of returnee women are addressed although their freedom of movement to monitor and follow-up on programmes will be seriously restricted.

Desired Impact

By further increasing its capacity to monitor and analyse the situation of returnees and the composition of and reasons for movements within Afghanistan and across borders, UNHCR will contribute to better planning of required reintegration assistance. It will also help in designing a response that will prevent and address further displacement of the population. The assistance to internally displaced and conflict/drought affected communities will aim at saving lives; help at stabilising the community; and create an environment conducive to voluntary repatriation and sustainable return.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management Structure

In autumn 2001, a regional co-ordinator was appointed. The regional co-ordinator is responsible, at the field level, for the co-ordination of operational matters in the region, for the duration of the emergency. Representatives in the region will report to, and co-ordinate with, the regional co-ordinator on all matters pertaining to the present crises. UNHCR's Office of the Chief of Mission will be, for the time being, located in Islamabad, where contacts with other UN agencies, the donors and NGOs will be maintained. The number of staff working inside Afghanistan will be dependent on future developments and the overall security situation.

Co-ordination

A unique feature in Afghanistan is the Strategic Framework and Principled Common Programming through which the UN's political assistance and human rights activities are bound together. UNHCR chairs the thematic group on returnee assistance and is actively involved in strategy development, contingency planning, monitoring and response to the continued crisis of internal displacement. UNHCR also continues to play an active role in the thematic group on human rights where protection issues are being addressed jointly with other actors. The Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator (OCHA) plays the lead role in helping the internally displaced Afghans.

One of UNHCR's main partners in Afghanistan is WFP which provides wheat to returnees both as part of the standard repa-

triation grant and also as a contribution to Food for Work shelter rehabilitation projects. WFP is an important partner, as the prospects for return largely depend on the overall food security situation.

OFFICES

Islamabad (Pakistan)
Kabul (supervising Field Unit Ghazni)
Herat (supervising Field Units Islam Qala and Farah)
Jalalabad (supervising Field Unit Khost)
Kandahar (supervising Field Units Laskargah, Spin Boldak, Zaranj and Dilaram)
Mazar-i-Sharif (supervising Field Units Pul-I-Khumri and Kunduz)

PARTNERS

NGOs
ACTED
Afghan German Basic Education
AMI
BBC Afghan Education Projects
CARE International
Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
International Assistance Mission
International Rescue Committee
Merci Corps International
Network of 100 Local Afghan NGOs
Peace Winds Japan
Save the Children Fund
Solidarities
Others
IOM
UNV

BUDGET (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	2,282,598
Domestic Needs	270,000
Education	440,000
Health	165,000
Income Generation	250,000
Legal Assistance	1,160,000
Operational Support (to Agencies)	455,000
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	370,000
Transport/Logistics	2,130,000
Water	290,000
Total Operations	7,812,598
Programme Support	1,679,578
Total	9,492,176