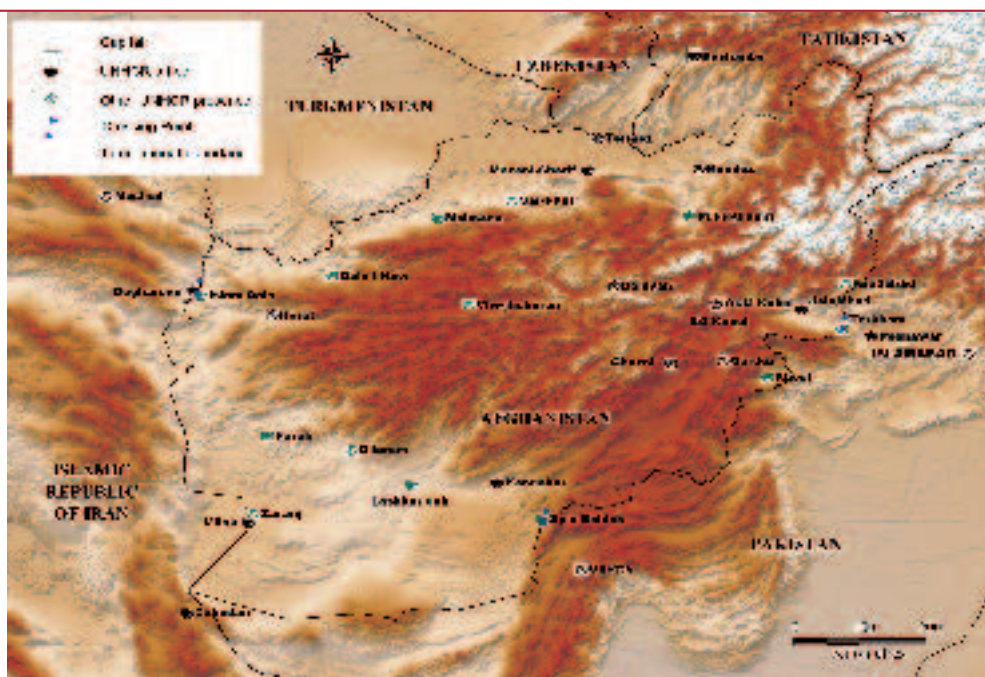


# Afghanistan

## Main objectives

The principal aim in 2002 was to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghans from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, and the Central Asian Republics in conditions corresponding to international protection standards. At the beginning of the year, UNHCR planned to assist up to 1.2 million people – 800,000 returning refugees and 400,000 IDPs.

UNHCR's first task was to provide initial reintegration assistance in returnee areas, in particular, water and shelter. In order to ascertain what assistance was needed where, and to be able to inform refugees about conditions in their home areas, UNHCR set up a district profiling system (with the aim of closely co-operating with the inter-agency Afghan



Information Monitoring System). UNHCR also planned to monitor returnees, so as to identify specific protection and assistance needs. From the outset, it was understood that UNHCR would have to establish and maintain links with other organisations, notably UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, the World

Persons of Concern				
Main Origin / Type of Population	Total In Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Returnees (from Pakistan)	1,539,600	-	49	-
Returnees (former IDPs)	753,300	-	-	-
Internally Displaced Persons	665,200	-	-	-
Returnees (from the Islamic Rep. of Iran)	252,800	-	33	-
Returnees (from Tajikistan)	9,060	-	25	-

Income and Expenditure (USD) Annual Programme and Supplementary Programme Budgets					
	Revised Budget	Income from Contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other Funds Available <sup>2</sup>	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
AB	7,401,676	4,405,264	2,761,659	7,166,923	6,634,954
SB	139,051,330	59,774,392	75,198,483	134,972,875	134,185,846
<b>Total</b>	<b>146,453,006</b>	<b>64,179,656</b>	<b>77,960,142</b>	<b>142,139,798</b>	<b>140,820,800</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from contributions restricted at the country level.

<sup>2</sup> Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

Bank and the NGOs that have played such an important role in Afghanistan for so long.

UNHCR was aware that it would need to assist at least some of the people who had been displaced by conflict or drought, although it was not known at the beginning of the year which agency would be asked to take responsibility for co-ordinating assistance and protection for IDPs. This became clear in May 2002, when UNHCR signed a Letter of Understanding with the Afghan Government and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA), accepting responsibility for supporting the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) by acting as Secretariat of the Returnee and IDP Programme Group. This significantly increased the organisation's responsibilities for the internally displaced.

In planning the repatriation and reintegration operation, UNHCR and MoRR deliberately chose not to intervene in sectors where other agencies were planning to take action, and where others possessed more relevant expertise. In this regard, no major interventions were planned for health, education or agriculture. Instead, the agency relied on close co-operation and co-ordination with other actors.

## Impact

Almost 1.8 million Afghans (47 per cent female; 53 per cent male) repatriated from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, and the Central Asian Republics with assistance from UNHCR. Some 1.5 million returned from Pakistan. An additional 400,000 IDPs returned home with help from UNHCR, MoRR and their partners. Many returned to the Shomali Plain from Kabul and the Panjshir Valley early in the year. UNHCR, MoRR, and others then helped almost everybody at the Hesar Shahi camp near Jalalabad go back to their home villages. Maslakh camp near Herat is likewise expected to be able to empty in the near future.

This huge return movement, representing between five and ten per cent of the Afghan population, took everyone by surprise. Whilst on the one hand it has demonstrated people's belief in the internal peace and reconciliation process, it also presents the Government and those trying to help the new authorities, with some major and urgent challenges.

One of the first activities launched was the profiling of security, service provision and the economy in 230 districts (some two-thirds of the country). This information was shared with the Government, other international agencies and NGOs, in order to inform the countries of asylum and to support in-country recovery planning and programme initiatives. The information was also conveyed to refugee and IDP communities (through a Mass Information Programme) to help them make informed decisions about return.

Twenty-three distribution centres supplied returning refugees and IDPs with food (donated by WFP), plastic sheeting, soap and sanitary materials for women. Staff at 11 encashment centres provided returnees with travel grants to help cover the costs of transport. These transport grants were among the most significant direct cash injections into the country in 2002.

As soon as the returnees had arrived back home, joint UNHCR and MoRR teams undertook returnee needs assessments, and provided some 40,000 vulnerable families (including female-headed households) with beams, doors, windows and other materials so they could rebuild their houses. In a year when most of the assistance provided to Afghanistan was of an emergency nature, this small contribution to the country's reconstruction was welcome.

The organisation has focused on ensuring that development plans take account of the presence and needs of returnees. With this in mind, UNHCR has taken part in joint missions, meetings and discussions with UNDP, the World Bank and other development organisations, as well as establishing important links with three relevant ministries (responsible for returnees, rural development, and urban development). All parties recognised the importance of such links in order to make the return process more sustainable; they also all agree on the urgent need for development activities in areas of high refugee and IDP return. Some promising programmes are underway, such as the National Solidarity Plan (led by the World Bank) and a number of road building initiatives.

## Working environment

### The context

Following the cessation of hostilities in November 2001, the Bonn Process mapped out the main elements of state-building in the context of a return to the peace and stability needed for social, political, and economic recovery and development. The creation of the Afghan Transitional Authority under the umbrella of the United Nations on 22 December 2001, and the subsequent establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) in March 2002, contributed to stability in this fragile and war-torn country. The reconvening of the emergency *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council) in June 2002 led to the establishment of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan.

Although gradual progress has been made in state-building at the central level, developments in the provinces vary greatly. Through continued dialogue and negotiation, the central Government managed to appoint key officials in most provinces. However, poor communications, logistical problems and insufficient resources, combined with persistent political and ethnic tensions, undermined government attempts to reduce the power of local leaders and establish the rule of law in many parts of the country.

The application and enforcement of law is another key challenge, particularly as legal interpretation and implementation draw upon conflicting sources, resulting from different local traditions. This is notable in the area of land ownership. One serious concern is that many customary laws violate women's rights. The development of a legal and judicial system that can also deal with legal issues during a period of transition, before the justice system has been firmly re-established, must therefore be prioritised. Although this is an essential factor in assuring sustainable reintegration, it is well beyond UNHCR's scope of intervention.

In much of the country security improved in 2002, but some areas remain extremely insecure both for returnees and for the staff of humanitarian agencies. These include the Southeast and parts of the Central Highlands, as well as certain areas in the east, south and north.

Systematic and nationwide monitoring of returnee communities has not brought to light any evidence of returnees experiencing discrimination. The most frequent problems are those shared by all Afghans: poverty, unemployment, insufficient access to education (especially for girls), lack of services, forcible military recruitment, and general insecurity. Irrespective of their experience in exile, women, in particular, face major constraints in access to and/or participation in basic services, most notably reproductive healthcare. Returnees also cite difficulties in repossessing land.

### Constraints

Despite the progress made in the past 12 months, the situation inside Afghanistan remains very fragile. Localised insecurity and criminality, the need to strengthen central government, and the slow roll-out of development programmes, all hinder the return and sustainable reintegration of refugees and IDPs. The continuing drought in the south is another major obstacle to return, as well as being an ongoing cause of internal population displacement. Practical problems include the lack of reliable baseline data, the absence or inexperience of available field-based partners in some regions, and poor communications.

### Funding

The Afghanistan operation enjoyed strong donor support throughout 2002, allowing UNHCR to carry out activities largely as planned. The operation benefited from significant support early in the year, however a slack funding period was experienced towards the middle of the year, calling for careful and judicious resource management. Greater predictability and regularity of funding would have facilitated the implementation of projects requiring a longer time frame – for example, initial reintegration projects such as shelter. By the middle of the year, UNHCR, in consultation with MoRR, had decided not to increase the operation's budget, even though the number of assisted returns was already exceeding expectations. This decision was made partly because of UNHCR's global funding problems; partly as a consequence of limitations in implementation capacity; and partly because UNHCR could see that partner organisations were finding it difficult to raise sufficient funds for their programmes in Afghanistan.

## Achievements and impact

### Protection and solutions

Protection activities concentrated on ensuring that return was voluntary and conducted in safety. To that end, staff of UNHCR and MoRR facilitated and supervised border crossings and checkpoints. Well co-ordinated and systematic nationwide monitoring was carried out through an extensive field presence of female and male international and national staff operating from a network of some 27 offices around the country. The monitoring highlighted key protection concerns and led to swift action at local and central levels to solve problems as they arose. Protection network groups comprising UN agencies and NGOs were established in Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar and Mazar-I-Sharif to increase coverage and enhance the information communicated to potential returnees through the mass information programme.

In June, the Government issued a Decree on the Dignified Return of Refugees which sets out a framework for returnees' rights. UNHCR has trained local authorities (at provincial, district and village level) so that they can publicise and implement the decree.

To find solutions for people displaced from the north, a joint UN/Government-led Return Commission was established with the participation of local leaders in the region. The Commission monitors conditions in villages of potential return, highlighting problems and seeking to address them.

Gender concerns are mainstreamed into all programmes. Women and men are included as decision-makers in and beneficiaries of support for return, including shelter and wells, and both women and men are consulted in protection-monitoring exercises. Achievements have been limited by cultural constraints, but thanks to the presence of women national staff, and the provision of guidelines on culturally sensitive ways of dealing with communities, some progress has been made.

### Activities and assistance

**Community services:** The main activities were to provide specific support to exceptionally vulnerable individuals (including unaccompanied minors and

single women) during return, and to establish a network and referral system for vulnerable returnees.

**Crop production:** UNHCR purchased seeds that were distributed to returnees who would not have been able to cultivate their lands without this support.

**Domestic needs/household support:** The organisation initially distributed soap, women's sanitary materials and a range of domestic items to returnees and to some IDPs in areas of displacement. As part of the contribution to the winter relief programme, UNHCR provided vulnerable returnees and IDPs with quilts and blankets (partly the product of income-generating activities), stoves and fuel.

**Education:** Although, from the outset, UNHCR's plans in this sector were modest and based on an agreed division of labour with other major actors, the organisation rehabilitated 11 schools in the north and two in the west.

**Health/nutrition:** As in the education sector, UNHCR's plans were based on complementing the work of others, with specialised agencies taking the lead. UNHCR did however continue to fund some mobile clinics and medical posts, in particular to deal with emergency births or referrals and vaccination of children. A total of 11 health centres in the north and east were rehabilitated.

**Income generation:** Rather than embark on micro-credit or income generation projects requiring significant resources in terms of time, staff and expertise, the focus was on advocacy and liaison with long-term development agencies, notably UNDP, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. Nevertheless, UNHCR invested in small-scale support to especially vulnerable individuals. This included carpentry in the north (for men), tailoring and poultry-rearing activities in the east (for women), stove production (men) and quilt making (women).

**Legal assistance:** The necessary legal frameworks for return were established with the Afghan Government's Decree on Dignified Return and the tripartite agreement on voluntary repatriation signed with the Governments of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is hoped that the Return Commission in Mazar-I-Sharif will also set some legal parameters and eventually reduce the



incidence of ethnic discrimination, property disputes and forcible recruitment, thereby enabling refugees and IDPs to return to their homes. In addition, district profiles and returnee monitoring reports provided vital input for the mass information programme, and financial support enabled Afghan lawyers' associations to run human rights workshops and refugee law awareness training.

**Operational support (to agencies):** UNHCR helped its partners to become operational by providing limited financial support to cover administrative and other costs related to the start-up of different programmes.

**Shelter/other infrastructure:** As well as providing returning refugee and IDP families with plastic sheeting, and displaced people with tents, UNHCR gave construction materials and tools to 40,000 of the most vulnerable returnee families to help rebuild their homes. The organisation also constructed access roads in the north, south, and west, and established five transit centres. In addition, it set up temporary IDP settlements in Kandahar and

provided funds for camp maintenance in Herat. Some renovation of offices of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation was also carried out.

**Sanitation:** More than 2,600 bath houses and 3,000 latrines have been constructed.

**Transport/logistics:** UNHCR established and financed 38 warehouses and centres from which repatriation packages were distributed. Through 11 encashment centres in returnee areas it also provided travel grants to help returning refugees and IDPs cover transportation costs for themselves and their possessions. Early in the year, UNHCR transported emergency relief items (plastic sheeting and blankets) by air. It also purchased a number of vehicles and trucks, and transported goods such as the timber for the shelter programme.

**Water:** Work has been carried out on more than 2,600 wells, as well as on *karez*es (irrigation channels), piped water schemes and canals in returnee areas.

Returnees from Pakistan collect water at a well in Kabul. UNHCR / N. Behring



## Organisation and implementation

### Management

Staffing plans were originally drawn up at a time when access to Afghanistan was very limited, and were based on a “modular” structure with standard staffing profiles. The Office of the Chief of Mission was established in Kabul, along with six sub-offices, two field offices, and 17 field units. The office in Islamabad, to which the Chief of Mission had been relocated in the 1990s, became a liaison office to oversee logistical matters. A total of 598 people are currently employed, 81 of them internationals (including 25 protection officers). UNHCR is progressively handing over responsibility for its programmes to national staff and government counterparts.

### Working with others

UNHCR has worked within the UNAMA co-ordination structure, co-operating closely with other UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF and WFP) as well as 21 international NGOs and 32 national NGOs. The organisation has established good working relationships with the three ministries directly involved in return and reintegration issues. UNHCR has assisted the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) in co-ordinating policy and activities relating to displacement. A joint capacity-building team made up of five senior UNHCR national staff and personnel from MoRR initiated work plans for each province. UNHCR has also been working closely with the Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development on issues relating to sustainable rural reintegration and with the Ministry for Housing and Urban Development on the reintegration of returnees in urban centres. The returnees represent 40 per cent of the populations who were displaced. Links are being forged with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, and co-operation pursued with bilateral agencies (particularly GTZ and JICA).

### Overall assessment

The focus was overwhelmingly on repatriation. UNHCR staff had at times to cope with more than

20,000 returnees per day. The pace of the return movement was a considerable challenge to the organisation and its partners, but, in general, the operation has so far been considered effective. Challenges included delays in the arrival of internationally-procured timber, limited access to certain areas of the country, and the fact that full staffing levels (especially adequate numbers of women) were only attained in early summer.

The support provided was a limited response to the most essential needs faced by returnees in Afghanistan. In some areas however, the focus of assistance was adjusted to meet more local needs – in Nangarhar, for example, shelter is less of a priority than water for agriculture purposes. Discussions are now ongoing with the Government regarding returnees to urban areas: during 2002 the focus was predominantly on rural return.

Having mobilised a massive emergency response in 2001 in anticipation of a large movement of Afghans into neighbouring countries, the organisation already had substantial quantities of relief items in the region. Funds were thus available at the beginning of the year to start up what became one of UNHCR’s largest ever facilitated voluntary repatriation operations.

Many more people returned than initially expected. Most of those who went back returned to the provinces of Kabul, Nangarhar, Baghlan and Kunduz. Some 40 per cent went to Kabul, partly because many inhabitants had left the capital in the mid-to-late 1990s, and were keen to return. Moreover, this was the only place where the International Security Afghanistan Force was present, and one of the few areas where economic opportunities were opening up.

#### Offices

Kabul

Asadabad

Bamyan

Chagcharan

Daman

Dilaram

Farah

>>>



## Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects			Notes	Prior Years' Projects	
	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total		Annual and Supplementary Programme Budgets	Notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	2,152,797	12,774,447	14,927,244		57,997	
Community Services	325,960	421,874	747,834		0	
Crop production	35,420	1,334,066	1,369,486		0	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	200	8,687,961	8,688,161		933,539	
Education	0	122,827	122,827		(11,500)	
Food	0	29,720	29,720		0	
Forestry	0	30,412	30,412		60,305	
Health / Nutrition	208	99,155	99,363		25,077	
Income Generation	0	915,792	915,792		33,810	
Legal Assistance	142,194	1,441,025	1,583,220		229,326	
Livestock	0	0	0		8,611	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	210,895	1,977,743	2,188,638		994,536	
Sanitation	0	355,012	355,012		16,759	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	1,154,902	18,760,141	19,915,043		688,992	
Transport / Logistics	144,445	50,570,840	50,715,285		174,164	
Water	35,181	1,637,331	1,672,512		314,759	
Transit Accounts	4,445	50,353	54,798		(5,953)	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	(124,886)	9,801,714	9,676,828		(289,529)	
<b>Sub-total Operational</b>	<b>4,081,760</b>	<b>109,010,413</b>	<b>113,092,173</b>		<b>3,230,895</b>	
Programme Support	1,752,285	4,081,058	5,833,343		431,788	
<b>Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries</b>	<b>5,834,045</b>	<b>113,091,471</b>	<b>118,925,516</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>3,662,683</b>	<b>(5)</b>
Unliquidated Obligations	800,909	21,094,375	21,895,284	(3)	0	(5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,634,954</b>	<b>134,185,846</b>	<b>140,820,800</b>	<b>(1) (3)</b>	<b>3,662,683</b>	
<b>Instalments with Implementing Partners</b>						
Payments Made	429,113	25,719,306	26,148,419		521,453	
Reporting Received	553,999	15,917,592	16,471,592		810,982	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>(124,886)</b>	<b>9,801,714</b>	<b>9,676,828</b>		<b>(289,529)</b>	
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		468,344	
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0		176,703	
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0		1,649	
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>(124,886)</b>	<b>9,801,714</b>	<b>9,676,828</b>		<b>3,761</b>	
<b>Unliquidated Obligations</b>						
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		4,522,089	(5)
New Obligations	6,634,954	134,185,846	140,820,800	(1)	0	
Disbursements	5,834,045	113,091,471	118,925,516	(3)	3,662,683	(5)
Cancellations	0	0	0		859,406	(5)
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>800,909</b>	<b>21,094,375</b>	<b>21,895,284</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5)</b>
Figures which cross-reference to Accounts:						
(1) Annex to Statement 1						
(3) Schedule 3						
(5) Schedule 5						