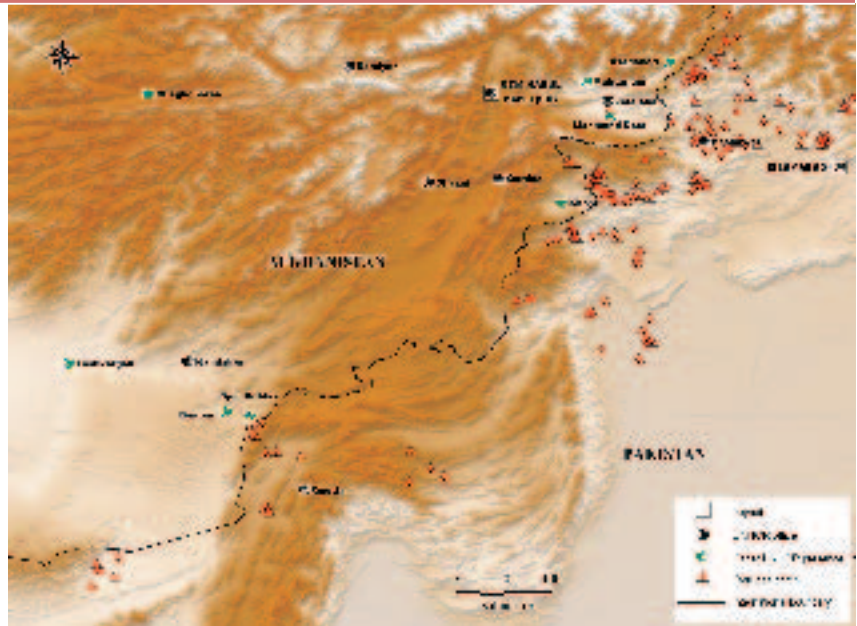


Pakistan

Main objectives

- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees.
- Advocate the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers (Afghans and others).
- Deliver basic services in camps, while developing strategic partnerships with the Government, United Nations agencies and NGOs.
- Streamline the assistance programme in camps established after September 2001 through a strategy of camp closure and consolidation.
- Seek durable solutions for refugees, including repatriation where feasible and resettlement where appropriate.



Working environment

Recent developments

In January 2003, UNHCR analysed the results of a survey designed to find out how many Afghan refugees planned to return. The survey suggested that return figures for 2003 would be much lower than in 2002. Its projections were soon borne out, and by September 2003 only some 300,000 refugees had come forward for repatriation (compared with 1.5 million from January to September 2002).

As in 2002, most of the returnees had been living in urban areas. The massive numbers of Afghans living in Pakistan's cities (particularly Peshawar, Quetta and the capital, Islamabad) have long been of concern to the Government. The fact that so many have already returned to Afghanistan has allowed the Government to endorse a more gradual return in 2004. Political changes after Pakistan's October 2002 general elections have also helped to contain pressures on Afghans to leave, particularly in the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan where most Afghan refugees are of Pashtun origin and there is a strong Pashtun affinity among the local population.

In May 2003, tripartite consultations between UNHCR and the authorities in Pakistan and Afghanistan brought about an end to the sixteen-month deadlock over the "Chaman Waiting Area" – a makeshift camp that sprang up in February 2002 when some 21,000 Afghans were denied entry into Pakistan. After reaching an agreement with the Afghan Transitional Government, Pakistan allowed part of the population to relocate to Baluchistan's Mohammad Kheil camp. More than half opted to move to settlements near Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

Constraints

Pakistan is not a party to the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, nor the 1967 Protocol. It regulates the entry, stay and movement of foreigners through the Foreigners' Act of 1946, according to which all foreigners without valid documentation, including refugees and asylum-seekers, are subject to arrest, detention and deportation. In practice, however, Pakistan has generally respected international standards in its control over the stay and treatment of refugees. This is clearly the

Planning figures		
Population	Jan. 2004	Dec. 2004
Afghanistan (refugees) ¹	1,200,000	1,100,000
Asylum-seekers	1,400	800
Total	1,201,400	1,100,800

¹ The estimated number of refugees in camps receiving humanitarian assistance. In addition, the Government estimates that a similar number of Afghans live in urban areas in Pakistan. UNHCR will also support returns from these areas.

Total requirements: USD 28,352,780

case in camps, where the Government accepts responsibility for ensuring refugees' access to protection and assistance. Refugee status determination is conducted by UNHCR on the understanding that persons accepted under the Office's Mandate will be provided with an appropriate durable solution.

Refugees are suffering alongside the local population as a result of the drought which affects Baluchistan as well as southern Afghanistan. Scarce water supplies not only

make it difficult and more costly for aid agencies to assist refugees, but have created tensions between refugees and local communities in places like Chaman. Frustrations felt by landowners in this part of Pakistan culminated, in early 2003, in a strike that prevented UNHCR and its partners from accessing the camps. Although the dispute has since been resolved, efforts are underway to shift residents away from the border to a safer location with a better supply of water.



Pakistan: Afghan refugees in the Chaman waiting area. UNHCR / N. Behring

Strategy

Protection and solutions

Co-ordinating closely with offices and partners in Afghanistan, UNHCR will facilitate the voluntary return of groups of refugees. If specific obstacles are identified, UNHCR and its partners will endeavour to find solutions. The Office remains committed to providing refugees with pertinent and up-to-date information on conditions in places of origin, through a mass information programme, backed up by community discussion groups in camps, “go and see” visits and Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs).

The legal centres will also provide free legal counselling. The network of 12 centres will be further expanded, to ensure more coverage in remote locations such as Pakistan’s tribal areas. UNHCR will continue to place a major focus on protection and monitoring of refugees, deploying trained protection staff to camps and areas with high concentrations of Afghans.

In 2004, UNHCR will continue to promote refugee law and the rights of refugees. UNHCR will expand its contacts with academic institutions, law-making bodies and law enforcement agencies.

As in the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNHCR will continue to discuss with the Government the possibility of alternative solutions for any Afghans who are unable or unwilling to return under the ongoing joint repatriation programme.

While seeking durable solutions for the 800 refugees of other nationalities (Somalis, Iraqis and Iranians), UNHCR will work with the Government to enhance their self-reliance. Accordingly, work permits will be issued to those resident in Pakistan since 2000, as per UNHCR’s 2003 MOU with the National Aliens’ Registration Authority. UNHCR will counsel refugees for whom repatriation is a viable option and submit applications for resettlement when appropriate.

Assistance

UNHCR will continue to protect and provide certain basic services to refugees in camps and settlements. Staff will monitor these populations, ensuring that assistance reaches the most vulnerable. As in 2003, refugees living in the new camps established since September 2001 will receive food rations and benefit from various amenities.

As part of an overall effort to streamline its assistance programme, UNHCR will close or consolidate some of these new camps in the course of 2004. Refugees living

in the camps will be able to choose between repatriating voluntarily with UNHCR’s assistance, or relocating to another site in Pakistan.

Refugees in all camps will be able to access basic health care at primary health care units. Through existing water supply schemes, they will receive a minimum of 15 litres of drinking water per person per day. Primary education will be provided, and efforts will be made to increase the attendance rates of refugee girls.

Desired impact

UNHCR will work with its partners to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers who remain in Pakistan, while simultaneously facilitating the voluntary return of Afghans in safety and dignity. The Advice and Legal Aid network will be expanded to enhance refugees’ access to free legal assistance and counselling, and to information on their rights and all aspects of the voluntary repatriation. Co-operation with UNHCR offices in Afghanistan will be strengthened, as part of an overall effort to identify and remove obstacles to return faced by refugee groups. The Office will call for the environmental rehabilitation of refugee-impacted areas, seeking support from other United Nations agencies.

Joint UNHCR-NGO training workshops are foreseen throughout 2004 to equip staff (in all sectors) with the necessary skills to implement the “Plan of Action for the Prevention and Reporting of Incidents of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)” finalised in 2003. Emphasis will be placed on enhanced reporting and more rapid and appropriate follow-up on cases of SGBV.

Organisation and implementation

Management structure

The UNHCR Representative for Pakistan is responsible for the Pakistan country programme. UNHCR will operate from four offices in the country with 213 staff (41 internationals, 167 nationals, and five UNVs).

Co-ordination

UNHCR activities will continue to be carried out in collaboration with the Government, in particular the Ministry of Kashmir and Northern Areas and States and Frontier Region (KANA and SAFRON), and with the support of national and international NGOs and United Nations agencies. Voluntary repatriation activities are co-ordinated through the Tripartite Commission newly established between Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR.

Offices
Islamabad
Karachi
Peshawar
Quetta

Partners
Government agencies
Ministry of Kashmir and Northern Areas and States and Frontier Region
NGOs
Afghan Medical Welfare Association
American Refugee Committee
Association of Medical Doctors of Asia
Basic Education and Employable Skill Training
Church World Services
Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
Frontier Primary Health Care
Global Movement for Children and Women Guardians
Health Net International
International Catholic Migration Committee
International Medical Corps
International Rescue Committee
Kuwait Joint Relief Committee
Norwegian Refugee Council
Ockenden International
Pakistan Community Development Programme
Pakistan Red Crescent Society
Save the Children Federation
SAVERA Counselling Services
Sayyed Jamal-ud-Din Afghani Welfare Organization
Society for Community Support for Primary Education for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid Society
Union Aid for Afghan Refugees
Water, Environment and Sanitation Society
World Assembly of Muslim Youth
Others
<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
UNV

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and co-ordination	7,148,572
Community services	1,043,289
Domestic needs	507,000
Education	4,710,000
Health	5,992,533
Legal assistance	1,516,387
Operational support (to agencies)	2,611,300
Sanitation	393,878
Transport / logistics	555,613
Water	1,140,000
Total Operations	25,618,572
Programme support	2,734,208
Total	28,352,780