

Afghanistan

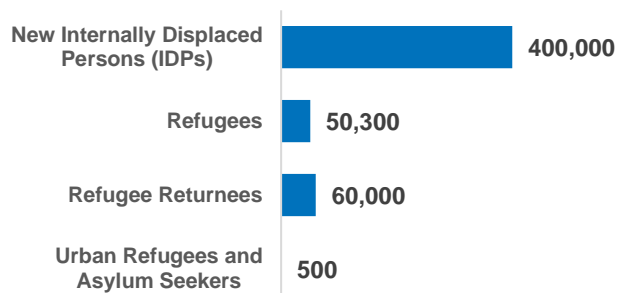
31 May 2019

To date in 2019, **2,320** registered refugees voluntarily returned to Afghanistan, out of which 1,597 returned from Pakistan, 673 from Iran and 52 from other countries. In 2018, 15,699 registered refugees voluntarily returned from neighboring and non-neighboring countries.

132,171 individuals have been displaced by conflict in 2019 and profiled by OCHA as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in need of protection and assistance. In 2018, 343,341 individuals were newly displaced by conflict.

72,065 Pakistani refugees from North-Waziristan Agency have been registered in Khost and Paktika provinces in 2019.

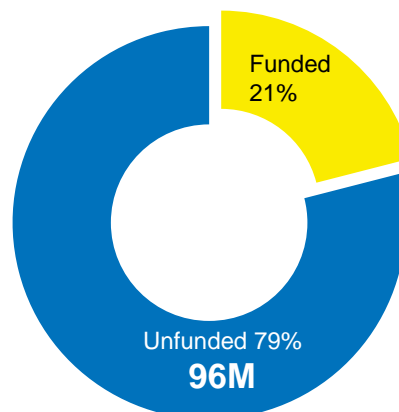
POPULATION PLANNING FIGURES AS OF 1 JANUARY 2019



2019 FUNDING

USD 121.7 M

requested for Afghanistan



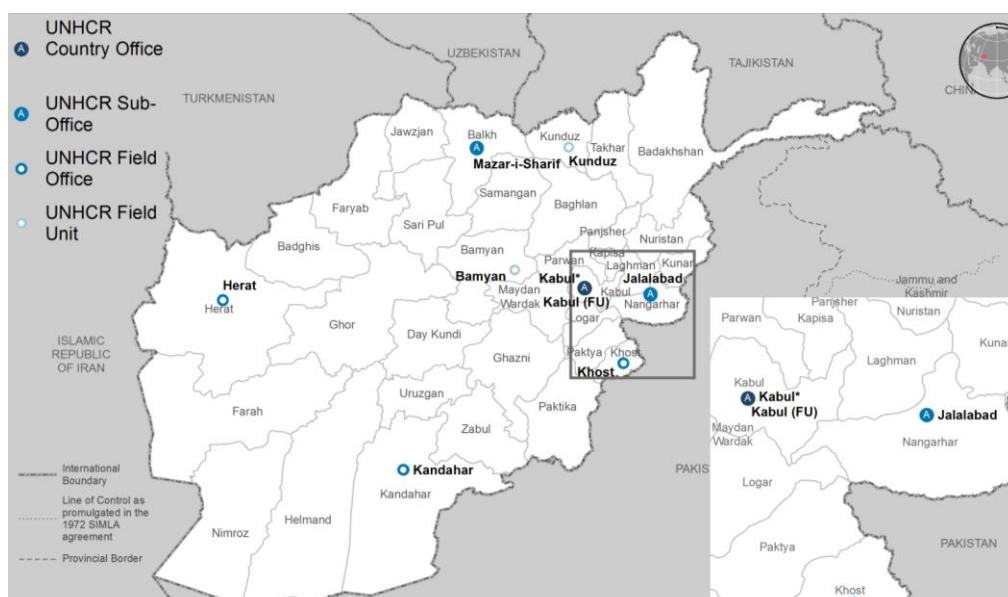
UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

192 National Staff
27 International Staff
15% female / 85% male

Offices:

- 1 Country Office in Kabul
- 2 Sub Offices in Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sharif
- 3 Field Offices in Herat, Kandahar, and Khost
- 3 Field Units in Kabul, Kunduz, and Bamyan



**FACILITATING REPATRIATION****UNHCR Facilitated Voluntary Repatriation (VolRep) Programme**

- UNHCR continues to facilitate voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan refugees from Pakistan, Iran and other countries to Afghanistan. The return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran is taking place under the Tripartite Agreements with the respective Governments and UNHCR. The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) remains the regional framework for Afghan refugees (involving Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan).
- More than 5.2 million Afghan refugees have repatriated with UNHCR assistance since 2002. In 2017, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of **58,817** refugees (98% from Pakistan), while in 2018, **15,699** refugees returned to Afghanistan (87% from Pakistan, 12% from Iran and 1% other countries). So far in 2019, **2,320** registered refugees voluntarily returned to Afghanistan, out of which 1,597 (69%) returned from Pakistan, 673 (29%) from Iran and 52 (2%) from other countries.

Cash Grant

- UNHCR provides cash assistance of an average of US\$200 per person through its four encashment centres. UNHCR's repatriation cash grant to refugee returnees is a key protection tool and is intended to prevent, reduce, and respond to immediate protection risks and vulnerabilities upon return to Afghanistan. The cash grant provides returnees with the means to meet their immediate humanitarian needs, as well as transportation costs to their places of origin or destination, providing returnees a sense of dignity and freedom to decide how the grant is used according to family priorities. Based on phone interviews in 2017 and 2018 with returnees (conducted between 1 and 6 months following return), the cash grant received from UNHCR normally lasts between 1-3 months.

Management of Encashment Centres

- In close coordination with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and the Ministry's local offices of the Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR), UNHCR and its partners manage four encashment centres located in Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul and Kandahar. In addition to cash grants, a wide range of inter-agency services are provided, including: basic health care, referrals of serious medical cases to hospitals, and vaccinations for children (implemented by Ministry of Public Health with support from WHO and UNICEF); mine risk awareness (coordinated by UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and implemented by the Danish Demining Group); back to school campaign (provided by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF); referral for information and legal assistance to obtain civil documentation (through the Norwegian Refugee Council's Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance programme); child friendly spaces (provided by UNICEF); and a transit facility for overnight accommodation at the encashment centres.
- UNHCR conducts household level interviews to assess the voluntary nature of return, return trends and protection risks in asylum and during return. As part of these interviews, persons with specific needs are identified by UNHCR and DoRR/MoRR and referred to service providers for assessment and response.

**ASSISTING REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)****Protection Monitoring**

- UNHCR systematically and regularly collects, verifies and analyses information over a period of time to assess the protection situation of IDPs, returnees and host communities in order to plan effective responses. Protection risk analysis helps to inform the overall humanitarian response and uphold the centrality of protection. UNHCR's

community-based protection projects provides a basis to plan interventions for persons with specific needs and provides evidence for advocacy efforts and assists UNHCR and partners in overall programme planning and response.

Return Monitoring

- Return monitoring constitutes an integral part of the protection monitoring system in Afghanistan. It consists of three components: monitoring upon arrival at the encashment centres; monitoring of returnees following their settlement in communities through regular phone surveys; and community-based protection measures. From April 2018, UNHCR has facilitated the distribution of SIM cards (free of charge) to returnees through the Afghan Wireless Communication Company. UNHCR also provides air time of US\$2 per month for 3 months, which aims to ensure returnees' access to communication services and to facilitate return monitoring to identify and address protection risks and to gather information on the situation and services available in areas of return.
- In May 2019, UNHCR signed a **data sharing agreement with IOM** to harmonize post return data with joint reporting and analysis through an integrated dashboard. In addition, baseline data for reintegration programming and community selection will be informed by UNHCR protection monitoring and IOM's DTM.
- In November 2017, UNHCR signed a **data sharing agreement with the World Bank** to strengthen existing data collection processes and enhance technical capacity for a comprehensive analysis of the return process and how best to support the reintegration of returnees over time.
- Awaaz Afghanistan, **the inter-agency information centre** (implemented by UNOPS, and funded by UNHCR and WFP) has entered its second year in 2019.
- The centre provides information to persons of concern on available services in their geographical area, and allows feedback (including concerns and complaints) from communities to be consolidated and shared with respective agencies including UNHCR. Details are presented through an online dashboard: <https://awaazaf.org/>



A returnee is able to have a small garden in his home to grow vegetables for his family thanks to water wells constructed by UNHCR in his community in western Afghanistan. © UNHCR/D.Corcoran

Persons with Specific Needs (PSN)

- UNHCR's PSN programme provides targeted assistance on an individual basis to people with acute vulnerabilities and protection risks among refugee returnees, refugees, and conflict-induced and other IDPs. Extremely vulnerable individuals from local host communities and undocumented returnees are also considered as beneficiaries under the PSN programme. The main objective of the programme is to mitigate and respond to individual protection risks and facilitate self-reliance through targeted response. PSN partners conduct protection assessments and refer (or directly assist) individuals taking into account a comprehensive protection risk analysis. UNHCR links the PSN programme with its Community-based Protection projects for enhanced, sustainable comprehensive assistance for persons in need.

Community-Based Protection (CBP) Projects

- UNHCR supports CBP to reduce protection risks and vulnerabilities while fostering peaceful co-existence and reintegration of returnees and IDPs with local host communities, including persons with specific needs. UNHCR's strategic focus with CBP is access to education and healthcare, as well as training and employment opportunities and energy.
- The projects aimed at enhancing livelihoods are in line with existing job markets and local demand, and include innovative approaches such as UNHCR's Global MADE51 for artisans' development. UNHCR's programme links with the Afghan Government's National Priority Programmes, development agencies' initiatives (including the World Bank), and fosters partnerships with local and international private sector actors to implement medium and longer term interventions that enhance sustainability.

Protection Cluster and Emergency Shelter/Non-Food Items Cluster

- UNHCR is actively involved in inter-agency humanitarian coordination mechanisms, including through its leadership of the Protection Cluster (including co-leadership of the Housing, Land and Property Task Force) and the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES/NFI) Cluster. This cooperation remains crucial to UNHCR's efforts to promote protection mainstreaming in all sectors of the humanitarian response, and ensures that protection principles are incorporated in all activities and that meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid remain priorities. In August 2018 the Humanitarian Country Team's Protection Strategy was endorsed and adopted, and this will go a long way toward enhancing and coordinating protection interventions system-wide.
- Efforts are directed towards action oriented and cross cutting coordination. To that aim, UNHCR is leading a review process of protection priorities for the Afghanistan Protection Cluster strategy, to refocus on the protection of civilians and displacement related protection concerns, and to mobilize relevant stakeholders for longer term interventions to strengthen the protection environment. UNHCR is also reinforcing coordination between regional and national levels by documenting protection concerns and engaging in advocacy to ensure response.



PROTECTING REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Khost and Paktika

- Afghanistan hosts some 72,000 Pakistani refugees who fled North Waziristan Agency in 2014, mainly in Khost and Paktika provinces. UNHCR leads camp management and coordination in Gulistan refugee camp, which accommodates over 13,000 refugees. Many have also settled in host communities in the two provinces and benefit from UNHCR and partners' community-based protection (CBP) projects. With the emergency phase of displacement over and in line with the Government's responsibility as signatory to the 1951 CSR and 1967 Protocol, UNHCR is transitioning to a protection strategy built on targeted assistance to persons with specific needs that is designed to build capacity, self-reliance and resilience. In the course of 2019, UNHCR is handing over the primary responsibility for coordinating

the refugee situation in Khost and Paktika to the Government of Afghanistan, and is strengthening efforts with national and local authorities and partners, while also advocating with donors, to ensure continuity of essential services for the refugee population and the host communities, in line with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) modalities in a whole of community approach.

Urban Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- UNHCR prioritizes interim solutions for the approximately 500 urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Kabul and other locations pending the adoption of a national asylum law and implementation of a national asylum framework. UNHCR conducts registration and, as needed, carries out refugee status determination under its mandate as a protection tool. Local integration is currently unattainable for legal, social, economic and other reasons, while resettlement opportunities remain extremely limited. The likelihood of refugees and asylum seekers opting to voluntary return to their countries of origin is generally limited. The provision of targeted subsistence allowance and assistance to persons with specific needs (cash-based and in-kind) aims to reduce vulnerability and promote self-reliance. Through advocacy with the Government of Afghanistan, UNHCR mitigates protection risks, including detention and refoulement, and has developed agreements with line ministries to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers have access to basic services such as education and health care. UNHCR continues to support the Government in its efforts to adopt a national asylum law, which has been highlighted as a priority by the President.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

- UNHCR in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran have worked together on the 2018-2019 UNHCR regional strategy under the umbrella of the SSAR, with the aim of enhancing resilience and peaceful co-existence through greater responsibility-sharing, including strengthened partnership with development stakeholders.

Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)

- The Government of Afghanistan has formally endorsed the GCR and CRRF which together support multi-stakeholder efforts to address the root causes of displacement by easing pressure on host countries and host communities, enhancing self-reliance, expanding access to third-country solutions for refugees, and supporting conditions in countries of origin to facilitate return in safety and dignity.

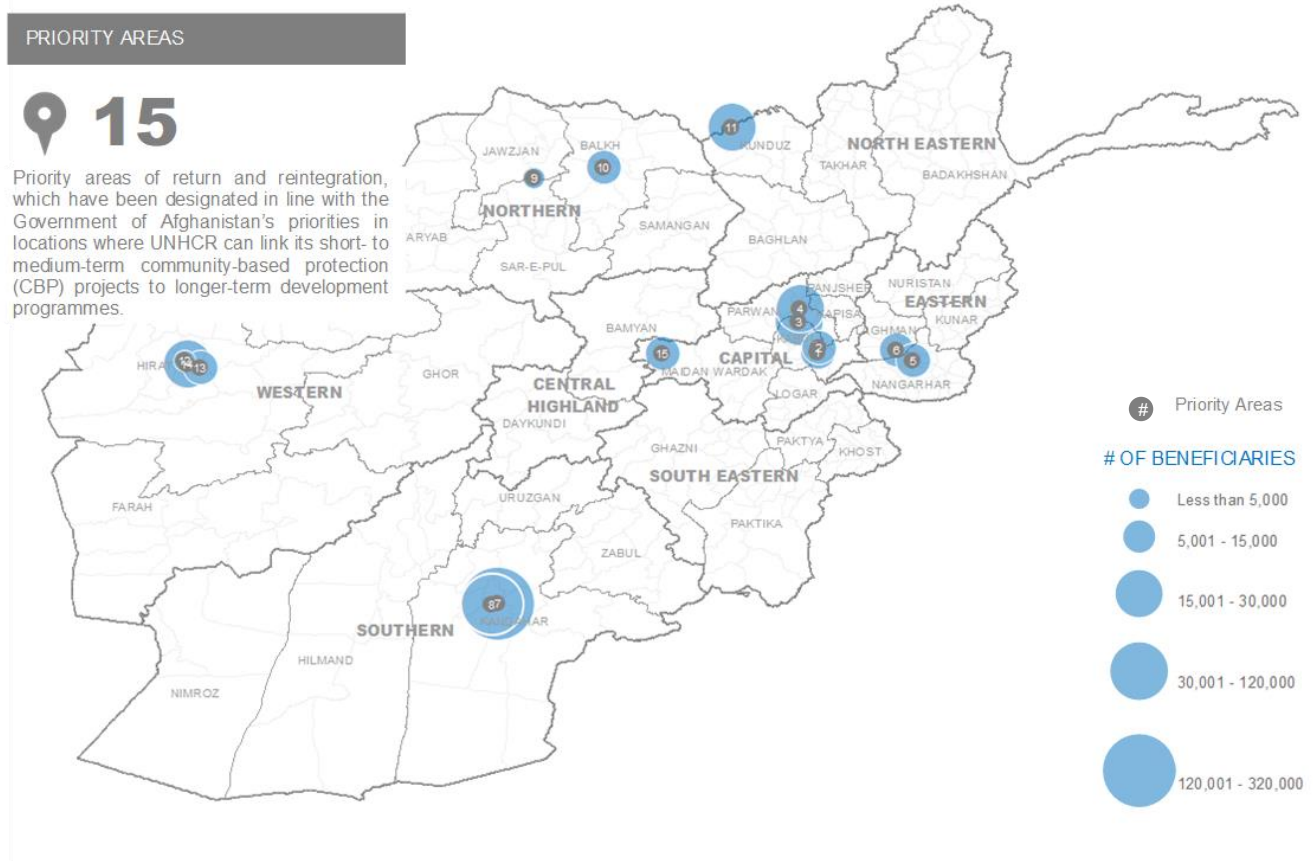
Displacement and Return Executive Committee (DiREC) and National Policy Framework

- As an active member of the DiREC Technical and Finance Working Groups and co-chair of the Policy Working Group, UNHCR supports the Government of Afghanistan in the implementation of the Policy Framework for Returnees and IDPs and the related National Action Plan. UNHCR advocates with Government ministries and development actors for the needs of returnees and IDPs – as well as for the mainstreaming of protection issues – to be part of national policy frameworks, development plans (including the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework) and other National Priority Programmes. UNHCR also advocates for the implementation of the National IDP Policy (2013) and provincial IDP action plans.

Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARR)

In line with the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), and more recently the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), UNHCR has identified 15 areas where UNHCR can link its short- to medium-term community-based protection (CBP) projects to longer-term development programmes. UNHCR's projects are designed to reduce protection risks and to support sustainable return and reintegration. The 15 areas have been prioritized based on government planning in the area, including the Citizen's Charter National Priority Programme,

because of the high number of returnees they have absorbed, or because of a range of protection needs the communities may have.



Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

- UNHCR works to strengthen linkages between humanitarian and development through partnerships with development actors (mainly the World Bank) and the private sector to ensure access to documentation, livelihoods and essential services and to facilitate the representation of women in community decision making. In November 2017, UNHCR and the World Bank signed a data sharing agreement to better support reintegration of Afghan refugee returnees through strengthened data collection and analysis.
- UNHCR is also working with the World Bank to assess socio-economic characteristics, employment and livelihoods of post-2014 Afghan returnees (both refugee returnees and those who are undocumented) through a phone survey, randomly identifying returnees among the population and following up with a detailed interview. This will lead to better comparative understanding on the situation of returnees. UNHCR also participates in the consultations for the World Bank supported Education Quality Reform for Afghanistan (EQRA) program, which targets 14 provinces, including those with high levels of return and displacement – to ensure greater inclusion of returnees and IDPs.

Working in Partnerships

- UNHCR's direct counterpart in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR). UNHCR is also working with numerous line ministries. UNHCR is co-leading with the Government, on a rotational basis with UNDP and IOM, the Durable Solutions Working Group, at both the national and sub-national levels, to strengthen links between humanitarian and development to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees and IDPs.
- UNHCR continues to facilitate voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan refugees from Pakistan, Iran and other countries to Afghanistan. The return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran is taking place under the

Tripartite Agreements with the respective Governments and UNHCR. The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) remains the regional framework for Afghan refugees (involving Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan).

- UNHCR Afghanistan works closely with UNHCR in Iran and Pakistan to implement and coordinated regional approach to anticipate challenges and align efforts, including with regard to advocacy and fundraising, as well as cross-border programming for livelihoods, and to share best practices and lessons learned.
- In line with the regional framework of the SSAR, UNHCR is an active member of DiREC, co-chairs the related Policy Working Group, and is a member of the Technical and Finance Working Groups.
- Within the Humanitarian Country Team and UN Country Team, UNHCR is working closely with other UN agencies, in particular IOM, to ensure sustainable return and reintegration in Afghanistan. The [One UN for Afghanistan website](#) was rolled out in July 2018, and will serve as an effective communication tool on activities of the UN in Afghanistan.
- UNHCR advocates and works with development actors to support the Government's policies and National Priority Programmes (NPP) for interim and longer term solutions.
- UNHCR works with 27 partners across the country, including 2 international and 25 national NGOs, as well as the World Bank and the private sector.
- UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and the Emergency Shelter/NFI Cluster. The Protection Cluster is co-chaired with NRC and the ES/NFI Cluster is co-chaired with IOM.
- UNHCR is working closely with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to prevent risks related to IEDs, landmines, and UXOs and to promote respect of International Humanitarian Law by all parties to the conflict.
- UNHCR leads coordination of the Pakistani refugee response in Khost and Paktika provinces.
- UNHCR maintains close relationships with the donor community through donor briefings, consultations and regular dialogue, and assists in coordinating field visits.
- UNHCR is working to harmonize data and strengthen information management to enhance protection outcomes. UNHCR has signed a data sharing agreement with WFP to ensure food assistance to vulnerable returnees through WFP's SCOPE programme. Through an inclusive and participatory approach, UNHCR is engaging with persons of concern to generate data and evidence-based results to demonstrate the impact of UNHCR programmes, identify gaps for strategic direction and programming, and inform the wider humanitarian community.

Donor support

UNHCR appreciates the partnership and financial contributions of both unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds from donors, as well as for those who have contributed regionally and directly to the operation.

Algeria | Argentina | Australia | Austria | Azerbaijan | Belgium | Canada | Costa Rica | Denmark | Estonia | European Union | Germany | Indonesia | Japan | Kuwait | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Norway | Netherlands | Peru | Philippines | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Sri Lanka | Sweden | Switzerland | Thailand | United Kingdom | United Arab Emirates | United States of America | Uruguay | Private Donors

1. All financial information contained in this update is indicative and does not constitute official UNHCR financial reporting.
2. Unrestricted and regional funds mentioned above include all sub-regional and regional contributions worldwide.

CONTACTS

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LINKS

- UNHCR's data portal for Afghanistan: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/afg>
- UNHCR's Global Focus website for Afghanistan: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/4505>
- Global Compact on Refugees: <https://www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees>
- Afghanistan Protection Cluster website: <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/en/field-support/field-protection-clusters/countries/afghanistan.html>
- Afghanistan Shelter Cluster website: <https://www.sheltercluster.org/response/afghanistan>
- Humanitarian Response Afghanistan website: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan>
- UNHCR's global website: <http://www.unhcr.org/>
- ONE UN for Afghanistan: <https://www.af.one.un.org/>
- Twitter: @UNHCRAfg