

Pakistan

Operational highlights

- UNHCR assisted 133,000 Afghan refugees to return home in 2006.
- The Office supported the registration of 2.15 million Afghans remaining in Pakistan. The registration would help identify various categories of Afghans, some of concern to UNHCR.
- UNHCR assisted more than one million Afghan refugees living in camps in Pakistan.
- Preliminary needs assessments in the key sectors of health, education, water and sanitation were conducted in 38 districts hosting Afghans.

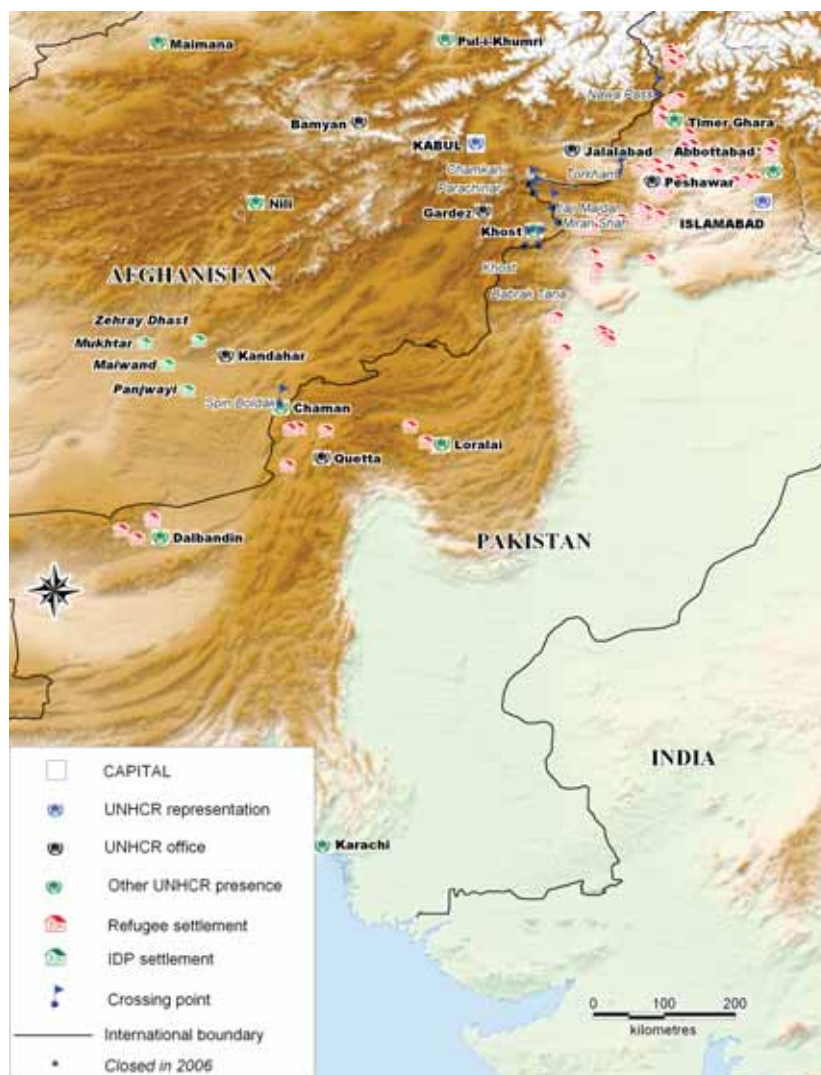
Working environment

The Government of Pakistan has different policies for Afghan and non-Afghan asylum-seekers. Although Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, its treatment of refugees over the last 27 years largely conforms to the principles of the Convention. It is assumed that the granting of proof-of-registration cards with a validity of three years (2007-2009) to Afghan refugees (as part of the ongoing registration exercise) will provide more predictable temporary protection. It is further anticipated that the tripartite agreement between UNHCR and the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan regulating the repatriation of Afghans will be extended for a similar period of time. For non-Afghan refugees, the Government has adhered to its policy of allowing those recognized under the UNHCR mandate to stay in Pakistan until they are resettled or repatriated voluntarily.

Achievements and impact

Main objectives

UNHCR's main objectives for Pakistan in 2006 were to convince the Government that not all Afghans would be



willing or able to repatriate in the near future; that these remaining Afghans would require solutions other than repatriation; facilitate the repatriation of Afghans from rural and urban areas; and protect and assist Afghan and non-Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers. The Office also sought to ensure the creation of a legal framework for temporary migration and population movements to and from Pakistan; promote, with the support of donors and the UN Country Team, coverage by development programmes of areas hosting refugees; and manage resources and assets in a cost-effective manner without compromising staff security or welfare.

Protection and solutions

The memorandum of understanding on the registration of Afghan citizens in Pakistan in 2006, and the start of registration in the autumn, were important both to protect refugees and find durable solutions for them. The information collected will help the Office develop a

more detailed profile of those Afghans of possible concern to UNHCR and indicate the potential for repatriation in the coming years. All registered Afghans received a proof-of-registration card with biometric and personal data which allows them to stay in Pakistan until 2009. The cards must be given up when the holder returns to Afghanistan with UNHCR's assistance. This registration exercise was the largest carried out by a host country in collaboration with UNHCR in a protracted refugee situation with a mixed population.

In the absence of national asylum laws and procedures, UNHCR conducted Refugee Status Determination (RSD) under its mandate for those in need of international protection and pursued durable solutions for them. Resettlement activities were carried out with caution, in order not to undermine the return process. In 2006, a total of 200 refugees were submitted to resettlement countries for consideration. Individual status determination was undertaken by the protection units in the Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta offices. Of some 690 Afghan asylum-seekers registered, some 90 individuals were recognized; of the 80 non-Afghan asylum-seekers registered, 17 were recognized.

Standard operating procedures were implemented for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. However, addressing such violence in refugee camps faced cultural obstacles. For instance, female victims of domestic violence are reluctant to report it for fear of reprisals from family members or the community.

Activities and assistance

Community services: UNHCR's aim was to empower refugees to meet their own needs and find solutions to their problems. Training was provided to more than 320 community mobilizers, members of refugee committees and community volunteers. This strengthened refugees' participation in the health, water and education sectors in camps. Communities identified their problems and took practical steps to resolve them by starting self-help schools, health clinics, libraries and community centres. More training will be required before communities can manage these sectors at the community level.

Domestic needs and household support: Some 800 non-Afghan refugees received a monthly subsistence allowance that allowed them to cover their basic needs.

Education: UNHCR supported some 300 schools hosting 111,000 Afghan refugee pupils, of whom only 26 per cent were girls. The closure of 13 schools due to camp consolidation as a result of reduced funding forced some children to forego schooling. Some of the pupils were absorbed in the self-help schools managed by the community and in private schools. All middle and secondary schools for Afghans were closed by the Government on March 31, 2006. Afghans were left to manage schools on a self-help basis at the local level. In the North West Frontier Province, 30 per cent of students dropped out and the retention of girls in post-primary education was extremely low.

Health and nutrition: Afghan refugees and the surrounding host communities had access to basic and preventative health-care services provided in 58 health units. The units provided primary health care, routine immunization and reproductive health services. Health indicators were mostly within WHO standards, although there was a high incidence of dysentery and typhoid. District hospitals implemented a "Universal Precautions and Blood Safety" project with UNHCR support.

Legal assistance: Afghans had access to free legal advice and information on the situation in Afghanistan through legal aid centres in Punjab, Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province. A smaller legal aid centre was established in Karachi during the year. Information on voluntary repatriation was shared with local authorities through the centres, which were also instrumental in finding solutions for Afghan refugees arrested under the Foreigners Act. A reduction in the number of arbitrary arrests was recorded.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR supported NGOs as well as government bodies, and trained implementing partners to build capacity. An assessment of the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees in 2006 resulted in a reduction of its staff. UNHCR also conducted an audit of implementing partners.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Afghanistan	1,044,000	1,044,000	50	-
	Afghanistan	2,100	2,100	47	55
Asylum-seekers	Various	200	200	27	13
	Somalia	100	100	33	13
	Iraq	100	100	29	29
	Islamic Republic of Iran	100	100	28	26
Total		1,046,600	1,046,600		

Sanitation: Sanitation facilities in refugee camps were upgraded and the use of mosquito repellent helped prevent malaria outbreaks in high-risk areas.

Shelter and infrastructure: See box on the South Asia earthquake.

Transport and logistics: UNHCR maintained a network of warehouses in Pakistan to ensure adequate supplies of non-food items and their timely distribution.

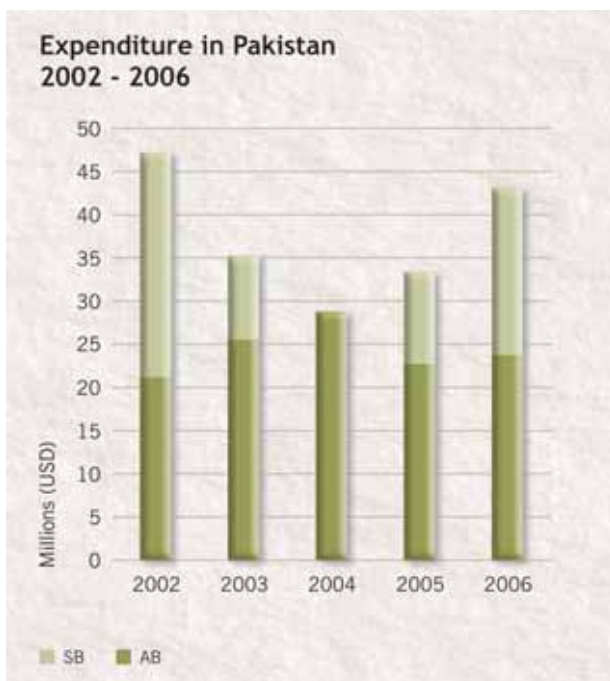
Water: Some 45 Afghan water-management committees were supported to ensure sufficient water supplies. This was important as sharing water resources is becoming a source of tension between the local population and Afghans, as well as within the Afghan communities. The maintenance costs of water systems were shared by communities, UNHCR and the water-management committees.

Constraints

The security situation in the regions bordering Afghanistan forced UNHCR to drastically reduce its field presence in some locations. Field protection and monitoring were scaled down. In some camps, health units were closed for several months, while it was difficult to monitor the running of the schools in the affected areas. Meetings with refugee leaders on repatriation and registration could not be held on a regular basis.

Financial information

Budget reductions in 2006 limited the scope of the operation to minimal care and maintenance in camps



and voluntary repatriation activities. Despite efforts to minimize the impact of the budget cuts, some sectors, especially education, suffered. The closing of some schools resulted in high drop-out rates as, for many children, the self-help schools they could attend were not within walking distance. Although efforts were made to spare girls' schools, reduced attendance could not always be prevented. Pupil-to-teacher ratios in education increased from 52:1 to 60:1, hurting the quality of the education provided. The plan to review and increase salaries for staff of implementing partners, frozen since 2003 despite high inflation, could not be carried out in 2006 due to the funding shortfall, while retrenchment benefits were only partially paid.

UNHCR expenditures in Pakistan declined steadily from 2002 to 2004 due mostly to the large movements of Afghan refugees back to Afghanistan. However, expenditures increased in 2005 and 2006 following a supplementary appeal for UNHCR's response to the South Asia earthquake.

Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR's operation in Pakistan was coordinated by the representation office in Islamabad and implemented by sub-offices in Peshawar and Quetta and a field office in Karachi. The programme operated with a total of 33 international and 173 national staff, one JPO, six UNVs and two consultants. With security remaining a concern in Pakistan, UNHCR employed two international field safety advisers, one in Quetta and the other in Peshawar, as well as a national field safety assistant in Islamabad. The Office also subsidized the residential security of international staff.

Working with others

UNHCR worked closely with the Government and 13 national and eight international implementing partners in Pakistan. In 2006, partnerships were reviewed and streamlined to improve service delivery and resource use. UNHCR made progress in strengthening strategic partnerships with the major stakeholders in the region to develop durable solutions, in addition to voluntary repatriation for Afghans in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan endorsed the results of the first phase of the needs assessment in areas hosting or affected by refugees. UNHCR participated actively in the UN Operations Management Team, supporting the 'One UN' concept.



UNHCR/B. Barloch

Feedback from refugees on registration issues is important for UNHCR to improve its work.

Overall assessment

In 2006, the level of return from Pakistan to Afghanistan was significantly below government and UNHCR forecasts, and marked a change from the consistently high repatriation figures in the years 2002-2005. This can be attributed to the following factors: (i) many of the 2.4 million Afghans remaining in Pakistan have been in the country for a very long period, (ii) the planned closure of four camps was postponed, (iii) the proof-of-registration card allows registered Afghan citizens to remain in Pakistan until 2009, (iv) a significant number of Afghans in Pakistan come from insecure parts of Afghanistan, and (v) many refugees lack the shelter, land or employment needed to rebuild their lives in Afghanistan.

Despite the low repatriation figures for 2006, UNHCR made progress towards getting government support for a more comprehensive approach to managing population movements to and from Afghanistan. The registration exercise was particularly significant in providing, for the first time, the basic data on the Afghan population on which a broader policy framework could be built.

Another important step was the implementation of the first phase of the Refugee-Affected Areas Programme. This showed the extent of poverty and the low economic and social indicators among both local and Afghan populations, and the degree of dependence on local public- and private-sector service providers among the Afghan communities. These factors were not previously highlighted or budgeted for within Pakistan's own development programmes. They underline the need for a reappraisal of how socio-economic and other needs can be addressed to improve conditions for both communities.

In conclusion, the dynamics of the repatriation of Afghans in Pakistan have changed. It is possible that the majority of those who could return voluntarily to Afghanistan without major difficulties have already returned. Maintaining a voluntary repatriation programme will therefore require a different approach in the future if sustainable outcomes are to be achieved. There is also a need to explore measures to address issues related to large and unregulated flows of people in and out of Afghanistan.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government agencies: Afghan Refugee Repatriation Cell, Karachi; Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, Islamabad; Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, Baluchistan; Commissioner for Afghan Refugees; NWFP; National Database and Registration Authority.

NGOs: Afghan Medical Welfare Association, American Refugee Committee, Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (Japan), Basic Education and Employable Skill Training, Basic Education for Afghan Refugees, Caritas, Church World Service (USA), Health Net International, Netherlands, International Rescue Committee (USA), Kuwait Joint Relief Committee, Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid, Ockenden International, United Kingdom, Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Save the Children Federation (USA), *Sayyed Jamaluddin Afghani* Welfare Organization, Society for Community Support to Primary Education, Society for Humanitarian Rights and Prisoners, Struggle for Change, *Taraqee* Foundation, The Frontier Primary Health Care, Union Aid for Afghan Refugees.

Operational partners

NGOs: Afghan Health Training Project, *Darus-Salam*, Humanitarian Medical Relief Board, International Medical Corps, *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Holland), Qatar Charity.

Others: UNV.

South Asia earthquake

UNHCR moved swiftly after the devastating earthquake that struck South Asia on 8 October 2005, to help the Government of Pakistan meet the needs of three million displaced people. The Office was designated the lead agency for the Camp Management Cluster in the United Nations emergency response team that was established to cope with the disaster. The immediate objectives were to ensure minimum standards and prepare camps for the displaced to survive the harsh winter months ahead. This meant having sufficient resources and expertise to monitor the conditions; to coordinate the delivery of basic services such as health care, water supply and sanitation; and to oversee the distribution of relief items and manage the camps.

In 2005 and 2006, close to 300 staff members were deployed from operations in the region to assist the emergency response. With the generous support of donors, UNHCR implemented a USD 33 million programme that met the humanitarian needs of some 160,000 displaced people in 158 camps.

UNHCR's provision and delivery of relief items would not have been possible without the support provided by more than 40 countries to an unprecedented NATO humanitarian air bridge operation. This enabled UNHCR to transport more than 1,780 metric tonnes of relief items to Pakistan from its warehouses around the world.

The return of those displaced by the earthquake took place in a phased manner over several months. By August 2006, most of the displaced had returned home and many camps could be closed. UNHCR completed the successful transition of camp management responsibilities for the remaining displaced people to the local authorities by August 2006 and closed its offices in the earthquake-affected areas. However, the Office maintained a capacity-building role till the end of December 2006.

A camp support team was established under the Resident Coordinator's Office in September 2006. This team established outposts in Mansehra and Muzaffarabad and provided technical advice to the authorities on the administration and management of the camps.

By the end of 2006, there were still some 35,000 displaced people who were unable to return home and thus



Facing threats of landslides, families in this village near Muzaffarabad prepare to be relocated to a camp nearby.

living in camps. In most cases, they could not return because their homes or property had been destroyed by the earthquake. Among those still displaced were many with special needs, including widows, older people, people with disabilities and children separated from their parents.

For many of the displaced, property issues are a serious impediment to return, while poor or vulnerable people do not have the resources or physical strength to rebuild their homes. UNHCR has advocated with the authorities on these issues and progress is being made towards solutions.

The camp support team established in 2006 will continue its activities in 2007, however UNHCR's staffing engagement ended on 1 January 2007.

Achievements and impact

UNHCR transported and distributed more than 2,700 tonnes of relief items from its stockpiles around the world. This included some 843,000 blankets; 20,000 tents; 39,000 mattresses; 3,700 sleeping bags; 24,300 water containers; 32,800 jerry cans for kerosene; 26,000 kitchen sets; 25,000 stoves and 353,000 bars of soap. Distribution started immediately after the earthquake, even though aftershocks were still frequent. Partners were identified to help distribute relief items in remote high-altitude areas

before the winter set in. The logistical challenge was great, and relief items could not have been distributed without the support of the Pakistan army.

UNHCR played an integral role in the UN inter-agency emergency winterization programme implemented from December 2005 to February 2006, which successfully averted a second wave of deaths. Another winterization programme was implemented in late 2006. Minimum shelter (one tent and two plastic sheets per family) and camp infrastructure standards were adhered to. A total of 72 mobile teams mapped all camps and, where necessary, improved facilities to meet UNHCR standards.

UNHCR's interventions in the water and sanitation sectors prevented a major outbreak of serious infectious diseases among earthquake victims. Kitchens and cooking areas, and washrooms and toilets were installed according to international standards. This reduced the number of cases of diarrhoea among the earthquake survivors by some 30 per cent from its figure at the start of the emergency. The trucking of water and the drilling of boreholes and wells ensured the provision of at least seven litres of drinking water per person per day, with water distribution points established within walking distance of the camps. These minimum standards continue to be met in the camps for those who cannot yet return.

Budget, income and expenditure (USD)

	Final budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	28,115,024	9,815,130	13,920,071	23,735,201	23,728,248
SB ³	21,696,451	3,397,741	17,966,750	21,364,491	19,381,532
Total	49,811,475	13,212,871	31,886,821	45,099,692	43,109,780

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

³ The SB figures apply to the South Asia Earthquake. The budget does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Previous years' projects
	AB	SB	Total	AB and SB
Protection, monitoring and coordination	7,232,093	2,648,705	9,880,798	0
Community services	344,303	1,702,262	2,046,565	204,586
Domestic needs and household support	44,272	697,550	741,821	3,502
Education	2,168,780	0	2,168,780	657,987
Health and nutrition	2,348,825	74,279	2,423,103	552,092
Legal assistance	6,362,789	37,719	6,400,508	57,463
Operational support (to agencies)	1,418,247	751,963	2,170,210	1,242,027
Sanitation	14,794	372,366	387,160	44,599
Shelter and infrastructure	0	2,635,424	2,635,424	261,148
Transport and logistics	183,106	5,578,008	5,761,115	97,874
Water	241,552	45,915	287,467	129,245
Instalments with implementing partners	1,374,331	2,949,482	4,323,813	(3,250,524)
Sub-total operational activities	21,733,092	17,493,673	39,226,765	0
Programme support	1,995,156	1,887,859	3,883,015	0
Total expenditure	23,728,248	19,381,532	43,109,780	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure				(1,208,362)
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	12,813,297	11,453,968	24,267,264	
Reporting received	(11,438,965)	(8,504,485)	(19,943,451)	
Balance	1,374,331	2,949,482	4,323,813	
Previous years' report				
Instalments with implementing partners				
Outstanding 1st January				5,125,918
Reporting received				(3,250,524)
Refunded to UNHCR				(1,157,910)
Adjustments				0
Balance				717,484