

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



Operational highlights

- Amayesh III registration cards were issued to some 935,000 Afghan refugees.
- A policy review was undertaken to strengthen partnership with the Government.
- Outreach activities initiated by UNHCR aim to better understand the needs of people of concern living in urban areas.
- UNHCR continued support for voluntary repatriation.

Working environment

The overall security situation in the south-east of the country remained of concern to the Iranian authorities, who declared more areas off-limits to foreigners ('no-go areas').

Some 3,650 people returned to Afghanistan, fewer than planned. The Office worked on improving conditions for return and reintegration in Afghanistan through forums such as the Kabul Conference of November 2008. Between 2002 and the end of 2008, UNHCR has assisted more than 859,000 registered Afghan refugees to return home from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

At the end of 2007, the Office conducted participatory assessments with Afghan and Iraqi refugees. The results indicated that the most pressing concerns of refugees in settlements and urban areas were limited access to medical insurance and the high cost of medical and educational expenses.

Achievements and impact

• Main objectives

In 2008, UNHCR's main objectives were to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan and Iraqi refugees and ensure better treatment and predictable conditions for remaining refugees. The Office also aimed to target assistance to vulnerable groups of Afghan and Iraqi refugees to enhance their self-reliance and help them rebuild their lives upon return. UNHCR supported the Iranian authorities in their discussions with the Government of Afghanistan on the management of migration issues.

• Protection and Solutions

In 2008, the Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA) conducted an on-line re-registration exercise for Afghan refugees. During the exercise, named Amayesh III, some 936,000 people were registered. Once this



Iraqis in Jahrom camp, Fars province, Iran

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database is shared with UNHCR, the Office hopes to profile the refugee population for planning purposes.

Amayesh II cardholders in no-go areas who did not re-register continued to be considered unlawful foreign migrants by the authorities. UNHCR was particularly concerned for people of concern in Sistan-Balochistan province, where some cardholders had been deported.

The Government began to issue temporary work permits to Amayesh III cardholders by the end of the year. UNHCR welcomed this initiative to find temporary solutions for refugees as return was still not an option for the majority of Afghans in Iran.

UNHCR organized workshops to provide a better insight into the legal issues faced by registered refugees. The Office alerted the Iranian authorities to the main problems identified, including the non-payment of wages, family conflict, and lawful access the labour market. In 2008,

UNHCR provided free legal assistance to almost 2,850 refugees.

The Office briefed the authorities on resettlement criteria as well as the new multi-referral system in order to increasing the Government's participation in the identification process. In 2008, a total of 112 cases (529 individuals) were submitted for resettlement and 67 cases (313 individuals) departed for resettlement countries.

Although the Tripartite Commission Agreement of March 2008 between UNHCR and the Governments of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran was not renewed, UNHCR assisted some 3,600 Afghans and almost 2,600 Iraqis to return to their home countries. All persons repatriated to Afghanistan were provided with a cash grant and outpatient medical services.

Almost 2,600 Iraqi refugees repatriated, either by organizing their own travel or in UNHCR-organized convoys.

Persons of concern

| Type of population | Origin | Total | Of whom assisted by UNHCR | Per cent female | Per cent under 18 |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Refugees | Afghanistan | 935,600 | 935,600 | 46 | 37 |
| | Iraq | 44,400 | 44,400 | 38 | 44 |
| | Various | 70 | 70 | 40 | 37 |
| Asylum-seekers | Afghanistan | 1,600 | 1,600 | 46 | 37 |
| | Iraq | 110 | 110 | 38 | 44 |
| | Various | 30 | 30 | 36 | 32 |
| Returnees (refugees) | Various | 100 | - | - | - |
| Total | | 981,910 | 981,810 | | |

Afghan and Iraqi refugees received vocational training to enhance their potential for economic self-reliance. Some 1,800 people participated in courses in general mechanics and another 100 in health work and midwifery.

○ *Activities and Assistance*

Community services: Women's refugee committees were established in urban areas and women were represented in refugee committees in four settlements. UNHCR identified and assisted 473 children with disabilities, as well as nine cases of sexual and gender-based violence. The Office established a partnership with the State Welfare Organization (Behzisti) which assists cases of sexual violence through its 24-hour hotline services.

Domestic needs and household support: Some 20,000 women and girls of reproductive age received sanitary materials, and almost 32,000 refugees in settlements received hygiene kits.

Education: Six prefabricated classrooms for girls were purchased for the Bardsir settlement. Some 13,800 stationery kits were provided to destitute Afghan and Iraqi refugees and 470 girls were given free transportation to school. DAFI scholarships were disbursed to 160 Afghan refugees, and a total of 1,800 Afghan and Iraqi refugees received vocational training.

Health and nutrition: Medical screening benefited 3,600 Afghan refugees. Some 11,000 refugees received medical assistance, while 5,100 participated in HIV and AIDS awareness training.

Legal assistance: Financial assistance to cover municipal taxes and registration was provided to some 3,000 extremely vulnerable individuals. Some 500 people were submitted for resettlement, and 313 departed for resettlement countries. There were some 935,500 Afghan refugees registered in the Amayesh database.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR organized a workshop on financial management for implementing partners, the Ministry of Interior and BAFIA. Office equipment and a pick-up truck were procured for BAFIA.

Transport and logistics: The year saw 3,600 Afghan refugees repatriate, while some 2,600 Iraqis returned to their country either through their own efforts or in UNHCR-organized convoys.

Water: Water supply systems in three settlements were repaired, an electric pump procured and a 10,000-litre water tank installed in a settlement.

○ *Constraints*

Restricted access to persons of concern, particularly in the so-called no-go areas, curtailed UNHCR's ability to monitor protection and prevent *refoulement*. Home visits were limited, particularly in provinces covered by the Office in Tehran.

Pressure was put on Afghans to repatriate or relocate from no-go-areas.

The late signing of sub-agreements and the lack of access to public universities for Afghan students were particular concerns of UNHCR.

| Financial information |

Iran received little earmarked funding but was well supported by contributions for the South-West Asia region. The expenditure rate increased from 85 per cent in 2004 to 95 per cent in 2008.

| Organization and implementation |

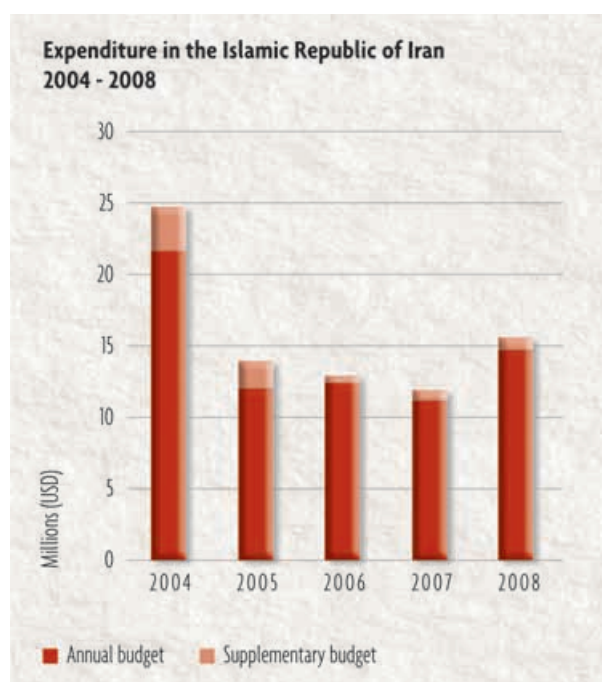
The UNHCR operation in Iran was managed by the Representation in Tehran, with three sub-offices in Ahwaz, Mashad and Zahedan (the latter moving in August 2008 to Kerman) and two field offices in Ourumieh and Dogharoun. There were 127 staff members, of whom 17 were international and 110 national.

| Working with others |

UNHCR's main working partners were the Ministry of the Interior and BAFIA. UNHCR also worked with the Ministries of Health and Education and the State Welfare Organization Behzisti.

| Overall assessment |

UNHCR made progress towards its objectives, and although repatriation figures for Afghanistan were down, most other targets were met. The Office reduced the number of Voluntary Repatriation Centres and repatriation staff in line with the reduced repatriation levels.



The overall shift from individual assistance to community outreach was slow, but will be strengthened in 2009 as the focus moves from camps to urban caseloads. There was an understanding between the authorities and UNHCR regarding the importance of addressing the situation of urban refugees.

UNHCR strengthened its relationships with the authorities and there was no large-scale *refoulement* from Sistan-Balochistan.

| Partners |
|--|
| Implementing partners |
| Government: Ministry of the Interior, Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education |
| NGOs: Iraqi Refugees Aid Council (IRAC) |
| Others: WFP, UNDP, UNICEF |
| Operational partners |
| NGOs: MSF |

Budget, income and expenditure for the Islamic Republic of Iran (USD)

| | Final budget | Income from contributions | Other funds available | Total funds available ¹ | Total expenditure |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Annual budget | 15,051,830 | 4,209,862 | 10,649,179 | 14,859,041 | 14,857,756 |
| Iraq Situation Response SB | 1,300,000 | 0 | 706,707 | 706,707 | 705,461 |
| Total | 16,351,830 | 4,209,862 | 11,355,886 | 15,565,748 | 15,563,217 |

Note: Supplementary programmes do not include seven per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR. Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

¹ Total funds available include currency adjustments.

Financial report on UNHCR's operations in the Islamic Republic of Iran (USD)

| Expenditure breakdown | Current year's projects | | | Previous years' projects |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Annual budget | Supplementary budget | Total | Annual and supplementary budgets |
| Protection, monitoring and coordination | 4,390,202 | 76,833 | 4,467,035 | 0 |
| Community services | 468,133 | 15,440 | 483,573 | 0 |
| Domestic needs and household support | 355,901 | 217,700 | 573,601 | 0 |
| Education | 451,281 | 0 | 451,281 | 0 |
| Health and nutrition | 2,417,912 | 176,503 | 2,594,415 | 49,078 |
| Legal assistance | 1,368,503 | 2,527 | 1,371,030 | 0 |
| Operational support (to agencies) | 261,945 | 314 | 262,259 | 0 |
| Sanitation | 22,835 | 1,265 | 24,100 | 0 |
| Shelter and infrastructure | 22,097 | 75,756 | 97,853 | 0 |
| Transport and logistics | 455,673 | 65,117 | 520,790 | 17,478 |
| Water | 19,096 | 0 | 19,096 | 0 |
| Instalments to implementing partners | 1,883,512 | 74,006 | 1,957,518 | (66,556) |
| Subtotal operational activities | 12,117,090 | 705,461 | 12,822,551 | 0 |
| Programme support | 2,740,666 | 0 | 2,740,666 | 0 |
| Total expenditure | 14,857,756 | 705,461 | 15,563,217 | 0 |
| Cancellation on previous years' expenditure | | | | (161,315) |
| Instalments with implementing partners | | | | |
| Payments made | 3,841,947 | 149,751 | 3,991,698 | |
| Reporting received | (1,958,435) | (75,745) | (2,034,180) | |
| Balance | 1,883,512 | 74,006 | 1,957,518 | |
| Outstanding 1st January | | | | 280,786 |
| Reporting received | | | | (66,556) |
| Refunded to UNHCR | | | | (24,075) |
| Currency adjustment | | | | 0 |
| Outstanding 31st December | | | | 190,155 |