

# Pakistan

January 2022

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

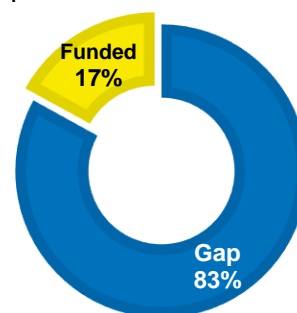
### Countries of Origin

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| Afghanistan | 1,451,966 |
| Somalia     | 202       |
| Yemen       | 167       |
| Syria       | 73        |
| Myanmar     | 54        |
| Iran        | 53        |
| Iraq        | 28        |
| Others      | 189       |

## FUNDING NEEDS

 **USD129 million**

Pakistan operation



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

**233 National Staff** including affiliate workforce

**41 International Staff**

### Offices:

**1 Country Office** in Islamabad

**2 Sub-Offices** in Peshawar and Quetta

**Presence** in Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat, and Loralai



## Working with Partners

UNHCR works in **close partnership** with the Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, UN agencies, humanitarian and development organizations, and civil society to safeguard protection and find solutions for refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern to UNHCR. Partners include:

- **Governmental:** Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), including the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees in the provinces serves as the main counterpart. UNHCR collaborates with National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) for registration of Afghans and issuance of birth certificates. UNHCR also works in partnership with National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) at the federal level and Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTA) at the provincial level for the youth skill development in Pakistan. UNHCR Pakistan also collaborates with provincial department of health and department of education, along with other provincial and district level government line departments.
- **NGOs:** UNHCR partners with 12 national and 1 international non-governmental organizations to provide protection and humanitarian assistance.
- **UN Agencies and International Organizations:** UNHCR coordinates with UN partner agencies, NGOs and international organizations in line with the pillars of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).
- **National Goodwill Ambassador:** Mahira Khan, a well-known national celebrity, raises awareness on the situation of refugees.

## Main Activities

### Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

The SSAR is a quadripartite multi-year regional strategy between UNHCR and the governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Launched in 2012, the SSAR provides a framework for cooperation between humanitarian and development actors to address the needs of Afghan refugees and the communities that host them. It seeks to identify and implement comprehensive solutions for Afghan refugees in the region.

A **Support Platform** dedicated to achieving the SSAR objectives was launched on 16 December 2019 as part of the first-ever Global Refugee Forum. The Support Platform aims to reinforce the priorities of the SSAR and mobilize additional resources to promote and realize its three pillars – voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration, and assistance to host countries – while seeking to address the remaining gaps through reinvigorated, sustained and coherent humanitarian and development investments. Thirteen states and international organizations have become members of the **Core Group** of the Support Platform: Asian Development Bank, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea, Qatar, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, UNDP, United States of America, and World Bank.

### Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA)

UNHCR, together with the Government of Pakistan, has implemented the RAHA programme, a humanitarian-development nexus initiative which supports the implementation of the SSAR. RAHA constitutes an effort to move away from prolonged dependence on open-ended humanitarian aid (“care and maintenance”) by enhancing social cohesion and building empowerment, resilience and productive capacities of both refugees and their host communities through targeted investments into national public service delivery systems (health, education, social protection etc.) and infrastructure.

### Registration and Refugee Status Determination

Pakistan has an over 40 years long history of hosting refugees and currently ranks as the third largest refugee-hosting country globally. Today, over 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees live within its borders, as well as some 840,000 Afghan Citizen Cardholders (ACC) and an estimated 500,000 undocumented Afghans. Pakistan also hosts a small number of non-Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers from other countries such as Somalia, Iraq, Palestine and Iran.



The Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise (DRIVE) successfully concluded its implementation phase on 31 December 2021. The final phase will be undertaken in the first quarter of 2022, including evaluation, data clean-up and reporting. A limited grace period will also be offered in January and February, during which any eligible applications who were unable to participate during the implementation phase may still be processed. New smart identity cards are being issued as part of this exercise. These cards, known as Proof of Registration (PoR) cards serve as an identity and residency document. DRIVE has been undertaken by the Government of Pakistan - the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), the Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) - with the support of UNHCR. It was designed to confirm and update government data relating to the registered Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, and to address the need for new identity documents by issuing biometric smartcards to all eligible refugees.

Pakistan does not have a national asylum system in place nor is it signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. As such, UNHCR conducts registration of persons with heightened protection needs. In line with the registration strategy, the first step of the procedure envisages pre-screening of the applicants to ascertain their protection needs and risk profiles. In this way, the office prioritizes registration of those with sensitive refugee claims, minorities, children-at-risk, older persons-at-risk, single parents, persons with disabilities, GBV survivors, women-at-risk and those with specific and legal protection needs. Documentation is issued once the registration process is completed. Pakistan generally accepts UNHCR decisions to grant refugee status and allows asylum-seekers to remain in Pakistan pending identification of a durable solution.



### **Voluntary Repatriation**

UNHCR operates two Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Pakistan, situated in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkwa, through which refugees wishing to repatriate to Afghanistan are facilitated to return. UNHCR also provides counseling and facilitates return for non-Afghan refugees to their country of origin.



### **Legal Assistance**

UNHCR operates nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas run by UNHCR partners SHARP and SEHER. ALAC teams are involved in direct interventions to secure release of persons of concern who are arrested/detained on the basis of their legal status, conduct legal awareness raising sessions with the community and capacity building activities with law enforcement agencies on the rights of refugees.



### **Community based Protection**

The community-based protection approach supports community empowerment and resilience. UNHCR and partners work with networks of Outreach Volunteers, refugee elders and focal points to identify community-led initiatives which support self-reliance, mitigate protection risks and mobilise behavioural change.



### **Child Protection, Gender-based Violence**

UNHCR and partners currently implement programmes for child protection, including life skills programmes, child friendly spaces, alternative care, case management, psychosocial support, family tracing and reunification and community outreach and awareness programmes. In the realm of GBV, UNHCR and partners currently implement programmes for prevention, risk mitigation of and response to GBV, including case management, psychosocial support, safe houses, and community-based social and behavioural change programmes. Women-friendly spaces and women and girls' empowerment activities are also in place.

### **Statelessness**

UNHCR works in partnership to provide legal assistance to stateless Bengali, Bihari and Rohingya communities in Karachi. The legal assistance focuses on acquiring and unblocking of identity documentation, legal advice and awareness raising on importance of identity documentation, birth registration and help to access to basic services. In addition, UNHCR continues to raise awareness on the procedures for birth registration in Pakistan and the importance of basic civil documentation as a measure to prevent statelessness in a protracted situation. In this regard, UNHCR engages with key government counterpart to bring Pakistan closer to the global and regional Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) standards.



### Livelihoods

UNHCR has a multi-prong livelihood strategy that aims to build refugees' self-reliance and economic capacity while in exile and in preparation for a durable solution. In line with development principles, projects are designed to provide livelihood options with a focus on strengthening social and economic capital in refugee communities that is complemented by financial literacy and career development. Assistance focuses on agriculture and artisanal skills alongside different vocational trainings and higher education. Advocacy is pursued to expand access to tertiary education opportunities, employment, and financial services. In recognition that voluntary return is the primary durable solution for most of the refugees, a cross-border dimension has been integrated through these efforts. The private sector equally features prominently as a partner with efforts underway to advance inclusion in supply chains and build new private sector partnerships.



### Education

UNHCR's education strategy aims to facilitate access of Afghan children into nearby public schools where these are available to avoid provision of parallel education system, maximise resources and encourage peaceful co-existence amongst refugees and local children. Accessibility and absorption capacity are key considerations for refugees being able to access public schools. UNHCR also provides tertiary-level scholarships to Afghan refugee youth through the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI). The beneficiaries are aged between 17 to 30 years old.



### Health

UNHCR has been transitioning from support to parallel refugee facilities towards investments in national services when national services are accessible and have the absorption capacity to include refugees. In these situations, parallel health facilities are being closed. Alongside enhancing access to public health facilities, a number of actions are underway to improve quality of health care available in public facilities benefiting both refugees and host communities.



### Energy

Energy is a basic need and a key to overcoming poverty and resolving environmental degradation. In Pakistan, most of the rural population including Afghan refugees have no access to electricity and depend heavily on traditional fuels. This has an adverse environmental impact on their communities and increases health risks, especially women and children using firewood for cooking, and heating indoors. To improve refugees' protection and well-being, UNHCR has implemented a series of energy interventions so that refugees and host communities have access to clean and affordable energy sources. In December 2021, UNHCR provided a sum of 1000 Afghan refugees men and women with vocational skill training on operation and maintenance of renewable energy appliances and environment education. All the participants were provided with renewable energy appliances to promote the efficient and effective use of energy sources in their communities.

## For more information, please contact:

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### LINKS

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