

Pakistan

30 July 2020

***28** registered refugees who returned to Afghanistan between 1 January – 31 July 2020

5,904 Afghan refugees whose births were registered between 1 January – 31 July 2020

14,043 Afghan refugees who have received legal assistance between 1 January – 31 July 2020

Personal protective equipment (PPEs) was provided to the health workers in **54** refugee villages to protect themselves during the pandemic

2,196 individuals (Afghan refugees and Pakistanis) received livelihoods assistance



UNHCR field staff carry out outreach activities in remote locations where refugees live and often need the most support. In Chaman, Balochistan, field staff raised awareness of COVID-19 and distributed information materials. © UNHCR

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin	Total persons of concern
Afghan refugees with proof of registration (PoR) cards	1,421,946
Afghan mandate refugees (without PoR cards)	3,015
Somalia (refugees)	181
Others (refugees)	341
Asylum-seekers	9,713

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff

**205 national staff

34 international staff

Offices

One Country Office in Islamabad

Two Sub-Offices in Peshawar and Quetta

Presence in Dalbandin, Haripur, Karachi, Kohat and Loralai



As part of UNHCR's COVID-19 response, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities are being improved in support of refugees and host communities across Pakistan. UNHCR recently completed such work in Ghulam Banda refugee village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. © UNHCR/J. Khalid

* The voluntary repatriation process was suspended on 30 November 2019 for the winter break and resumed from 2 March 2020. It was suspended again on 17 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan. Please refer to the UNHCR Afghanistan Situation Data Portal and the UNHCR Pakistan website for the latest updates.
 ** Affiliate workforce is included.

Working with partners

- UNHCR collaborates closely with the Government of Pakistan. It works jointly with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), as well as the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the Commissionerates for Afghan Refugees at the provincial level.
- UNHCR partners with a range of national and international non-governmental organizations to provide protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as collaborates with non-implementing partners, such as the World Bank, sister UN agencies and private sector partners.

Main activities

Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

- The regional multi-year Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (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 supports the pursuit of durable solutions, as well as youth empowerment through education, the development of vocational skills and livelihoods training. The SSAR was previously extended until 2021.
- Aligned with the SSAR, a dedicated Support Platform for SSAR was launched on 16 December 2019, one day prior to the Global Refugee Forum. The Support Platform seeks to achieve: (i) enhanced international solidarity and burden-sharing for the Afghan refugee situation, resulting in stronger political and financial commitments to achieve solutions; (ii) additional investments and expanded partnerships for coherent humanitarian and development responses that increase absorption capacity for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, while easing the burden on host communities in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan; and (iii) sustained visibility for the Afghan situation by linking the SSAR to the Global Compact on Refugees, enabling the sharing of regional good practices and lessons learned, showcasing the positive contributions of refugees to their host country and community and advocating for the implementation in the subregion of unassigned pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum.
- A High-Level Meeting on the Support Platform for the SSAR was convened by the United Nations High Commissioner on 6 July 2020. During the event, several States participated, took the floor to make remarks and expressed their interest in joining an action-oriented Core Group of the Support Platform.

Protection and durable solutions

- **Voluntary repatriation:** UNHCR usually operates two Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Pakistan where refugees wishing to repatriate to Afghanistan must deregister. From November to the end of February, voluntary repatriation was temporarily suspended during the winter months. On 2 March 2020, UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme resumed, but it was suspended until further notice on 17 March due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The centres remained closed during the reporting period.
- **Legal assistance:** UNHCR operates nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in the main refugee-hosting areas. Eight of these centres are run by UNHCR's partner, SHARP. The remaining centre is run by another partner, SEHER.
- In July 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of 1,983 persons of concern. During the month, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for 11 persons of concern arrested/detained and secured the release of all. In most cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested persons of concern before they were formally charged by law enforcement. Also, the majority were released within 24 hours. In addition, ALAC partners

represented in court five persons of concern who had been charged under the Foreigners Act (dealing with the unauthorized stay of foreigners) and other preventive laws (allowing preventive detention of persons acting in a manner prejudicial to the integrity, security and defence of the country and public order). These interventions resulted in court-ordered releases.

- During the reporting period, partner staff provided individual legal counselling to 186 persons of concern who visited the ALACs, as well as legal advice to 1,247 persons of concern through the ALAC helplines. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modification, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) information, and the asylum application process were the main issues addressed when providing assistance. Out-of-court legal assistance was also given to 505 persons of concern, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.
- UNHCR and ALAC staff organized three legal camps and *shura* meetings, reaching 24 people. Two legal sessions were held in urban areas and one in a refugee village. Through these legal sessions, refugees shared various issues affecting their communities. UNHCR partner staff informed refugees of free legal aid available and UNHCR helpline services.
- On communicating with communities, ALAC teams have been calling refugee community representatives to keep them informed of the COVID-19 pandemic. In July, ALAC teams made 705 calls to refugee communities in the area of responsibility of the Country Office in Islamabad. Refugee communities were advised to comply with orders from the local and provincial administrations. ALAC teams have been encouraged to maintain a proactive approach throughout the situation and share daily situation reports.

In July:

- *A total of 1,983 individuals received legal assistance;*
- *11 individuals were arrested/detained and all were released;*
- *5 individuals were provided with court representation;*
- *186 individuals received individual legal counselling; and*
- *1,247 people were assisted through ALAC helplines.*

Community-based protection

- Some 14,000 vulnerable refugees were provided with information on COVID-19 prevention and referral mechanisms through UNHCR's helplines and counselling by telephone.
- More than 16,300 refugee Outreach Volunteers, community committees and community leaders were reached with information on UNHCR's cash assistance programme through in-person visits, WhatsApp and counselling by telephone, along with the distribution of 15,200 cash assistance posters and flyers.
- Some 9,700 refugees attended sensitization sessions organized by refugee Outreach Volunteers, shuras and community mobilizers in small groups countrywide.
- Approximately 3,000 active Outreach Volunteers and community committee members received PKR 500 (USD 3) mobile top-up cards to continue their efforts in sharing information with refugee communities and in providing UNHCR with updates on the current situation during the pandemic. These Outreach Volunteers and community committee members play a vital role in spreading key messages on COVID-19 through tele-outreach within their communities.
- The distribution of cash incentives for school teachers in refugee villages has commenced. So far, 90 per cent of the teachers have received their incentives through online transfers, while the rest are expected to receive their incentives in the coming weeks.

Education

- All UNHCR-supported schools in refugee villages were closed in March. They remained closed during the reporting period and are expected to reopen in mid-September 2020, as per the directives of the Government of Pakistan.
- As part of the preparations for the reopening of schools in September, UNHCR is upgrading WASH facilities in refugee village schools and procuring hygiene materials.
- Some 413 DAFI scholars continued to be supported by UNHCR in 2020.

Livelihoods

- UNHCR, through a private sector supporter, provided skills training to 50 Afghan refugees in Karachi in fashion jewellery and face mask making. The skills training was provided by internationally recognized fashion brand called FNKAsia, who initially provided skills training to refugee artisans. The company will prophase the products from refugee women, which will be sold out through countryside franchises of FNKAsia. This will help refugee women to earn income and achieve some degree of self-reliance.

Health

- **PPEs:** UNHCR Sub-Office in Peshawar provided approximately 7,000 kg of multipurpose soap, 31,800 pieces of Lux Soap and 2,400 (500 ml) toilet disinfectant to UNHCR partners to protect their staff while working with refugee communities. PPEs were also provided to the following partners: the Project Directorate Health (PDH); the Frontier Primary Health Care (FPHC); the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC); and SHARP. PPEs were also sent to Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRCs).
- **Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE):** During the reporting period, some 1,300 health education sessions were conducted by male and female community health workers. Some 7,500 individuals participated in these sessions. The topics addressed in sessions included prevention and awareness of COVID-19, malaria, diarrheal diseases, acute respiratory infections and dengue. Referrals to district health hospitals were also discussed. In addition, as part of community engagement, approximately 1,300 meetings were conducted with village health committees, religious leaders and shuras. Some 5,400 refugees participated in these meetings. Pesh Imams (prayer leaders) continued to play a key role in the prevention of COVID-19 at their mosques. Partners continue with the policy of “no mask, no entry” at health facilities. A triage system is being used in all health facilities.
- **Social stigma:** A certain level of fear has been noted among refugees and host communities regarding medical care in government hospitals. As a result, those who may have been infected with COVID-19 face social stigma and often delay before seeking health care. Partners have focused on providing health education, both in health facilities and at community levels through Information, Education and Communication materials developed by the Department of Health.
- **Mobile health services:** UNHCR, through partners, continues to provide critical mobile mother and child health services to refugees free of charge. This arrangement offsets the economic impact of COVID 19 on refugees.
- **Balochistan:** A community fund management training has been provided to Fund Management Committees in Surkhab and Saranan in Pishin District. The five-day training covered organizational management, fund management, book-keeping, control mechanisms and other topics that help such Committees manage community-run health facilities.
- Some 48 sessions have been conducted in the three refugee villages of Zar Karez, Posti and Chaghi in Balochistan. These sessions were an opportunity for awareness-raising on tuberculosis and COVID-19 prevention measures. Some 180 individuals from the community participated while distancing protocols. In addition, 100 households were visited to collect information regarding presumptive cases.

- All the privately and community-run health facilities in the refugee villages of Surkhab and New Saranan in the Pishin District, Posti and Chaghi in the Chaghi District and Mohammad Khail in the Quetta District remained functional during the month of June 2020. Refugees also accessed health services in public hospitals located in nearby cities.

Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme

- Since 2009, UNHCR, together with the Government of Pakistan, has implemented the RAHA programme, an initiative which supports the implementation of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. Through RAHA, a wide variety of projects have been carried out in the sectors of education, health, livelihoods, infrastructure, water, sanitation and social protection. In 2019, the RAHA programme marked 10 years. During this decade, RAHA supported more than 4,250 projects which aligned with UNHCR's livelihoods, education and health strategies, all aiming to ensure greater inclusion of Afghan refugees in public systems and structures.
 - All the necessary groundwork has been completed for the implementation of the 15 projects in 2020, but a delay in implementation was expected due to COVID-19.
- *In total, 4,273 projects have been completed since 2009.*
 - *12.4 million beneficiaries in the projects implemented in 47 districts of Pakistan.*
 - *14 projects in 2019.*
 - *15 projects in 2020.*

External/donors relations

Earmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 22 July 2020)¹

Australia | Canada | Denmark | Dr. Kin Chung Lam | European Union | IRTHI-NAMA Women Advancement Establishment | Japan | Norway | Qatar (Educate A Child) | Switzerland | United Nations Development Programme | United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS | United States of America | Miscellaneous private donors, including The Big Heart Foundation

Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR Pakistan in 2020 (as at 22 July 2020)²

Denmark | France | Germany | Norway | Netherlands | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | Private donors in Japan | Private donors in the Republic of Korea | Private donors in Spain

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Data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/pak>

¹ Contributions to Pakistan are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.

² Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Only donors who have contributed \$10 million or more are indicated.

Pakistan: UNHCR Presence 2020

