



Asia and the Pacific

Khadijeh Rahimi, a nineteen-year-old Afghan refugee, works at a tailoring workshop supported by UNHCR and managed by Zeynab Shaban, a refugee as well, in Shiraz, in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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“In 2020, UNHCR will focus on the search for solutions in the Asia and the Pacific region. Too many refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in and from the region have been facing precarious situations for too long, generously hosted by countries and communities who have received too little support. The Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum give us a unique opportunity to turn the tide. It is time to broaden responsibility for protecting the displaced and stateless in the region and express solidarity through practical measures that concretely improve their lives.”

Indrika Ratwatte

Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Ensuring inclusive protection and assistance

In 2020-2021, UNHCR will protect, empower and build the resilience and self-reliance of people of concern in the Asia and the Pacific region, with continuing focus on refugees from Afghanistan and Myanmar and support for the main countries that host them, namely the Islamic Republics of Pakistan and Iran, as well as Bangladesh. In addition to the protection priorities in those major operations, UNHCR will undertake a wide range of protection activities for people of concern across the region. To ensure access to asylum, UNHCR will conduct refugee status determination in countries without national asylum procedures such as in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, and advocate for the adoption of national refugee legislation while supporting the responsible institutional structures. In Central Asia, UNHCR will support States, such as Kyrgyzstan, to strengthen national asylum systems.

In the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, the Office will play a catalytic role in channelling additional investments into national public service delivery systems to support the inclusive policies of the host governments benefitting both host communities and refugees, pending their return to Afghanistan.

In a region with 2.4 million IDPs, and in line with UNHCR's new IDP Policy, UNHCR will take a more decisive and predictable approach when responding to situations of internal displacement, notably in Afghanistan, Myanmar and the Philippines. It will better protect and assist IDPs and will support governments to develop and implement legal and policy frameworks for preventing, responding and resolving internal displacement.

Promoting innovative solutions in protracted and emergency situations

UNHCR will support multi-stakeholder efforts to address the root causes of

The new Policy on “UNHCR’s Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement”



displacement in countries of origin, improve conditions for return and facilitate voluntary and informed repatriation and sustainable reintegration, where appropriate.

In South-West Asia, UNHCR will plan for the return of approximately 60,000 Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, and will leverage humanitarian and development partnerships in support of communities across Afghanistan that have the potential to receive returning refugees and IDPs.

In line with the “Solutions strategy for Afghan refugees to support voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration and assistance to host countries” (SSAR) and the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR aims to link its short- to medium-term community-based protection projects to longer-term development programmes in 20 priority areas for return and reintegration. These projects include providing cash assistance and in-kind support to vulnerable families, improving access to adequate shelter, expanding education and skills training, providing entrepreneurial support, implementing quick-impact livelihood initiatives and developing public infrastructure such as schools, healthcare facilities, community centres and roads.

In Bangladesh, UNHCR will build on the comprehensive biometric registration of all refugees from Myanmar—conducted jointly with the Government of Bangladesh in 2019—to better target and more efficiently deliver assistance. Data-driven analysis of the refugee population in Bangladesh will allow for more informed consultations with refugees about their intentions and the conditions in their places of origin. In Myanmar, UNHCR will continue working with UNDP and the Government to implement quick impact-projects that improve conditions for communities in Rakhine State.

UNHCR will pursue solutions for refugees by advocating increased resettlement as well as complementary pathways for admission to third countries. In 2020, UNHCR will pursue the voluntary repatriation of some 4,000 Sri Lankan refugees from India. The Government of Japan is doubling its resettlement quota in 2020, and expanding its selection criteria to all refugees within Asia. In Nepal, UNHCR will prioritize enabling solutions and building the self-reliance of the 6,500 Bhutanese refugees who remain. UNHCR’s engagement will strengthen livelihood opportunities, enhance community-based protection

and reinforce social inclusion by improving access to public services and cohesion with host communities.

Reducing and preventing statelessness and protecting stateless persons

With an estimated 1.7 million stateless persons in the region, and many others at risk, addressing statelessness is a priority. The Office will strengthen its engagement with States and other partners, building on recent breakthroughs in the region and pursuing the goals of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024. To prevent and reduce statelessness, UNHCR and relevant States will seek to help an estimated 24,900 people confirm their nationality in 2020. In South-East Asia, UNHCR will work with States to build on progress made in addressing statelessness.

In Central Asia, the Government of Kyrgyzstan announced in 2019 the complete elimination of all known cases of statelessness in the country—almost 14,000 individuals. UNHCR will support improvements to the country’s draft statelessness determination procedure and continue to promote registration of all births and documentation of all citizens. Building upon these successes, UNHCR will reinforce its strong collaboration with governments in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to resolve statelessness.

Diversifying partnerships to promote an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach

UNHCR will focus on building and strengthening partnerships that assist, protect and enable solutions for people of concern, including with development actors, international financial institutions, civil society, academia and regional

organisations. Together, they will forge operational synergies, enhance humanitarian-development cooperation, and drive resource mobilization in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, through a “whole-of-society” approach.

In Bangladesh, for instance, UNHCR will strengthen its partnership with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, focusing their contributions to the development of Cox’s Bazar District. This is where the vast majority of refugees from Myanmar are hosted, and where both they, and host communities, face shared challenges such as environmental degradation, water scarcity and competition for livelihoods.

UNHCR will engage in approaches to better protect, assist and find solutions for people of concern. In Myanmar, UNHCR will advocate establishing a coordinated, multi-partner approach to improving conditions in Rakhine State and building confidence among refugees.

For the Afghan refugee situation, UNHCR will work with multiple partners to find solutions for refugees and ensure their return is sustainable, in line with the SSAR, building upon the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Afghanistan and the Global Refugee Forum commitments.

Promoting a people-centered approach, UNHCR will seek to ensure that host communities are included in area-based approaches, strengthening co-existence with people of concern. It will also pro-actively engage refugees and returnees to empower them and encourage their participation in decision-making processes.

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In Afghanistan, an innovative partnership informing UNHCR’s response

In the Afghan context, understanding the protection and livelihood needs of people of concern and the general population, as well as their perceptions of migration and potential flight, necessitated an innovative approach. UNHCR Afghanistan launched a mobile phone survey project for returnees, IDPs and the population generally,

to provide pivotal data to inform its response. This enabled quick, large-scale surveys and data analysis in real time across challenging geographies. A collaboration with Orange Door Research also saw the opening of a call centre in Kabul.

MAJOR SITUATIONS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC IN 2020



AFGHANISTAN

Afghans will be the largest refugee population of concern to UNHCR in the region in 2020, 40 years since their displacement began. The international community's recent commitment to greater and more equitable burden and responsibility-sharing, enshrined in the Global Compact, is important to redoubling collective efforts to enable solutions for Afghan refugee returnees while standing in solidarity with the principal host countries. With the SSAR the overarching policy and operational framework for strengthening support for host countries while creating the conditions for sustainable return and reintegration, UNHCR will support the launch of a dedicated SSAR Support Platform for the Afghanistan situation.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNHCR will support the Government's inclusive policies, notably in the areas of education and healthcare. It will also support greater opportunities for self-reliance and portable skills, and enhanced access to social safety nets for vulnerable refugees, all while seeking durable solutions. In Pakistan, UNHCR will support the Government implement its Comprehensive Policy on Voluntary Repatriation and Management of Afghan nationals. It will also promote support for refugees and host communities through the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas programme, focusing on enhancing access to and quality of national education, healthcare, skills training and self-reliance initiatives. In both countries, UNHCR will facilitate voluntary repatriation as the preferred (regional) durable solution for Afghan refugees, while continuing efforts to promote and facilitate complementary pathways and increase resettlement quotas from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

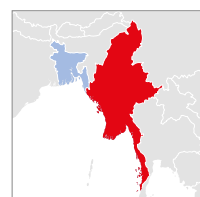
Inside Afghanistan, an estimated 2 million people will remain internally displaced. UNHCR will promote comprehensive solutions benefitting both returning refugees and local communities by strengthening community-based protection initiatives. These will provide access to education, skills training and livelihood opportunities and healthcare, while building community infrastructure and services to support sustainable reintegration.

1.4 million
REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

1 million
REFUGEES IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

60,000
RETURNEES

2 million
INTERNALLY DISPLACED



MYANMAR

UNHCR will work with the Government of Bangladesh and partners in Cox's Bazar to meet the needs of some 900,000 Rohingya refugees seeking sustainable solutions. The conclusion of the joint registration of refugees with the Government by 2020 will enable more targeted assistance. Priorities include engaging refugees in child protection, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence through community-based education, legal aid and mental health support; providing the most vulnerable families with transitional shelters/material and core relief times; and maintaining a critical health and nutrition response.

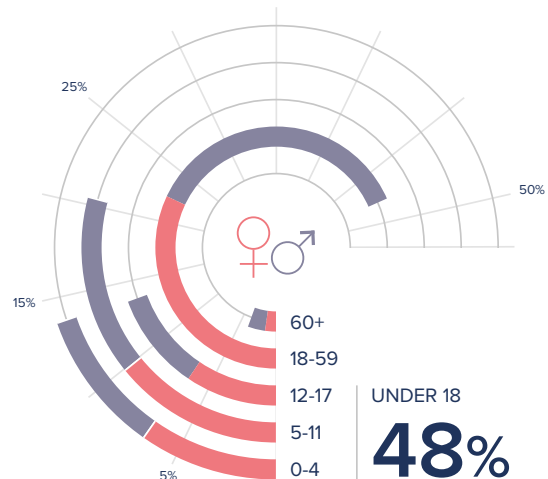
In Myanmar, UNHCR will advocate for improved conditions in northern Rakhine State and for refugees to make voluntary and informed decisions on their sustainable return. In central Rakhine State, where there are an estimated 128,000 IDPs, UNHCR will advocate that the Government's plan for the closure of the IDP camps is implemented in line with international human rights standards.

900,000
ROHINGYA REFUGEES in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

80%
WOMEN & CHILDREN

128,000
INTERNALLY DISPLACED in central Rakhine State

AGE AND GENDER BREAKDOWN
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS | January 2019

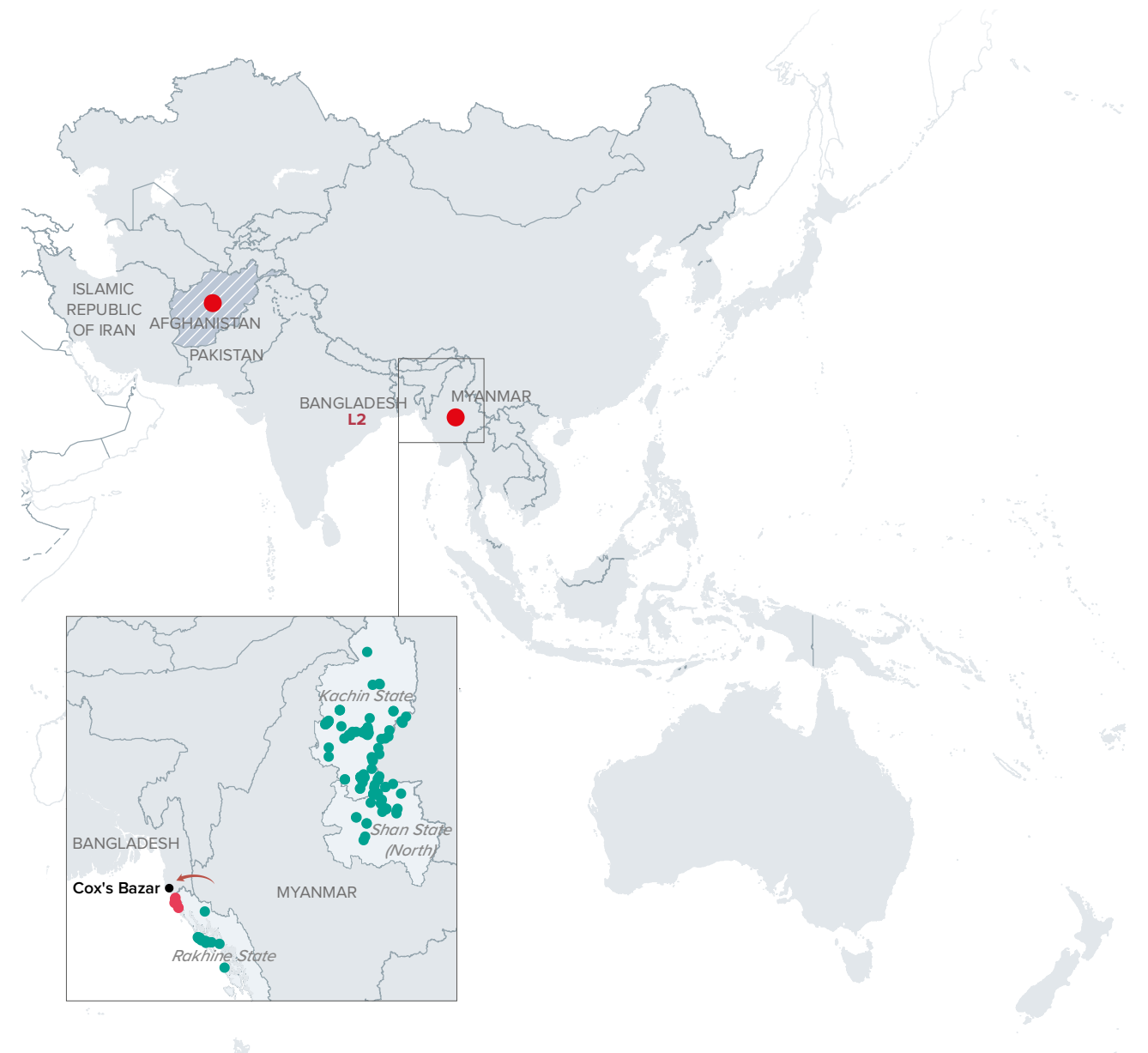


9.1 million

2020 PLANNING FIGURES FOR PEOPLE OF CONCERN IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

REFUGEES	4.1 million
ASYLUM-SEEKERS	183,000
RETURNEES (REFUGEES AND IDPs)	608,000
IDPs	2.4 million
STATELESS PERSONS	1.7 million
OTHERS OF CONCERN	161,000

With approximately 9.1 million people of concern to UNHCR in the Asia and the Pacific region, in 2020, UNHCR will respond to a broad set of multifaceted situations of displacement and statelessness. The Global Compact on Refugees will catalyse positive regional developments, helping guide the management of complex situations and the achievement of solutions.



- Situation
- L2 Level of emergency
- CRRF country
- Refugee camp
- IDP initiative
- IDP camp
- Rohingya refugee outflow

IMPLICATIONS OF UNDERFUNDING

In the past few years, a shortfall in funding has limited UNHCR’s ability to respond to the needs of populations of concern in the region and deliver key activities, including protection interventions and core relief items.

In Malaysia, underfunding means that the needs of vulnerable groups, in particular women and children, cannot be adequately addressed. Opportunities to promote and secure durable solutions through voluntary return, local integration or resettlement to a third country will not be possible.

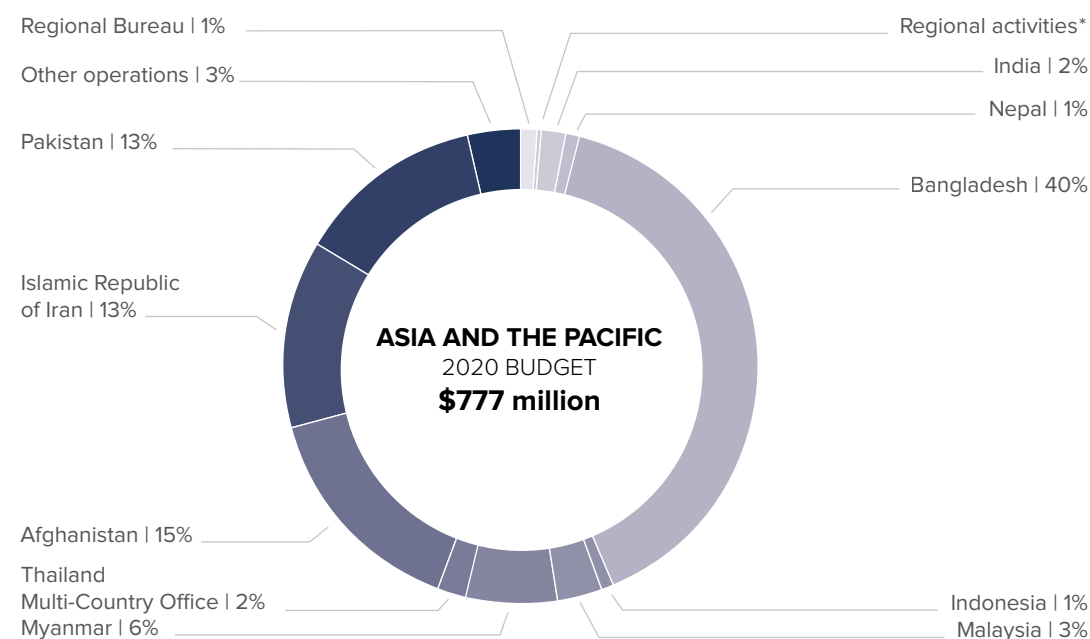
Despite the enormous scale of the challenges and complexities in Afghanistan, it remains one of UNHCR’s most underfunded situations worldwide. In the two main hosting countries, underfunding strains host communities, puts protection space at risk, and impacts access to education and basic health services. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, specifically, underfunding would mean UNHCR could not provide support and essential drugs to several health posts.

Vulnerable refugee women of reproductive age would be denied sanitary items. Within Afghanistan, the lack of funding would limit, for example, the provision of adequate shelter and schools, as well as community access to potable water for returning refugees and IDPs.

In Bangladesh, each year the monsoon season requires significant resources to ensure a speedy and efficient lifesaving response—particularly for shelter, infrastructure and public health. Without adequate funds, UNHCR’s resources will only meet critical gaps and longer-lasting impacts will be minimal for refugees and host communities.

In the Philippines, limited resources could limit the identification and solutions efforts for people at risk of statelessness in Mindanao. Planned solutions interventions will be restricted to the target population in Zamboanga.

In Sri Lanka, limited resources and a growing number of refugees may restrict refugee assistance, due to limited resettlement submissions and departures in 2019 and 2020.



* Less than 0.5%

BUDGETS FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC | USD

OPERATION	2019 Current budget (as of 30 June 2019)	PILLAR 1 PILLAR 2 PILLAR 3 PILLAR 4				TOTAL	2021 Proposed budget
		Refugee programmes	Stateless programmes	Reintegration projects	IDP projects		
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC							
Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific ¹	3,860,000	10,014,160				10,014,160	10,358,563
Regional activities for Asia and the Pacific ¹	1,412,004	1,975,000				1,975,000	2,850,000
SUBTOTAL	5,272,004	11,989,160	-	-	-	11,989,160	13,208,563
CENTRAL ASIA							
Kazakhstan Multi-Country Office ²	5,528,849	2,260,530	910,765	-	-	3,171,295	2,859,492
Kyrgyzstan	813,836	608,450	104,300	-	-	712,750	700,000
Tajikistan	2,333,462	1,191,247	828,753	-	-	2,020,000	2,020,702
SUBTOTAL	8,676,147	4,060,227	1,843,818	-	-	5,904,045	5,580,194
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC							
Australia Multi-Country Office ³	3,154,621	3,276,343	109,134	-	-	3,385,477	3,466,511
China	5,102,589	4,290,027	150,000	-	-	4,440,027	3,900,000
Japan	3,539,131	3,392,628	59,802	-	-	3,452,430	3,477,108
Republic of Korea	2,072,827	1,944,507	99,840	-	-	2,044,347	2,902,610
SUBTOTAL	13,869,168	12,903,505	418,776	-	-	13,322,280	13,746,228
SOUTH ASIA							
India	16,168,231	13,490,296	159,249	-	-	13,649,545	9,531,841
Nepal	5,500,000	5,061,358	438,642	-	-	5,500,000	2,575,164
Sri Lanka	4,102,765	3,702,874	78,535	-	-	3,781,409	3,781,408
SUBTOTAL	25,770,996	22,254,528	676,426	-	-	22,930,954	15,888,413
SOUTH-EAST ASIA							
Bangladesh	307,553,397	308,670,324	-	-	-	308,670,324	288,940,721
Indonesia	8,229,348	6,875,981	361,577	-	-	7,237,557	7,348,455
Malaysia	17,949,196	22,258,740	873,100	-	-	23,131,840	25,136,435
Myanmar	38,724,000	5,333,631	27,178,950	-	12,413,948	44,926,529	45,340,359
Philippines	3,662,017	666,236	392,433	-	2,599,349	3,658,017	3,658,017
Thailand Multi-Country Office ⁴	19,589,586	18,639,328	1,232,395	-	-	19,871,723	20,216,218
Thailand Regional Office	7,978,810	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL	403,686,354	362,444,239	30,038,455	-	15,013,297	407,495,991	390,640,205
SOUTH-WEST ASIA							
Afghanistan	121,705,680	22,923,827	-	67,377,447	26,819,333	117,120,607	118,120,607
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	98,916,706	98,662,025	-	-	-	98,662,025	98,221,684
Pakistan	99,201,669	72,292,663	580,000	26,789,059	-	99,661,722	99,763,396
SUBTOTAL	319,824,055	193,878,515	580,000	94,166,506	26,819,333	315,444,354	316,105,687
TOTAL	777,098,725	607,530,174	33,557,475	94,166,506	41,832,630	777,086,785	755,169,290

¹ Regional Bureau and regional activities cover the whole Asia and the Pacific region.

² Coordinates activities in Kazakhstan and covers Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

³ Coordinates activities in Australia and covers New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands.

⁴ Coordinates activities in Thailand and covers Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam.