

REPATRIATION OF AFGHAN REFUGEES FROM PAKISTAN

Supplementary Appeal
September – December 2016



19 September 2016



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Cover photograph:

Minadar, 30, has eight children and they have all returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan. He is pictured here with his three-year-old son, Adnan. Minadar had been a refugee in Pakistan since he was one year old.

UNHCR/S. Rich

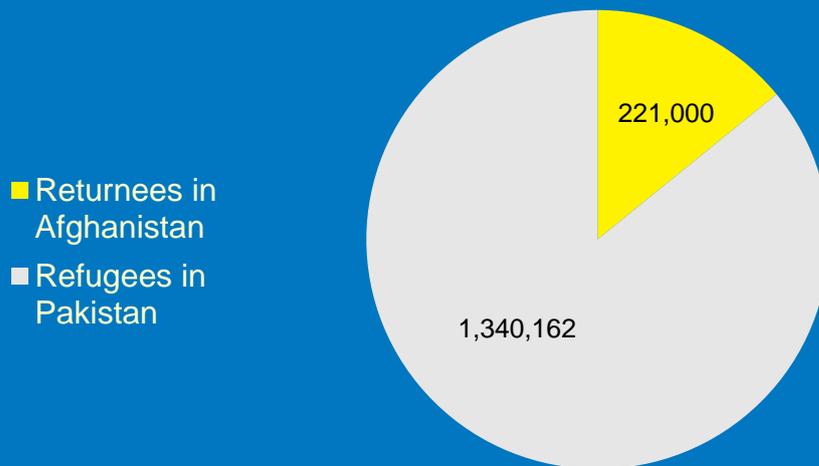
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AT A GLANCE

PEOPLE OF CONCERN

A total of 1,561,162 people of concern



\$104.7 million¹ in financial requirements is needed until the end of the year to support the repatriation of Afghans from Pakistan, including \$64.2 million in supplementary requirements (\$53.5 million for Afghanistan and \$10.7 million for Pakistan, including support costs).



¹ All dollar signs in this document denote United States dollars. This total includes 7% support costs

INTRODUCTION

In July 2016, UNHCR issued its Regional Plan: Building Resilience and Solutions for Afghan Refugees in South-West Asia. Covering 2016 and 2017, the plan is embedded within the framework of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR). It was presented in the context of Afghanistan's precarious security situation, a major push factor behind the outflow of Afghans towards Europe, while the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan have hosted 2.5 million refugees for more than three decades.

With the end of Ramadan, the rate of refugee return from Pakistan to Afghanistan has increased significantly, and has now surpassed initial projections for 2016. While only 7,804 refugees returned during the first six months of 2016, in July and August alone 72,585 refugees returned primarily from Pakistan, an increase of over 830 per cent in comparison to the beginning of the year. At the current rate, UNHCR projects that 221,000 refugees may return by the end of 2016.

Several factors are contributing to the increase in the number of refugee repatriations. Enhanced border management measures were introduced at the Torkham border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan, requiring every Afghan to be in possession of a valid national e-passport and Pakistani visa. In addition, while the validity of Afghan refugees' Proof of Registration (PoR) cards was provisionally extended to the end of March 2017, refugees are increasingly anxious about what may happen at the expiration of validity. Further, a number of returning refugees have reported incidents of harassment and decreased levels of acceptance by hosting communities. They also expressed unease about increased levels of security operations in Pakistan, despite assurances from the relevant Pakistani authorities as to their safety.

The increase in the number of returns is having immediate repercussions on the integration/reintegration of returnees in Afghanistan, compounding the challenges they face in accessing basic services, securing land tenure, adequate shelter and job opportunities, particularly for the youth. The doubling of the repatriation grant to \$400 per person on average – as foreseen in the Regional Plan and announced by the High Commissioner during his visit to Pakistan in June this year – aims to address these initial challenges and refugees interviewed upon arrival in Afghanistan are confirming the importance of this support.

The Conclusions of the Tripartite Commission meeting between the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan and Pakistan and UNHCR in July 2016 reaffirmed the commitment to the principle of voluntary return and the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. It also further stressed the need to create an environment conducive for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, particularly by integrating returnee needs within national development planning processes across relevant line Ministries.

Against this background, this Supplementary Appeal presents the additional financial requirements for the Regional Plan to adjust to the evolving situation for the remainder of 2016, given the total number of projected returns of Afghan refugees have been adjusted upwards to 221,000. The response will continue to focus on monitoring and advocating for safe, voluntary and dignified returns of Afghan refugees, and supporting the initial phase of their integration/reintegration through the payment of repatriation grants.

Population data

		CONCERNED POPULATIONS <i>as of 30 August 2016</i>	PLANNED ASSISTED POPULATIONS <i>by 31 December 2016</i>
Afghanistan	Returnees	90,573	221,000
Pakistan	Afghan refugees	1,527,657	1,340,162*
TOTAL		1,618,230	1,561,162

* Based on the number of registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan at the end of 2015 (1,561,162), excluding 221,000 people projected to return by the end of 2016.

Financial summary (US\$)

UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom) budget for the Afghan situation in 2016 amounted to \$121.4 million for Afghanistan and \$105.4 million for Pakistan.

To address the needs of Afghan returnees from Pakistan, UNHCR established a supplementary budget for the needs presented in this appeal for \$64.2 million.

The total revised 2016 requirements for the Afghan situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including additional requirements, amount to \$291 million. Of this total, \$104.7 million is the requirement until the end of the year to support the repatriation (\$94 million in Afghanistan and \$10.7 million in Pakistan, including support costs for additional requirements).

OPERATION	EXCOM- REVISED BUDGET (excluding the Afghan RefugeeSituation ¹)	AFGHAN REFUGEE SITUATION			TOTAL REVISED REQUIREMENTS FOR 2016
		EXCOM- REVISED BUDGET ²	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL	
Afghanistan	16,373,817	121,360,048	50,000,000	171,360,048	187,733,865
Pakistan	21,960,914	105,391,442	10,000,000	115,391,442	137,352,356
Subtotal	38,334,731	226,751,490	60,000,000	286,751,490	325,086,221
Support costs (7%)	-	-	4,200,000	4,200,000	4,200,000
TOTAL	38,334,731	226,751,490	64,200,000	290,951,490	329,286,221

¹ Includes IDPs in Pakistan and refugees in Afghanistan.

² Includes the refugee and refugee-hosting area programmes (Pillars 1 and 3) in Pakistan; and the IDP and returnees programmes in Afghanistan (Pillars 3 and 4).

AFGHANISTAN

Existing response

To respond to the increased returns of Afghan refugees from Pakistan, UNHCR has scaled up the reception and processing capacity at its Encashment Centres in Jalalabad and Kabul. UNHCR provides cash grants to the returnees at the Encashment Centres at \$400 per person on average. Cash grants remain a central part of the assistance to returnees during the critical period of their initial integration/re-integration. UNHCR returnee monitoring documented that the cash grants help cover immediate needs including transport costs, initial expenses upon return, and facilitate the initial stages of integration.

In addition to cash grants, UNHCR will continue to provide services to returnees at the Encashment Centres, as well as enhanced protection interviews and monitoring. Emergency medical services and vaccinations, as well as mine risk awareness education, are provided at the Centres in collaboration with partners. Given the limited capacity of health infrastructure in Afghanistan, medical services provided at Encashment Centres may be the only opportunity for women and children to receive such assistance.

UNHCR also conducts enhanced interviews with returnees, as well as focus group discussions with returnee groups (men/women, boys/girls), at the Encashment Centres to identify protection concerns, the results of which inform UNHCR's monitoring activities and advocacy in Pakistan.

Strategy and coordination

The current context and trends apply to both refugees (Afghans holding PoR cards) and undocumented Afghans. According to IOM, the month of August alone saw more than 60,000 spontaneous returns and deportations of undocumented Afghans, increasing the annual total to 124,836, compared to 60,743 refugees returning in August and 90,573 for the year-to-date.

There is also a significant level of internal displacement in Afghanistan this year, with 229,000 people confirmed as newly displaced due to ongoing conflict in areas accessible to the UN and its partners. This number continues to grow. UNHCR will continue working with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), with its response part of the overall humanitarian action addressing the needs of different types of population movements.

Based on the recent trends, UNHCR is anticipating there may be 221,000 returning refugees in 2016, with high overall levels of vulnerability. Many have few resources and little time to prepare for return. In addition, many have lost vital community linkages with Afghanistan and risk becoming secondarily displaced without access to land, shelter and livelihoods, in particular with the approach of winter.

UNHCR and IOM as members of Afghanistan's HCT have been advocating for timely support for the needs associated with returns of refugees and undocumented Afghans, as well as IDPs. A collective inter-agency approach is key to providing humanitarian assistance to returnees to meet their immediate needs as the winter approaches. To respond to the humanitarian needs as a result of the sharp increase in returns and internal displacement, the HCT launched an inter-agency Flash Appeal, within which UNHCR's requirements under this Supplementary Appeal are included.

UNHCR requires \$90.5 million to address the immediate needs of 221,000 returnees in 2016. Of this amount, \$50 million included in this Supplementary Appeal is urgently needed to continue the provision of cash grants to 120,000 returnees.

Planned activities

Durable solutions

Potential for voluntary return realized

- Provide cash grant to 120,000 returnees to help address their immediate needs upon return to Afghanistan.

Financial requirements for Afghanistan (US\$)

UNHCR's 2016 ExCom-revised budget for Afghanistan to support refugee returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan amounts to \$121.4 million. To address the needs of returnees during the critical integration/re-integration period, UNHCR has established a supplementary budget for the requirements presented above for Afghanistan amounting to \$53.5 million, including support costs, as shown in the table below.

	EXCOM-REVISED BUDGET (Afghan Situation)	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL
Basic Needs and Essential Services	24,308,068	-	24,308,068
Population has sufficient basic and domestic items	6,891,542	-	6,891,542
Services for persons with specific needs strengthened	727,085	-	727,085
Shelter and infrastructure established, improved and maintained	16,689,441	-	16,689,441
Community Empowerment and Self Reliance	16,641,394	-	16,641,394
Peaceful co-existence with local communities promoted	12,069,799	-	12,069,799
Self-reliance and livelihoods improved	4,571,595	-	4,571,595
Durable Solutions	57,890,753	50,000,000	107,890,753
Potential for voluntary return realized	55,509,224	50,000,000	105,509,224
Reintegration made more sustainable	2,381,529	-	2,381,529
Fair Protection Processes and Documentation	4,259,794	-	4,259,794
Quality of registration and profiling improved or maintained	4,259,794	-	4,259,794
Favourable Protection Environment	6,633,672	-	6,633,672
Access to legal assistance and legal remedies improved	5,106,086	-	5,106,086
Law and policy developed or strengthened	1,527,585	-	1,527,585
Leadership, Coordination and Partnerships	1,599,587	-	1,599,587
Coordination and partnerships strengthened	1,599,587	-	1,599,587
Logistics and Operations Support	5,055,694	-	5,055,694
Logistics and supply optimized to serve operational needs	5,055,694	-	5,055,694
Security from Violence and Exploitation	4,971,086	-	4,971,086
Risk of SGBV is reduced and quality of response improved	4,971,086	-	4,971,086
Subtotal	121,360,048	50,000,000	171,360,048
Support costs (7%)	-	3,500,000	3,500,000
TOTAL	121,360,048	53,500,000	174,860,048

PAKISTAN

Existing response

With 1.5 million Afghan refugee holders of a PoR card, Pakistan is one of the largest protracted refugee situations globally. Partnership and collaboration constitute the essential link between the solutions, protection and assistance approaches and UNHCR works closely with other UN agencies under the Delivering as One process as well as with development agencies and civil society. UNHCR supports the Government of Pakistan in the implementation of the SSAR, with voluntary repatriation as one of the key elements, together with the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas programme, which aims at preserving asylum space for Afghan refugees and promoting peaceful co-existence with host communities.

Until the surge in Afghan refugee returns that started in July, UNHCR's activities in Pakistan were focused on: (1) advocacy for extension of the validity of the PoR cards; (2) support for the SSAR with a focus on youth empowerment through education, livelihood and skills training; (3) facilitation of smaller numbers of returns; and (4) protection and assistance to the most vulnerable. In the past weeks, UNHCR in Pakistan has been maximizing the existing capacity at Voluntary Return Centres (VRCs) to respond to the surge in numbers, but the operation is no longer able to meet the increase in needs with existing resources. Such large numbers require increased capacity to process the returns, enhance border monitoring, implement mass and targeted information campaigns and carry out additional advocacy interventions.

Strategy and coordination

At the governmental level, UNHCR works closely with various counterparts, in particular the States and Frontier Regions Ministry, which is responsible for refugee matters, as well as the police, to ensure that the Government of Pakistan's policy toward PoR cardholders is channelled to the provincial and local authorities and that the rights of refugees are respected by law enforcement agencies. UNHCR and the Government also seek to prevent the harassment and intimidation of refugees by local authorities and the police, and to monitor and follow-up on reports of such incidents.

At the operational level, UNHCR verifies at its VRCs that each return is voluntary and that people signing the Voluntary Repatriation Form (VRF) are informed about the security situation and humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan. The de-registration process performed at the VRCs includes biometric verification (including iris scan) and issuance of VRFs. These activities are complemented by telephone helplines and information/grievance desks to immediately provide refugees with information on repatriation.

UNHCR has increased the capacity of the existing VRCs by extending operational hours to six days a week and adding a second shift, and opening a third VRC. Establishment of a fourth VRC in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is also underway: this centre will facilitate repatriation movements for local refugee families by removing the need to travel to Peshawar for processing before crossing the border. New scheduling mechanisms are also being established in both Peshawar and Quetta to shorten the waiting period for the de-registration process. In the meantime, UNHCR has reinforced its mass information and media campaigns explaining the modalities for voluntary repatriation. Given that the vast majority of refugees reside in urban or peri-urban settings, increasing outreach activities is crucial to fulfilling UNHCR's protection and solutions mandate, necessitating additional capacity in staffing and equipment.

At the individual level, UNHCR and its legal aid partners monitor detention facilities to ensure that PoR cardholders are released if they were mistakenly detained for illegal residence: ten Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALAC) are operational in the main refugee-hosting areas of four provinces in order to provide free legal support for people of concerns through drop-in counselling, interventions in arrest/detention cases, representations in courts as well as legal camps, *Shura* meetings and facilitated group

discussions. With the number of Afghan refugees in need of legal assistance having increased in the last few months, UNHCR is planning to expand access to legal aid in response.

Five PoR Card Modification (PCM) centres support the modification/replacement of existing cards, registration of new-born children up to the age of five, provision of PoR cards to registered children who have reached five years of age and are now entitled to their own cards, as well as the issuance of birth certificates to children under the age of 18. A sudden and sharp increase in activities has been observed in these PCM centres country-wide, attributed to both the increase in the pace of repatriation (as parents wish to register their children before returning to Afghanistan) as well as the extension of the validity of PoR cards until the end of March 2017. Increases and upgrades in staffing and infrastructure are urgently required to keep pace with demand.

Planned activities

Favourable protection environment	
Access to legal assistance and legal remedies improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand ALACs in four provinces. ▪ Strengthen the helpline system, border protection monitoring. ▪ Process PoR card modification and de-registration, including birth registration, PoR cards correction, biometric verification, issuance of VRFs.
Public attitude towards people of concern improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce and disseminate relevant information through TV, radio adverts, press releases, leaflet and posters, focus group discussion, seminars and <i>Shura</i> meetings.
Durable solutions	
Potential for voluntary return realized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish additional VRCs in Azakhel, near Peshawar as well as in northern KP (including installation of network and satellite connections for the data base processing). ▪ Upgrade the Chamkani (KP) and Baleli (Balochistan) VRCs (including wash facilities, parking lots for the buses and trucks, waiting sheds and child-friendly spaces). ▪ Establish new scheduling centres in Peshawar and in Quetta to assist refugees and shorten the waiting period for de-registration process at the VRCs. ▪ Strengthen security measures in all VRCs and scheduling centres (walk through gates, armed security guards, scanning machines, barriers and items to control access to premises).

Financial requirements for Pakistan (US\$)

UNHCR's 2016 ExCom-revised budget for Pakistan to support refugee returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan amounts to \$105.4 million. To address the needs of returnees during the critical integration/re-integration period, UNHCR has established a supplementary budget for the requirements presented above for Pakistan amounting to \$10.7 million, as shown in the table below.

	EXCOM-REVISED BUDGET (Afghan Situation)	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL
Basic Needs and Essential Services	57,992,217	-	57,992,217
Health status of the population improved	16,087,845	-	16,087,845
Population has optimal access to education	23,458,819	-	23,458,819
Population has optimal access to reproductive health and HIV services	2,584,651	-	2,584,651
Population lives in satisfactory conditions of sanitation and hygiene	4,181,726	-	4,181,726
Services for persons with specific needs strengthened	2,656,809	-	2,656,809
Supply of potable water increased or maintained	9,022,367	-	9,022,367
Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance	17,104,843	-	17,104,843
Community mobilization strengthened and expanded	3,362,406	-	3,362,406
Peaceful co-existence with local communities promoted	4,865,013	-	4,865,013
Self-reliance and livelihoods improved	8,877,424	-	8,877,424
Durable Solutions	11,811,788	4,426,000	16,237,788
Comprehensive Solutions strategy developed, strengthened or updated	6,530,619	-	6,530,619
Potential for resettlement realized	1,571,018	-	1,571,018
Potential for voluntary return realized	3,710,151	4,426,000	8,136,151
Fair Protection Processes and Documentation	3,496,473	-	3,496,473
Access to and quality of status determination procedures improved	1,911,947	-	1,911,947
Civil registration and civil status documentation strengthened	409,952	-	409,952
Level of individual documentation increased	1,174,574	-	1,174,574
Favourable Protection Environment	4,008,549	5,574,000	9,582,549
Access to legal assistance and legal remedies improved	2,351,616	5,034,000	7,385,616
Access to the territory improved and risk of refoulement reduced	656,137	-	656,137
Public attitude towards persons of concern improved	1,000,796	540,000	1,540,796
Leadership, Coordination and Partnerships	799,071	-	799,071
Donor relations and resource mobilization strengthened	799,071	-	799,071
Logistics and Operations Support	7,738,769	-	7,738,769
Logistics and supply optimized to serve operational needs	2,277,813	-	2,277,813
Operations management, coordination and support strengthened and optimized	5,460,956	-	5,460,956
Security from Violence and Exploitation	2,439,732	-	2,439,732
Protection of children strengthened	535,215	-	535,215
Risk of SGBV is reduced and quality of response improved	1,904,517	-	1,904,517
Subtotal	105,391,442	10,000,000	115,391,442
Support costs (7%)	-	700,000	700,000
TOTAL	105,391,442	10,700,000	116,091,442

