

# AFGHANISTAN

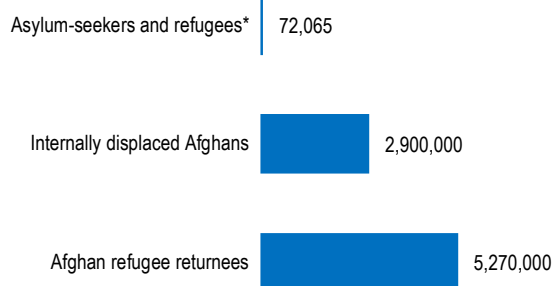
June 2021

The operational context in Afghanistan has been marked by a new wave of **COVID-19**, drought, **deteriorating security situation**, and **ongoing intra-Afghan peace talks**.

As a result of the C19 pandemic, numbers of households lost their livelihoods, even as borders were closed to prevent the spread of the pandemic. **Armed conflict displaced over 287,000 persons** in Q1 and Q2.

UNHCR is executing plans to **assist 3.1 million refugees, asylum-seekers, Afghan refugee returnees, internally displaced persons and host communities**, with access to basic services - education, health and other public facilities.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

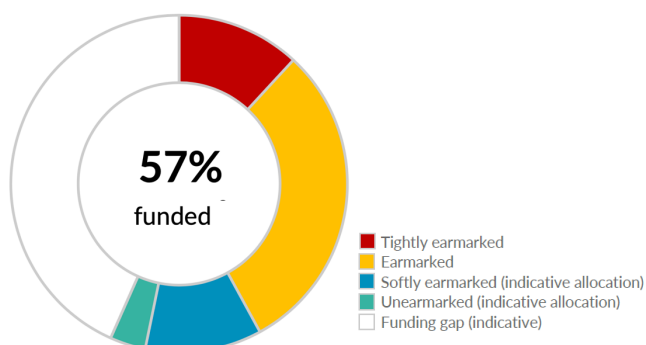


\* Registration in some locations is suspended due to insecurity.

## FUNDING (AS OF 21 JULY)

# USD 127.1 million

requested for the Afghanistan Situation and the Coronavirus Emergency



## UNHCR PRESENCE

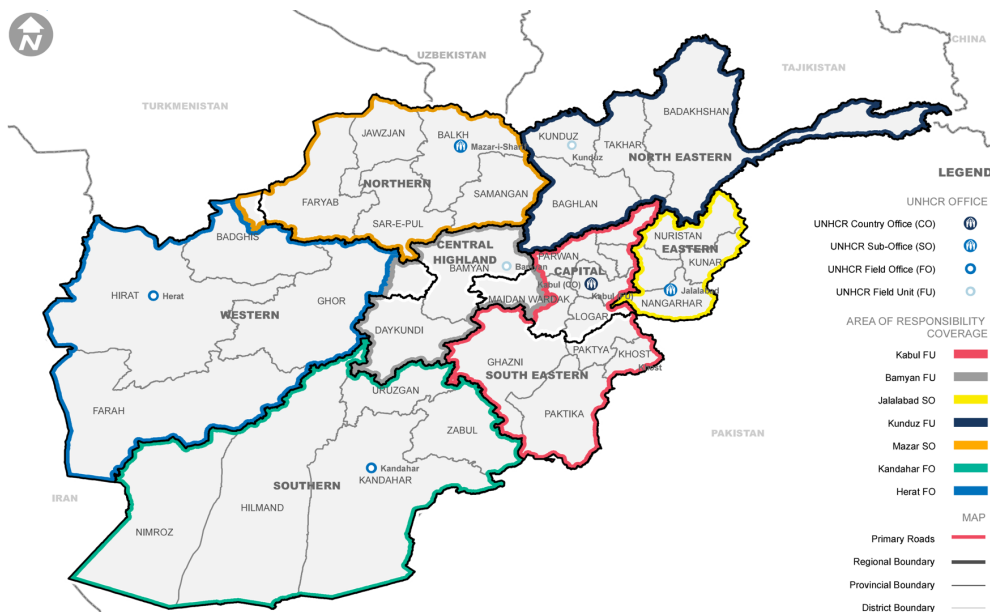
### Staff\*:

**185** national staff  
**30** international staff

### Offices:

**1** Country Office in Kabul  
**2** Sub Offices in Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sharif  
**2** Field Offices in Herat and Kandahar  
**3** Field Units in Bamyán, Kabul and Kunduz

\* As of 1 July 2021



## COVID-19 REPOSENSE

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of Afghans including, Afghan refugee returnees, asylum-seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons. Traditional coping mechanisms are being tested and access to basic essential services has been limited, with general increasing poverty. **Around 95 per cent of surveyed Afghan refugee returnee households reported decreased incomes due to COVID-19. Food insecurity levels worsened by COVID-19 are now similar to those during the 2018 drought.** UNHCR is supporting vulnerable Afghans in response to COVID-19, in line with the [2021 COVID-19 Supplementary Appeal](#) through the provision of protection and assistance for families and individuals affected by displacement.



Students of the newly constructed Deh-Misken Primary School washing their hands before entering the school. © UNHCR/Gulbuddin Elham

- UNHCR's prioritized interventions include emergency **livelihood activities** such as business start-up grants and business incubation activities through **cash-based interventions** to support the livelihoods for returnees and displaced persons. These activities are mostly concentrated in priority areas of return and reintegration (PARRs) where returnees and displaced populations are living side by side with members of host communities. From 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021, UNHCR **provided livelihood opportunity to 340 persons** and **unconditional one-time multi-purpose cash grants to 14,868 persons**.
- In line with UNHCR's protection monitoring objectives and noting with concern the increasing impact of COVID-19 pandemic on **cross-border movements** in Afghanistan; UNHCR expanded its **protection and return monitoring** activities to official entry points with Iran (Islam Qala/Dogharoon and Zaranj/Milak crossing points) and Pakistan (Spin Boldak/Chaman and Torkham) by establishing border monitoring activities mostly focusing on inflows in April. In view of the current context in Afghanistan, UNHCR in consultation with its offices in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, revised its border (inflow) monitoring tool to include outflow monitoring in all four official entry points with Iran and



Pakistan. The new tools were launched on 1 April 2020 with the purpose to understand the triggers, intentions and reasons for movement of Afghans into Iran and Pakistan. Through regular and consistent presence at these zero points, UNHCR aimed to ensure efficient, timely and systematic collection and analysis of protection related information from Afghan returnees and deportees, irrespective of their status. **Border monitoring also helps to assess access to the territory and “the right to asylum” for people fleeing persecution who may be in need of international protection.** It also aims at assessing the right to return for Afghan refugees and other nationals amidst possible limitations imposed by COVID-19.

- From 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021, **UNHCR conducted 42,198 interviews (29,307 males and 12,891 females) with returnees and deportees of various status upon return from Iran and Pakistan.** Similarly, between 1 April 2021 and 30 June 2021, outflow interviews were conducted with a total of 5,236 Afghans (3,385 males and 1,851 females) prior to their departure to Pakistan and Iran. The findings of the border monitoring interviews through monthly updates are posted on the [Data Operational Portal for Afghanistan](#).
- From 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021, **UNHCR conducted 405 focus group discussions, 5,116 household level interviews and 177 key informant interviews** with internally displaced persons and members of the host community under its community-based protection monitoring interventions.

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

The Government of Afghanistan has laid out its vision in the **Mutual Accountability Framework**, the **Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework** (ANPDF-II) and **Afghanistan Partnerships Framework** – which explicitly focuses on addressing the needs of returnees and internally displaced persons in 10 of the 15 **National Priority Plans** across different sectors. The Government of Afghanistan also affirmed its commitment to the **Global Compact on Refugees**, which supports multi-stakeholder efforts to address the root causes and drivers of displacement. UNHCR works with the Government of Afghanistan and diverse actors to **create conducive conditions for sustainable return and reintegration**, building resilient communities, and promoting peacebuilding at the grassroots level.



**UNHCR Afghanistan** @UNHCRAfg · 30 Mar

A Letter of Intent is ✍️ by @UNHCRAfg 🤝 @UNDPAf for achieving #SustainableReintegration & #DurableSolutions for #Returnees/#IDPs in 🇦🇫. A step towards accelerating structural transformation for #SustainableDevelopment. #ANPDFII #Statebuilding #Marketbuilding #Peacebuilding



**UNHCR Afghanistan** @UNHCRAfg · 28 Mar

@UNHCRAfg Thanks to 🇰🇷 for the generous donation of 150,000 #KF94Masks to @MoPHAfg – that will be distributed to #HealthcareWorkers, and #Returnees #IDPs – and to support #GoIRA #COVID19 #preparedness #response efforts. #Afghanistan

[data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/d...](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/d...)



- UNHCR continues supporting the Government of Afghanistan in the implementation of its policy framework for returnees and internally displaced, namely, the national **policy on internal displacements** and the **National Action Plan for Return and Displacement**.
- UNHCR continues to engage through the **One UN** and **UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)** to support the Government of Afghanistan in identifying and providing durable solutions to all displaced communities across the country. UNHCR co-leads the UNSDCF **Peace Working Group**, co-chairs the **Housing, Land and Property Task Force**, co-leads the **Protection Cluster** and the **Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster**, actively engaged in the **Cash and Voucher Working Group**, and acts as secretariat for **Durable Solutions and Reintegration Working Group**.
- UNHCR continues engagement with the private sector, including the **Chamber of Commerce and Industry** and industrial unions.
- UNHCR is strengthening its engagement with communities, particularly through **Community Development Councils**, community leaders, and civil society organizations, promoting civic and social engagement, inclusion and participation.
- UNHCR is also strengthening its cooperation with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the German Agency for International Cooperation, UNDP, ILO, UNHABITAT, FAO, UNICEF, UNESCO, IOM, UNWOMEN, BRAC, the Aga Khan Development Network, and the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry to provide a comprehensive response towards sustainable reintegration and solutions through humanitarian-development-peace programming for collective outcomes, impact, and sustainability, and in Delivering As One approach.



Students during the computer class in newly constructed Saracha school in Nangarhar province.



## MAIN ACTIVITIES

### Refugees and asylum-seekers

UNHCR continues to support the Government of Afghanistan with the coordination of the response to **72,065 refugees and asylum-seekers** in Kabul, Khost and Paktika. Majority of refugees and asylum-seekers require birth certificate, access to education, livelihoods, water, sanitation and health. UNHCR strives to find the interim solutions for **407 refugees and asylum-seekers** in Kabul pending the adoption of a **National Asylum Law**.

- In the absence of a national asylum framework, UNHCR continues to **register asylum-seekers** as a protection tool and conducts **refugee status determination** under its mandate when required to facilitate durable solutions or protection interventions and provide material assistance to vulnerable persons. UNHCR continues working with line ministries and partners to enable refugees and asylum-seekers **access to basic services such as education, health** and formal **employment opportunities**. UNHCR continues providing critical financial assistance to the vulnerable population and engaging in activities to build **self-reliance** of the refugees and asylum-seekers through community-based programmes including through innovative approaches.

### Voluntary repatriation

Despite a fragile security situation and significant socio-economic and political challenges, Afghanistan remains the largest voluntary repatriation operation in UNHCR's history with over **5.27 million Afghan refugees having been assisted to return by UNHCR since 2002**.

- From 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021, **1,143 Afghan refugee returnees were repatriated**: 706 persons (62 per cent) from Iran, 400 persons (35 per cent) from Pakistan and 37 persons (3 per cent) from other countries of asylum.



Afghan refugee returnees receiving cash grant at the Encashment Center in Kandahar (left) and undergo medical screening (rights).

- During 2020, UNHCR provided support to 2,147 Afghan refugee returnees. The return trend in 2020 decreased by 71 per cent compared to 2019 when 8,079 Afghans returned. This declining trend in returns is mainly due to the deteriorating security and economic situation in Afghanistan, ambiguity in the progress of the peace process with the Taliban and the improved protection situation in Pakistan and Iran.
- In line with the regional [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees](#) (SSAR), tripartite and quadripartite legal frameworks, UNHCR continues supporting Afghanistan and Afghan refugees to voluntary repatriate depending on the protection environment in countries of asylum and the overall political, economic and security conditions as well as positive progress in peace negotiations.
- Afghan refugee returnees who make an informed and voluntary decision to repatriate under the voluntary repatriation programme are provided with **unconditional multi-purpose cash grant of an average of US\$ 250 per person** to meet basic needs and transportation costs to their origin or intended destination.

### Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

The regional SSAR, launched in May 2012, with Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan supported by UNHCR, and endorsed by the international community, has pioneered the key elements of the GCR and remains the central framework for responsibility-sharing and solutions in the Afghan situation with the primary objectives of easing pressure on host community in Iran and Pakistan while addressing root causes and creating conditions for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan.



Students playing in front of newly constructed Daman Middle School in Nangarhar. © BEST/U.K.



- In 2021, **Core Group Afghanistan** was established. The Core Group for Afghanistan, chaired by the EU, met three times, adopted its **work plan** and started its engagement in several thematic areas including Access to jobs and livelihoods, Land Allocation, Civil Documentation, and Partnership for investment in PARRs.
- In June 2021, UNHCR organized the **First Virtual Mission** to show the progress made in the two PARRs namely, in Sarcha in Nangarhar province and in Jebrail in Herat province. The UNHCR and the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations have been engaged in the two locations since 2019.

### Priority areas of return reintegration

- An estimated 1.3 million Afghan refugee returnees currently reside in the 40 PARRs located in 23 out of 34 provinces. UNHCR continues supporting the Government of Afghanistan in establishing essential public facilities and enabling access to basic services in education, health and livelihood sectors through Community-based Protection and Solutions Programme Response (Co-PROSPER).
- In 2021, UNHCR conducted a third party **Impact evaluation 2021** with the objective to understand what was achieved in PARRs and how the program contributed to and helped population to sustainable reintegrate. The Co-PROSPER in PARRs reported to have had **moderate to large positive impacts on the overall wellbeing of households** living in priority areas of return and reintegration. However, most households also reported that they still **live in sub-standard conditions, mainly due to poor access to livelihoods, and to a lesser extend poor access to services like healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene.**



Beneficiaries construing their permanent shelters through Cash for Shelter approach in Nangarhar province.

### Internally displaced persons

- **In the first part of 2021, conflict newly displaced some 287,000 persons**, adding to the already existing 2.9 million of internally displaced persons who are mostly in a protracted situation estimates UNHCR. In addition, COVID-19 has had a severe socioeconomic impact on internally displaced

persons, resulting in highest levels of indebtedness and worsening food consumption scores amongst all population groups. Protection risks tied to the worsening economic situation have been observed, including increased rates of domestic violence, child labour, early or forced marriage, and migration.

- Efforts to reach a peace agreement have continued amid widespread forced displacement. UNHCR continues to **co-lead the Protection Cluster** and **co-chair the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster**, and work together with the Government of Afghanistan and all stakeholders to ensure a coordinated response to the internally displaced situation. UNHCR continues conducting **protection monitoring** at all accessible levels, to gather, verify and analyse information to identify violations of human rights and protection risks of people of concern, through organized participatory dialogue with communities and people of concern.
- UNHCR continues to mainstream **gender-based violence and child protection** in its protection activities under the coordination of the Protection Cluster. As a lead agency of the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster, UNHCR continues to **advocate with humanitarian actors for transitional shelter assistance and promote access to adequate shelter to build community resilience**. UNHCR, as a member of the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) task force (TF) extends its support to the implementation of PSEA TF work plan by conducting joint trainings for the members of the TF and other sectors. It also implements direct activities according to the operation's PSEA strategy and workplan.

## Response to newly internally displaced persons

Key figures from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021



**287,152** persons  
newly internally displaced  
[OCHA]



**90,488** persons  
benefited from non-food items



**50,601** persons  
benefited from hygiene kits



**9,041** women benefited  
from sanitary kits



**12,194** persons  
benefited from family tent



**2,575** persons  
with specific needs provided  
with cash assistance

- From 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021, **287,152 persons (47,413 households) were displaced due to conflict** according to [OCHA](#). Out of 287,152 persons, 45 per cent (129,172 persons) were displaced in northern and north-eastern provinces.
- As of 1 July 2021, UNHCR has provided life-saving assistance by distributing non-food items to 90,488 persons, hygiene kits to 50,601 persons, tents to 12,194 persons, cash assistance to 2,575 persons with specific needs, and sanitary material to 2,575 women of reproductive age.
- Majority of **displaced persons lack basic items including water, food, clothing and live in inadequate shelters**. A number of public infrastructures such as schools, health clinics and telecommunication network have been damaged and require reconstruction. **Humanitarian access continues to be affected** due to ongoing armed conflict and improvised explosive devices on main roads.



Region of displacements or assistance	# of displaced persons	# of persons benefited from non-food items	# of persons benefited from hygiene kits	# of persons benefited from family tents	# of persons benefited from sanitary kits	# of PSN provided with cash assistance
Central	25,935	4,523			715	
Central Highland	13,340					
Eastern	61,371	17,776		1,715	6,784	50
Northern	32,501	4,848	4,848	613		
North Eastern	96,671	19,125	19,125	70		
Southern	34,802	27,335	26,628	6,223		824
South Eastern	3,836	2,274			1,049	
Western	18,696	14,607		420	3,646	1,701
<b>Total</b>	<b>287,152</b>	<b>90,488</b>	<b>50,601</b>	<b>9,041</b>	<b>12,194</b>	<b>2,575</b>



A family that fled from Wazhgon village found a temporary shelter in a rented house in Firuz Kuh city.

### Inter-agency humanitarian coordination

The [Humanitarian Country Team](#) for Afghanistan targets 15.7 million persons including **786,000 refugees and returnees and 450,000 internally displaced persons** for provision of humanitarian assistance in 2021.

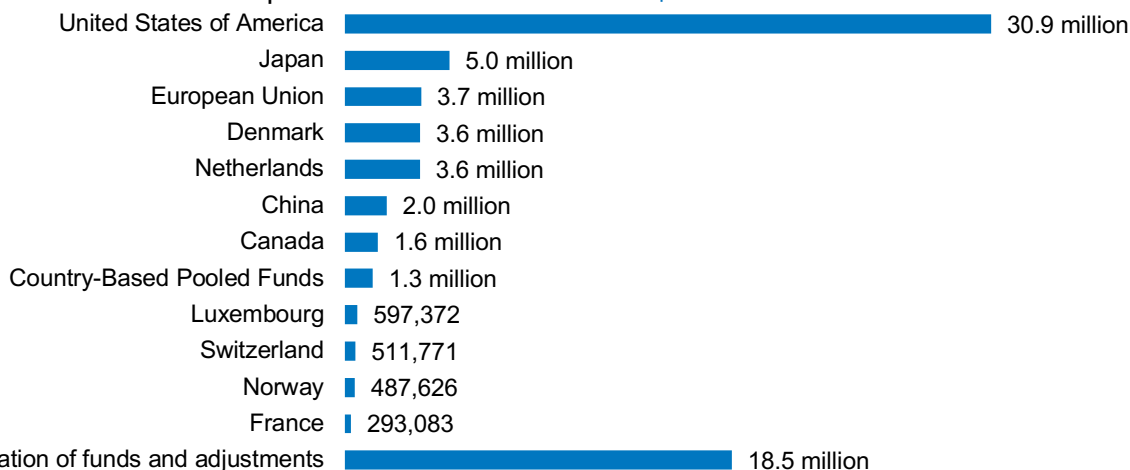
- From 1 January 2021 to 31 May 2021, the Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR, **reached over 1 million persons through activities** by providing assistance in the following sectors: child protection, gender-based violence, housing, land and property, and mine action.
- From 1 January 2021 to 31 May 2021, the Emergency Shelter and NFIs Cluster, led by UNHCR, reached **over 443,100 persons with shelter and NFI assistance** by providing non-food item kits, emergency shelter kits, insulation package, support to construct transitional shelters or improve current shelters.

## Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Earmarked contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 72 million**.



### BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of broadly earmarked contributions that can potentially be used for this operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region.

United States of America 30.7 million | Private donors Australia 4.8 million | Germany 3.6 million

Canada | Luxembourg | Norway | Spain | Private donors

### UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Private donors Spain 42.6 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Germany 26 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 21.5 million | France 20 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Japan 14.3 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Italy 10.7 million | Private donors Italy 10.4 million

Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | South Africa | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private donors

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### CONTACTS

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### LINKS

Global Focus: Afghanistan | Operational Data Portal: Afghanistan | @UNHCRAfg | Facebook | Pandemic depends hunger for displaced people the world over | UNHCR calls for continued engagement and increased support for Afghanistan

UNHCR Afghanistan is grateful for contributions by

