



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



AFGHANISTAN SITUATION

SUPPLEMENTARY APPEAL

July - December 2021



Madina, 7 years old, takes notes during a class in Kahdistan Secondary School in Injil district, Herat province, where she is displaced with her family.
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Overview



Six-month emergency response planning

Most likely scenario*

500,000

IDPs
in
Afghanistan

Worst-case scenario**

300,000

Refugees
in
Pakistan

150,000

Refugees
in the Islamic Republic of
Iran

65,000

Refugees
in
Central Asia***

*No refugees

**These refugee figures are in addition to 500,000 IDPs



Funding needs: \$62.8 million

***Includes Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

The humanitarian situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has dramatically worsened due to the ongoing armed conflict, resulting in significant new displacement of civilians. With the withdrawal of international military forces and limited progress in the intra-Afghan peace talks, the situation on the ground has worsened, and increasing violence and insecurity have resulted in the internal displacement of some 390,000 people during the first seven and a half months of 2021.¹

OCHA estimates that nearly half of Afghanistan's population (around 18.4 million people) are currently in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance. The Afghan population has endured four

decades of war and instability and their resilience is pushed to the limit by the prolonged conflict, recurrent natural disasters, deepening poverty, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Afghanistan began 2021 with around 2.9 million of its population displaced due to conflict within the country and almost 2.6 million registered abroad as refugees, 85% of whom are in the Islamic Republics of Iran (Iran) and Pakistan (Pakistan). Among the 400,000 or so newly displaced people in Afghanistan this year because of the conflict, 60% are children. Over 4,000 refugees have crossed the borders into Tajikistan, 40% of them children. According to some government sources, some 5,000 people are arriving in Iran per

¹ Source :
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/idps>

day, which is up to three times the previously estimated daily average.

Since 2002, UNHCR has helped over [5.2 million refugees to return](#) to Afghanistan, but numbers have dwindled in recent years, largely due to the deteriorating security and economic situation and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Afghans continue to return on short-term visits for medical reasons, livelihood opportunities and family visits.

On 13 July, [UNHCR warned](#) of a looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and alerted that if the current situation continued, it would result in further displacement within the country as well as new refugee movements to neighbouring countries and beyond.

In parallel with emergency preparedness and response efforts, UNHCR has continued a community-based, conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian programmes in prioritized areas inside Afghanistan and within host countries to strengthen community resilience and coping mechanisms and to support the governments to include refugees in national social welfare programmes.

UNHCR and partners' ability to ramp up urgent emergency preparedness and response interventions is greatly dependent on the availability and timely delivery of resources. Strengthened support for regular protection and assistance programmes for the existing internally displaced persons (IDPs) in

Afghanistan and refugee populations in the principal host countries will also serve as a shock-absorber and help ensure an enabling environment for new arrivals.

While this Supplementary Appeal includes preparedness activities (in Afghanistan and host countries) and IDP response (in Afghanistan) in line with the most likely scenario, it does not include UNHCR's planned humanitarian response in the event of a worst-case scenario that would see significant new refugee movements from Afghanistan into Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. UNHCR has led inter-agency contingency planning and preparedness in support of the governments of these refugee-receiving countries. In the event of any significant refugee influx to these countries, an inter-agency needs assessment would be undertaken and a Regional Refugee Response Plan would be prepared. In that case, UNHCR and partners will require additional support from the international community.

UNHCR is appealing for [\\$62.8 million](#) to cover the period [July-December 2021](#) for an emergency response that prioritizes preparedness in Afghanistan and host countries, as well as the immediate needs of up to 500,000 new IDPs in Afghanistan. The urgent needs presented in this Supplementary Appeal are additional to UNHCR's requirements for South-West Asia and Central Asia outlined in the 2021 Global Appeal.

For more information

Visit [Global Focus](#), which is UNHCR's main operational reporting portal for donors and other key partners. The site provides an overview of the protection risks that refugees and other populations of concern to UNHCR face across the world, as well as regularly updated information about programmes, operations, financial requirements, funding levels and donor contributions. The situation page for the Afghanistan situation can be found [here](#).

Displacement scenarios

UNHCR has increased its operational-level planning and has strengthened preparedness activities in anticipation of a further escalation in the armed conflict and an exponential increase in internal displacement and new refugee outflows.

A UNHCR Level 1 Emergency Declaration was communicated on 27 June for Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan to support on-the-ground preparedness. On 17 July, this was reclassified to a Level 2 Emergency Declaration for the four countries, while a Level 1 Emergency Declaration was established for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response plan works from two scenarios as agreed by the UN country teams in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries:

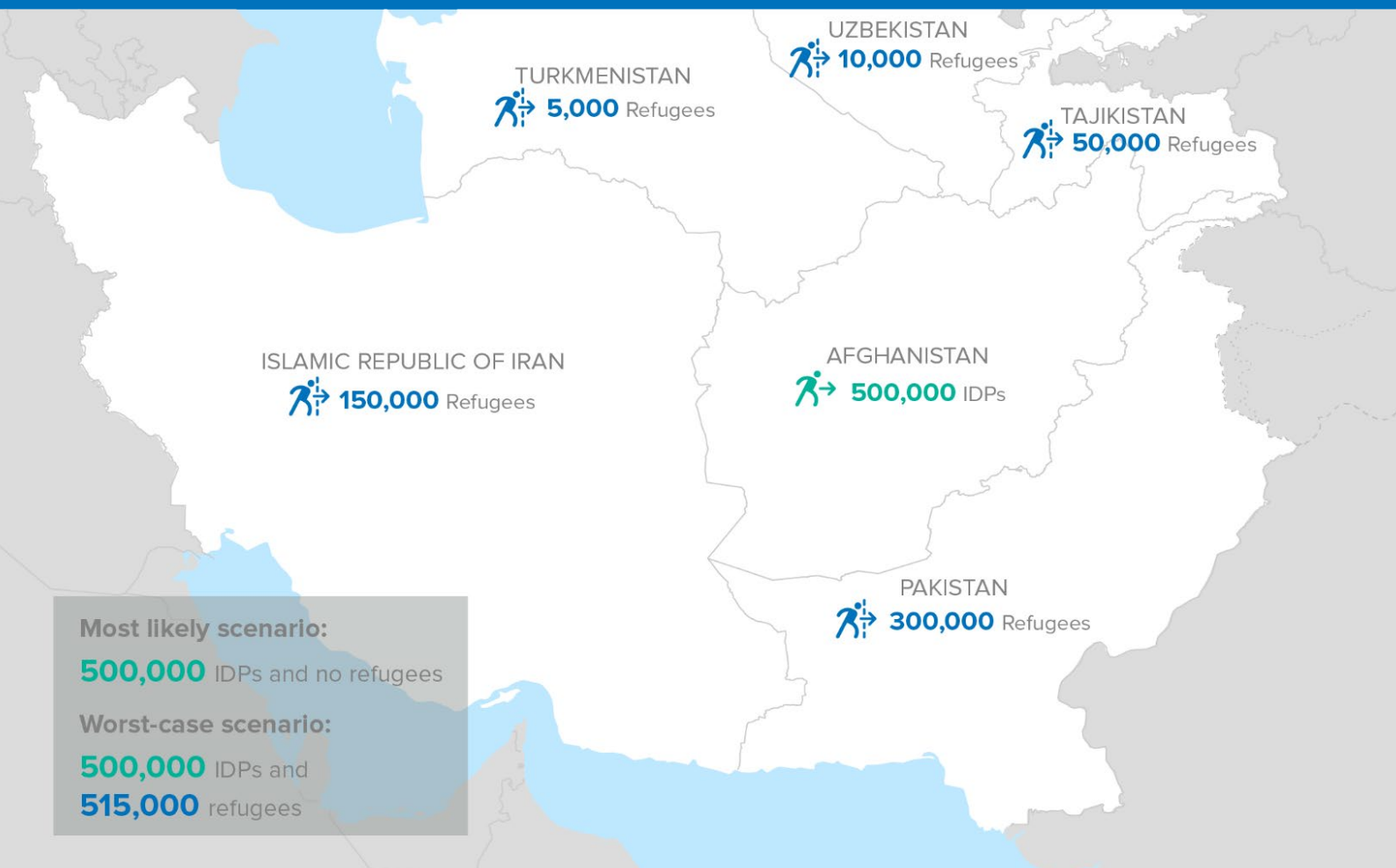
Most likely scenario | An emergency response that prioritizes the immediate needs of up to 500,000 new internally displaced people;

Worst-case scenario | An emergency response to new refugee movements into Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

In both scenarios, UNHCR will continue its area- and community-based conflict-sensitive humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan and in the host countries.

Preparedness actions include increasing the in-country contingency stocks of items such as emergency shelter, hygiene kits and other core relief items (CRI), and personal protective equipment (PPE). There is a particular need to elevate the CRI stock levels in Afghanistan through urgent prepositioning as escalated violence causes disruptions in the logistics chain.

UNHCR's overall preparedness and response remains scalable, rapidly adaptable, and based on the established connectivity with communities.



Strategic priorities

UNHCR maintains its regional strategic objectives and priorities in the event of new internal displacement and cross-border refugee movements:

- Access to territory, asylum, and protection in accordance with international protection standards including admission, non-refoulement, registration and documentation, security and human rights.
- Coordinated preparedness measures implemented to ensure a timely and effective humanitarian response.
- Timely, life-saving humanitarian assistance including support of existing national services, with a strategic focus on durable solutions.

UNHCR is among the agencies responsible for leading the humanitarian response inside Afghanistan, including in its role as cluster lead for Protection, Emergency Shelter/NFI, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management if required.

UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies will adjust their footprint to continue providing life-saving assistance to the displaced population, in accordance with programme criticality assessments. This will include increased emergency

response and protection activities and strengthening the teams on the ground through surge deployments in emergency management and sector-level coordinators, as well as staff in the areas of protection, field, programme management, information management, supply and logistics.

The needs of those who have had to flee suddenly are acute. UNHCR and partners, as part of a coordinated response, are already assisting newly displaced Afghans with emergency shelter, food, health, water and sanitation support, and cash assistance, despite challenges in accessing vulnerable groups.

The Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan have granted access to their territory and protection to Afghan refugees for over four decades, providing access to health care, education and other services. Their generous hospitality and refugee-inclusive policies must not be taken for granted.

In this regard and in the spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing, UNHCR appeals to the donor community to support the Government of Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries at this critical moment.

Planned activities and implementation

Afghanistan | UNHCR's activities in Afghanistan under this Supplementary Appeal will focus on the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance including basic shelter, core relief and seasonal items, and interventions for persons with specific needs. UNHCR will continue to lead the protection and assistance

response, including on emergency shelter and core relief items.

UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and effective coordination is being ensured through sub-regional working groups. With the limited mobility and sometimes restricted access of UNHCR staff due to

security constraints, protection monitoring and community-based protection mechanisms will be critical to identify and assist persons with specific needs.

UNHCR also leads the Emergency Shelter Cluster and coordination on the ground that includes key interventions such as the distribution of emergency shelter, core relief items, protection monitoring, and focused assistance to persons with specific needs. Afghanistan has a well-established cash assistance programme

and UNHCR will continue with this modality to provide cash for protection to persons with specific needs and cash for rent to IDPs hosted in urban and peri-urban areas.

Logistical arrangements to transport core relief items are a challenge due to the increasing insecurity. Depending on road closures, UNHCR may consider air transportation to deliver life-saving assistance to persons of concern in remote locations.

Planned response in refugee-receiving countries

In line with the Refugee Coordination Model, UNHCR leads coordination with other UN agencies and stakeholders at the country level to ensure sectoral responsibilities and contributions to the emergency response in case of a refugee influx. The need to invest in initial infrastructure in new sites is expected to fall on UNHCR for site preparation, health, education, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.

Islamic Republic of Iran | UNHCR's response in Iran will focus on supporting the Government on all aspects of refugee protection and assistance. UNHCR is undertaking preparations for 150,000 potential new arrivals over three to six months. Discussions are ongoing with the Government on the establishment of temporary locations, while joint assessment visits to the potential sites along the eastern border provinces have begun taking place. Although current discussions focus on the establishment of hosting sites and reception centres to accommodate the potential new arrivals, UNHCR will continue to advocate for a hybrid approach to encampment (i.e.,

mixed shelter solutions) such as temporary stay in hosting sites along the border before refugees can move to urban areas.

As a part of preparedness efforts, UNHCR will continue to advocate for more sustained presence at the border areas to monitor population movements, stockpile emergency shelter, WASH and core relief items, and commence preparations for the reception centres and hosting sites.

In reception centres, additional registration equipment, transportation and human resources will be required to register and support the new arrivals.

Establishing hosting sites and reception centres will entail ground preparation, procurement of tents, building renovation, and upgrades to the primary health and WASH infrastructure. In some areas, tents and temporary shelters are not feasible in the long term due to harsh weather conditions. Mid- to long-term solutions of addressing refugees' care and maintenance needs, including prefabricated shelters, will be considered as the situation evolves.

UNHCR will provide support and training to the Government and NGO partners to enhance coordination and mainstream protection considerations in all aspects of the preparedness and response.

Pakistan | The Government of Pakistan has not yet adopted a national policy and so far, the political rhetoric has focused on advocacy for Afghans to be assisted in Afghanistan with indications that if any newly arriving Afghan asylum-seekers were allowed access to the territory, they would likely be hosted in camps. UNHCR works in support of the Government of Pakistan and is strongly advocating with the Government on the necessity to plan and prepare for a potential influx and for a clear policy decision to be taken to open its borders to people who may flee Afghanistan.

As a part of the preparedness activities included in this Supplementary Appeal, UNHCR is looking at measures to be taken to facilitate the initial registration of new arrivals entering Pakistan. In the meantime, UNHCR, together with partners, is increasing its protection monitoring efforts to better understand the movement patterns and the needs of the small trickles of people who have recently crossed into Pakistan seeking refuge.

Importantly, as a major influx has not occurred in recent decades, numerous efforts are needed for UNHCR and partners to scale up their operations, notably in prepositioning of core relief items. UNHCR has also begun providing

required support and training to Government and non-governmental counterparts to enhance coordination and mainstream protection considerations in all aspects of the preparedness and potential response. Measures to have sufficient staff immediately available are also being taken.

Tajikistan | UNHCR will provide necessary support to the Government of Tajikistan in the areas of reception and registration, including equipment and human resources, as well as training to enhance coordination and to integrate protection considerations throughout.

UNHCR and its partners undertake regular protection and border monitoring visits. It is expected that refugees will be accommodated in tented camps, and basic needs assistance will be provided in-kind. In-country transportation and warehousing will be set up to move the relief items closer to where they are needed.

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan | In the preparedness stage, in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, UNHCR's focus will be on monitoring and coordination with the respective Governments to ensure protection space.

In the event of an influx, UNHCR will support the host Government with registration and human resources and engage local partners to provide protection services. Warehousing capacity will need to be established for UNHCR to provide tents and core relief items.

Critical needs by sector

AFGHANISTAN



Protection

- 600 protection monitoring missions
- Protection monitoring for 50,400 persons of concern
- Cash grants for 2,000 persons with specific needs
- Psychosocial counselling for 530 gender-based violence survivors



Shelter

- Provision of 19,300 tents
- Cash grants for 7,100 households for rental accommodation
- Cash grants for 2,100 households for transitional shelter materials



Basic needs (including core relief items)

- Core relief items for 36,150 households
- Seasonal support for 4,500 households
- Sanitary materials for 50,000 women

PREPAREDNESS IN REFUGEE-RECEIVING COUNTRIES



Protection

- Establishment of reception/registration centres
- Regular border monitoring missions and protection monitoring of new arrivals
- Training and capacity-building for host governments



Emergency shelter

- Provision of 25,650 emergency shelters
- Identification/establishment of two potential camp sites in Iran and provision of basic infrastructure



Basic needs (including core relief items)

- Core relief items for 25,650 households
- Seasonal support for 23,000 households
- Sanitary materials for 33,400 women
- Hygienic supplies for 25,650 individuals



Health

- Health facilities supported with medical supplies and equipment



WASH

- 200 communal sanitary facilities/latrines constructed
- 200 water taps constructed

Key challenges

Increasing insecurity, restrictive humanitarian access, the geographic magnitude of the sub-region of Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries, climatic conditions and a surge in the global coronavirus pandemic all contribute towards making this one of the most difficult operating environments in the world. The exponential increase in conflict-displaced people in Afghanistan and the urgent response has overstretched the existing capacity of the humanitarian system.

Even for displaced Afghans who seek the ways and means to return to their homes, their personal challenges are compounded by food insecurity, limited access to productive arable land, loss of livelihoods, poor healthcare and education services, and constraints around legal assistance and civil documentation. For the most vulnerable families and individuals, these hardships exacerbate existing protection risks and in turn often lead to harmful coping mechanisms.

Afghans already constitute the largest protracted refugee population in the world and 85% of the 2.6 million registered Afghan refugees are in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. After four decades of hosting this population, the Governments and host communities are fatigued. International support for Afghan refugees declined as new crises such as the Syria, Yemen, Myanmar and Sahel emergencies emerged amid a global economic turndown, recently made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While humanitarian access is mainly granted for most of the countries of asylum, there are challenges to ensure an adequate, effective and sustainable set of protection and humanitarian assistance interventions, particularly through the first months of a new crisis and as the winter season looms. Preparedness measures and a rapid scale-up of UNHCR and partner emergency programmes—should the worst-case scenario unfold—will be a critical need and significant challenge when supporting the respective governments.



Displaced Afghan schoolgirls play a game during break time at Kahdistan Secondary School in Injil district, Herat province. © UNHCR/Aref Karimi

Coordination

In Afghanistan, UNHCR coordinates with OCHA, UN agencies and humanitarian actors in line with the global cluster approach and the in-country coordination structure.

In response to any new refugee influx into neighbouring countries, the concerned governments maintain primary responsibility with operational and coordination support of UNHCR as the

lead UN agency. Humanitarian interventions will be delivered alongside respective government-led efforts.

UNHCR will ensure timely and effective response interventions to any new refugee influx from Afghanistan including the immediate development of a Regional Refugee Response Plan and will strengthen existing coordination mechanisms in line with the global refugee coordination model.

Funding the response

Through this Supplementary Appeal, UNHCR is appealing for **\$62.8 million**, which includes preparedness in [Afghanistan and the refugee-receiving countries \(Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan\)](#), as well as IDP response in Afghanistan. Further details are provided below.

Budget summary (all figures in US dollars)

Operation	Excom Approved Budget*	Afghanistan Situation additional needs	Total
Afghanistan	18,347,094	14,907,123	33,254,217
Iran	4,600,000	10,000,000	14,600,000
Pakistan	4,828,475	7,586,720	12,415,195
Central Asia (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)	467,320	2,060,521	2,527,841
Total	28,242,889	34,554,364	62,797,253

Budget by sector (all figures in US dollars)

Sector	Afghanistan		Pakistan		Iran		Central Asia		TOTAL	
	Excom Approved Budget*	Additional needs	Excom Approved Budget*	Additional needs	Excom Approved Budget*	Additional needs	Excom Approved Budget*	Additional needs	Excom Approved Budget*	Additional needs
Protection monitoring, community-based protection, registration	1,000,000			648,400		500,000		200,000	1,000,000	1,348,400
Gender-based violence	39,832								39,832	
Shelter and settlement	7,397,928	7,737,139	2,780,000	2,939,932	2,500,000	3,000,000	260,000	856,000	12,937,928	14,533,071
Core relief items	1,819,618	2,562,722	1,243,730	2,449,000	2,000,000	1,500,000	125,613	365,000	5,188,961	6,876,722
Health				80,000		1,000,000				1,080,000
WASH						2,500,000				2,500,000
Partnership and coordination	670,266								670,266	
Logistics/Warehousing	5,185,843	4,498,757	804,745	475,000	100,000	201,315	81,707	494,000	6,172,295	5,669,072
Operational support, administration, temporary staffing	2,233,607	108,505		994,388		1,298,685		145,521	2,233,607	2,547,099
Total	18,347,094	14,907,123	4,828,475	7,586,720	4,600,000	10,000,000	467,320	2,060,521	28,242,889	34,554,364
	33,254,217		12,415,195		14,600,000		2,527,841		62,797,253	

* These figures are the amounts that have been reprioritized within the ExCom-approved budget of **\$316.5 million** for the Afghanistan Situation (including recent reallocations). With the additional needs of **\$34.5 million**, the total budget for the Afghanistan Situation now amounts to **\$351 million**.



A group of Afghan men wait to receive the third instalment of their money to complete the building of their homes under UNHCR's Cash for Shelter project in the Dand district of Kandahar province, Afghanistan. © UNHCR/Farzana Wahidy

In addition to the requirements outlined in this appeal, the needs for COVID-19 prevention amounting to **\$2.3 million** within the context of the preparedness and IDP response were identified. This amount is included in [UNHCR's COVID-19 Supplementary Appeal for 2021](#).

In the event of significant numbers of new refugee movements to any of the refugee-receiving countries and a large-scale refugee situation, UNHCR will revise this appeal to incorporate the additional requirements. At this point in time, the projected [additional requirements stand at \\$152 million](#) (\$52.5 million for Iran, \$84 million for Pakistan, and \$15 million for Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

The importance of flexible funding

Flexible financial support helps UNHCR to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and implement programmes to their full extent. Flexible funds enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved.

UNHCR is grateful to donors who have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions. Additional financial and operational information is available on the Global Focus website (reporting.unhcr.org).

AFGHANISTAN

RESPONDING TO URGENT NEEDS SUPPLEMENTARY APPEAL

July - December 2021



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Cover photo: Zarif, aged 6, peeks out from his grandmother's makeshift tent in Nawabad Farabi-ha IDP camp near the city of Mazar-i-Sharif. His father was killed during the clashes between government and non-government armed forces.

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