

Asia and the Pacific

9 June 2021

 **9.2** million
Persons of concern

 **4.4** million
Refugees and Asylum seekers

 **3.3** million
Internally displaced persons

 **85,446**
Returnees

 **2.3** million
Stateless persons

Highlights by country

South-West Asia

Afghanistan

- An estimated 14.1 million Afghans (more than one third of the population) are in critical levels of food insecurity. Food prices are already higher due to the pandemic and are likely to increase further given the impact the dry spell will have on crops. These factors, combined with COVID-19-related interruptions to informal employment and decreased remittances, are driving people into crippling debt. According to the multisectoral 2020 Whole of Afghanistan Assessment, paying for food was the primary reason that drove people into debt (53 per cent).
- China has announced that it would donate 700,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

Islamic Republic of Iran

- UNHCR offices will identify vulnerable households affected by the pandemic and provide multi-purpose cash assistance worth two months of minimum expenditure basket to meet their basic needs. An initial 2,000 households will be assisted in 2021.
- Iran includes foreigners including refugees and undocumented Afghans in the national COVID-19 vaccination drive, and vaccination of refugees over age 70 in Saveh Settlement has begun. Similarly, in Khorasan Razavi province, vaccination of refugees commenced in selected health centres. Refugees over age 65 in Torbat-e-Jam settlement have also received their first dose.

Pakistan

- The Afghan refugee population in Pakistan has been included in the national vaccination programme and over 44 refugees have been reported as having received the vaccine as of 4 June 2021.
- Pakistan has successfully launched its locally produced single-dose CanSino COVID-19 vaccine with China's support. Renamed "Pakvac", the vaccine has been prepared at the state-run National Institute of Health. Some 118,000 doses of the Pakvac vaccine have since been produced.
- The Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise (DRIVE) is ongoing but at reduced capacity (50%) due to the rapid increase of COVID-19 cases which resulted in lockdown in some areas as well as some positive cases identified among staff in.
- The 2021 Pakistan Humanitarian Response plan, which incorporates COVID-19 related programs, was 'soft launched' on 12 May. The official launch is now planned for 9 June 2021.

South-East Asia

Myanmar

- International flights continue to be suspended with only sporadic relief flights operating, including the bi-weekly WFP flights. For those arriving through relief flights internationally, the length of quarantine has reduced from 14 to 10 days. On 28 May, stay-at-home orders were issued for two townships, one in Chin State and one in Sagaing Region due to an increase in COVID-19 cases in these areas.

Bangladesh

- The Government extended the lockdown until 6 June. In the refugee camps, while the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) has been limiting humanitarian presence and closed most facilities/activities in the camps including registration and protection, they increased restriction measures on 20 May. Efforts continue to negotiate with the RRRC to permit, at a minimum, scaled-down protection activities in the camps.

- As of 31 May, WHO reports 10,266 COVID-19 cases in Cox's Bazar District, of which 1,180 are Rohingya refugees. Among refugees, the test positivity rate has increased from 3% in April to 13% in May (12% in host community compared to 15% in April). Six refugee deaths were reported in May, while cumulative death stands at 17 among refugees. So far no refugees have been vaccinated and the COVAX allocation has not yet arrived to Bangladesh.

Indonesia

- At the end of May, 706 persons of concern were confirmed to have COVID-19 including 8 deaths.
- UNHCR distributed cash-based assistance to 3,111 refugee households (5,414 individuals) to support them financially during the pandemic.

Thailand

- 107 new cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Tham Hin camp during May. 198 persons have been in quarantine during May and as of end-May, there are 109 persons in the field hospital and home quarantine. 128 persons are reported to have returned from Myanmar during the past month before the camp lockdown and are staying at home. Meanwhile, some 70 refugees remain in quarantine in four other camps.
- The Ministry of Public Health issued guidelines on 7 May that authorize public health facilities to provide medical care to "patients who do not have rights to access governmental treatment scheme". This development will help benefit refugees and other persons of concern, as well as other vulnerable groups.

Malaysia

- The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Immigration Department announced that 70,000 enforcement personnel will be mobilized to conduct operations to detain undocumented migrants during the Movement Control Order. This announcement runs counter to previous understanding that undocumented persons will not be detained when coming forward to get vaccinated.

South-Asia

Nepal

- On 21 May, the United Nations and partners launched the Nepal COVID-19 Response Plan calling for USD 83.7 million to mobilize an emergency response over the next three months to assist 750,000 of the most vulnerable people affected by the pandemic in Nepal.
- 871 among the total population of 19,562 persons of concern received COVID-19 vaccines through the national vaccination plan. Among them, 740 received the first dose while 131 have completed two doses.
- Of the one million doses of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines that China announced for Nepal, 900,000 doses arrived in country on 1 June.
- As the number of COVID-19 cases continue to surge, several hospitals in Kathmandu valley announced in May that they were not able to admit patients due to shortage of oxygen.
- Nepal has requested support from the UN to receive vaccines under COVAX facility. The Deputy Prime Minister also requested the UN's facilitation in the management of ventilators, PPEs, oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators, mobile oxygen plants, medicines, and required human resources, including specialists, for setting up COVID-19 temporary health facilities.

India

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued an SOP for the vaccination of individuals without requisite government documents. A total of 1,446 refugees including Afghans, Rohingya and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees have been vaccinated.
- 41,366 ration kits were distributed to 4,821 families across Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Mewat and Uttar Pradesh. In addition, the distribution of 600,000 bars of soap was organized in collaboration with Unilever and local NGO partners across Mewat, Jaipur, and Uttar Pradesh.

East Asia and the Pacific

China

- On 25 May, the Hong Kong SAR Government formally announced the inclusion of refugees and other persons of concern in the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

- China continues its international assistance related to COVID-19 such as the deployment of medical teams to Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe as well as donation of medical materials to Jordan.

Japan

- On May 28, the Government of Japan provided an Emergency Grant Aid of approximately USD 14.8 million to India in response to the current surge. An additional 1,000 ventilators and 2,000 oxygen concentrators will be provided to India through UNOPS. In total, support to India amounts to 1,800 ventilators and 2,800 oxygen concentrators through a series of recent Japanese assistance, while Japan announced that it is ready to provide grant assistance of up to USD 50 million to India.
- As part of the COVID-19 response, the Government of Japan approved the provision of some 490,000 pieces of PPE to Cambodia, Laos and Bangladesh. The items will be delivered to these countries in close coordination with the WHO.



UNHCR welcomes India's inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in its ongoing COVID-19 vaccination drive. © UNHCR/ Aparna Dewal

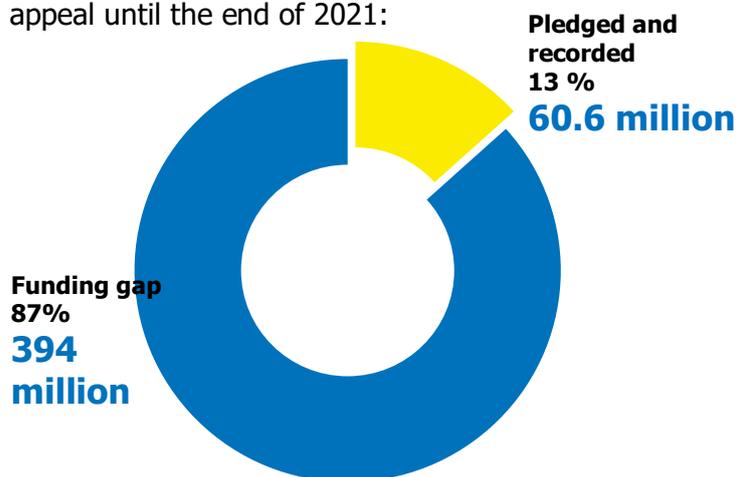
Funding needs

About half of UNHCR's COVID-19-related needs have been mainstreamed into its 2021 Global Appeal. However, with the pandemic evolving, and needs still emerging, UNHCR has in addition focused on a supplementary and limited set of activities related to exceptional socio-economic and protection impacts related to COVID-19. These activities focus on individuals who are newly vulnerable due to loss of income or livelihood, or were already vulnerable but whose situation has further deteriorated and may need additional support. Specific attention has been paid to activities that focus on women and girls due to heightened gender inequality linked to COVID-19.

USD 469 million has been mainstreamed into the 2021 Global Appeal. USD 455 million are supplementary needs included in **UNHCR's 2021 COVID-19 supplementary appeal**. This brings the total COVID-19-related requirements in 2021 to USD 924 million, including **USD 132 million for Asia and the Pacific** (ExCom-approved budget (mainstreamed) of USD 87 million and supplementary budget of USD 45 million).

USD 455 M

Requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 supplementary appeal until the end of 2021:



Funding as of 25 May 2021

UNHCR is grateful for the support from donors on the COVID-19 response including **African Development Group, Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, Education Cannot Wait, EU, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Unilever (UK)** and the **United States of America**. We also appreciate the support from private donors, and UN pooled funds that provided support for COVID-19 response in the region.

Moreover, we are grateful to donors who provide unearmarked contributions to UNHCR, which enable operations in Asia to respond in a timely and flexible manner. These donors include **Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland** and **private donors in the Republic of Korea and Spain**.

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