

# Asia and the Pacific

9 December 2020

 **9.5** million  
Persons of concern

 **4.4** million  
Refugees and Asylum seekers

 **3.2** million  
Internally displaced persons

 **137,489**  
Returnees

 **2.3** million  
Stateless persons

## Highlights by country

### South-West Asia

#### Afghanistan

- Through the cash for protection programme, UNHCR has assisted a total of 7,988 households of the approximately 10,870 households that have been identified so far (from an overall target of 11,400 households). This programme aims to support households with specific needs to help them avoid engaging in harmful coping strategies. Distribution is ongoing countrywide and will continue until the end of the year.

#### Islamic Republic of Iran

- In line with UNHCR's continued efforts to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to strengthen the national health systems to which refugees have access, 13 portable ventilators (in addition to 66 ventilators which were previously procured) were imported and recently handed over to the Government. These ventilators will be used in medical centers and hospitals in refugee-hosting provinces. This equipment is part of over 100 tonnes of medical equipment imported into the country by UNHCR since the beginning of the pandemic.
- COVID treatment in hospitals affiliated with the Ministry of Health will no longer be free, for refugees and nationals alike. UNHCR will continue to monitor the impact on refugees and explore possibilities to support them through cash-based interventions.
- Even though many of UNHCR's persons of concern have returned to work or have managed to continue work during the pandemic, they are increasingly unable to meet their basic needs, especially education and health services, due to inflation and reduced business. Many people borrowed money at the outset of the pandemic and, as it has lasted longer than expected, most have not been able to pay back their debts leading to tensions in families and communities.

#### Pakistan

- As of 16 November, of the 68,104 vulnerable Afghan refugee families identified to receive UNHCR's emergency cash assistance, some 45,44 families have received their cash. This intervention with Pakistan Post and Ministry SAFRON mirrors the Government's own Ehsaas emergency cash program, where vulnerable Pakistani families receive Rs.12,000 (approximately USD 77) to cover a four-month period.

### South-East Asia

#### Bangladesh

- The 2021 Joint Response Plan process is under way, with sectors having conducted peer review of project submissions last week. As agreed at Inter-Sectoral level, the 2021 JRP will have the socio-economic impact and containment measures for COVID-19 mainstreamed throughout the document and there will be no separate addendum. District Level Consultation on the JRP will take place on 9 December in Cox's Bazar.
- Child protection activities have resumed on a small scale in all multi-purpose centers across the Cox's Bazar camps. This is particularly notable due to the major impact that the suspension of children's activities and closure of facilities have had on refugee children.

## Myanmar

- The Government of Myanmar has received support from several donors to increase its testing capacity and bolster preventative efforts. On 26 November, the Cambodian Government donated medical supplies, including 2 million masks, goggles, PPE sets, and ventilators in commemoration of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Other donors contributing critical medical supplies include the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, the Singapore Association of Myanmar, and Yunnan Provincial People's Association.
- In Rakhine State, UNHCR and partner agencies continue to face access constraints adding to challenges to carry out regular as well as COVID-19 activities. Activities have been restricted to lifesaving only, identified by the authorities as food, health, and WASH related to COVID. In northern Rakhine, while most humanitarian activities have been suspended, some field activities are slowly restarting through a number of health agencies, such as the resumption of mobile clinics.

## Thailand

- The first confirmed case amongst the camp population on the Thai-Myanmar border was officially reported by the Government on 22 November. In response, vigilance in camps has been stepped up, with curfews being extended and camp residents being required to report the presence of strangers or newcomers in the camp to camp authorities.

## The Philippines

- The Humanitarian Country Team agreed to extend the implementation period for the COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan from the end of December 2020 until March 2021 with minimum revision. Member agencies have been encouraged to continue integrating COVID-19 activities into their humanitarian response to recent typhoons.

## South Asia

### Nepal

- The Government of Nepal is preparing to purchase COVID-19 vaccines from the international market as soon as they become available. UNHCR Nepal has coordinated with WHO to have the 20,000 refugees included in the planning figures for vaccine ordering, of which approximately 23% are a heightened risk and are prioritized accordingly. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health and Population has issued instructions that refugees with refugee documents shall be treated the same as Nepalese nationals when accessing COVID-related health treatment and will receive free COVID testing and treatment.

## East Asia and the Pacific

### China

- China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) will provide a contribution which will support procurement and delivery of essential PPE including masks, gowns, goggles, gloves and gumboots to frontline workers and vulnerable refugees in in Kenya, Tanzania, and South Sudan. The Project Assistance Agreement for UNHCR's PPE proposal to CIDCA for three operations in East Africa was signed on 19 November and the project start date is currently under discussion."

### Republic of Korea

- The Republic of Korea will donate 2,237,000 masks to UNHCR in Asia, which will be distributed as follows: 900,000 to Iran; 600,000 to Pakistan; 300,000 to Afghanistan; 367,000 to Myanmar; and 70,000 to India. The masks will be distributed to health professionals and workers in isolation wards, ICU and laboratories in isolation centres and hospitals. In some countries, they will also be distributed to refugees and host communities. UNHCR is currently coordinating transportation of the consignment to the countries mentioned above.

### Japan

- Refugees in Japan have begun to approach UNHCR's partner requesting food assistance. One refugee community leader reported that an increasing number of its members are losing their jobs due to COVID and need financial and material support.

## Funding needs

UNHCR's revised COVID-19 emergency appeal was launched on 11 May, in line with the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. Of the USD 745 million total revised financial requirements for UNHCR, the total needs in Asia-Pacific stand at **USD 96.3 million**. The requirements per country to support COVID-19 preparedness and response in the region are as follows.

**Afghanistan:** USD 11,085,150 | **Islamic Republic of Iran:** USD 16,199,400 | **Pakistan:** USD 19,256,030

**Bangladesh:** USD 25,487,008 | **Myanmar:** USD 8,900,000 | **Indonesia:** USD 3,536,871 | **Malaysia:** USD 4,526,273 | **Philippines:** USD 450,000 | **Thailand:** USD 2,139,090

**India:** USD 2,077,500 | **Nepal:** USD 1,461,200

**Kazakhstan:** USD 270,000 | **Kyrgyzstan:** USD 470,000 | **Tajikistan:** USD 440,000



*Distribution of N95 and surgical masks to refugees, 17 hospitals and 12 community health clinics in Jakarta and greater Jakarta began on 2 November. A symbolic handover ceremony was held with UNHCR, CWS and a donor representative from the Japanese Embassy in Indonesia to Tarakan General Hospital.*

UNHCR is grateful for the robust support from donors on the COVID-19 response including the Governments of **Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Sweden, UK, USA**, as well as the **EU (ECHO and DEVCO)** and **CERF**. We also appreciate the support from private donors who have rallied swiftly to provide a range of in-kind donations for COVID-19 response in the region.

We are also grateful to donors who provide unearmarked contributions to UNHCR, which help support operations in Asia and enable us to respond in a timely and flexible manner. These donors include **Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, the UK, Germany, Switzerland**, and **private donors in Spain** and the **Republic of Korea**.

UNHCR continues to appeal to donors not to deprioritize funding for the regular programmes in Asia-Pacific as our ongoing activities are critical to support the over 9.2 million persons of concern in the region.

## Contacts

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