



UNHCR IN PAKISTAN

Afghan Operation April 2010

UNHCR in Pakistan

Since 1979, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been working in Pakistan to assist Afghans fleeing conflict in their homeland. In addition to an Assisted Voluntary Repatriation program, the Agency's 200 staff members in Islamabad, Quetta and Peshawar also care for asylum seekers from a number of other countries in the region as well as in Africa.

In the aftermath of the South East Asia Earthquake of October 2005, UNHCR provided emergency relief assistance to thousands of internally displaced persons in affected areas of Pakistan-Administered Kashmir and NWFP. As of May 2009, UNHCR has also been engaged in one of the world largest situations of internal displacement that is still ongoing in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan. Since August 2008, over 3.5 million people have been affected.

Asylum numbers Today, there are some 1.7 million registered Afghans in Pakistan. Of these, less than half live in 84 Refugee Villages (RVs) in NWFP (71), Balochistan (12) and Punjab (1). Close to 60% of the registered Afghans live in urban areas. Over half of this population comes from five provinces in Afghanistan: Nangarhar, Kabul, Kunduz, Logar and Paktya.

There are also 2,500 non-Afghan refugees, and several thousand asylum seekers. The majority of asylum seekers, other than the Afghans, are from Iraq, Somalia and Iran.

UNHCR Refugee Program

Registration In October 2006, the government, with support from UNHCR, conducted a 15-week registration exercise of Afghan citizens living in Pakistan. The registration exercise was preceded by a census conducted in 2005, the first ever survey of Afghans carried out in Pakistan since their arrival in the country in 1979. Some 2.19 million Afghans were registered and issued a Proof of Registration (POR) card valid until 31 December 2009. The full Registration Report is available at: www.unhcr.org.pk.

The 18th Tripartite meeting between the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR, was held in early April. This Commission, valid through 2012, governs the Afghan program and its operational procedures. The next meeting is scheduled for May.

In view of the continued challenges facing Afghans returning home, and fuelled by considerable advocacy on the part of UNHCR, the Government of Pakistan (GOP) adopted its 'Strategy for the Management of Afghans in Pakistan'. The GOP agreed to extend the POR cards until 31 December 2012 and to formally announce a new strategy for the Afghan population in the country with additional components including a visa regime and work permits to strengthen procedures to regularize cross-border and migration management procedures.

Protection UNHCR policies for 2010 and 2011 include a number of changes especially with regard to protection issues. While UNHCR will continue its program of durable solutions in the form of assisted voluntary repatriation and resettlement, it will also conduct more targeted interventions within the refugee status determination process, strengthened legal aid and assistance to individuals and vulnerable cases and more interventions that benefit urban refugees (and their host communities) *(see RAHA & PPV below)*.

Voluntary repatriation The UNHCR Assisted Voluntary Repatriation program for Afghans started in 2002, and since then more than 3.5 million Afghans have returned home with UNHCR assistance. *(details in table below)*

The highest number of returns took place in 2002, when close to 1.6 million returned home. Starting 1 March 2007, UNHCR introduced new return modalities linked to the Proof of Registration (PoR) card, and an enhanced return package. Over 360,000 Afghans returned home in 2007, including more than 200,000 unregistered Afghans.

In 2010, UNHCR's Assisted Voluntary program started on 22 March. Two Voluntary Repatriation Centers (VRCs), Baleli in Quetta and the newly-

constructed Chamkani in Peshawar, are receiving and processing Afghans who wish to return home. The VRC in Chamkani was inaugurated on 22 March in the presence of Officials from the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR), UNHCR as well as the media. Some 700 Afghan families or 3,817 individuals repatriated in March 2010. Out of these 525 families (2,323 indiv) repatriated from NWFP while 106 families (650 indiv) repatriated from Balochistan. The remaining 69 families (344 indiv) returned home from other parts of the country.

As of 13 April 2010, repatriation figures stand at 2,536 families / 13,989 individuals.

Year of Repatriation	Families	Individuals
2002	281,720	1,565,095
2003	62,524	343,074
2004	67,023	383,598
2005	79,727	449,520
2006	24,232	133,015
2007	61,399	364,476
2008	50,841	282,496
2009	9,520	46,329
31 March 2010	700	3,817
Total	640,686	3,571,420

Community-based assistance in Refugee Villages (RVs) The Government of Pakistan, in collaboration with UNHCR and NGOs, is providing basic community-based services like primary school education (some 100,000 students in over 270 Refugee Village-based schools), basic health care, water and sanitation. UNHCR provides these services through implementing partners. In some RVs, the Afghan community runs the facilities.

Registration Information Project for Afghan Citizens (RIPAC) Following a registration exercise conducted by UNHCR, in collaboration with Government of Pakistan and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), the Registration Information Project for Afghan Citizens (RIPAC) was implemented to develop an analytical and updated profile of Afghans in order to formulate durable and sustainable solutions.

The Project has two components: 1: PoR Card Modification (PCM) centers, operating in collaboration with NADRA, to update, modify and correct information on the Proof of Registration (POR) cards (e.g. births, deaths, marriages, etc.). PCM centers, in Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Haripur and Lahore are operational and continue to update registration data and 2: a Population Profiling and Verification (PPV) at the household

level to help to plan and design solutions and protection interventions.

The first phase of the PoR card modification and PCM project was concluded in September 2009. The next phase of the project includes the issuance of new cards which is due to be completed by 31 December 2010.

Refugee-Affected (RA) and Hosting Areas (HA) initiative The RAHA initiative aims to address the adverse impact (i.e. infrastructure, environment, health systems, etc.) in the hosting areas that were once inhabited by refugees as well as to create and support basic services through developmental interventions instead of humanitarian support that will benefit both Afghans and Pakistani populations mainly in the education, water/sanitation, health and livelihood sectors. While UNHCR is the Convening agent in RAHA other agencies (FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNIFEM, WFP and WHO) are also participants in the initiative.

Out of a total of 29 RAHA projects, some 23 projects have been completed to date and six are ongoing in NWFP, due to be completed by July. In total nine projects are in Balochistan and twenty in NWFP.

In March, Some 40 proposals from the Government of Pakistan (GOP) and 20 from NGOs were submitted to KFW (German Development Bank) for funding considerations. The total value of these project proposals by the GOP and NGOs is USD 5.8 million and USD 7.7 million respectively.

Some 320 GOP proposals are in the process of being vetted. UNDP has received funding from the Government of Japan (GoJ) and is in the process of signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with a number of participating UN agencies. Out of the USD 22 million contributed by GoJ, USD 1.820 million is allocated to UNHCR and earmarked for Balochistan.

UNHCR working with the GOP and GTZ (German Development Cooperation) has set up a Program Support Unit (PSU) structure through which projects are vetted, implementation progress monitored and gaps addressed.

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