

UNHCR REGIONAL PLAN

Building resilience
and solutions for
Afghan refugees in
South-West Asia

1 July 2016 - 31 December 2017



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Regional Context

While early last year there was a sense of optimism about the situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the country has reverted back to a humanitarian emergency, combined with dire socio-economic conditions. Since mid-2015, a series of political, security and economic developments in Afghanistan have affected its people and forced large numbers out of their homes with, in the last year and a half, over 500,000 people newly displaced within the country. There are now some 1.2 million internally displaced people in Afghanistan. Today, Afghans constitute the second largest group of new arrivals in Europe.

The recent developments in Afghanistan have slowed voluntary returns from major hosting countries in the region. In total, less than 59,000 Afghan refugees have opted to return from the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan in 2015. Furthermore, only some 7,500 Afghans have returned during the first half of 2016.

For almost four decades, millions of Afghans have found protection, assistance and temporary solutions in the neighbouring countries thanks to **the generosity of the governments and people of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan**. According to current figures, Pakistan hosts some 1.5 million Afghan refugees, holding Proof of Registration Cards and the Islamic Republic of Iran hosts some 951,000 *Amayesh* card holders¹. The majority of them are second and third generation refugees living in protracted displacement and with no imminent solutions.

Last year, at the request of countries in the region, UNHCR convened a **High Level Segment (HLS)** on the Afghan refugee situation during the 66th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. The objective of the segment was to draw global attention to the slow progress achieved in addressing this protracted situation and encourage support from the international community.

The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR), developed by the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, and UNHCR has provided the overall framework for Afghan refugees in the region since 2012.² Member states participating at the HLS reaffirmed the validity of the SSAR and recognized the critical role played by host countries in the region. The HLS also called for increased international solidarity and responsibility-sharing to address the protracted

¹ In addition, both countries host large numbers of undocumented Afghans who have been estimated at 1.5-2 million in the Islamic Republic of Iran and 1 million in Pakistan.

² SSAR is a regional multi-year initiative to help facilitate voluntary return and sustainable reintegration while providing assistance to host countries. As part of it, Governments, along with more than 50 humanitarian and development partners, developed three country-specific portfolios of projects in 2014. Designed around education, health, and livelihoods, the portfolios offer an integrated framework for multilateral cooperation. See also <http://www.unhcr.org/afghan-solutions-strategy.html>.

situation, including greater financial and political support to reinforce the resilience of refugees and host communities and to find durable solutions for Afghan refugees.

The Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan have been strong supporters of the SSAR and regularly participate in tripartite and quadripartite meetings with UNHCR to coordinate solutions for Afghan refugees. However, there are serious concerns about the limited prospects for return to Afghanistan and the decreasing support of the international community for the Afghan refugee situation.

Inside Afghanistan, the situation remains precarious. The National Unity Government, formed in 2014, showed strong commitment to address issues related to displacement and placed it among its highest national priorities. This included the formation of the High Commission on Migration, chaired by the President, to address key issues relating to Afghan refugees, returnees and internally displaced people. The Government developed a national Comprehensive Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Strategy with UNHCR's support and in coordination with the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan through the tripartite commission framework.

Despite these positive developments, since mid-2015 the **security situation in most parts of Afghanistan has been rapidly deteriorating**. It has seen the highest civilian casualties recorded since 2009 (11,002 people), alongside an unprecedented number of conflict-affected IDPs today totalling 1.2 million. The country continues to face serious challenges in its nation-building and in addressing complex security issues. The situation is further exacerbated by economic challenges and slow progress in the implementation of development programmes. At the same time, the humanitarian community is severely constrained in addressing the country's growing needs due to increasing insecurity, narrowing humanitarian space, and dwindling resources.

The waning hope of many Afghans for their country's political and economic future is driving people out of the country, many of them to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Many **have also tried to reach Europe**, hoping to find protection and opportunities for better lives for themselves and their families. Representing some 20 per cent, Afghans are ranked the second largest group of new arrivals in the Mediterranean since the beginning of 2016, roughly equivalent to that of 2015. The movement toward Europe is also reported to include Afghans who transited or resided in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In particular, younger refugees, many of whom were born in exile, find it difficult to relate to Afghanistan and believe they will have better educational and economic prospects in European countries.

Resilience and Solutions Measures

These evolving dynamics have resulted in four major developments in recent months:

- Rising internal displacement resulting from the situation of conflict and political instability in Afghanistan and the lack of development investments;
- Continuing population outflows from Afghanistan beyond the region towards Europe;
- Limited returns from neighbouring countries and unlikely prospects for large-scale voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in the foreseeable future;
- Resulting need for reinvigorated responsibility-sharing by the international community with the two principal host countries.

To respond to these developments, the regional plan reconfigures key parts of UNHCR's planned activities in South West Asia for the next eighteen months into a set of concrete measures ("resilience and solution measures") which will contribute to building resilience among Afghan refugees, IDPs, returnees and hosting communities, and in finding innovative solutions to their situations. These measures are in line with the SSAR, endorsed by the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. They are also designed to **mitigate displacement of the Afghan population within and beyond the region** by ensuring dignified and safe stays, as well as increasing prospects for more viable solutions, in particular for youth.

In the same vein, the resilience and solutions measures are grounded in Government strategies and policies, and in firm partnerships. First and foremost, these are with UNHCR's operational counterparts within the respective Governments at the local and the capital levels, and with civil society, development and humanitarian actors, SSAR partners, donors, and the private sector. In the three countries, coordination platforms have been established and will be used to exchange information, develop common strategies and priorities at the national level, and coordinate response.

The success of UNHCR's regional plan rests on an inclusive notion of partnership, especially with development actors and international financial institutions. Various mechanisms are used to pool expertise and capacity via joint assessments, planning, implementation and fundraising. UNHCR is pursuing opportunities for joint or complementary programming and advocates with participating agencies for the mainstreaming of needs or referral of IDPs, returnees and refugees into related projects.

In refugee hosting countries, the resilience and solutions measures aim to nurture a viable protection space for Afghan asylum-seekers and refugees. They will continue to ensure refugees' access to basic services and enhance social cohesion and peaceful co-existence with host communities. These measures are articulated around five key areas of intervention: **(1)** access to

protection (legal and policy framework), **(2)** access to basic services, **(3)** youth empowerment through education, skills training and livelihood support, **(4)** support for durable solutions, and **(5)** advocacy, coordination and partnership.

Given the worsening security and humanitarian situation, **the resilience and solutions measures for inside Afghanistan** will target assistance to the most vulnerable IDPs, returnees and local communities. The measures are designed to be a flexible set of immediate interventions focused on vulnerable families and displaced communities in locations where humanitarian access is possible. Interventions include cash and in-kind assistance, referral to service providers, cash-for-work and quick impact projects.

These humanitarian interventions are complemented by two longer-term solutions-oriented measures: 1) Targeted livelihoods interventions, and 2) area-based pilot projects to foster durable solutions for protracted IDPs as well as returnee communities.

UNHCR will also continue to support refugees who opt to return voluntarily to Afghanistan. An increased voluntary repatriation grant will aim at enhancing coping mechanisms of returnees for the initial period following their return. In parallel, UNHCR will play a larger catalytic role in calling for more international attention and support to Afghanistan and the neighbouring refugee hosting countries to ensure equitable responsibility-sharing and to address root causes of displacement towards solutions with voluntary repatriation, accompanied by long-term reintegration, as the most preferred option.

The resilience and solutions measures presented in this regional plan cover July 2016 to December 2017. The financial requirements needed to implement these activities amount to USD 468,126,067.

Youth empowerment

In both the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, the majority of the refugee population are second and third generation. In Pakistan, 74 per cent of refugees are under 24 years old. Given the demographics of the Afghan refugee population, youth empowerment is the cornerstone of the resilience and solutions measures.

Youth empowerment through education, skills training and livelihoods support, will be critical in building resilience. These interventions also foster social cohesion among Afghan refugees and their host communities through investments in local systems and contribute to the economic development of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan. Education and access to livelihoods will also minimize the risk of refugee youth being marginalized or adopting negative coping strategies.

It is expected that these measures will pave the way towards longer-term solutions by giving hope to Afghan youth, help build their futures, and also enable them to contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan when return becomes possible.

Furthermore, as part of its approach to people with specific needs in Afghanistan, UNHCR will provide cash-based support to the most vulnerable children and youths among IDPs, returnees and host communities to facilitate their access to education.

In Pakistan, Parliament endorsed the country's commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning), opening a valuable opportunity for UNHCR and the Government to work together towards youth empowerment through education. UNHCR works closely with the federal and provincial authorities, as well as the SDG 4 leads, UNESCO and UNICEF, to support the Government of Pakistan to mainstream the needs of refugee children and youth within the new education sector plans and national development planning and processes. UNHCR will also actively engage within the global platform for education to be launched in 2016.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been placing much emphasis on ensuring the education of refugees. The literacy rate among Afghan refugees has risen from 6 per cent in 1979 to 60 per cent in 2013. To support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in continuing with this policy priority, now extended to undocumented Afghan children, UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, UNESCO and other partners towards increasing the rate of school enrolment and reducing drop-out rates through the construction or rehabilitation of schools. In May 2016 following sustained advocacy, regulations on the registration of foreign national students in the education system in the Islamic Republic of Iran were revised. This resulted in the removal of all refugee-specific tuition fees (USD 70-90 /child) for primary and secondary education as of the upcoming school year (2016-2017 starting in September). Refugee students will now receive the same benefits as Iranian students regarding registration and educational services

UNHCR also supports the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and partners to enhance skills training based on market demand and livelihood opportunities, including revolving loans. A range of small projects implemented by young refugees will also be supported.

Resilience and Solutions Measures

Resilience and Solutions

IRAN

1. Access to protection: legal and policy framework
2. Access to basic services
3. Youth empowerment
4. Durable solutions
5. Advocacy, coordination and partnership

AFGHANISTAN

1. Facilitation of voluntary repatriation
2. Support to persons with specific needs
3. Community based humanitarian QIPs
4. Targeted livelihood support
5. Area-based solutions for protracted IDPs and returnees

PAKISTAN

1. Access to protection: legal and policy framework
2. Access to basic services
3. Youth empowerment
4. Durable solutions
5. Advocacy, coordination, and partnership

Funding requested				
	2016 ExCom approved budget (July- Dec)	2016 Additional requirements	2017*	2016-2017 Total
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	51,803,670		106,870,410	158,674,080
Islamic Republic of Iran	34,634,134	6,102,137	95,526,963	136,263,234
Islamic Republic of Pakistan	54,211,416		118,977,337	173,188,753
Total	140,649,220	6,102,137	321,374,710	468,126,067

Notes:

All amounts in this table are in USD.

*Pending approval by the 67th Session of UNHCR's Executive Committee.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Target population: 1,5 million internally displaced persons and returnees

Requirements: USD 158,674,080 (July 2016 - December 2017)

	2016 ExCom approved budget (July- Dec)	2017*	Total
1. Facilitation of voluntary repatriation	14,900,015	66,485,767	81,385,782
2. Support to people with specific needs	10,927,944	17,866,558	28,794,502
3. Community-based quick impact projects	19,644,067	6,303,325	25,947,392
4. Targeted livelihoods support	2,271,388	10,110,987	12,382,375
5. Area-based pilot for local integration of IDPs	4,060,256	6,103,773	10,164,029
Total	51,803,670	106,870,410	158,674,080

Notes: All amounts in this table are in USD.

*Pending approval by the 67th Session of UNHCR's Executive Committee.

2015 was one of the worst years for conflict-induced displacement in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, with more than 400,000 people recorded as displaced during the year because of renewed fighting in an increasing number of provinces. This represents one of the highest figures since 2001 and is a 96 per cent increase over 2014. In 2016, as at mid-May, 134,000 new IDPs have

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_17969

