



Refugees receive their renewed Universal Public Health Insurance booklets.

IRAN FACTSHEET

1 July 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

332

Refugees voluntary repatriated January to end June 2017

405

Refugees departed for resettlement during the first half of 2017

Over 350,000*

Afghan and Iraqi students enrolled in the 2016-2017 academic year

1,425

Refugees planned to be targeted so far for various livelihoods projects in 2017

Population of concern

979,410** people

By country of origin

Country	Number of Refugees
Afghanistan	951,142
Iraq	28,268
Total	979,410

Funding for 2017

USD 97.2 million requested

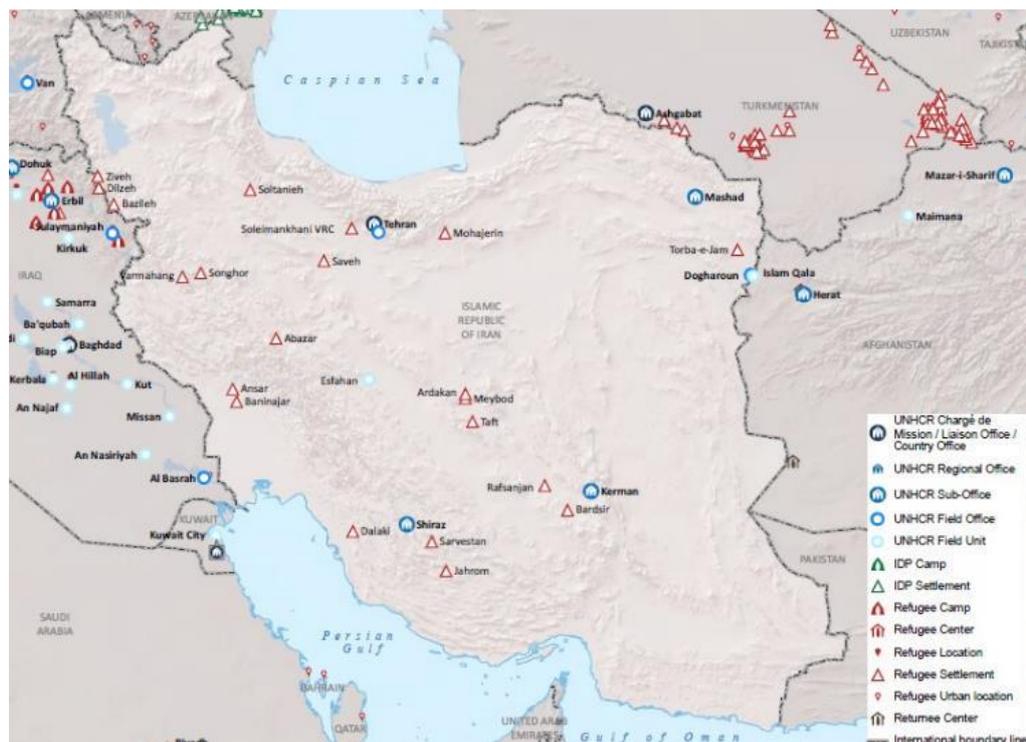
USD 18.3 million confirmed contributions

19% funded

UNHCR Presence

Staff: Regular: 103 national/10 international
Affiliated-Project: 36 national/4 international

Offices: 6 offices located in: Tehran (Central and Field Office), Kerman, Mashhad, Shiraz, Esfahan, Dogharoun



* Includes documented and undocumented Afghan and Iraqi students.

** Based on the Amayesh IX statistics received from the Government in May 2015.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- The Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA) is UNHCR's main operational Government counterpart. Additionally, Project Partnership Agreements exist with other partners including

Governmental: Ministry of Education (MoE), Literacy Movement Organization (LMO), Ministry of Health (MoH), State Welfare Organization of Iran (SWO), Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO), Iran Health Insurance Organization (IHIO)

National NGOs: Association for Protection of Refugee Women and Children (HAMI), The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), Society to Protect Children Suffering from Cancer (MAHAK), Society for Recovery Support (SRS), Rebirth Charity Organization (Rebirth), World Relief Foundation (WRF), Kowsar Scientific and Cultural Foundations (Kowsar), Chain of Hope (COH); Pars Development Activists Association (PDA), Iranian Life Quality Improvement Association (ILIA), Kiyana Cultural and Social Group (KIYANA), Iraqi Refugee Aid Council (IRAC)

UN Agencies: UNHCR also coordinates with a number of sister UN agencies, as well as NGOs and international organizations under the umbrella of the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR). In 2017, UNHCR continues to collaborate with a network of partners and be engaged in the implementation of joint activities.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

- The SSAR is a quadripartite multi-year regional strategy between UNHCR and the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran that was launched in 2012, which aims at ensuring the protection of Afghan refugees and finding solutions for them. Five outcomes guide the strategy in Iran: 1. Voluntary repatriation; 2. Essential Services and Shelter; 3. Livelihoods and Food Security; 4. Protection and Resettlement; and, 5. Coordination and Support.

Resilience & Solutions Measures

- In light of the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and the recent displacement flows to Europe (of which Afghans constituted the second largest population in 2015, many of whom transited through or resided in Iran) **the SSAR was realigned** in June 2016 to focus on supporting host countries to create an environment for Afghans to sustain their lives in the first country of asylum. Known as the '**Resilience and Solutions Measures**', this realignment places greater emphasis on the areas of health, livelihoods, and youth empowerment through education and skills development, as well as on enhancing protection space in the country of asylum. The Resilience and Solutions Measures was officially launched in Geneva on 29 June 2016 following the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' visit to the region.

Protection

- Community-based approach:** UNHCR continues to reach out to communities and include them as equal partners in assessing, designing, and implementing activities and projects in cooperation with their local government. These activities help to address **issues identified and prioritized by the communities themselves**, i.e. related to child labour and out of school children, to support peaceful coexistence, and to engage with vulnerable refugees including those with disabilities. In 2016 the approach led to the development of **20 community based/led projects** across Iran, 13 of which continue implementation into 2017. New additional projects are undergoing review with government counterparts.
- Registration:** The Government of Iran is responsible for refugee registration and refugee status determination. It renews the refugee identification cards (**Amayesh**) **on a regular basis** enabling refugees to access basic services and attaining work permits. In addition, 620,000 Afghan passport holders who were previously undocumented or Amayesh cardholders have been issued with Iranian visas that allow them to reside legally in the country, while the government estimates that 1.5 - 2 million undocumented Afghans live in Iran. As part of the government's efforts to regularize the documentation status of the Afghan population in Iran, an **identification exercise** was conducted in February and March 2017, targeting three groups of undocumented Afghans. A complementary identification exercise for Afghans holding family passports started in mid-April 2017.
- Protection against violence and exploitation:** UNHCR supports survivors of violence through a referral system with national NGOs and charities, and maintains in-house capacity for psychosocial and legal support. Furthermore UNHCR's **legal support programme**, including UNHCR-hired lawyers and Dispute Settlement Committees, are part of UNHCR's efforts to prevent and respond to arbitrary arrest, detention and deportation.
- Persons with Specific Needs (PSN):** UNHCR provides support to PSN through targeted cash-based assistance, referral to governmental and non-governmental partners and inclusion in relevant programmes, i.e. livelihoods. With the support of the State Welfare Organisation (SWO), assistance to persons with specific needs has been further enhanced, especially for the elderly and for persons with disabilities.
- Secondary Movement:** Although displacement flows have partly subsided since the EU-Turkey deal was agreed in March 2016, movement flows remain given the ongoing insecurities in Afghanistan. Afghan nationals still remain among the top three

countries which seek asylum in Europe, and Afghan children still account as the **largest number of unaccompanied minors in Europe (14%)¹**.

- **Durable Solutions:** UNHCR continues to facilitate the **voluntary repatriation** of Afghans and Iraqis to their respective countries of origin, although voluntary return has reduced over the years due to the increasing insecurity in Afghanistan and Iraq. By end June 2017, **332** individuals were assisted to voluntary return to their country of origin. Nonetheless, the vast majority of Afghans (61%) did so to receive Afghan passports in order to enroll in tertiary education in Iran. Regarding **resettlement** to third countries, by end June 2017, **101** cases (419 individuals) were submitted for resettlement, while **405** individuals *departed* to resettlement countries. In 2016 a total of **788** individuals departed Iran for resettlement.
- **Legal Support:** UNHCR operates a Legal Services Project with the objective of providing legal assistance to refugees in Iran and resolving disputes through alternative **dispute resolution** mechanisms. The project components include Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs) and **UNHCR Hired Lawyers** (UHLs). In addition to participating in the DSCs, UHLs provide free legal advice and assistance to Afghan and Iraqi refugees. Currently **15** UHL lawyers operate across the country. In the first half of 2017, the UHLs assisted 2,002 individuals (964 Afghans and 38 Iraqis) who received legal assistance on a variety of issues.

Education

- In 2017, UNHCR will be supporting the government through the co-funded **construction of 11 schools**, benefiting both refugees and host communities in areas where many refugees reside. Additionally, UNHCR in partnership with the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) will be providing **literacy-related services** to 2,100 refugee adults and over-aged children. In 2016 UNHCR supported the government by jointly constructing 16 schools in densely-refugee populated areas, and in partnership with the LMO facilitated the access of 3,000 refugee adults and over-aged children to literacy classes.
- Following a **decree by the Supreme Leader in 2015 that all Afghan children should attend school** regardless of documentation status, close to 400,000 Afghan and Iraqi children are now enrolled in primary and secondary school, of which over 46,000 are undocumented children. For the 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic years, some 77,000 undocumented children have registered for school². UNHCR continues to support the efforts of the government in providing access to formal education (primary and secondary) and non-formal education for non-Iranian students.
- In May 2016 the revision of regulations on the registration of foreign national students in Iran resulted in the **removal of any refugee-specific tuition fees** (70-90 USD per student) for primary and secondary education; UNHCR and its government counterparts are closely monitoring the implementation of this revision.

Health

- **Primary Health Care (PHC):** By partnering with 24 universities of medical sciences across 18 provinces in Iran, UNHCR complements the efforts of the Ministry of Health (MoH) in providing **PHC services to all refugees**, including vaccinations, antenatal care, maternal and child health, provision of essential drugs, and family planning in health posts located in refugee populated areas, 23 of which receive staff incentives from UNHCR. Through co-funding between UNHCR and MoH, 7 health posts have been established in refugee-populated areas in 2017 and are fully operational. Other joint UNHCR interventions include medical referral, harm reduction and Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR).
- **Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI):** As part of a breakthrough agreement between UNHCR, BAFIA and the Iranian Health Insurance Organisation (IHIO) and in close cooperation with MoH, all registered refugees residing in Iran can access a **health insurance package similar to Iranian nationals, which covers both hospitalization and para-clinical services** (medicine, doctor's visits, radiology etc.) for a 12 month period. UNHCR covers 100% of the insurance premium fees for 110,000 of the most vulnerable refugees including refugees who suffer from Special Diseases³ and their families, while the remaining refugee population can enrol in the health insurance by paying the premium fees (approx. \$11/month). In addition to improving the healthcare of refugees, the insurance scheme offers potential protection dividends in reducing the risk of catastrophic out-of-pocket health expenditures and negative coping mechanisms related to economic vulnerability, particularly where surgery or hospitalisation is required.

Livelihoods

- In recent years there has been a positive shift in the Government of Iran's view towards enhancing refugees' various livelihoods opportunities, recognising that **refugees should be empowered to earn a decent living and be able to positively contribute** to the society in which they live. Over time, engaging refugees in skills and livelihoods opportunities prepares them to find a sustainable durable solution to their situation, either in their own country or elsewhere.

https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Latest-Asylum-Trends-April-2017_final.pdf

² Registration is the initial process that must take place (at Kefalat Centres) before actual enrollment in school can commence. Please note that not all children who register finally enroll in/attend school.

³ Special Diseases include Haemophilia, Thalassemia, Renal Failure, Kidney Transplant, and Multiple Sclerosis as defined by Iranian MoH.

- UNHCR supports both direct and joint interventions with partners at three different levels (policy, organisation, and individual/community) to enhance refugees' financial, human, and social capital and to promote **self-reliance and economic empowerment**.
- In 2017, UNHCR plans to collaborate with the Government of Iran and non-governmental partners to implement a diverse portfolio of **livelihoods interventions targeting more than 1,500 refugees**. Aiming to enhance income and employment generation these projects included technical and vocational training, establishment of home-based enterprises, and cash for livelihoods. After successfully piloting the **Revolving Fund** project (micro-enterprise loans) in Esfahan, UNHCR is planning to expand the project countrywide in cooperation with the Government of Iran.
- As part of its projects of direct implementation, UNHCR also provides business start-up/business development equipment for income-generating activities, while looking into possible cross-border initiatives and interventions when the security situation is conducive. These aim at linking knowledge, skills of refugees in Iran with job opportunities in Afghanistan.

Cash Based Interventions

- **UNHCR is implementing cash-based interventions (CBIs)** including cash-for-work and multi-purpose individual cash assistance projects to assist **vulnerable refugees** meet their protection and basic needs with choice and dignity. CBIs are used to access higher education and healthcare; to support shelter and livelihoods needs; to support persons with disabilities; to provide for transportation in the case of voluntary return; and to assist in covering basic needs prior to resettlement. Jointly with the Government of Iran, UNHCR is currently exploring further ways to diversify its cash-based interventions, and leads a Cash Working Group between INGOs, UNHCR, and WFP to harmonize approaches and maximize cooperation between all CBI actors across the country.

Shelter and Infrastructure

- In an effort to improve refugees' access to essential services (including shelter, water, domestic energy, sanitation, and community halls) UNHCR continues to invest in **critical infrastructure in the most populated settlements and urban areas** that host refugee populations.

Emergency Preparedness and Response (Contingency Planning)

- UNHCR continues to work closely with BAFIA and partners on refugee emergency preparedness and response, including the facilitation of **capacity building and preparedness workshops**. Developed in 2013, a scenario-based Contingency Plan (CP) for the Afghanistan situation remains in place, in preparation to respond to a possible sudden influx of 100,000 persons entering Iran. Continuing efforts since 2013, in 2017, UNHCR and its Regional Centre for Emergency Preparedness (eCentre) based in Bangkok will jointly lead a Refugee Emergency Protection Workshop in Tehran with the BAFIA. These trainings have brought together government counterparts (BAFIA and MoH), the Iranian Red Crescent Society, and the National Disaster Management Organization with the objectives of enhancing knowledge, information sharing and mutual understanding, as well as to clarify coordination mechanisms in the event of a sudden refugee influx.
- For non-refugee emergencies, UNHCR continues to play an active role in the UN Country Team/Disaster Management Team towards emergency preparedness for natural disasters in Iran (mainly earthquake scenarios), and is currently chairing the Protection Working Group for Preparedness.

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