

## KEY DISPLACEMENT FIGURES

 **3.4M**

Estimated internally displaced persons (IDPs) by conflict within Afghanistan as of 1 December 2021<sup>1</sup>

 **710,039**

Estimated total conflict induced IDPs within Afghanistan since 1 January 2021<sup>2</sup>



 **72,481**

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Afghanistan as of 31 December 2021

 **2.2M**

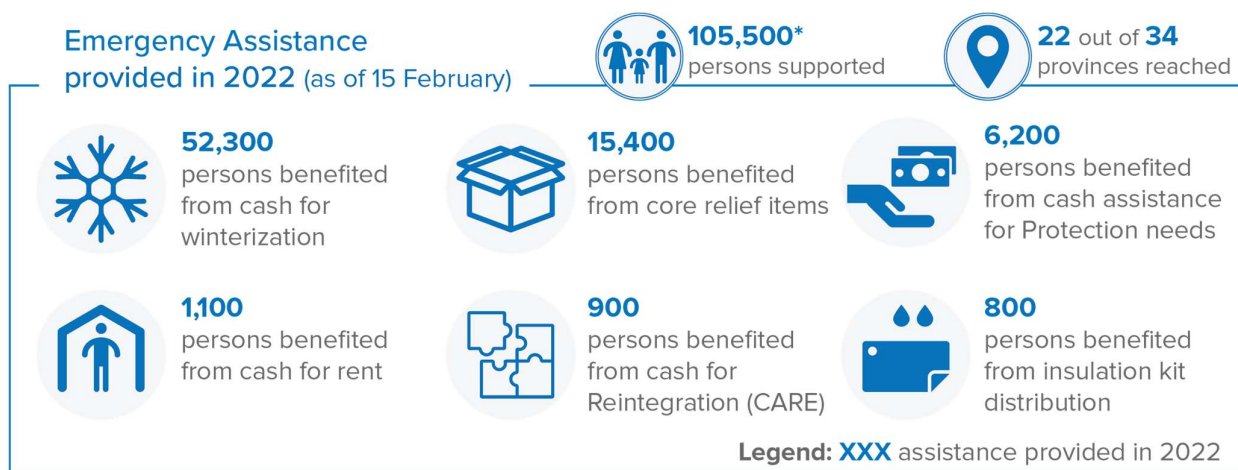
Refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan in neighboring countries as of 31 December 2020

 **172,940**

Reported newly arrived Afghans in need of international protection to neighbouring countries since 1 January 2021<sup>3</sup>

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continues to remain challenging, particularly since the onset of the harsh winter season. More than half of the population of the country is currently dependent on life-saving and essential humanitarian assistance. This includes many internally displaced people, who often live in makeshift settlements under difficult conditions.
- Against this backdrop, UNHCR has continued to deliver, with the support of partners, emergency assistance across Afghanistan, particularly to IDPs, supporting more than 105,000 individuals since the beginning of the year. This includes the following types of essential assistance:



\*The total persons supported may include multiple counting of beneficiaries receiving assistance through more than one activity during the reporting period.

- In addition, UNHCR, in collaboration with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), distributed winter cash assistance to more than 1,000 Olympic athletic families in Kabul at the start of the month. This is to support them over the winter period as the athletes carry on their sporting activities and so they can address their basic living needs.
- With the support of UNHCR, Afghan students, who are returning refugees, have also started courses this month at Afghan universities. UNHCR provided 34 students holding DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarships with their monthly cash grant in Kabul. By opening a programme for qualified returnees in Afghanistan, DAFI is supporting returning refugees to continue their education, after which they will be in a better position to help reconstruct their communities. The grant will help them cover a range of education-related costs, including study materials, allowances for living expenses, transportation, and accommodation during the academic year.



- Out of some 700,000 IDPs displaced by conflict since January 2021, approximately 170,000 have now returned to their previous places of residence, as the security situation has stabilized across the country. 70 per cent of IDPs returnees have done so to the southern and north-eastern regions. The number of returnee IDPs continues to rise. In support of finding solutions for IDPs, UNHCR has continued to support IDPs voluntarily returning home – some 900 – since 01 January, including with cash for their integration, as well as support for transportation from IDPs sites to their places of origin (see above).
- Throughout Afghanistan, UNHCR and partners also continue to undertake community projects in priority areas of return. This is to improve the reintegration of displaced people and to stabilize communities. Since the start of 2021, this includes a joint UNHCR and UNDP cash for work project, which has provided income for nearly 600 refugee returnees, IDPs and host community in Kahdistan, Injil, Herat, as well as the recent completion of the Haji Obaidullah school in Kandahar which will be able to support 600 pupils.
- Since its introduction in August 2021, the UNHCR Afghanistan HELP website continues to receive significant traffic. The website received an average 11,000 visitors and 28,000 views during the reporting period. UNHCR continues to receive a large volume of inquiries from former government officials, journalists, and social activists who claim to be under Taliban threat or in financial distress because of their inability to return to work, which the Agency works to respond to, among other inquiries.

## REGIONAL

- UNHCR has recorded 172,940 newly arriving Afghans who may be in need of international protection to neighbouring countries since the start of the year, composed of 53% children and 22% adult women in Iran and Pakistan. In Tajikistan, Afghan new arrivals are composed of 31% adult women and 40% children. The overall number of Afghans in need of international protection are thought to be higher. The majority of those interviewed report leaving Afghanistan for security-related reasons. Basic needs cited by those newly arriving Afghans interviewed in Iran and Pakistan include access to shelter, livelihoods, food and documentation, with a large majority of those undocumented Afghans in Iran also citing concerns regarding detention and forced return.

- Most Afghans fleeing to Iran are doing so in an irregular manner through unofficial border crossings and with the help of smugglers, as official border points remain closed for entry to persons without valid passports and visas intending to seek asylum. According to evolving estimates by the Government of Iran, approximately 500,000 Afghans have arrived in Iran in 2021.
- In Pakistan, border entry at Torkham is limited to those with valid passports and visas. Afghans in critical medical condition with one caretaker at Torkham and two caretakers at Chaman are allowed to enter Pakistan without visas on humanitarian grounds at both border crossings. At Chamam border, Afghans with Tazkiras from neighbouring districts are also allowed to cross in Chamam.
- Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have their borders open with Afghanistan, however this is restricted only for Afghan passport and visa holders.
- Since the start of the year, UNHCR has also recorded 43 Afghan refugees who voluntarily returned home on their own, bringing the number of Afghan refugees who have voluntarily returned since January 2021 to some 1,400. Some 900 of that number returned from Iran and 480 from Pakistan, among other countries.

