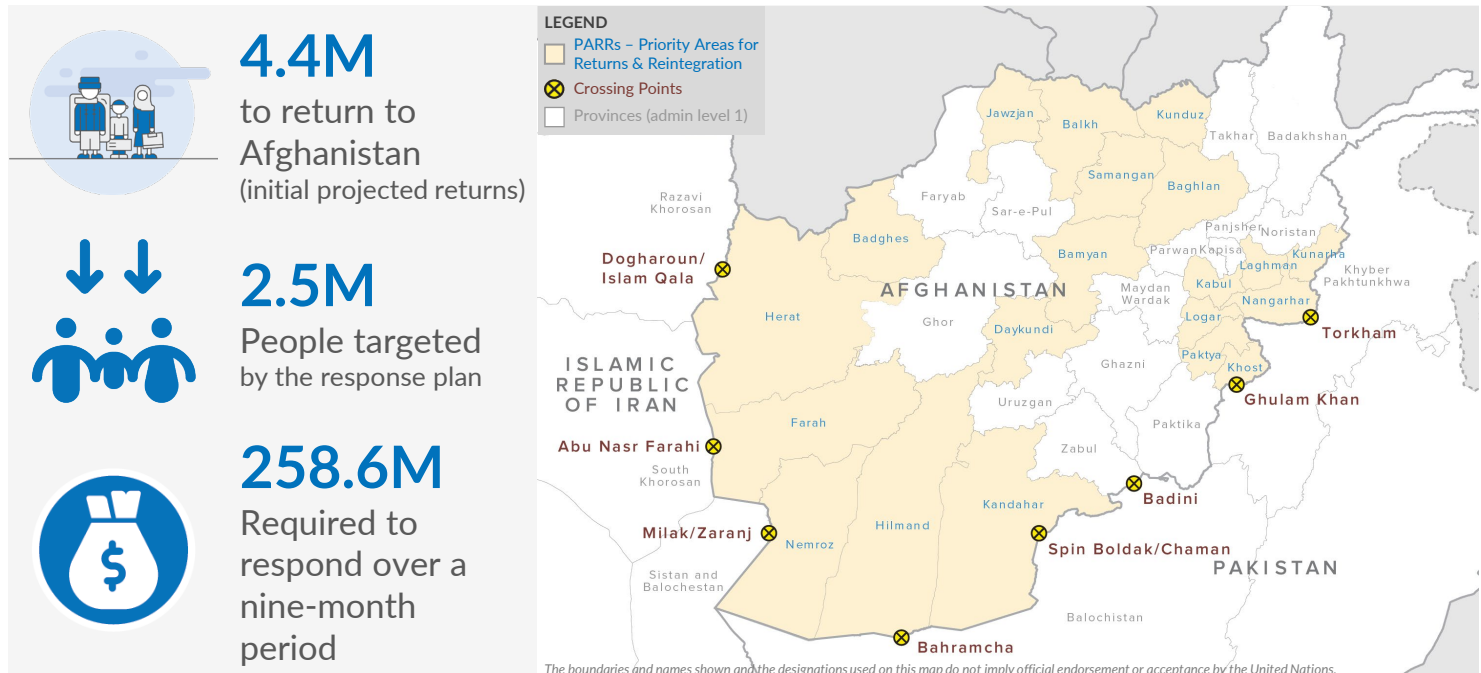


KEY FIGURES



OVERVIEW

UNHCR urgently requires additional funding to respond to growing humanitarian needs, as increasing numbers of Afghans [return](#) from Iran and Pakistan – well beyond initial projections through the end of 2025. The devastating 31 July earthquake in Afghanistan near the Pakistan border is affecting a significant number of recent returnees, increasing [needs](#). Since January, more than 2.6 million Afghans have returned, placing enormous pressure on already overstretched services and support systems in Afghanistan. This appeal updates requirements as of May 2025 and reflects critical needs at borders and for longer-term reintegration in areas of return.

In **Iran**, conditions for Afghans have grown increasingly precarious following the expiry of Headcount Slips on 20 March and the launch of a regularization and return scheme affecting two million people. As of 10 September, over 2 million Afghans returned from Iran in 2025.

In **Pakistan**, with the resumption of the 'Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan', returns have surged to over 602,000 Afghans thus far in 2025. Authorities are reportedly conducting door-to-door operations, detaining individuals before sending them to transit sites toward the nearest borders. Refugees contacting UNHCR report police harassment, arrests, demands for bribes and pressure from landlords to vacate homes due to a lack of valid documents. They also cited challenges in accessing medical treatment, high repatriation transport costs and cash assistance difficulties. Feedback highlights widespread anxiety, financial hardship and fear of forced return, compounded by deteriorating living conditions. Afghans also report disrupted mobile services, limited access to education, fear of persecution and restrictions on movement due to expired ID cards.

While UNHCR continues to urge countries in the region to ensure returns are voluntary, safe and dignified, thousands of Afghans are returning with no choice, no belongings and no place to call home. They face protection risks upon return, particularly women and girls. Iran and Pakistan are among the world's major refugee-hosting countries, sheltering 6 million and 2.6 million Afghans, respectively. Since 2023, shifting displacement trends – driven partly by growing anti-Afghan sentiment – have triggered a surge in returns. This scale of returns with limited reintegration prospects, is driving a rise in secondary displacement, including cyclical movements back into Pakistan and Iran, and risky [onward movements](#) toward Europe.

UNHCR response and financial requirements

UNHCR is seeking \$258.6 million to respond to this crisis through December 2025. Flexible funding is essential to adapt to fluid return dynamics and provide sustained support in Afghanistan. It also ensures ongoing protection and stability for refugees who remain in host countries. By investing in flexible funding, donors enhance efficiency, predictability and long-term solutions for millions affected by displacement.

Afghanistan

Response at the Iran & Pakistan borders

- Conduct biometric registration and protection screening of Afghan returnees under UNHCR's mandate.
- Provide emergency cash assistance for immediate needs such as food and transport to intended destination.
- Provide hot meals and core relief items on arrival.
- Ensure safe spaces for returning families and specialized counselling and support for children at risk.
- Identify and support people at risk by providing information and advice to enable access to essential services (including healthcare, gender-based violence response, child protection, legal aid and mental health and psychosocial support) while facilitating access to help desks to gather returnee feedback on UNHCR services.
- Conduct border monitoring to gather information on returnees needs to inform planning and service delivery.



4.4M returns



1M

People targeted

Reintegration Response in Areas of Return in Afghanistan

- Monitoring protection and post-return conditions.
- Facilitate access to civil documentation enabling reintegration services.
- Provide legal aid, counselling, case management and mental health and psychosocial support.
- Strengthen child-friendly safe spaces and women's centres to provide protection services and support to survivors of gender-based violence.
- Provide multi-purpose cash grants three months post-arrival in areas of return to support reintegration.
- Support housing repairs, earthquake-resilient housing and solar microgrids.
- Promote livelihoods and socioeconomic inclusion through technical and vocational training and skill-building as well as grants and micro-credit for small and medium enterprises.
- Support to women's businesses and agriculture including training, green houses and solarized water supply.



1.8M

People targeted

Iran

- Protect Afghans at risk in Iran through legal counselling and psychosocial support, including through improved communication with communities to bolster access to services and protection.
- Enhance facilities at Dogharoun and Milak border crossings through the provision of food, water, essential medicine and medical equipment to support immediate humanitarian needs and uphold dignity.
- Provide cash support for internal transportation to enable safe and dignified travel.
- Provide emergency cash assistance, including for documentation for people with specific needs to assist in their regularization process.



3M returns



270k

People targeted

Pakistan

- Advocate for and support the establishment of accessible and practical mechanisms to grant legal stay to individuals facing heightened protection risks or with other humanitarian needs.
- Protect Afghans at risk by preventing and responding to gender-based violence and child protection concerns and providing access to essential services, psychosocial support and legal services.
- Enhance protection interventions through strengthened border monitoring, community outreach, protection monitoring and communication with communities.
- Advocate for access to essential or life-saving services to be maintained for the Afghans who have not yet returned to Afghanistan including targeted assistance to people with specific needs.



1.44M returns



476k

People targeted

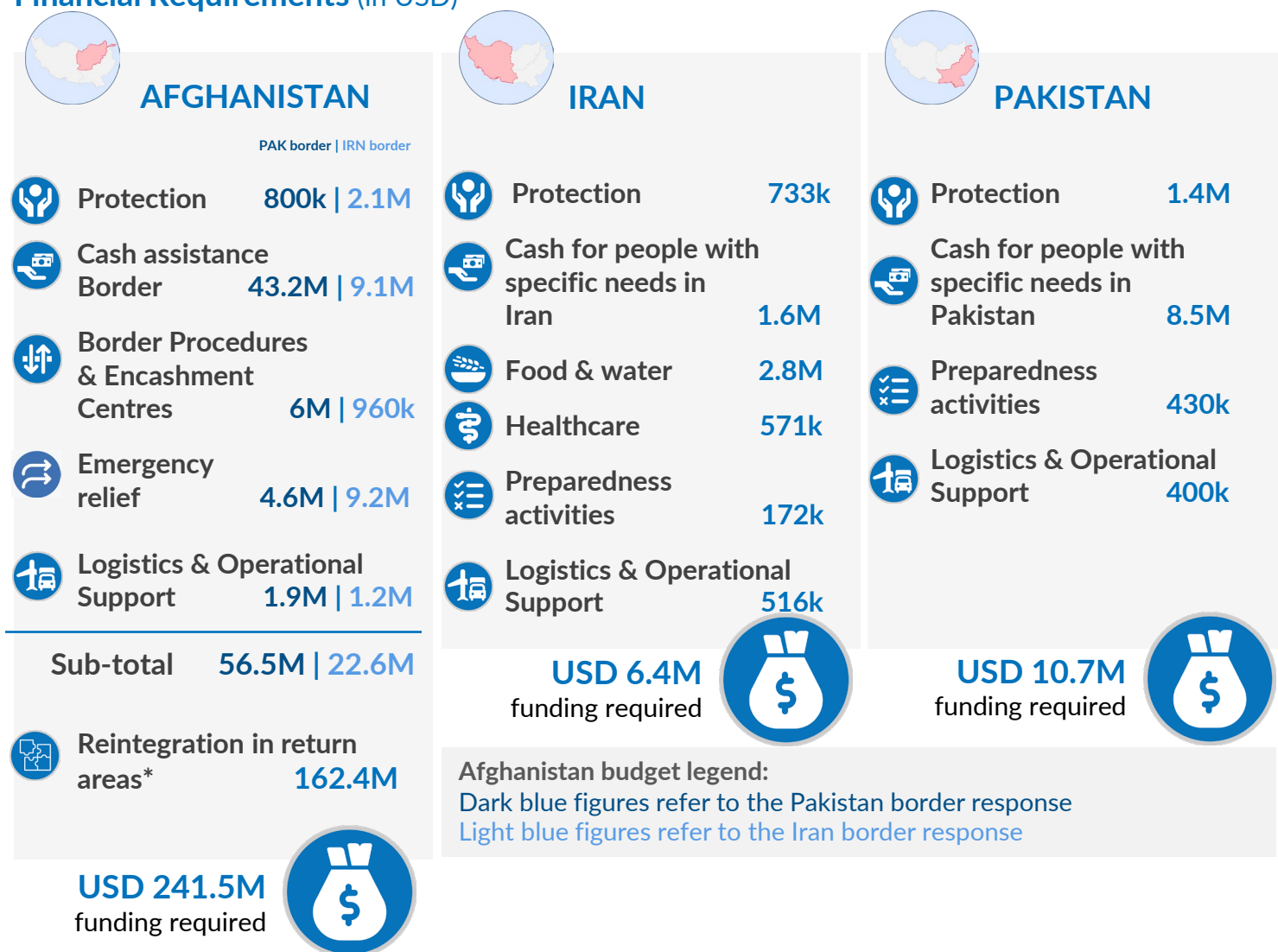


Returned families at Torkham border prepare to continue their journey. As they enter Afghanistan, they face an uncertain future and the task of starting anew. © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

Coordination

UNHCR is leveraging its presence across Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, as well as the Regional Bureau in Bangkok, to ensure swift data triangulation and information exchange for efficient and protection-centric cross-border responses. Advocacy is coordinated through the [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees](#) (SSAR) Support Platform and the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) platforms. In Afghanistan, UNHCR leads the Protection and Shelter Clusters, as well as the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Working Group, and is a core member of the Border Consortium and the Durable Solutions Working Group. UNHCR is working with the International Organization for Migration, other UN agencies and NGOs to support the growing number of returnees in Afghanistan.

Financial Requirements (in USD)



* Including protection monitoring and activities, safe spaces for women and children, cash assistance for reintegration, shelter and livelihoods support.

For additional information on the situation, please refer to the [Afghanistan Situation Operational Data Portal](#) and [UNHCR Global Focus](#)

CONTACT

- In **Kabul**: Charlie Goodlake goodlake@unhcr.org
- In **Tehran**: Victoria Thomas thomasm@unhcr.org
- In **Islamabad**: Joyce Wayua Munyao-Mbithi munyao@unhcr.org
- In **Bangkok** (Regional Bureau): Nini Gurung gurungn@unhcr.org