

# Afghanistan

## Refugee quota factsheet

## New Zealand Refugee Quota Afghan Refugees

The New Zealand Government works with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to offer permanent resettlement solutions in New Zealand for 1000 refugees annually. Refugees from Afghanistan are included in the 2018/2019 refugee quota and will be resettled to New Zealand throughout the year.

Prior to their arrival to New Zealand the Afghan refugees were living in Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan recognised as refugees by the UNHCR.

Before settlement in the community all refugees accepted under the annual refugee quota programme complete a six week reception programme at Auckland's Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre.

In order to become successfully resettled, refugees will be accessing the assistance of mainstream services such as health, education, housing and Work & Income. The New Zealand Red Cross is the key agency responsible for assisting quota refugees in their initial community settlement.

*This document aims to provide New Zealand's community-based professionals with general information about Afghanistan, the human rights situation in Afghanistan, the Afghani culture as well as some general information on supporting successful refugee resettlement in your community.*

### Humanitarian situation and needs

Insecurity linked to almost four decades of conflict in Afghanistan is increasing as fighting persists between government forces and armed opposition groups.

According to the United Nations, over 5 000 civilians were killed or injured in the first half of 2018, the highest ever recorded since the documentation of civilian casualties began in 2009. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that some 178 000 people have become newly displaced since January 2018. They urgently need basic services such as healthcare, water and shelter. At the national level, 9.3 million Afghans are food insecure.

Some 5.8 million Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2002. Throughout 2017, approximately 650 000 Afghans returned to the country, often after many decades. The influx of the returnees has strained the capacity of existing services and caused concerns about their ability to re-integrate and establish decent living conditions. Meanwhile, a further 5 million Afghans (2.7 million without registration or legal status) still live as refugees in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>

Devastated by the long-drawn conflict, people living in affected areas are reliant on humanitarian assistance and need protection from violence. Basic services like health care, drinking water and shelter are urgently needed in many areas. At the national level, eight million Afghans are food insecure, and a strong need for livelihood support remains throughout the country.

<sup>1</sup> European Commission: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation (ECHO), 4 October 2018, *Afghanistan – Factsheet*, [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/asia-and-pacific/afghanistan\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/asia-and-pacific/afghanistan_en)

## Cultural communications:<sup>2</sup>

### ■ MEETING & GREETINGS

- › When meeting someone the handshake is the most common form on greeting. You will also see people place their right hand on their chest hands when greeting each other.
- › Hospitality is highly valued in Afghanistan. One should always enquire about things like a person's health, business, family, etc.
- › Women and men will never shake hands.
- › Eye contact should also be avoided between men and women.

## Ethnic Groups:<sup>3</sup>

### ■ PASHTUNS

The Pashtun are the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan (approx. 42 percent). Most speak Pashto and are Sunni Muslims. They are concentrated in Nangrahar and Pakhtya provinces. A large population also live in neighbouring Pakistan.

### ■ TAJIKS

Tajiks comprise roughly 27% of the population. They are Iranian in origin and speak a form of Persian found in Eastern Iran. Most are Sunni Muslim. Most reside in Kabul and Herat provinces, although some reside in the mountains north of Hindu Kush, and the Iranian border.

### ■ HAZARAS

Hazaras make up about 9% of the population. They are descendants of the Mongols, and speak a dialect of Dari (Farsi dialect) called Hazarag. They vast majority are Shiite Muslims which led to much of their persecution under Taliban rule. Most live in the Hazarajat region.

### ■ UZBEKS

Uzbeks live in the northern parts of the country and comprise approximately 9% of the population. They are Sunni Muslims and speak a dialect of Turkish.

## Supporting successful refugee resettlement:

- › Be aware of differences between yourself and your client / student in terms of customs, values and belief systems, as well as perceptions of service delivery and treatment. It may be advisable to obtain the assistance of a cultural adviser, or someone familiar

with the culture of your client's home country to help you develop culturally appropriate forms of service delivery when working with a new refugee community in your area.

- › Many adult refugees will have only had limited formal education so communication styles may need to be adjusted accordingly.
- › Refugees may also have difficulty comprehending the importance New Zealand society places on official documentation. Some refugees may associate the recording of personal information with suspicion because of past experiences in their home country. As such, it is important to ensure refugee clients understand why you are recording information, where it will be stored and with whom it will be shared.
- › Explain your role carefully to the client and always use a professional interpreter if the client is not proficient in English. If your organisation does not have established procedures for using interpreters, interpreting services can be found through the following organisations: Interpreting New Zealand <http://www.interpret.org.nz/> and Language Line <http://ethniccommunities.govt.nz/browse/language-line>.
- › The Citizens Advice Bureau Language Connect provides free and confidential support in different languages. Advice on settlement needs, such as housing, renting, health, education and any other settlement issues. They can also help with immigration questions. Please call 0800 788877 (free phone) or email: [language@cab.org.nz](mailto:language@cab.org.nz)

## Language

Their main language is Dari, with some limited English.

### ■ BASIC DARI:<sup>4</sup>

**Hello** – *salam*

**Welcome** – *khosh amadin*

**Thank you** – *tashakor*

**Yes** – *bala*

**No** – *na*

## Religion

Muslim 99.7% (Sunni 84.7 – 89.7%, Shia 10 – 15%), other 0.3% (2009 est.)<sup>5</sup>

2 Commisceo Global, [2018], *Afghanistan Guide*, <https://www.commisceo-global.com/resources/country-guides/afghanistan-guide>

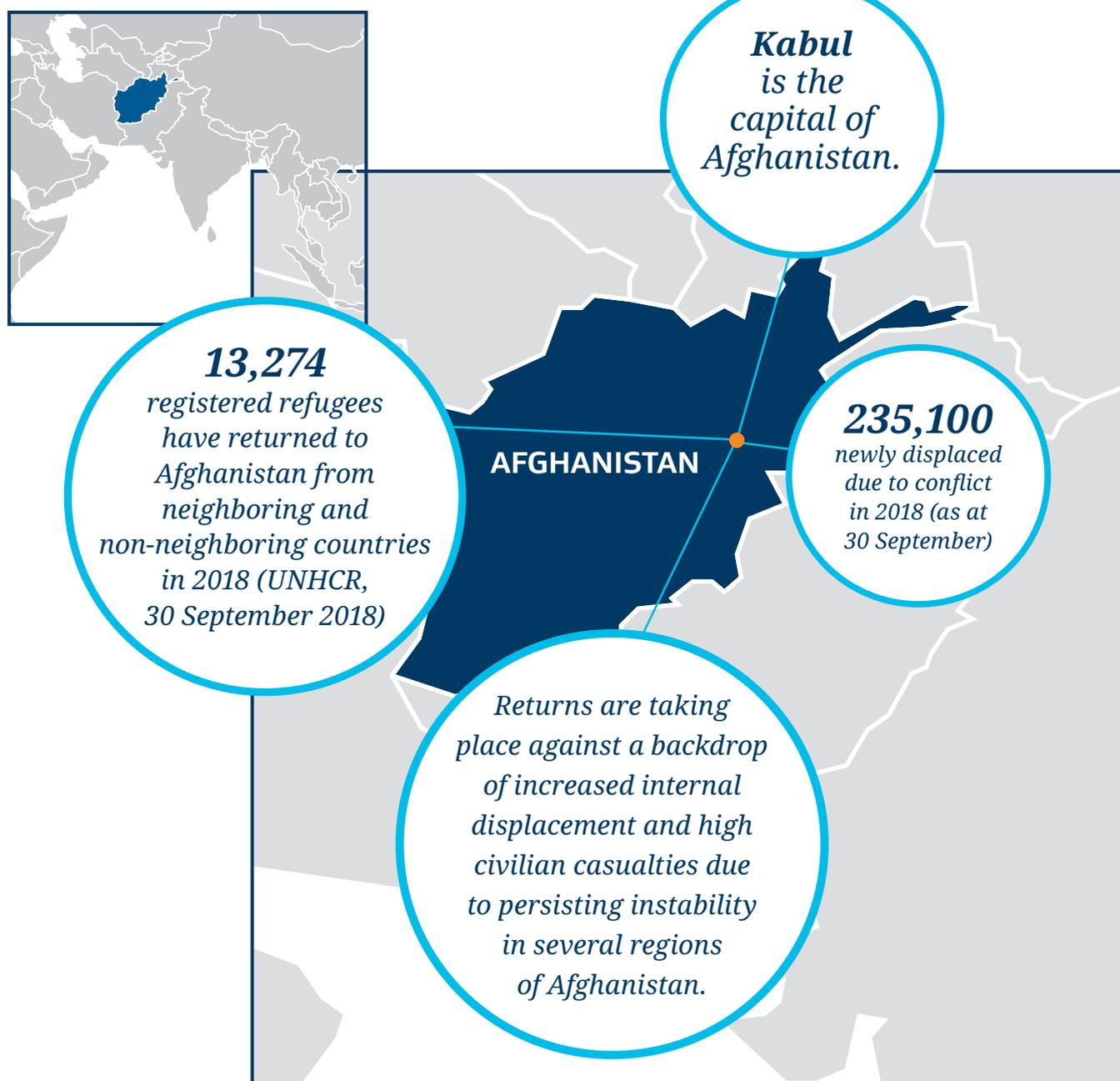
3 Cultural Atlas, [2018], *Afghan Culture*, <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/afghan-culture/core-concepts-2b0de7af-9011-4807-be1a-adb8910ab0cb#core-concepts-2b0de7af-9011-4807-be1a-adb8910ab0cb>

4 Clammer, Paul, [2007], *Afghanistan*, Lonely Planet, Footscray, Victoria, p.228

5 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 15 November 2018, *The World Factbook: Afghanistan*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

New Zealand is one of thirty seven countries that take part in the United Nations Refugee Agency's regular refugee resettlement programme. Our annual refugee quota of 1000 refugees is a reflection of the government's commitment to fulfilling its international humanitarian obligations and responsibilities to provide protection to refugees.

The New Zealand Government and a number of local organisations, such as New Zealand Red Cross, are helping these families to resettle, and to access the goods and services they need to restart their lives.



\* Sourced from United Nations: High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 30 September 2018, *Fact Sheet: Afghanistan*, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/66542.pdf>

## Additional Resources

- › New Zealand Immigration has factsheets and videos for refugees and family members settling in New Zealand which are available at <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/information-for-refugees-settling-in-new-zealand>
- › Detailed UNHCR guidelines for working refugees are available in a publication called *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration*, see <http://www.unhcr.org/4a2cfe336.html>
- › BBC, 31 January 2018 [last updated], *Afghanistan country profile*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12011352>
- › Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2 November 2018 [last updated], *Afghanistan*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7798/Afghanistan>
- › Every Culture, [2018], *Afghanistan, Afghans, Hazaras, Pashtun*, <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Afghanistan-to-Bosnia-Herzegovina/Afghanistan.html>
- › Human Rights Watch, 2018, *World Report 2018: Afghanistan*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/afghanistan>
- › Minority Rights Group International, [No date], *Profile: Hazaras*, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/hazaras/>
- › Minority Rights Group International, [No date], *Profile: Pashtuns*, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/pashtuns/>
- › Minority Rights Group International, [No date], *Profile: Tajiks*, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/tajiks/>
- › Minority Rights Group International, [No date], *Profile: Uzbeks and Turkmens*, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/uzbeks-and-turkmens/>
- › United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), [2018], *Afghanistan: 2018 UNHCR country operations profile*, <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/4505>
- › United States Department of State, 2018, *2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Afghanistan*, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277519.pdf>

## Contact Information

For more information about New Zealand's Refugee Quota programme, or New Zealand's Refugee Policy, please contact:

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New Zealand Immigration  
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If you require further information or support on any health or education issue for the refugees recently resettled in your region, please contact the following specialist agencies located at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre:

### Refugees as Survivors New Zealand (RASNZ)

(09) 270 0870  
[www.rasnz.co.nz](http://www.rasnz.co.nz)

### Refugee Health Screening Service

(09) 276 6719  
[www.refugeehealth.govt.nz](http://www.refugeehealth.govt.nz)

### AUT – Centre for Refugee Education

(09) 921 9366  
[www.aut.ac.nz/community/aut-in-the-community/centre-for-refugee-education](http://www.aut.ac.nz/community/aut-in-the-community/centre-for-refugee-education)

### INZ Resettlement Team

(09) 928 2648  
[www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz)

### New Zealand Red Cross

0800 RED CROSS  
[www.redcross.org.nz](http://www.redcross.org.nz)

*Please note: No personal information will be released without written consent from the client.*