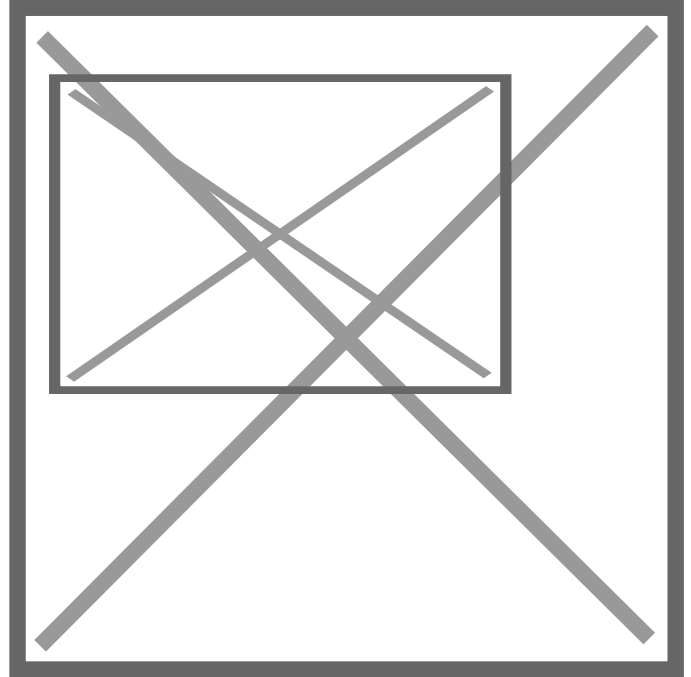


Army provides Afghan refugee assistance



The Salvation Army in Peshawar, Pakistan is working to aid those who have fled their homes in Afghanistan. Thousands of refugees are streaming into Pakistan via the Khyber Pass.

Major Mike Olsen, international emergency services coordinator, reports The Salvation Army is launching a program to provide assistance to Afghan refugees in the troubled border community of Peshawar, situated only 35 miles from Afghanistan at the eastern portal of the Khyber Pass.

A team of Salvation Army officers is currently in Peshawar seeking property from which to serve the thousands of refugees not living in the established refugee camps.

According to Commissioner Shaw Clifton, territorial commander, "The conflict in Afghanistan has increased the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Many are destitute. They include children and the elderly." He explains that many arrive sick or injured through the fighting and bombing. "The Army's instinctive reaction is to try by any and all means to meet this need. We shall be seeking out the poorest, most urgent cases and doing all we can with the resources at our disposal."

Funds have been advanced from IHQ to acquire a distribution site and purchase much-needed food and supplies. Pashto-speaking Salvationists in Pakistan are being assigned to Peshawar to supervise the humanitarian response and establish a permanent Salvation Army presence in this troubled community.

Five thousand warm, knitted sweaters are being flown in from a Salvation Army knitting mill in Bangladesh, sponsored by The Salvation Army in Norway.

The Salvation Army in Singapore is assembling two large shipping containers of blankets to assist in the effort.

"We were repeatedly faced with the plight of the refugees living outside the camps in this wild frontier city," said Olsen after returning to London from Pakistan, where he joined with local staff to meet with government officials and conduct a needs assessment survey.

"The Salvation Army in Pakistan has the will and the capacity to do a major humanitarian work there," he said. "It's now our job to help them get the resources to make it meaningful." An advance of nearly \$300,000 has been dispatched to launch the refugee project. The program will be expanded as more funds become available.

The international emergency services office at IHQ is providing technical assistance and international coordination.

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The Salvation Army's work in Pakistan began in 1883 and has more than 60,000 members in the predominantly Islamic nation. Territorial headquarters is in Lahore.