

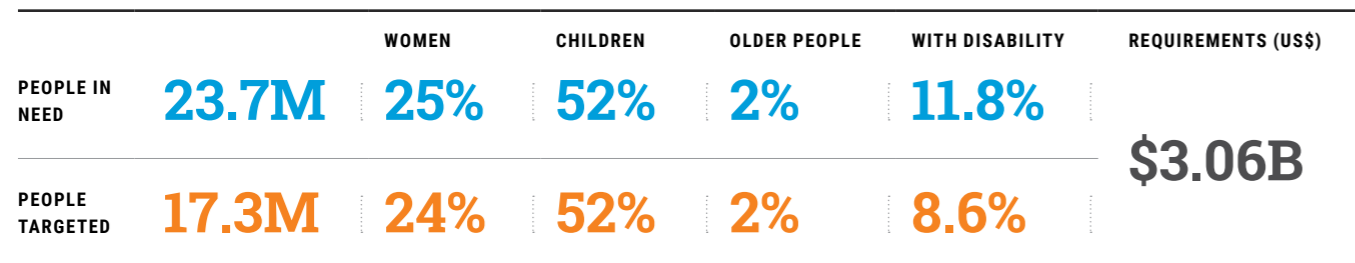
HUMANITARIAN **NEEDS** **AND RESPONSE PLAN** AFGHANISTAN

HUMANITARIAN
PROGRAMME CYCLE
2024
ISSUED DECEMBER 2023

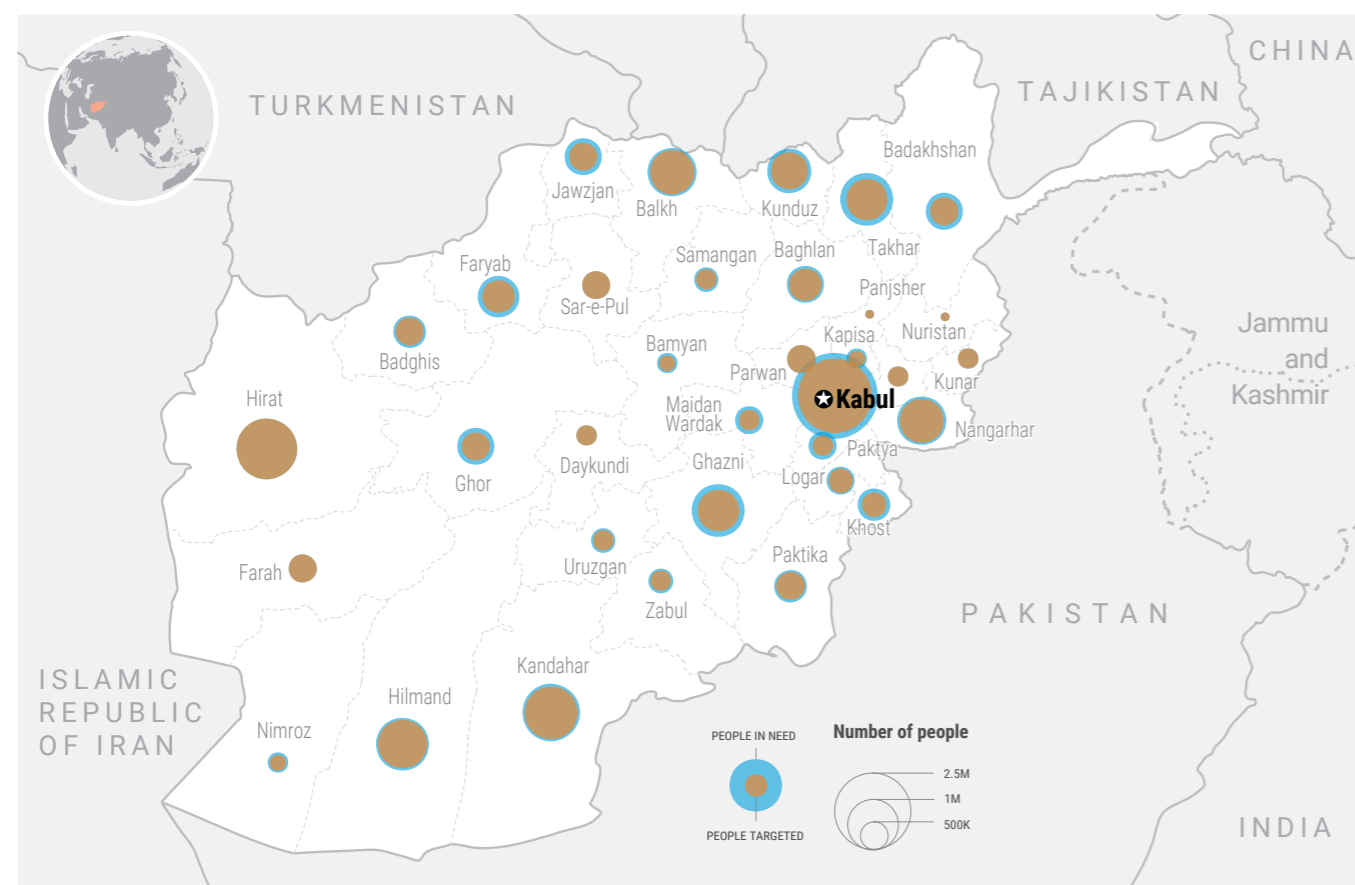


At a glance

People in need and people targeted by sex, age and disability



M: Million / B: Billion



People in need and people targeted by sector/cluster

SECTOR / CLUSTER	PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	% OF PEOPLE TARGETED
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	21.1	9.7	46%
Protection	20.8	6.0	29%
Health	17.9	12.8	71%
Food Security and Agriculture	15.8	15.8	100%
Education	8.0	1.4	17%
Nutrition	7.4	5.6	76%
Emergency Shelter and NFI	6.6	1.7	26%

Executive summary

Afghanistan continues to grapple with the consequences of four decades of conflict, entrenched poverty, climate-induced crises, and barriers to women’s equality and participation in public life. The economic downturn following the political transition in August 2021 – which coincided with a suspension of large-scale bilateral development cooperation on which the Republic depended – has exacerbated underlying fragilities, including limited livelihood opportunities for both urban and rural populations alike. Despite the significant reduction in active hostilities, Afghanistan remains primarily a protection emergency characterized by high-levels of protracted displacement, mine and explosive ordnance contamination, restrictions to freedom of movement, increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV), child labour, early marriage and increased needs for mental health and psychosocial support. At the same time, despite the withdrawal of international forces, Afghanistan is not immune to geo-political and regional dynamics with 1.9 million Afghans having returned to the country so far in 2023¹, including more than 471,000 from Pakistan since 15 September.² Additionally, severe climate change effects have precipitated a widespread water crisis that leaves no corner of the country untouched, and has generated new food, health and nutrition needs. Lying on numerous fault lines, Afghanistan also remains vulnerable to earthquakes, having experienced nearly 400 in the past year³ including three 6.3 magnitude shocks in Herat Province in October, contributing to increased shelter needs. The exclusion of 1.4 million girls from secondary school, combined with low literacy rates overall, means that education needs persist and remain a critical priority.

In 2024, an estimated 23.7 million people—more than half of Afghanistan’s population—are projected to require humanitarian assistance. The fragile Afghan economy, heavily reliant on humanitarian aid

and remittances, faces challenges exacerbated by the exclusion of women from economic activities. Restrictive policies continue to hinder women’s ability to access assistance and services, as well as negatively impact international community engagement and donor contributions. Bureaucratic hurdles and efforts to influence humanitarian programming, including restrictions on the participation of Afghan women staff, have contributed to delays in project registration and implementation, requiring time-consuming negotiations and workarounds to overcome.

The latter part of 2023 witnessed the return of hundreds of thousands of undocumented Afghans and refugees from Pakistan, triggered by a new policy affecting an estimated 1.3 million Afghans. This returnee crisis has strained border points and posed additional demands on limited resources among host communities, necessitating increased humanitarian assistance. A surge in returns is expected to continue, with projections indicating over 1.46 million Afghans from Pakistan and Iran will return in 2024.

Many returnees are arriving in areas already facing protracted displacement. Forty years of pervasive conflict has resulted in multiple waves of forced displacement within Afghanistan and across its borders, while recurring natural disasters have prompted further displacement. While conflict-related displacement has drastically decreased since 2021, an estimated 6.3 million individuals—roughly 1 in 7 Afghans—are experiencing long-term displacement, many who left their homes as early as 2012.⁴ This is the largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Asia and the second largest worldwide.⁵ Protracted IDP households often live in Informal Settlements (ISETs) – displacement sites with no written, legal agreement for land usage – usually in or near major urban centres. Many ISETs households



KABUL, CENTRAL AFGHANISTAN

AOAD health Clinic for Victims Assistance. Marjaan, 67 years-old. When he was 22, walked on a pressure landmine in Balkh province. Doctor Hameed Ullah, is testing a new lighter prosthesis.

Photo: Olivier Jobard;

are at risk of eviction and in 2023 there were multiple incidents of threatened and actual forced eviction in predominantly urban-located informal settlements. The existing displacement and high numbers of returns highlights the need for durable solutions that support voluntary return, local integration, or resettlement elsewhere.

Afghanistan also faces a climate-induced emergency, with the country in the midst of its third consecutive year of drought-like conditions, following the worst drought in 30 years in 2021/2022. Rising temperatures are rapidly altering precipitation patterns across the country, diminishing people's access to water. Increases in drought related shocks were reported in 15 out of 34 provinces, with the highest increases reported in Parwan, Kunar, Baghdis, Baghlan, and Samangan compared to last year.⁶ Anticipated El Niño conditions in late 2023 and early 2024, which may offer some opportunities for drought recovery, also pose risk of flooding and crop pests. Water and sanitation conditions are sub-optimal, with little prospect of immediate improvement.

The 2024 humanitarian response in Afghanistan prioritizes the comprehensive needs of 23.7 million people, of which 17.3 million will be targeted for assistance. Key priorities include providing food aid, safe drinking water, healthcare, and education; and addressing acute water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs. The protection of vulnerable groups,

especially women, girls, boys and those living with disabilities, remains paramount, involving safe spaces, legal support, psychosocial services, and long-term resilience initiatives.

Limited funding has and will continue to force humanitarian actors to prioritize those most vulnerable and in need, including those living in the same community and will require context and conflict sensitive programming to manage. Greater delineation between humanitarian and basic human needs interventions, including when and where they begin, will also be crucial in delivering an efficient and effective response, especially to returnee caseloads. Deterioration of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, water and sanitation systems, roads, bridges and dams, has a compounding impact on humanitarian needs, necessitating investments in sustainable livelihoods and infrastructure to build resilience.

Realizing a transformative shift from traditional humanitarian assistance to a focusing on basic human needs and longer-term, more sustainable programming, will require efforts that centre on deepening the linkages between humanitarian and development action. Without this, it will not be possible to move from repetitive (annual) cycles of humanitarian relief to greater self-sufficiency of communities to secure and maintain their own wellbeing and livelihoods.

Table of contents

- 02 At a glance**
- 03 Executive summary**
- 07 Part 1: Humanitarian needs**
- 08 1.1 Crisis overview
- 15 1.2 Analysis of humanitarian needs and risks
- 19 1.3 People in need breakdown
- 20 Part 2: Humanitarian response plan**
- 21 2.1 Humanitarian response strategy
- 23 2.2 Boundaries of the Humanitarian Response and contributions to basic human needs
- 24 2.3 Strategic objectives
- 28 2.4 Planning assumptions, operational capacity, and access
- 30 2.5 Inclusive & quality programming
- 33 2.6 Cost of the response
- 33 2.7 Multi-purpose cash assistance
- 34 2.8 Monitoring
- 36 Part 3: Cluster/sector needs and response**
- 37 3.1 Education
- 39 3.2 Emergency Shelter and NFI
- 42 3.3 Food Security and Agriculture (FSAC)
- 45 3.4 Health
- 48 3.5 Nutrition
- 51 3.6 Protection
- 53 3.6.1 Protection: Child Protection
- 55 3.6.2 Protection: General Protection
- 57 3.6.3 Protection: Gender-Based Violence
- 59 3.6.4 Protection: Housing, Land and Property
- 61 3.6.5 Protection: Mine Action
- 63 3.7 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- 66 3.8 Coordination and Common Services
- 68 Part 4: Refugee needs and response plan**
- 69 4.1 Refugee Response Plan
- 72 Acronyms**
- 73 End notes**

Part 1: Humanitarian needs

HIRAT/WESTERN AFGHANISTAN

A heartbroken 80-year-old man sits in front of the ruins of his home, completely flattened by the devastating earthquakes that struck Herat province.
Photo: IOM/Marjan Wafa



1.1 Crisis overview

Two years have elapsed since the Taliban De-Facto Authorities (DfA) assumed control in 2021, with Afghanistan remaining caught in the aftermath of decades of war, recurrent and now-prolonged drought, and escalating poverty. The effects of political transition, economic contraction, and diminished development assistance have amplified protection risks and humanitarian needs at the household-level, with women and girls bearing the brunt of the impact.

Due to the multifaceted challenges facing Afghanistan, the humanitarian landscape remains complex, addressing it requires concerted efforts from humanitarian and development actors, recognizing the unique features of the Afghan context.

Governance and Infrastructure

The current government in Afghanistan is internationally unrecognized and lacks a clear constitutional basis. DfA rule, which is based on a strict interpretation of Sharia Law to govern Afghanistan, is enforced through extensive social and cultural policies that restrict the rights of women and girls, place severe limitations on freedom of expression and assembly, and in many cases direct violence toward individuals with dissenting views. Following the political transition, there have been at least 800 documented instances of extrajudicial killing, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests and detention and enforced disappearance of former government officials and former Afghan National Defense and Security forces.⁸ UNAMA documented 1,600 violations in detention of detainee rights, of which 49 per cent comprised torture or ill-treatment of detainees. Furthermore, journalists, activists, and members of minority communities have faced threats, harassment, violence, arrests and arbitrary detentions, raising serious concerns about the state of human rights in Afghanistan.

Women and girls have faced significant setbacks in terms of access to education and employment, with many subjected to forced marriages and other forms

of gender-based violence. Since August 2021, the DfA have issued more than 40 directives restricting women's movement and ability to participate in education, the workforce, economy, and public life.⁹ In December 2022, the DfA banned Afghan women from working for national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), later extending the ban to Afghan women working for the UN in April 2023. While confronting and directly contravening humanitarian principles, these directives have been inconsistently applied, with humanitarian partners experiencing a degree of practical cooperation with the DfA which has enabled Afghan women to continue working across the entire spectrum of the response, albeit with some geographical differences, additional expenses and labour-intensive negotiations to secure local authorizations.

Limited state capacity to manage challenges, including natural disasters and climate change, further complicates the efforts of humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors to meet the diverse needs of the population. Inadequate investment in infrastructure following the political transition and subsequent reductions in international development assistance, present challenges across all sectors, affecting water infrastructure, agricultural support systems, dams, flood protections, public health, education facilities, electrical and natural gas supplies, and roads. Deteriorating infrastructure, non-operational equipment, and inadequate maintenance of facilities at Kabul International Airport pose a significant hazard for inbound and outbound movement within the country.

These challenges come as Afghanistan faces increased demand for services – the consequence of rapid population growth, continued high-levels of population movement and urbanization – and dwindling resources. Already, the capacity and coverage of basic services, such as healthcare, safe drinking water and education assistance, is inadequate to meet the needs of 23.7 million people.

Security

The security landscape in Afghanistan has dramatically changed since August 2021, with a significant decrease in active fighting; concomitant improvements

in physical access for humanitarian actors; a reduction in conflict-related shocks to 2 per cent in 2023, down from 60 per cent in 2021;¹⁰ and a significant decrease in civilian casualties. Nevertheless, pockets of armed clashes persist between the National Resistance Front and DfA forces, concentrated almost exclusively in Panjshir Province, along with periodic attacks by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs), such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in northern provinces bordering Pakistan. The threat posed by the Islamic State of Khorasan (ISK) is also unlikely to be eradicated, and while no meaningful expansion in territorial control is foreseen, they are expected to retain their capacity to carry out mass casualty incidents. Indeed, while the overall number of attacks, perpetuated by ISK and undetermined actors, has declined since mid-August 2020¹¹, those occurring since then resulted in more civilian casualties, suggesting an increased lethality, UNAMA reports.¹²

Despite the overall decrease in civilian casualties since the political transition, deliberate attacks employing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continue to be a leading cause of civilian harm. Between August 2021 and May 2023, UNAMA recorded 3,774 civilian casualties, 75 per cent of which were caused by indiscriminate IED attacks in populated areas, including in places of worship, schools, and markets.¹³ Unexploded ordnance and landmines were the second-leading cause of civilian casualties during the period, demonstrating the continued threat that explosive hazards pose to the physical and mental wellbeing of the civilian population, affecting land use, impeding development and generating psychological fear among communities. Afghanistan has one of the highest levels of explosive hazard contamination in the world, with more than 60 people – mostly children – killed and maimed every month.¹⁴ While the legacy of IED contamination in Afghanistan begins before 2001, more recent conflict has continued to worsen the situation, with Uruzgan, Kunduz, Hilmand, Kandahar, Kunar, Badghis, Faryab, Nangarhar, Ghazni, Farah, Maidan Wardak, and Samangan provinces among the most severely impacted.

Households dependent on agriculture-based livelihoods, including farmers, shepherds and herders,

are particularly at risk of the threat posed by explosive hazards, as are asylum-seekers, refugees, vulnerable migrants and returnee populations that lack knowledge about the areas they are returning to. Based on Mine Action projections, 3.9 million people (including people living within 1 km of explosive hazards) will need mine action services in 2024.

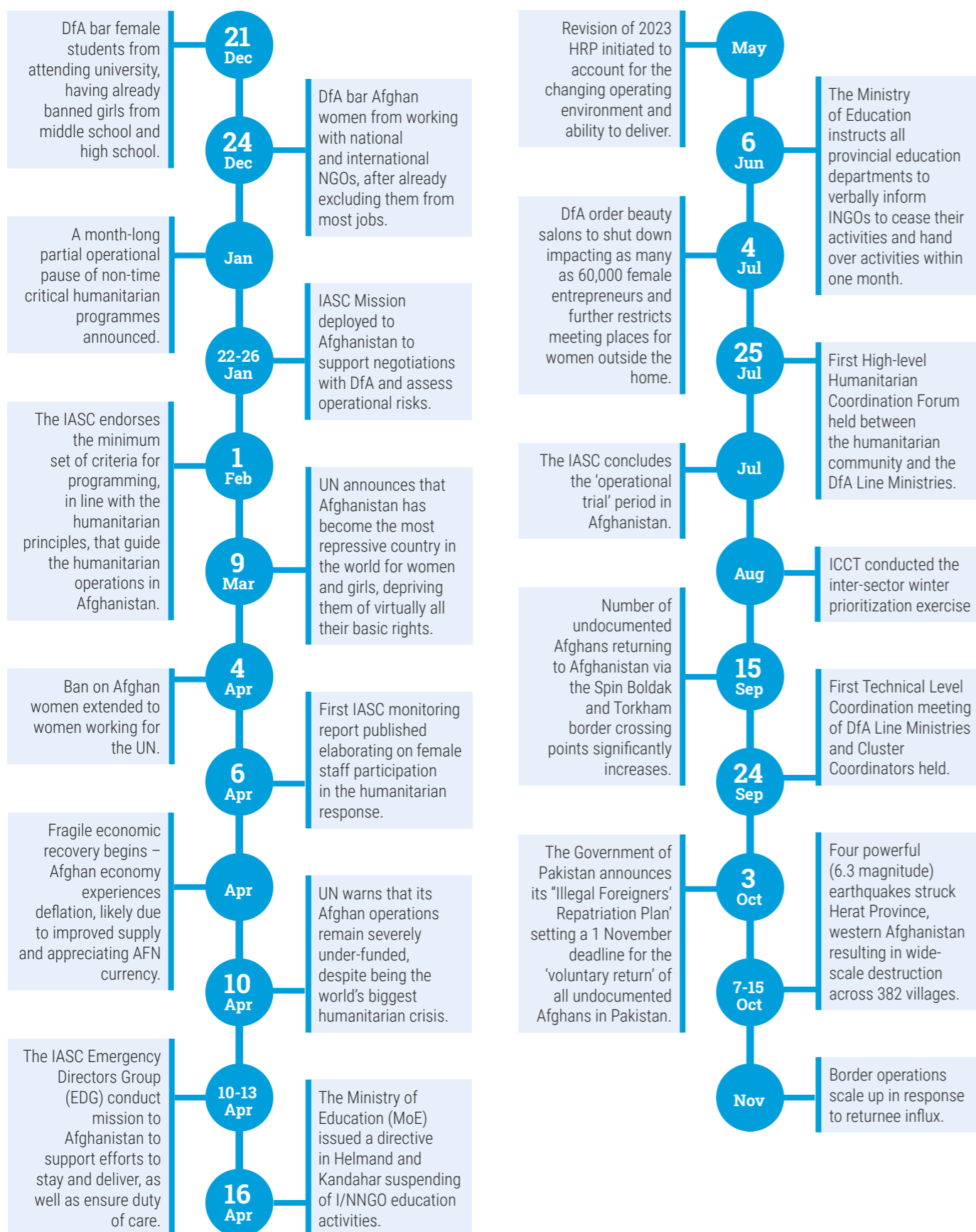
Fragile Economic Recovery

Financial hardship brought about by economic decline, the reverberating effects of forty years of conflict, and recurrent drought-like conditions are the predominant drivers of humanitarian need in Afghanistan today. The World Bank reports that nearly half of the population—48 per cent—lives in poverty.¹⁵ Increased labour demands have outpaced supply resulting in a doubling of unemployment rates and a 25 per cent increase in underemployment. With one in three young males currently unemployed and women facing limitations to the right to work, both economic well-being and social cohesion are damaged. Fragile economic conditions are expected to continue contributing to acute food insecurity in 2024, affecting approximately 15.8 million people.

Following a 20.7 per cent contraction in 2021, the economy contracted by a further 6.2 per cent in 2022.¹⁶ The economy has somewhat stabilized since then with decreased inflation in 2023, an easing of supply constraints, and wider availability of market goods. Between 1 January and 23 October 2023, the Afghani (AFN) appreciated by 20 per cent against the US dollar, making the Afghani the best performing currency in the world in the third quarter of 2023.¹⁷ However, these macro-economic improvements have not translated into better outcomes for all Afghans, with 80 per cent of families earning less than USD \$1 a day per household member, leaving the vast majority of the population highly susceptible to shocks.¹⁸ In 2023, 65 per cent of families reported directly experiencing an economic shock, a 20 per cent increase compared to 2022, the Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) reports. Unemployment rates remain high, particularly among Afghan women, with 58 per cent of women household members lacking employment opportunities. Moreover, women-headed households

Timeline of events

December 2022 - November 2023



are more reliant on unstable sources of income – such as daily labour, loans, and donations – to make ends meet. Likewise, the WoAA revealed that women-headed households and recent returnees are showing a worsening of needs compared to 2022 and are more likely to resort to emergency coping strategies. In 2023, 31 per cent of women-headed households and 34 per cent of recent returnees utilised emergency coping strategies to meet their basic needs, compared to the national household average of 22 per cent.

Food Security

While 2023 witnessed marginal improvements in food insecurity following the provision of substantial levels of food and livelihoods assistance over the 2022/2023 winter, Afghanistan continues to experience high rates of hunger and malnutrition, amid difficult climate conditions, limited income generating opportunities for its growing population and ongoing barriers to basic services. In 2024, an estimated 15.8 million people will experience crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity through March (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC 3+)).¹⁹ The onset of El Niño in January 2024 is expected to increase agricultural availability and production, with above-average rainfall and a close-to average harvest anticipating during the coming year.²⁰ However, households will still be recovering from years of drought-like conditions and will remain highly vulnerable. Ultimately, food security improvements will remain dependent on socio-economic conditions, as well as the availability of seed and fertilizers to support agricultural production at the right time and in the right locations.

Protection Crisis

Despite reduced conflict, Afghanistan remains a protection crisis, intensified by climate change-induced water scarcity. Women and girls continue to face heightened protection needs as a result of targeted policies which seek to restrict their movement and limit their involvement in life outside the home. Other protection risks include GBV, mines and unexploded ordnance contamination; unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement and forced displacement; risks to children including family and child separation, early marriage, and child labour;

and psychological distress and emotional abuse. In 2023, following the bans that decreased access of women and girls to humanitarian and other services, the number of women and girls at heightened risk of GBV increased 30 per cent from 10.1 million to 13.1 million. In the absence of large-scale conflict, explosive ordnance—IEDs, explosive remnants of war, and landmines— remain leading causes of death. Climate and natural-disasters have contributed to internal and cross-border migrations, leaving many on the move searching for work, contributing to family separation. Moreover, child labour and marriage rates stand at approximately 19 and 39 per cent, respectively.²¹ The humanitarian crisis and its various stressors has had a severe impact on psychosocial wellbeing; nearly 60 per cent of households reported that a member of their household has experienced psychological distress, according to Protection Cluster monitoring.²²

Further, the diverse ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan face continued risks of violence, repression, discrimination, and marginalization, mirroring historical patterns. DfA directives targeting the media have also contributed to a narrowing of civil society space, while human rights violations against former government personnel and armed force members continue to be documented.

In addition to gender, inequities by location, wealth, and legal status are acute, as are those related to age, ability, ethnicity, civil status, and sexual orientation. Together, these intersecting identities shape people's access (or lack thereof) to basic services, decision making, representation, information, resources and protection.

Population growth, internal displacement and migration, as well as high rates of cross-border returns, are placing additional pressure on already limited resources at the community level, especially livelihood opportunities and basic services, while also contributing to increased protection risks for the most vulnerable groups. Afghanistan's population is estimated to pass 44.5 million in 2024, up from 36.8 million just five years ago, with 52 per cent of the population under 18 years old – one of the highest youth populations in the world. The population is

expected to grow at 3.3 per cent per annum until 2030, one of the steepest rates in the region.

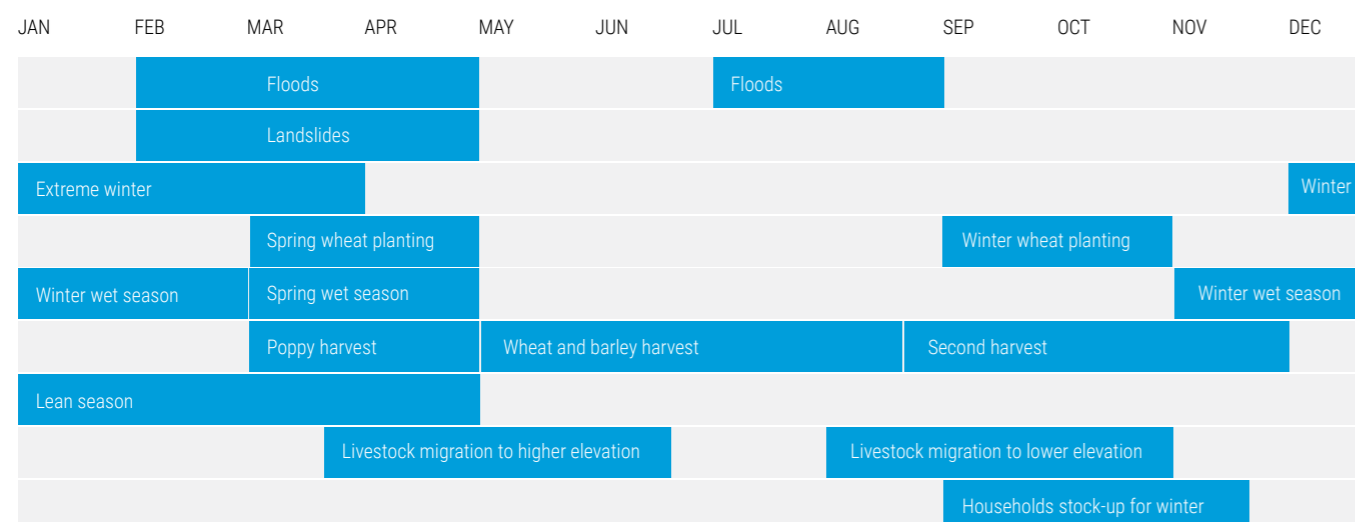
Afghanistan's population faces increased strain on limited resources, livelihoods, and basic services. Additional population influxes, such as the one triggered by the forced and spontaneous return of undocumented Afghans from Pakistan, will only further compound an already fragile situation, while the unpredictability of movements across the Iranian border adds to uncertainties. In 2024, more than 978,000 Afghans are projected to return from Iran, with the majority returning to Herat, Kabul, Kunduz, and Mazar-e-Sharif.

Furthermore, the threat of eviction remains omnipresent across several locations in Afghanistan, including in Badghis, Herat Kabul, Kandahar and Nangarhar, especially for those said to be residing on state land, increasing protection risks for protracted IDPs, conflict-affected populations, and residents of informal settlements, necessitating long-term reintegration solutions. Overall, an estimated 390,000 households reside in nearly 900 ISETs across the country.²³

Environment and Natural Disasters

Afghanistan is on the frontlines of climate change, ranking among the countries most at risk of crises and disasters due to their increasing frequency, intensity and severity, exposing millions of people to critical

Seasonality of events and risks



households reporting difficulties in accessing water, up from 48 per cent in 2021.²⁹ Rural households are also having to travel further to meet their water needs – spending an average of 17 minutes to fetch water – while 42 percent of rural women in male-headed households cannot access water at all.³⁰ Meanwhile, urban households are having to pay twice as much for water as than in previous years (up from AFN 158 to AFN 317). Moreover, multiple districts are now in catastrophic need of water and sanitation, where there is little prospect of near-term improvement. While El Niño may bring relief, it also poses sudden-onset disaster risks, requiring substantial infrastructure adaptations such as disaster risk prevention infrastructure.

Afghanistan's susceptibility to earthquakes adds to the complexity, with recent seismic events underscoring the continuous risk. Located in a seismically active region, Afghanistan is prone to regular shocks, including those capable of causing substantial damage to homes and other critical civilian infrastructure, with densely populated urban areas such as Kabul and Jalalabad especially vulnerable. The vast majority of buildings in Kabul, and other Afghan cities, are adobe and masonry; approximately 30 per cent of these could be expected to collapse if expose to severe shaking, and 60 per cent would suffer damage.³¹ In October 2023, a series of three 6.3 magnitude earthquakes struck Herat province within the span of eight days, destroying and or causing major damage to around 40,000 homes and leaving 275,000 people in need of urgent shelter support.³² While unpredictable by their very nature, in 2024, humanitarian actors project that natural disasters, including floods, landslides and earthquakes, could affect 180,000 people.

Women and Girls

De-facto authority policies have effectively marginalized women and girls' participation in education, employment and public life, while giving rise to additional protection needs. The restrictions imposed by the DfA have validated traditional gender norms and patriarchal culture, which have long reinforced discrimination against women and girls, increasing their vulnerability and leaving them

disproportionately affected. Since the ban on female secondary school attendance was imposed, only 3 per cent of girls attend secondary school, while among boys aged 13-18, only 44 per cent are receiving a secondary education.³³

Institutionalizing these norms has led to increasing obstacles for women to access formal and informal legal mechanisms. Women and girls have become more vulnerable to greater disrespect, violence, and abusive social practices, and face increased family-and community-imposed restrictions. Due to restrictions in their ability to participate in the workforce and economy, women are becoming more dependent on humanitarian support. This has created a cycle of escalating needs, which in turn has further limited women's economic capacities.

Peoples Priorities

To inform and support a people-centered response, the HNRP has incorporated priorities identified by Afghans To inform and support a people-centred response, priorities identified by Afghans have been incorporated into needs analysis and response planning through household and community surveys. Communities in Afghanistan have highlighted food as a top need which requires addressing, in addition to healthcare services, education, and WASH, according to the Afghanistan Community Voices and Accountability Platform. Nearly half of households stressed the importance of livelihoods support, followed by sufficient healthcare and access to safe drinking water and sanitation services. Together, these findings underscore the multi-dimensional and interwoven humanitarian and development challenges now confronting the population.

Community feedback mechanisms continue to capture concerns related to women and girls' access to education, basic services, and livelihoods opportunities. Particular attention must be paid to meeting the information needs of women and girls, and their ability to access appropriate feedback and complaints channels.

Communities also highlighted the need for information on beneficiary selection and eligibility criteria to ensure

Context, impact and humanitarian needs

Crisis context

Conflict

Only 2 per cent of Afghan households were affected by conflict in 2023.

Economy

Since the takeover, the Afghan economy has shrunk by 25 percent, unemployment has more than doubled and underemployment has increased by one quarter, with rates significantly higher among women.

Decrees / restrictions

Since August 2021, the DfA have issued more than 200 directives directly impacting humanitarian response.

Poverty

Poverty affects one in every two Afghans. 80 percent of Afghan households live on less than USD \$1 a day per household member.

Shocks

Pakistan border crisis

On October 3, the Government of Pakistan announced a new policy targeting approximately 1.3 million undocumented Afghans.

Drought / climate change

Three years of consecutive La Niña conditions have led to drought and floods, threatening livelihoods. Nearly three-quarters of rural communities experienced severe drought and over 21,000 Afghans were affected by floods in 2023.

Access issues

Access-related challenges have increased three-fold since 2019, with more than 1,600 access incidents reported between January and November 2023

Earthquakes

In October 2023, a series of four 6.3 magnitude earthquakes in Herat Province affected 275,000 people across nine districts. More than 30,000 homes were severely damaged or destroyed.

Impact

Cross-border returns

Since 15 September, 471,000 undocumented Afghans have returned via Spin Boldak and Torkham border points. More than 1.4 million returnees (from Iran and Pakistan) are projected in 2024.

Access to water

More than one-quarter of Afghan households reported relying on unimproved water sources, with reliance on unprotected wells and springs, and surface water.

Female headed households more vulnerable

One in ten women-headed households reported marriage of daughters earlier than intended.

Food insecurity and malnutrition

More three million children under five are malnourished. One in three Afghans are projected to face emergency level of food insecurity in 2024 (IPC 3 and above).

Humanitarian needs

Cross-border returns

98 per cent on Afghan returnees arriving from Pakistan are highly vulnerable and in need to humanitarian assistance.

Protection concerns

Inequitable WASH services contribute to protection concerns, with 64 per cent of females facing barriers and GBV risks during water collection.

Access to adequate shelter

Nearly one-third of households in Afghanistan live in inadequate shelter.

Reduced coping strategies

Nearly one in three female-headed households rely on 'emergency' livelihood coping strategies.

that the most vulnerable groups, including women headed households and persons living with disabilities, are not left behind. Community engagement, consultation and information sharing with communities should continue to be strengthened to ensure transparency in aid distribution.

Priority needs

as expressed by people in rural areas

91% **46%** **42%**

Food Healthcare Livelihoods

as expressed by people in urban areas

83% **60%** **31%**

Food Livelihoods Drinking water

Most Affected Groups

Exposure to shocks is felt across all population groups, highlighting the need for a response that is targeted accordingly. In the assessment of vulnerability, various indicators, such as income per household member, indebtedness, livelihood coping strategies, Food Consumption Score (FCS), reliance on unimproved water sources, adequacy of shelter, and school attendance, were utilized for comparison. Overall, the most vulnerable groups in Afghanistan include women and girls, recent returnees, households with a member with a disability, and rural households.

Despite improved food security due to lower commodity prices and a robust harvest season, certain households, including women-headed and recent returnees face ongoing challenges. Rural households, in particular, exhibit vulnerability across several indicators, with a higher reliance on unimproved water sources and lower income.

Women-headed households emerge as highly vulnerable, resorting to emergency coping strategies more frequently than male-headed households, and facing a diverse array of challenges including early marriage, lower Food Consumption Score, and

higher child labour cases. Similarly, households with disabilities experience heightened vulnerability, marked by higher debt levels, increased reliance on negative coping mechanisms, and prevalent child labour.

1.2 Analysis of humanitarian needs and risks

In 2024, an estimated 23.7 million people – including 5.9 million women and 5.4 million men – will require humanitarian assistance to survive, underscoring the critical nature of the situation. The complexity of recurring small-scale acute emergencies in the context of a deeper, more protracted crisis, means that the nature and severity of needs manifests in varied ways for different people, across all sectors, and according to different drivers.

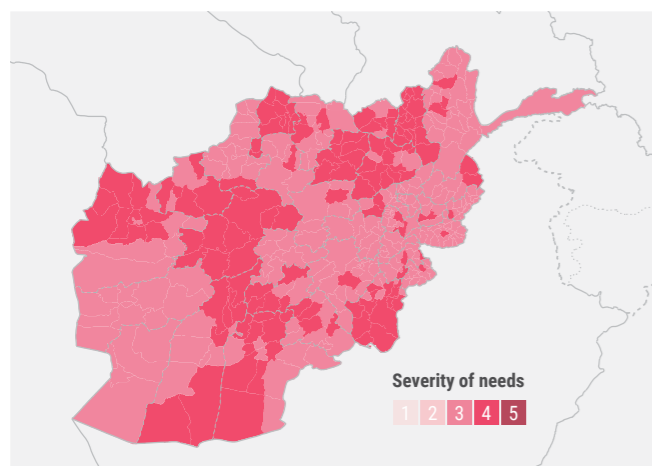
The 2024 Afghanistan HNRP places people at the centre of the humanitarian needs analysis. Rather than simply presenting people's needs across the whole of Afghanistan on the basis of sectors alone (food, wash, shelter, health, nutrition, protection) this analysis provides a more representative overview of how different people experience the humanitarian crisis.

Women and Girls

While overall needs have decreased slightly, restrictions imposed on women and girls have had far-reaching implications on their ability to access assistance and basic services. For example, in a recent Afghanistan Community Voices and Accountability Platform survey, 60 per cent of respondents indicated that their ability to access humanitarian assistance had changed following the bans on Afghan women aid workers, citing a lack of women service providers, either in the delivery of assistance (29 per cent) to women-headed households, or in needs assessments of women beneficiaries (25 per cent).³⁴

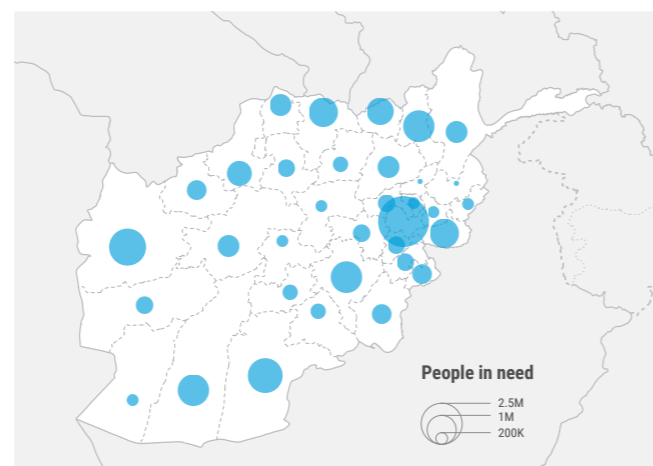
Intersectoral severity of needs

by admin 2 (in 2024)



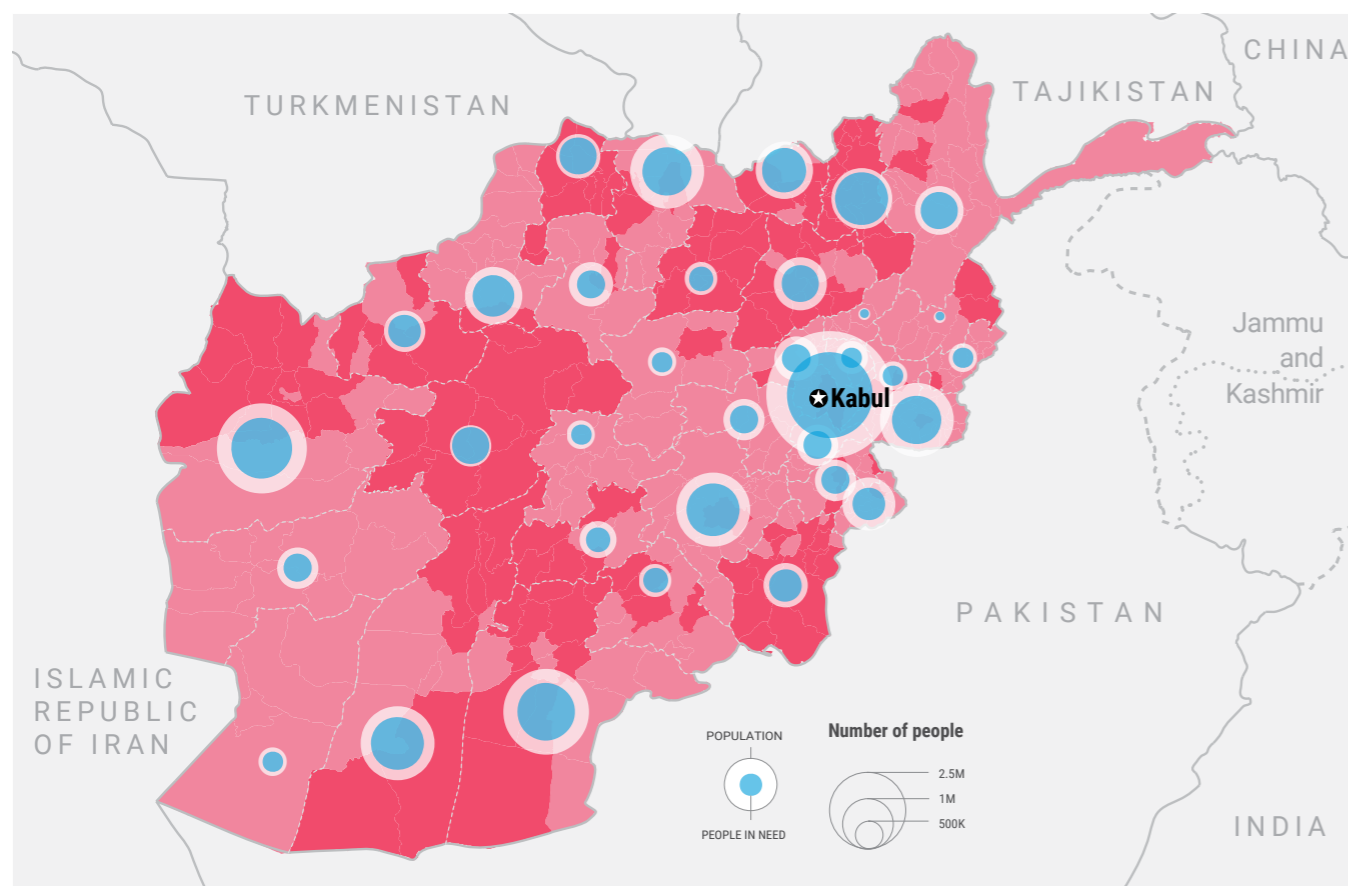
Distribution of people in need

by admin 1 (in 2024)



Intersectoral severity of needs and distribution of people in need

at admin 1 level



Intersectoral severity classification ● Minimal ● Stress ● Severe ● Extreme ● Catastrophic

This has contributed to greater levels of vulnerability and exposed them to additional risks, especially for women-headed households or women-only households who do not have male relatives to serve as mahrams or to attend distributions and collect assistance on behalf of the family. Overall, women-headed households are the most vulnerable population group in Afghanistan today, with a higher reliance on ‘emergency’ livelihood coping strategies, increased reports of early marriage of daughters, and higher rates of food insecurity and child labour when compared to male-headed households. More than 1.4 million girls are directly affected by the ban on female secondary education.³⁵

Women-led organizations, which had in the past been a lifeline for women, also face major administrative impediments targeting their ability to provide services to women and girls. The exclusion of women from economic participation hampers recovery efforts, while deflation and economic sensitivity to shocks persist. Furthermore, this negatively impacts global engagement and donor contributions to life-saving initiatives.

Afghan Returnees

From October 2023 onwards Afghanistan has experienced a massive increase in the arrival of undocumented and undocumented Afghans from Pakistan. Growing tensions between the two neighbouring countries, intensified by a spate of terrorist attacks in Pakistan attributed to the Afghan community and an increase in TTP assaults, have led to a renewed repatriation effort by the Pakistan government which has warned it will forcefully expel more than 1.3 million Afghans by July 2024. Between 15 September and late December 2023, some 471,000 documented refugees (27,500) and undocumented Afghans (414,300) crossed the border, with numbers increasing from less than 200 per day in early October to more than 25,000 by early November. In 2024, more than 423,000 additional undocumented Afghan returnees and 60,000 documented Afghan refugees are projected to return from Pakistan, including an anticipated spike in forced returns in advance of the Pakistan elections.

In many cases, returning families are given as little as 24 hours to pack up their lives and businesses after spending decades in Pakistan. There are numerous reports of both documented refugees and undocumented Afghans being harassed, arbitrarily arrested and detained in Pakistan before being transferred to the border and deported. Many returnees are arriving in Afghanistan with few possessions, assets or social support networks, and have been left traumatized by their experience. The self-identified priority needs of Afghan returnees include livelihoods, advice and counselling, medical treatment, and access to education. Shelter needs are considerable among recent-returnee households with three out of four households facing shelter issues.

The surge in returns has overstretched existing services in return locations, including Kabul, Kandahar and Nangarhar, and severely hampered humanitarian capacity to adequately respond. Durable solutions and basic human needs investments in communities that are receiving returnees will be required to ensure longer-term assistance and service provision and to facilitate the prospect of reintegration at a minimum. Priority longer-term support includes rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, construction of transitional and permanent shelter, de-mining and provision of local livelihood opportunities. While the humanitarian response cannot address the underlying infrastructure or housing needs, it can provide a critical bridge to stabilise vulnerable people and communities and allow them to move out of immediate crisis.

Moreover, humanitarian partners will continue coordinating with basic human needs and durable solutions actors to facilitate information sharing, including assessment data, tracking of population movements and information on conditions in areas of displacement and return to strengthen joint analysis and planning for durable solutions. Humanitarian actors will also engage with communities and authorities to raise awareness and support efforts to find sustainable solutions for people, including by strengthening referrals of cases to durable solutions and basic human needs actors.

Persons Living with Disabilities

In the current humanitarian crisis, persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected, and face physical, communication, institutional and attitudinal barriers preventing them from meaningfully accessing life-saving assistance and developmental opportunities. Among those with disabilities in Afghanistan, approximately 14 per cent experience severe disability, with higher prevalence in the western region, central highlands and south-eastern region.³⁷ Moreover, decades of conflict have added to the number people with disability in Afghanistan. Unexploded ordnance (UXOs) or explosive remnants of war (ERW) have injured and potentially disabled over 44,000 individuals.³⁸

Households with a member with a disability face heightened vulnerability, exhibiting 25 per cent higher debt levels (AFN 59,876 vs the national average of AFN 46,530) and increased reliance on livelihood coping strategies (32 per cent vs 22 per cent of the national average). Child labour is also more prevalent in such households (23 per cent reported at least one boy working outside compared with 15 per cent of the national average).³⁹ Limited infrastructure accessibility, inadequate healthcare, discrimination, and stigma hinder their integration into society. Tailored

KANDAHAR, SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN

A deported family navigates heavy rain and floods on their way to the IOM transit center in Kandahar.
Photo: IOM/Osman Azizi



support, inclusive policies, improved healthcare, and societal awareness are essential for addressing their vulnerabilities and enabling comprehensive and meaningful integration into Afghan society.

Rural Households

Fragile economic conditions and three years of drought-like conditions have significantly impacted rural households, exhibiting vulnerability across multiple indicators. The share of rural households reporting barriers to accessing public services remains at high levels, amidst increasing quality concerns but improved market functionality. Rural populations particularly face availability barriers due to limited infrastructure, investing more time travelling to or waiting at public service points. Overall, 28 per cent of rural households rely on unimproved water sources (in contrast to 17 per cent of urban households) and have nearly 10 per cent lower income per person (AFN 1,651 vs AFN 1,802 among urban households), making them more susceptible to disease outbreaks and less resilient to economic shocks.⁴⁰

Climate and Natural Disaster Risks

Overall, it is expected that severe and unpredictable weather events and natural disasters will continue in 2024 and beyond due to the impact of climate change, with severe knock-on effects on infrastructure and agriculture, heightening the risks of displacement to

urban areas. Afghanistan, ranked globally as the sixth most vulnerable and least prepared country to adapt to climate change,⁴¹ faces concerning climate signals, notably a significant 1.8° Celsius increase in mean annual temperature from 1951 to 2010—double the global average.⁴² In 2023, natural disasters affected people in 26 out of 34 provinces.⁴³ The nation's susceptibility to earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides, and avalanches perpetuates an annual impact on an average of 200,000 individuals.

With anticipated El Niño conditions in late 2023 and early 2024, Afghanistan grapples with both promise and risk. The potential for above-normal rainfall presents an opportunity for drought recovery but simultaneously raises the specter of flooding and crop pests. At the same time, multiple districts in the Northern, Northeastern and Southern regions are exhibiting considerable WASH needs due to high drought stress, limited access to safe drinking water, low sanitation coverage, reported acute malnutrition, acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) outbreaks, and service gaps. Unfortunately, the prospects for near-term improvement in these areas remain bleak without sustained and high-value investments in WASH infrastructure, including sanitation systems and water resource management.

Compounding these challenges is the limited funding available to humanitarian actors, compelling them to undertake more rigorous prioritization, and delineate better between humanitarian and basic human needs activities. To that end, the 2024 Afghanistan needs analysis incorporated clear boundary setting by narrowing down the scope to core humanitarian activities and stricter targeting based on severity and vulnerability.

1.3 People in need breakdown

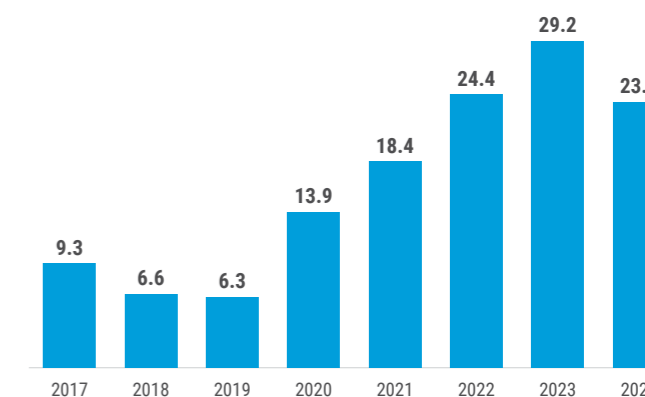
A total of 23.7 million people in Afghanistan are in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance in 2024, reflecting the fragile stabilization of the country's

situation, primarily due to the reduction in conflict, an improved harvest and climate outlook, related marginal decreases in food insecurity, and relative micro-economic and price stability.

Economic instability, drought-like conditions and the deteriorating rights of women and girls are the primary drivers of humanitarian needs in Afghanistan today. Needs have also been amplified in recent months by a set of major earthquakes in Herat Province in October and the increase in Afghan returns from Pakistan since mid-September. WASH needs, particularly lack of clean water, and protection are the largest drivers of sector-specific needs. The transition from provincial-level to district-level needs analysis and targeting for the 2024 HNRP, along with effective boundary settings and prioritization, has resulted in more granular understanding of the severity of needs, and informs more efficient targeting.

With humanitarian needs estimates approximately 20 per cent lower than in 2023, this year's analysis is based on a more rigorous methodology for estimating how many people require assistance and the severity of their needs. The reduction should in no way be interpreted as an 'improvement' in Afghanistan's humanitarian situation, which remains grave, but rather in the context of boundary setting and stricter interpretation of humanitarian needs. Making this distinction is particularly important in the context of Afghanistan where the protracted nature of the crisis has increasingly seen humanitarian actions – and, by extension, humanitarian financing – used to bridge gaps in public services such as basic healthcare and education.

People in need trends in millions (2017 - 2024)



Part 2: Humanitarian response plan

HIRAT, WESTERN AFGHANISTAN

Humanitarian aid for earthquake-affected areas in Hirat.
Photo: OCHA/ Sayed Habib Bidell



2.1 Humanitarian response strategy

US\$3.06B
Required to support 17.3M people

In 2024, Afghanistan will continue to face complex humanitarian challenges necessitating a strategic and comprehensive response. This plan prioritizes response to the critical needs of the 17.3 million Afghan people, considering factors such as a deteriorating protection environment; external factors which risk triggering a sudden onset-crisis, be it natural or man-made; and water scarcity and ongoing food security issues. The primary focus in 2024 will be on providing life-saving assistance including food, safe drinking water, healthcare, and support for education. Moreover, a central tenet of the response is the protection of vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. Despite operational challenges and funding constraints, humanitarian partners remain steadfast in their commitment to delivering vital assistance, ensuring the well-being and resilience of Afghanistan's most vulnerable populations.

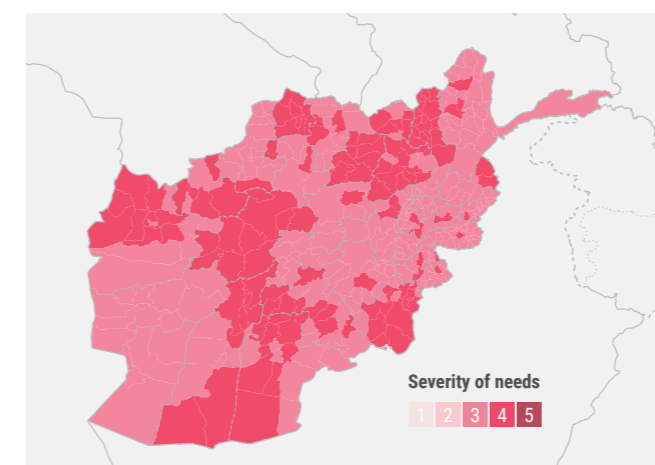
Prioritization of Critical Needs and Provision of Life-Saving Assistance

The 2024 humanitarian response strategy for Afghanistan commits to addressing the urgent and comprehensive needs of 17.3 million of the 23.7 million Afghan people in need. This prioritization stems from the deteriorating protection environment, recent earthquakes in Herat Province, increased return of undocumented Afghans, acute WASH needs due to drought and climate change, and ongoing food security issues.

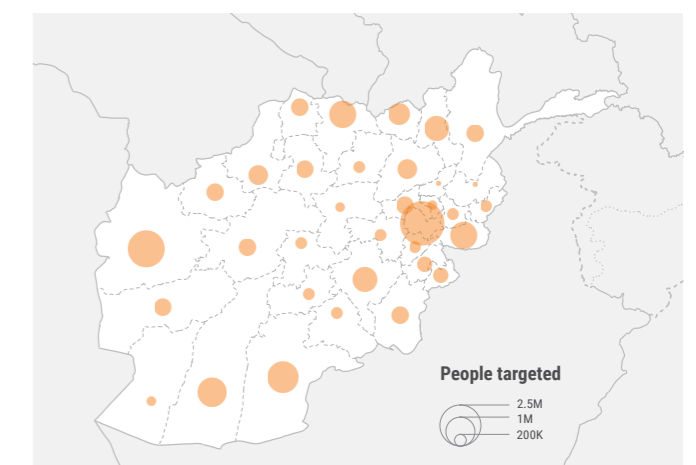
District-level targeting and efficient prioritization ensure maximum impact for the 4.2 million women, 3.8 million men, 9 million girls and boys, 329,000 elderly persons, and 1.5 million people living with disabilities targeted in 2024, with a budget requirement of US\$ 3.06 billion.

The primary focus is delivering life-saving assistance, including food, safe drinking water, and healthcare. Food assistance targets 15.8 million individuals facing critical food insecurity. Strengthening the healthcare system upholds principles like Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Disability Inclusion, Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and gender considerations. Ensuring education access for Afghan children, especially girls, remains a priority, with support for Community-Based Education (CBE) and innovative learning methods. Life-saving education in emergencies support will be critical to support returnee children who have been deprived of

Intersectoral severity of needs
by admin 2 (in 2024)



Distribution of people targeted
by admin 1 (in 2024)



quality education for longer periods and bring girls’ and boys’ life back to normalcy. Efforts to address malnutrition include acute malnutrition treatments and blanket supplementary feeding programs (BSFP).

Ensure Centrality of Protection

Among the prevalent protection threats and associated risks identified by protection actors include gender-based violence (GBV); the presence of mines and explosive ordnance; unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement and forced displacement; risks to children including family and child separation, early marriage, and child labour; and psychological distress and emotional abuse.

In 2024, protection actors will work with clusters to develop a protection strategy to address these risks and operationalise the centrality of protection. Given the deteriorating protection environment, the strategy emphasizes protecting civilians, especially women and children, at heightened risk of violence and exploitation. This involves providing safe spaces, legal support, and psycho-social services for GBV survivors. Facilitating the safe return of displaced populations and addressing explosive hazards are key components. Resilience-building initiatives, including vocational training and livelihood support, are integrated for long-term stability.

Stay and Deliver

Recognizing the complex operating environment in Afghanistan, this strategy anticipates challenges arising from the DfA’s desire to be more involved in humanitarian planning and programming more generally, including attempts to influence beneficiary selection or project location, and bureaucratic impediments related to project registration, Memorandum of Understanding, and the participation of Afghan women in humanitarian action. On the latter, as has been seen throughout the past year, there has been varying implementation of DfA directives affecting Afghan women and girls, including those banning them from working for I/NGOs and the UN.

In 2023, humanitarian actors have been able to reach similar numbers of people with life-saving assistance

compared to the same period in 2022. They have not only resumed but scaled up programmes that had initially been suspended, and successfully secured local arrangements with the DfA which enabled Afghan women staff to participate across all areas of the response – from assessments to distributions to monitoring.

Challenges, however, remain and will require careful monitoring to ensure continued delivery to women and girls, and to aid operational readiness in the event of a further deterioration in the operating environment, including new restrictions or impediments. Nevertheless, the humanitarian community remains committed to staying and delivering on behalf of the Afghan population – more than half of whom will require humanitarian assistance in 2024 to meet their primary needs.

Women’s Participation and Gender-Responsive Assistance

In 2024, humanitarian partners will continue to push for the safe, meaningful and comprehensive participation of Afghan women in all components of the humanitarian response, while simultaneously investing in their recruitment and retention through inclusive policies and practices. There has been a 1 per cent increase in the number of national female staff employed by the UN in the first six months of the year, the period during which the ban came into effect. Programming adaptations trialled in 2023 such as remote outreach to women and girl beneficiaries, distinct distribution spaces for women and men beneficiaries, and the use of women community volunteers, will be scaled-up to safely reach women and girls. In addition, capacity-building of cluster partners, gender responsive AAP strategies to amplify women’s feedback and voices, and gendered protection and SEA prevention strategies will also be implemented.

Moving the Needle from Humanitarian to Basic Human Needs

The political developments of August 2021, and end to widespread conflict associated with the insurgency, have ushered in a period of unprecedented stability in

Afghanistan – albeit unpredictable – which has opened the door for greater investments to be made in longer-term basic human needs programming. This in turn can pave the way, over time, for some communities and population groups to be graduated from the humanitarian portfolio to alternative frameworks.

In 2024, efforts will concentrate on establishing close programmatic and working linkages with basic human needs actors to support Afghan arrivals from Pakistan and Iran in areas of return, focusing on Nangarhar, Kandahar and Kabul.

Time will of course be needed to verify that basic human needs actors are able to meet the structural needs of affected people, and that they are systematically benefiting from longer-term and larger-scale investments in basic service delivery. In the absence of this, humanitarian assistance will continue to not only be necessary but fundamental to the survival of a significant proportion of the Afghan population.

2.2 Boundaries of the Humanitarian Response and contributions to basic human needs

Afghanistan represents a protracted crisis with deep-rooted poverty and socio-cultural factors converging with decades of conflict to generate different types and layers of need. Consequently, the HNRP sharpens the humanitarian focus on acute needs arising from distinct drivers.

In recognition that humanitarian action and capacity has its limits, and that the humanitarian burden can only be sustainably reduced through a greater commitment to early recovery and resilience-building initiatives which bridge short-term relief and longer-term assistance, the boundaries of humanitarian action in Afghanistan have been further tightened in 2024 to focus on vulnerability, prioritise populations facing critical and catastrophic needs (severity 4 and 5), and reduce the scope of basic human needs activities included in the response plan. Indeed, the danger of with labelling all needs present in a

HNRP	UNSF
<i>Short to medium-term interventions for acute humanitarian needs of most vulnerable</i>	<i>Medium to long-term interventions for sustainable integration and standard of living</i>
Education: temporary learning spaces, provision of education kits, light rehabilitation of schools	Construction and rebuilding of schools, vocational education and training, improving literacy rates
Food Security: emergency food assistance, agricultural tools and inputs	Agricultural development, vocational training, strengthened food value chains, business support
Health: emergency health services, trauma care	Health systems strengthening, health information systems, rebuilding of primary healthcare facilities
Nutrition: SAM and MAM treatment	Sustained access to nutrition services
Protection: Family reunification, mine clearance	Social safety nets, sustained access to social services and civil documentation strengthening
Shelter: Emergency and transitional shelter, rental support	Long-term housing and site planning
WASH: Water-trucking, hygiene promotion, repair and light rehabilitation of systems	Building of WASH infrastructure, water conservation

humanitarian context as 'humanitarian' is that agencies and partners will only address those in areas where they have existing programmes, rather than tackling immediate needs in locations of highest severity, where lives will be lost.

As a result, Clusters have shifted some response activities to basic human needs including school rehabilitation activities; basic disaster risk mitigation infrastructure for flood-prone and other areas; shelter repair and transitional shelter support for cross-border returnees at areas of destination; non-conflict-related trauma care and coordination and surveillance of attacks on health care; community nutrition screening of children aged 6-59 months; dialogues with community leaders, men, and boys; land allocation; community-led total sanitation activities; and urban water networks and sanitation/sewerage in cities.

Yet, some of the prioritized humanitarian interventions will contribute directly or indirectly to the achievement of durable solutions and meeting basic human needs. To this end, short-term humanitarian interventions to address acute vulnerabilities will help where possible to support and enable mid- to long-term approaches and resilience-oriented interventions. Activities that support emergency livelihoods, improve food security and expand access to basic services are examples of this approach. Other examples include efforts to ensure the sustainability of interventions. For instance, Emergency Shelter/NFI Cluster partners are adopting durable shelter solutions, understanding that they are key to building the resilience of affected populations; this includes addressing housing, land and property rights, and facilitating housing repairs.

Under the overall leadership of the triple-hatted UN leadership structure - the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC), a durable solutions architecture has been established in-country to facilitate joint analysis and response planning across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The strategic-level Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG), includes members of the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and works closely with the

humanitarian Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT). To that end the 2024 HNRP and the United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFA) have been designed to complement each other, while avoiding overlaps in response.

2.3 Strategic objectives

Overview

In 2024, humanitarian actors will target 17.3 million people across Afghanistan with life-saving humanitarian assistance. The Strategic Objectives will cover the following areas: 1) core emergency response activities, with a focus on addressing immediate life-saving priorities across all sectors; 2) mitigation, monitoring, and advocacy to address all types of protection concerns to ensure equitable, inclusive access to all; and 3) supporting crisis-affected people to build their resilience and live dignified lives.

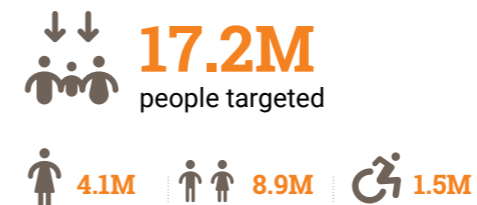
Scope

The response will provide timely, life-saving education, emergency shelter, health, mine action, NFI, and WASH support to people of all genders, ages, and diversities. This will include rapid and immediate multi-sectoral interventions to ensure that affected people are reached and to prevent further deterioration and employment of negative coping mechanisms. Activities will improve access to food and life-saving nutrition services through in-kind assistance, cash-based transfers, emergency livelihoods support, and programmes to address acute malnutrition. Health interventions will be gender-sensitive and include reproductive health, trauma care, mental health and psychosocial support, as well as disease outbreak prevention and response.

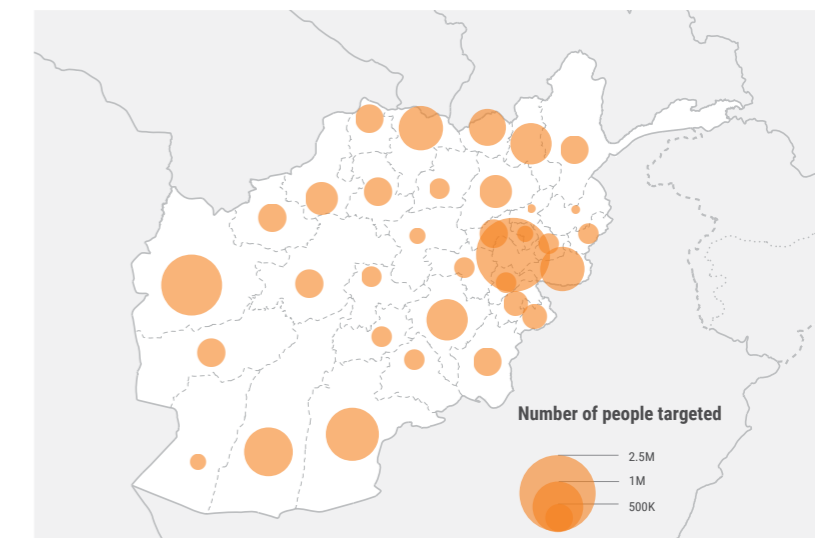
Protection assistance will be central to the humanitarian response in 2024. By utilizing protection monitoring tools and systems, humanitarian actors will identify protection concerns and needs of all groups,

Strategic objective 1

Mortality and morbidity of crisis-affected people of all gender and diversities are reduced through timely, multi-sectoral, lifesaving, equitable and safe assistance.

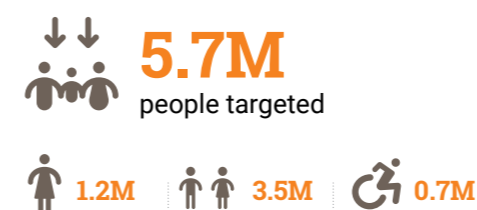


Number of people targeted by strategic objective 1

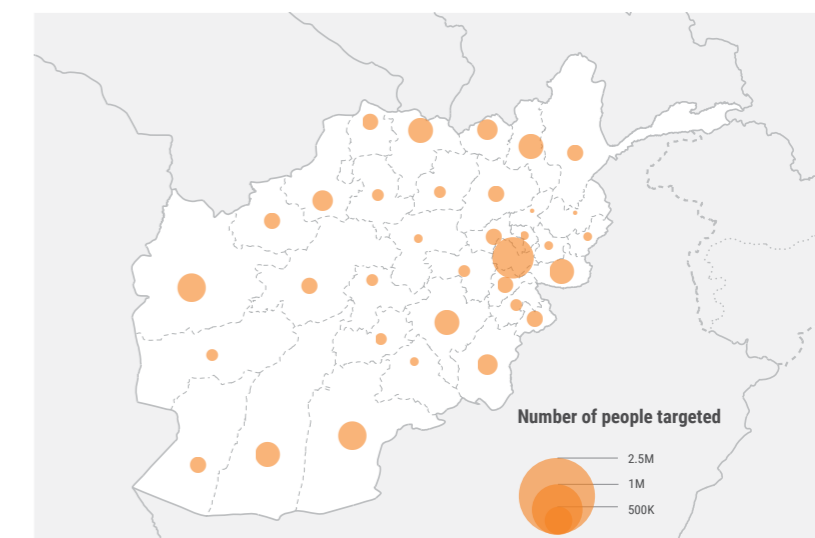


Strategic objective 2

The protection risks of the most vulnerable are mitigated and the needs of affected persons of all genders and diversities are monitored and addressed through humanitarian action.

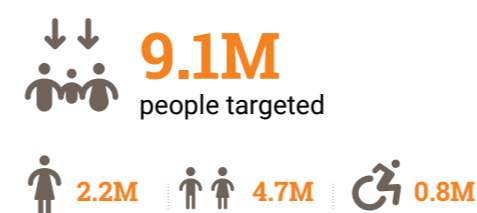


Number of people targeted by strategic objective 2

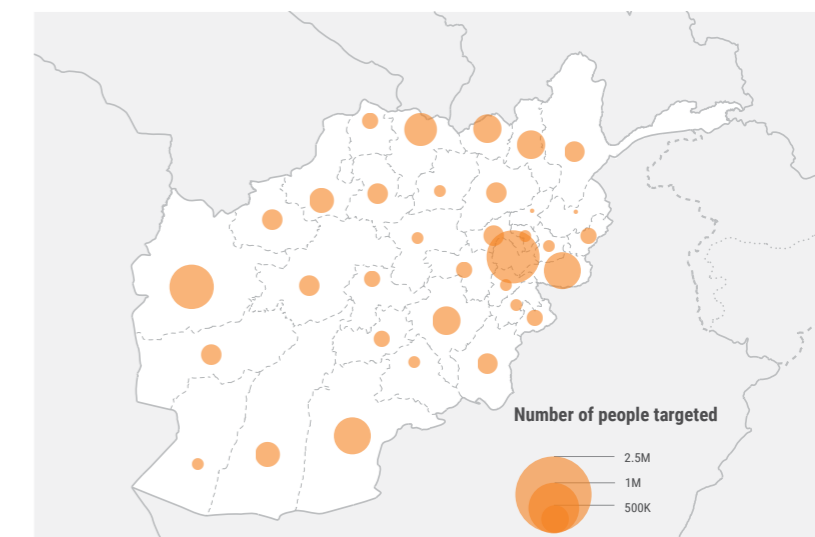


Strategic objective 3

Vulnerable crisis-affected people of all gender and diversities are supported to build their resilience and live their lives in dignity.



Number of people targeted by strategic objective 3



 The response plan's monitoring framework is available on [Humanitarian Action](#). The monitoring framework includes the complete set of indicators attached to strategic objectives, specific objectives, cluster objectives and cluster activities

considering the specific gender, age, diversity, and disability-related vulnerabilities. Protection activities will include cash for protection, child protection services, and women protection and empowerment services. A core tenant of the HNRP is continuous advocacy at local, provincial, national, and global levels to address the drivers of protection needs and actualize the ‘centrality of protection.’

Response activities will also build the resilience of crisis-affected people through emergency livelihoods support, durable solutions, and infrastructure repair. Household stability will be supported through basic livelihoods support, strengthening of food systems and value chains, investments in communal assets, skills development, and enhanced market access. Humanitarian partners will continue to address the needs of people in informal settlements, cross-border returnees, and host communities by constructing transitional shelters, de-mining, and supporting local livelihood opportunities. Emergency repairs and basic infrastructure rehabilitation will ensure continued access to essential services, particularly water and sanitation. While the humanitarian response cannot address the underlying infrastructure or housing needs, it can provide a critical bridge to stabilise vulnerable people and communities and allow them to move out of immediate crisis.

Strategic Objective 1

Mortality and morbidity of crisis-affected people of all genders and diversities are reduced through timely, multi-sectoral, lifesaving, equitable and safe assistance.

Strategic Objective One focuses on core emergency response activities, with a focus on addressing immediate life-saving priorities across all sectors.

Strategic Objective 2

The protection risks of the most vulnerable are mitigated, and the needs of affected persons of all genders and diversities are monitored and addressed through humanitarian action.

With the deteriorating protection situation being one of the most significant drivers of the increased number of people in need, Strategic Objective Two focuses on mitigation, monitoring, and advocacy to address all types of protection concerns and ensure equitable, inclusive access to all essential services.

Strategic Objective 3

Vulnerable crisis-affected people of all genders and diversities are supported to build their resilience and live their lives in dignity.

Strategic Objective Three prioritizes assistance to the most vulnerable in the community, addressing critical problems related to living standards and coping mechanisms through the provision of emergency livelihoods assistance and access to basic services.

People on the move

In the latter part of 2023, the number of returns to Afghanistan has skyrocketed, precipitating a returnee crisis that is poised to significantly influence humanitarian response efforts well into 2024. So far in 2023, 1.9 million Afghans have returned to the country including more than 471,000 from Pakistan since 15 September, a much higher number than planned for by UN or humanitarian aid agencies.⁴⁴ This spike in returns was propelled by Pakistan's announcement on 3 October of a new policy targeting the deportation of undocumented Afghans, affecting approximately 1.3 million Afghans presently residing in Pakistan.⁴⁵

This influx includes highly vulnerable populations, including women and children with heightened protection needs, who are departing Pakistan for reasons including police harassment, fear of deportation, and lack of livelihood opportunities. From Iran, return and deportations of undocumented Afghans remain high. While voluntary repatriation of registered refugees largely continues in safety and dignity and in relatively low volumes (just under 500 individuals between 01 January and 15 December 2023), there are also tens of thousands among the deportees that were head counted by the Iranian government and considered to be in a refugee-like situation.⁴⁶

This abrupt and substantial movement has strained border points and host communities in the areas of return, exacerbating an already fragile situation

characterized by elevated unemployment rates, widespread poverty, insufficient access to basic services, and inadequate infrastructure. In response, humanitarian organisations have scaled up assistance at border points, providing medical screenings, protection, counselling, legal assistance, food, transportation, WASH, and registration services. Further support is being provided in areas of return, as most returnees have limited means and require basic food, education, health support, access to services, and livelihood opportunities. The onset of Afghanistan's harsh winter has further exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and threatens to reduce coping abilities of returnee families.

The ongoing surge in returnees has the potential to significantly impact an already fragile humanitarian context within Afghanistan. Over 1.4 million Afghan returnees from Iran and Pakistan are anticipated to be “on the move” across borders in 2024. This includes more than 978,000 newly returning Afghans from Iran, as well as and 423,000 undocumented returnees and 60,000 documented refugees⁴⁷ from Pakistan, many of whom will require humanitarian assistance.

In 2024, bridging the gap between immediate, life-saving humanitarian assistance and longer-term basic needs support will be critical to facilitate the integration of returnees into host communities and maintaining the current fragile stability in Afghanistan. Humanitarian partners, the Durable Solutions Working Group and basic human needs actors are working together to jointly identify and prioritise household and community-based response activities in areas experiencing high rates of return.

KANDAHAR, SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN

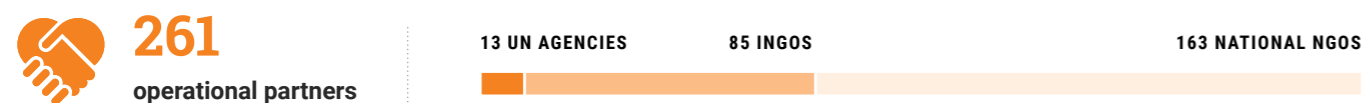
A young Afghan girl waits for her family to receive assistance at Spin Boldak border crossing. Photo: IOM/Mohammad Osman Azizi



2.4 Planning assumptions, operational capacity, and access

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has witnessed significant shifts in the operational context since August 2021, marked by decreased military operations which has enhanced access to previously hard-to-reach areas. However, this positive momentum has been offset by a notable increase in bureaucratic and administrative interferences (BAI) affecting humanitarian operations, particularly in 2022 and 2023. This surge in BAI-related challenges follows the DfA's introduction of new procedures and regulations for coordinating humanitarian response. Humanitarian access in 2023 has further been constrained by the issuance of two directives – one in December 2022 and the other in April 2023 – banning Afghan women from working for I/NGOs and the UN respectively. While the almost-immediate granting of nation-wide exemptions for Afghan women working in the health and education sectors have somewhat mitigated the impact of these bans, even these are frequently only partially implemented and subject to conditionalities (e.g. Afghan women must be accompanied by a mahram (male relative), comply with Islamic attire (the hijab), travel to and from work in gender-segregated transport, or conduct their work in static facilities only). These regulatory developments are anticipated to continue to affect the access landscape in Afghanistan in 2024 and will require dedicated and likely enhanced efforts to minimize their impact on humanitarian operations.

Operational presence In Q3 2023



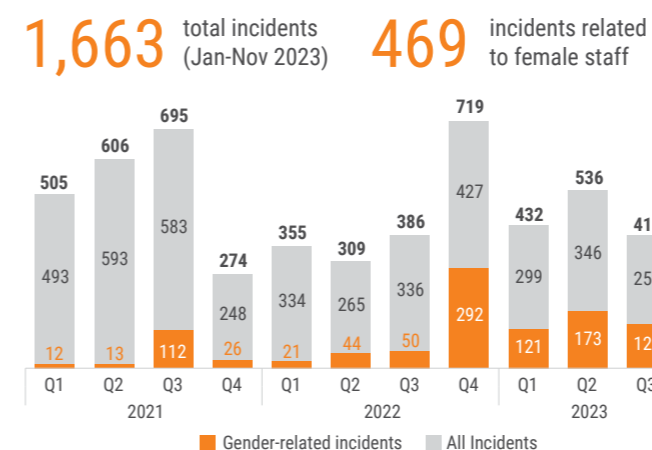
For more information about the operational presence please visit the [3W dashboard](#)

Looking ahead, the operational space is projected to contract due to:

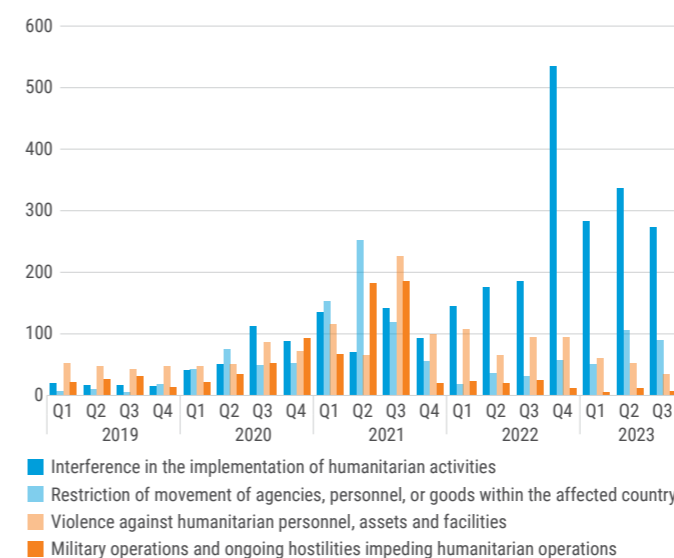
1. Increased restrictions on programming modalities, including community-based education, child-friendly spaces, and cash assistance, and the participation of Afghan women in humanitarian action.
2. Elevated bureaucratic hurdles, including project registration requirements, programmes targeting women and girls, and delays in project implementation due to Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) negotiations and signing.
3. Growing desire from the DfA to be involved in program design and implementation, which could translate into attempts to influence beneficiary selection and project location.
4. Augmented scrutiny and monitoring of humanitarian operations.
5. Increased restrictions on humanitarian movements, involving incidents at checkpoints and the imposition of new movement procedures that greatly affect Afghan women.
6. Escalated violence against humanitarian workers and community volunteers, including detentions and threats.

Between January and October 2023, humanitarian partners reported 1,529 access-related challenges, marking a 21 per cent increase from 2022 and a threefold rise from 2019 figures.⁴⁸ Predominantly, these incidents (65 per cent) involved active interference in humanitarian programming, followed by movement restrictions on agencies, personnel, or goods (17 per cent), and violence against humanitarian staff, assets, and facilities (11 per cent). This stark reality is reaffirmed by the third round of access severity mapping, which identified 90 per cent of districts experiencing 'moderate' to 'high' access challenges,

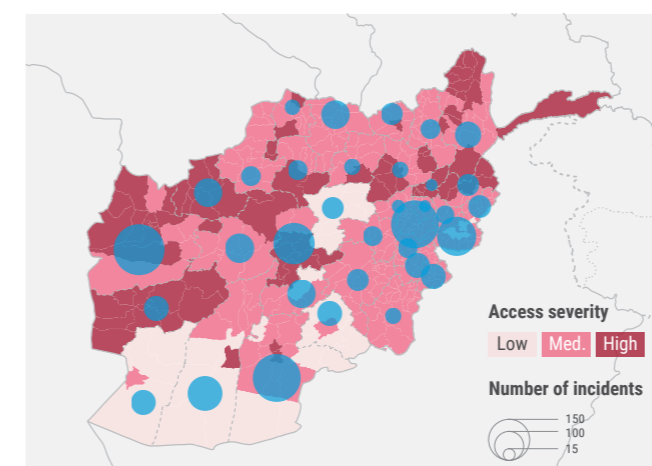
Humanitarian access incidents (2021 - 2023) and number incidents related to participation of female staff



Humanitarian access constraints by type (2021 - 2023)



Humanitarian access severity and number of access-related incidents (Jan - Oct 2023)



and findings from the Afghanistan Community Voices platform, revealing that more than half of the 10,000 surveyed communities reported challenges in accessing aid or services.

DfA interference remains the foremost access challenge, with more than 1,000 incidents reported in 2023.⁴⁹ These incidents encompass the enforcement of the bans on Afghan women working for I/NGOs and the UN, as well as reports of increased interference and bureaucratic obstacles. The latter includes the introduction of new transportation taxation directives and inconsistent processes for completion of MoUs. At the same time, I/NGOs have reported that they are unable to register projects within the Ministry of Economy when they involve Afghan women staff working outside of the two exempted sectors. Between January and June, 50 I/NGO partners reported to the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) and Access Working Group that they were unable to register women staff on project documents with the Ministry of Economy, of which 33 partners informed they were unable to use the word 'women' or refer to women beneficiaries in their project documents at all. Contributing factors involve heightened efforts to influence beneficiary, vendor, and staff selection, pressures to share sensitive information, and increased monitoring through entities like the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV), General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI), and provincial-level committees established by the DfA.

Humanitarian access faces further hurdles due to movement restrictions stemming from varying requirements for a mahram and approval letter for both men and women at checkpoints in some provinces. The ban on Afghan women working for the I/NGOs and the UN has compromised vulnerable populations' access to assistance provision and services, despite the exemptions and localized arrangements secured. The October 2023 Humanitarian Access Group (HAG)-GiHA survey revealed that 46 per cent of 144 organizations reported significant concerns in their ability to interact with women and monitor humanitarian assistance as a result of the bans. This concern is exacerbated by new directives or procedures further excluding women's participation

in humanitarian action. Since early July, the DfA have issued a series of official letters to many WLOs and I/NGOs requesting that women be removed from leadership positions in NGOs (including Director, Deputy Director and Board member roles) and as bank signatories.

Despite the improved security situation, humanitarian staff in 2023 continued to contend with a volatile environment fraught with serious safety threats. Violence against aid workers accounted for 11 per cent of all incidents, with 168 reported cases.⁵⁰ Moreover, 170 staff members were detained during the year. While 61 per cent of these detentions were resolved within two days, the remaining incidents (33 per cent) took longer to resolve, underscoring the persistent risks to humanitarian workers – and, by extension, operations – in Afghanistan.

2.5 Inclusive & quality programming

Humanitarian partners in Afghanistan are committed to the principles of quality and inclusive programming. This includes a response anchored in the centrality of protection and do-no harm approaches, as well as a

response that is owned and delivered in partnership with communities and informed by two-way communications with affected populations, including women, children and marginalized groups.

Improving protection remains a cornerstone of the humanitarian response. DfA restrictions on Afghan women's participation persist, posing critical challenges for humanitarian efforts. These directives limit partners' ability to reach women and girls, hindering the delivery of assistance to vulnerable groups and meaningful engagement in humanitarian action. Women and girls with disabilities and women-headed households face compounded risks. Clusters have incorporated protection risk analysis and mitigation measures into the cluster response plans, and protection and gender considerations will be mainstreamed throughout the implementation of the response. Moreover, the AAP, Disability and Inclusion (DIWG), Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA), and PSEA Network collaborate to ensure inclusive and quality programming for the most vulnerable populations.

Accountability to Affected Populations

Accountability to affected populations (AAP) is fundamental to the humanitarian response. Humanitarian partners are committed to seek out, listen, and act upon the diverse voices of all affected communities. In 2023, humanitarian partners

successfully established and implemented a collective AAP Strategy, coordinated by the ACBAR and UNFPA-led Afghanistan AAP Working Group. Guided by this inter-agency AAP commitment, efforts to ensure meaningful participation of affected communities in humanitarian response were made throughout the year, including:

1. Ensuring minimum standards for quality and inclusive programming in response.
2. Tracking and monitoring community feedback and perceptions through the Afghanistan Community Voices and Accountability Platform and Awaaz helpline to inform response decision-making processes.
3. Implementing “do no harm” approaches through rolling out Data Responsibility SOP for community feedback and complaint systems.
4. Communicating a series of critical and lifesaving messages to local communities, including DfA directives and impacts on humanitarian activities, as well as standardized key messages on available assistance in the Herat earthquakes and Returnee responses.

Humanitarian partners will continue to strengthen community-centered approaches in the response. With the support and guidance of the AAP Working Group, key AAP areas such as real-time community feedback and perception monitoring, community validation, and inclusive, protection-sensitive and gender-responsive AAP mechanisms will continue to be strengthened. The AAP Working Group will also continue to build and strengthen the capacity of frontline teams, particularly local actors and community members, to ensure the Afghanistan humanitarian response is fully guided by crisis-affected communities.

Disability Inclusion

People living with disabilities in Afghanistan face additional barriers accessing employment, services, and education, as well as increased economic vulnerability. In 2024, the DIWG will continue building the capacity of humanitarian actors on disability inclusion, provide technical support on developing and reviewing inclusive proposals and tools, and support

systematic disaggregated data collection and analysis from an age, gender, and disability perspective. The DIWG will also improve advocacy efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, ensure meaningful participation of persons and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in the humanitarian cycle, and provide technical support to OPDs.

Gender in Humanitarian Action

Women and girls in Afghanistan continue to face restrictions rooted in cultural norms and DfA-enforced directives, rendering them more vulnerable to the humanitarian crisis. This has prevented them from raising their voices in the response, participating in the design and monitoring of aid delivery, and at times from accessing services and distributions. In addition to the bans on Afghan women working for I/NGOs and the UN, organizations face a range of gendered impediments targeting women staff and shrinking the space for gender-specific humanitarian assistance. These further impact women's access to assistance and contribute to negative coping mechanisms such as selling assets or taking on debt, eating less preferred foods or eating less often, and entering into early marriage or engaging in child labour. Furthermore, as poverty levels deepen in the country, poverty-driven scrap collection also increases children's exposure to explosive ordnance, with over 60 children – mostly young boys – killed or wounded each month.⁵¹

In 2024, GiHA will continue to provide a gender lens to decision makers by supporting the Women's Advisory Group to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). Guidance will be implemented on gender-responsive programming for all humanitarian partners, both at national and regional levels, building on the activation of GiHA in several regions in 2023. GiHA will promote the recruitment and retention of women humanitarian workers through monitoring and capacity-strengthening of partners. GiHA will continue producing data and analysis, tracking access challenges, modalities for women participation, and raising actors' awareness on inclusive, gender-responsive methods to reach women and girls.

Satisfaction with assistance received

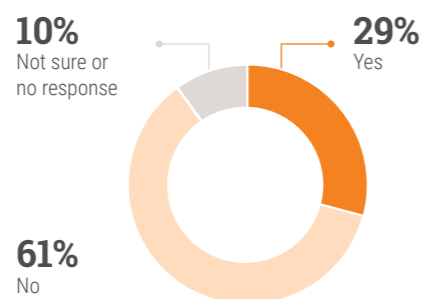
based on feedback mechanisms



10,000
feedbacks

Of which
45%
received at least one
type of assistance

Assistance received meets needs



Reasons it does not meet needs

- 55% Assistance is inadequate
- 24% Not appropriate to needs
- 15% It is only one time

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

While sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) affect persons across all segments of society, women, children, and people with disabilities are particularly at-risk and disproportionately affected in aid settings. In response to the augmented risk of SEA in Afghanistan following the 2021 political transition, the PSEA Network was expanded and bolstered with additional capacity. Barriers, including legislative limitations, hinder SEA survivors from coming forward. Moreover, critical gaps in awareness persist, with only 31 per cent community members reporting broad community awareness of SEA implications. To overcome these challenges, under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator, the HCT seeks to build on existing PSEA efforts including endorsement of PSEA Standard Operating Procedures and SEA Action Plan.

In collaboration with the AAP Working Group, the PSEA Network conducts quarterly assessments with affected community members on PSEA issues related to awareness, access, reporting preferences, and risks. A helpline was established to provide guidance on inter-agency standard operating procedures on processing

and recording SEA, victim support, and gender-based violence/child protection referral pathways in local languages.

Response Strategy

In 2024, cross-cutting working groups will unite to address inclusive and quality programming through AAP, disability inclusion, gender and PSEA. Building on 2023 initiatives, they will operationalize minimum standards, providing training for clusters and enhancing capacity to ensure the effectiveness of the programmes in contributing to response-wide accountability and strengthened outreach to vulnerable populations.

Furthermore, the AAP, DIWG, GiHA, and PSEA network, supported by the GenCap, will continue to monitor the humanitarian response to ensure quality programming and the inclusive provision of humanitarian assistance through dedicated outreach to groups at risk of being left behind. This includes expanded data collection and the deployment to teams on the ground to conduct more face-to-face interviews to reach vulnerable community members who cannot easily access hotlines. The various cross-cutting monitoring

Average Cost-Per-Beneficiary (US\$)

SECTOR	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Education	\$76	\$97	\$72	\$84	\$108	\$59	\$104
Emergency Shelter and NFI	\$74	\$59	\$88	\$109	\$193	\$156	\$134
Food Security and Livelihoods	\$60	\$71	\$38	\$39	\$123	\$82	\$90
Health	\$27	\$34	\$24	\$16	\$26	\$29	\$29
Nutrition	\$83	\$60	\$47	\$46	\$48	\$66	\$53
Protection	\$65	\$33	\$39	\$29	\$30	\$22	\$28
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	\$24	\$28	\$40	\$26	\$32	\$34	\$34
OVERALL	\$115	\$136	\$102	\$82	\$201	\$151	\$177

indicators and tools utilized in 2023 will be streamlined into 2024 HNRP monitoring to enable humanitarian actors to enhance monitoring efforts.

2.6 Cost of the response

Afghanistan's HNRP is an activity-based costed plan, with each cluster producing a cost per beneficiary estimate which encompasses expenses related to in-kind supplies, cash assistance (where applicable), and logistical aspects of assistance delivery, including staff, security, and other overhead costs.

The overall HNRP funding requirements have decreased by 34 per cent in 2024 compared to 2023, reflecting a 27 per cent reduction in targets and adjustment of some activities, offset by the inclusion of assistance packages for Afghan returnees from Pakistan and the response to the Herat earthquakes. Consequently, the average cost per beneficiary has decreased by 10 per cent, from \$151 per beneficiary in the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan to \$177 per beneficiary in the 2024 HNRP.

Several clusters have adjusted their targeting methods, modified their inputs to the minimum expenditure basket (MEB), and stabilized distribution expenses. These adjustments have reduced their overall cost per beneficiary, including emergency shelter and non-food items (ES-NFI) with a 43 per cent reduction, food security and agriculture (FSAC) with a 26 per cent decrease, and nutrition with a 24 per cent decrease. The Health and WASH Clusters have slightly reduced their cost per beneficiary by 1 per cent.

Conversely, the Education Cluster has experienced a 76 per cent increase in the cost per beneficiary, aligning with trends observed in previous years. This is primarily driven by a higher advocacy caseload for secondary school girls, which has driven the cost per beneficiary lower in 2023. Similarly, the Protection Cluster has seen a 4 per cent increase in the cost per

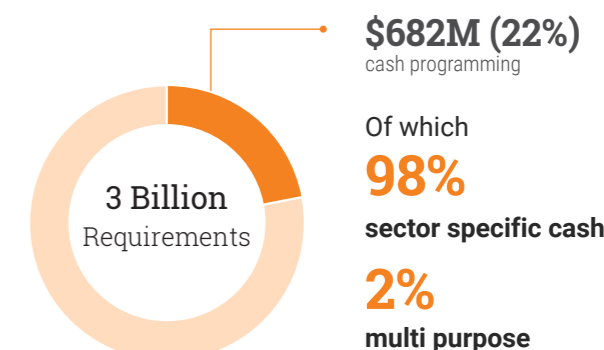
beneficiary since some of the beneficiaries are being targeted for multiple activities.

2.7 Multi-purpose cash assistance

Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) has gained substantial traction in Afghanistan since its inception in 2009, becoming a favoured response approach among both humanitarian actors and recipients. As of 2023, approximately 60 per cent of Afghans have designated cash as their preferred form of assistance.⁵² Multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) empowers disaster-affected individuals, offering adaptability in addressing immediate needs like food, shelter, health, WASH, or education. Simultaneously, MPCA contributes to local economies, diminishes administrative costs, and fosters social cohesion within communities. The main Clusters employing CVA are FSAC, which employs cash-for-food and ES-NFI, which provides cash for shelter, winterisation, and transportation. Protection and WASH also employ CVA for activities.

Despite the substantial progress made in scaling up CVA, obstacles to operations persist, encompassing interference by the DfA and community leaders, restricted access to women recipients due to DfA policies, and limited CVA access for other vulnerable

Cash programming 2024



groups. National liquidity issues arising from suspended loan packages by International Financial Institutions and the freezing of the Central Bank of Afghanistan's financial assets further compound challenges. In response, the Cash and Voucher Working Group (CVWG) collaborates closely with partners, consistently assessing CVA feasibility, devising practical solutions, and offering guidance on transitioning to alternative modalities.

Response Strategy

In 2024, an estimated US \$682 million of the \$3.06 billion requested for the HNRP is projected to be allocated in cash, encompassing \$668 million in sectoral cash and \$14 million in MPCA. MPCA will benefit more than 42,000 households, or 296,000 individuals nationwide. Assistance will address the immediate needs of the population during disasters, targeting vulnerable individuals and communities.

Recipients receive an average of three months of MPCA, with monthly instalments of \$140, aligning with the latest MEB guidance and ensuring compatibility with in-kind sectoral provisions. Adjustments to the scale of cash transfers may occur based on the overall financial system's stability, socio-economic factors, and the management of risks associated with cash distributions. The CVWG has outlined risk mitigation recommendations that serve as a reference for cash partners in the country.

Integration of Beneficiary Views

CVWG partners adhere to inter-agency cash-based assistance guidance and minimum requirements, emphasizing the inclusion of community-based participatory planning and cross-cutting issues in CVA programming. Alongside regular face-to-face consultations, the CVWG analyses data from diverse channels, including the Afghanistan Community Voices and Accountability Platform and the Awaaz hotline. In 2024, collaboration with Awaaz and the AAP working group continues to ensure inclusive cash programming for affected communities, with a targeted focus on minority groups, women, children, and people with disabilities. The CVWG commits

to monitoring community voices through multiple two-way feedback mechanisms.

Cash Coordination

CVWG reports to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT) and its role extends to providing technical support on MPCA transfer values and coordination in order to develop technical guidance on MPCA programming in Afghanistan. The group establishes field-based sub-national MPCA coordination during sudden-onset crises, ensuring partner coordination and offering technical and operational support. Reporting under the CVWG reporting mechanism in iMMAP's data centre, the CVWG analyses and presents monthly data to its members and, upon request, to the ICCT and HCT.

Monitoring Plan

Collaborating with iMMAP, the CVWG employs ReportHub for quarterly reporting during non-crisis periods. Partner achievements are encapsulated in quarterly CVWG programmatic snapshot dashboards. Monthly post-distribution monitoring is conducted to validate beneficiaries' cash utilization, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. Interviews target women-headed households, women within male-headed households, persons with disabilities, households led by a person with a disability, child-headed households, and households with pregnant or lactating women. The CVWG maintains a biannual revision of the MEB, crucial for determining MPCA transfer values and market monitoring of the cluster baskets.

2.8 Monitoring

In 2024, ensuring the timely, safe, and efficient delivery of assistance requires regular monitoring of both the operational landscape and collective response efforts. Ongoing sector-specific and country-wide multi-sector needs assessments will continue in tracking the evolution of needs, response effectiveness,

residual and unmet needs, and people's preferences regarding assistance.

Regular operational situation reports detailing cluster responses to existing and emerging needs will continue to provide a detailed picture of assistance and service provision. Response preparedness capacity will be evaluated through regular analysis of critical commodity pipelines. Snapshots showing the status of stockpiles at the national level and regional levels will continue on a quarterly basis, providing an early warning of looming pipeline breaks.

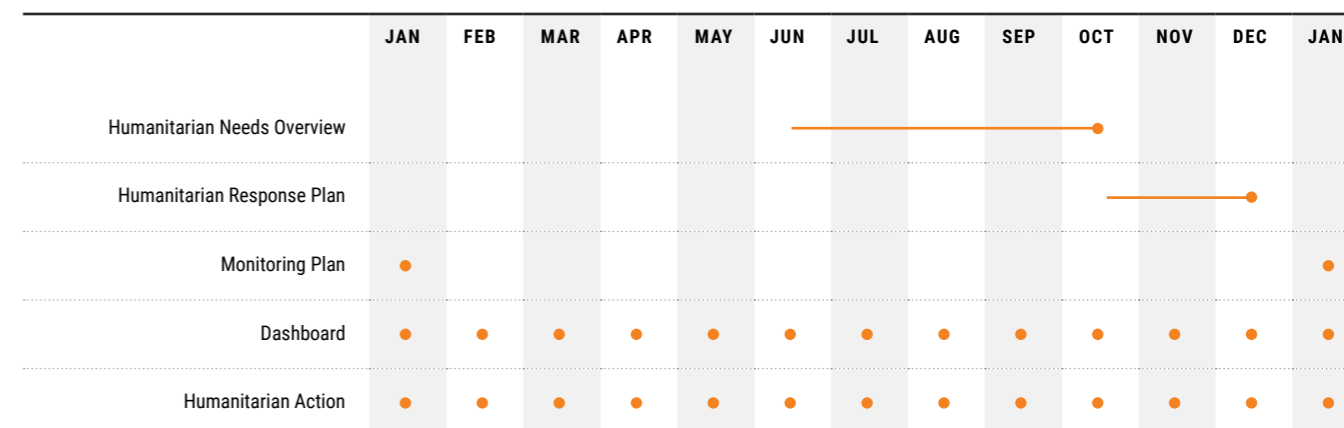
Close monitoring of partner presence and geographical access trends will be paramount to ensuring realistic response targets. The 2024 monitoring framework will also include a careful analysis of cross-border movement trends, building upon the insights gained from the record year of returns of undocumented Afghan nationals in 2023.

All assessments will be coordinated through the Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) in collaboration with OCHA. Findings from these assessments, as well as inputs from the community

voices platform, will inform adjustments to the response and will help in course correction. The WoAA will be conducted once in 2024, complemented by quarterly Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) reports and two IPC exercises – with one planned for the end of the lean season and another after the fall harvest.

Recognizing a persisting challenge in the lack of gender-specific data and the inability to monitor women's access to and satisfaction with humanitarian assistance in 2023, dedicated efforts will be made this year to monitor inclusion in coordination with GiHA. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) monitoring indicators, which were developed in 2023 to track constraints of Afghan women participating in the response, their ability to reach the most vulnerable populations, and actors' ability to maintain a principled response, will be incorporated into routine 2024 HNRP monitoring. Key capacity-building initiatives will be undertaken to ensure that women are actively engaged in all major assessments, allowing their voices to influence and shape the ongoing humanitarian response.

Humanitarian programme cycle timeline



Part 3: Cluster needs and response

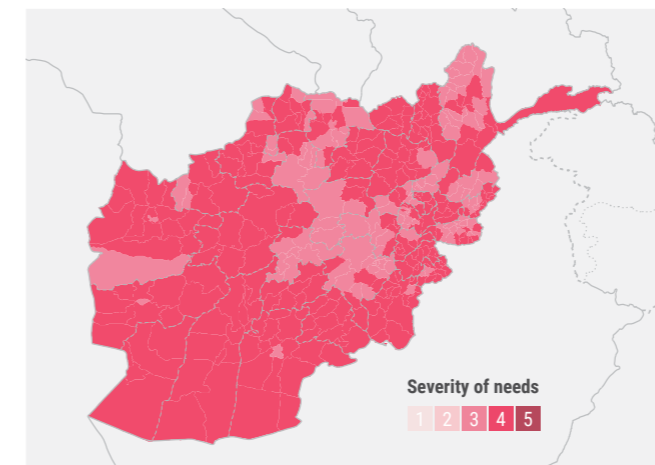
KANDAHAR, SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN
Children displaced by violence and conflict at a water pump in a village nearby Kandahar.
Photo: OCHA/Charlotte Cans



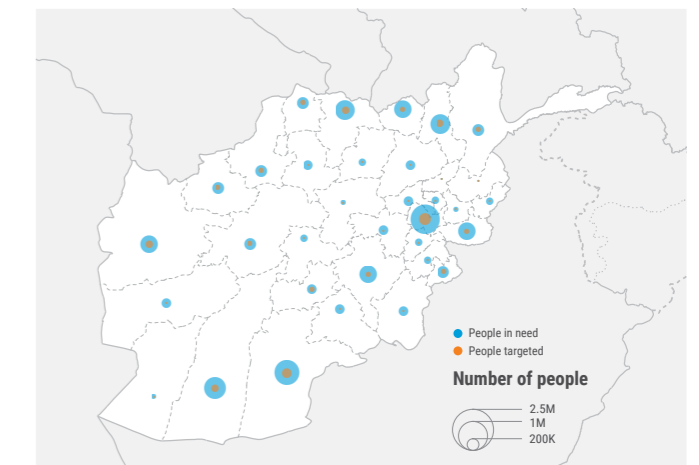
3.1 Education

PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
8M	1.4M	\$140M	40	40

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Increase access to education for crisis affected boys and girls in both rural and urban area
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.1

Cluster objective C02

Ensure inclusive and protective learning spaces for crisis affected boys and girls including psychosocial support for vulnerable children
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.1

Cluster objective C03

Reduce the risk of disaster, conflict and emergencies on children's education through building systemic resilience
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.1

Humanitarian Need

DfA policies, natural hazards and disasters, and poverty are the main drivers of need for school-aged boys and girls in Afghanistan. At the same time, restricted donor funding has heightened emergency education needs due to limited public schooling investments. DfA policies are the main barrier preventing girls from accessing education, according to the 2023 WoAA. The 2021 ban on secondary school education for girls has affected approximately 1.4 million girls to date and will prevent 297,155⁵³ girls who completed grade six this academic year from continuing school. Other DfA restrictions, including a June decree ordering all INGOs to halt community-based education (CBE) activities, have left inadequate time for capacity-building of local organisations and created monitoring gaps. Moreover, accelerated learning programmes (ALPs) for girls were suspended in several provinces in 2023, limiting their chances of receiving primary school education.

Meanwhile, the October 2023 Herat earthquakes left 96,000 children in need of education assistance, while flooding across numerous provinces during the year caused excessive damage to schools, disrupting learning for thousands of children. Widespread poverty continues to drive education gaps as families often deprioritise schooling to meet daily needs. In 2023, the WoAA found that 21 per cent of boys did not attend school because they needed to earn money. Moreover, the influx of undocumented returns from Pakistan in late 2023 are expected to pressure an already strained public school system, with 163,000 returnee children expected to require educational assistance in the coming year.

Response Strategy

In 2024, the Education Cluster will focus mainly on CBE interventions, which provide accessible learning opportunities for children who have been excluded from education for reasons including distance from schools, lack of physical infrastructure or teachers, and/or poverty. ALPs will remain a core strategy for enrolling out-of-school girls, given the low barriers to access as learning takes place within communities. Partners will respond to sudden onset emergencies by establishing temporary learning spaces and providing teaching and learning materials to affected public-school children. The cluster will continue to use in-kind assistance as the main modality for delivering Education in Emergency (EiE) interventions, while building upon alternative learning modalities such as online-offline technology to reach children who may not have access to physical schools.

Targeting and Prioritization

In 2024, the Education Cluster seeks to maximize the investment made in 2023 by prioritizing and maintaining the existing CBE classes. Partners will target the most vulnerable out-of-school children, including children in disaster-prone and Severity 4 areas with multiple, intersecting needs. At minimum, if the cluster receives 50 per cent of the funding requested, it will prioritise CBE activities and halve the caseload of shock-affected children. If the cluster only receives 25 per cent of requested funding, partners will reduce CBE interventions and will be unable to

assist shock-affected public-school children, leaving 1 million children total without any support or access to education.

Inclusive and Quality Programming

The Education Cluster will continue to advocate that all Afghan girls receive an education and that secondary schools be reopened for girls. The cluster will strengthen disability inclusion efforts in 2024 by training CBE teachers on methods to engage with students with special needs and disabilities. Of its overall target in 2024, three per cent are children living with disabilities. Moreover, providing assistive technology to children with disabilities will be a collaborative effort between the community, EiE partners, basic human needs partners, and the DfA. The Education Cluster remains an active member of the AAP, GiHA, and DIWG working groups, has identified dedicated focal points for each, and will collaborate with sub-national cluster coordinators and working group leads to build the capacity of national NGOs in these areas. Further, PSEA will be conducted at the sub-national level to ensure that all partners are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

Cost of Response

The Education Cluster will require \$140 million to provide essential support to 1.4 million children. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$104 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. This represents a 76 per cent increase compared to 2023, mainly driven by increased advocacy for secondary school education for girls. Otherwise, the average cost per beneficiary largely remains the same and reflects support required to maintain CBE interventions. Other primary cost drivers for cluster activities are alternative educational modalities that are costlier than other core activities. These activities are conducted through in-person and alternative learning modalities, including self-learning and distance learning, which have proven essential for girls.



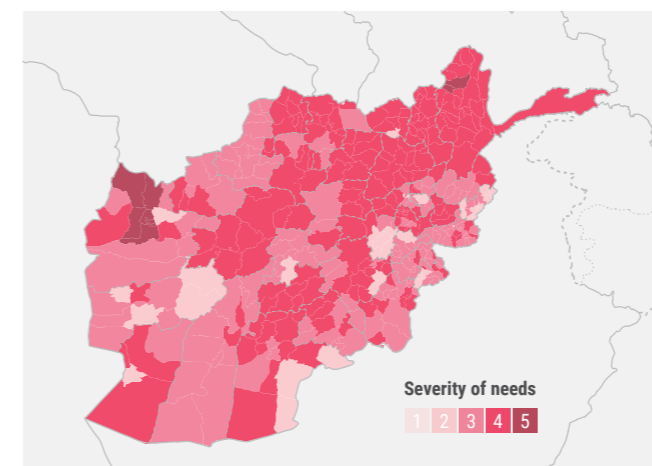
The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)



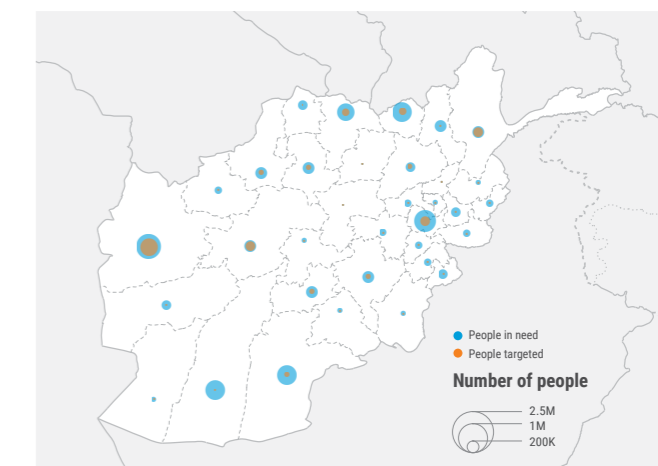
3.2 Emergency Shelter and NFI

PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
6.6M	1.7M	\$227.1M	66	54

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Necessary ES-NFI assistance is provided to affected people in a timely manner

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.1

Cluster objective C02

Shelter materials and maintenance tool kits provided to affected people in a timely manner

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.1

Cluster objective C03

Transitional shelter support is provided to affected people in a timely manner

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.2

Cluster objective C04

Vulnerable people with disabilities receive shelter and NFI assistance as per cluster standards after consultation on the design and assistance for people with special needs

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.2

Cluster objective C05

CCCM WG: Ensure care and maintenance of the Informal settlements (ISET) infrastructure

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.2

Cluster objective C06

CCCM WG: Mobile Site Management

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.2

Humanitarian Need

While conflict-related displacements have continued to decrease in 2023, the sudden influx of forced returnees, economic shocks, recurrent floods, earthquakes, and other natural disaster events are expected to continue into 2024. These events, compounded by the residual shelter needs for more than 30,000 families affected by the Herat earthquakes, seasonal winter and shelter needs for forced returnees, and the heightened risk of evictions for IDPs residing in ISETs, have resulted in 6.6 million people in need of shelter and NFI assistance. Additionally, anticipated El Niño conditions in 2024 introduces the risk of above-normal precipitation and warmer temperatures, leading to flooding, landslides, and potential displacement.

Across the country, shelter needs remain considerable especially among rural, recent-returnee and female-headed households with three out of four households facing shelter issues. According to the WoAA, 30 percent of households live in inadequate shelters. The range of shelter issues reported by households include minor damage to roofs, leaking during rain, damage to walls, and lack of insulation. Despite a decrease in the number of settlements over the past two years, an estimated 390,000 households reside in nearly 900 ISETs, including recent returnees from Pakistan.⁵⁴

Response Strategy

The ES-NFI Cluster will continue all its core activities to ensure crisis affected-people of all genders and diversities – including vulnerable groups with specific protection needs – have immediate and adequate access to emergency shelter, non-food items, transitional shelter, shelter repairs and winterization support – to meet needs from impact of natural disasters, conflict, cross-border returns, and the lack of recovery, driven by the multi-faceted crises. These efforts will be facilitated through the Cluster Coordination, Camp Management and Camp Coordination (CCCM), which includes the care and maintenance of infrastructure in ISETs. The Cluster will further continue its progressive shift towards resilient shelter solutions, advocating and supporting repair, retrofitting and transitional shelter activities. The main modalities of assistance include

a combination of in-kind, cash, and voucher support. Equally, the Cluster will continue to advocate for resources for replenishment and prepositioning of emergency stockpiles.

Targeting and Prioritization

In 2024, the ES-NFI Cluster will prioritise assistance to households impacted by new, sudden onset disasters, vulnerable families facing the risk of eviction, cross-border returnees in places of destination, refugees and asylum seekers, vulnerable households affected by the Herat earthquakes, families with protracted needs following recent flooding and other natural disasters in 2023, and those residing in high priority districts requiring seasonal winterization support.

The Cluster will use the shelter severity classification system and a protection, age, gender, and diversity lens to prioritize the needs of different groups. Assistance will be provided and tailored to the type of event, or crisis, phase of displacement, response, security of tenure and level of vulnerability.

While the Cluster has prioritized some repair, and transitional shelter assistance for persons with specific needs, the HNRP does not reflect or include shelter needs for the more than 26,000 families affected by the earthquake events in Herat or 91 per cent for undocumented returnees at places of destination. An additional \$98 million is needed to address this gap.

The CCCM Working Group, on the other hand, has formulated a response strategy for 2024 that will focus on three modalities: cash assistance, in-kind support, and profiling, which will be conducted for 100 percent of the targeted individuals to gain a better understanding of their specific needs.

Inclusive and Quality Programming

The ES-NFI Cluster aims to involve and support marginalized groups including women, especially those who are disabled, elderly, or head their households. To ensure that women headed households, and others with intersecting vulnerabilities, receive adequate support and protection, the Cluster will take the following actions: 1) promote a minimum allocation of

10 to 15 per cent of resources for these households among its partners, 2) facilitate the participation of women's and girls' rights organizations in the Cluster, 3) prioritize funding opportunities for these organizations, and 3) improve the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex and age.

The Cluster will continue to support partners to adhere to established Minimum Standards for the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and Cluster Specific Guidelines/ Checklist. Implementation of shelter projects will be centred on owner-driven approaches, and the design of culturally appropriate and inclusive housing modalities. Gender-responsive programming will be prioritized throughout the program cycle and partners are encouraged to hold regular consultations with women and girls to assess the adequacy of assistance provided. Local women groups and elderly women will play a crucial role in facilitating assessments. Distribution practices will be adapted to reduce barriers reported by women-headed households and people with disabilities. Moreover, the Cluster will support partner capacity-building initiatives working in collaboration with GiHA, AAP, PSEA and DIWG. The Cluster will also finalise a qualitative assessment in 2024, focussed on understanding the role of women and girls' and their priorities for shelter, NFI and seasonal support.

The CCCM Working Group, in collaboration with the Protection Cluster and ES-NFI Cluster, will aim to address protection concerns, improve housing access, and comprehensively mitigate evictions. This will be done through training field staff to enhance the identification and referral of protection cases; work closely with other clusters to address housing, land, and property issues; and supporting individuals with insecure tenures and heavy debts, reducing the risks of eviction.

Cost of Response

In 2024, the ES-NFI Cluster will require \$227 million to provide essential support to 1.7 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$134 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data, a 14 per cent decrease compared to the previous year. This is due to the transfer of some activities to the basic human needs framework, including repair and rebuild for earthquake-affected families, shelter support for cross-border returnees in areas of destination, and basic disaster risk mitigation infrastructure for areas vulnerable to floods and other natural disasters. An additional \$98 million is needed to address this gap.

CCCM interventions targeting IDPs have incurred significant costs. More than 454,000 individuals will be targeted with cash assistance which accounts for 80 per cent of the overall target. With an allocation of \$10 per person, this intervention alone amounts to approximately \$4.5 million. In parallel, the in-kind assistance was extended to approximately 113,500 people, covering 20 per cent of the overall target. Based on the same valuation of \$10 per person, this component incurred costs of around \$1.1 million. Furthermore, the profiling efforts will reach 567,713 individuals within the targeted population. At a rate of \$13 per household, this profiling initiative accounts for an additional \$1.1 million. Collectively, these investments highlight the substantial financial commitment that CCCM has dedicated to supporting IDPs and meeting their specific needs in Afghanistan.



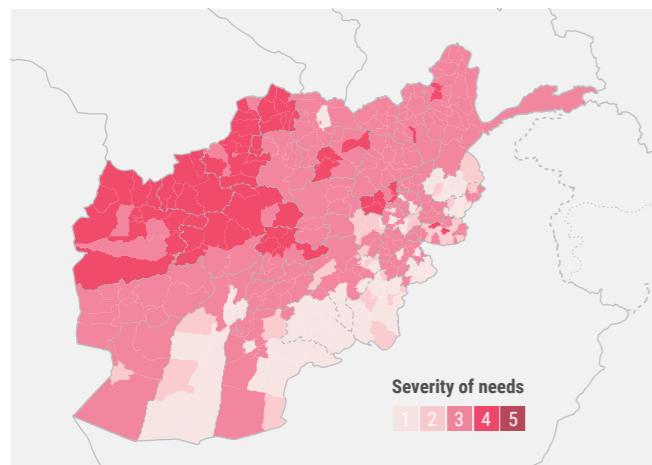
The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)

3.3 Food Security and Agriculture (FSAC)

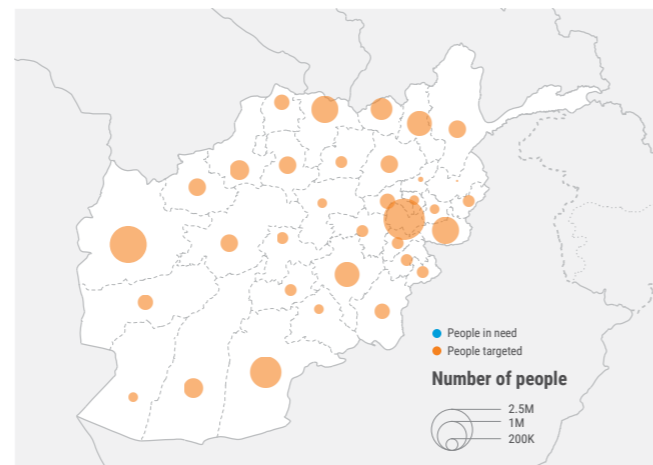


PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
15.8M	15.8M	\$1.43B	235	121

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Shock-affected women, men and children of all ages (IDPs, returnees, refugees, natural disaster-affected and people under IPC 3 and 4) have a minimum household food consumption score above 42.5
 Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.2

Cluster objective C02

Necessary food assistance is provided to affected households in a timely manner
 Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.2

Cluster objective C03

Assistance to affected population is provided to all vulnerable groups
 Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.2

Cluster objective C04

Local communities are active interlocutors regarding beneficiary selections
 Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.2

Cluster objective C05

Livelihoods are protected and rehabilitated for vulnerable people facing acute food insecurity and at risk of hunger and malnutrition
 Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.1

Humanitarian Needs

The overall level of food insecurity across Afghanistan decreased in 2023, largely the result of high levels of humanitarian food and emergency agricultural assistance, as well as a significant reduction in drought-conditions in late 2023, which is expected to continue in early 2024. However, levels of food insecurity remain extremely high, with more than a

third of Afghans projected to be experience crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC3+) from November 2023 to March 2024.⁵⁵ Despite the relative overall improvement, the food security situation remains extremely fragile and subject to seasonal, economic, and climatic shocks. The main drivers of food insecurity in Afghanistan include macroeconomic instability, high levels of unemployment, debt, elevated agriculture and livestock input prices, and depressed purchasing power. Moreover, the lingering impact of decades of conflict, extreme climatic conditions – multi-year drought, harsh winters, floods – and natural disasters such as earthquakes have significantly reduced households’ capacity to cope with shocks. Additionally, funding shortfalls in 2023 have excluded 10 million Afghans from assistance, leaving protracted emergency needs unmet, particularly for new and expecting mothers, toddlers, and pre-school children. El Niño conditions, are expected to persist through the spring 2024, supporting favourable growing conditions, particularly for the main wheat harvest. However, potential spring flooding, as well as instability in fertilizer prices, may mitigate some positive harvest outcomes. The overall economic fragility further emphasizes the need for sustained assistance to address food insecurity in Afghanistan.

Response Strategy

FSAC’s major objectives for 2024 are ensuring timely access to food for IPC3+ populations, protecting the livelihoods of urban and rural populations facing acute food insecurity, providing income support to the most vulnerable population groups through vocational skills and cash-for-work activities, reducing the effects of natural shocks and stressors on communities through cash transfers, and supporting emergency preparedness through early warning systems and timely assessments. In 2024, FSAC will undertake a shift in its priority response activities, moving from a year-round standard response to providing seasonal support for eight months with a gap during the four-month summer and harvest season. This adjustment is accompanied by a reduction in the number of assisted districts and provinces, while a reserve will be maintained to cover rapid, emergency response needs of 1 million people. Additionally, FSAC will increase the proportion of emergency food assistance delivered through cash-based transfers to almost half of all assistance, promoting localised economic benefits, recovery, and providing greater choice and dignity. The response aims to target specific vulnerable groups through various types of assistance, including in-kind food assistance, cash-based support, subsistence food production support, and livelihood protection

Photo: WFP/Omid Amini



support. The plan emphasises targeting women-headed households, integrating emergency agricultural assistance to protect agricultural livelihoods, and addressing challenges in the livestock sector. The 2024 FSAC response will address challenges in agriculture, livestock, and food security through integrated strategies, emphasizing the empowerment of vulnerable households and contingency measures to mitigate unforeseen shocks. FSAC will also leverage early warning systems and partner rapid assessment capacity to inform hotspot responses in 2024. Contingency plans include a reserve of assistance for rapid and flexible emergency response based on early warning indicators, and the allocation of assistance will be adjusted according to evolving scenarios.

Targeting and Prioritisation

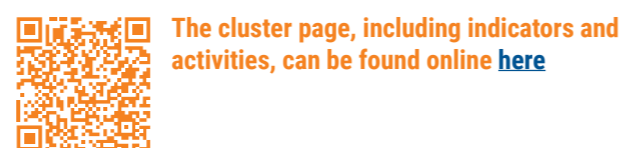
FSAC will target 15.8 million people identified in IPC Phase 3 and 4 in the November 2023 - March 2024 projection period. Priority will continue to be given to ensure that all families facing IPC 4 level outcomes are assisted throughout the year, with the most vulnerable of those facing IPC 3 outcomes assisted as much as possible based on resourcing levels, especially during the winter lean season. FSAC will assist vulnerable households in rural and urban areas in all 34 provinces for both food assistance, food production, and emergency agricultural livelihood assistance. During the January-to-March lean season, which coincides with the winter period, FSAC will scale up its support to vulnerable households with food assistance and support to winter cultivation. Support to food production and emergency agricultural livelihoods will focus on rural areas, which have been most affected by the series of droughts and have also been significantly affected by the deep economic crisis. FSAC priorities will differ between spring, summer, and winter due to the different seasonal hazards as well as the impact of the harvests. Asset creation will be focused on rural areas characterized by high levels of acute food insecurity and affected by high exposure to sudden onset natural disasters and shocks over the past five years. FSAC is also targeting people displaced by natural hazards, as well as undocumented returnees from Iran and Pakistan, as well as Pakistani refugees.

Inclusive and Quality Programming

FSAC partners will prioritise inclusivity and gender equality in its activities to ensure equal access to food assistance and livelihood opportunities, with a focus on engaging beneficiaries in all project phases. To reach people with disabilities, FSAC will adopt vulnerability-responsive and inclusive packages, emphasizing livelihood activities catering to women and vulnerable individuals, including those with disabilities. Beneficiary selection prioritises women-headed and child-headed households, recognising situations where women are effectively the household head or adult men have disabilities. FSAC partners commit to fully integrating gender in response implementation, applying gender-sensitive vulnerability criteria for targeted assistance to diverse priority beneficiary groups. FSAC is committed to the Do No Harm principle, striving to prevent exacerbation of GBV and ensuring safe, dignified, and unhindered access to assistance. Distribution practices will incorporate separate waiting areas for males and females, availability of both male and female distribution staff, and, if necessary, separate distribution days for women and men. Partners are encouraged to conduct focus group discussions, post-distribution monitoring, and rapid protection assessments to verify safe and dignified access. FSAC puts emphasis on mainstreaming protection, considering the needs of people with disabilities, the elderly, returnees, IDPs, vulnerable host community individuals, as well as youth throughout the response activities.

Cost of Response

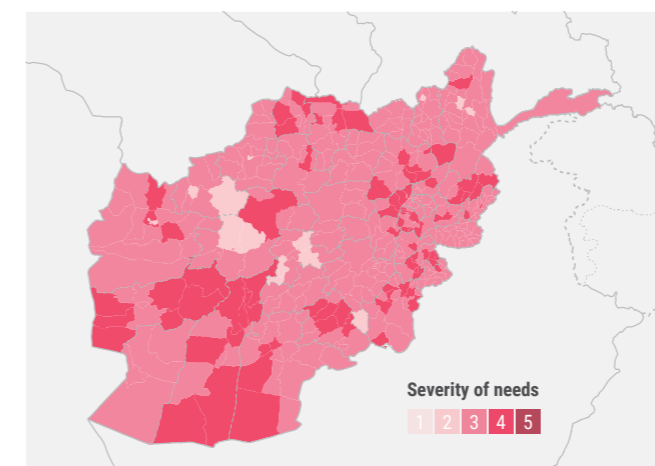
FSAC will require \$1.4 billion to provide essential support to 15.8 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$90 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities are in-kind food assistance for populations facing IPC 3 and IPC 4, as well as livelihoods support for asset creation. This is done through in-kind and cash assistance, which has proven essential and lifesaving, particularly for women, rural households, and persons with disabilities.



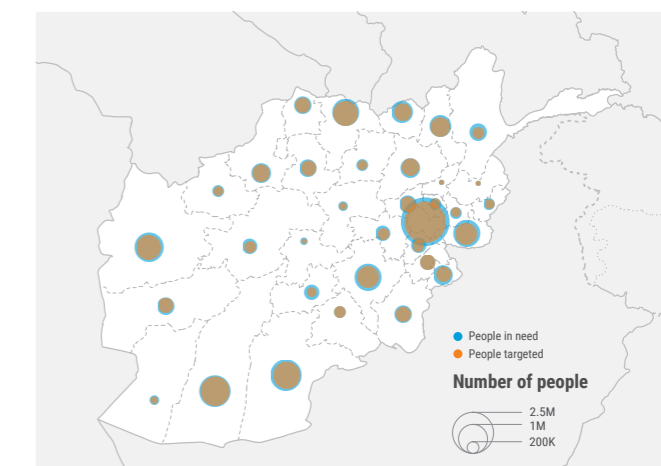
3.4 Health

PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
17.9M	12.8M	\$367M	61	61

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Maintain and increase access to life-saving and life-sustaining coordinated health services and information for those most vulnerable and in need
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.3

Cluster objective C02

Strengthen health sector capacity to prepare for, prevent, detect and deliver timely response to disease outbreaks
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.3

Cluster objective C03

Ensure access to safe, equitable and inclusive health services and information to survivors of violence
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C04

Strengthen provision of integrated rehabilitative care to improve resilience of vulnerable people
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.3

Humanitarian Needs

Afghanistan is grappling with a precarious health situation characterized by a fragile healthcare system and unequal access to services, particularly in rural areas. The challenges are multifaceted, including insufficient funding, heavy dependence on foreign aid, transportation, a shortage of healthcare professionals, and limited access to quality healthcare. The repercussions are profound, with ongoing communicable disease outbreaks, unmet maternal and child health needs, and high rates of malnutrition contributing to substantial mortality and morbidity.

Non-communicable diseases further compound the crisis, accounting for a significant percentage of all deaths in the country.

Compounding these challenges are humanitarian crises and shocks, particularly in urban areas with inadequate infrastructure and a scarcity of qualified healthcare workers. Limited resources and capacity within the public health system, along with hidden costs for private care and medicine, pose additional barriers to healthcare access. The threat of disease outbreaks, including COVID-19, AWD, measles, Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever, Dengue fever, pertussis, and malaria, looms large.

Winter exacerbates the crisis, especially for vulnerable groups like children under the age of five and the elderly, as respiratory infections surge, and heavy snowfall blocks roads, impeding access to healthcare. During the summer, limited access to safe drinking water and low public awareness may result in a high number of AWD cases. Maternal and child health needs, coupled with malnutrition, contribute significantly to mortality, with Afghanistan bearing the highest global maternal and under-5 mortality rates.

Trauma cases persist at alarming rates due to widespread contamination of explosive ordnance,

BAMYAN, CENTRAL AFGHANISTAN

A health-care professional medicates a baby in the new Bamyan Hospital built by the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan.

Photo: OCHA/Sayed Habib Bidell



sporadic explosions, and road traffic accidents. Psychosocial distress affects half the population, and one in five individuals faces impaired daily functioning due to exposure to traumatic events.

In 2024, the Health Cluster anticipates heightened health vulnerabilities due to an influx of returnees, potential earthquakes, and floods. Returnees and internally displaced persons strain existing health services, underscoring the urgent need for increased health infrastructure, female staff, health education, and psychosocial services. Financial constraints and limited access further hinder seeking treatment for various ailments.

Response Strategy

The Health Cluster's strategy, grounded in prioritizing vulnerable groups and responding to varying funding scenarios, underscores the commitment to ensuring access to quality healthcare for all, even in the face of formidable challenges.

The response strategy is comprehensive, aiming to safeguard public health through quality healthcare delivery, prevention of communicable diseases, and effective management of outbreaks and incidents. Priorities include maintaining and expanding access to life-saving health services, disease outbreak prevention, trauma care, non-communicable diseases management, procurement of essential medical supplies, and vaccination efforts.

The cluster emphasizes strengthening disease outbreak prevention, preparedness, and response; supporting disability and rehabilitation services; and enhancing healthcare workers' capacity. Community-based interventions and community engagement will also be strengthened to ensure that healthcare delivery remains responsive to affected people's voices, priorities and concerns. Healthcare service delivery will be supported through static and rationalized mobile health facilities and primary healthcare services will be prioritised in rural and underserved areas. Ensuring safety and accessibility for women and girls involves recruiting female staff and delivering services in easily accessible locations.

The Health Cluster's key response priorities encompass improving access to primary and secondary healthcare services, including reproductive health, newborn health, noncommunicable diseases, strengthening disease outbreak preparedness and response, enhancing mental health and psychosocial support services, and providing trauma care. The commitment extends to supporting disability and physical rehabilitation services, managing severe acute malnutrition in children, and ensuring a consistent supply of quality medicines and medical supplies. Coordination with other clusters is emphasized for a holistic and integrated response.

Targeting and Prioritisation

Targeting and prioritisation are informed by indicators such as accessibility, availability, health service coverage, health status, epidemic disease incidence, and vulnerability. Geographic prioritisation focuses on primary healthcare services and referrals in rural or hard-to-reach underserved areas, with special attention to vulnerable groups. Conflict-induced trauma cases take precedence in 2024.

Funding availability dictates intervention priorities, with potential repercussions outlined for varying funding levels. Reduced funding would lead to fewer people reached, diminished support scale, and reduced geographical coverage, intensifying vulnerability to catastrophic health expenses, particularly for low-income families.

Inclusive and Quality Programming

Inclusive and quality programming is a cornerstone of the Health Cluster's approach. The collaboration with technical working groups ensures accountable, inclusive, and gender-responsive humanitarian health assistance. Recommendations for promoting the participation of women and vulnerable groups include creating a secure environment, ensuring equitable access to assistance, and actively involving community members in discussions. Frontline healthcare workers are trained to report and refer cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, and the recruitment and retention of female staff are prioritized.

Efforts are directed toward promoting the inclusion of the elderly and people with disabilities, establishing minimum standards for their involvement in humanitarian action. Gender-responsive humanitarian assistance addresses the specific vulnerabilities, needs, and capacities of individuals with disabilities and the elderly. Activities to address the needs of people with disabilities include prioritizing them in healthcare and rehabilitation services, eliminating infrastructural barriers, and involving them in healthcare surveillance efforts.

Cost of Response

The Health Cluster will require \$367 million to provide essential support to 12.8 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$29 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities are providing primary healthcare services; support to secondary healthcare services, including provision of medical supplies; staff capacity-building; and transporting patients who are referred; and disease outbreak preparedness and response. These activities are conducted through the static and mobile health facilities and risk communication and community engagement, which has proven essential and lifesaving, particularly for women and girls, rural households and persons with disabilities.



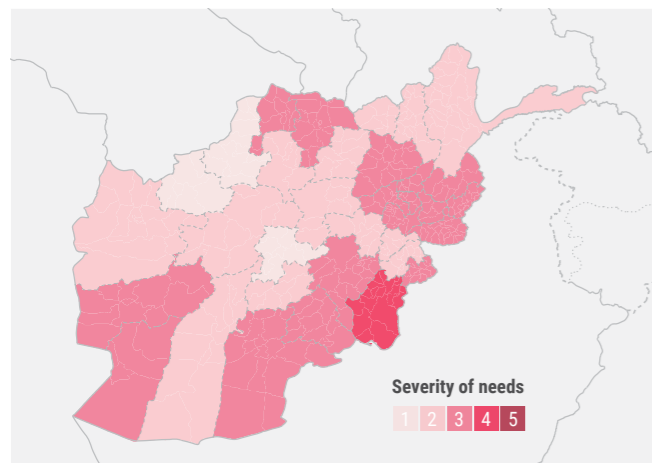
The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)

3.5 Nutrition

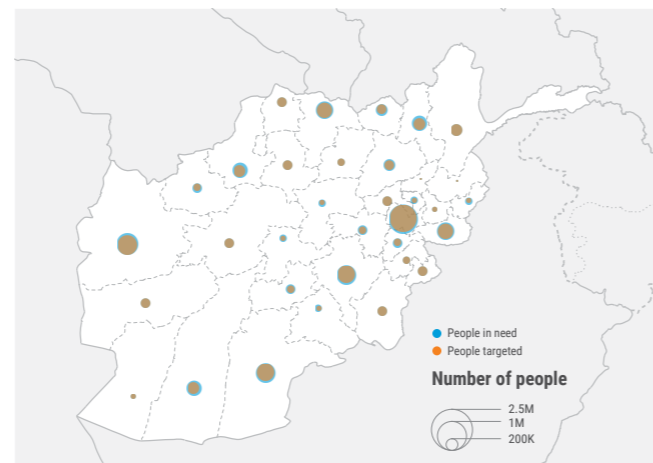


PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
7.4M	5.6M	\$299M	154	74

Sectoral severity of needs by province (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Increase equitable access and utilization of quality lifesaving curative nutrition services for early detection and treatment of acute malnutrition for girls and boys under five years of age and PLW affected by acute malnutrition

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.2

Cluster objective C02

Increase equitable access and utilization of quality lifesaving preventative nutrition-specific service delivery for children, and women

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.2

Cluster objective C03

Increase equitable access to quality lifesaving preventative nutrition-sensitive services in prioritized

setting through joint inter-cluster programming

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.2

Cluster objective C04

Strengthen capacities for rolling out improved and effective surveillance, programming and coordination mechanisms

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.2

Humanitarian Needs

Macroeconomic factors and recurrent natural disasters continue to exert a profound impact on the lives of the Afghan people. The vulnerability of Infants and young children and their mothers to malnutrition remains a pressing concern⁵⁶, exacerbated by factors such as food insecurity, poor feeding practices, and high morbidity due to limited access to essential services. In recent years, Afghanistan has faced a persistent and high burden of malnutrition, with over three million

children under the age of five experiencing acute malnutrition annually, with figures reaching 3.1 million, 3.9 million and 3.2 million in 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively. The October 2023 IPC analysis revealed that 29 per cent of the population is in Phase 3 and above, with a projected increase to 36 per cent from November 2023 to March 2024.⁵⁷

The number of children under five affected by acute malnutrition was calculated by the district using the globally accepted formula⁵⁸, encompassing both prevalent and incident cases with a correction factor of 2.6 to address incident cases. The findings from the 2022 national population-based nutrition survey (NNS) using the standardized monitoring and assessment of relief and transition methodology and the subsequent IPC acute malnutrition methodology were used to estimate for 2023. In the absence of a population-based survey in 2023, the projections for 2024 considered food insecurity and diarrheal disease trends. Overall, an estimated 2.9 million children under the age of five will suffer from acute malnutrition in 2024, including 857,000 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and more than 2 million with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), respectively.

Response Strategy

In 2024, the Nutrition Cluster aims to provide life-saving assistance to 5.6 million children under five and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in all provinces. Seven service categories will be delivered through static sites, complemented by mobile health and nutrition teams (MHNTs), aligned with the national MHNTs rationalisation plan. These include treatment of under-five children and PLWs with acute malnutrition, blanket supplementary feeding (BSFP), vitamin A supplementation and infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling to primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months.

To inform the strategy for cash-in nutrition programming, a cash incentive pilot was conducted for covering transportation and accommodation costs of mothers and mahram for reaching in-patient nutrition treatment hospitals.⁵⁹ Insights from this pilot will guide the scale-up of the cash for inpatient treatment.

The Nutrition Cluster emphasises a holistic approach, combining treatment and prevention services to break the cycle of malnutrition. The BSFP and IYCF counselling aims to promote a well-balanced, diversified, and nutritious diet from infancy. Institutionalising acute malnutrition management involves mapping health facilities and districts with low nutrition services coverage, developing a capacity strengthening plan, and integrating nutrition services into public and private health facilities and family health houses.

In addition to the nutrition-specific services, the Nutrition Cluster will collaborate with health, food security and WASH clusters for an integrated package of community- and facility-based services.⁶⁰ This approach aligns with the global clusters' call for action on inter-sector collaboration and partnership in emergency settings.⁶¹ The Nutrition Cluster plans to use nutrition sites as platforms for delivering intersectoral health, food security and WASH services, and engaging with clusters and technical working groups to strengthen the multi-sectoral response for vulnerable households.

To align with the national strategy for health emergency response, the Nutrition Cluster commits to the effective integration of acute malnutrition management into the health system. The systematic screening for acute malnutrition will be conducted on children 6-59 months and PLW attending health facilities for curative and preventative services and referral for treatment as needed. Collaboration with the WASH cluster includes providing WASH kits to children 6 to 59 months of age with SAM attending nutrition sites and improving hygiene practices. The partnership with FSAC involves delivering BSFP through the general food distributions jointly reaching beneficiaries with food distribution and nutrition messaging. The integrated nutrition messaging package, developed with FSAC, will be rolled out. As part of the integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) programme, community outreach and sensitisation will be conducted to raise awareness and promote participation in a responsive nutrition service delivery, as per guidelines.⁶²

Targeting and Prioritization

Failure to meet needs will lead to a disaster, with a dramatic increase in the number of deaths. Malnutrition is one of the leading nutrition-related causes of death in under-five children, with SAM and MAM increasing the risk of death twelve and three times, respectively, compared with a well-nourished child. The Nutrition Cluster targets all provinces for acute malnutrition treatment, emphasising continuous stakeholder engagement and advocacy. Without adequate response, 2.9 million acutely malnourished children under five face high mortality risk. Findings suggest that 194,000 to 217,000 children among these

children may die in the course of the year (531 – 594 daily). Key literature highlights MAM case fatality rate (3.6 per cent), MAM progressing to SAM without treatment (8.1 per cent), and SAM case fatality rates by anthropometric measurement type (13.0 per cent for MUAC, 15.1 per cent for Weight for Height, 35.0 per cent for both).

Scaling up nutrition services is resource-intensive and time-consuming. Timely funding is crucial, impacting achievements in training, procurement, and reaching set targets. Prioritisation of services and geographic areas would depend on fund availability.

% OF FUNDING AVAILABLE			
25%	50%	75%	100%
Services: treatment U5 and PLW, IYCF, VAS	Services: treatment U5 and PLW, IYCF, VAS, BSFP	Services: treatment U5 and PLW, IYCF, VAS, BSFP	Services: treatment U5 and PLW, IYCF, VAS, BSFP
Geographic areas: Current or projected IPC Phase 4	Geographic areas: Current or projected IPC Phase 4	Geographic areas: Current or projected IPC Phase 3 & Phase 4.	Geographic areas: All provinces.

Inclusive and Quality Programming

Gender and culture-based constraints may hinder access to nutrition services for women and children. Trained frontline workers will continue implementing all IMAM activities – from community sensitisation to delivering quality lifesaving services, adhering to national guidelines. Advocacy will persist for female worker involvement in both facility and community-based services. AAP work, focusing on community outreach and sensitisation, and PLW counselling through mother-to-mother groups, will empower women for effective, meaningful participation.

The Nutrition Cluster prioritises extreme needs in households with multiple vulnerabilities by targeting children under five and PLW. Amid financial hardships and women’s movement restrictions, decentralised community-based activities will intensify. Revised country-specific guidance on protection mainstreaming includes risk-specific mitigation measures identified through a participatory exercise⁶³. Categories such as child with disability, girl child, child below six months, child with comorbidity, orphan child, IDP child, and child of underage mother, alongside PLW with disability,

PLW in early motherhood, PLW with no mahram, and PLW head of household, require additional protection measures. Monitoring at national and subnational levels ensures compliant service delivery.

Cost of Response

The Nutrition Cluster will require \$299 million to provide essential support to 5.6 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$53 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities are blanket supplementary feeding programmes, moderate acute malnutrition treatment for children, and acute malnutrition treatment for pregnant and lactating women. These activities are conducted at nutrition treatment facilities and by providing specialized nutritious foods, which has proven essential and lifesaving, particularly for pregnant and lactating women and children under 5.



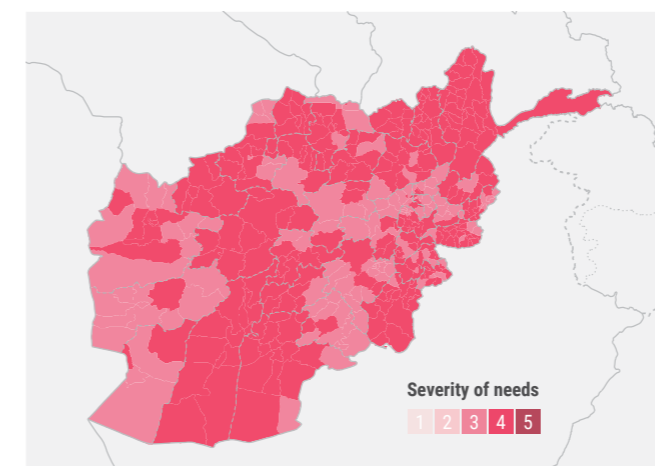
The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)



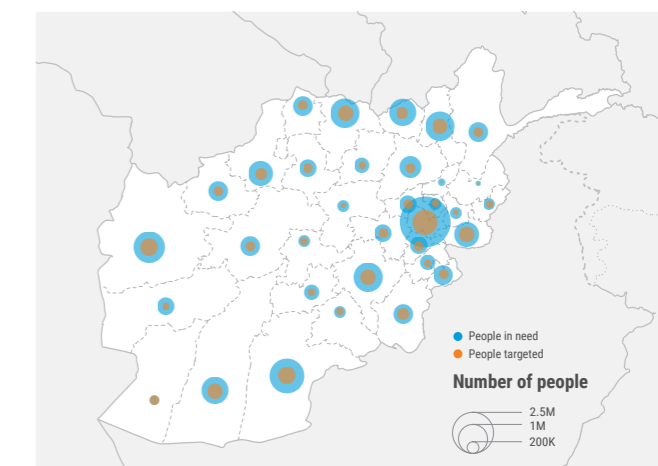
3.6 Protection

PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
20.8M	6M	\$165.8M	55	55

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Overall Summary of Needs

Despite improved economic and security conditions across the country, Protection Cluster actors believe that the protection space in Afghanistan is shrinking, and that the operational environment will become more demanding in 2024. This is owing to DfA directives and increased interference in humanitarian response, as well as the systematic degradation of Afghan women's and girls' rights leading to their isolation from socioeconomic and political life. Due to restrictive measures or bans imposed by authorities, girls and women face significant challenges in terms of limited access to basic services, education, participation in communities, limited freedom of movement, and personal safety concerns, making them more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and violence. A continuing ban on post-secondary education for girls and women, mahram requirements, and prohibitions on women working in specific businesses,

organisations, and sectors limits their participation in their communities, access to services, and undermine their fundamental and human rights. The lack of land and property rights for women furthers gender-based asset disparity. In the third annual Women, Peace, and Security Index for 2021, Afghanistan ranked as the worst performer for women's inclusion, justice access, and security out of 170 countries.⁶⁴ Since mid-2021 women continue to face restrictions on their ability to exercise their basic human rights and reports of grave protection violations – including murder, rape, forced and child marriages, assault, battery, and honour killings – have not been addressed in the legitimate court system.

Two developments in late 2023 will impact Protection stakeholders, their concerns, and efforts in 2024. First, the devastating Herat earthquakes in October, which left 275,000 people in need of assistance, increased immediate and long-term protection needs, with


women and children comprising the majority of those affected. Second, Pakistan's new deportation policy for undocumented returnees triggered thousands of Afghans to return in numbers not seen since 2016, putting further strain on services.

Persistent economic insecurity has forced families to adopt harmful coping mechanisms like taking on debt and has also prompted both internal and cross-border migration, sending many children on the move in search of employment, exposing them to risks. Restrictions on Afghan female aid workers has threatened and reduced access to essential health, and child protection services, while the ban on post-primary education for girls – which has affected 1.4 million girls to date – has exacerbated problems like child marriage, child labour, and psychological distress among children and their families. UNICEF's 2023 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey reports that more than 19 per cent of children are engaged in child labour and that nearly 40 per cent of women were married before age 18,⁶⁵ while the 2023 WoAA found that 24 per cent of primary school aged children are out of school. Furthermore, water scarcity and food insecurity have drained communities' resilience and coping mechanisms, while seasonal weather patterns – such as harsh winter – increased shelter and clothing needs.

Despite the significant reduction in armed conflict, Afghanistan remains one of the most contaminated countries in the world, with 3.2 million people living within 1km of improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war, which are a leading cause of civilian casualties.⁶⁶ Poverty-driven scrap collection

also increases children's exposure to explosive ordnance, with over 60 children killed or wounded each month, UNICEF reports. Additionally, farmers, herders and those involved in agricultural livelihoods are especially at risk, as are returnees who lack knowledge of the areas they are returning to.

Meanwhile, the growing threat of forced evictions from informal settlements and the influx returnees continues to drive housing, land, and property (HLP) needs. The returns of long-term displaced families and undocumented returnees to places of origin is expected to result in increased HLP demands, as land conflicts in these areas are projected to worsen. The lack of a legal framework for HLP administration and ambiguity regarding the enforcement of property law since 2021 raises further risks for these vulnerable groups and their property rights and poses obstacles to land tenure security. Women continue to be vulnerable to evictions, with bans on female partners from representing women beneficiaries in court and the refusal of women advocacy licenses impeding progress on women's HLP rights, according to HLP and GiHA research. In this situation, HLP partners are obliged to work through the informal legal system, which limits the response options open to women.

 [The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online here](#)

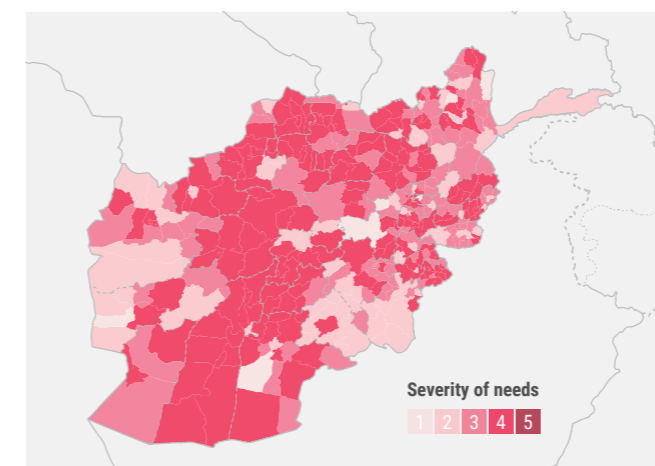
KANDAHAR, SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN
An Afghan family arrives at the IOM Transit Center in Kandahar to receive the assistance.
Photo: IOM/Mohammad Osman Azizi



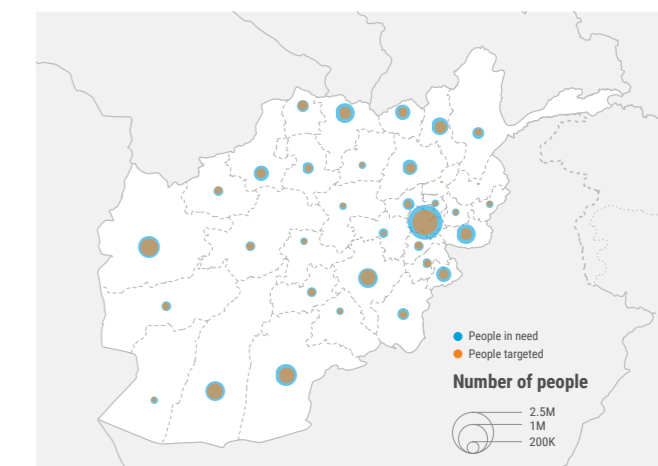
3.6.1 Protection: Child Protection

PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
9.2M	4.6M	\$42.9M	45	34

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Vulnerable families and girls and boys at-risk have access to well-coordinated age, gender and disability sensitive child protection services, including psychosocial support and case management, and are protected against life threatening risk including abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C02

Girls and boys are protected through coherent and meaningful engagement with communities, caregivers and duty bearers by promoting evidence based awareness raising and advocacy and use of community based child protection mechanisms
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C03

Increased and strengthened capacities of partners, service providers, civil society, and authorities, including through established guidelines and SOP, training, and resources to safely prevent, mitigate, mainstream, and respond to protection issues
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Response Strategy

The child protection area of responsibility (CP AoR) will utilise integrated and community-based approaches to respond to children across all vulnerable populations in need of care and protection. CP partners will provide comprehensive case management services, establish child-friendly safe spaces to provide a secure setting for educational and recreational activities, engage parents and caregivers to cope with psychological

stressors and enhance positive parenting, distribute emergency response and NFI kits, provide cash-for-protection, and raise awareness of child protection issues through community dialogues and mass media. The CP AoR will also build the capacity of partners and the social workforce on minimum quality standards for services and multi-sectoral integration, strengthen coordination at national and sub-national levels, and roll out the child protection information management systems (CPIMS+) to enhance the management and organization of child protection data.

Targeting and Prioritization

The CP AoR targeting strategy will prioritize activities based on geography, vulnerability, emergency response and seasonal needs, and community engagement. Priority will be given to rural areas with the most severe child protection needs, considering factors such as lack of social services and prevalence of child exploitation, violence, and displacement. Vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied and separated children, girls, children with disabilities, women-headed households, and those living in high-risk environments, will be a primary target. CP partners will prioritize areas and communities affected by extreme weather conditions, and actively engage affected communities to participate in the identification of protection needs. The CP AoR will adjust its strategy based on funding received to ensure critical activities are implemented to the greatest extent possible. If only 50 per cent of funding is received, CP will halve its target for case management and structured psychosocial assistance (PSS) activities, reduce parenting sessions to 30 per cent and capacity-building activities for humanitarian workers to 15 per cent. If only 25 per cent of required funds are received, structured PSS activities, prevention


messaging, and the rollout of CPIMS+ will also be affected, prevention messaging, and the rollout of CPIMS+ will also be affected.

Quality and Inclusive Programming

The CP AoR will ensure the inclusion of women and girls, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups through the design of safe, physically accessible spaces to specifically accommodate the needs of women, girls, and boys; gender-sensitive child protection awareness campaigns; specialized case management support to children with disabilities, and women’s and girls’ empowerment activities, providing them with opportunities to build resilience and access resources to protect themselves. The AoR will also address specific needs of children on the move, unaccompanied and separated children, women-headed households, and children recently returned to Afghanistan.

Cost of Response

The Child Protection AoR will require \$43 million to provide essential support to 4.6 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$9 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities are establishing child friendly spaces and case management services, as well as wellbeing messaging to support children’s psychosocial wellbeing. These activities are conducted at in-person child and adolescent friendly spaces, as well as homes and communities, which have proven essential and lifesaving, particularly for girls and boys.

 **The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)**



3.6.2 Protection: General Protection

PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
14.8M	3M	\$45.8M	13	13

Cluster objective C01

Protection assistance and services are provided to vulnerable, conflict and disaster-affected women, men, boys, and girls, including IDPs, refugees, returnees, elderly as well as people living with disabilities

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C02

Capacities of partners, service providers and civil society are strengthened, including through established guidelines, SOPs and training

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C03

Key protection issues are monitored, in order to identify persons in need of assistance, inform the humanitarian response and advocate for the protection of civilians

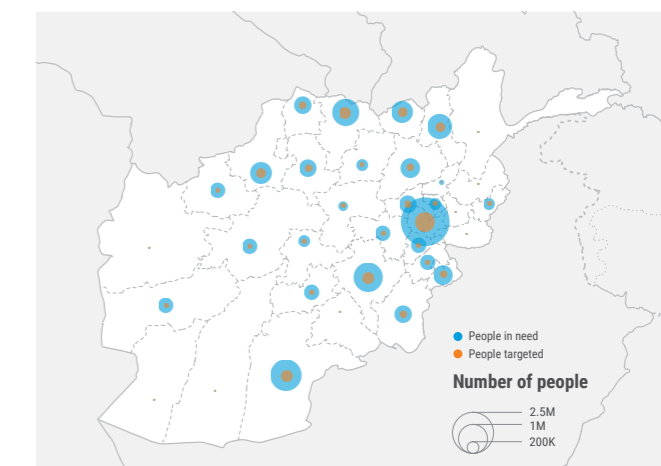
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.2

Cluster objective C04

Protection risks are mitigated through coherent, meaningful engagement with duty bearers and consistent advocacy efforts, for the actualization of the ‘centrality of protection’

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.3

Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Response Strategy

General protection partners will engage in protection monitoring and community-based protection activities to track protection risks, human rights violations, and support evidence-based advocacy; implement community-based protection (CBP) activities; capacity building of partners, civil society, and other stakeholders; risk communication with community engagement to raise awareness on protection concerns; and sensitization sessions for local authorities. Partners will also provide individual protection assistance to people with special needs; cash-for-protection; legal counselling and

assistance, including identity and support with civil documentation; and psychosocial support assistance and referrals. Further, the cluster will support protection mainstreaming, establish an advocacy red flag system to raise issues to the HCT, and develop standard protection terminology in local languages for system-wide use.

Targeting and Prioritization

General Protection partners will maintain their focus on districts where elevated protection risks and concerns have been identified through partner reporting, community-based protection monitoring data, the WoAA, and the needs monitoring framework. This includes communities situated along borders, as well as locations with high concentrations of IDPs, refugees, returnees, and other vulnerable individuals, such as those with disabilities. General Protection strategies, targeting, and approaches – including community-based activities, cash, in-kind assistance, and referrals – will align with partner targets. The overall fluid operational environment and shrinking protection space shall be the determining factors that will inevitably impact planned protection activities.


Quality and Inclusive Programming

In collaboration with GiHA, the Protection Cluster will continue exploring innovative approaches and diverse modalities to deliver assistance to ensure that the protection requirements and concerns of women and girls are comprehensively considered. Approaches include collaborating with women's organizations,

engaging with women through other sectors, recruiting personnel of both genders to carry out protection monitoring activities; and conducting remote household surveys when in-person participation is not possible. The cluster will collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, including community structures, leaders, and organizational frameworks, to establish effective channels for reaching women and girls and delivering essential services.

Cost of Response

General Protection will require \$46 million to provide essential support to 3 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$15 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities are protection monitoring, community-based protection activities, and individual protection assistance and cash for protection for people with special needs. These activities are conducted through emergency in-kind, cash, and community-based interventions, which has proven essential and lifesaving, particularly for women, girls, and persons with disabilities.

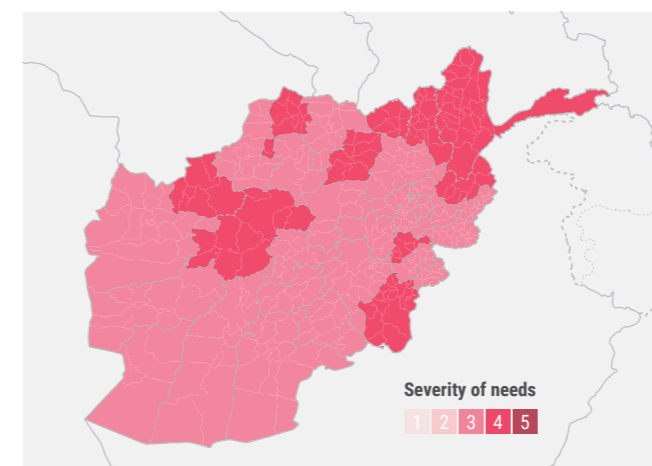
 The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)

3.6.3 Protection: Gender-Based Violence

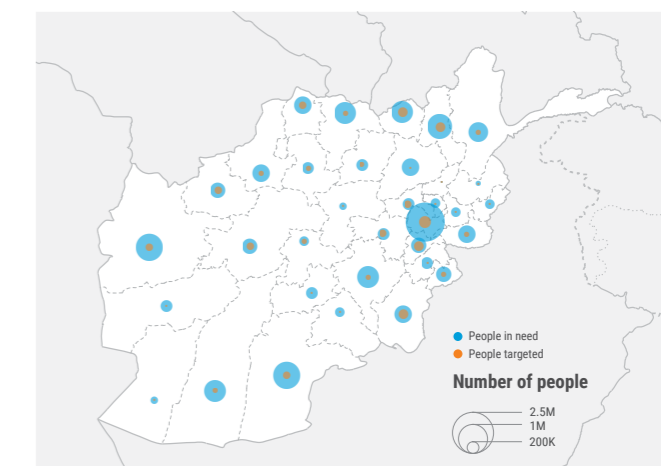


PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
13.3M	2M	\$45M	40	26

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Targeted population have access to lifesaving services in safe and confidential spaces and are provided with tools to restore their dignity and wellbeing in alignment with survivor-centered principles
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C02

Targeted population, through awareness raising and community engagement, have access to comprehensive information on available services and can access safe, confidential and timely referrals.
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C03

Increased and strengthened partner capacities including through established guidelines, trainings

and resources to safely and ethically respond to the needs of targeted population
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Response Strategy

In 2024, GBV Sub-Cluster activities will include providing life-saving case management, mental health and psychosocial support, health services, and legal aid and shelter to vulnerable populations. Partners will seek enhanced access to survivors through tailored community dialogues with influential community members, men, boys, and youth networks. The sub-cluster (SC) will also preposition dignity kits, support safe spaces and survivor-centred services, and build the capacity of actors to deliver higher quality and harmonized services in line with minimum standards.

Targeting and Prioritization

GBV SC will target individuals who are considered the most vulnerable within already vulnerable population groups, including recent female returnees unaccustomed to the current restrictions as well as IDPs. District-level severity, together with the incorporation of expert opinion, is applied to address the areas with the greatest need adequately. In the event of insufficient funding, priority will be given to the distribution of dignity kits, which aim to address the immediate needs of women and girls, particularly those displaced. Additionally, efforts will be made to provide well-being activities for women and girls, along with necessary referrals to medical services.


Quality and Inclusive Programming

The GBV SC will implement a survivor-centred approach and prioritize the well-being of children, enabling agencies to effectively address the unique gender-related and individual needs of the population they serve. Given the dynamic nature of the operating environment, it is crucial to conduct regular and timely analyses to inform and adapt service modalities to specific limitations. Enhancing the protective

environment and support systems requires engaging in community dialogues with influential members and fostering collaboration with men, boys, and youth networks.

Cost of Response

The GBV Sub-cluster will require \$45 million to provide essential support to 2 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$23 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities include providing wellbeing support to women and girls, dignity kit distribution, and multisectoral, life-saving services. These activities are conducted through in-kind distribution, case management services, and community engagement activities, which has proven essential and lifesaving, particularly for women and girls.

 The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)

HIRAT, WESTERN AFGHANISTAN
Shafiq, a strong mother, overcomes joint problems following the earthquake, while her two daughters display courage in facing stress
Photo: IOM/Marjan Wafa

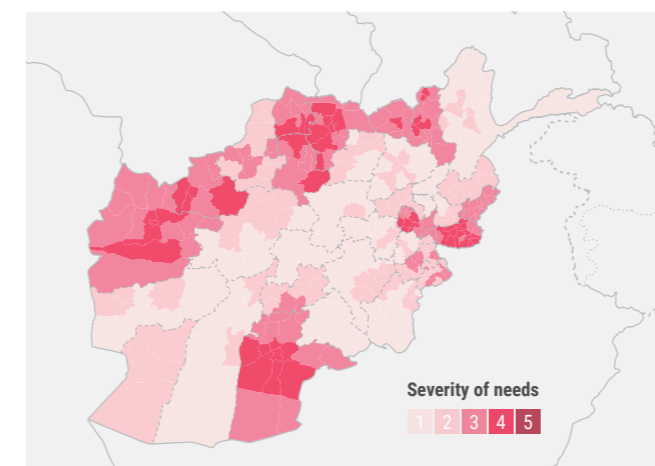


3.6.4 Protection: Housing, Land and Property

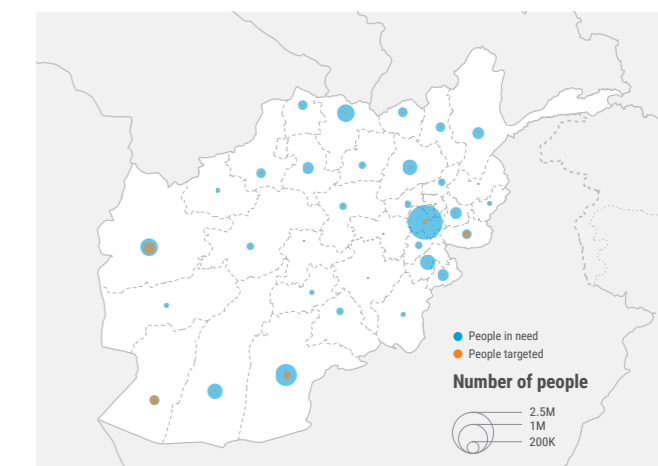


PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
6.3M	635K	\$8.4M	-	-

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Vulnerable people of all genders and diversities are able to claim HLP rights and/or possess HLP documents through legal support and advocacy
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C02

Vulnerable people of all genders and diversities are supported towards obtaining a durable housing, land or property solution through strengthened communal property rights or land allocation
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C03

Duty bearers and other actors are capacitated on HLP rights and responsibilities
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.3

Response Strategy

HLP activities will include the provision of information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA) services such as legal awareness, counselling, and assistance. HLP partners will support the strengthening of communal land rights of informal settlements through mapping, participatory planning, and priority humanitarian investments in communal infrastructure and services. HLP partners will also support activities that assist IDPs who have returned to their place of origin in locations where there is a high demand due to high volumes of returns. Capacity-building activities will continue to target informal justice actors, humanitarian actors, and other stakeholders, with formal justice actors also being targeted if possible. Additionally, HLP partners will continue advocacy on key HLP issues with DfA and will develop materials and products to advocate for the rights of the most vulnerable.

Targeting and Prioritization

HLP partners will target those who are in land conflicts, under threat of eviction, and/or have returned to places of origin. HLP will focus on large informal settlement populations; border points experiencing high volume of returns, and areas of destination with high rates of IDPs and returnees. In all these cases, women-headed households and women in male-headed households are prioritized for assistance. If 50 per cent of funding is not received, HLP will halve its caseload for people with severe HLP needs, leaving affected populations at higher risk of eviction while restricting vulnerable people from accessing land and housing. In addition to the humanitarian implications, failing to secure HLP rights will also have longer-term impacts, since investments to meet basic needs will not occur in the absence of secure HLP rights.


Quality and Inclusive Programming

HLP partners will continue to prioritize women and girls, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Partners will maximize access to women and

girls through in-person activities and/or conducting activities by phone, while using female staff to assist women and girls in needs assessments, awareness raising, counselling and legal assistance. Partners will utilize existing relationships with community representatives and leaders, community development councils, religious leaders, and informal justice actors to access the most vulnerable community members. In addition, strong coordination with other humanitarian stakeholders such as I/NGOs and UN agencies will ensure referrals are made to HLP partners for the required assistance.

Cost of Response

HLP will require \$8.4 million to provide essential support to 635,000 people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$13 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities are providing information on HLP rights and supporting communal land rights. These activities are conducted through counselling and legal assistance.



The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)

HIRAT, WESTERN AFGHANISTAN

Zamarod stitches together a tent following the destruction of her home by the earthquakes that struck Hirat. Photo: IOM/Marjan Wafa

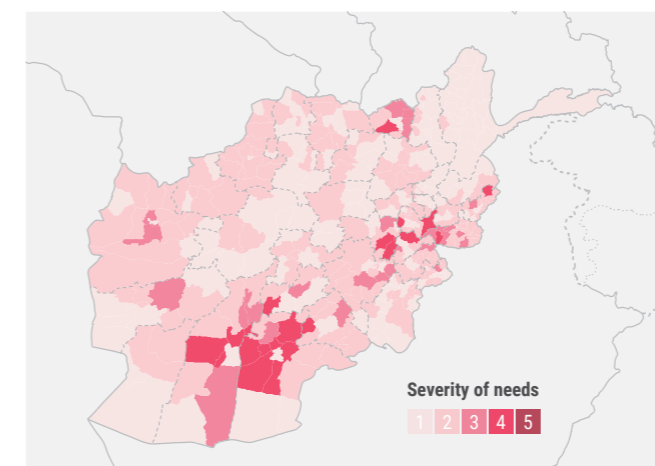


3.6.5 Protection: Mine Action

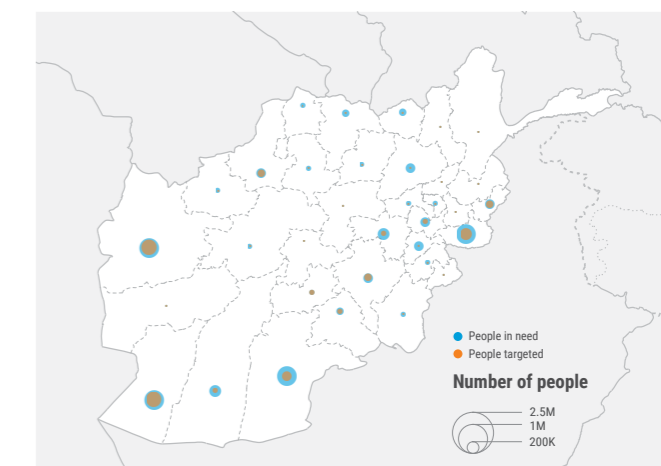


PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
4.2M	1.8M	\$23.7M	12	12

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Reduce civilian casualties from explosive ordnance through mine action land release, quick response and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.1

Cluster objective C02

The specific needs with regards to the explosive ordnance of the vulnerable people are identified and responded to through survey and quick response activities
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.1

Cluster objective C03

Support the victims of explosive ordnance to ensure their integration in the society
Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Response Strategy

In 2024, Mine Action (MA) partners will prioritise explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) for returnees, IDPs, and explosive ordnance-impacted communities; surveillance of districts in former conflict areas to expand the Mine Action database; and clearance of explosive hazards. Partners will coordinate with the Health Cluster to deliver physical rehabilitation services to the victims of explosive ordnance, providing cash to cover travel and accommodation costs for victim assistance beneficiaries from remote areas seeking rehabilitation services.

Targeting and Prioritization

MA priorities include responding to civilian casualties from explosive ordnance (EO) hazards, humanitarian activities needing MA support, and community

proximity to hazards. Households dependent on agriculture-based livelihoods, returnee populations, and impoverished households that resort to scrap metal collection are particularly at risk. To address the most devastating effects posed by explosive ordnance, the mapping, explosive hazard clearance, and EORE will be prioritised. Significant underfunding in 2024 will prompt MA partners to cease victim assistance activities, scale down mine clearance and surveillance, and reduce EORE activities. This will impact overall security situation due to increased civilian casualties from explosive ordnance, generating further humanitarian needs.


Quality and Inclusive Programming

Mine Action partners are employing several strategies to promote the inclusion of women and girls in mine action, including deploying mixed gender teams to conduct explosive ordnance risk education and ensure that women and girls are also reached. MA is also advocating for gender focal points in partner organizations, increased employment opportunities for

women in mine action, as well as developing policies to ensure safe working spaces for women. Mine Action also uses sex and age disaggregated data to track reach to women and girls. Moreover, Mine Action advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities and includes victim assistance as one of its five main pillars.

Cost of Response

Mine Action will require \$23.7 million to provide essential support to 1.8 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$14 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities are explosive hazard clearance, followed by explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance for people with disabilities. Mine Action activities are conducted through survey, physical clearance, physical rehabilitation services, and educational activities, which have proven essential and lifesaving, particularly for rural households.

 [The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online here](#)

MAYDAN WARDAK, CENTRAL AFGHANISTAN
Afghan Technical Consultants, ATC, performs minefield clearance, supported by UNOCHA.
Photo: Olivier Jobard

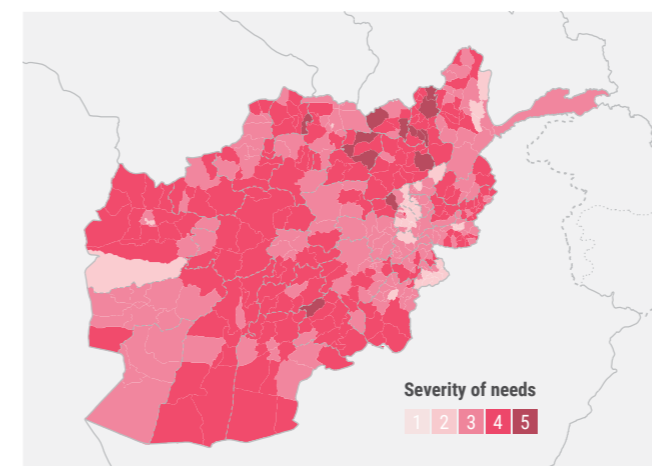


3.7 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

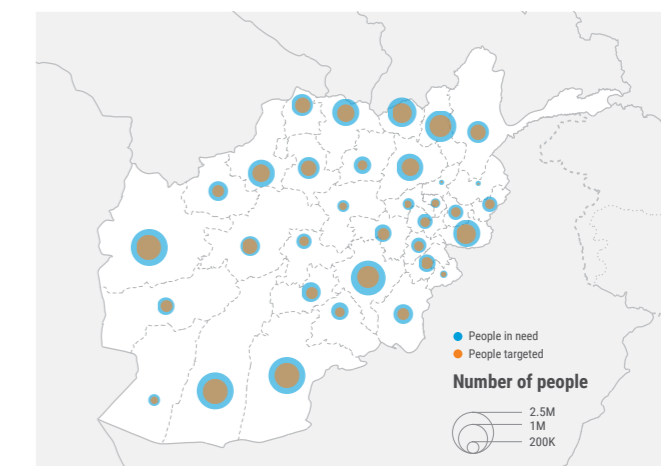


PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
21.1M	9.7M	\$327.8M	71	50

Sectoral severity of needs by district (in 2024)



Sectoral people in need and people targeted by province (in 2024)



Cluster objective C01

Identified vulnerable populations receive timely, life-saving and emergency WASH assistance – targeting people of all gender, ages, and diversities including newly internally displaced, border returnees (refugee returnees, undocumented returnees), refugees and asylum seekers, and people affected by sudden-onset natural disasters

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.1

Cluster objective C02

Identified children under 5 with SAM cases, receive integrated Nutrition-WASH assistance at the household level and prevent further deterioration from WASH-Nutrition related infections

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.3

Cluster objective C03

Pregnant and lactating women (PLW) linked with reported children U5 with SAM cases are supported with WASH assistance at the household level to improve and promote safe WASH practices at the HH level and prevent subsequent WASH-Nutrition related infections

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.3

Cluster objective C04

Vulnerable people affected by AWD/cholera outbreaks receive timely effective integrated WASH, Health and Nutrition assistance, and preventive actions to mitigate transmissions at the community and household levels

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 1.3

Cluster objective C05

Vulnerable people (women, girls, men, boys, and persons with disability) are consulted to identify their specific needs for WASH assistance and take into consideration their safety and dignity in the provision of WASH assistance

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C06

WASH partners engage with vulnerable people in decision-making about WASH assistance, ensuring women, men, girls, boys and people with disability participate in the process

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 2.1

Cluster objective C07

People facing vulnerability in urban areas receive aid through rehabilitations, repairs, extensions, and the delivery of enduring and environmentally-friendly WASH services

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.3

Cluster objective C08

Vulnerable populations in rural areas have access to drought-responsive water supply options through drought risk mapping and continuous groundwater monitoring and are supported with sustainable sanitation options

Contributes to Specific Objective SP3.3

Cluster objective C09

Provision and promotion of safe hygiene promotion practices through a participatory approaches that are culturally appropriate

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.3

Cluster objective C10

Health and nutrition facilities are supported with a basic WASH package for infection and prevention control

Contributes to Specific Objective SP 3.3

Cluster objective C11

Schools and learning centres are supported with a basic WASH package to promote learning and prevent disease outbreaks

Contributes to Specific Objective SP3.3

Humanitarian Needs

The 2023 WoAA sheds light on the pressing WASH needs across the country. A staggering 74 per cent of rural communities endured severe drought in the preceding year, affecting 19 provinces. This resulted in dried springs and diminished groundwater in wells. The scarcity of water, both in rural and urban areas, has intensified due to recurring droughts, escalating barriers for households from 48 per cent in 2021 to 67 per cent in 2023, with the likelihood of further increases without improved services. Monthly household water expenditures surged from 185 AFN in 2021 to 317 AFN in 2023, indicative of the growing crisis. Inequitable access to WASH services has elevated protection concerns, with 64 per cent of females encountering barriers and exposure to GBV during water collection.

The last year witnessed the spread of acute watery diarrhoea /cholera to 333 districts across all 34 provinces, recording more than 195,000 cases and 94 deaths.⁶⁷ Catastrophic severity in AWD among children under age 5 was observed in four provinces, with high caseloads in six additional provinces, both rural and urban.⁶⁸ Vulnerabilities and inadequate infrastructure signal a continuation and likely escalation of this trend in 2024.

Afghanistan faces multiple natural hazards, with nearly two million people living in areas that would be heavily impacted by heavy flooding⁶⁹ and 17 million people living near fault lines in high-risk seismic zones.⁷⁰ The observed high drought stress is predicted to persist in 2024. WASH needs are anticipated to grow in urban, drought-affected, and return areas. Economic barriers leave only 20 per cent of households reporting sufficient water, while one-fourth use unsafe water, and one-third lack soap.⁷¹ Rural areas exhibit higher usage of unimproved latrines (38 per cent) and open defecation (9 per cent). Climate vulnerabilities, droughts, and economic shocks disproportionately

affect populations. Limited capacity of water and sanitation authorities results in 60 per cent non-functional water systems⁷², negatively impacting approximately 10 million people in urban and peri-urban areas across the country.⁷³

Response Strategy

To address these challenges, the 2024 WASH Cluster priorities are threefold. First, ensuring a safe water supply for domestic use with a focus on risk reduction, water surveillance, household treatments, and infrastructure improvements. Second, enhancing hygiene promotion with culturally relevant messaging and an evidence-based approach. Third, addressing safe sanitation with a focus on emergency latrines, improved access, and environmental sanitation. The response aims to deliver comprehensive WASH services in high and medium-priority drought-affected provinces, encompassing safe drinking water, appropriate toilets, showers, handwashing facilities, and hygiene promotion.

The WASH Cluster commits to prioritising gender parity in WASH facility provision, incorporating consultations, feedback mechanisms, and a swift and safe referral process. Collaboration with the PSEA Network will enhance the capacity of service providers and frontline workers. Training and guidance on identifying and referring allegations will be provided, aligning efforts with monitoring frameworks.

In response to challenges posed by the ban on female staff, the WASH Cluster will encourage partners to integrate WASH activities with health and nutrition programs. Consideration for persons with disabilities will be prioritized, incorporating ramps and appropriate facilities. Facilities at border crossing points, nutrition centres, health facilities, and schools will be maintained, with attention to AWD prevention and control at returnee points.

Targeting and Prioritization

Targeting and prioritization for 2024 will focus on severity 4 and 5 districts facing high drought stress, limited access to safe drinking water, low sanitation coverage, reported acute malnutrition,

AWD hotspots, and service gaps. The WASH Cluster emphasizes the need for funding, as underfunding intensifies community challenges, worsening water scarcity and risking displacement of nearly 1 million people. Discontinuity in services poses a threat of waterborne outbreaks, with only 5 out of 40 potential partners responding to AWD/Cholera cases in 2023, leaving nearly half a million people uncovered due to low funding.

Inclusive and Quality Programming

The WASH Cluster underscores the importance of inclusive and quality programming, focusing on both displaced and non-displaced sites. The Gender & Protection Technical Working Group advises partners to ensure active and safe participation of women in decision-making. Community-level engagements with a gender-focused approach will involve systematic consultations with women and girls on WASH infrastructure and hygiene kit content. The WASH Cluster is committed to addressing the specific needs of people with physical disabilities through assessments and engagement via AAP platforms.

Cost of Response

The WASH Cluster will require \$327.8 million to provide essential support to 9.7 million people. The response cost utilises an average cost of \$34 per person as analysed based on the 2023 programming data. Primary cost drivers for cluster activities are providing emergency and safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene; providing emergency gender and disability-sensitive sanitation facilities; and increasing access to sustained, safe water supply in AWD hotspots and areas affected by drought conditions. WASH activities are conducted through prepositioning NFIs and in-kind assistance; chlorination and household water treatments; and the rehabilitation of water sources, systems, and networks, with water trucking as a last resort. These modalities have proven essential and lifesaving, particularly for women-headed households, rural households and persons with disabilities.



The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)

3.8 Coordination and Common Services



REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	COORDINATION	ASSESSMENTS AND IM	GENDER AND PSEA	AVIATION
77.3M	AAP: 5.4M OCHA: 13.9M CCCM: 1.6M	DTM (IOM): 7.5M iMMAP: 317K REACH: 3.8M	Gender: 2.4M PSEA: 850K DIWG: 159K	UNHAS: 41.3M

Coordination

OCHA leads coordination of the humanitarian response in liaison with the DfA and between international and national humanitarian actors through the HCT at the strategic level and the ICCT at the operational level both in Kabul and in the field. OCHA Afghanistan will continue to scale-up its efforts in response to the multi-faceted crisis, as well as ensuring a well-coordinated response addresses needs arising from ongoing conflict and natural disasters. OCHA leads on the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, including response planning through the ICCT and regional and provincial coordination platforms, and continues to support humanitarian partners with joint advocacy, access and civil-military coordination.

The regional coordination mechanisms include Regional Humanitarian Teams, ICCG, and Operational Coordination Teams for the Central region, including the Central Highlands, and the Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern and North-Eastern regions. There is ongoing work to expand the level of coordination capacity at the regional level.

OCHA's unique information management capacity allows real-time sharing of situation and response analysis with donors and partners to inform planning, programming and advocacy. OCHA also continues to expand its regional and local coordination support – engaging on a more local level with de facto authorities and communities.

The Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) supported a staggering 120 projects in 2023, totalling \$135 million, and implemented several innovative approaches such as the AHF Partner Cash Facility, constant/rolling allocations since 2021, NGO capacity building programs focusing on women-led and women's-rights organizations, promoting the participation and inclusion of local women's rights

and women-led organizations in the AHF governance structure, as well as increased quality partnerships with local and national non-governmental organizations (NNGO), enhancing localization, and supporting complementarity and humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus with bilateral donors and other funding mechanisms. These innovations, coupled with robust risk management, project monitoring and real-time information sharing provided to donors, maintained the AHF's ability to be highly flexible – even at a much larger scale – and thereby fit for purpose in Afghanistan's changing environment.

To support coordination in 2024, OCHA requires \$13.9 million.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

In support of monitoring of IDPs living in informal settlements, the CCCM Working Group with its partner REACH plans to assess all informal settlements in 34 provinces. This initiative combined with quarterly monitoring, thanks to CCCM Mobile teams, will expand its data collection and close monitoring of the situation facing people living in informal settlements where the aid community has not traditionally collected comprehensive data in the past. Also, the information collected will certainly contribute to a better transition for IDPs willing to return, helping them to integrate locally or to establish themselves somewhere else with the support of development partners within the durable solutions' framework. To support CCCM in 2024, the working group requires US\$1.6 million to develop site profiles, information management systems and training and capacity building on CCCM approaches in 2024.

Gender

The Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group is an inter-cluster technical working group. The GiHA WG serves as an inter-agency and inter-cluster

coordination mechanism that offers technical, advisory and support services. This technical support includes the collection of sex and age disaggregated data and gender analysis of needs, risks, progress and gaps, and the translation of these into the HNRP, cluster-specific plans, ensuring and gender-responsive and transformative programmes and service delivery for crisis-affected populations that adequately identify and address the needs of women and girls.

In response to the ban on women working in NGOs and other measures, the GiHA is expanding its initiatives to develop a gender response programming risk mitigation strategy, ensuring women's continued participation in the humanitarian response and scaling up gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation tools that find ways to ensure that humanitarians are able to understand and respond to the specific needs of women and girls. In 2024, this will include a Rapid Gender Analysis of the Humanitarian Response, as well as perceptions surveys on people's access to assistance and accountability to women and girls, humanitarian response snapshots looking at the response composition and women's participation; and thematic studies, including on the ability of women organizations to continue operating in the current context.

The GiHA Working Group and related projects will require \$2.38 million for coordination, information management, gender analysis and assessments in 2024.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

Revitalised in 2020, the AAP Working Group has set out to support a humanitarian response that considers the voices of affected people, their communication and response preferences and their feedback received through collective mechanisms. In 2024, the AAP Working Group plans to further strengthen and expand collective feedback mechanisms, building AAP systems and sub-national AAP capacity.

Collective accountability also will be strengthened in 2024 through further provision of common, accurate, clear and useful information to IDPs, refugees, marginalized and minority groups, and others based on their information needs and provided through their preferred channels and languages. Two-way communication channels for giving feedback that will

be strengthened are expected to allow identification of specialized ways to reach women, people with disabilities, older people and children. To support this collective AAP effort, US\$5.45 million is required for 2024, including \$3 million for the Community Voices and Accountability Platform as well as \$2.45 million for Awaaz.

PSEA

An additional \$850,000 is required for PSEA to proactively mitigate, investigate, and address sexual exploitation and abuse cases.

Evidence-based Response

The HNRP also includes funding for common data collection, and management and analysis services to support an evidence-based response. IOM's DTM requests \$7.5 million to continue its work on monitoring and analysing population flows both across borders and within the country. This includes additional resources needed for increased tracking of movements in light of the economic shocks, tense regional dynamic and ongoing drought and conflict, and the possibility of both increased returns and new patterns of displacement.

iMMAP requests USD \$317,000 to establish a severity risk index (SRI) and early warning mechanism for natural hazards and providing natural hazards risk analysis and mapping services to clusters in Afghanistan.

United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS)

UNHAS' updated budget is estimated at \$41.3 million for 2024, a 25 per cent increase compared to last year, to maintain essential domestic and international air services for humanitarian personnel and cargo. This will allow UNHAS to maintain its regular domestic and international operations, including air bridges from Islamabad, Dushanbe, Doha and Dubai and provide reliable access across the country to meet the needs of aid organizations to send staff members on essential missions. The budget also includes medevac capacity for personnel working with UN agencies, NGOs, and diplomats to enable them to stay and deliver.



The cluster page, including indicators and activities, can be found online [here](#)

Part 4: Refugee needs and response plan

Photo: OCHA/ Fariba Housaini



4.1 Refugee Response Plan

PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	PARTNERS (ALL)	PARTNERS (ACTIVE)
50K	50K	\$15M	-	-

*This chapter represents an extracted summary of refugee responses which are also costed in the relevant clusters' requirements. While they appear in two different places in the HRP, it should be noted that these costs are only included in the overall HRP requirement once.

Afghanistan hosts approximately 50,000 refugees and asylum seekers, including almost 30,000 children. Most refugees were displaced from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2014 and are currently dispersed across urban and rural locations in Khost and Paktika provinces in the south-eastern region. Additionally, approximately 450 refugees and asylum seekers from various nationalities reside in urban areas in Kabul and Herat provinces. Large-scale returns to Pakistan are not anticipated in 2024, contingent upon the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries. However, Pakistan's new policy to deport undocumented Afghans living in Pakistan may have implications on refugees living there. Due to the shifting political context in Pakistan, as well as the status of mixed households, an estimated 50,000 refugees are expected to return to Afghanistan by July 2024.

Humanitarian Needs

Refugees and asylum seekers represent one of the most vulnerable populations in the country. Although Afghanistan acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in 2005, the draft National Law on Asylum is still under development. The lack of a legal framework to protect refugees and regulate asylum remains a challenge. Without legal status and documentation, refugees' access to basic services and assistance is often limited. This includes enrolment of refugee children in schools, entering the formal labour market, access to house, land and property rights, and limited access to quality primary health care and nutrition.

These challenges also affect refugees in their socio-economic integration. According to the 2023 rapid household assessment conducted by UNHCR, 93 per cent of refugees and asylum seekers are unable to cover their daily expenses for food, shelter, and other necessities, with almost half reliant on assistance to fulfil their essential needs. Furthermore, the 5.9 magnitude earthquake that struck Afghanistan's Central Region in June 2022 caused immense material damage and impacted refugee-hosting districts in Khost and Paktika provinces. Refugees and refugee returnees living in the region were affected not only by the loss of homes, but also the depletion of their productive and agricultural assets.

Response Strategy

Recognizing that needs remain high across all sectors for refugees and asylum seekers in Afghanistan, the refugee response will maintain its area-based approach in the implementation of multi-sectorial assistance activities in 2024 in coordination with relevant authorities. This will allow humanitarian partners to consider the holistic needs of refugees, but also other affected populations living in the same areas, including IDPs, refugee returnees, and vulnerable host community members. Priority areas include education, food, health, legal assistance, shelter, MHPSS, and WASH.

More than two years after the change in regime, DfA policy towards refugees and asylum seekers remains uncertain and could evolve with a change in the political scenario. In 2023, the humanitarian

community continued to undertake awareness-raising and advocacy efforts to sensitise authorities at the local and national levels on international protection, as well as Afghanistan's responsibilities and obligations under international legal frameworks. It is critical that these efforts are reinforced in 2024 in support of social cohesion and self-reliance. The Protection Cluster will ensure that the entire population group is covered through the community-based protection monitoring, which will not only identify the cross-sectoral needs amongst the population but also protection issues. UNHCR and WFP continue to discuss the emergency food needs of the refugee population. The response is transitioning from status to needs-based assistance, in line with the area-based approach and in an endeavour to strengthen social cohesion and coexistence between host and displaced populations. This will be done in conjunction with support for livelihoods.

Operational Capacity

Following the DfA bans on women working from I/ NGOs and the UN, the role of women aid workers is critical in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and other protection interventions to refugees, refugee returnees, and other vulnerable populations. Furthermore, the lack of a legal status for refugees and asylum seekers remains a challenge in the promotion of their inclusion into existing programmes. Any support towards this population will require the application of an area-based approach.

Inclusive and Quality Programming

The refugee response strategy will include the application of different approaches, such as

accountability to affected people; centrality of protection; age, gender and diversity; and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. This will be achieved by ensuring a broad participation of communities in all aspects of the design, implementation, and monitoring of programmes through protection monitoring; complaint and feedback mechanisms; and community engagement initiatives. In 2024, the Awaaz toll-free number, as well as UNHCR helplines and protection mailbox, will continue to be widely shared during monitoring and distribution activities. Additionally, the operation will use artificial intelligence to generate and analyse qualitative data from the protection monitoring systems to improve programming and response. Gender-sensitive mechanisms will also support initiatives to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, by allowing individuals to lodge complaints and allegations in a safe and confidential manner. This will be further enhanced by continuous PSEA awareness-raising and information dissemination campaigns. The UNHCR community outreach volunteer programme will ensure the humanitarian response factors in the unique needs of different people within the response by engaging directly with affected populations.

Cost of Response

The total cost of the multi-sector response to refugees in Afghanistan is \$15 million. This includes \$4 million for WASH and shelter initiatives, \$1 million for education, \$700,000 for livelihood assistance, \$4.5 million for protection and \$4.8 million for food assistance. For Afghan refugee returnees, the multi-sector response is \$27 million USD.

How to contribute

Contribute to the Humanitarian Response Plan

To see the country's humanitarian needs overview, humanitarian response plan, and monitoring reports, and to donate directly to organisations participating in the plan, please visit:

<https://response.reliefweb.int/afghanistan>

Contribute through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

The CERF provides rapid initial funding for life-saving actions at the onset of emergencies and for poorly funded, essential humanitarian operations in protracted crises. The OCHA-managed CERF receives contributions from various donors – mainly governments, but also private companies, foundations, charities, and individuals – which are combined into a single fund. This is used for crises anywhere in the world. Find out more about the CERF and how to donate by visiting the CERF website:

<https://cerf.un.org/donate>

Contribute through Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF)

The AHF is a country-based pooled fund (CBPF). CBPFs are multi-donor humanitarian financing instruments established by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and managed by OCHA at the country level under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator. Find out more about CBPFs and how to make a contribution by visiting:

<https://www.unocha.org/country-based-pooled-funds>

For information about the AHF, please contact:

ahf-afg@un.org

<https://www.unocha.org/afghanistan/about-afghanistan-humanitarian-fund>

In-kind relief

The United Nations urges donors to make cash rather than in-kind donations for maximum speed and flexibility and to ensure the supplies that are most needed are the ones delivered. If you can make only in-kind contributions in response to disasters and emergencies, please contact:

logik@un.org.

Registering and recognising your contributions

OCHA manages the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), which records all reported humanitarian contributions (cash, in-kind, multilateral, and bilateral) to emergencies. Its purpose is to give credit and visibility to donors for their generosity, to show the total amount of funding, and to expose gaps in humanitarian plans. Please report yours to FTS, either by email to fts@un.org or through the online contribution report form at:

<https://fts.unocha.org/content/report-contribution>.

Get the latest updates



OCHA coordinates humanitarian action to ensure crisis-affected people receive the assistance and protection they need. It works to overcome obstacles that impede humanitarian assistance from reaching people affected by crises, and provides leadership in mobilizing assistance and resources on behalf of the humanitarian system.

www.unocha.org/afghanistan

twitter.com/ochaafg

Humanitarian Action

ANALYSING NEEDS AND RESPONSE

Humanitarian Action provides a comprehensive overview of the humanitarian landscape. It provides the latest verified information on needs and delivery of the humanitarian response as well as financial contributions.

humanitarianaction.info

rw response

ReliefWeb Response is part of OCHA's commitment to the humanitarian community to ensure that relevant information in a humanitarian emergency is available to facilitate situational understanding and decision-making. It is the next generation of the Humanitarian Response platform.

response.reliefweb.int/afghanistan



The Financial Tracking Service (FTS) is the primary provider of continuously updated data on global humanitarian funding, and is a major contributor to strategic decision making by highlighting gaps and priorities, thus contributing to effective, efficient and principled humanitarian assistance.

fts.unocha.org

Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations	DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
AAWG	Assessment and Analysis Working Group	EiE	Education in Emergency
ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development	EO	Explosive Ordnance
AFN	Afghani (currency)	EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
AHF	Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund	ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program	ES-NFI	Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items
AoR	Area of Responsibility	FCS	Food Consumption Score
AWD	Acute Watery Diarrhoea	FSAC	Food Security and Agriculture Cluster
BAI	Bureaucratic and administrative interferences	GBV	Gender-based Violence
BHN	Basic human needs	GiHA	Gender in Humanitarian Action
BSFP	Blanket supplementary feeding	HAG	Humanitarian Access Group
CBE	Community Based Education	HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
CBP	Community-based Protection	HLP	Housing Land and Property
CCCM	Camp Coordination Camp Management	HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
CCHF	Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic Fever	HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
CEFM	Child Early and Forced Marriage	HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
CMAM	Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition	IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
CP	Child Protection	ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management Systems	ICCT	Inter-Cluster Coordination Team
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	ICLA	Information Counseling and Legal Assistance
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance	IDP	Internally Displaced Person/s or People
CVWG	Cash and Voucher Working Group	IED	Improvised Explosive Device
DfA	De-facto Authorities	INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
DIWG	Disability Inclusion Working Group	IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
		IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

ISSET	Informal Settlements
ISK	Islamic State of Khorasan
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
JIAF	Joint Inter-Sectoral Analysis Framework
MA	Mine Action
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
MHNT	Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MPCA	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
MUAC	Mid-Upper Arm Circumference
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organization
NNS	National Population-based Nutrition Survey
PiN	People in Need
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
PoR	Proof of Registration
PSEA	Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSS	Psychosocial Support
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SC	Sub-Cluster
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNSFA	United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan
UXO	unexploded ordnance
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WoAA	Whole of Afghanistan Assessment

End notes

1. IOM Displacement Tracking Monitoring
2. Estimated Figure as of 20 December 2023, according to the Border Consortium. More information on the Border Consortium is available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/border-consortium-appeal>.
3. iMMAP, Afghanistan Earthquake Events Overview November 2023, December 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-earthquake-events-snapshot-november-2023>
4. IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix Afghanistan Mobility and Needs Assessment, July 2023.
5. NRC, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/afghanistan>.
6. 2022 and 2023 Whole of Afghanistan Assessment.
7. OCHA, Afghanistan: El Niño Outlook for 2024, December 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-el-nino-outlook-2024-6-dec-2023>.
8. UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, August 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/barrier-securing-peace-human-rights-violations-against-former-government-officials-and-former-armed-force-members-afghanistan-15-august-2021-30-june-2023-endarips>.
9. Humanitarian Access Working Group (HAWG), 2023. UN Women has reported 50 such directives, of which the HAWG has identified 41 directly linked to humanitarian operations. See UN Women, UNAMA and IOM, Summary Report of Country-wide Women's Consultations, September 2023. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/09/summary-report-of-country-wide-womens-consultations#view>.
10. 2023 Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA).
11. Between 15 August and 31 December 2021, three suicide attacks caused 753 civilian casualties, while in 2022, eight suicide attacks caused 600 civilian casualties. In comparison, between 1 January and 14 August 2021, eight suicide attacks caused 102 civilian casualties and in 2020 16 suicide attacks caused 557 civilian casualties. UNAMA Human Rights, Impact of Improvised Explosive Devices on Civilians in Afghanistan, June 2023.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, 2023.
15. World Bank, Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey, October 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-welfare-monitoring-survey-awms-round-3-october-2023>.
16. World Bank, Afghanistan Development Update, October 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-development-update-october-2023-uncertainty-after-fleeting-stability-october-2023>.
17. World Bank, Afghanistan Economic Monitor, October 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-economic-monitor-october-30-2023>.
18. WoAA 2023.
19. IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for October 2023 and Projection for November 2023 - March 2024, December 2023. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156740/?iso3=AFG>.
20. Afghanistan Nutrition Cluster. (2023). Risk Analysis Framework for Protection Mainstreaming into nutrition programs.
21. UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, June 2023. <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/reports/afghanistan-multiple-indicator-cluster-survey-mics-2022-2023>.
22. Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update, July 2023. <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/publications/1487/reports/protection-analysis-update/afghanistan-protection-analysis-update>.
23. Informal Settlement Monitoring, December 2023.
24. INFORM Risk Index, 2024. <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index>.
25. Notre Dame Gain Index. <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/>.
26. According to the 2022 FSAC Strategic Response Plan, 70 per cent of Afghans rely on domestic agricultural production for their food or income.
27. World Bank, Afghanistan Capacity Development for Natural Resource Management, 2018. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/870281529935471121/pdf/Rangelands-and-Forests-in-Afghanistan-The-Foundation-of-Sustainable-Rural-Development.pdf>.
28. IOM DTM, 2023. <https://afghanresponse.iom.int/report>.
29. 2023 WoAA.
30. 2023 WoAA.
31. OCHA, Afghanistan Earthquake Contingency Plan, 2020. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-earthquake-contingency-plan-issued-nov-2020>.
32. Revised Herat Earthquake Response Plan, November 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-revised-herat-earthquake-response-plan-october-2023-march-2024-issued-november-2023-endarips>.
33. World Bank, Afghanistan Development Update, October 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-development-update-october-2023-uncertainty-after-fleeting-stability-october-2023>
34. Afghanistan Community Voices and Accountability Platform, Quarter 3, 2023.
35. This figure is calculated based on the UNICEF 2023 school census, the 2019 Education Management Information System data, and an estimation of Grade 6 students in 2023 who will be out of school in 2024.
36. Estimated Figure as of 9 December 2023, according to the Border Consortium. More information on the Border Consortium is available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/border-consortium-appeal>.
37. The Asia Foundation, Model Disability Survey of Afghanistan 2019. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/model-disability-survey-afghanistan-2019>.
38. Information Management System for Mine Action, 2023.
39. 2023 WoAA.
40. 2023 WoAA.
41. Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index.
42. Warming was strongest in the south at 2.4°C, still distinct across the north and central highlands (1.7°C and 1.6°C, respectively), and lowest in the east (0.6°C). Afghanistan: Climate Change Science Perspectives | UNEP - UN Environment Programme. Similar estimates across two periods conducted by the World Bank showed a similar increase over 1.5 degrees between two periods of 1900-1917 and 2000-2017: https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/15396A-WB_Afghanistan%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf.
43. OCHA, Natural Disasters Dashboard. <https://response.reliefweb.int/afghanistan/natural-disasters-dashboard>.
44. IOM Displacement Tracking Monitoring, 2023.
45. Pakistan Returnees Border Consortium Appeal, November 2023.
46. UNHCR Afghanistan- Iran Border Monitoring Update, 7 December 2023.
47. Documented returnees include Afghanistan Citizen Card holders and Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders.
48. OCHA Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework, October 2023.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. UNICEF, Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, 2023.
52. 2023 WoAA.
53. UNICEF school census data 2023.
54. Informal Settlement Monitoring, December 2023.
55. IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for October 2023 and Projection for November 2023 - March 2024, December 2023. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156740/?iso3=AFG>
56. UNICEF. (2021). Conceptual framework on maternal and child nutrition. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/113291/file/UNICEF%20Conceptual%20Framework.pdf>

57. IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for October 2023 and Projection for November 2023 - March 2024, December 2023. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156740/?iso3=AFG>.
58. Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC). Caseload, targets and supplies calculation tool, V1.0. Available at: <https://www.nutritioncluster.net/calculation>
59. Afghanistan Nutrition Cluster. 2021. Cash for nutrition guidance note. Available at: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/document/cash-nutrition-guidance-note-afghanistan>
60. Afghanistan Nutrition Cluster. Enhancing Convergence and Synergy among Clusters to Address Malnutrition: A Comprehensive Approach
61. Global Food Security/WASH/Health/Nutrition Clusters. 2022. Urgent and coordinated action needed to avert wide-scale catastrophe. Joint Statement on Famine and Food Crises. Available at: <https://www.nutritioncluster.net/resources/joint-statement-urgent-and-coordinated-action-needed-avert-wide-scale-catastrophe>
62. MoPH. Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition National Guidelines. Available at: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sd3lo_2YxhNz6kKrfAxGYb9IEt4SJ8ax
63. Afghanistan Nutrition Cluster. (2023). Risk Analysis Framework for Protection Mainstreaming into nutrition programs.
64. Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security. <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WPS-Index-2021.pdf>.
65. UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, June 2023. <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/reports/afghanistan-multiple-indicator-cluster-survey-mics-2022-2023>.
66. Information Management System for Mine Action, 2023.
67. Afghanistan: Infectious Disease Outbreaks Epidemiological Week # 43, 2023.
68. 2023 WoAA.
69. This refers to people living in areas that could experience a 271 cm flood depth during a 100-year flood event. iMMMap, DRR and Seasonal Climate Analysis. <https://hsdc.immap.org>.
70. Ibid. This figure refers to the number of people living in high-risk seismic zones 8-10.
71. 2023 WoAA.
72. UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, June 2023. <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/reports/afghanistan-multiple-indicator-cluster-survey-mics-2022-2023>.
73. Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development data. <https://ruralwash.gov.af/>.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND RESPONSE PLAN

AFGHANISTAN

This document is consolidated by OCHA on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team and partners. It provides a shared understanding of the crisis, including the most pressing humanitarian need and the estimated number of people who need assistance. It represents a consolidated evidence base and helps inform joint strategic response planning.

PHOTO ON COVER

A woman mixes a traditional yogurt drink (dough) in a home damaged by the June 2022 earthquake, one year later, on June 21st 2023, in Wora, a village of Gyan district, in the south-eastern Paktika province, Afghanistan. Photo: OCHA/Elise Blanchard

The designations employed and the presentation of material in the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.