

Briefing Note – 02 March 2017

AFGHANISTAN

Floods



	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Need for international assistance			X		
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major

Crisis overview

Continuous heavy rainfall since February has caused severe flooding in Khashrod and Chakhansur districts in Nimroz province. As of 23 February several homes had been destroyed or swept away by flood waters, and over 20,000 hectares of arable land had been submerged in flood water. An estimated 3,000 people have been affected and displaced by flooding in both Chakhansur and Khashrod districts. Affected populations are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Some of the affected were already vulnerable prior to the flooding. Many were either internally displaced or returnees from Iran.

Affected areas	Resident pop.	No. people affected
Chakhansur	24,638	1,800
Khashrod	26,346	1,200

Access to families affected in Chakhansur district is currently difficult due to high flood waters that have prevented access by road to affected people. Insecurity in Khashrod district due to ongoing military operations against insurgent groups is making access to flood affected people difficult.

Key findings

Anticipated scope and scale As of 1 March, 3,000 people are affected (300 families in Chakhansur, 200 families in Khashrod). This is equivalent to 11 villages in Chakhansur and 12 villages in Khashrod. The flood season normally lasts from March to May, so needs could increase over the coming month.

Priorities for humanitarian intervention The key priorities are emergency shelter and non-food items, food, safe drinking water, and medical supplies. Joint assessments are still ongoing.

Humanitarian constraints There are access constraints, particularly in Chakhansur as floods have made roads impassable. Violence targeted at humanitarian aid workers and general insecurity in Khashrod are also a problem.

Limitations

Limited information on the extent of flooding in Chakhansur district. Almost no information on the flooding in Khashrod district.

Crisis impact

Heavy and continuous rainfall has resulted in severe flooding in Khashrod and Chakhansur districts in Nimroz province. Chakhansur currently endures the most severe flooding relative to Khashrod. Initially, it was estimated that about 20 villages were under threat of flooding in the southwestern province of Chakhansur. 20 homes and over 20,000 hectares of arable land had been submerged as of 23 February.

Pajhwok Afghan News 23/02/2017 Due to river bank erosion, several families were affected and displaced in Chakhansur. IOM 25/02/2017

An estimated 3,000 people have been affected and displaced by flooding in both Chakhansur and Khashrod. There are 11 villages in Chakhansur and 12 villages in Khashrod that are in an extremely vulnerable position and in need of assistance. Access to families affected in Chakhansur is currently only possible by boat. Insecurity

in Khashrod due to ongoing military operations against insurgent groups makes access to flood affected people difficult. *Khama Press 13/01/2017*

Shelter and NFIs: NFIs and family tents have been provided to the affected people in Chakhansur but affected populations in Khashrod are still in need of these. *IOM 25/02/2017*

Food: People who could be accessed in Chakhansur have received some food assistance in the form of bread and dates, however, it is insufficient. *Pajhwok Afghan News 23/02/2017* This has left people in accessible areas of Chakhansur and Khashrod district in particular need of food assistance.

WASH: Nimroz province does not have full access to sanitation services. *WASH Cluster 28/02/2017* The flooding situation is likely to make the sanitation situation much worse. Clean water is also needed.

Health: Medical supplies are needed for affected people in Khashrod. In addition to being affected by flooding and displacement, some people may have injuries from the ongoing violence. The situation of insecurity could also make it difficult for the injured and sick to access health care facilities.

Impact on critical infrastructure

Roads in Chakhansur that connect up to 20 villages have been inundated by the floods. *Pajhwok Afghan News 23/02/2017*

Vulnerable groups affected

Particularly vulnerable groups are undocumented Afghan returnees and refugees who have either spontaneously returned or been deported from Iran and settled in Nimroz. This year alone 5,662 spontaneous returnees and 11,449 deportees crossed into Nimroz from Milak border crossing. *IOM 25/02/2017*

Humanitarian and operational constraints

The flooding in Chakhansur currently makes access to affected populations difficult due to flooded roads. *Pajhwok Afghan News 23/02/2017*

Security situation on the road from Khashrod to Zaranj is volatile. Many incidents of food looting occur in Bakwa desert on this road. Escorted convoys have been attacked and

trucks are burnt and looted. Transporters usually decline to deliver food to Nimroz province for these reasons. *Logistics Cluster*

Aggravating factors

Spring wet season

Flooding is the most commonly occurring natural hazard in Afghanistan. The country is prone to river flooding because of steep slopes in headwaters. Flooding in rivers mainly occurs as a result of heavy rainfall coupled with rapid snowmelt; the sources of most of the rivers lie in the mountains and are fed by snow and glaciers. Lack of vegetation (as is the case in Nimroz province) and denudation of the mountain areas also contribute to the occurrence of flooding. *World Bank 28/02/2017* The Spring wet season has just begun in Afghanistan. Peak risk for Spring flooding in Afghanistan ordinarily begins in February and it is expected to last up until May. *FEWSNET 02/2017* It can be expected that more rains and flooding will occur in the coming weeks. This would make recovery from this current flooding situation difficult, and may see affected and displaced families enduring repeated and prolonged flooding.

Location and type of housing/infrastructure

Due to the arid-like terrain of Nimroz province, populations tend to settle closer to major rivers. *Logistics Cluster*. This makes them more vulnerable to the effects of flooding when river banks burst. Arable land, livestock, and agricultural assets get washed away or damaged by flooding, leaving affected populations with little or no livelihoods when the waters reside.

Poorly built flood protection infrastructure, lack of early warning systems, and increasing settlements in flood prone areas are important drivers of flood risk in Afghanistan. *World Bank 28/02/2017* Homes in many of the villages are not built to resist heavy rains and flash floods. Many, particularly in rural areas are built of mud or stone, and easily washed away by flooding. In some villages almost every home has been destroyed or washed away by the recent flooding. *Pajhwok 23/02/2017* Many of these homes are built next to rivers that flood during heavy rains. *OCHA 19/02/2014*

Proximity of critical infrastructure

The flash floods have severely damaged major roads, delaying assessments and dispatching of relief assistance to affected families and rescuers. IOM 25/02/2017

Important upcoming events

Spring wheat planting season

Spring wheat planting season has begun and will last until May. FEWSNET 02/2017 However, the heavy rains and flash floods may make agricultural activity in the affected areas difficult, either due to leaching of soil, washing away of seeds, or inability to engage in any planting due to excess water and mud.

Fighting season

The Spring is also the beginning of the fighting season in Afghanistan due to improved weather conditions. It generally brings a spike in violence in the country when insurgent groups re-arm and go on renewed violent offenses in various provinces. Arab News 28/02/2017 Khashrod, which is currently inaccessible due to ongoing military operations and insurgent group activity, may continue to be inaccessible as the spring progresses.

Political stability and security

There is no Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) presence in Nimroz. The Afghan National Army's 205th Corps has minimal presence there. The lack of security forces has made the province an unchecked conduit route for insurgents infiltrating into Afghanistan from Pakistan or for those coming from Arab countries through Iran into Afghanistan. ISW

The security situation in Khashrod district has been volatile since last year when there were fears that the district would fall under the control of the Taliban. Pajhwok Afghan News 07/09/2016 On 3 January 2017, Afghan security forces began military operations in the province, trying to recapture areas that had fallen under the control of the Taliban. TOLONews 04/01/2017 Khaama Press 23/01/2017 As of 7 January, the Razavi and Kandahariha areas of the district had been retaken from the Taliban. Pajhwok Afghan News 07/01/2017 Afghanistan times 10/01/2017 The military operations are still ongoing.

The highway linking southern Helmand with western Nimroz province is relatively volatile as anti-government armed militants frequently set up check points to kidnap or kill anyone passing through. Khaama Press 05/01/2017

Other factors of vulnerability

Most of Afghanistan is in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food security. This is predicted to continue up until September, largely due to the impact of reduced non-agricultural labour opportunities as a result of the cold winter months and insecurity. Many newly displaced persons (IDPs) and natural disaster-affected households who have lost access to land will likely be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). FEWSNET 02/2017

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

The Afghan Government's Provincial Disaster Management Committees (PDMC) are leading the coordination of operational response in Chakhansur, district with support from humanitarian agencies. Natural Disasters Response Committee and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) office in Nimroz has distributed tents, blankets, bread and dates to the affected people in reachable areas of Chakhansur district. Pajhwok Afghan News 23/02/2017 The Ministry of Public Works has been supporting the unblocking of roads for transportation of aid and rescuing people in Chakhansur district as well. Pajhwok Afghan News 23/02/2017 The National Government has however expressed need for additional assistance to families affected by the flooding. Currently, only the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) is aiding the people affected by the flooding in Khashrod.

No early warning systems for floods are in place in Nimroz province International response capacity

An assessment team comprising IOM, ANDMA and other agencies conducted an assessment on 21 February. IOM distributed NFIs and family tents to all 50 affected and displaced families. IOM 25/02/2017

Information gaps and needs

- No information on the needs of the affected population in Khashrod district and what assistance has already been provided.
- No information on the current coping mechanisms being employed by people in the affected areas.

Lessons learned

Homes were destroyed by the flooding of Khashrud River last year and people appear to have rebuilt their homes along the same river again. Locals had asked the government and other organisations to build a protective wall along the river's banks near their villages on several occasions but this did not happen. *Pajhwok Afghan News 23/02/2017*

Key characteristics

Key indicators	Nimroz province	Chakhansur district	Khashrod district
Total population	164,978	24,638	26,346
% population in rural areas		100% rural	100% rural
Gender distribution of population	Female: 48.5%, Male: 51.5%		
State capital	Zaranj	Chankhansur	Khash
Lighting and cooking sources	Wood is the main source of energy for cooking (49.8%). 73.1% of households have access to city electricity for lighting.		
WASH figures	78% have access to improved sanitation facilities, 12.7% have access to improved water resources		
Health figures	Under five mortality rate: 210 per 1,000 live births Maternal mortality ratio: 1,600 per 100,000 live births		
Food security	IPC 2 across the province		
Literacy rates	46.2% of the population aged 10 years and above		

Sources: Government of Afghanistan, Geohive, UNFPA, UNICEF, FEWSNET 01/03/2017

Map

Afghanistan: Number of affected families in flood affected districts (as of 2 March 2017)

