This report is produced by OCHA Afghanistan in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued on 3 September 2018. It covers the period from 1 to 31 August 2018. The next report will be issued on or around 17 September.

**Highlights**

- The number of people due to the drought has surpassed 150,000 in August in the Western Region. Most of them live in informal sites in Hirat and Qala-e-Naw cities.
- More than 310,000 people received food, cash or livelihood assistance in Badghis, Ghor, Hirat, Jawzjan, Faryab and Kandahar provinces in August.
- Water trucking reaches 34,000 people in rural areas of Badghis Province and to more than 100,000 residents of informal sites in Hirat and Qala-e-Naw.
- Serious protection concerns have also been detected on informal sites in Hirat City with a spike in early marriages and child labour.
- As planting season and winter approach, humanitarian partners in the Western Region are working on a strategy to enable voluntary returns, facilitate durable solutions and prepare for winterization.

### Situation Overview

Food distributions continue in drought-affected areas across the country. In August, some 311,000 people have received food, cash and livelihood assistance in Badghis, Faryab, Hirat, Jawzjan and Kandahar provinces. In two districts of Badghis Province, 34,000 people in rural areas receive emergency water supplies, and partners are planning to expand the provision to another 50,000 people in three districts of Hirat Province.

Drought-induced displacement continues to increase in the Western Region and has reached a total of 150,000 people. The number of displaced people in and around Qala-e-Naw, Badghis, is estimated to be 66,500, most of them from Muqur and Abkamari districts. Around 5,000 people have reportedly displaced to Abkamari district centre from surrounding villages and small-scale displacement has reported in the Qadis district centre. In Hirat City, where some 84,000 displaced people were registered in July, another 3,000 family petitions have reportedly been submitted to the authorities, indicating that the total number of drought-induced IDPs in the city may be higher than 100,000. In Chaghcharan City, Ghor, the number of drought-induced IDPs is currently 4,060.

In Qala-e-Naw, operational capacity and existing supplies in are insufficient to meet the life-saving needs of newly-arrived families, and an immediate scale-up across all sectors is required to respond to an estimated 66,500 displaced people. The most urgent gaps are in emergency shelter and non-food items (ESNFI), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and protection. In Hirat City, food, cash and WASH assistance have been provided, and health and nutrition services are increasingly available on the ten informal sites. The response is however hampered by uncertainty regarding the tenability of the sites, difficulties in registration, and limited capacity to respond. Many families remain exposed to the elements, surviving in make-shift shelters, while some have resorted to self-building mud-brick huts. Serious protection concerns have also been reported from the sites, with a spike in early marriage and child labour.
There is a need for a scale-up in food and livelihoods assistance in the coming months, supporting people to return to their areas of origin, or remain in their homes and close to their field to take advantage of the next planting season. Complementary activities in health, nutrition, protection and WASH remain equally essential.

Humanitarian Response

Food Security and Agriculture

Needs:
- In its first phase of response, Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) partners will target 621,000 people, of which 307,000 are in the Western Region. The Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) results, which are expected in the upcoming weeks, will inform further response.
- Results of the first phase of the Drought Impact and Needs Assessment (DINA) showed that 82 per cent of the IDPs in Badghis, Ghor and Hirat provinces had a poor food consumption score, while 72 per cent had adopted negative coping strategies, including reducing food intake or reducing number of meals.
- Results of a World Vision International (WVI) multi-sector assessment in Badghis Province showed 78 per cent of respondent families' food security situation was “a lot worse” and 21 per cent were “worse” compared to last year. It also showed that most farmers had lost their crop last season, and 97.5 per cent indicated the lack of seeds as one of their main challenges for the upcoming planting. Also in Badghis, reports from the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) indicate that some 40 per cent of livestock has been lost due to limited pasture and fodder.

Response:
- Almost 311,000 people received food/cash and livelihood assistance in Badghis, Ghor, Hirat, Jawzjan, Faryab and Kandahar provinces in August 2018 (283,000 received food-in-kind or cash-for-food and 28,000 received livelihood assistance). Of those, almost 167,500 have been reached in the Western Region by WVI and the Tawana Services Development and Cultural Organization (TSDCO) (WFP project), DRC-DDG and Oxfam.
- In Hirat City, WFP commenced cash-for-food distributions to drought-induced IDPs and has reached some 7,000 people.
- In Qala-e-Naw City, WFP, through TSDCO, has distributed food packages with flour, oil and salt to over 13,000 drought-induced IDPs. In light of the continuing increase in arrivals, a scale-up in distributions will be required.
- In Chaghcharan City, Ghor, ACF provided cash for food to 330 drought-induced IDPs.

Gaps & Constraints:
- Over 310,000 (49 per cent) people in need of food and livelihoods assistance are yet to be reached across the drought-affected provinces. In the Western Region, the gap is 157,000 people, or 51 per cent.
- The lack of funding is causing delays in response, especially to support seasonally-bound agricultural support activities through seeds and fertilizer in drought-affected areas that rely on rainfed agriculture.
- Existing assessments and information from partners on the ground indicate the need to significantly increase the number of people targeted with food distributions in areas of origin to prevent further displacement.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:
- The WASH Cluster targets 480,000 people for water provision, as well as 100,000 people to be reached with emergency sanitation facilities and hygiene kits.
- Some 150,000 drought-induced IDPs need provision of safe drinking water in the Western Region for at least three months.

Response:
- Around 133,000 drought-induced IDPs have been reached with WASH assistance by cluster partners in Hirat and Qala-e-Naw cities.
- Close to 34,000 people are being provided with emergency water supply in the most severely drought-affected districts of Abkamari, Jawand, Muqur and Qadis in Badghis.
• Across the informal sites in Hirat City, some 84,000 people are provided with emergency water supply by UNICEF/PRRD and DACAAR through water trucking. Forty hygiene promoters are conducting hygiene-awareness sessions at all sites. Some 1,500 IDPs have access to EBL in Qala-e-Naw and 25,200 in Hirat City.

• In Qala-e-Naw, safe drinking water is being provided for some 18,500 drought-induced IDPs by UNICEF/PRRD, WVI and NRC. In addition to the 50 latrines built by NRC, WVI/UNICEF have commenced the construction of another 4,000 latrines and baths to reach an additional 8,000 people.

Gaps & Constraints:

• Due to the recent arrivals of IDPs in Qala-e-Naw, a significant scale-up in WASH response is required in the city. The current operational capacity of partners is insufficient to meet the needs. Availability and sustainability of water for trucking is a concern, but partners are working to find solutions. Sanitation is a particularly significant gap.

• Around 30 per cent of the sanitation response targets have been met. Some 120,000 drought-induced IDPs remain without access to sanitation in Hirat and Qala-e-Naw. Some 48,000 IDPs are in urgent need of hygiene and water kits containing two jerry cans and one bucket in Hirat and 57,500 in Qala-e-Naw.

• Some 50,000 people in three Kohsan, Gulran and Kushk drought-affected districts in Hirat Province urgently need emergency water assistance. Without assistance, they are likely to become displaced.

• In the medium and long-term, rain water harvesting should be seen as a key sustainable solution to narrow the water gap in areas of origin.

Health

Needs:

• Over 1.6 million people in the Western Region are in need of health assistance, including an estimated 150,000 drought-induced IDPs in Hirat City and Qala-e-Naw City.

Response:

• Health Cluster partners UNICEF/DoPH, WVI, UNFPA, Handicap International, ARCS and WHO are responding to the needs of drought-induced IDPs. Nine Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) from are deployed across IDP sites in Hirat, providing integrated health, nutrition and psychosocial support. Referral systems have been rolled out to nearby health facilities. However, the consistency and predictability of MHT presence needs to be strengthened, and additional MHTs need to be deployed to meet existing needs. Their services and scheduling need to be effectively communicated to the affected communities.

• In Badghis, four MHTs are responding to the needs of IDPs in Qala-e-Naw City, one is covering Abkamari and Muqur districts, and one is deployed in Qadis district.

• As part of UNICEF regular programming, eight MHTs are operational in areas without access to static health facilities in Badghis and six in Ghor.

• A medicine kit and a delivery kit have been delivered to two Comprehensive Health Centers (CHC) and the Regional Pediatric Hospital located close to IDP sites in Hirat City.

Gaps & Constraints:

• Access in Badghis Province remains a challenge. In Balamurghab and Jawand districts, non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have impeded the provision of supplies to 17 health facilities over the past three months, which has adversely affected the polio vaccination and health response in general. The situation is reportedly being resolved, but will require close monitoring. National authorities have delayed the deployment and release of supply packages to MHTs operated by some partners.

• There is a need for a comprehensive health response plan in areas of origin.

Nutrition

Needs:

• According to the results of the Drought Impact and Needs Assessment carried out in late July, 24 per cent of children in the assessed IDP households in Hirat, Chaghcharan and Qala-e-Naw were acutely malnourished (15 per cent had MAM and 9 per cent had SAM). A WVI Multi-Sector Rapid Needs Assessment, undertook in Badghis Province in June had found the nutrition situation to be “extremely critical” as almost 33 per cent of...
children-under-five were acutely malnourished (17 per cent had MAM and 16 had SAM). Another assessment, conducted by ACF in the Balamurghab district in Badghis, found 20 per cent of children-under-five were acutely malnourished.

- According to the Nutrition Cluster, over 33,000 acutely malnourished children under five require life-saving treatment in the drought-affected provinces in Western Region.

**Response:**

- Across IDP sites Hirat City, over 5,600 children under five have been screened for acute malnutrition by the nine MHTs, of which 900 were reached in August. Some 500 children have been reached with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) treatment and some 970 have received moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment. Around 1,450 mothers have received infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counseling services, and almost 8,400 children have received Vitamin A supplements. Twenty-four hygiene promoters and 18 social workers have been trained on mass acute malnutrition screening and referral to MHTs.

- In Qala-e-Naw, targeted supplementary feeding programme is targeting all IDP children-under-two alongside food distributions. All five MHTs have a nutrition screening and treatment component.

- In areas of origin across Badghis, Farah, Ghor and Hirat provinces, 107 nutrition facilities are providing treatment services to acutely malnourished children and women. The activities are part of regular programming by partners and are indirectly supporting drought response. Over 2,200 children with SAM have been admitted for treatment since July.

**Gaps & Constraints:**

- Additional 11 MHTs with an integrated nutrition component are required to scale up response in areas of origin (six in Badghis Province and five in Hirat Province). The number of in-patient and out-patient malnutrition treatment sites should be increased in Ghor.

### Protection

**Needs:**

- Up to 170,000 drought-induced IDPs in the Western Region require protection monitoring and assistance.

**Response:**

- Western Region Protection Cluster members IRC, DRC, NRC, UNICEF and WVI have formed a Protection Monitoring team (PMT) and have agreed on a joint monitoring framework, geographic division and standard operating procedures. Protection monitoring is on-going at all IDP sites in Hirat City.

- In Qala-e-Naw City, the Protection Cluster plans to establish a Systematic Protection Monitoring mechanisms with the support of partners on the ground, including the assignment of geographical responsibilities.

**Gaps & Constraints:**

- UNHCR, through protection partners, has identified 25 cases of persons with special needs (PSN) in life-threatening situations, but partners do not appear to have the resources or capacity to respond. Considering the high number of IDPs and their vulnerability, it is expected that many would be entitled to PSN support. However, only UNHCR and DRC have some resources to provide it.

### Child Protection in Emergencies

**Needs:**

- Over 100,000 drought-affected children need protection assistance in the Western Region.

- In Hirat informal IDP sites, more than 100 Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) are required to address the psychosocial support needs of the 15,000 vulnerable IDP children. Considering the significant increase in IDP families in Qala-e-Naw City, child protection activities need to begin there without delay.

- Child Rights Monitors from the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) reported on increasing gender-based violence incidents in the informal IDP sites including child marriage, early engagement and child trafficking/ selling of newborn babies and young girls. To address the rapidly deteriorating situation for young girls being sold and married off, there is an urgent need for targeted livelihood support activities.
Response:

- Almost 9,300 children and caregivers have been reached with Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) assistance. In Hirat City, seven Mobile Child Protection Teams operated by CPiE members Hirat Legal Clinic, War Child UK/Child Helpline, WASSA and Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre have reached some 2,150 children and 4,000 caregivers displaced by the drought with psycho-social support and community awareness-raising sessions. In August, 136 child protection cases have identified through child protection monitoring activities. A total of 415 affected children (165 girls, 250 boys) received psychosocial support and 32 cases were referred for provision of basic services such as health, nutrition, legal assistance and specialized mental health and psychological services.
- Four CFS and four Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres providing psychosocial support and awareness raising sessions have been established in four IDP sites in Hirat City and are operated by War Child UK, DRC, IRC and WASSA funded by UNICEF.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Funding gaps are affecting the response. The estimated funding gap for CPiE activities for the upcoming three months is US$ 900,000.
- There is a lack of social workers at the Department of Social Affairs (DoLSA). To provide timely and adequate case management services to the at-risk girls and boys, recruitment of additional social workers and training are urgently required.
- Protection mainstreaming is a gap and a minimum protection mainstreaming checklist should be developed and implemented across all sectors of the response.
- Participation of children and women, and participation of the community in general, in the response should be promoted in designing and monitoring of the response.
- Accountability mechanism should be put in place in the informal settlement sites immediately to monitor and address complaints and feedback from the affected population including children.
- Meaningful findings on specific protection issues were not captured in the DINA and it is recommended to be supplemented with adequate situational analysis and qualitative findings from the FDGs conducted by trained protection partners with balanced participation of women.

Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items

Needs:

- An estimated 150,000 people displaced by drought in Hirat City and Qala-e-Naw City are in need of emergency shelter and NFI assistance.

Response:

- To date, ESNFI partners IOM, IRC, DRC, NRC, IRC and IFRC/ARCS in the Western Region have provided emergency shelter assistance to over 10,000 drought-induced IDPs, of which 8,370 were reached in Hirat and 1,650 Qala-e-Naw.
- Over 8,900 IDPs have been reached with NFI kits by IOM, IRC, NRC and UNHCR in Hirat and Qala-e-Naw cities.
- Some 510 displaced people have received NFI kits from IOM and UNICEF.

Gaps & Constraints:

- The gap in ESNFI response is the most significant across all sectors. Partners are experiencing constraints in relation to the availability of supplies and targeting.
- Some families have begun building mud houses using water supplied by humanitarian partners, ostensibly due to lack of emergency shelter assistance.

Education in Emergencies

Needs:

- Some 40,000 drought-affected children and adolescents in the Western Region do not have access to education in places of origin and displacement.
- The Drought Impact and Needs Assessment found that school enrollment rates had been reduced by at least 87 per cent because of the displacement.
Response:

- Some 2,500 drought-affected children from 5 to 18 years have access to 60 Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) established in five IDP sites in Hirat City. Five of the TLS have been supplied with education materials.
- Assessments are on-going to gauge the scale of the need of Education in Emergencies activities for drought-induced IDPs in Qala-e-Naw City where learning spaces are expected to commence in the next weeks.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Some 32,000 drought-affected children remain in need to regain access to learning spaces in the areas of origin in Western Region and IDP sites in Hirat City. In light of increase in IDPs in Qala-e-Naw, assessment and response required there.

General Coordination

Although no formal camps have been established in Hirat or Qala-e-Naw cities, the large number of displaced people across multiple informal sites requires a dedicated site management and coordination function. The fluidity of movements across the different sites and the viability of some sites themselves is hampering effective response.

The establishment of a temporary Community Engagement Working Group has been recommended to the Humanitarian Regional Team in the Western Region. The proposed co-leads are UNICEF and OCHA, and the proposed immediate priorities are the preparation and dissemination of key messages for each cluster, as well as the establishment of a two-way communication mechanism and a site-liason function.

Data collection for the multi-cluster Drought Impact and Needs Assessment (DINA) has been completed in Badghis, Faryab Ghor, Hirat, Faryab and Jawzjan provinces. Over 1,300 households have been assessed on immediate humanitarian and longer-term development needs in areas of origin. Preliminary results will be available shortly. The Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) results are expected to become available by mid-September. Some partners have reported people in Badghis experiencing assessment fatigue due to multiple assessments having been conducted in the same districts.

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