

Key Messages: **UPDATED**

- **People confirmed to have COVID-19: 35,070** (as of 2pm, 16 July. Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health - MoPH)
- **Deaths from COVID-19: 1,113**
- **Samples tested: 82,352**

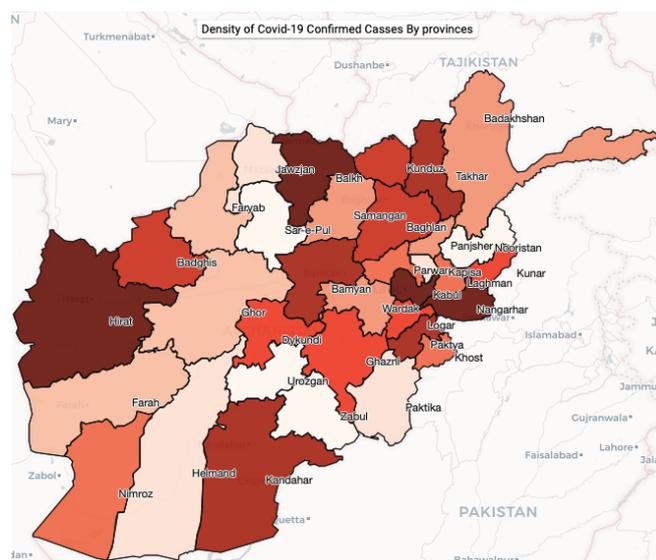
Key concerns: Border crossing areas, in-country testing capacity, protective equipment for frontline workers, commodity prices, messaging and rumour management, international air services

Situation Overview: **UPDATED**

MoPH data* shows that 35,070 people across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan are now confirmed to have COVID-19. Some 22,824 people have recovered, and 1,113 people have died (54 of whom are healthcare workers). 82,352 people out of a population of 37.6 million have been tested. Almost 10 per cent of the total confirmed COVID-19 cases are among healthcare staff. Due to limited public health resources and testing capacity, as well as the absence of a national death register, confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19 are likely to be under reported overall in Afghanistan. Different COVID-19 models show that the peak for the COVID-19 outbreak in Afghanistan is expected between late July and early August, creating grave implications for Afghanistan's economy and people's well-being.

Hospitals and clinics continue to report challenges maintaining or expanding their facilities' capacity to treat patients with COVID-19. These challenges are related to the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), testing kits and medical supplies, as well as the limited number of trained staff – further exacerbated by the number of frontline staff falling ill. Humanitarian partners urge the Government of Afghanistan to ensure healthcare staff have adequate personal protection and to share distribution plans for existing stocks of medical equipment and PPE with humanitarian partners. Current laboratory capacity in Afghanistan remains limited. There continues to be an urgent need for increased laboratory supplies, as well as to strengthen human capacity and operational support.

WHO notes that when health systems are overwhelmed, as is being seen in Afghanistan, both direct mortality from the outbreak and indirect mortality from vaccine-preventable and treatable conditions increase dramatically. WHO stresses the need to balance the demands of responding directly to COVID-19, with simultaneously engaging in strategic planning and coordinated action to maintain essential health service delivery, mitigating against the risk of system collapse.



Source: MoPH

* Disaggregated MoPH data currently unavailable

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) recently conducted a joint rapid impact assessment of COVID-19 on agriculture production and markets in Afghanistan. According to the report, over 20 per cent of the consulted farmers are not able to plant their next crop, with lack of access to agriculture inputs and COVID-19 restrictions listed as key factors. Moreover, most wheat, fruit, vegetable and dairy processing plants are currently operating at partial/zero capacity, with COVID-19 restrictions listed as a key reason for the reduction in operations. The great majority of traders reported increased prices for wheat, fresh food, sheep/goat, cattle, and transport as compared to the same time last year. Provincial and national level fresh produce traders have faced more restrictions compared with district level traders, while a great majority of traders reported partial market closures due to COVID-19, according to the report. Finally, majority of Kuchis reported restrictions on the sale of their livestock, lack of access to adequate fodder and increased fodder prices. Close to one-third of Kuchis reported restrictions on their spring/summer stock movements due to COVID-19 containment measures.

Response Activities: **UPDATED**

Humanitarians have rapidly scaled-up services to support the response to the pandemic, reaching millions of people with life-saving assistance for new and existing needs. For a detailed update of all cluster response activities in Afghanistan please see the latest [Operational Situation Report](#).

Key cumulative COVID-19 response figures include:

- Health Cluster partners have traced 568,453 people through health surveillance systems.
- Almost 4.6m people have been reached with risk communication and community engagement messages.
- More than 2.1 million people have been reached with WASH assistance.
- 506,774 people have been reached by ES-NFI partners with key messages on the prevention of COVID-19.
- Protection partners have reached 198,330 men, women, boys and girls with psychosocial support services.
- 52,742 children have been reached with home-based learning materials.
- As part of WFP's regular programming, approximately 5.3 million people have been reached with food assistance between 5 March and 8 July.[†]

Cross Border: **UPDATED**

The Milak crossing (Nimroz) and Islam Qala-Dogharoon (Hirat) crossings are officially open to commercial traffic and movement of documented Afghanistan nationals. According to the Border Monitoring Team of the Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR), a total of 10,604 Afghanistan nationals returned from Iran through the Milak and Islam Qala border crossing sites between 5 and 11 July 2020, a 13 per cent decrease from the previous week (12,204). 4,283 people returned voluntarily and 6,321 were deported. IOM provided post-arrival humanitarian assistance to 585 (6 per cent) of all undocumented Afghanistan nationals returning from Iran at its transit centres in Hirat and Nimroz during the past week. IOM is highlighting the significant increase in deportations of Afghanistan nationals from Iran in recent weeks following increased cross border movement with the reopening of the Iran's economy.

According to [UNHCR's latest border monitoring report](#) (covering the period between 5 and 11 July), 31 per cent of returnees interviewed at the Islam Qala and Milak border crossing points said they faced problems during the COVID-19 outbreak in Iran, such as lost work/wages, discrimination/stigmatisation by local communities, lack of access to markets, pressure by Iranian authorities to return to Afghanistan, movement restrictions related to the lockdown, and lack of access to medical services. 89 per cent of respondents stated that they had received information about COVID-19 in Iran, mainly through TV, radio and local communities. 14 per cent of returnees interviewed at the Milak border crossing point and 21 per cent at Islam Qala reported that they had not received information about COVID-19 upon arrival in Afghanistan.

According to [UNHCR](#), 53 per cent of returnees interviewed at the Torkham border crossing point said they faced problems in Pakistan during the COVID-19 outbreak, mainly lost work/wages, movement restrictions due to the lockdown, lack of access to markets, and lack of access to medical services. 95 per cent of those interviewed stated that they had received information about COVID-19 in Pakistan, mainly through TV, radio, religious leaders and local communities. 85 per cent of returnees interviewed at the Torkham border crossing stated that they had not received information about COVID-19 upon arrival in Afghanistan. The monitoring findings shows that the information gap at Torkham remains very high and further efforts are required to provide new arrivals with the information they need to stay safe. Spin Boldak and Ghulam Khan border crossings remain closed for pedestrian movement.

Pakistan continues to facilitate the movement of cargo trucks and containers into Afghanistan. Since 22 June, two border crossing points (Ghulam Khan and Torkham) have been open six days a week (every day except Saturday) to facilitate

[†] The tonnage of weekly food dispatched fluctuates regularly based on programme needs, use of commercial transporters versus WFP's own fleet, capacities to distribute in the field and other factors. Weekly figures are regularly consolidated and analysed as part of WFP's overall rolling implementation plan that ranges from two to four months.

trade between the two countries. The Spin Boldak crossing point has remained closed for commercial traffic since mid-June. On 2 July, Mohammad Sadiq, [Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan](#), announced that Pakistan would reopen Angor Adda and Kharlachi border crossings with Afghanistan on 12 July to boost trade between the neighbours. The Angor Adda border crossing site was operationalised on 10 July, two days ahead of its scheduled opening, while the Kharlachi border crossing was reopened on 12 July. In response to the Government of Afghanistan's request, [Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) confirmed on 13 July that Pakistan would also restore Afghanistan's exports through the Wagah border with India from 15 July onwards.

Borders with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan remain open only for commercial traffic and crossings of passport holders back into Afghanistan.

Humanitarians emphasise the critical importance of maintaining a reliable flow of traffic for humanitarian cargo from all neighbouring countries and are advocating for special consideration to expedite humanitarian food and relief items through border crossings.

Operational Issues: UPDATED

A nationwide lockdown remains in place. The Government has also extended the closure of schools until the end of August. According to [reports](#), while lockdown measures are in place, enforcement has been lenient. In most cities, shops and restaurants are open. Measures to contain the spread of the virus continue to vary across provinces where local authorities are responsible for implementation. Humanitarian partners remain active in responding to crises throughout the country, including flooding and conflict-related displacement, and continue to urge the Government to employ a national approach to these movement issues so that individual negotiations are not required on a case-by-case basis and assistance is not delayed. For additional information on access constraints, please see the latest [C-19 Access Impediment Report](#).

The Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority announced that it has resumed the operation of domestic flights after a three-month hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On 15 July, Kam Air resumed all of its regular domestic flights to provinces across Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) has reduced domestic flight days from five to four days a week. UNHAS no longer conducts regular domestic flights on Mondays; however, all locations are still served during the week. UNHAS will adjust the schedule based on user demand. UNHAS will continue to support any required evacuation and relocation flights during all days of the week.

International commercial air travel has resumed with Emirates Airlines providing round-trip international flight services to/from Kabul. Turkish Airlines has announced that it is suspending its flights to Afghanistan after several passengers tested positive for COVID-19 on recent flights. Qatar Airways recently announced that it will facilitate two exceptional round-trip international flight operations between Kabul and Doha on 18 and 21 July, respectively. Ariana Airlines and Kam Air have also resumed their international flights. On 8 July, [Emirates Airlines announced](#) that effective from 10 July, all passengers travelling with Emirates from Afghanistan have to carry a COVID-19 negative certificate issued by a local government-approved laboratory to be accepted on the flight. Where specified, a certificate from a UAE government designated laboratory in the country of origin is also acceptable. Certificates must be issued no more than 96 hours before departure. Passengers are encouraged to check with airlines on flight restrictions for international flights, as well as travel and immigration entry requirements of their destination country.

The UNHAS airbridge connecting Kabul and Doha continues to operate on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Flights into Doha accommodate transiting passengers only. This service is planned to continue until the end of September 2020, or until regular commercial international flights consistently resume. The next flight is planned for Sunday, 19 July.

More Information – Links: **UPDATED**

WHO

- [WHO's latest information on COVID-19](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Global Dashboard](#)
- [COVID-19 Partners Platform](#)
- [Timeline of WHO's response to COVID-19](#)
- [The vaccines success story gives us hope for the future](#)
- [Women's, children's, and adolescents' health in the context of UHC and the SDGs](#)
- [More than 150 countries engaged in COVID-19 vaccine global access facility](#)

Government of Afghanistan:

- [Ministry of Public Health: COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

Inter-Agency Standing Committee

- [IASC-endorsed COVID-19 guidance – new materials available](#)
- [Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Aspects of COVID-19 Outbreak \(available in English, Dari, Pashto\)](#)
- [Key message on applying the IASC guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action](#)

UN and others

- [UN: Global Humanitarian Response Plan: COVID-19 \(April – December 2020\) – GHRP May Update](#)
- [UN: Comprehensive Response to COVID-19](#)
- [Relief Web: COVID-19 Response Page](#)
- [OCHA: Asia Pacific COVID-19 - Humanitarian Data Portal](#)
- [OCHA: Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2018-2021 \(June 2020 Revision\)](#)
- [OCHA: Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2018-2021 \(June 2020 update\) - Infographic](#)
- [UN: UN interpreters adapt to new work modes](#)
- [UN: 'Don't make schools a political football'](#)
- [UN: UN and partners work to ensure learning never stops for young refugees](#)
- [UNICEF, WHO: Immunization coverage](#)
- [UNICEF, WHO: WHO and UNICEF warn of a decline in vaccinations during COVID-19](#)
- [IFC: COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence](#)
- [FAO + 4 more: The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020](#)
- [UN-HABITAT: Report of the First COVID-19 Urban Thinkers Campus Series](#)
- [UNICEF: Guidance for Health Care Worker \(HCW\) Surveys in Humanitarian Contexts in LMICs](#)
- [EU: Vaccine against COVID-19](#)
- [UNAIDS: Advancing TB services for people living with HIV during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [USAID: A Focus on the Role of Nurses and Midwives - 2020](#)

- [Amnesty: Failures to protect health and essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [UNDP: Putting the UN framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19 into action](#)
- [UNESCO: COVID-19 is a serious threat to aid to education recovery](#)
- [FAO: FAO launches the new COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme outlining seven key priority areas](#)
- [ICRC: Partnering with local organizations makes us stronger](#)
- [Grand Bargain: Linking Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection for an Effective Cash Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic](#)
- [UNDRR: COVID-19 - A Risk Context](#)
- [SC: Almost 10 million children may never return to school following COVID-19 lockdown](#)
- [SC: Save Our Education](#)
- [UNHCR: Global COVID-19 Emergency Response](#)
- [WFP: COVID-19 Global Common Service Provision](#)
- [IRC: COVID-19 restrictions preventing people from fleeing violence or forcing dangerous routes](#)
- [REACH: The impact of COVID-19 on acute food insecurity across crisis-affected countries](#)
- [WV: Fragile Context Programme Approach for COVID-19](#)
- [UNICEF: How COVID-19 threatens the futures of 600 million South Asian children](#)
- [UNICEF: EU Humanitarian Air Bridge helps deliver over 50 tonnes of UNICEF supplies for vulnerable children and families](#)
- [ESCAP: Responding to natural disasters in South Asia during Covid-19](#)
- [ESCAP: Protecting the most vulnerable to cascading risks from climate extremes and the COVID-19 in South Asia](#)
- [ESCAP: National Strategies and Sub-regional Cooperation for Accelerating Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Recovery](#)
- [Education Cluster, UNICEF: EiEWG Dashboard – COVID-19 response \(Afghanistan\)](#)
- [WB: Afghanistan Development Update, July 2020](#)
- [WFP: European Union helps WFP support people affected by conflict and natural hazards in Afghanistan](#)
- [UN Women: Gender Alert on COVID-19 in Afghanistan](#)
- [OCHA: Weekly Humanitarian Update - Afghanistan](#)
- [WFP: Afghanistan Weekly Market Price Bulletin](#)
- [UNFPA: A Raise in Gender Based Violence in the Wake of COVID-19](#)
- [UNHCR: Border Monitoring update - COVID-19 Response](#)
- [IFRC: Race to avert COVID-caused catastrophes in Afghanistan](#)
- [ICRC: Families who lost everything in conflict, struggle again due to COVID-19 \(Afghanistan\)](#)

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