



WFP Afghanistan Country Brief

March 2018

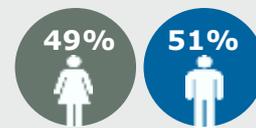
In Numbers

54,063 people displaced by conflict since 1 January 2018

5,500mt of food assistance and **US\$119,000** cash based transfers distributed

US\$20.9 m six months (Apr-Sept 2018) net funding requirements, representing 34% of total

730,511 people assisted in March 2018



Operational Context

Strategically situated between Central and South Asia, with a committed Government, rich natural resources, and a young and diverse population, Afghanistan has the potential to make significant progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. However, a complex and protracted conflict combined with other challenges including climate change and natural disasters, demographic shifts, limited job opportunities, pervasive gender inequalities, food insecurity and transparency concerns, has dramatically constrained the country's wider development efforts.

The level of food insecurity has increased significantly in recent years to 44.6 percent of the population, or 13.2 million people.

WFP has been present in Afghanistan since 1963.



Population: **30 million**

2016 Human Development Index: **169 out of 188**

Income Level: **Low income**

Chronic malnutrition: **41% of children between 6-59 months**

Operational Updates

- **The Government of Pakistan** has permitted over 2.3 million Afghan nationals residing in Pakistan to stay there until 30 June, further delaying an increase in returns and postponing the pressure of the humanitarian system in Afghanistan.
- However, **low average rainfall, low snow accumulation and dry soil** continue to threaten staple crop production and livestock according to the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) food security outlook for February to September 2018. The evolving drought situation exacerbates underlying challenges to food security from conflict and weak labour markets. WFP is preparing for a possible drought response to up to 1 million people.
- **Conflict has displaced over 54,000 people** this year (as of 1 April). This is higher than in same period from 2017. WFP continues to assist vulnerable displaced families where they settle across the country by using cash transfers and food assistance alongside SCOPE, its corporate beneficiary management platform.
- **635,000 vulnerable people have registered with SCOPE in Afghanistan**, improving WFP's capacity to monitor and manage assistance in a way that is more transparent and guards against duplication.
- **Resilience building and disaster risk reduction** activities restarted this month after a break through the winter. The development-oriented food for assets (FFA) programme builds upon WFP's humanitarian response to provide more sustainable solutions to food insecurity. Assets under creation include roads, irrigation canals, kitchen gardens and flood defences.
- **The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** transported 1,489 aid workers and 7.2mt of light cargo. In Afghanistan, 160 organizations rely on UNHAS to reach populations in need.

Main Photo

Credit: WFP/Jalalabad Sub-office
Caption: Workers supported by WFP build a flood protection wall in Mihtarlam District

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	Total Requirements (in USD)	Confirmed Contributions (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
Assistance to Address Food Insecurity and Undernutrition			
PRRO 200447 (Jan 2014 - Jun 2018)	763.7 m	446.9 m (59%)	20.5 m
Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Afghanistan			
SO 200870 (Jan 2016 - Jun 2018)	41.3 m	35.2 m (85%)	0.4 m
Capacity Development in Support of the Strategic Grain Reserve			
SO 200635 (Sept 2014 - Jun 2018)	14.1 m	1.6 m (11%)	0 m [†]

*Includes the duration of these projects (April 2018 - June 2018) only, note that these projects will finish in June 2018 and transfer to the County Strategic Plan (CSP)

†Activities under this project are on hold and will resume in June 2018 under the CSP



Challenges

Access issues persist countrywide. At present, WFP has suspended food delivery to parts of the western province of Ghor, while the northern district of Wardak remains out of reach. In the south, WFP cannot currently operate in a number of districts in Helmand Province nor can it get to Mandol District in the east of the country.

Some examples of how WFP manages access issues in Afghanistan follow in the next section.

Insecurity in Kabul continues to hinder movements in the city. Most incidents in March only indirectly affect WFP's operations however, a blast on 2 March targeting an international convoy near WFP's country office inflicted non-structural damage to the buildings, forcing staff to work from home while repairs took place. All staff were safe.

A lack of **funds** in early 2018 will lead to a shortage of special nutritious foods for the treatment of malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and girls and children under five. This is because it takes at least three months after procurement for food to reach Afghanistan from regional or international markets.

Overcoming Access Constraints

The country office implements a proactive strategy to maintain and improve access across the country.

The presence of armed groups on the main **Herat-Ghor** highway is preventing WFP-contracted transporters from reaching their destinations. In response to this specific case, WFP's Herat sub office (HSO) has deployed a staff member for face-to-face negotiation with influential elders in the affected areas. HSO will also offer improved rates to transporters from 1 April to encourage them to take alternative routes where possible.

Meanwhile, in **Nangarhar Province**, Eastern Afghanistan, the Jalalabad sub-office (JSO) access team held meetings in March with influential elders from Mandol, a very remote district of Nuristan Province as part of the JSO access strategy. The aim of these meeting was to seek ways to reach the vulnerable population. The elders agreed to talk to communities and actors with the aim of opening access in the second quarter of 2018.

In the southern province of **Helmand**, WFP's Kandahar sub-office recently secured assurances from anti-government elements to deliver food safely to Nad Ali, Musa Qala, Marjah and Gramseer districts, which are under their control. Distributions will start as soon.

Donors

WFP Afghanistan's top five donors are the U.S.A., the Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia and Canada.