

Key Messages: **UPDATED**

- **People confirmed to have COVID-19: 752** (Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health - MoPH)
- **Deaths from COVID-19: 28**
- **Tests completed: 4,470**

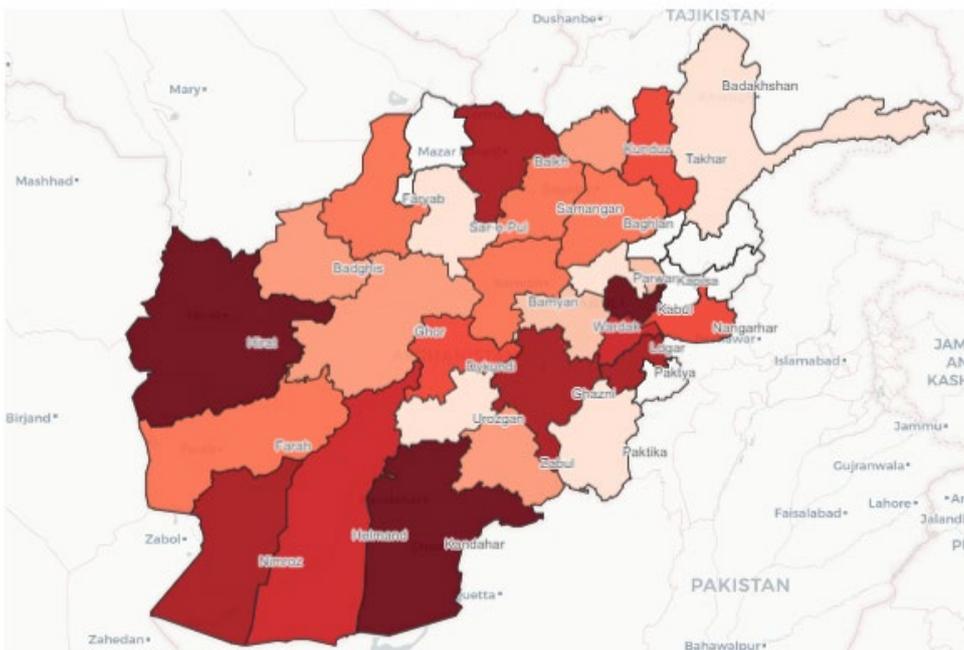
Key concerns: Border crossing areas, measured lockdowns, protective equipment for frontline workers, commodity prices, floods, messaging and rumour management, international air services

Situation Overview: **UPDATED**

MoPH data shows that **752 people across 27 provinces in Afghanistan are now confirmed to have COVID-19. Some 44 people have recovered and 28 people have died.** Of the 752 people who are confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, 29 are girls (age 0-19), 33 are boys (age 0-19), 529 are adult men and 161 are adult women. Men between the ages of 20-39 have the highest rates of infection (350 of the confirmed cases), followed by men between the ages of 40-49 (81 of the confirmed cases). The average age of people confirmed to have COVID-19 in Afghanistan is 35 years – much younger than global figures – and speaks to the unique vulnerabilities faced by the population.

Cases are expected to increase rapidly over the weeks ahead as community transmission escalates, creating grave implications for Afghanistan's economy and people's well-being. Hirat is still the most affected part of the country, followed by Kabul. MoPH reports that 4,470 tests have been conducted. Altogether, the Government plans to expand to 15 testing facilities across the country within the month. WHO reports that testing kits are being sent from Kabul to regional testing hubs on a needs-basis but due to global shortages, it is not possible to stockpile testing kits and supplies in each region. Despite the global shortages, new supplies are regularly arriving in-country.

Density of Covid-19 Confirmed Cases By provinces



	Total
People confirmed to have COVID-19	752
Number of deaths from COVID-19	28
Number of people recovered	44
Number of tests conducted	4,470

Source: [MoPH](#)

On 13 April, WHO provided medical equipment and supplies to MOPH including: 10,000 gowns, 600 packs of gloves, 1,500 face shields, 200 soft frame goggles, 100 infrared thermometers, 1200 packs of surgical masks, 60 packs of respiratory masks, 20 packs of hazard bags and 21 supplementary kits of emergency medicine that will cater to 120,000 patients. WHO also delivered 27 hospital beds, 31 oxygen concentrators, 21 intubation kits and 11 autoclaves. With funding from the donors, including the EU, more supplies, including \$1.8m worth of testing kits and 60,000 additional PPE kits will arrive in the coming weeks.

Response: UPDATED

The Global Humanitarian Response Plan, released in March, is in the process of being updated. At the country-level, the humanitarian community has begun the process of revising of the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan in light of COVID-19. In the meantime, activities from April-June are outlined in a \$108.1m [COVID-19 Multi-Sector Humanitarian Country Plan for Afghanistan](#), which was released in March 2020.

IOM, UNHCR, WHO and other partners are strengthening logistics, health (screening and surveillance) and monitoring assistance in border areas, in support of the Government. Border monitoring teams have been put in place along main crossing points from Iran and Pakistan. Some 670 sets of personal protective equipment have been provided to government and humanitarian personnel, while some 82 government and humanitarian offices have been provided with hygiene kits. However it is understood that gaps still remain. UNHCR additionally plans to mobilise some 100 refugee housing units; 500 tents and 12,000 NFI kits to augment medical service provision in these areas. Distribution of hygiene materials among those in displacement sites continues with some 3,500 households in Gulistan settlement receiving support and an additional 200 refugees and asylum seekers being provided with cash top-ups to facilitate purchase of hygiene items. Over 100 community health supervisors and workers have participated in COVID-19 trainings on personal protective measures in Nimroz and Hirat conducted by IOM, in coordination with the Provincial Public Health Directorate. Additional trainings are planned in these locations in the coming weeks and similar trainings will be provided for community health workers in Kandahar and Nangahar.

The GBV Sub-Cluster has issued revised guidance on adapted content for Dignity Kits in light of COVID-19, as well as information on mitigating the risk of spreading the virus during distributions. The guidance note will be published online shortly. The Nutrition Cluster has developed [guidance for partners and nutrition care providers for the COVID-19 response](#). The Ministry of Education and Education in Emergencies Working Group has recently published an [Alternate Education Service Delivery Plan](#).

While implementing activities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, humanitarians continue to respond to other ongoing and emerging humanitarian needs. Recent flooding has left people in need of assistance in many parts of the country. In Shinwar District in Nangahar Province, approximately 1050 people who were trapped due to flooding had to be relocated yesterday. Additional emergency response assessments and follow on activities are planned. In the past two weeks alone, humanitarian partners reached more than 872 flood-affected families with emergency shelter, household items, hygiene materials and food assistance.

Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) engagement in COVID-19 response

The Government's response to COVID-19 outbreak has seen a strong engagement from the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS). ARCS is an active member of the high-level committee established under the auspices of the President and led by the Vice-President, as well as the emergency committee leading coordination of the COVID-19 response within MoPH. Between February and March, ARCS teams have been mobilised in support of early detection and surveillance efforts, including screening of returnees from Iran and China.

ARCS runs mobile health teams and health centres, and some 4,000 volunteers have conducted awareness raising sessions and risk communication in 31 provinces. More than 470,000 people are estimated to have benefitted from this. Additionally, some 200,000 IEC materials have been distributed. Seven mobile health team members, who have been trained in infection prevention and control and who engaged in early detection and surveillance efforts, were also able to identify and refer 93 potential cases out of some 23,000 people screened.

Funding:

On 14 April, the [International Monetary Fund](#) announced the plans to provide immediate debt service relief under the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust. Afghanistan is among the 25 countries that will receive debt relief under the announcement. The [Asia Development Bank](#) has also announced it is tripling its funds to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic globally. The \$20b global package will address the immediate needs of ADB's developing member countries and help counter severe macroeconomic and health impacts due to COVID-19. The package includes \$2.5b in concessional and grant resources. More information on the specific allocation for Afghanistan is still to come.

Cross Border Concerns: UPDATED

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

As of 15 April, Johns Hopkins University reports that there are 74,877 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Iran. The Milak crossing (Nimroz) is formally open only to commercial traffic and documented citizens of Afghanistan; 1,000 individuals used this border crossing to return to Afghanistan yesterday. The Islam Qala-Dogharoon land border crossings (Hirat)

remain open on both sides for both individuals and commercial traffic. Approximately 1,420 people used this border crossing to return to Afghanistan yesterday.

As of 15 April, according to Johns Hopkins University there are 5,988 people confirmed to have COVID-19 in Pakistan. Pakistan's border remains closed to all except commercial vehicles. Pakistan has announced that it is now facilitating the movement of cargo trucks and containers into Afghanistan through the Torkham and Chaman border crossing points three days per week (on Monday, Wednesday and Friday). Humanitarians remain hopeful that border crossing for commercial traffic will be maintained according to the announced schedule; this is critical for maintaining the flow of humanitarian food and relief items from storage sites in Karachi.

Operational Issues: **UPDATED**

A number of provinces have instituted measures to limit the exposure of residents to COVID-19. Throughout the country, these '**measured lockdowns**' have resulted in closures of sections of each city and/or movement limitations. These include limits on the number of people travelling together and the imposition of curfews. Limitations on inter-city travel have also been implemented.

On 13 April, stricter measures were announced in Kandahar by the Provincial Committee of Corona Virus Prevention. These measures include the daytime closure of all businesses, excluding health centres, pharmacies and bakeries. Shops and businesses can continue their work from 12am to 6am. Assurances have been received that freedom of movement for UN and NGO staff who are carrying valid organisational IDs will continue. Additional movement restrictions remain in place for Kabul and Jalalabad; these measures will remain in place until the start of Ramadan, at which point they will be reassessed. Reports indicate that despite reassurances by the government that these should not limit critical program movements of NGOs and the UN, newly introduced lockdown measures have impacted on mobility for some staff members. Humanitarian partners continue to urge the Government to employ a national approach to these issues so that individual negotiations are not required on a case-by-case basis. The closure of government institutions due to movement restrictions may create new coordination challenges for humanitarian agencies.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) continues to make arrangements for an international airbridge. UNHAS has received an initial \$3.7m in funding from the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund and is now in the process of securing flight approvals for an international service with three flights per week between Kabul and Doha. Flights into Doha will accommodate transiting passengers only. The newly secured aircraft and crew have arrived in Kabul and flights are planned to start on 21 April with subsequent flights scheduled for 23 and 26 April, pending successful negotiations on landing permits and air space. UNHAS intends to maintain flights every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. UNHAS instructions on booking procedures will be disseminated shortly.

Emirates Airlines has [announced](#) limited passenger flights to carry passengers outbound from the UAE; this will include flights three times a week from Dubai into Kabul starting from 16 April, depending on passenger demand.

More Information: **UPDATED**

WHO

- [WHO's latest information on COVID-19](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Strategy Update](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Global Dashboard](#)

Inter-Agency Standing Committee

- [IASC-endorsed COVID-19 guidance – new materials available](#)

UN and others

- [Ministry of Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- [Ministry of Education Alternate Education Service Delivery COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan](#)
- [Afghanistan: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(PSEA\) in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and response](#)
- [Guidance Note on IMAM IYCF Programming in the context of COVID-19 in Afghanistan](#)
- [Afghanistan COVID-19 Access Impediment Report \(1 Mar-7 April 2020\)](#)
- [IOM dashboard on impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human mobility](#)

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