Forty years of war, recurrent natural disasters, chronic poverty, drought and the COVID-19 pandemic have left 18.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Recent escalation in conflict and resulting upheaval have exacerbated needs and further complicated an extremely challenging operational context. Humanitarians have already witnessed a deepening of need for a wider number of people. While all population groups across the country have been impacted, the consequences for women and girls have been most immediately felt.

This Flash Appeal presents a prioritisation of unmet needs in the 2021 HRP and strategic response to new emerging needs, as they are currently understood. Humanitarians seek $606 million to provide prioritised multi-sectoral assistance to 11 million people in the four remaining months of 2021. $413 million of this is already costed within 2021 HRP requirements, while $193 million is needed to address new emerging needs and changes in operating costs.

The full implications of the recent political transition on the country’s basic services, financial systems and markets will take time to manifest. However, initial indications already reveal a severe deterioration of the situation for vulnerable people. While it is outside the humanitarian remit and the parameters of this appeal, it is critical that these basic services be maintained through continued development assistance. Failure to do so risks human and humanitarian catastrophe for the more than 37 million people who currently live on less than $2 a day.

**TRENDS**

**Civilian casualties**

In the first half of 2021, there were 5,183 civilian casualties (1,659 people killed and 3,524 injured). More than four in every 10 civilian casualties were women and children.

**Conflict forces thousands to flee**

Conflict has forcibly displaced more than 570,000 people across 32 provinces so far this year. 750,000 people are now projected to be displaced due to conflict in 2021.

**Undocumented returnees flood back to Afghanistan**

Close to 760,000 undocumented people have returned to Afghanistan since the start of the year, surpassing the record number of returns during the same period last year. An estimated 1.2 million undocumented people are projected to return by year’s end.

**Acute food insecurity crisis**

More than 30 per cent of the population is now facing emergency or crisis levels of food insecurity. Markets continue to function but prices for key commodities are becoming dangerously high. Wheat production is expected to face a shortfall of 2.5m MT. The next lean season is likely to be more intense and arrive earlier.

27 out of 34 provinces are now within the emergency threshold for acute malnutrition, 10 of which are facing critical situations.

The proportion of households living with an ‘emergency’ LCSI score has more than doubled. This is the most severe category of coping mechanisms and is incredibly difficult to reverse. One in five displaced households have taken on catastrophic levels of debt.

High needs are expected over the harsh winter season due to aggravated vulnerability and an anticipated prolonged lean season. By November, cases of hypothermia, acute respiratory infections and death associated with cold are likely to increase.

In the first eight months of 2021, at least 32 aid workers were killed, 86 injured, and 55 abducted. Attacks on health facilities in the first half of 2021 have left more than 200,000 people without access to care. Attacks against schools have led to the closure of 927 schools in the first half of 2021.
The ICCT reviewed humanitarian trends and geographic priorities given the rapidly evolving need profile and operational context. A rigorous approach based on analysis of both sector-specific and cross-cutting indicators was employed to update a geographic prioritisation snapshot for the remainder of 2021. Based on this analysis, the ICCT identified 15 provinces as high priority and 19 provinces as medium priority. While the development of this joint analysis underscores the importance of responding to people's overlapping, multi-sectoral needs, it also highlights the widespread nature of the crisis and the reality that there are currently no provinces where humanitarian assistance is not urgently needed.

Children will be supported to access education through establishment of temporary learning spaces. Teachers will be trained in psychological first aid to provide first line support and referral services to students. Support for enrolment, teaching salaries and other critical functions will continue.

People will be supported to protect themselves through provision of emergency and transitional, shelter repairs and upgrades, household items, rental subsidies and specialised winter assistance.

People's survival will be supported through the provision of critical food and livelihood assistance, including early support for the winter wheat planting season, livestock support and asset creation activities.

People's wellbeing will be supported through the delivery of essential life-saving and life-sustaining health services including reproductive health, trauma, maternal and child health and COVID-19 support.

Children's and women's survival will be supported through treatment for severe and moderate acute malnutrition and nutrition promotion.

Vulnerable groups will be reached with individual protection assistance to mitigate adoption of negative coping mechanisms, specialized support for children, integrated services for GBV survivors, provision of land mine clearance and education, legal counselling and documentation assistance.

People's safety and ability to protect themselves from the spread of diseases will be maintained through access to safe drinking water (including the repair of wells, bore holes, hand pumps, solar, gravity and mixed water systems), sanitation facilities and hygiene materials.

Scaled up humanitarian action requires the urgent establishment of a humanitarian air bridge. This will serve as a critical logistics enabler to move cargo and humanitarian staff across the country. Affected people will also be supported with enhanced AAP activities to ensure two-way communication and humanitarians will carry out more real-time data collection to support displaced people.