

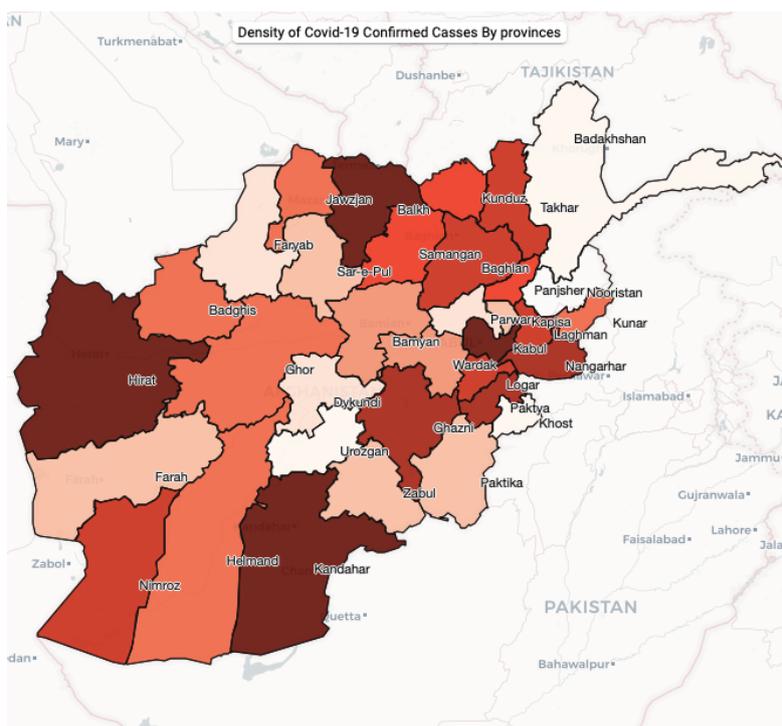
Key Messages: **UPDATED**

- **People confirmed to have COVID-19: 2,704** (as of 6pm, 3 May. Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health - MoPH)
- **Deaths from COVID-19: 85**
- **Samples tested: 11,647**

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

Situation Overview: **UPDATED**

MoPH data shows that **2,704** people across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan are now confirmed to have COVID-19. Some **345** people have recovered and **85** people have died. **Eight** healthcare workers are among those who have died from COVID-19. Among the fatalities, 72 had at least one underlying disease, the most common of which are cardio-vascular disease, lung disease, and diabetes. The majority of the fatalities were between ages of 40-69. Men between the ages of 40-69 represent almost 60 per cent of all COVID-19-related deaths. 30,000 diagnostic testing kits are currently available in-country; as countries continue to be affected by global supply shortages, WHO are working to secure a steady pipeline for essential supplies, including laboratory reagents and diagnostic kits tests. 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. Kabul remains the most affected part of the country in terms of confirmed cases, followed by Hirat, Kandahar and Balkh.



Source: MoPH

	Age 0-19		Age 20-29		Age 30-39		Age 40-49		Age 50-59		Age 60-69		Age 70-79		Age 80+		Total
	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Women	Men											
# people confirmed with COVID-19	77	85	195	458	121	482	110	306	78	217	48	126	16	32	7	20	2704
# deaths from COVID-19	0	1	0	0	0	7	3	16	2	10	5	18	0	8	2	6	85

Impact of COVID-19 on women in Afghanistan – Oxfam

On 24 April, Oxfam released a briefing note on the impact of [COVID-19 on women in Afghanistan](#). The briefing note was informed by 34 interviews with women's rights organisations, female community members, government institutions, and protection actors. Several key concerns were identified in the report: (1) COVID-19 eroding hard-won rights of women; (2) social norms inhibiting women's medical care at a time of increased need; (3) increase in domestic violence; (4) deepened economic inequality.

With lockdowns and quarantine measures in place throughout Afghanistan, the interviewed women raised concerns that progress made during recent years could be reversed given that women are once again restricted to their homes. Respondents feared that family members will use this as an excuse to prevent women from leaving their homes, and that women may lose their newly gained public roles, freedoms and rights.

People in Afghanistan face massive challenges in accessing proper health care, with women disproportionately affected. Only 15 per cent of nurses and 2 per cent of medical doctors in Afghanistan are women. The same social norms and customs preventing women from working in health care, also prevent them from accessing services. In Afghanistan society, the responsibility of taking care of sick family members lies with women and girls. This duty not only places an additional burden on women, but also brings additional risk because of how COVID-19 is transmitted.

Besides physical health issues caused by COVID-19, the brief also highlights various forms of violence resulting from the crisis. Interviewees expressed fear that cases of domestic violence (physical, sexual or psychological) will increase due to COVID-19, especially because of economic concerns and stress related to lockdowns and cramped living conditions. According to an Oxfam needs assessment, 97 per cent of female respondents said that gender-based violence has already increased since the COVID-19 outbreak started.

All women interviewed in the Oxfam assessment mentioned their fear of poverty and how prices in markets and shops have already increased. They report that some items have doubled in price. Women's decreased ability to earn money during the COVID-19 outbreak severely limits their economic and social independence.

To ensure that the short-term and long-term needs of women in Afghanistan are taken into account during and after the COVID-19 crisis, and that women are not further marginalised, Oxfam notes the need for:

- Inclusion of awareness raising on the rights of women in COVID-19 responses;
- Inclusion of women and women-led organisations in planning COVID-19 response. Women's expertise on their communities will be vital to designing tailored responses;
- Recognition of gender base violence (GBV) responses as lifesaving and mainstream GBV programming into responses from the outset;
- Direct funding must be accessible to subnational and local organisations, especially women's rights organisations.

Response: **UPDATED**

A Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) has been activated for six-months to focus on COVID-19 issues. The GiHA COVID-19 WG is an inter-cluster technical working group to ensure that the humanitarian system in Afghanistan is gender responsive. The working group will advise on gender issues and activities supporting gender equality that are related to the COVID-19 response. It will serve as a platform for clusters to coordinate and harmonise their efforts on gender.

For a detailed update of all Cluster response activities please see the [operational Situation Report](#).

Cross Border Concerns: **UPDATED**

The Milak crossing (Nimroz) is officially open to commercial traffic and documented citizens of Afghanistan. The Islam Qala-Dogharoon land border crossings (Hirat) remain open on both sides for documented travellers and commercial traffic. While the number of people returning from Iran this week has been in line with normal average return rates, IOM emphasises that the scale of humanitarian needs among those returning has increased. Close to 100 per cent of returnees are now in need of some humanitarian post-arrival assistance, compared to the 20 per cent previously estimated. According to a [recently published report](#) by the United States Institute of Peace, more than 3.3 million Iranians have lost their jobs and many more unskilled daily wage workers have been impacted. This includes large numbers of migrant workers from Afghanistan and their families. This economic crisis runs the risk of cutting remittances, a lifeline for migrants and their families in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's frontier with Pakistan at Spin Boldak and at Torkham remains mainly closed due to COVID-19-related restrictions, however limited openings have been granted for the return of stranded nationals from Afghanistan and Pakistan to return to their respective countries. Pakistan has announced twice-weekly border openings, on Tuesdays and Saturdays, to allow Pakistan and Afghanistan nationals to return to their countries of origin.

Pakistan continues to facilitate the movement of cargo trucks and containers into Afghanistan through the Torkham and Chaman border crossing points three days per week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). Humanitarians emphasise the critical importance of maintaining a reliable flow of traffic for humanitarian cargo and are advocating for special consideration to expedite humanitarian food and relief items through border crossings.

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

Operational Issues: **UPDATED**

'**Measured lockdowns**' aimed at limiting the exposure of residents to COVID-19 continue throughout the country, resulting in closures of sections of each city and/or movement limitations. On 2 May, the Government of Afghanistan extended its nationwide lockdown until 24 May in a bid to contain the spread of the virus. The decision was made following a Cabinet meeting chaired by President Ghani. Humanitarian personnel have received permission to continue their duties amidst the movement restrictions, however NGOs report periodic delays and complications. Humanitarians 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. For additional information on access constraints, please see the [C-19 Access Impediment Report](#).

On 2 May, the Government of Afghanistan announced suspension of all commercial domestic flights until the end of Ramadan (24 May). Additional information is anticipated to be released in the coming days. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) has started airbridge service connecting Kabul and Doha. Flights into Doha accommodate transiting passengers only. The next flight is planned for Tuesday, 5 May. Thereafter, UNHAS will continue its flights as per the previously announced schedule on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. This service is planned to continue until regular commercial international flights resume.

More Information – Links: **UPDATED**

WHO

- [WHO's latest information on COVID-19](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Global Dashboard](#)
- [Interim guidance: Health system response to COVID-19 in the context of internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and returnees in the Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)
- [Interim guidance: Strengthening Preparedness for COVID-19 in Cities and Urban Settings: Interim Guidance for Local Authorities](#)

Inter-Agency Standing Committee

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

UN and others

- [UNHCR: Livelihoods Short Guidance on COVID-19 Response](#)
- [Ministry of Public Health: COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

- [Relief Web: COVID-19 Response Page](#)
- [WFP: 2020 Global Report on Food Crisis](#)
- [IOM: Dashboard on impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human mobility](#)
- [UN: Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#)
- [WRC: Guidance on establishing remote monitoring and management of GBV programming in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [UNESCO/ UNICEF/ WFP/ World Bank: Framework for reopening schools](#)
- [OHCHR: COVID-19 and the rights of persons with disabilities](#)
- [IFRC/ UNICEF/ WHO: COVID-19 Global Response Risk Communication & Community Engagement Strategy](#)
- [UN Women: Gender Alert on COVID 19 in Afghanistan](#)

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