

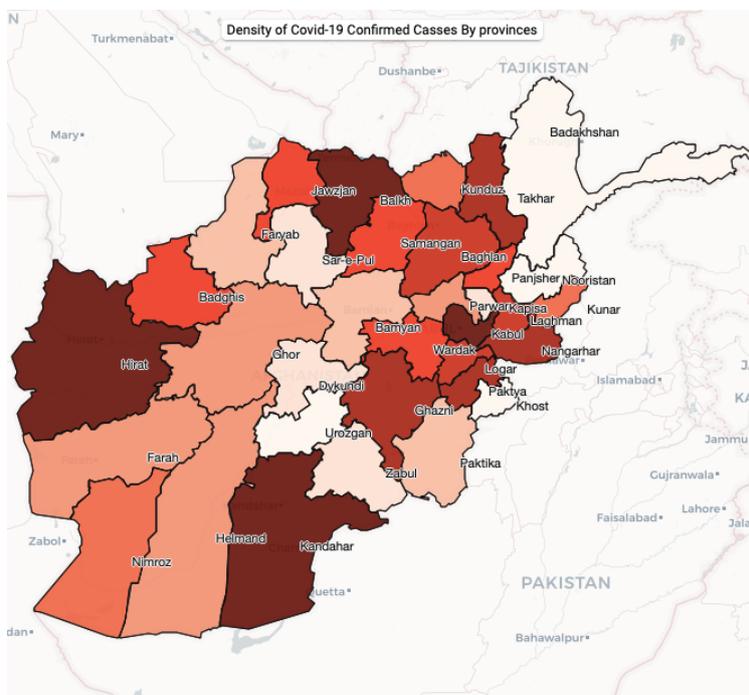
## Key Messages: **UPDATED**

- **People confirmed to have COVID-19: 5,639** (as of 1pm, 14 May. Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health - MoPH)
- **Deaths from COVID-19: 136**
- **Samples tested: 19,732**

**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 **5,639** people across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan are now confirmed to have COVID-19. Some **691** people have recovered and **136** people have died. **11** healthcare workers are among those who have died from COVID-19. The majority of the deaths were people between ages of 40 and 69. Men between the ages of 40 and 69 represent more than half of all COVID-19-related deaths. Cases are expected to continue to increase 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	157	188	387	928	252	981	227	653	162	462	102	240	34	67	13	39	5639
# deaths from COVID-19	2	2	1	1	1	11	4	23	4	20	8	29	2	11	2	13	136

## Response Activities: **UPDATED**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Afghanistan has begun delivering training sessions on COVID-19 for nurses at the ARCS Kabul District Hospital. The training package includes: recognition of COVID-19 symptoms, how to take vital signs, stages of the disease and clinical management, infection control for COVID-19 and an introduction to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) use. The ICRC is also supporting the ARCS District Hospital with the provision of essential medical equipment.

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

Key cumulative figures to date include:

- 350 WHO polio surveillance staff, 1,000 polio surveillance focal points, and 34,000 polio surveillance volunteers have engaged in surveillance, case identification and community contact tracing activities.
- Approximately 45,000 men, women, boys and girls have received psychosocial support services by Protection partners to cope with the mental health-related consequences of COVID-19.
- More than 150,000 people have been reached with awareness raising sessions on the prevention of COVID-19 since the start of the crisis by ES-NFI partners
- 28,465 hygiene kits have been distributed by WASH partners, reaching 199,255 people.
- As part of WFP's regular programming, 2,440,000 people have been reached with life-saving food assistance\*.

### A Safe Space for Children and Families Returning from Iran - OCHA

Seven-year-old Satayish and her six-year-old brother, Mysam, are playing in a children's playground under the watchful gaze of their parents at a Transit Center in Hirat in western Afghanistan. Just a day earlier, the family returned to Afghanistan from Iran through the Islam Qala border.

"We went to Iran three years ago, but the situation has changed and now there is no work," said their father, Jovid, while packing a few belongings from the room where they had spent the night. "If the conditions there were good, why would we come back?"

Like many others, Jovid went to Iran in the hope of a better life for the family of four. However, with the spread of COVID-19 in Iran, employment opportunities for day labourers have all but dried up.

"After all our expenses, we were only able to afford the basics, but with no work, we could not stay. Satayish had only been going to school for one year," he added. In the first four months of this year, 272,000 people without undocumented Afghan migrants returned to Afghanistan from Iran, with as many as 15,000 returning per day in March. The number has since declined to between 500 and 600 people per day due to Ramadan religious holidays and a temporary ban on movements within Iran that was subsequently lifted in late April.

The young family was among the 95 people staying at this IOM-supported Transit Centre that day. The majority were young men, but 18 women and 22 children were also staying on as guests. When asked about COVID-19, Jovid said, "We didn't return because of that alone; we still have to be concerned because we have the virus here in Afghanistan as well."

The staff at the Transit Centre, which has 64 rooms, are doing their best to prevent the spread of COVID-19. "We sanitise high-traffic and common spaces especially doors and handles several times a day. Once a room is vacated, we disinfect the room. We don't allow more than four people per room, but of course, we



Seven-year-old Satayish plays with her younger brother, Mysam.  
Credit: OCHA Afghanistan/Linda Tom

need to keep families together," said Aziz Rahimi, a Senior Programme Assistant working on cross-border returns and reintegration with IOM.

In addition to temporary shelter, the IOM Transit Centre also provides returnees with hot meals, dry food rations, medical, counselling and other protection referral services and cash assistance for transportation, so that they can return home. UNICEF also supports transit centres for unaccompanied and separated children complementing the work of IOM.

With help from IOM, Jovid is hopeful about rebuilding his family's lives in Kabul with some help from their extended family who have a small plot of farmland. "We have no plans to say here; we will leave this afternoon," said Jovid while holding on tight to his two children. "Before going to Iran, I worked in Kabul for eight years. If they accept me, I would like to go back to that job so I can support my family," he said.

### Funding: **UPDATED**

On 11 May, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a [\\$40 million grant to support Afghanistan's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The grant will help increase Afghanistan's capacity to manage the virus by funding the construction of 15 hospitals and the rehabilitation of five existing medical facilities, supporting the procurement of vital medicines and medical equipment, and training at least 3,000 health workers and support staff, 900 of whom will be women, in COVID-19 surveillance, prevention, testing, treatment, and risk management.

\* The tonnage of weekly 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.

## Cross Border: 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. According to the Border Monitoring Team of the Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR), a total of 6,870 citizens of Afghanistan returned from Iran through the Milak and Islam Qala borders between 3 and 9 May, an 18 per cent increase from the previous week (5,801). 3,251 people returned voluntarily and 3,619 were deported from Iran. IOM has provided post-arrival humanitarian assistance to 991 people (14 per cent of all undocumented citizens of Afghanistan returning from Iran) at its transit centres in Hirat and Nimroz. 15 IOM health staff are presently deployed to major border crossing points with Iran to provide support to ongoing COVID-19 response efforts.

According to UNHCR's latest [border monitoring report](#), 42 per cent of returnees interviewed at the Milak border crossing point had not received information about COVID-19 upon arrival in Afghanistan. Following advocacy, IOM and public health authorities are seeking to address this need and ensure that all returnees receive adequate COVID-19 messages upon arrival.

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 their respective countries. Pakistan continues to facilitate the movement of cargo trucks and containers into Afghanistan. On 1 May, the Government of Pakistan announced that the Torkham and Spin Boldak crossing points would open five days a week (Monday-Friday) for commercial purposes. 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

The Government of Afghanistan announced on 2 May that it was extending the **nationwide lockdown** until 24 May in a bid to contain the spread of the virus. However, a number of provinces began easing lockdowns with the arrival of Ramadan. Humanitarian personnel, who have received permission to continue their duties amid the movement restrictions, are encouraged to monitor the situation closely. For additional information on access constraints, please see the [C-19 Access Impediment Report](#).

On 2 May, the Government of Afghanistan announced the suspension of all commercial domestic flights until the end of Ramadan (24 May). Kam Air recently announced that it will facilitate exceptional domestic flight operations during the suspension period to three locations: Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar and Hirat. The flights began operation on 7 May with one flight to Mazar-e-Sharif. The next roundtrip flights are scheduled to depart from Kabul to Mazar-e-Sharif on 20 May, Kandahar on 22 May, and to Hirat on 27, 28, 29 and 30 May. Additionally, two exceptional flights operated by Kam Air will carry stranded nationals of Afghanistan from Ankara and Islamabad respectively to Kabul on May 22.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) airbridge service connecting Kabul and Doha is operating regularly on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. Flights into Doha accommodate transiting passengers only. The next flight is planned for Sunday, 17 May. This service is planned to continue until regular commercial international flights resume. UNHAS will not operate domestic flights or flights to Doha during the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr holidays on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May. However, UNHAS will remain on operational standby for any medical or security situations.

## More Information – Links: UPDATED

### WHO

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

### 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](#) (now available in [English](#), [Dari](#) and [Pashto](#))

### UN and others

- [UN: Global Humanitarian Response Plan: COVID-19 \(April – December 2020\) – GHRP May Update](#)
- [Relief Web: COVID-19 Response Page](#)
- [UN: COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health](#)
- [FAO: Policy responses to keep input markets flowing in times of COVID-19](#)
- [FAO: COVID-19 and the risk to food supply chains: How to respond?](#)
- [EU: Asylum Trends and COVID-19](#)
- [World Bank: Protecting People and Economies](#)
- [Oxfam: Conflict in the Time of Coronavirus](#)
- [UNHCR: Putting People First – AAP and COVID-19](#)
- [Amnesty: Refugees and migrants forgotten in COVID-19 crisis response](#)

- ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO, UNHCR: Forced returns of migrants must be suspended in times of COVID-19
- UN Women: Gender Alert on COVID-19 in Afghanistan
- Protection Cluster: Disability Considerations in GBV Programming during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Protection Cluster: Developing Key Messages for Communities on GBV & COVID-19
- UNAMA: Calls for solidarity amid concerns of rising domestic violence during COVID-19
- UNODC, WHO, UNAIDS and OHCHR: Joint statement on COVID-19 in prisons and other closed settings
- UN-DESA: How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective
- ICRC: Prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence in COVID-19 quarantine centres
- Plan: Going hungry: the impacts of COVID-19 on girls and young women
- UNICEF: GBV Service provision during COVID-19
- GHA: 2020 Global Nutrition Report
- UNDP: Gender-based violence and COVID-19

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