

Key Messages: **UPDATED**

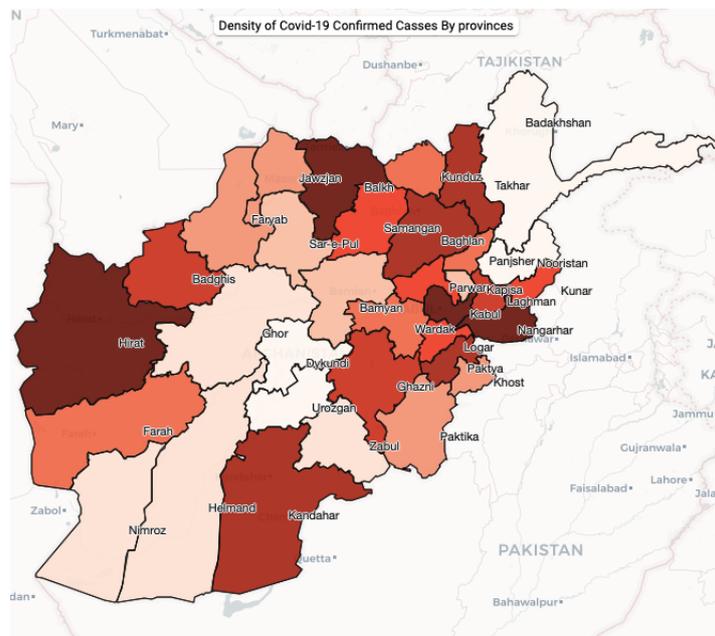
- **People confirmed to have COVID-19: 15,205** (as of 4pm, 31 May. Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health - MoPH)
- **Deaths from COVID-19: 257**
- **Samples tested: 38,460**

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

Situation Overview: **UPDATED**

MoPH data shows that 15,205 people across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan are now confirmed to have COVID-19. Some 1,328 people have recovered, and 257 people have died. 38,460 people out of the population of 37.6 million have been tested. 13 healthcare workers are among those who have died from COVID-19. More than five per cent of the total confirmed COVID-19 cases are among healthcare staff. The majority of the deaths were people between ages of 40 and 69. Men in this age group represent more than half of all COVID-19-related deaths. With a fragile health system, a developing economy and underlying vulnerabilities, the people of Afghanistan are facing extreme consequences from the COVID-19 pandemic. 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, Balkh, Nangarhar and Kandahar. Other health issues continue to affect the people of Afghanistan during the pandemic and continued support is needed to ensure that existing health and WASH services are not interrupted.

There have been issues with laboratories in Kandahar and Nangarhar that have meant they were unable to conduct tests for several days this month. The Kandahar lab remains closed after a problem with contamination of the facility. According to WHO in the east, four out of five PCR lab technicians there also tested positive for COVID-19 rendering the Jalalabad PCR lab temporarily out of service and causing delays in the processing of samples. Two technicians were deployed from Kabul and the Nangarhar laboratory has been back up and running for several days. A delegation from MoPH Kabul visited Jalalabad on 27 May where they engaged in a series of meetings to address COVID-19 challenges and gaps. Additional health staff are being trained in Jalalabad to help keep these critical services running and prevent backlogs.



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	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
# people confirmed with COVID-19	352	437	917	2244	558	2306	465	1541	369	992	205	584	73	166	23	83	15205
# deaths from COVID-19	2	2	2	3	6	19	6	37	8	31	9	41	4	20	4	19	257

Secretary-General warns of grim post-pandemic future, predicting 'historic' hunger, famine, in remarks to high-level event on financing for development (28 May 2020)

Unless we act now, the COVID-19 pandemic will cause unimaginable devastation and suffering around the world. Hunger and famine of historic proportions. Sixty million more people pushed into extreme poverty. Up to half the global workforce, 1.6 billion people, without livelihoods. A loss of US\$8.5 trillion in global output — the sharpest contraction since the Great Depression of the 1930s. We must avoid it.

The pandemic has demonstrated our fragility. Despite all the technological and scientific advances of recent decades, we are in an unprecedented human crisis because of a microscopic virus. We need to respond with unity and solidarity. A key aspect of solidarity is financial support.

I welcome the swift actions that have already been taken by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank Group, the regional development banks and other international financial institutions and the G20. But, many developing countries lack the means to fight the pandemic, and to invest in recovery. Today, we are asking for immediate, collective action in six critically important areas.

First, finding ways to enhance global liquidity so that developing countries have the resources they need to fight the pandemic. Second, preventing debt crises in all countries at risk, including middle-income countries. Such crises risk undermining both the COVID-19 response and sustainable development for years to come. Third, engaging with private creditors on joint debt-relief efforts. Fourth, aligning global financial systems with the Sustainable Development Goals. Fifth, ending illicit financial flows. Sixth, rebuilding differently, and better. COVID-19 has exposed and is exacerbating deep inequalities and injustices that we must tackle — including gender inequality. The economic impacts are worse for women, who typically have fewer savings and lower incomes than men.

All our efforts must go towards building sustainable and resilient pathways that enable us not only to beat COVID-19, but to tackle the climate crisis, reduce inequality and eradicate poverty and hunger. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change address precisely the failures that are being exposed and exploited by the pandemic. The United Nations is mobilized to support countries in implementing these agreements throughout and beyond COVID-19.

These are challenging and dangerous times. We must face them with all urgency, seriousness and responsibility. Getting through COVID-19 and recovering better will cost money. But, the alternative will cost far more. This is a global crisis and it's up to all of us to solve it. Let's do it together and I thank you.

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.

On 16 May, the Government of Pakistan announced that passenger movements of stranded nationals of Afghanistan and Pakistan are officially allowed once a week (Saturday) with a maximum of 500 people allowed to pass through the Torkham and 300 through the Spin Boldak crossing to facilitate return to their respective countries. On 30 May, 7,380 citizens of Afghanistan (2,079 women and 5,301 men) returned from Pakistan through the Torkham border. The process was reportedly orderly and health screening procedures were followed. Spin Boldak was closed yesterday for passengers. On 31 May, IOM reported protests taking place in Spin Boldak, Kandahar. Protesters are seeking the reopening of the border at least twice weekly for cross border passenger traffic in both directions.

Pakistan continues to facilitate the movement of cargo trucks and containers into Afghanistan. On 16 May, the Government of Pakistan announced that the Torkham and Spin Boldak crossing points would open six days a week (except for Saturday) for commercial purposes. An unlimited number of trucks are being allowed to pass per day. 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** in a bid to contain the spread of the virus. Current nationwide lockdown measures are being reviewed. A number of provinces have already eased their lockdowns, including Kandahar, Hilmand and Ghazni, Badakhshan, Khost, Paktya, Kunduz and Takhar provinces. A number of provinces in the East of the country continue to enforce stricter lockdowns (Laghman, Kunar) and there are reports that greater physical distancing behaviours are now being observed in Nangarhar due to increases in numbers of people showing possible COVID-19 symptoms. Similarly, the Balkh provincial government decided to elevate Mazār-e Sharīf's previous quarantine levels to a full lockdown for a period of 10 days, effective from 31 May. Essential businesses (e.g. pharmacies, bakeries, vegetable shops, and general grocery stores) will be allowed to remain open. The rest of businesses/offices that were allowed to reopen on 10 May (e.g. electronics shops, toys shops, clothing shops, tailor shops, money exchange kiosks, barbershops etc.), will again be closed. A similar return to a complete quarantine has been implemented in Aybak City, Samangan Province, as of 30 May.

On 26 May, the government in Kabul issued a new plan to ease the COVID-19 lockdown, which outlines the use of an 'odds-and-evens' approach to allow people to head back to work and enjoy other activities after weeks of lockdown. According to the plan, starting from 27 May, private vehicles are being allowed to run on an odd-even basis, alternating days according to the last digit of their license plates. Moreover, vehicles with odd numbers as the last digit of their license plates will be allowed to drive on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays whereas those with even number plates will be allowed to drive on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays. Both even and odd numbers will be allowed to travel on Fridays. Humanitarian personnel, who have received permission to continue their duties amid the movement restrictions and under the odd-even rationing system, are encouraged to monitor the situation closely. Reports indicate that despite assurances from the Government that the lockdowns would not limit critical program movements of NGOs and the UN, the measures continue to impact the mobility of humanitarian organisations, delaying the delivery of assistance and affecting access to humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian partners remain active in responding to crises throughout the country and continue to urge the Government to employ a national approach to these movement issues so that individual negotiations are not required on a case-by-case basis. For additional information on access constraints, please see the [C-19 Access Impediment Report](#).

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) airbridge connecting Kabul and Doha is operating regularly on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. Flights into Doha accommodate transiting passengers only. This service is planned to continue until regular commercial international flights resume. The next flight was initially planned for Tuesday, 2 June but has now been postponed until Sunday, 7 June. UNAMA is also considering the possibility of planning a special flight to Frankfurt to support UNAMA personnel and the humanitarian community (UN Agency and NGO personnel, donors, diplomats) in Afghanistan. The flight will depart from Kabul to Frankfurt on 9 June and then return back to Kabul from Frankfurt the following day.

More Information – Links: **UPDATED**

WHO

- [WHO's latest information on COVID-19](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Global Dashboard](#)
- [How WHO is supporting refugees and migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Risk Communication and Community Engagement Guidance for Physical and Social Distancing](#)
- [Facing mental health fallout from the coronavirus pandemic](#)

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 \(available in English, Dari, Pashto\)](#)
- [Operational considerations for multisectoral mental health and psychosocial support programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Interim Guidance on Localisation and the COVID-19 Response](#)

UN and others

- [UN: Global Humanitarian Response Plan: COVID-19 \(April – December 2020\) – GHRP May Update](#)
- [Relief Web: COVID-19 Response Page](#)
- [OCHA: Asia Pacific COVID-19 - Humanitarian Data Portal](#)
- [UN: 'Verified' initiative aims to flood digital space with facts amid COVID-19 crisis](#)
- [Sphere: Palliative care - why it is crucial in any COVID-19 response](#)
- [Save the Children, UNICEF: Children in monetary poor households and COVID-19 \(technical note\)](#)
- [World Vision: COVID-19 & Disruptions to Education](#)
- [ICRC, IFRC: COVID-19 - The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Approach](#)
- [UNFPA: Joint Statement on Gender-Based Violence & COVID-19](#)
- [EC: Women's rights around the world in times of the coronavirus pandemic](#)
- [Global Fund: COVID-19 Threatens to Derail Fight Against HIV, TB and Malaria](#)
- [WFP: Targeting and prioritization of impoverished and food-insecure populations affected by COVID-19](#)
- [MSF: Unregulated market for personal protective equipment puts lives at risk](#)
- [RedR UK: Covid-19 Learning Needs Assessment](#)
- [IFRC: COVID-19 outbreak \(3-Months Update\)](#)

- [Logistics Cluster, WFP: COVID-19 – Cargo Entry Point Update](#)
- [IOM: Films Fight Xenophobia, Movies Counter Misinformation about Migrants](#)
- [ICRC: The COVID crisis is becoming a protection crisis](#)
- [FEWS NET: Global Food Security Alert](#)
- [ESCAP: UN Seeks To Build Transport And Trade Resilience In Wake Of COVID-19](#)
- [World Vision: How do we protect children caught up in war and a pandemic?](#)
- [Plan International: Periods in a Pandemic Menstrual hygiene management in the time of COVID-19](#)
- [UNHCR: Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion - COVID-19](#)
- [UN Women: Gender Alert on COVID-19 Afghanistan \(issue VI\)](#)
- [UN Women: UN Women's response to COVID-19](#)
- [UNHCR: Asia and the Pacific COVID-19 External Update](#)
- [UNICEF \(South Asia\): COVID-19 Situation Report No. 12](#)
- [FEWS NET: Key Message Update \(Afghanistan\)](#)

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