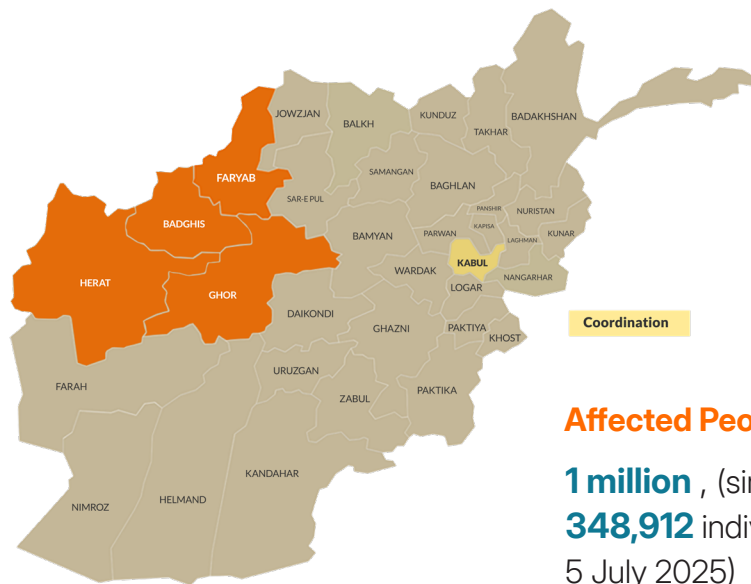


West Afghanistan Forced Returnees Response (WAFRR)

Situation Report 01 | Date of report: 25 June - 6 July 2025

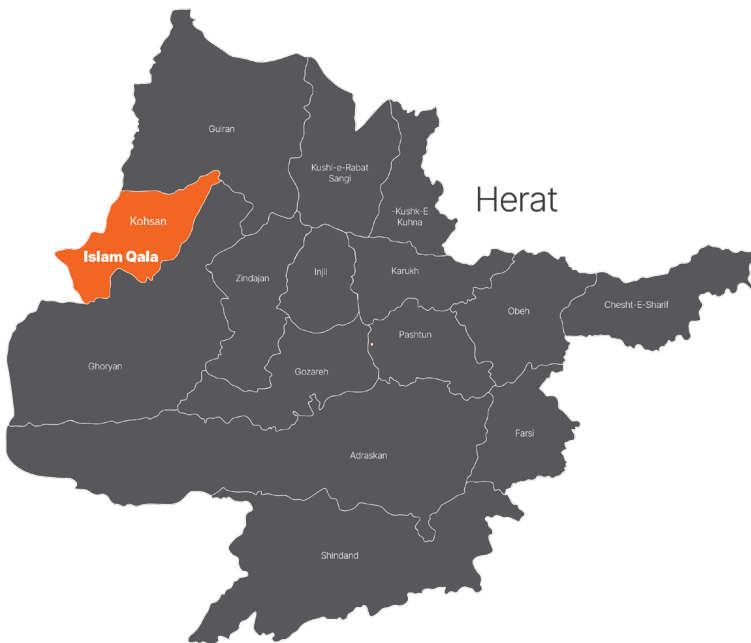


Response Model: Cat II National Response
Duration: Six months

Affected People

1 million , (since the beginning of 2025)
348,912 individuals (between 1 June and 5 July 2025)

Current Locations of Emergency
Afghanistan - Herat – Islam Qala
Border



People reached in the first 12 days of the response:

2,549 individuals, (1,643 men, 829 women, 43 boys & 34 girls)



Funding Status

Funding Target (USD):	4,700,000
Funding Achieved PNS	256,000



Humanitarian Situation Overview

Afghanistan is facing one of the world's most severe and complex humanitarian crises. Over half of the population—approximately 23 million people—are in need of humanitarian assistance due to a combination of conflict, economic collapse, prolonged drought, high food insecurity, and widespread displacement. The situation has been further exacerbated in 2025 by a sharp increase in the number of Afghans returning from neighbouring countries—more than 1.2 million Afghans have returned or been forced to return from Iran and Pakistan this year alone. These returns are placing immense pressure on already overstretched services, especially in border provinces and areas of high return.

The crisis of returnees from Iran has escalated dramatically in recent months. Between 1 January and 29 June 2025, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), recorded 714,572 Afghan returnees from Iran. A record-breaking 256,000 people crossed the border in June alone, with over 43,000 returnees recorded on 1 July, the highest daily total this year. Based on World Vision's need assessment, 90% of returnees were forced to return. Return movements intensified following a 20 March deadline issued by the Iranian government requiring all undocumented Afghans to leave the country and were further accelerated by political tensions in the region, including the June conflict between Iran and Israel.

There has also been a significant demographic shift in returnee profiles. Where previous months saw mainly single young men returning, recent weeks have seen a surge in families crossing the border—many with women, children, and elderly relatives.

Needs

Many returning families are highly vulnerable when they arrive, lacking shelter, food, and access to basic services such as healthcare and safe water. Needs at the border are acute, with thousands requiring immediate multi-sectoral assistance, including protection and livelihood support.

Our needs assessment reveals that 51% of returnees are sleeping on the streets, underscoring the urgent need for shelter at the zero-point border. However, the humanitarian response remains severely under-resourced. Due to funding constraints, current capacity can support only a small fraction of those in need. Border facilities and reception centres are overwhelmed, and agencies have been forced to divert resources from other critical operations to address the surge in returns. Meanwhile, the needs that drove many Afghans to migrate to Iran in the first place remain, and home communities are not well-placed to sustain substantial numbers of returning people in need of support. In many parts of rural western Afghanistan, where World Vision operates, 'working age' (13 years and over) males have been working in Iran in huge numbers. The pace and scale of arrivals continue to exceed available resources, leaving thousands without timely support and increasing the risk of exploitation, protection incidents, and deepening poverty for both returnees and host communities.

Given these challenges, humanitarian organisations are urgently calling for increased international support to scale up the response and prevent a further deterioration of the already fragile situation. Without additional funding and coordination, Afghanistan will struggle to absorb the growing number of returnees and meet their basic needs.

World Vision Afghanistan Response



Protection

World Vision Afghanistan (WVA) continues to provide essential protection services for vulnerable returnees—particularly women, children, and persons with disabilities—at key border entry points. WVA has established Help Desk and a Call Centre at Islam Qala, enabling returnees to access real-time information, service referrals, and communication support.

Between 25 June and 6 July, a total of **2,281 individuals** (1,560 males and 721 females) accessed Call Centre services. This included free national and international calling services, internet and Wi-Fi allowing families to reconnect and receive updates about available services at their destination.

Trained staff at the Help Desks also guide returnees to critical services such as registration, food and water assistance, health facilities, toilets, and hygiene resources—ensuring they are supported at every step of their journey. The aim is to foster a safe and welcoming environment where returnees can begin rebuilding their lives with dignity, safety, and hope.

Given the emergency planned response to returnee, protection interventions include:

- Psychological First Aid (PFA) sessions and distribution of PFA kits
- Structured parenting sessions for caregivers of vulnerable children
- Distribution of dignity kits for women and adolescent girls

In areas of destinations, WVA will roll out early recovery well-being interventions as part of reintegration support. These include:

- Case management, including Individual Protection Assistance (IPA)
- Parenting education and group psychosocial support (PSS) sessions
- Referral and coordination with specialised child well-being actors to ensure sustained care for high-risk returnees.
- Establishment of Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) offering psychosocial support, play-based activities, and referral services for children at border points



Education

As part of its reintegration efforts in areas of return, WV Afghanistan is planning to strengthen Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) through strategic collaboration with local partners. Recognising the vital role early learning plays in the recovery and resilience of displaced children, WV Afghanistan will partner with vetted community-based organisations to establish and rehabilitate ECCD centres in high-return communities.

These centres will provide safe, age-appropriate learning environments for children aged 3 to 6 years, equipped with essential learning and play materials, hygiene kits, and basic infrastructure upgrades such as classroom cooling systems to support a healthy learning atmosphere.

This locally led, community-based approach aims to ensure sustainability, promote local ownership, and maintain continuity of early education during the reintegration phase—giving returnee children a better foundation for lifelong learning and development.



WASH

World Vision Afghanistan's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector continues to coordinate closely with stakeholders and the WASH Cluster to assess and respond to lifesaving WASH needs among returnees. As an immediate measure to ensure access to safe drinking water, the team conducted rapid water quality testing and surveillance at the reception point—where returnees undergo documentation before being dispatched to the collection centre. The results confirmed that the water being provided met all safety standards, with no contamination detected across tested parameters. These results comply with both World Health Organization (WHO) and Afghanistan National Standards Authority (ANSA) guidelines.

Planned interventions under a crisis modifier project include:

- Distribution of hygiene and dignity kits to 500 families
- Solid waste management at the reception centre through the installation of waste bins
- Rehabilitation of damaged water points
- Hygiene and environmental awareness sessions

In parallel, mobilisation is underway for early recovery interventions in areas of return. These will focus on:

- Rehabilitation and construction of new water systems
- Basic sanitation services
- Climate-resilient WASH adaptation
- Behavioural change and environmental awareness activities

These efforts aim to ensure both immediate and long-term access to safe water and improved hygiene for vulnerable returnee populations.

Health & Nutrition

To address urgent health needs at the point of entry in Islam Qala, WV Afghanistan has deployed four doctors and four nurses to support outpatient therapeutic services for returnees, delivering critical care, including the treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases, management of infections, and general healthcare support for vulnerable populations.

WV Afghanistan has also donated an essential medical package to its local partner, the Agency for Assistance and Development of Afghanistan (ADAA), which operates a health facility at the border.

To strengthen primary healthcare service delivery and meet the rising needs of returnees, WV Afghanistan is working in close coordination with the Health and Nutrition Cluster, UNICEF, WHO, the Department of Public Health (DoPH), and other key actors. Current efforts include exploring the activation of an Emergency Referral System to ensure critical cases are managed effectively, as well as the establishment of a breastfeeding corner at the Point of Entry (PoE) to support maternal and child health.

Food Security, Livelihoods

WV Afghanistan's food security and livelihood (FSL) sector is coordinating with stakeholders under the emergency and durable workstream to facilitate targeted, life-saving, and early recovery livelihood interventions.

As part of its emergency response, WV Afghanistan aims to provide multi-purpose cash assistance to 10,000 of the most vulnerable returnees at their areas of destination (AoD). Based on recent assessments and WV Afghanistan's expertise, cash-based interventions are the preferred modality.

This approach offers households the flexibility to meet their immediate priorities, including food, transportation costs, housing rent, hygiene essentials, education, and other urgent needs

Cash assistance is efficient, quick to deploy, and leverages functional markets where essential commodities and services are accessible at fair prices.

Beyond immediate relief assistance, WV Afghanistan proposes early recovery interventions tailored to facilitate sustainable livelihoods and a smooth transition to self-reliance. Recognising that returnees with limited or no access to productive assets require targeted support, the following initiatives are prioritised, and WV Afghanistan aims to deliver.

- **Vocational Skills Training:** Targeting 500 households, with a focus on youth and women, this programme will provide market-relevant skills through a combination of theoretical and practical training. Hands-on production activities, coupled with job placement support, including the distribution of post-graduation toolkits and facilitation of market linkages, aiming to promote rapid income generation.
- **Small-Scale Business Development Support:** 500 returnees with existing skills but limited capital or unfamiliarity with local markets will receive tailored training in business planning, market linkages, and access to startup capital. This initiative aims to empower skilled returnees to establish small businesses aligned with local demand, thereby fostering resilience and stimulating local economies.
- **Cash-for-Work and Livelihood Asset Rehabilitation:** For 3,000 returnees lacking prior skills or capital, WV Afghanistan proposes cash-for-work schemes focusing on restoring livelihood assets, particularly irrigation infrastructure, to address water scarcity and drought impacts. These activities will generate immediate income and contribute to long-term water resource management and community resilience.

Post Disaster Needs Assessment

Post-Disaster Needs Assessment at Islam Qala Border Highlights Urgent Returnee Needs

To align its response to the needs of Afghan returnees from Iran, WV Afghanistan conducted a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment at the Islam Qala (Zero Point) border crossing in Herat province.

The assessment aimed to evaluate the immediate living conditions, vulnerabilities, and priority needs of returnee households—particularly in the areas of food security, health, protection, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)—as well as their intended provinces of settlement.

Using a rapid data collection methodology, structured questionnaires were administered to a representative sample of 300 returnee households, with 78% of respondents being male and 22% female.

Key findings include

- Only 38% of households reported having sufficient food, while nearly 15% faced severe shortages. Around half of respondents reported consuming only two meals per day.
- Health concerns are widespread, with households reporting high incidences of diarrhoea, respiratory infections, and mental health issues. Nearly 30% reported limited or no access to health services.
- Shelter remains a critical concern, with 51% living on the streets or in temporary camps, and 25% considering their current shelter unsafe.
- WASH services remain inadequate, with gaps in access to sanitary pads, oral hygiene items, and other basic supplies.
- Protection risks are prominent, including issues related to elder care, child protection, gender-based violence, and interrupted access to education.

Although 65% of households reported receiving some form of assistance, the assessment underscores the urgent need for coordinated, multi-sectoral interventions to address ongoing vulnerabilities and support the safe and sustainable reintegration of returnees into their communities of origin or intended destinations.

World Vision Afghanistan requires immediate funding of USD 4.6 million to provide lifesaving assistance and scale up medium to longer term support for 150,000 displaced individuals and families, including:

- expanding on our small helpdesk facility at the Islam Qala border crossing in Herat province
- providing emergency care and referrals for primary health and nutrition services (including breastfeeding centres and medicine)
- delivering food and livelihood assistance (in kind and cash)
- offering transportation assistance
- ensuring access to safe and clean water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities
- providing psychosocial support services and safe spaces and protection services for women and children.



Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

World Vision Afghanistan (WVA) ensures accountability to returnees and affected communities by implementing a comprehensive Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM). Key measures include:

- Information Sharing: Communities receive information about the organization, AAP/CFRM system, and projects through banners, business cards, help desks, and staff communication.
- Community Participation: Feedback and complaint channels are available for communities to report issues, including misconduct or SEA. WVA promotes inclusive participation, ensuring women, children, and persons with disabilities are consulted and engaged.
- Community Consultation: WVA conducts FGDs and meetings to understand communities' preferred information needs, channels, and languages.
- Feedback Collection & Action: Trained staff collect and analyse complaints and feedback through Digital Accountability Platform (DAP), using various channels (WVA hotline, AWAAZ helpline, boxes, help desks, direct contact). Complaints are referred according to the AAP protocol and tracked through the WV CFRM matrix.

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Two rounds of information provision have been conducted for returnees by the AAP team. In addition, two Communities' and Feedback Response Mechanism (CFRM) banners have been installed at Help Desk centres, and CFRM business cards have been distributed among returnees to raise awareness of available feedback channels. Regular monitoring visits will be carried out by the MEAL team, and project staff will continue to deliver key AAP/CFRM messages to returnees on a daily basis to ensure accountability and engagement.

AWAAZ

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Number of
Staff Engaged
in the Response :

Expatriate: 6 | Nationals: 30+



Communication Resource

Multimedia stories:

- <https://storyhub.wvi.org/Share/n0035pbuqsn62851kokedlp52734412i>
- [Inside the growing crisis of Afghan returnees at the Iran border | World Vision International](#)

Video: [What Awaits Them in Afghanistan? Inside the Forced Return Crisis at Islam Qala | Afghanistan | World Vision International](#)

Press Release: [World Vision declares emergency response at Iran-Afghanistan border | Afghanistan | World Vision International](#)

Media Engagement

Al Jazeera : <https://storyhub.wvi.org/Share/nu6113iix3tdbjsg170582im8m3hg62v>

Associated Press : <https://apnews.com/article/afghan-iran-refugees-war-deportation-b58f3772e3e50a722a9f0b17d8ee1f9a>

The Independent: [Thousands of Afghans are fleeing Iran every day to escape war and deportation | The Independent](#)

Al Jazeera: [Nowhere to run: The Afghan refugees caught in Israel's war on Iran | Israel-Iran conflict News | Al Jazeera](#)

Deutsche Welle: [هزاران مهاجر افغان به خاطر جنگ ایران را ترک می کنند - DW - ۱۴۰۴/۳/۳۱](#)

Reliefweb: [Inside the growing crisis of Afghan returnees at the Iran border - Afghanistan | ReliefWeb](#)

Radio Liberty: [روند اخراج افغانها از تهران شدید تر شده است](#)

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One-year-old Ruqia receives treatment for diarrhoea at a World Vision Afghanistan-supported health centre in Dolina district, Ghor province. In communities like Farah Road, where clean water is scarce, children are especially vulnerable to waterborne diseases caused by drinking contaminated water.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Thamindri De Silva
National Director
World Vision Afghanistan
Thamindride_silva@wvi.org

Blerina Lako
Operations Director
World Vision Afghanistan
blerina_lako@wvi.org

Ria Mohammad Rehaa
Communications Manager
World Vision Afghanistan
Riamohammad_rehaa@wvi.org

