

4 years later: Afghanistan since the return of the Taliban

August 15 marks four years since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan. Amid funding cuts and international disengagement, the population of Afghanistan faces a dire humanitarian situation.

Background

Four years after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the population is trapped in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. International aid, which has been essential in alleviating immense humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, is now dwindling. Since August 2021, Afghanistan has witnessed the return of over 6.5 million Afghans, with an additional 3 million expected to return by the end of 2025. With half the population of Afghanistan already in need of humanitarian assistance, the scale of returns poses a risk of needs on the ground exceeding organizations' response capacity as humanitarian efforts remain hampered by limited funding, access constraints, and gender-based restrictions.

NRC's work in Afghanistan

For over two decades, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has remained a dedicated and reliable organization in Afghanistan, providing critical humanitarian

assistance to displacement-affected communities. NRC delivers life-saving support across multiple thematic areas, including legal assistance, shelter and settlements, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), livelihoods and food security, education, and protection. In 2024, NRC reached over 215,961 individuals with humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.

Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan:

- 22.9 Afghans are in need of humanitarian assistance ([UN](#))
- 1.4 million people have returned or been forced to return to Afghanistan so far this year ([UNHCR](#))
- So far in 2025, donor countries have only provided 26 per cent of the money needed according to the humanitarian response plan ([UNOCHA](#)), and several donors have announced drastic funding cuts ([NRC](#))

From Silence to Strength Through Education:

In Akbarabad, Sar-e-Pul, 10-year-old Marwa once lived in fear and silence. With no school nearby, she had no access to education. When NRC established Community-Based Education (CBE) in her village, everything changed. Initially too shy to introduce herself, Marwa slowly blossomed into one of the class' most eager learners. With the support of Better Learning Program (BLP) and psychosocial activities, Marwa overcame her shyness and found her voice.



Photo credit: Sebghatullah Yurtsever

“Before school, I was afraid to speak. Now, I want to be a teacher so I can help other children learn like me” says Marwa with determination

US Engagement & Recommendations

Due to suspensions and cuts in funding from the United States, NRC has been forced to end some of its programming in Afghanistan, including community resource centres and shelter and livelihoods support. The closure of programs has led to the closure of two provincial offices and necessitated the termination of dozens of contracts, including both international and Afghan staff. NRC calls on Congress and the US government to renew their commitment to meeting urgent humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. NRC also urgently asks:

- For the international community to engage diplomatically with host countries to maintain their generous, longstanding support for Afghan refugees, providing protection and adhering to UNHCR's non-return advisory.
- For donors to renew their support and solidarity with Afghan returnees during this critical time, when the international support to Afghanistan remains limited. This includes provision of funding for urgent humanitarian response at border points and areas of return, addressing critical needs such as legal assistance and shelter

Learn more about NRC's work in Afghanistan below:

<https://www.nrc.no/countries/asia/afghanistan>

Contact: nrcusa@nrc.no for additional information or questions



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