

NRC's operations in **Afghanistan**

Humanitarian overview

Forty years of conflict continue to deeply affect Afghanistan. Conflict-induced civilian deaths reached a record high in 2018, with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documenting 10,993 civilian casualties, whilst the first quarter of 2019 already saw 1,773 casualties. In addition, over 100,000 Afghans are currently conflict-displaced, whilst an additional 225,00 people are displaced due to a drought crisis.

Against this backdrop, thousands of Afghan refugees spontaneously return or are forced to return from Pakistan and Iran each year. According to IOM, 157,252 Afghans have spontaneously returned or have been deported from Iran so far this year, with up to 570,000 returnees expected over 2019. Only four per cent of these have received assistance, whilst 80 per cent of 8,829 undocumented returnees from Pakistan have received assistance.

Despite high levels of needs, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is only 17.4 per cent funded. With the exception of the Protection Cluster, no cluster has received more than 20 per cent of the funding according to the Financial Tracking Service.

NRC's operation

NRC Afghanistan assists internally displaced Afghans and Pakistani refugees. Our priorities are twofold. In the aftermath of violence and disaster, we give immediate, emergency assistance. Where the effects of long-term displacement have taken hold, we work to find lasting solutions.

Our regional and cross-border programmes address and relieve the effects of the conflict, as do our emergency teams. We place significant importance on helping displaced people in hard-to-access areas and the empowerment of women.

NRC Afghanistan

Established	2003
International staff	26
National staff	1,302



NRC Afghanistan

Country office

Kabul

Areas of operation

Balkh, Faryab, Herat, Kabul, Nangarhar, Kunar, Kandahar, Khost, Sar-e-pul, Kunduz, Badghis, Laghman, Nimroz, Parwan, Zabul, Uruzgan



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Camp management

NRC uses Camp Management approaches to enhance communication with communities, community participation, and support to inclusive coordination in both urban non-camp environments and within informal settlements and spontaneous self-settled camps. Our Camp Management teams:

- establish and run community centres and outreach information sessions where displaced Afghans can access information about services and be referred for assistance;
- establish and support neighbourhood/settlement/camp committees who disseminate information and solve problems in their communities;
- support local coordination mechanisms, including through facilitation of meetings between relevant stakeholders to address needs and gaps;
- monitor protection issues, threats, and hazards in sites and neighbourhoods, and report these to relevant agencies and fora.

Education

NRC Afghanistan specialises in Education in Emergencies (EiE), for school age children into protection

and safe learning environments with enrolling to nearest government schools, providing Community Based Education (CBE) as part of Alternative Education (AE), Bridging Programme (BP) with establishing language and literacy classes. Our teams:

- increase accessibility to schools in rural areas transitioning into city suburbs;
- train teachers and informal instructors;
- help marginalised out-of-school children to catch up through accelerated and formal integration classes, bridging programme including language and literacy classes;
- work with the Ministry of Education to increase the capacity of the Afghan government to respond to the urgent educational needs of displaced children, as well as those returned from neighbour countries with constructing new schools and providing rehabilitation through school improvement plan.

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

ICLA provides information and legal advice to displaced Afghans on a wide range of legal matters within two thematic areas: 1) housing, land and property (HLP); and 2) legal identity, including civil documentation (LCD).

Our ICLA staff:

- visit communities to conduct information sessions;
- outline tailored instructions on how displaced people can claim their rights through tailored one-on-one legal counselling;
- provide direct legal assistance through the formal justice and administrative system to support people claim and exercise their rights;
- use traditional dispute resolution mechanisms to resolve legal disputes, housing, land and property rights cases;
- provide information and follow up referrals to help people access essential services and support in complex protection cases;
- conduct research and assessments to better understand displaced people's HLP and LCD challenges;
- advocate for displaced people's HLP and property rights as the co-lead of the HLP Task Force.

Livelihoods and food security

Almost half of the Afghan population (16 million people) is considered chronically food insecure, due to high unemployment and depressed wage rates, driven by the worsening economic situation, natural disasters affecting local food production (droughts and pests), and low agricultural productivity. In addition, 4.5 million people are estimated to be at risk of acute food insecurity and in need of direct food assistance in 2019, primarily due to conflict and drought. Of these, close to 900,000 are expected to be displaced. Our teams:

- provide emergency food assistance to families displaced by drought or conflict and now living in IDP camps in Badghis;
- help people start small businesses through business skill mentoring programmes and start-up cash grants – focusing on women and youth;
- partner with private businesses to deliver demand-driven, high quality vocational skills training, along with post-training support to help graduates set up their own business or get hired by companies;

- support private companies to grow their business, thereby generating sustainable salaried employment;
- establish vegetable gardens and orchards in schools supported by NRC's Education programmes, to improve the nutritional awareness of students and their parents.

Shelter and settlements

Due to drought, conflict, and poor economic conditions, many Afghans live in inadequate and partially damaged housing. This may mean they are overcrowded, living in conditions where they are unable to stand within the shelter due to low walls, have rooms where there is no glass in the windows, have limited privacy and may be improperly protected from climatic elements. This may particularly affect women who often spend more time inside the house due to cultural reasons. Our shelter teams, whilst working side-by-side with our WASH experts. We:

- support the construction of one- and two-room shelters for families with a community-driven approach;
- build schools as well as additional classrooms for existing schools and provide temporary classrooms;
- collaborate with the community to construct shelters through a cash-based programme, providing cash assistance in exchange for constructing shelters;
- advocate for shelters to be built to better endure natural hazards;
- upgrade shelter to better withstand natural hazards and climate;
- provide temporary cash assistance to cover basic rent for the most vulnerable;
- provide sealing off kits to families with damaged or poor-quality shelters.
- provide cash-for-rent to cover their basic need for accommodation and pathway to transitional solution.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) promotion

Water, sanitation, and hygiene practices are not a norm in many parts of Afghanistan, largely due to the lack of infrastructure and behaviour. In addition to this, Afghanistan is

among the countries which are prone to climate change effects. In many of our WASH activities, our WASH experts closely work with the shelter and education teams to promote integration and safe programming. Our WASH teams:

- provide emergency water supply and sanitation facilities and supporting good hygiene practices for affected vulnerable populations;
- construct households improved latrines and access to safe water through community water points;
- provide safe drinking water points, access to improved sanitation, hand washing facilities in schools, and establish grey water filtrations in schools for waste water management;
- distribute hygiene kits and train families on how to use the hygiene kits through hygiene education promotion in communities and schools.

Gender and Protection

Women, in particular, face many barriers in Afghanistan. Our teams integrate gender considerations in our programming:

- NRC is the only organisation in Afghanistan to work

for the widespread acceptance of women's HLP rights;

- our all-female shelter team reaches female-headed households and widows – the most vulnerable part of the population we serve;
- protection mainstreaming, psychological first aid, and basic gender-based violence (GBV) trainings are provided for non-protection field staff country-wide in order to enhance understanding of protection principles and practices and be better able to make safe and relevant referrals of sensitive cases;
- NRC reflected gender-related focus in its new three-year Protection Strategy with a commitment to enhance understanding on impact of displacement on gender dynamics with the ultimate aim of developing context-specific initiatives aimed at reducing exposure of women and girls to protection threats caused by displacement.

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