

NRC's operations in Afghanistan

Humanitarian overview

Decades of war, political turmoil, chronic poverty, recurrent disasters such as drought, earthquakes, and flooding, as well as an economic and financial crisis have devastated Afghanistan and left it on a trajectory of overall decline. The UN estimates that 24.4 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance – this is more than half of the country's population. Most Afghans now live well below the poverty line, with almost 90% of the population facing insufficient food consumption.

Since the Taliban authorities took over Afghanistan, the formal economy is reported to have lost USD \$5 billion and is on a declining trend, losing in 12 months what had taken 10 years to accumulate. International sanctions continue to affect the functioning of key financial institutions and the private sector. In addition, widespread unemployment, currency deflation and increasing food costs continue to drive humanitarian needs.

There are around four million internally displaced people living in precarious situations across the country and thousands more have been forced to leave their homes over the last year due to economic deprivation, persecution, violence, and natural disasters.

NRC's operation

NRC Afghanistan seeks to protect and assist vulnerable women, girls, boys and men who are affected by displacement. NRC provides assistance to meet immediate humanitarian needs, prevent further displacement, and contribute to durable solutions.

We implement programming across all of NRC's core competencies, integrating protection, advocacy, and an emergency response team to support preparedness and response.

NRC Afghanistan

Established	2003
International staff	20
National staff	1,564



NRC Afghanistan

Country office

Kabul

Areas of operation

Badghis, Balkh, Faryab, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Khost, Kunar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Paktika, Paktya, Sar-e-pul, Uruzgan, and Zabul



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Protection from violence

Protection has four strategic pillars: (1) community safety and violence prevention, (2) camp management, (3) specialized protection services, and (4) thought leadership and influence. The aim of bringing these four strategic pillars together with their unique core activities through a single core competency is to better support individuals, households, and communities who are negatively impacted by protection problems, conflict, and displacement.

In Afghanistan, protection teams implement activities aiming to prevent or mitigate the consequences of protection problems on civilian populations. These activities are within two strategic areas: specialized protection services and civilian self-protection – through case management, protection risk reduction trainings for communities and facilitating referrals for access to life-saving humanitarian assistance.

Our teams also run community response centres for humanitarian actors and the targeted community to serve as a one-shop stop where displaced Afghans can access services from more than one actor.

Within the humanitarian coordination space, we co-coordinate the Afghanistan Protection Cluster, and co-leads the Risk Communication and Community Engagement Working Group and CCCM Working Group.

Education

We specialise in education in emergencies for displacement-affected children, adolescents and youth. Our teams endeavour to improve access to quality, inclusive, and protective education relevant to our beneficiaries' cognitive, emotional, and psychosocial development. The education teams provide non-formal education (accelerated education, community-based education) for out-of-school children and support their transition into formal basic education.

In 2023, the education portfolio will include a special focus on youth. In addition to providing youth education and training focusing on Youth Social Engagement Pathway, we will support youth with life skills, basic skills and recreational activities; peer-to-peer or youth-led activities. We will also retain our emergency response within education by working closely with the Ministry of Education to respond to the urgent

educational needs of displaced and vulnerable host community out-of-school children, and provide WASH and rehabilitation support through school improvement plans.

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

ICLA provides information, counselling and legal assistance to displacement-affected Afghans on a wide range of legal matters within four thematic areas: housing, land and property (HLP); legal identity documentation (LID); employment law and procedure (ELP); and access to essential services. Our ICLA staff conduct information sessions on legal rights in communities, NRC community centres and transit centres run by other agencies, and basic rights to refugee returnees at border points with Pakistan and Iran.

Staff also outline tailored instructions on how people can claim their rights through one-on-one legal counselling and provide direct legal assistance and full representation to enable people to claim and exercise their rights, including accessing legal identity documentation; resolving housing, land and property disputes; or claiming employment rights. By supporting justice actors with capacity-building training and mentorship, ICLA teams provide knowledge and skills to resolve disputes and facilitate access to rights. Our teams also conduct research and assessments to better understand displacement-affected people's challenges in claiming and exercising their rights. Through the HLP Taskforce and Protection Cluster, we advocate for displacement-affected people's housing, land and property rights as the co-lead of the HLP Taskforce within the Protection Cluster.

Livelihoods and food security

We work with vulnerable people affected by drought and conflict to ensure they have immediate and increased access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets basic needs and improves well-being. To reverse negative trends and build capacity of farmers and commu-

nity members, we support identified communities with improving food production systems and sustainable natural resource management practices, strengthening agricultural markets, and in-kind assistance when seed, agricultural and livestock market analysis shows that local market actors cannot provide needed goods and services.

We also support individuals with rehabilitating and investing in business development in support of stronger rural and agricultural market system linkages. With community members, we design safe and social inclusive interventions that enable women and people with disabilities to access and establish microbusiness activities and networks.

Shelter and settlements

The shelter response in Afghanistan is based three principal pillars: temporary shelter, transitional shelter, and transitional/permanent Infrastructure. To ensure timely and effective response during humanitarian crises, NRC will seek to preposition emergency shelter items and NFIs (especially during winterisation) to strategic safe and accessible locations in areas of high displacement. We also aim to sustain its rental assistance programme to assist vulnerable households that are under imminent threat of eviction – this intervention remains vital in mitigating unlawful evictions.

We will explore energy solutions that are environmentally friendly, hybrids with grid systems, as well as advocating for solutions aiming to reduce the carbon footprint. These solutions will be provided at household and community levels. The 2023 shelter strategy focuses on strengthening links with emergency, WASH, humanitarian access, ICLA, livelihood and protection for a holistic and informed response.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

We aim to improve the health of Afghan communities through access to safe water, sanitation, and public

health promotion and reducing the impact of public health risks. Protracted IDPs living in deteriorating conditions with limited or no WASH services will be targeted for the provision of new WASH facilities or upgrades to existing WASH facilities in informal settlements. Sustainable WASH interventions such as water resource management, sustainable sanitation options and positive hygiene behaviours are prioritised as part of community-led programming.

We also support in the construction, repair and maintenance of water supplies, latrines and bathing facilities, designed alongside affected communities and an understanding of protection risks. In 2023, we will also place a special focus on research and analysis of environmental impact and climate change, such as indiscriminate groundwater pumping, to inform overall programming.

Gender mainstreaming

Women have always faced barriers in Afghanistan and this situation has only worsened given recent events. Our teams integrate gender considerations in programming and strive to engage women in a meaningful way and providing them with safe access to adequate assistance and services.

We believe that humanitarian action cannot take place without women. NRC works to improve the acceptance of women's HLP rights. Our camp man-

agement team ensures that information dissemination responds to women's needs and engages them in community committees. The protection team does not provide specialised GBV services but makes sure to include a gender lens to its protection analysis to understand the specific risks women are facing and ensure that their voices on protection risk reduction activities at community level influence the actions.

Emergency response

We support IDPs, extremely vulnerable host communities and returnees devastated by extreme weather and conflict with access to humanitarian assistance.

We are scaling up our emergency operations to provide emergency humanitarian assistance across our operational areas through a broad set of measures including winterisation, emergency shelter response, non-food items, vulnerability assessments, capacity building and multi-purpose cash to support IDPs during displacement, when settling and integrating in a new place, and upon return.

We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:



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