

NRC's operations in Iran

Humanitarian overview

For the past 40 years, Iran has hosted one of the largest displaced populations with about 3.6 million Afghans in the country. Nearly 800,000 Afghans have renewable Amayesh cards and are considered de facto refugees; 540,000 hold valid Iranian visas and Afghan passports, and between 2-2.5 million are undocumented. Given the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, Iran has welcomed even more Afghans in 2021.

Iran's inclusive policies grant access for all Afghans to access primary health care and all Afghan children can study in Iranian public schools. Amayesh and visa holders are allowed to work in certain job categories. Despite the inclusive policies and support from the international community, Afghans still face challenges finding and retaining stable incomes. This affects their ability to secure housing, keep children in school, and could impact their ability to renew documentation and legal status on time.

The re-imposition of US sanctions on Iran in 2018 and the Covid-19 pandemic have further pressured Iran's economy, increasing the challenges faced by all Afghans in Iran.

Iran is also prone to natural disasters which can lead to displacement and destruction.

NRC's operation

Since 2012, NRC has been assisting displaced Afghans in Iran as well as their Iranian host communities. We work to improve protection and access to basic humanitarian services across ten provinces, and coordinate with NRC operations in Afghanistan.

Since April 2019, we have expanded operations to provide assistance to people affected by floods and since early 2020 we have significantly expanded our programmes to support the Covid-19 pandemic response.

Since 2021, NRC is working with humanitarian partners to assist the influx of new Afghan refugees who are in need of protection and basic services. NRC's programme in 2022 is focusing both on supporting the protracted refugee caseload and the new arrivals living in refugee settlements and in host communities.

NRC Iran

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|---------------------|------|
| Established | 2012 |
| International staff | 9 |
| National staff | 127 |



NRC Iran

Country office

Tehran

Areas of operation

Alborz, Kerman, Markazi, Razavi Khorasan, Semnan, Sistan and Baluchestan, South Khorasan, Tehran, Yazd, Hormozgan



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Covid-19 response

Our efforts have been focused on providing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions which include the provision of hygiene kits to households, cleaning and disinfection kits to schools and health posts, rehabilitation or establishing appropriate facilities in schools as well as critically needed handwashing stations.

We have also scaled up our cash assistance to vulnerable Afghans in order to support them during quarantine, to prevent further spread of the virus.

NRC Iran is expanding activities targeting the longer-term socio-economic impacts of the virus. This includes providing increased or diversified livelihood opportunities to affected families. Specific attention is also being paid to children who can't attend school and may be at risk of adopting negative coping mechanisms, such as child labour, in order to supplement the family income, or where the costs of continuing education (such as transportation or stationery) are too prohibitive for the family and children are at risk

of dropping out of school.

Despite the Covid-19 outbreak, and the challenges and adjustment required for programme implementation, NRC Iran has reached 55,232 unique beneficiaries from January to August 2020.

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH)

It is crucial that displaced Afghans in Iran as well as those affected by emergencies have access to clean water and adequate sanitation facilities. To ensure this, our WASH team:

- supports the Covid-19 pandemic response by distributing hygiene kits to households, cleaning and disinfection kits to schools and healthposts, and providing hand washing stations
- installs and repairs latrines, showers and hand washing facilities in public spaces such as settlements and schools, as well as in refugees shelters
- provides water, electricity and sewage connection to newly constructed shelter units in one of the

settlements

- offers hygiene promotion training for students and adults
- distributes hygiene kits to students and households to reinforce training and ensure behaviour change
- supports our emergency response team, including responding to the floods in January 2020 by distributing hygiene kits to affected Iranian and Afghan families

Education

In 2015, the Supreme Leader issued a decree through which all Afghan children are given access to education irrespective of their legal status in Iran. However, socio-economic and cultural barriers to the implementation of this decree remain. Our team offers:

- accelerated education programmes, with our partner the Literacy Movement Organization, through literacy and numeracy courses for out-of-school children to help them bridge the gap and enter school at the appropriate level
- school readiness programmes for children who have never been to school to support school enrolment
- life-skill courses for school students, parents, and teachers
- support to the formal education system by rehabilitating classrooms and expanding existing school infrastructure (including water and sanitation facilities), and providing essential education materials including school equipment and stationery
- certified soft skills training for youth to complement vocational training
- provide stationary and educational materials to pupils to facilitate their home-schooling when schools closed due to Covid-19

Shelter and settlements

Our shelter team works towards providing displaced

Afghans and those affected by emergencies with safe and suitable living conditions and addresses urgent shelter needs in settlements, urban, peri-urban and rural areas. Our team:

- provides/rehabilitates shelters and public infrastructure, including playgrounds, community centres, sport courts, etc.
- supports the expansion and rehabilitation of schools to provide safe and adequate educational spaces for many Afghan pupils
- constructs community centres designed to serve as hubs delivering services to Afghan and host communities
- provides training about basic housing maintenance practices and energy-saving techniques
- supports our emergency response through the distribution of basic household items

Livelihoods and food security

Our livelihoods and food security team explores ways to improve refugee and displaced families' livelihoods in Iran. In addition, we also provide emergency cash assistance to people affected by natural disasters and Covid-19 so they can meet their most pressing needs while preserving their livelihoods and not resorting to negative coping strategies. Our team:

- distributes multi-purpose cash through bank cards or bank transfers to cover basic household needs
- provides business grants and/or toolkits for small business owners to initiate and/or expand their activities
- collaborates with our education team to offer certified vocational and transferrable skills training including tailoring, construction, welding, electricity, hairdressing, plumbing and computer use
- establishes community income generating workshops

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

Our ICLA team supports Iran's displaced Afghan pop-

ulation in exercising their rights and making informed decisions. Our experts provide:

- information and counselling to improve access to essential services and maintaining legal status in Iran
- unconditional cash assistance to the most vulnerable to help them maintain legal residence, access identity and civil documentation, as well as essential services. Cash assistance is always complemented with information which helps Afghans decide on how to use it and how to address their most pressing protection concerns

- reliable information to Afghans considering a return to Afghanistan, on how to access identity and civil documentation and available services upon return, so that they can make informed decisions

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- Educate A Child, a global programme of the Education Above All Foundation
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)