

Afghanistan

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HIGHLIGHTS

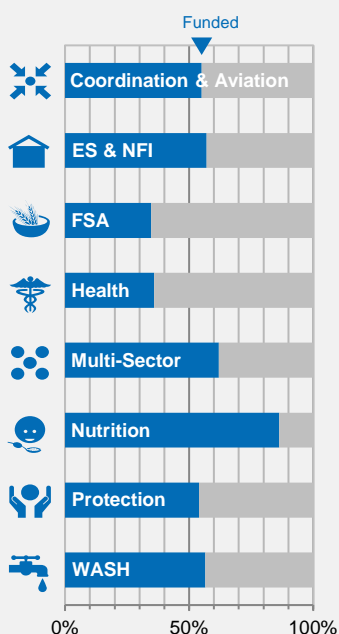
- WFP warns of \$30 million funding shortfall.
- CERF gives \$4 million to support refugees in Khost and Paktika.
- Milder winter predicted as Humanitarian community prepares for winter.

FUNDING

406 million
requested (US\$)

58% funded

FUNDING BY CLUSTER



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Refugees in Khost, Paktika brace for winter

Over a million people have been forced to flee their homes in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) since the start of a full scale military operation by the government of Pakistan in June 2014. As host families warn of insufficient food supplies, many refugees fear that they will not be able to go home to Pakistan before the onset of winter.

While the majority of families have remained in Pakistan, a significant number have fled to Afghanistan. As of 27 September, a total of 33,026 families (25,123 families in Khost; 7,903 families in Paktika) had been assessed by UNHCR. There are a reported 5,000 refugees in Spera district of Khost and an unconfirmed number of refugees in Paktika that have yet to be assessed.

Significant pressure has been placed on host communities, stretching already limited basic services. Priority humanitarian needs are food assistance, health care (including mental health support), mine clearance, shelter and water and sanitation services,¹ including preparatory distributions in view of the harsh oncoming winter, especially for families staying in the open.

With the onset of winter, UNHCR is working with key partners to support refugees. For most families, this will be the first time they have experienced sub-zero temperatures and there is an urgent need to provide shelter and clothing to this vulnerable population.

In August 2014, the UNHCR Refugee Response Plan estimated an overall requirement of \$25 million to meet the most acute needs of the refugee population (July-December 2014). CERF contribution of US\$4 million will help cover some of the funding shortfall expected in meeting winterization needs of the population. However, additional funding is urgently needed to sustain the response throughout the winter period and into 2015.



Credit: OCHA / Christophe Verhellen
Winter distribution in Kudekistan settlement
Kabul, Afghanistan

¹UNHCR Khost and Paktika Update No. 28, 28 August 2014

IRC raises alarm on winter needs for refugee families

"We came here with nothing and we have no idea how long we will stay. We were in such a rush to get out we left everything behind"

As the first wave of refugees began arriving from Pakistan in June, the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) well-established presence in Khost province meant they had access and resources in place to be one of the first responders to the crisis. To date, IRC has reached over 4,000 families in Mandozai, Nadir Shah Kot and Tani districts with emergency shelter, non-food items (NFI) and WASH support.

According to initial surveys, most refugees are sheltering with host families. However, lack of space and cultural sensitivities mean that many refugees sleep outside in unroofed courtyards and lack access to adequate clean water, shelter and food.

"We came here with nothing and we have no idea how long we will stay. We were in such a rush to get out we left everything behind," said Lal who fled his home in NWA with most of his family. Lal's mother was not well enough to make the arduous journey along with the rest of the family. She has since died.

"No cars would take us so we travelled to Khost by foot. The women's slippers were quickly torn and many had to travel barefoot, which left them with terrible blisters. We carried water in bottles but the adults dared not drink any, in case the children might die of thirst." he said. Lal and his family now live in an IRC-supplied tent in Khost province.

As temperatures begin to plummet, the ability of responders to support both host and displaced communities will be an issue of critical concern.



Credit: IRC
Khost, Afghanistan
IRC distribution center

WFP funding gap threatens food supplies

\$30 million funding shortfall threatens WFP food supplies in Afghanistan

The World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that a \$30 million funding shortfall is threatening its food supplies in Afghanistan. Gaps in funding have forced the agency to cut rations for up to 1 million people in Afghanistan.

WFP Afghanistan started 2014 with strong support from donors, securing nearly 60 per cent of its \$156 million request by April. However, no major new contributions have been forthcoming since then. Available resources have been stretched even further by the response to unplanned emergency and recovery needs, including large-scale flooding in the north and significant population displacement from Pakistan's North Waziristan Agency.

Recent contributions from the United States of \$2.5 million and the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of \$2 million will allow delivery of food assistance to displaced populations in Khost and Paktika until late November, where emergency food rations were reduced from 2,100 kcal/person/day to 1,500 kcal representing a 25 per cent reduction.

Gaps in funding have forced the agency to cut rations for up to 1 million people in Afghanistan.

A contribution from the Government of Australia will enable purchase of 4,100 MT in food commodities. WFP plans to use the Government of Afghanistan's Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR) for the required wheat.

WFP will support an estimated 215,000 people by prepositioning approximately 5,600 MT of mixed food items in 63 districts covering 14 provinces.

With the onset of winter some six weeks away, WFP will not be able to preposition food for winter this year for life-saving activities in approximately 54 districts that are impossible to access in winter. This will affect about 750,000 beneficiaries.

At the time of this writing, WFP was unable to respond to the food needs of other conflict-displaced populations in southern Afghanistan.

WFP is appealing to the Strategic Response Allocation Committee (SRAC) for consideration and is exploring other funding options in order to avert drastic implications on the food and nutrition needs of communities particularly until the end of winter season in March 2015.

Milder temperatures predicted as work begins for winter support

As the humanitarian community prepares to support vulnerable populations in Afghanistan, weather forecasts predict a milder than average winter. However, winter puts an added strain on vulnerable people already struggling with displacement, inadequate temporary housing and limited access to health care.

While this winter is expected to have less snowfall and temperatures above the seasonal average, populations most at risk are being prioritized for assistance. These include refugees, particularly in Khost and Paktika, internally displaced people, young children in 13 provinces, those living in the Kabul informal settlements, and people living in the most food insecure areas which traditionally become inaccessible in winter.

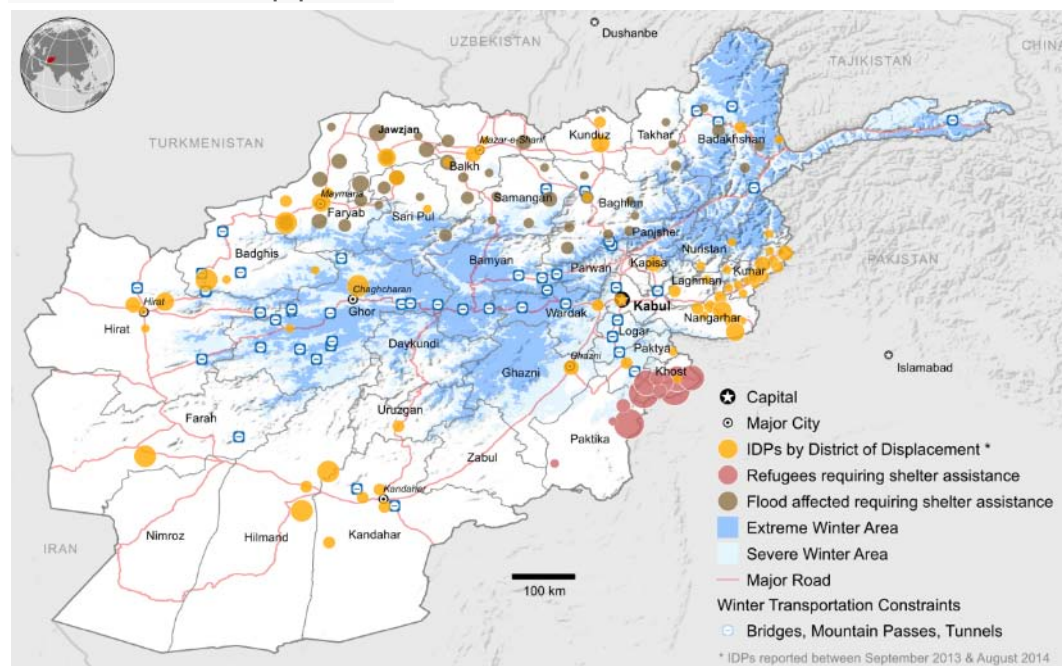


Credit: OCHA / Christophe Verhellen
Laborers queuing to collect the items. Winter distribution in Kudekistan settlement. Kabul, Afghanistan



Credit: ORCD
Displaced population from North Waziristan queuing to receive non-food and food items provided by UNHCR and WFP in Bermal District.

Distribution of vulnerable populations



Source: OCHA

Pneumonia and hypothermia are two of the main life-threatening challenges of extreme winter conditions. Peaking in January, each year pneumonia accounts for the highest number of disease related deaths. The Health Cluster plans to assist 1.3 million vulnerable people in 116 districts of 24 provinces. Kits have been prepositioned to provide approximately 700,000 people with basic emergency health care, perform 1,800 surgical procedures using trauma kits, and treat 100,000 cases of pneumonia and 2,500 cases of diarrhea.

UNICEF's winter response will target 40,000 families, comprised mostly of children under 18 years in 13 provinces (Badakhshan, Bamyam, Baghlan, Daikundi, Ghazni, Ghor, Khost, Nuristan, Paktika, Panjsher, SarePul, Takhar and Wardak). UNICEF has long term agreements in place with local suppliers that allow winter items to be sourced locally and delivered to beneficiaries quickly.

UNHCR plans to assist 2,700 displaced families and 3,470 returnee families through a harsh winter.

Working alongside partners, UNHCR's winter interventions will prioritize refugees, particularly in Khost and Paktika with distributions tents, blankets and warm clothing. Working alongside partners, Subject to availability of funds, UNHCR plans to provide winter assistance to the most vulnerable of those displaced in 2014 elsewhere in Afghanistan. UNHCR plans to assist 2,700 displaced families and 3,470 returnee families through a harsh winter.

IOM has prepositioned stock as a preparedness measure in the event of an emergency. IOM has prepositioned non-food item (NFI) kits in 24 locations across the country, including winter support kits for 7,204 natural disaster affected/ displaced families. An additional 1,805 winter clothing modules are in the pipeline. Family and emergency shelter kits are prepositioned for 8,294 natural disaster affected/ displaced families, 225 emergency tents are in the pipeline for Afghan returnees from Pakistan in Khost province.

Reassessments in flood hit communities in northern Afghanistan, suggest a total of 7,525 completely destroyed (Category A) shelters. A total of 3,720 shelter are funded as of October leaving an outstanding caseload of 3,805. These families will require support for winterization.

Case study

Cash Transfer Programmes in Afghanistan: An overview

Hervé Nicolle
Director, Samuel Hall

CTPs have proven to be a fully or partially efficient and flexible assistance tool: i) in emergency or development situations; ii) across a large spectrum of activities (livelihoods, WASH, food security), and iii) in diverse geographic locations (urban and rural).²

Positive trends

Momentum: Donors have been funding CTP, as a more transparent and cost-efficient assistance modality. Interviews confirm that CTP is seen as a pragmatic way to empower communities and mitigate security and corruption risks, although nuances remain: *“DFID used mobile cash transfer to alleviate extreme poverty in rural areas; we use it to generate financial flows and connect poor people to the real economy – that is why we do not target the poor among the poor” (USAID-FAIDA).*

Technical know-how: Humanitarian actors (WFP, ACTED, Concern, Afghan Aid, Solidarités, NRC, DRC) have gained operational and technical expertise on CTP, through pilot initiatives and information sharing. There is no panacea: *“It is not because fuel distribution is good for the New Parliament IDP community in Kabul that the same assistance should be duplicated in another district. Before developing CTP initiatives, you need to assess the needs and context of the communities you want to assist” (DRC).*

Coordination platform: The Cash and Voucher Working Group has proven efficient in promoting information, coordination, feedback, and innovative solutions. This type of working platform is often missing between humanitarian and development agencies.

Research: Impact evaluations have been commissioned to understand the output of each modality. On mobile cash transfer, *hawala* systems, vouchers, or direct cash assistance, there is a large body of evidence to fine-tune the operational strategy and programming– even if multi-year and comparative assessments should be developed to capture development outputs.

Subjective rating: The 2014 *Samuel Hall* study for WHH/DRC validates the assumption that beneficiaries are ‘very satisfied’ with direct cash (57%) or mobile cash (51%), whereas only 21% reported being ‘very satisfied’ with in-kind assistance. Buy-in for CTP is strong.

Objective impact: The proportions of households favouring extreme coping strategies – ‘not eating for entire days’ and ‘reducing the quantity of food’ – have decreased by 30 and 15 percentage points between the baseline and end-line. CTPs can generate longer-term impacts: if 44% of the DFID mobile cash transfer beneficiaries spend the cash on food, 50%



Credit: Samuel Hall
Hawaladar Kiosks

² On the *Samuel Hall* website: *Cash-Based Assistance Programmes for Internally Displaced Persons* (WHH/DRC, 2014), *Humanitarian Assistance through Mobile Cash Transfer in Northern Afghanistan* (DFID, 2013), *Effectiveness Study* (WFP, 2013), *Sustaining the Working Poor in Kabul Informal Settlements* (Solidarités, 2012).

"Before developing CTP initiatives, you need to assess the needs and context of the communities you want to assist."

spend it on items for their house, 34% on loan repayment, 25% on health, and 14% on education.

In Nangarhar, whilst the poorest beneficiaries use cash vouchers to get food items, the better off often exchange vouchers to invest in longer-term assets.

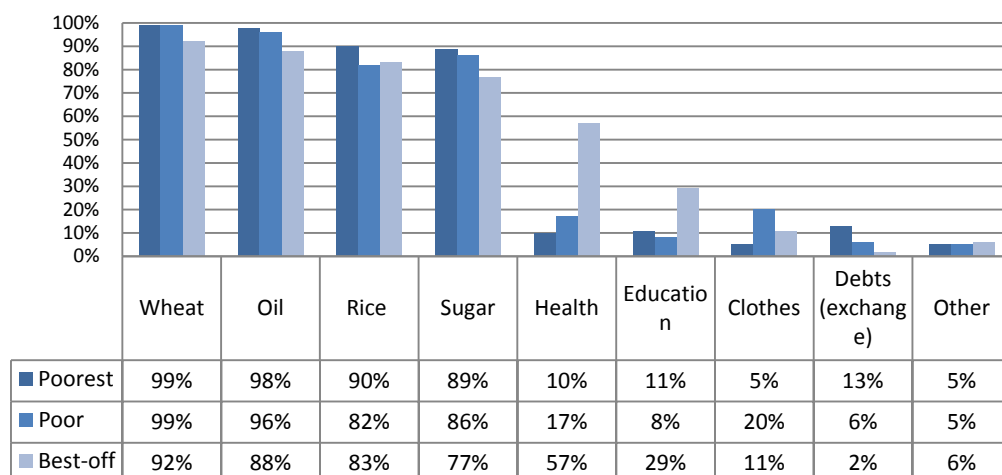


Table 1: Spending patterns of WFP beneficiaries in Nangarhar - SH study for WFP, 2013

Existing caveats and milestones

Cost-effectiveness? The assumption that CTP is less costly than delivering food is challenged, as CTPs have associated costs: importing food in bulk at wholesale prices proves cheaper than giving beneficiaries cash to buy the same food on local markets. Costs also need to be expressed in relation to economic and social impacts, as some outcomes are intangible ('dignity', 'female empowerment').

Choice of modalities? There is still limited evidence on how to prioritise one assistance modality over another. The 2014 *Samuel Hall* survey highlights key vulnerability variables: 1) gender; 2) literacy; and 3) income. Mobile cash transfer may be a counter-productive assistance tool for illiterate female beneficiaries with lower incomes, whereas it can have an immediate and longer-term positive impact on the literate; by contrast, a mix of in-kind and direct cash assistance remains adequate for the most vulnerable.

Proven inflationary impact? A 8-month survey of market prices suggests that insulated and unsafe areas are more likely to see an inflationary impact through CTP. A comparison of wheat prices in 6 bazaars of Almar and Qaysar districts shows a 30 to 45 point difference between the two markets– driven by Almar's geographic and economic isolation. Such an economic backlash must be assessed to avoid destabilizing fragile contexts.

Inflationary risks: the key variables are remoteness (= difficult access to other markets) and insecurity (South of Faryab = conflicts with AOGs).

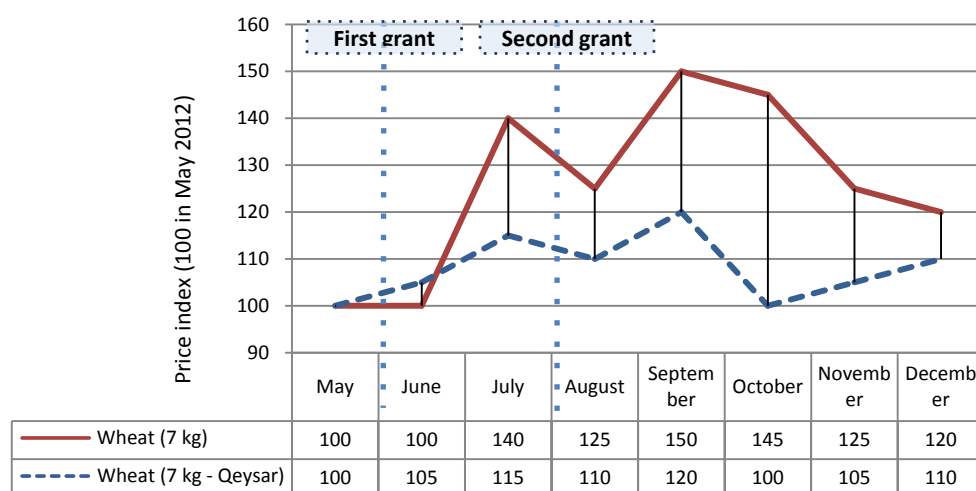


Table 2: Inflationary impact of mobile cash transfer - SH study for DFID, 2013

Outweighing the cons

Donors and practitioners must bear a number of important – if not crucial – caveats in mind. Local communities are fragile ecosystems sensitive to external (in-kind or cash) assistance, as it redefines what “poor” or “vulnerable” mean. Through the CVWG, stakeholders have the opportunity to share information, avoid one-size-fits-all approaches, and tailor strategies to needs in complex social and political contexts.

Humanitarian access

26 incidents against aid workers

2 aid workers killed

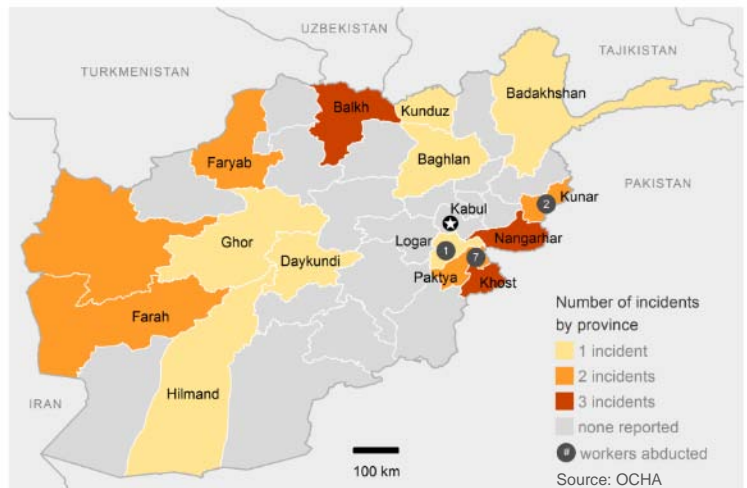
4 wounded

10 abducted

Incidents affecting humanitarian action

September saw a relatively average number of security incidents impacting humanitarian action compared to previous months and a reduction compared to a total of 31 incidents in August. A total of 26 incident against aid workers were reported across Afghanistan, four of which involved NGO run health facilities.

Two aid workers were killed (as compared to eight in August), four wounded, and ten abducted. There were four incidents against de-miners, one of which involved the abduction of 7 staff members for 24-hours.



The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Humanitarian financing Update

2014 Strategic Response Plan is 58 percent funded as of 30 September

Overall funding

Overall humanitarian funding for Afghanistan reached \$383 million in September. Sixty-three per cent, or \$238 million, of this amount is aligned with the 2014 Strategic Response Plan (SRP). Of the SRP aligned funds, 62 per cent is allocated to UN agencies & IOM and 38 per cent to NGOs including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Twenty-two donor countries support humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan. The top five donors, based level of contributions to overall humanitarian funding are United States, Japan, European Commission, Canada and Sweden. According to the Financial Track System (FTS), in 2014, contributions from these five donors account for 65 per cent of overall support to humanitarian action in Afghanistan.

Other humanitarian funding

According to FTS, the balance of other humanitarian funding available for Afghanistan is \$145 million, with \$67 million reported for ICRC following their own appeals process. The remaining \$78 million is not aligned to 2014 SRP.

Overall humanitarian funding for Afghanistan reached \$383 million in September.

In brief

Response to refugees receives \$4 million from CERF

The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated \$4 million to humanitarian operations supporting more than 120,000 refugees in Khost and Paktika. Host communities and refugees will receive shelter, food and water, as well as health and hygiene support, and continued demining activities from UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNMAS, WFP and WHO as well as from several NGOs providing support for the harsh winter ahead.

Provision of services includes support to more than 55,000 women, not only through hygiene awareness campaigns and dignity and 4,800 kits for newborns, but also through mobile clinics ensuring safe delivery of newborns and psycho-social counseling across a wide range of areas. Support to and referrals systems to promote good health among the conflict-affected families.

Children account for 58 per cent of the population and are vulnerable not only to colder weather conditions but also to mines and unexploded remnants of war.

CERF allocations per cluster



Source: OCHA

Children account for 58 per cent of the population and are vulnerable not only to colder weather conditions but also to mines and unexploded remnants of war (ERW). Working together with partners, UNMAS is conducting critical mine clearance and awareness raising operations Gulan camp. As the only established refugee camp in Khost province Gulan hosts a population of 20,000.

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