In Numbers

29,460 people assisted in January 2021

269.2 MT of food assistance distributed

USD 121,465 distributed through cash-based transfers

USD 0.9 million six-months net funding requirements (February – July 2021)

Operational Context

The Islamic Republic of Iran, an upper middle-income country with a population of 83 million, is hosting the world’s fourth largest refugee community. The Government of Iran has generously hosted approximately 1 million refugees for the past 30 years. The majority, which mainly came from Afghanistan and Iraq, live in urban areas. Approximately 31,000 of the most vulnerable refugees live in 20 settlements located throughout the country.

WFP Iran works under its Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020) extended until 2022 to align it with both the United Nations development assistance framework (2017–2021) which will be extended for one additional year and the National Development Plan (2016–2022). WFP assists 31,000 beneficiaries yearly through unconditional food assistance in addition to the provision of a girls’ education cash incentive, and a school feeding initiative consisting of nutritious school snacks.

Moreover, WFP continues to support refugees’ livelihoods through activities that aim at providing them with complementary skills in view of a sustainable repatriation to their country of origin once the situation is conducive. WFP has been present in Iran since 1987.

Operational Updates

• In January, WFP successfully reached 29,460 refugees as per the target, of whom 8,259 were women, 8,474 men, 6,074 girls, and 6,653 boys (these figures include 535 Iranian teachers who receive WFP school snacks). The assisted people received a total cash transfer value of USD 121,465 and 269.2 MT of fortified wheat flour, vegetable oil, lentils, biscuits, date bar, nuts and milk.

• General food distributions in refugee settlements are ongoing with increased health and safety measures due to COVID-19. Cash-based transfers are also operational.

• As per previous months since April 2020, all refugees received a double cash entitlement.

• By providing supplementary rations and maintaining monthly assistance to the refugees through a combination of cash and food, WFP is reducing the economic impact on beneficiaries caused by negative market developments, such as inflation and rising food prices.

• Due to COVID-19 situation, schools are continuing their work either online or in person depending on the situation in their provinces. School snacks distribution is being continued either on-site for those who have routine classes or as take-home ration for those who receive online training.

• All livelihood activities are ongoing in the refugee settlements with precautionary measures.

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Photo caption: Refugees baking bread in settlements with fortified wheat flour which they receive from WFP monthly.
Photo: WFP/ Neda Mobarra

Population: 83 million
Income Level: Upper middle

2019 Human Development Index: 70 out of 188
2020 Global Hunger Index: 39 out of 107 (7.9, Low)
Challenges

- To minimize the health risk of WFP staff, a work from home modality is in place at the WFP country office in Tehran. Only a limited number of staff (maximum 20 percent on any given day) go to the office for limited hours, if needed. Returns to the office are being assessed on a regular basis.

Partnerships

- The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the BAFIA are the main cooperating partners of WFP in Iran. BAFIA is responsible for coordinating all matters related to refugees and international agencies. Bi-annual meetings take place between BAFIA, UNHCR and WFP. Monthly operational coordination meetings are also held to monitor the refugee situation and discuss appropriate response actions.

- WFP has a long-standing partnership with UNHCR, given the nature of WFP operation in Iran in refugee settlements. In this context, Joint Assessment Missions (JAM), joint distribution and joint post-distribution monitoring take place regularly.

Donors

Japan, Germany, Republic of Korea, People’s Republic of China, multilateral funds and private sector donors.