



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Iran Country Brief May 2023

Operational Context

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a lower-middle-income country with a population of 87 million. For the past 40 years, it hosts one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world, recently estimated at about 4.5 million displaced people of different statuses who potentially need protection and humanitarian assistance. Most of the displaced people originate from Afghanistan and Iraq and live in urban areas, while some 33,000 of the most vulnerable refugees live in 20 settlements scattered across the country.

The new WFP [Interim Country Strategic Plan \(ICSP 2023-2025\)](#) was approved by WFP Executive Board in February 2023. Under the new ICSP, WFP assists 33,000 refugees through cash and in-kind food assistance, a refugee girls' education cash incentive, and a school feeding initiative consisting of nutritious school snacks. Moreover, WFP continues to equip refugees with complementary livelihood skills aimed at supporting their sustainable repatriation to country of origin - once the situation is conducive. WFP has been present in Iran since 1987.



Population: **89.2 million**

2021 Human Development Index rank:
76 out of 191

Income Level: **Lower middle**

2022 Global Hunger Index:
29 out of 121 (6.5, Low)

In Numbers

33,210 people assisted
in May



360 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 92,346 distributed through cash-based transfers

US\$ 4 m six-month net funding requirements
(June - November 2023)

Operational Updates

- In May, WFP's food assistance reached 33,210 beneficiaries, which includes 32,592 Afghan and Iraqi refugees and 618 Iranian teachers. Refugees are assisted with a staple food basket which includes fortified wheat flour (9 kg per person per month) and vegetable oil (900 ml per person per month). Of the total assisted, 28 percent were women, 29 percent were men, 21 percent were girls, and 22 percent were boys.
- In addition to in-kind food assistance, WFP provides cash assistance to 7,301 Afghan and Iraqi refugee households each month. In May, households headed by refugee men received Iranian Rials (IRR) 1 million (US\$ 2.6, according to the UN Operational Rate) per person. Households headed by refugee women received a slightly higher monthly cash allocation, amounting to IRR 1.2 million (US\$ 3.1) per person due to limited access to working opportunities, leading to higher food insecurity.
- Throughout May, WFP distributed school snacks (a combination of milk, biscuits, and date bars) to students and their teachers across all settlements. The distribution successfully reached 8,106 refugee students and 618 Iranian teachers.
- In addition, WFP provided 2,884 refugee girls with a cash incentive of IRR 500,000 (US\$ 1.3) transferred to their bank accounts. This is part of WFP Iran's efforts to promote education for refugee girls by providing them with cash for each month of regular school attendance.
- WFP implemented a pilot initiative in two settlements, Shahid Naseri of Markazi and Mohajerin of Semnan provinces, providing refugees with disabilities a monthly cash top-up of IRR 1 million (US\$ 2.6) on top of their regular entitlement. As of May the programme successfully reached 83 beneficiaries out of the planned 100.

Iran Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) (April 2023 - December 2025)

Total Requirements (in US\$)	Total Received (in US\$)
37 m	33 m
2023 Requirements (in US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (June 2023 – November 2023)
12 m*	4 m

*Covering ICSP 2018-2023 and ICSP 2023-2025 requirements

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Food-insecure refugees and other crisis-affected populations in Iran are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs throughout the year.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Strategic Outcome 2: Crisis-affected populations in Iran benefit from improved capacities of national entities and other partners to prevent and respond to emergencies

Focus area: Partnership

Activities:

- Activity 1:** Provide unconditional food assistance to food-insecure refugees and other vulnerable households
- Activity 2:** Provide conditional support, especially to refugee women and girls, to incentivize education and enhance livelihoods
- Activity 3:** Support national disaster response, especially through the provision of emergency food assistance to crisis-affected populations in Iran
- Activity 4:** Provide cash transfer, coordination, or other services to partners

[WFP Iran 2022 Annual Country Report](#)

Monitoring

- Every month, 2.5 percent of the refugee households are selected randomly and contacted by phone. During the calls, personal and household information are confirmed, and refugees have a chance to clarify whether they have received their monthly cash and food entitlements. Furthermore, the quality and quantity of assistance received is also verified.
- After collaborating with the Iranian Red Crescent Society to distribute 2,445 family food packages that were procured and delivered to assist with the earthquake response in the city of Khoy in West Azerbaijan province in Iran, WFP conducted distribution monitoring in Zavieh Hassan Khan village in May.

- The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is WFP's main government counterpart, and the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) is the main cooperating partner of WFP in Iran. Monthly operational coordination meetings are held with BAFIA to monitor the refugee situation and discuss appropriate response actions.

Given the refugee focus of its operations in Iran, WFP also has a long-standing partnership with UNHCR. Together, WFP and UNHCR regularly conduct Joint Assessment Missions (JAM), joint distribution, and joint post-distribution monitoring exercises critical in understanding and monitoring the refugee food security.

Donors

Australia, Germany, Japan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, multilateral funds, and private donors.



Photo caption: WFP distributed 2,445 family food packages to the Earthquake-affected population in the city of Khoy, Iran.
Photo: WFP / Neda Mobarra