



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Iran Country Brief March 2024



In Numbers

33,529 people assisted
in March 2024



357 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 171,979 distributed through cash-based transfers

US\$ 6.2 m six-month net funding requirements
(April- September 2024)

Operational Context

The Islamic Republic of Iran, a lower-middle-income country with a population of over 88 million, has hosted one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world for the past 40 years. According to recent estimates by UNHCR, it is home to about 3.4 million displaced people of various 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.

WFP Iran's Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP 2023-2025) was approved by the WFP Executive Board in February 2023. Under the 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 their country of origin - once the situation is conducive. WFP has been present in Iran since 1987.



Population: **88 million**

2022 Human Development Index rank:
78 out of 193

Income Level: **Lower middle**

2023 Global Hunger Index:
49 out of 125 (7.7, Low)

Operational Updates

- WFP provides a monthly hybrid of cash and in-kind food assistance to targeted refugees:
 - In March, **WFP's in-kind food assistance reached 33,529 Afghan and Iraqi refugees, as well as Iranian teachers.** The refugees were assisted with 357 mt of food supplies consisting of fortified wheat flour (12 kg per person per month) and vegetable oil (810 ml per person per month), while students and their teachers received a date bar and/or a fortified biscuit. However, WFP stopped providing milk in school snacks since January 2024 due to funding gaps.
 - Of the total assisted, 28 percent were women, 29 percent were men, 21 percent were girls, and 22 percent were boys.
 - WFP's direct cash transfer assistance was provided to 32,924 Afghan and Iraqi refugees (7,349 households) in March.** Households headed by men received Iranian Rials (IRR) 2 million (US\$ 5.01) per person, while those headed by women received a slightly higher monthly cash allocation, amounting to IRR 2.5 million (US\$ 6.2) per person due to limited access to work opportunities that may lead to higher food insecurity levels for women-headed households.
 - To help sustain beneficiaries' purchasing power amid deteriorating economic conditions, since June 2023, WFP has increased the value of its cash assistance by 100 percent for men-headed households and by 108 percent for women-headed households.
 - Following [WFP's Disability Inclusion Workplan](#) for 2023, WFP Iran implemented an initiative in two settlements, namely Shahid Naseri of Markazi and Mohajerin of Semnan provinces, providing 102 refugees with disabilities a monthly cash top-up of IRR 1 million (US\$ 2.5) in addition to their regular entitlement. In March 2024, the programme successfully reached all intended beneficiaries across the two settlements.

Photo caption: WFP dispatches wheat flour to refugee settlements as part of its in-kind food assistance every month.
Photo: ©WFP / Neda Mobarra

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

Total Requirements (in US\$)	Total Received (in US\$)
37 m	8 m
2024 Requirements (in US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (April 2024 – Sept. 2024)
14 m	6.2 m

SDG target 1: 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

- 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.

SDG target 2: Partnerships

Strategic Outcome 2: Crisis-affected populations in Iran benefit from enhanced coordination and improved capacities of national entities and other partners to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies all year round.

Focus area: Crisis Response

- Activity 4:** Provide cash transfer, coordination, or other services to partners.

WFP Iran 2023 Annual Country Report

- By March 2024, WFP Iran supported 48 refugee celiac beneficiaries with specific gluten-free dietary needs, providing them with an extra cash amount of IRR 7.7 million (US\$ 19.3 per person) as a replacement for their usual food entitlement.
- In March, through **WFP’s school-based programme, a total of 9,157 refugee students, including their teachers, received school snacks** consisting of date bars and/or fortified biscuits as part of the school meals programme.

- In addition, WFP provided 2,746 refugee girls with a cash incentive of IRR 0.5 million (US\$ 1.2). This is an education incentive to promote education for refugee girls by providing them with cash for each month of regular school attendance.
- To support the income generation and resilience of 356 refugees (59 percent women and 41 percent men), 21 WFP-supported livelihood activities are currently operational, including welding, tailoring, baking, and farming.

Monitoring

- 250 monthly monitoring phone calls (approximately 2.5 percent of refugee-assisted households) were made to verify the quality and quantity of assistance received by refugee households.

Partnerships

- WFP in Iran works closely with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Organization for Migration (NOM) to coordinate refugee-related matters. Coordination meetings take place every six months between NOM, UNHCR, and WFP to monitor the situation and discuss appropriate response actions.
- Given the refugee focus of operations in Iran, WFP also has a long-standing partnership with UNHCR, conducting joint periodic assessments, including distribution and post-distribution monitoring activities, to track the food security of refugees in Iran. The latest assessment was done in October 2023.

Challenges

- WFP Iran is currently facing significant funding shortfalls affecting its assistance to refugees. If no additional funding is received in a timely manner, WFP will not be able to continue its in-kind food assistance to refugees beyond June 2024 and its cash assistance beyond September 2024.

Donors (In alphabetical order)

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