



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Iran Country Brief September 2024

Operational Context

The Islamic Republic of Iran, an upper-middle-income country with a population of over 88 million, is one of the world's largest refugee-hosting countries. Generously providing 3.8 million refugees and refugee-like persons access to health, education, and livelihood opportunities for over 40 years, as per UNHCR. 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 2023-2027) was approved by the WFP Executive Board in February 2023. Under the ICSP, WFP supports around 33,000 food-insecure 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 resilience and preparedness for voluntary sustainable repatriation to their country of origin - once the situation is conducive.

WFP has been operating in Iran since 1962, initially for its first emergency earthquake response until 1978, and subsequently reinitiated operations to address the refugee crisis from 1987 onwards.



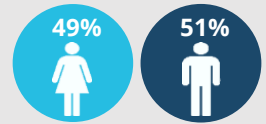
Population: **88 million**

2022 Human Development Index rank:
78 out of 193

Income Level: **Upper-middle**

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

In Numbers



33,041 people assisted
in September 2024

500.4 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 187,909 distributed through cash-based transfers

US\$ 2.1 m six-month net funding requirements
(October 2024 – March 2025)

Operational Updates

- In September, WFP provided **33,041 Afghan and Iraqi refugees (7,347 households)** with **monthly general food assistance through a hybrid combination** of in-kind food and cash-based transfers.
 - **Under in-kind, a total of 500.44 mt of food** consisting of fortified wheat flour (12 kg per person) and vegetable oil (810 ml per person) was distributed.
 - **Under cash-based transfers**, in September, WFP conducted a **cash transfer value adjustment exercise** to ensure its financial assistance meets the current costs of living and essential needs of refugee households across settlements, amid fluctuating exchange rates, persistent inflation and economic challenges in Iran. To mitigate the gap in assistance, as of August, **WFP increased its transfer value by 25 percent for men-headed households (MHH) and 20 percent for women-headed households (WHH)**.
Iranian Rials (IRR) 2.5 million (US\$ 5.5) per person were disbursed to MHH, while WHH received a slightly higher monthly allocation of IRR 3 million (US\$ 6.6) per person due to limited access to work opportunities for women, which may lead to higher levels of food insecurity.
 - As part of **WFP's Disability Inclusion Workplan**, WFP Iran has been providing **additional monthly cash support** of IRR 1.5 million (US\$ 3.3), **to refugees with disabilities** across eight refugee settlements, on top of their regular aid. Initially, the top-up support was rolled out in Shahid Naseri settlement, in Markazi province, and Mohajerin settlement, in Semnan province.
 - In September, the programme expanded to include Kerman province in addition to Lorestan, West Azerbaijan, Fars, Khuzestan, Markazi, and Semnan provinces, raising the total number of beneficiaries assisted from 128 in August to 211 persons in September.

Photo caption: WFP distributes wheat flour in a refugee settlement in Iran, enabling refugees to make bread.
Photo: ©WFP / Neda Mobarra

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Iran Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP)

(April 2023 - December 2027)

Total Requirements (in US\$)	Total Received (in US\$)
43 m	12.1 m
2024 Requirements (in US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (Oct. 2024 – March 2025)
8 m	2.1 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](#)

- WFP's cash assistance in Iran continued to include support for **52 refugee celiac patients with specific gluten-free dietary needs**, providing them with an extra cash amount of IRR 7.7 million (US\$ 17.55 per person) complementing their food entitlement.
- To support the income generation and **resilience of 251 refugees** (39 percent women and 61 percent men), in September, WFP continued 20 livelihood activities **across 17 settlements**, including welding, tailoring, baking, and farming.
- WFP Iran's **Budget Revision of the ICSP was approved in September**, leading to adjustments in the Needs Based Plan (NBP). Due to evolving circumstances,

including the suspension of two planned new refugee settlements to accommodate displaced persons from Afghanistan, the revision made changes as follows:

- Reduced the total planned number of beneficiaries from 52,000 to 35,000.
- Extended the duration of the ICSP by two years, now covering April 2023 to December 2027, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) duration.
- The total ICSP budget has increased by USD 5.8 million, bringing it to USD 42.82 million, to account for these adjustments and the plan's extended timeline.

Monitoring

- WFP conducted 250 monthly monitoring phone calls (approximately 2.5 percent of refugee-assisted households) in August, to verify the quality and quantity of assistance received. Findings indicated that all households assisted were satisfied with both the quality and quantity of the fortified vegetable oil and wheat flour provided.
- The Country Office has planned the 2024 Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) to be conducted jointly with UNHCR in October. As in previous years, the mission will take place in seven major Afghan settlements to assess key indicators for both UNHCR and WFP, contributing to the Annual Country Report 2024 report.

Partnerships

- WFP in Iran works closely with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Center for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (CAFIA) to coordinate refugee-related matters. Coordination meetings take place every six months between CAFIA, 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.

Funding Outlook

- WFP Iran operations are 48 percent funded and for the next six months, WFP requires vital funding amounting to US\$ 2.1 million to continue planned response.

Donors: The European Union (ECHO), multilateral funds, and private donors.