



World Food Programme

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

## WFP Iran Country Brief May 2025

### 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, providing 3.4 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 over 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 reinitiating operations to address the refugee crisis from 1987 onwards.



Population: **89.8 million**

2022 Human Development Index rank:  
**75 out of 193**

Income Level: **Upper-middle**

2024 Global Hunger Index:  
**38 out of 127 (7.4, Low)**

### In Numbers

**33,836 people assisted**  
in May 2025



**557 mt** of food assistance distributed

**US\$ 255,466** distributed through cash-based transfers

**US\$ 0.3 m** six-month net funding requirements  
(June to November 2025)

### Operational Updates

- In May, WFP provided **general food assistance to 33,190 Afghan and Iraqi refugees (7,328 households), through a hybrid combination** of in-kind food and cash-based transfers.
  - Under in-kind food assistance**, WFP distributed **557 mt of fortified food**, consisting of wheat flour (12 kg per person) and vegetable oil (810 ml per person).
  - Under cash-based transfers** WFP continued to provide the increased cash transfers to better support essential living costs. Since January 2025, the transfer has doubled to IRR 5 million (US\$ 7.2) to men-headed households and to IRR 6 million (US\$ 8.7) for women-headed households.
  - WFP supported **379** refugees with disabilities in May across ten settlements, each receiving an **additional monthly cash support of IRR 3 million (US\$ 4.3)**, on top of the regular assistance provided. Assistance covered Kerman, Lorestan, West Azerbaijan, Fars, Khuzestan, Markazi, Khorasan Razavi, and Semnan provinces after initially being introduced to two refugee settlements across two provinces.
  - WFP's cash assistance in Iran continued to include monthly support for **52 refugee celiac patients with specific dietary needs**, providing them with an extra cash amount of IRR 9.7 million (US\$ 14.13 per person), complementing their food entitlement.
- WFP's school feeding programme, reached 9,239 refugee students and their teachers, in May, with daily snacks** consisting of milk, date bars and/or fortified biscuits.
- Additionally, WFP provided **2,606 refugee school girls** with a monthly cash incentive of IRR 2 million (US\$ 2.9). This is an educational incentive to promote the school retention of refugee girls by providing them with cash support for each month of regular school attendance.

Iran Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP)

(April 2023 - December 2027)

Total Requirements (in US\$)	Total Received (in US\$)
43 m	18 m
2025 Requirements (in US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (June - November 2025)
8.2 m	0.3 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 2024 Annual Country Report](#)

Partnerships

- In May, WFP led a donor mission with the German Ambassador and the Head of the Embassy's Economic Section to Sarvestan settlement in Fars Province. During the visit, the delegation met refugees, observed WFP's operations, and discussed challenges with government officials. The Ambassador complemented WFP for its effective work in Iran.
- WFP in Iran works closely with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CAFIA to coordinate refugee-related matters. Semi-annual coordination meetings take place with CAFIA and UNHCR to monitor the refugee 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.

Funding Outlook

- WFP Iran operations are 90 percent funded for the next six months and require an additional US\$ 0.3 million to be fully funded in 2025.

Feeding Futures: How School Meals Keep Dreams Alive

Nazanin, a thirteen-year-old, resides with her mother and eight brothers in the Saveh settlement of Iran. Nazanin aspires to be a doctor to assist others. Despite financial struggles, she diligently attends sixth grade thanks to WFP's school feeding programme that provides snacks to over 9,239 refugee students.

Her mother, Bi Bi Shah, underscores the significance of these meals, highlighting that they frequently constitute the sole source of nutritious food for her children each day. The programme not only provides nourishment to students but also promotes school attendance, especially among girls, by offering additional monthly cash incentives for regular attendance of girls. This initiative helps alleviate economic pressures and discourages early marriage.



Donors

The European Union, Germany, Japan, multilateral funds, and private donors.

Operational Updates

- To enhance the economic resilience and self-sufficiency of 373 refugees (49 percent women) in May, WFP continued its support for 26 income-generating initiatives across 18 settlements. Activities included welding, tailoring, baking, and farming, among others.

Monitoring

- WFP continuously verifies the quality and quantity of assistance provided to beneficiaries. In May, WFP conducted 180 monthly monitoring phone calls (approximately 2.5 percent of refugee-assisted households).