



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Iran Country Brief August 2025

Operational Context

The Islamic Republic of Iran, an upper-middle-income country with a population of over 91 million, is the world's largest refugee-hosting country, providing 3.5 million refugees and refugee-like persons access to health, education, and livelihood opportunities for over 40 years, as per UNHCR's data. 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: **90.6 million**

2023 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

33,162 people assisted
in August 2025



356 mt of food assistance distributed

USD \$246,279
distributed through cash-based transfers

USD 0.6 m six-month net funding requirements
(September 2025 – February 2026)

Operational Updates

- Over the past six months, more than 1.2 million undocumented Afghans have returned from Iran to Afghanistan. Meanwhile, about 35,000 registered refugees in designated settlements remain largely protected from immediate return. Supported by WFP, UNHCR, and other agencies, these communities receive regular assistance and are closely coordinated with humanitarian actors. However, they remain heavily dependent on external support for food, health care, and education, making sustained aid essential to their stability.
- In August, WFP provided **general food assistance to 33,162 Afghan and Iraqi refugees (7,334 households)**, through a hybrid combination of in-kind food and cash-based transfers (CBT).
 - Under the in-kind food assistance**, WFP distributed **356 mt of fortified food**, consisting of wheat flour (12 kg per person) and vegetable oil (810 ml per person).
 - Under CBT** programming, WFP continued to provide cash transfers to better support essential living costs. The transfer is Iranian Rial (IRR) 5 million (USD 7.2) for households headed by men and IRR 6 million (USD 8.6) for households headed by women.
 - WFP supported **388** refugees with disabilities across ten settlements, each receiving an **additional monthly cash support of IRR 3 million (USD 4.3)**, on top of the regular assistance. Initially launched in two refugee settlements across two provinces, the assistance gradually expanded to cover Kerman, Lorestan, West Azerbaijan, Fars, Khuzestan, Markazi, Khorasan Razavi, and Semnan provinces.
 - WFP's monthly cash assistance continued to support **52 refugee celiac patients with specific dietary needs**, providing them with an extra cash amount of IRR 9.7 million (USD 14.13 per person), to complement their food entitlement.

Iran Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP)
(April 2023 - December 2027)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)
43 m	20 m
2025 Requirements (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (September 2025 - February 2026)
8.2 m	0.6 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’s **School-Based Programmes**, including School Feeding and Education Incentives, have been temporarily suspended due to the summer holidays and will resume with the start of the new academic year in October.
- To enhance the economic resilience and self-sufficiency of **296** refugees (42 percent women) in August, WFP continued its support of 22 income-generating initiatives across 18 settlements. Activities included welding, tailoring, baking, and farming, among others.

Monitoring

- WFP conducts approximately 200 monthly phone monitoring calls, representing around 2.5 percent of refugee-assisted households, to verify the quality and quantity of assistance provided.

Partnerships

- WFP Iran works closely with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Center for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (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.
- A contribution of EUR 7,500 has been confirmed from New Zealand for establishing an innovation center in Semnan settlements, marking New Zealand’s first support to refugees in Iran. WFP was selected for this project because of its unique access to 20 settlements across the country, enabling effective implementation and outreach.

Funding Outlook

- WFP Iran operations are **83 percent** funded for the next six months and require **USD 0.6 million** to sustain its activities throughout February 2026.

Donors

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

