



World Food  
Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## 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 35,000 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



32,721 people assisted  
in December 2025

314.6 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 200,897 distributed through cash-based transfers

USD 1.7 m six-month net funding requirements  
(January – June 2026)

## Operational Updates

- In December, WFP provided **general food assistance to 32,721 Afghan and Iraqi refugees (7,236 households), through a hybrid combination** of in-kind food and cash-based transfers (CBT).
  - **Under the in-kind food assistance**, WFP distributed **314.65 mt of fortified food**, consisting of wheat flour (12 kg per person) and vegetable oil (810 ml per person).
  - **Under CBT**, WFP continued to provide cash transfers to better support essential living costs. The transfer is Iranian Rial (IRR) 5 million (USD 5.4) for households headed by men and IRR 6 million (USD 6.5) for households headed by women.
  - WFP provided **additional monthly cash assistance of IRR 3 million (USD 3.2)** to **403 refugees** living with disabilities across eleven settlements, **on top of their regular entitlements**. Initially launched in two refugee settlements across two provinces, the initiative was gradually expanded to cover 11 settlements: Saveh, Semnan, Bani Najar, Sarvestan, Bezileh, Abazar, Rafsanjan, Bardsir, Jahrom, Meybod, and Torbat-e Jam.
  - WFP's monthly cash assistance continued to support **56 refugee celiac patients with specific dietary needs**, providing an extra cash amount of IRR 9.7 million (USD 10.6 per person), to complement their food entitlement.
  - Insufficient funding delayed the start of WFP's school feeding programme at the beginning of the academic year. Currently, procurement of biscuits is completed, and distribution will start in January.

# WFP Country Strategy



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

Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)
43 m	22 m
2026 Requirements (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (January - June 2026)
8.3 m	1.7 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](#)

- In December, WFP supported 25 income-generating projects in 18 settlements to improve economic resilience and self-sufficiency for **363** refugees, 50 percent of whom were women. These activities included welding, tailoring, baking, farming, and other trades.

## Monitoring

- Each month, WFP conducts approximately 200 telephone interviews, representing 2.5 percent of refugee-assisted households, to assess the quality and quantity of aid provided.
- A joint vulnerability assessment mission took place from 7 to 19 December, carrying out visits and data collection in four refugee settlements, Saveh, Abazar,

Rafsanjan, and Taft, in coordination with UNHCR. Preliminary recommendations will be presented to the Government in mid-January 2026. Early findings highlight the need to maintain assistance to beneficiaries, while improving targeting accuracy and considering increased top-ups for the most vulnerable groups.

## Partnerships

- In December, Mr. Samer Abdeljaber, WFP Regional Director undertook a mission to Iran to gain first-hand insight into WFP operations on the ground. During the visit, the Regional Director engaged with relevant government counterparts, met with members of the donor community, and visited Semnan settlement to observe WFP-supported activities and interact directly with beneficiaries. The mission provided an opportunity to review operational progress, strengthen partnerships, and reaffirm WFP's commitment to supporting vulnerable populations in Iran.
- **Tehran Art Fair:** WFP leveraged **Iran's largest art event in four decades**, attracting **over 20,000 visitors and 40+ leading galleries**, to showcase refugee children's artwork at zero cost, securing a prime booth location as the only UN agency invited, achieving exceptional citywide visibility through billboards, strong engagement from diplomats, donors, and the public, and amplifying WFP's advocacy on inclusion, resilience, and cultural exchange.



- 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.

## Funding Outlook

- WFP Iran operations are **59 percent** funded for the next six months and require **USD 1.7 million** to sustain its activities throughout June 2026.

## Donors

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