



## WFP Iran

### COUNTRY BRIEF

February 2026

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Iran continues to face a complex socio-economic landscape shaped by external sanctions, high inflation, and limited international banking access, all of which constrain development financing and humanitarian operations. Despite these challenges, Iran remains a key host country for one of the world's largest and most protracted refugee populations.
- Based on the findings of the recent joint vulnerability assessment mission, WFP provided cash top-ups to 32,914 Afghan and Iraqi refugees to better support their food needs.

#### IN NUMBERS



**33,522** people assisted in January 2026



**51%**  
Male



**49%**  
Female



**314 mt** food distributed



**USD 468,792** cash transferred



**USD 1.1M** (Feb – July 2026) net funding requirements

**Photo Caption & Credit:** WFP distributes wheat flour to refugees in 20 settlements. WFP/Mohammad Khodabakhsh

#### SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Islamic Republic of Iran, an upper-middle-income country with a population of over 91 million, is the largest refugee-hosting country in the world, sheltering an estimated **3.49 million refugees** and refugee-like populations (UNHCR) and **6.1 million** according to the Government of Iran, including unregistered individuals, predominantly from Afghanistan, for over four decades. With no viable return or relocation options, sustained humanitarian assistance remains critical. Most of the displaced people originate from Afghanistan and Iraq and live in urban areas, while more than 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.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### General Assistance

- In January, WFP provided **general food assistance to 32,914 Afghan and Iraqi refugees (7,271 households), through a hybrid combination** of in-kind food and cash-based transfers (CBT).
  - **Under the in-kind food assistance**, WFP distributed **314 mt of fortified** wheat flour (ration of 9 kg per person, reduced from 12 kg since the month of November due to funding shortfalls).
  - **Under the cash-based transfer (CBT) modality**, WFP continued to provide cash assistance to support essential living costs of vulnerable refugees. Monthly transfers were set at IRR 8 million (USD 6.9) for male-headed households and IRR 9 million (USD 7.7) for female-headed households. In addition, following focus group discussions conducted during the Joint Assessment Mission (7-18 December 2025) and with CAFIA's approval, WFP replaced the monthly in-kind entitlement of vegetable oil - one litre) per person per month - with a cash equivalent of IRR 3 million (USD 2.5) per person. This amount is now delivered directly to beneficiaries' bank cards as part of their monthly cash assistance, providing greater flexibility to meet household consumption needs.
  - Moreover, WFP provided **additional monthly cash assistance of IRR 3 million (USD 2.5) to 405 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 **57** refugee celiac patients with specific dietary needs, providing an extra cash amount of IRR 9.7 million (USD 8.4 per person), to complement their food entitlement.

### School-Based Assistance

- The school snacks, consisting of biscuits and date bars, were distributed to **8,309** refugee students and their teachers. Milk could not be procured due to funding shortfalls and its high cost.
- Additionally, WFP provided **2,607** refugee girls with a monthly cash incentive of IRR 2 million (US\$ 1.7). This is an educational incentive to promote the school retention of refugee girls by providing them with cash.

### Resilience and Livelihood Support

- In January, WFP supported 26 income-generating projects in 18 settlements to improve economic resilience and self-sufficiency for **364** refugees, 50 percent of whom were women. These activities included welding, tailoring, baking, farming, and other trades.

### Monitoring

- A joint vulnerability assessment mission was conducted from 7 to 19 December in coordination with UNHCR, covering four refugee settlements, Saveh, Abazar, Rafsanjan, and Taft. Early findings underscored the need to maintain assistance while improving targeting accuracy and considering increased top-ups for the most vulnerable groups in view of rising inflation and currency depreciation in the country. The preliminary recommendations have since been consolidated into a two-page brief for presentation to CAFIA during a tripartite meeting involving WFP, UNHCR, and CAFIA management in the coming month.

## FUNDING OVERVIEW

### Country Strategic Plan (2023-2027)



### Donors:

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