



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Iran

COUNTRY BRIEF

March 2026

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite the escalation in the region, WFP remains steadfast in its commitment to continuing life-saving assistance for the people it serves. The operation in Iran continues without disruption, with teams on the ground ensuring uninterrupted delivery of food and cash assistance to the most vulnerable refugees residing in settlements.
- As of February 2026, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Disaster Management Organization have designated WFP as the lead agency for the Disaster Risk Management pillar under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

IN NUMBERS



33,925 people assisted in February 2026



51%
Male



49%
Female



356 mt food distributed



USD 225,178 cash transferred



USD 1.9M (March – August 2026) net funding requirements

Photo Caption & Credit: WFP distributes wheat flour to refugees in 20 settlements. WFP/Neda Mobarra

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Islamic Republic of Iran, an upper-middle-income country of over 91 million people, is among the world's largest refugee-hosting nations, sheltering around **2.5 million** forcibly displaced people according to UNHCR—and up to **6.1 million** per government figures, including unregistered individuals—mainly from Afghanistan and Iraq, living in urban areas. With no viable return options, sustained assistance remains critical, particularly for over 33,000 highly vulnerable refugees living in 20 settlements nationwide.

WFP Iran's [Interim Country Strategic Plan \(ICSP 2023-2027\)](#) 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.

In light of the recent escalation in the region and resulting internal displacement in the country, WFP continues to monitor the situation and activated its emergency preparedness capacities to support THE Government to meet any emerging needs.

For further details please refer to [Middle East Regional Escalation Emergency Response External Situation Report](#).

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

General Assistance

- In February, WFP provided **general food assistance to 33,317 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 **356 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) for male-headed households and IRR 9 million (USD 6.7) for female-headed households. In addition, following focus group discussions conducted during the Joint Assessment Mission and with CAFIA's approval, since January, WFP replaced the monthly in-kind entitlement of vegetable oil (one litre per person) with a cash equivalent of IRR 3 million (USD 2.2) 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.
 - Moreover, WFP provided **additional monthly cash assistance of IRR 3 million (USD 2.2) to 406 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** refugeeeliac patients with specific dietary needs, providing an extra cash amount of IRR 9.7 million (USD 7.2 per person), to complement their food entitlement.

School-Based Assistance

- The school snacks, consisting of biscuits and date bars, were distributed to **8,306** refugee students and their teachers. Milk could not be procured due to funding shortfalls.
- Additionally, WFP provided **2,618** refugee girls with a monthly cash incentive of IRR 2 million (USD 1.5). This is an educational incentive to promote the school retention of refugee girls by providing them with cash.

Resilience and Livelihood Support

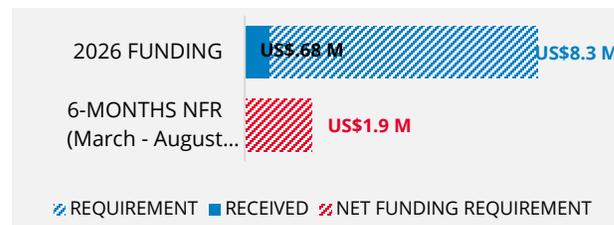
- In February, WFP supported 26 income-generating projects in 18 settlements to improve economic resilience and self-sufficiency of **364** refugees, 50 percent of whom were women. These activities included welding, tailoring, baking, farming, and other trades.

Monitoring

- A joint vulnerability assessment (JAM) mission was conducted in 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. On 17 February, WFP and UNHCR debriefed the Director General of CAFIA on the JAM initial findings and recommendations. JAM's final report will be shared by the end of March.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

Country Strategic Plan (2023-2027)



Donors:

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