

Afghanistan | Population Movement (Returnees)

Emergency appeal №: MDRAF018 Emergency appeal launched: 01/05/2025 Operational Strategy published: 24/05/2025	Glide №: CE-2025-00042-AFG
Operation updates #5 (12-month update) Date of issue: 17/06/2026	Timeframe covered by this update: From 01/05/2025 to 30/04/2026
Operation timeframe: 24 months (01/05/2025 – 30/04/2027)	Number of people being assisted: 517,560 ¹ Number of people reached with hot meal: 493,800
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 20 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 25 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 1 million

To date, this IFRC Emergency Appeal, which seeks CHF 20,000,000, is 26 per cent funded. Further funding contributions are needed to enable the Afghan Red Crescent Society, with the support of the IFRC, to continue providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan returnees arriving through different crossing points. This operation was made possible through the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Swiss Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross Society, the Saudi Red Crescent Authority, the Netherlands Red Cross, the British Red Cross and FCDO, the Swedish Red Cross, as well as the in-country Partner National Societies, namely the Danish Red Cross, the Turkish Red Crescent, the Qatari Red Crescent, and the Norwegian Red Cross.



With the support of the IFRC, ARCS distributed winterization kits to the most vulnerable returnees from Pakistan: (Photo: IFRC)

¹ As of this operational update, figures for people reached through services are presented separately from those reached through hot meal distributions to prevent double counting.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

Since the beginning of 2025 until 30 April 2026, Afghanistan has witnessed the return of more than 3.4² million Afghan nationals (returnees and deportees) from neighbouring countries - one of the largest cross-border population movements recorded in the region since 2021.

According to data published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), approximately 2.1 million individuals returned from Iran, while over 1.25 million returned from Pakistan, with smaller but growing movements observed from Tajikistan, Türkiye, and other countries. These movements form part of a longer trend: an estimated 5.8 million Afghans have returned since September 2023, equivalent to a 10–12 per cent increase in the country's population over two years.³

The scale, pace, and sustained nature of these returns continue to exacerbate Afghanistan's already severe humanitarian crisis. More than half of returnees arrived through western and eastern border provinces where local infrastructure, health systems, shelter capacity, and livelihood opportunities remain critically overstretched. Humanitarian partners report that despite the winter season traditionally limiting mobility, cross-border returns remained consistently high through late 2025 and into the first quarter of 2026, indicating that deportation policies, documentation pressures, and protection concerns continue to outweigh seasonal constraints on movement.

Returnees from Pakistan

Based on data from UNHCR and Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) border monitoring reports, between 1 January 2025 and 30 April 2026, an estimated 1,335,800 Afghans returned from Pakistan, of whom approximately 208,200 (15 per cent) were forcibly returned or deported.

The return trend accelerated following the implementation of the second phase of the government of Pakistan's 'Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan' (IFRP) in April 2025, initially targeting undocumented Afghans and holders of Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC). On 31 July 2025, the Government of Pakistan announced the expansion of the repatriation plan to include holders of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, significantly increasing uncertainty among the Afghan population residing in the country.

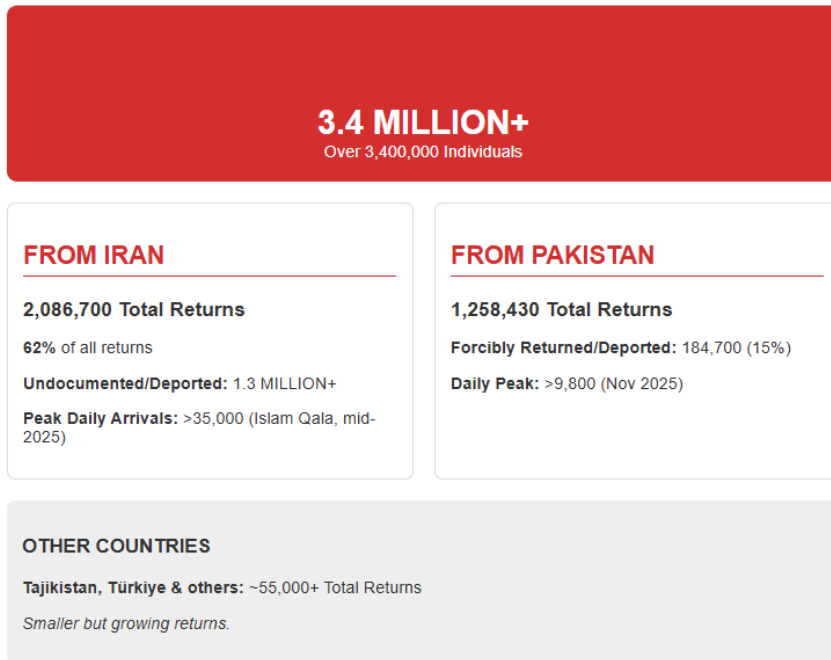
Conditions for Afghans in Pakistan deteriorated sharply over the reporting period, with increased arrests, detention, evictions, and restrictions on movement and access to services. These pressures generated a high proportion of

² [AFGHAN RETURNEES FROM IRAN AND PAKISTAN SINCE 2025](#)

³ [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. \(2026, May 19\). UN and NGOs launch 529 million USD response plan for 2.7 million Afghan returnees from Iran and Pakistan.](#)

Afghan National Returns

Period: 01/05/2025 to 30/04/2026 (12 months)



Key Entry Points: Milak-Zaranj (Nimroz), Torkham (Nangarhar), Milam Qala (Herat), Spin Boldak (Kandahar)

Figures are approximate and subject to change. Source: National authorities & IFRC monitoring.

forced and pre-emptive returns, often undertaken under distressing conditions and with minimal preparation. At the same time, escalating tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan resulted in cross-border hostilities, intermittent border closures, and disruptions to trade and humanitarian access, producing congestion and unpredictable population movements at key crossings.

According to operational monitoring by the ARCS, the highest daily influx from Pakistan during the reporting period was recorded in November 2025, with more than 9,800 individuals crossing in a single day. Most returnees entered Afghanistan through the official border crossings at Torkham (Nangarhar) and Spin Boldak (Kandahar), while smaller cross-border movements were observed through Angur Ada Border Crossing and informal crossing routes in Helmand province.

Despite temporary fluctuations linked to border closures and political negotiations, daily arrivals remained elevated through the first four months of 2026, suggesting that return movements from Pakistan are likely to continue throughout the remainder of the year.

Returnees from Iran

Returns from Iran continued to represent the largest share of cross-border movements during the reporting period. According to UNHCR and IOM border monitoring reports, between 1 January 2025 and 30 April 2026, an estimated 2,099,600 Afghan nationals returned from Iran, with approximately 1,435,400 deported. Accounting for nearly 62 per cent of all recorded returns during the period.⁴

Of these returns, more than 1.3 million were undocumented or deported individuals, reflecting intensified migration enforcement and reduced access to temporary residency mechanisms inside Iran. Return movements rose sharply between June and September 2025, with daily arrivals at times exceeding 35,000 individuals per day at the Islam Qala Border Crossing in Herat, making it one of the largest single border movements recorded in the region in recent years.

Although daily arrival rates decreased after the mid-year peak, returns remained consistently high through late 2025 and into early 2026. Most returnees entered through Islam Qala and Milak-Zaranj Border Crossing, often arriving with limited belongings, depleted savings, and urgent humanitarian needs.

Humanitarian assessments conducted by UNHCR indicate that many returnee households from Iran face acute vulnerabilities upon arrival, including lack of shelter, loss of livelihoods, absence of civil documentation, and limited access to health care. Women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and unaccompanied and separated children continue to face heightened protection risks.

Returnees from Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, entry for Afghan nationals remains limited to those possessing valid passports and visas. At the same time, humanitarian actors, including UNHCR, continue to report cases of arbitrary deportation involving recognized refugees and asylum seekers, heightening concerns about incidences of refoulement.

Between January 2025 and April 2026, approximately 2760 Afghans were recorded returning from Tajikistan. Although fewer than from Iran and Pakistan, these returns continue to raise serious protection concerns due to legal uncertainty, family separation, and restricted access to asylum procedures.⁵

Humanitarian Outlook

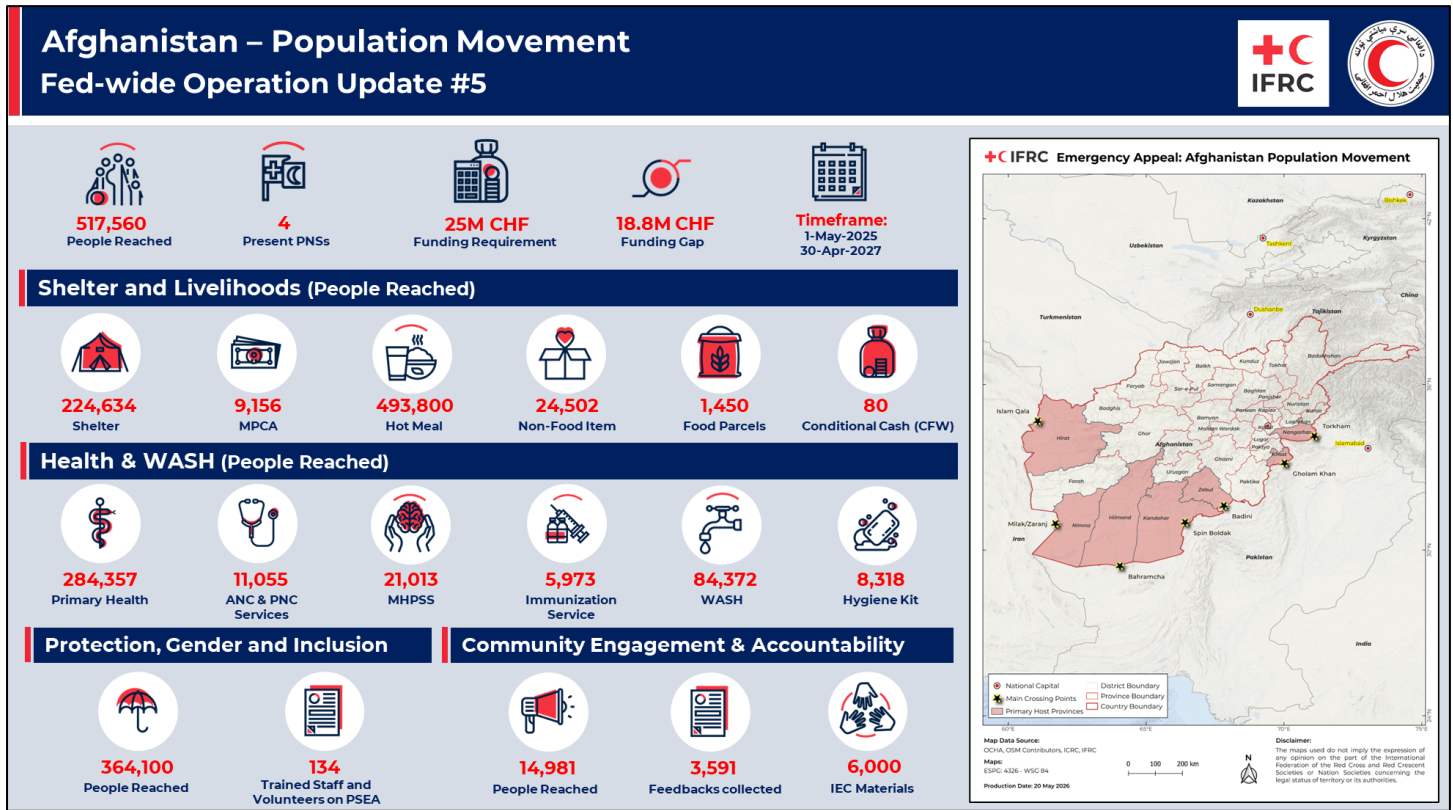
The sustained return of more than 3.4 million people in sixteen months continues to place extraordinary pressure on Afghanistan's humanitarian response capacity. Border provinces including Herat, Nangarhar, Kandahar, and Nimroz are experiencing increased strain on reception facilities, emergency health services, shelter assistance, and protection referral systems. With deportation policies in neighbouring countries expected to continue throughout 2026,

⁴ [AFGHAN RETURNES FROM IRAN AND PAKISTAN SINCE 2025](#)

⁵ UNHCR OPERATIONAL DATA PORTAL-[AFGHANISTAN](#)

humanitarian actors anticipate that cross-border returns will remain at significant levels, further increasing immediate humanitarian needs and long-term reintegration challenges across Afghanistan.

Summary of response



During the reporting period of 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026, ARCS, with the support of IFRC and Participating National Societies (PNS), delivered humanitarian assistance across nine provinces in Afghanistan. The ARCS-implemented operation in Afghanistan continues to provide life-saving response to the ongoing population movement, prioritizing both immediate humanitarian relief and seeking to address the long-term dignity of those affected. At the heart of this operation is a commitment to integrated service delivery, where shelter, nutritional support, and financial empowerment work in tandem to stabilize displaced households. By providing shelter support to 224,634 individuals and distributing nearly half a million hot meals alongside essential non-food items, the operation has addressed the most urgent survival needs of returnees. This support is increasingly bolstered by cash-based interventions, including 10,842 multi-purpose cash grants and conditional cash-for-work programmes, which empower families to manage their own recovery while simultaneously strengthening local market resilience.

Public health remains a central pillar of the response, with 284,357 primary health consultations serving as a critical safety net in strained border regions. The operation’s health strategy is holistically designed, addressing not only acute physical ailments but also the vital needs of mothers and children through over 11,000 antenatal and postnatal sessions and nearly 6,000 immunizations. Recognizing the invisible scars of displacement, the provision of over 21,000 mental health and psychosocial support sessions has been essential, while the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector’s reach to 84,372 people—complemented by the distribution of 8,318 hygiene kits—serves as a frontline defense against disease outbreaks in high-density transit areas.

Underpinning these technical interventions is a steadfast dedication to protection and accountability. Reaching 364,100 people through Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) programming, the operation ensures that aid is delivered with respect for the safety and rights of the most vulnerable. This is reinforced by a rigorous commitment to institutional integrity, evidenced by the specialized training of 134 staff and volunteers in safeguarding and the

prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). By maintaining an active dialogue with the community—facilitated by 14,981 engagement sessions, the systematic collection of 3,591 pieces of feedback, and the wide dissemination of 6,000 informational materials—the operation ensures that it remains transparent, accountable, and responsive to the evolving needs of the people it seeks to serve. Together, these efforts represent a cohesive and human-centred approach to one of the most challenging humanitarian landscapes in the world.

Needs analysis

Based on the rapid needs assessment conducted by ARCS in May 2025 at crossing points along the border with Pakistan, and the evolving situation at the Iran border at the end of June 2025, Afghan returnees urgently need food, multipurpose cash assistance, primary healthcare, clean water, sanitation facilities, and safe temporary shelter to ensure safety, dignity, and basic well-being upon arrival.

The findings of the rapid assessment are confirmed by other agencies' reports, and according to the OCHA Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) 2026, large-scale cross-border returns are among the principal drivers of humanitarian need in Afghanistan. The huge return influx in 2025 that continued through 2026 is placing significant pressure on host communities, basic services and livelihoods. These returns are compounding existing internal displacement and placing extraordinary pressure on housing, land, water, education, health services and labour markets. Overall, an estimated 21.9 million people, approximately 45 per cent of Afghanistan's population, will require humanitarian assistance in 2026⁶.

The needs facing returnees map directly onto the most severe sectoral gaps identified in the HNRP. Food insecurity is the most widespread driver. In 2026, 17.4 million people are projected to face acute food insecurity, including 4.7 million in emergency (IPC Phase 4) conditions. Approximately 15.9 million people require WASH assistance, linked to returns, prolonged drought, disease outbreaks and flooding, while an estimated 14.4 million people require health assistance; at least 422 primary healthcare facilities closed in 2025 due to funding shortfalls, affecting access for an estimated 3.3 million people. Around 4.2 million people require shelter interventions, with the return of more than 2.6 million people from Pakistan and Iran in 2025 increasing pressure on housing. In response, humanitarian partners will prioritize 17.5 million people for assistance in 2026, around 80 per cent of those in need, through a coordinated US\$1.71 billion response focused on food, shelter, healthcare, nutrition, safe water, hygiene and multi-purpose cash support.⁷

In the longer term, livelihood support including vocational training and small-scale agriculture, alongside access to permanent housing, remains critical to reducing secondary displacement and enabling sustainable reintegration.

Shelter

Returnees arriving from Pakistan and Iran are facing acute shelter challenges upon arrival, with inadequate housing leaving families exposed to harsh weather conditions throughout the year— from the harsh cold of winter to the flooding and extreme heat of warmer months. Many families are temporarily accommodated in overcrowded tents, open areas, or public structures such as mosques and schools, which are poorly insulated and structurally unsuitable for extended stays under any weather conditions. Inadequate shelter exposes returnees, particularly women, children, older persons, and people with disabilities, to heightened risks of weather-related illness, cold or heat exposure, flood damage, and protection concerns.

While ARCS and other humanitarian actors have installed emergency tents, there is a significant gap in both quantity and availability of shelter materials. In northern provinces like Kunduz, land has been allocated for returnee housing, but no formal shelter construction is underway, and permanent housing solutions remain unplanned. Shelter

⁶ [Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan Afghanistan 2026 | Afghanistan | Humanitarian Action](#)

⁷ [Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan Afghanistan 2026 | Afghanistan | Humanitarian Action](#)

remains one of the most visible and urgent unmet needs, requiring coordinated investment from both humanitarian and recovery actors.

WASH

While the ARCS has successfully provided WASH services to 84,372 people and distributed 8,318 hygiene kits, the situation at key border crossings—specifically Spin Boldak, Torkham, Islam Qala, and Milak—remains critical and overstretched. Despite these interventions, existing infrastructure is struggling to keep pace with the high volume of daily cross-border movements, returnees, and displaced populations. At Spin Boldak, while 60 bathing and sanitation units have been installed, their current design is restricted to male use, creating a significant gap in hygiene access for women and girls. Furthermore, challenges such as poor toilet maintenance, inadequate waste management, and insect infestations due to a lack of vector control continue to pose public health risks.

At Torkham, the strain on water supply and sanitation infrastructure has led to limited access to safe drinking water and insufficient handwashing facilities. The lack of standardized quality testing for water and cooling ice has introduced potential contamination risks, further heightening the threat of waterborne diseases, such as acute watery diarrhea and cholera, particularly during periods of intense overcrowding. Similar vulnerabilities are evident at the Islam Qala and Milak crossings, where reliance on water trucking and a shortage of latrines and hygiene supplies have left mobile populations—especially children, the elderly, and those with disabilities—at an increased risk of communicable disease outbreaks.

Health Services

The ARCS has provided critical medical support to 284,357 people through primary health services, including 11,055 ANC & PNC consultations, 5,973 immunizations, and 21,013 MHPSS sessions. Despite these efforts, health facilities at major border crossings remain severely strained by high demand and persistent shortages of essential medicines, equipment, and specialized personnel—particularly female healthcare workers. This staffing gap disproportionately limits access to maternal and child health services. The environment remains high-risk, with frequent cases of respiratory infections, acute diarrhea, and dehydration exacerbated by poor WASH conditions. While ongoing polio and measles vaccination campaigns are vital, there is an urgent need to expand isolation capacity for infectious cases and scale up MHPSS, especially for women and children arriving from conditions of prolonged hardship.

Livelihoods and Income Support

Addressing the severe income insecurity faced by returnees from Pakistan and Iran is a central pillar of the operation. While the programme has provided 493,800 hot meals, 1,450 food parcels, and 24,502 non-food items, the data indicates that 10,842 people have received Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) and 80 have participated in Conditional Cash (CFW) programs. However, the scale of need far exceeds current coverage. Most returnees arrive with minimal resources, necessitating an urgent expansion of cash-based assistance and cash-for-work programs to provide immediate income. Furthermore, targeted livelihood support—such as vocational training and small business grants—is essential to help households transition from total reliance on humanitarian aid toward self-sufficiency.

Protection and Psychosocial Support

The PMO operation has reached 364,100 people through PGI initiatives, supported by 134 staff and volunteers trained in PSEA to ensure a safe and dignified response. While initial assessments did not identify widespread protection violations, significant systemic barriers persist for women, children, and persons with disabilities. To address these, the operation is prioritizing the establishment of dedicated safe spaces for women and child-friendly areas, particularly at the Islam Qala and Spin Boldak crossings. Integrating comprehensive PGI services—including GBV prevention, child protection, and trauma support—into existing Marastoons and MHPSS frameworks remains a priority to ensure that the most vulnerable receive the specialized care they require.

Community Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms

Over the reporting period, meaningful progress has been made in improving communication with affected families and addressing earlier information gaps. In Islam Qala border, a full feedback and information-sharing mechanism has been established, allowing returnees to receive clear guidance on assistance, registration steps, and eligibility criteria in real time. During the reporting period, a total of 3591 community feedback have been collected and entered in the online Kobo form. Based on the ARCS observation, this has significantly reduced confusion and helped streamline support services.

In Spin Boldak and Torkham border points, some of the earlier challenges are being partially addressed through strengthened coordination with field teams and partners, resulting in more consistent and timely delivery of unified messages to returnees. Although limitations in connectivity and access still persist, ongoing efforts have contributed to better clarity on assistance-related information and health, hygiene, and psychosocial support messaging, helping reduce misinformation and uncertainty among affected families.

A total of 3,591 feedback entries were received from returnees and communities, including 1,492 compliments, 1,353 questions seeking information or clarification, 435 suggestions for service improvement, 282 complaints related to services or processes, and 29 rumours or beliefs. This reflects strong community engagement and active use of feedback mechanisms throughout the response. All feedback cases were reviewed and addressed through established response mechanisms, ensuring the feedback loop was closed, and community concerns were responded to appropriately and in a timely manner.

Operational risk assessment

The Afghanistan Population Movement response has faced significant contextual and programmatic risks during the reporting period, particularly following the increase in returns from Iran in late June and early July 2025. The following outlines the key operational risks affecting the response, ordered from most to least impactful, based on ARCS's field observations and ongoing monitoring:

- Funding shortfalls: only 26 per cent of the funding ask of 20 million CHF (IFRC EA) has been covered, which continues to constrain ARCS's capacity to sustain essential services, particularly food, shelter, WASH, and health interventions at high-volume crossing points such as Islam Qala, Milak, Torkham, and Spin Boldak.
- Sustained returnee influx: the continued influx of returnees, particularly along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, is placing additional pressure on existing response capacities and necessitates the expansion of ongoing humanitarian operations.
- Public health risks are rising due to overcrowding, limited sanitation, and inadequate access to safe water at the Spin Boldak and Milak crossings. Sharp increases in waterborne diseases, respiratory infections, and child malnutrition were reported, underscoring the likelihood of localized disease outbreaks, particularly among unvaccinated children.
- Protection risks remain high, especially for women, children, and persons with disabilities, who face elevated risks of abuse and exploitation in congested settings. The lack of gender-segregated facilities, safe spaces, and psychosocial support at several crossings, particularly at the crossing points with Iran, further compounds these vulnerabilities.
- Harsh winter conditions significantly increased humanitarian needs, particularly for winterization assistance and essential non-food items (NFIs) such as blankets to protect affected populations from cold weather.
- Concurrent disaster events: seasonal flooding, including flash floods across multiple provinces, has compounded existing vulnerabilities among returnee and host communities, damaged shelter and infrastructure, and stretched ARCS response capacity already committed to the Population Movement Operation. Overlapping emergencies increase the risk of resource competition and may delay or dilute assistance to returnees.

- Border closures between Afghanistan and Pakistan have resulted in delays in the receipt of procured and donated relief items, consequently affecting the timely provision of assistance to affected communities.
- Afghanistan–Pakistan tensions: heightened tensions along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, including periodic security incidents and cross-border restrictions, continue to disrupt the predictability of return flows and the transit of relief items. Renewed escalation could further restrict humanitarian access and supply routes, affecting timely delivery of assistance at key crossing points such as Torkham and Spin Boldak.
- Regional instability in the Middle East: escalation in the wider Middle East has contributed to the unpredictability of return flows, particularly from Iran, and risks diverting donor attention and humanitarian funding away from the Afghanistan response. Sudden shifts in the regional security environment may trigger further large-scale, unplanned returns that exceed current preparedness and response capacities.
- Access constraints, including limited road connectivity and restricted air access during the winter months, are likely to impede the timely delivery of assistance to affected border areas.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update on the strategy

The IFRC [Emergency Appeal](#), launched on 1 May 2025, contributes to the ARCS-led response to the Afghanistan Population Movement crisis, addressing urgent humanitarian needs resulting from large-scale and ongoing returns from Iran, Pakistan, and other neighbouring countries. The [Operational Strategy](#), published on 24 May 2025, outlines a 24-month operation to respond to urgent humanitarian needs of returnees and establish a pathway for early recovery and long-term reintegration into communities in areas of return. The operation addresses the scale and complexity of the needs of returnees and aims to reach 525,000 people through coordinated efforts of the IFRC Secretariat and participating Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies.

The response prioritizes life-saving assistance, including temporary shelter, basic health services including MHPSS, hot meals, cash support, and WASH, while also advancing early recovery efforts to restore livelihoods, ease pressure on host communities, and support vulnerable households to rebuild their lives and livelihoods with dignity. Nevertheless, the scale of need continues to grow. The 2026 Response Plan for Afghan Returnees (RPAR), recently published by the UN and NGO partners in Afghanistan⁸, estimates that 2.7 million Afghans will return from Iran and Pakistan between April and December 2026, placing further strain on reception capacity at border crossing points and on already over-stretched services in areas of return. Against this backdrop, continued solidarity and sustained international support are essential. The needs of returnees, many arriving with few or no assets, in deteriorating economic conditions and with limited absorption capacity in receiving communities, far exceed the resources currently available to the operation.

While the overall strategy, planned reach, and 24-month timeframe remain unchanged, implementation has been further prioritized in line with available funding. With the appeal 26 per cent covered as of April 2026, the operation continues to prioritize life-saving assistance at major border crossing points, health, including MHPSS, emergency shelter, hot meals, multi-purpose cash, and WASH, while early recovery activities, including vocational training and permanent shelter support, are sequenced and scaled according to confirmed contributions. In case additional funding resources are secured, these components will be expanded as originally planned.

ARCS, with the support of the IFRC, maintains continuous coordination to review and adjust both immediate response and early recovery activities in line with the evolving returnee situation. Building on the three planning meetings held in June 2025, regular sectoral and cross-cutting coordination has continued throughout the operation, focusing on ARCS sectoral priorities, cross-cutting components such as Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and PGI, and the periodic review of budget requirements against emerging needs and available funding.


⁸ [THE 2026 RESPONSE PLAN FOR AFGHAN RETURNEES](#)

Given the substantial funding gap and the urgent needs of returnees at border crossing points, a decision was taken in July 2025 to reallocate CHF 700,000 from the Unified Plan to bolster the Emergency Appeal, CHF 200,000 from the British Red Cross contribution and CHF 500,000 from the Finnish Red Cross contribution, following Federation-wide procedures and ensuring full transparency and accountability to donors. The Country Delegation and Asia Pacific Regional Office held partner calls on 26 May and 30 June 2025 to present the escalating returnee situation, particularly from Iran, and to advocate for increased and flexible funding, with the next partner call planned for 2026 to update partners on the evolving situation and renew advocacy for sustained, flexible funding.

In addition to the overall appeal funding, an ECHO top-up fund of EUR 2 million is being implemented, with initial activities already underway in coordination with ARCS, Danish Red Cross (DRC), and the Netherlands Red Cross (NRC), under a consortium approach, and Programme Grant Agreements drafted and reviewed by the partners.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

 Shelter, Housing and Settlements	People Reached: 224,634	
	Female > 18: 54,450	Female < 18: 60,224
	Male > 18: 52,185	Male < 18: 57,775

Objective:	<i>Provide safe and secure shelter solutions for people who have returned to Afghanistan, enhancing their safety and well-being while supporting longer-term recovery and community integration.</i>
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Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached with shelter support</i>	224,634	3,500
	<i>Number of people taking part in cash-for-work (CFW) schemes related to shelter and settlement activities</i>	-	500
	<i>Number of households who received cash assistance (conditional cash for shelter construction-community-based)</i>	-	500

Emergency Shelter Assistance

During the reporting period, ARCS delivered targeted shelter and accommodation assistance to families affected by displacement and return movements, prioritising those in the most vulnerable situations at camps and reception areas near key border crossing points. The reach achieved and the activities delivered during the reporting period are presented below. A total of 224,634 people were reached with shelter support and accommodation support after returning to Afghanistan during the reporting period. This figure reflects the cumulative number of returnees and displaced family members who stayed overnight or for short periods in camps near border crossing points. As these camps host a continuously changing transient population, the

cumulative number of people reached over the reporting period is considerably higher than the planned target, which was set for a smaller resident caseload.

In addition, a total of 5,968 people received blankets as part of the emergency relief assistance, helping returning families to cope with low temperatures while staying in temporary accommodation.

Although the shelter construction support remains a priority need, no funding has been secured through the relevant appeals to support community-based shelter construction activities. Consequently, conditional cash assistance for shelter construction was not implemented during this reporting period, and the target of 500 households has not been achieved yet.

Rental Assistance: To address the critical housing shortage and reduce protection risks among displaced populations in urban centres, the operation provided cash-for-rent support to 2,000 households (11,782 individuals) across Kabul and Kandahar. Each household received USD 60 per month over five months, totalling USD 300 per household, disbursed through Financial Service Provider (FSP) channels. By securing stable housing, these transfers reduced families' exposure to the elements and provided a foundation of safety and dignity from which to begin recovery in their new environments.

Winterization Kits Post-distribution Monitoring

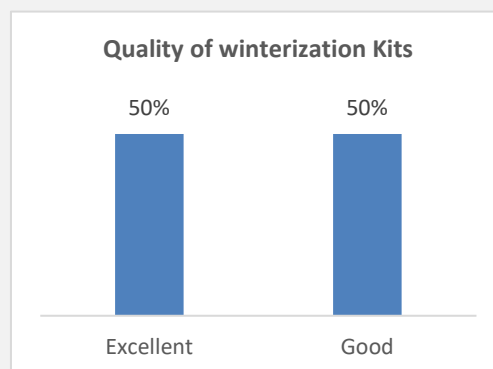
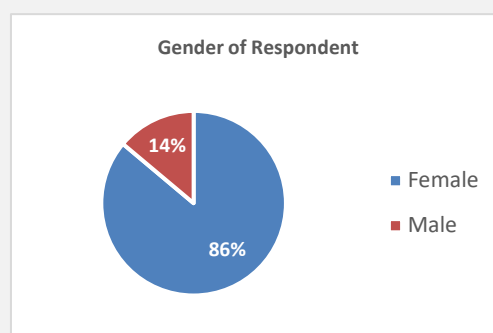
During the reporting period, the post-distribution monitoring (PDM) survey for winterization kit was conducted in Kabul with 36 respondents to assess beneficiary satisfaction, the relevance of the assistance provided, and the accountability of the distribution process. Given the small sample size, the findings are indicative rather than statistically representative.

The findings show that most respondents were female (86 per cent), while male respondents represented 14 per cent of the sample, indicating that the survey largely captured the perspectives of women beneficiaries. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (78 per cent) were between 18 and 50 years old, while 22 per cent were above 50 years of age, reflecting participation from both working-age adults and elderly individuals. All respondents were identified as returnees.

All respondents reported using the assistance received for its intended purpose. They also confirmed awareness of the ARCS beneficiary selection criteria and stated that they were treated respectfully by ARCS staff throughout the assistance process. Furthermore, all respondents reported that they did not pay any money or provide any benefit to receive assistance, suggesting that the distribution process was conducted fairly and transparently.

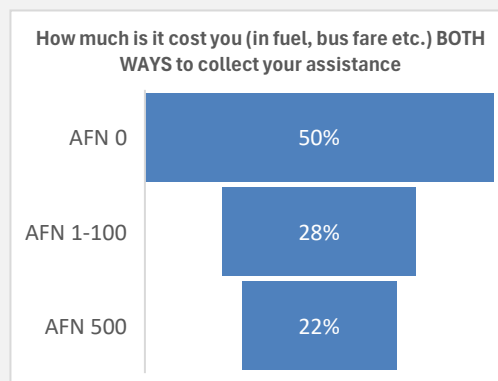
Regarding the quality of assistance, 50 per cent of respondents rated the assistance items as excellent, while the remaining 50 per cent rated them as good, reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the support provided. Most respondents (94 per cent) stated that the quantity of assistance was adequate for their household size, while a small proportion (6 per cent) considered it insufficient due to the large number of household members. Similarly, 94 per cent of respondents confirmed that ARCS staff conducted sensitization sessions before the distribution, while 6 per cent reported that they did not receive such sessions.

The findings further indicate that the distribution process was generally accessible and responsive to beneficiaries' needs. Most respondents (97 per cent) reported that the distribution point was conveniently

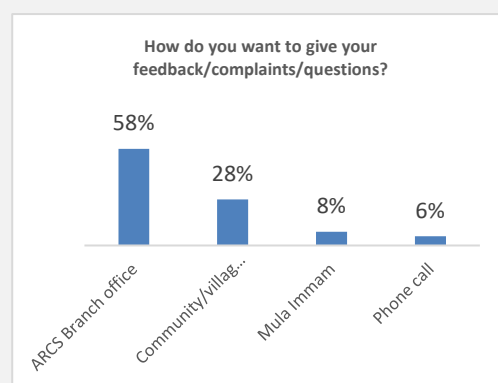


located, while only 3 per cent experienced difficulties accessing the site due to the long distance from their homes.

Regarding transportation costs, 50 per cent of respondents reported no travel expenses to collect the assistance, 28 per cent spent between AFN 1–100, and 22 per cent spent around AFN 500 on transportation. A large majority of respondents (97 per cent) confirmed that the assistance addressed their main urgent needs, while only 3 per cent stated that it did not fully meet their priority needs. In terms of communication channels, most respondents learned about the distribution through the ARCS provincial office (56 per cent), while 44 per cent received information through community or village elders, highlighting strong community-level communication support.



For feedback and complaint mechanisms, respondents preferred using the ARCS branch office (58 per cent) as the main channel for raising concerns or providing feedback. Other preferred channels included community or village elders (28 per cent), Mula Imams (8 per cent), and phone calls (6 per cent). These findings demonstrate that beneficiaries trust both formal ARCS mechanisms and community-based channels for communication and accountability.



These findings will be shared with the ARCS distribution team to inform future planning. Priority follow-up actions include reviewing household-size considerations in kit composition to better address the needs of larger families, ensuring that pre-distribution sensitization sessions reach all selected beneficiaries, and exploring transport support or distribution points closer to the homes of households located far from collection sites.



Livelihoods

People Reached: 364,180

Female > 18:
90,060

Female < 18:
95,630

Male > 18:
86,609

Male < 18: **91,881**

Objective:

Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

Number of people reached with livelihoods support

80

4,000

Number of people supported in starting or improving their income-generation activities

-

2,000

Number of people who have completed training or awareness-raising sessions on improved income-generation risk management practices

-

2,000

<i>Number of people provided or supported with formal or informal technical, vocational or professional education or training opportunities</i>	-	2,000
<i>Number of volunteers and staff trained in livelihoods</i>	-	100
<i>Number of people reached with essential inputs, materials, or tools for income-generation</i>	-	2,000
<i>Number of households that received conditional cash to start income-generating activities</i>	247	2,000
<i>Number of households that received cash for tools and equipment under the CFW programme</i>	80	2,000

Hot Meal Distribution

During the reporting period, ARCS provided hot meals to a total of 364,100 returnees and vulnerable people across key border crossing points and transit locations in Kandahar, Herat, and Nimroz provinces. The assistance was delivered to support the immediate food needs of returnees arriving in difficult humanitarian conditions, many of whom had undertaken long journeys with limited access to food and basic services.

The hot meal distributions contributed to improving the dignity and wellbeing of affected populations upon arrival, particularly for vulnerable groups including women, children, older persons, and people with disabilities. The intervention also helped reduce immediate food insecurity among newly arrived returnees while complementing broader humanitarian assistance provided at the crossing points and reception areas.

ARCS volunteers and staff continued to support the implementation and monitoring of food distributions to ensure timely, safe, and organized service delivery in high-traffic locations experiencing large-scale return movements throughout the reporting period.

Cash for Work for Waste Management

ARCS implemented Cash-for-Work (CFW) activities in Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces to provide vulnerable returnee households with temporary income-generating opportunities while contributing to improved living conditions in displacement-affected areas. In Nangarhar, 60 people were engaged in daily waste management activities in Jalalabad (Omari Camp); in Kandahar, 20 people were engaged in Spin Boldak (Takhta Pul). Participants were employed for 26 working days each, at a daily rate of AFN 400 (approximately CHF 5), determined in alignment with prevailing local labour market rates and ARCS standard rates. Each participant received a total of AFN 12,000 (approximately CHF 150), disbursed through a Financial Service Provider (FSP) to ensure secure and dignified delivery. In total, 80 people benefited from CFW activities, providing short-term livelihood support and helping vulnerable households meet immediate basic needs.

In addition, a total of 247 returnee households received conditional cash assistance to establish income-generating activities (IGAs) based on their own skills, experience, market opportunities, and livelihood preferences. Through a participatory selection process, beneficiaries identified and launched a diverse range of small businesses, including poultry farming, electrical repair services, automotive mechanics, food processing, tailoring, retail shops, fruit vending, and other community-based enterprises.

The conditional cash support enabled households to invest in productive assets, purchase essential equipment and materials, and initiate sustainable livelihood activities upon their return. The intervention aimed to strengthen

household self-reliance, improve income generation opportunities, and reduce economic vulnerability among returnee families. At the end of each month, each laborer received AFN 12,000 (CHF 150) in cash through a designated FSP, based on verified attendance and a clear timesheet report documenting the days worked.

Fed-wide

During the reporting period, ARCS, with the support of the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) provided hot meals across multiple provinces, including Kabul, Paktya, Herat, Zabul, Nuristan, Nangarhar, and Ghor. Through these interventions, a total of 121,600 people were reached with essential healthcare services in underserved and crisis-affected communities.



Multi-purpose Cash

People Reached: 7,895

Female > 18: **1,520** Female < 18: 2,631

Male > 18: **1,358** Male < 18: 2,386

Objective: *Households are provided with unconditional/multipurpose cash grants to address their basic needs*

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people provided with unconditional cash assistance</i>	7,895	35,000

During the reporting period, ARCS, with IFRC support, implemented MPCA activities in Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Zabul provinces, targeting vulnerable households affected by displacement, return movements, and deteriorating economic conditions. A total of 1,127 households (7,895 people) received one round of unconditional cash assistance, enabling families to prioritize and address their most urgent needs in a flexible and dignified manner.

The transfer value was set at AFN 10,500 (approximately CHF 133) per household, equivalent to 80 per cent of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) and is fully aligned with the recommendations of the Cash Working Group (CWG). The transfer covered a single instalment designed to address households' immediate and prioritized needs across food, non-food items, and other essential expenditures.

Transfers were disbursed through a qualified Financial Service Provider (FSP) selected through a transparent procurement process, using over the counter cash to ensure timely, secure, and dignified delivery to beneficiaries.

In Kandahar province, 584 people received MPCA support in Kandahar city, while in Nangarhar province, 1,102 people were assisted in Jalalabad. In Zabul province, assessments and targeting activities were conducted across several districts, including Arghandab, Atghar, Daychopan, Kakar, Mizan, Nawbahar, Qalat, Shah Joi, Shamul Zayi, Shinkay, and Tarnak Wa Jaldak, and an overall 6,209 people received the MPCA assistance.

A total of 7,895 people were reached with IFRC-supported multipurpose cash assistance against a target of 35,000, approximately 22 per cent of the indicator target. This target was established for the full duration and full funding requirement of the Emergency Appeal and is not a reporting-period milestone; delivery against it is necessarily phased in line with the contributions confirmed to date. The variance between the actual and target figures reflects the level of funding available for cash programming rather than any limitation in implementation capacity, community access, or operational readiness.

The MPCA intervention played an important role in strengthening the coping capacity of vulnerable families facing significant humanitarian and socio-economic challenges. The cash assistance helped households cover essential expenses such as food, shelter, healthcare, transportation, and other immediate household needs, reducing negative coping mechanisms and supporting families to make decisions based on their own priorities. For many returnee and vulnerable households, the assistance provided temporary financial relief during a period marked by rising needs, limited livelihood opportunities, and increased pressure on already strained community resources.

ARCS staff and volunteers supported the implementation of the intervention through beneficiary identification, verification, registration, distribution monitoring, and post-distribution follow-up to ensure accountable, transparent, and timely delivery of assistance. Coordination with local authorities and communities also contributed to improving access to vulnerable populations and strengthening the overall effectiveness of the response.

PDM for MPCA

A PDM exercise was conducted to assess the effectiveness and accountability of cash assistance provided to recently returned populations from Pakistan and Iran. The intervention targeted returnee households in Kabul, Kandahar, and Zabul provinces (1,000 HHs/province).

A total of 310 beneficiary households were interviewed during the PDM survey. The sample was proportionally distributed across the targeted areas based on the number of beneficiaries in each location to ensure balanced representation of different communities and beneficiary groups. The survey primarily targeted household heads or adult household representatives who were knowledgeable about the assistance received and household utilization of the cash support.


Key findings

- The survey findings show that the assistance primarily reached adult returnee households, with 95 per cent of respondents identified as heads of households and 97 per cent being male. Most respondents (81 per cent) were between 18–50 years old, while 17 per cent were above 50 years of age. Household sizes were generally medium to large, with 38 per cent reporting 4–6 family members and another 38 per cent reporting 7–9 members. Almost all respondents were returnees.
- Regarding beneficiary selection and communication, 100 per cent of respondents were aware of the amount of cash assistance distributed, reflecting strong transparency. More than half (55 per cent) reported receiving sensitization messages about programme objectives and beneficiary selection, while 45 per cent did not receive such information. Satisfaction with the registration and selection process was extremely high, with 99 per cent expressing satisfaction. The ARCS provincial office was identified as the main information source by 92 per cent of respondents.
- Concerning the distribution process, 82 per cent of respondents considered the distribution site convenient, although 18 per cent reported difficulties mainly due to long distances. Travel time was significant for many households, with 38 per cent traveling more than one hour to reach the site. Transportation costs varied, with 34 per cent spending AFN 1–100, while some households reported much higher costs. Waiting times were also lengthy, as 42 per cent of respondents waited more than one hour before receiving assistance.
- s widely viewed as useful and effective. A total of 97 per cent of respondents stated that the assistance helped meet their urgent needs, while 94 per cent considered the cash amount adequate for their household size. The majority (88 per cent) spent the cash primarily on food, followed by debt repayment (6 per cent) and medical expenses (5 per cent). Decision-making on cash use was mainly shared jointly between husbands and wives in 75 per cent of households.

- Findings on CEA showed that 76 per cent of respondents were aware of the existence of feedback or complaint mechanisms, while 24 per cent were not. Despite this, almost no respondents used the formal complaint system. Preferred feedback channels included the ARCS branch office (56.8 per cent) and phone calls (26.1 per cent).
- PGI findings were positive, with 96 per cent of respondents confirming that vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, elderly people, pregnant women, and mothers with infants, were prioritized during the distribution. In addition, all respondents reported feeling safe while transporting and keeping the cash assistance.

Fed-wide

During the reporting period, ARCS, with support from DRC, implemented MPCA activities in Herat province to support vulnerable returnees and crisis-affected households facing severe economic hardship. Through this intervention, 1,261 people were reached with cash assistance aimed at helping families meet their most urgent basic needs in a flexible and dignified manner.

 Health & Care <i>(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)</i>		People Reached: 125,780	
		Female > 18: 28,503	Female < 18: 34,557
		Male > 18: 27,131	Male < 18: 35,589
Objective:	<i>Strengthening holistic individual and community health of the population impacted through community level interventions and health system strengthening</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached through primary health care by the National Society</i>	125,780 (62,720 male, 63,060 female)	350,000
	<i>Number of childbirths attended by a skilled health worker in a health facility operated by the National Society</i>	30	350
	<i>Number of functional mobile health service units providing quality primary health care</i>	9 (5 MHTs and 4 HCs)	31
	<i>Number of antenatal and postnatal care visits delivered by a skilled health worker in a health facility operated by the National Society</i>	11,055	22,400
	<i>Number of people reached with immunization services</i>	5,973	67,200
	<i>Number of people reached with mental health and psychosocial support services.</i>	5,579	35,000
	<i>Number of volunteers trained in CBHFA, NCD, HP, ECV, nutrition screening, and RH+</i>	80	1,600
Primary Health Care			

Between May 2025 and April 2026 (inclusive), ARCS, with IFRC support, provided primary health care services to 125,780 people, including 62,720 men and 63,060 women. In addition, with support from DRC, ARCS implemented primary healthcare activities in Herat and Nangarhar provinces from April to October 2025, reaching a total of 41,861 people, including 21,349 men and boys and 20,512 women and girls. The intervention aimed to improve access to essential healthcare services for vulnerable communities affected by displacement, return movements, and ongoing humanitarian challenges.

In Herat province, primary healthcare services reached 30,245 people, including 15,425 men and boys and 14,820 women and girls. In Nangarhar province, a further 11,616 people benefited from healthcare services, including 5,924 men and boys and 5,692 women and girls. The activities focused on providing outpatient consultations, basic treatment, health screening, referrals, and preventive healthcare services to underserved and crisis-affected populations. The intervention contributed to improving timely access to healthcare, strengthening early detection and referral of medical cases, and reducing health risks among vulnerable groups, particularly women, children, older persons, and returnee families.

ARCS health teams and volunteers played a key role in delivering healthcare services, conducting community outreach, and supporting awareness-raising activities to improve community access to health information and essential medical assistance. The intervention also helped reduce pressure on overstretched local health facilities in areas experiencing increased humanitarian needs and population movements.

Since July, 5 out of 11 Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) remain operational along with 4 Health Camps. Initially, 11 MHTs were deployed to multiple locations to address urgent health needs during the peak of the crisis in May 2025. As the number of returnees decreased, the number of active teams was gradually reduced, with locally based MHTs continuing service delivery on the ground.

Outpatient Care

From May 2025 to April 2026, a total of 125,780 people received primary health services, comprising 63,060 women and 62,720 men. The consultations addressed various health conditions, including respiratory infections, dehydration, diarrhoea, pneumonia, conjunctivitis, and non-communicable diseases.

Reproductive Health

A total of 11,055 women visited health facilities for family planning education sessions, including 7,415 who received antenatal care and 3,640 who received postnatal care.

Nutrition Screening

In total, 31,884 children (16,472 girls and 15,412 boys) were screened for malnutrition. Out of these, 27,355 children had no acute malnutrition, 3,483 had moderate malnutrition, and 1,046 had severe acute malnutrition, requiring follow-up care. Some cases were directly treated by the ARCS health team with RUTF and RUSF, and other acute cases are referred to other agencies.

Maternal and Child Health

Thirty (30) normal deliveries were safely conducted at ARCS clinics in Nangarhar. Overall, 11,107 maternal, and child health services were provided to the women in the communities.

Health Education


ARCS conducted awareness sessions on hygiene, disease prevention, and health-seeking behaviour, reaching approximately 67,729 people.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

A total of 5,579 people were reached with MHPSS through the health facilities in different provinces. These services included psychological first aid, counselling, emotional support, and stress management sessions, tailored to the needs of returnees facing trauma, distress, and uncertainty. Most cases were related to acute stress, with both men and women experiencing symptoms such as fainting and seizures. The psychological toll is largely driven by the fear of restarting life in Afghanistan, particularly among those who have never previously lived in the country. Returnees highlighted uncertainty about the future, limited livelihood opportunities, and concerns for their children's well-being as primary stressors. Men expressed deep anxiety over their inability to provide for their families, while women reported significant emotional strain from caring for children under extremely difficult conditions.

Fed-wide

With support from the DRC, ARCS continues to provide MHPSS services at Torkham and Islam Qala. During the reporting period, 15,434 people were reached through MHPSS services by DRC at the border crossing points of Herat and Nangarhar.

 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	People Reached: 38,172	
	Female > 18: 9,161	Female < 18: 9,925
	Male > 18: 8,779	Male < 18: 10,307

Objective:	<i>Ensure safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and adequate hygiene awareness of the communities during relief and recovery phases of the Emergency Operation, through community and organizational interventions</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</i>	38,172	10,500
	<i>Number of handwashing facilities constructed or rehabilitated</i>	12	36
	<i>Number of sanitation facilities constructed or rehabilitated</i>	60	36
	<i>Number of dignity kits distributed (MHM kits)</i>	96	1,650
	<i>Number of family hygiene kits distributed</i>	200	1,260

There has been no change since the previous report, as DREF funding allocated to WASH activities has been fully utilized. Further funding allocations for WASH are planned and will be reflected in the next operational update.

To address critical water and sanitation needs at key border crossings, particularly at Islam Qala and Torkham, the ARCS, with support from the IFRC, has scaled up its WASH interventions.


Constructing Hand washing Facilities Construction: A total of 12 handwashing facilities were constructed and rehabilitated at key service delivery points and high-traffic locations to improve access to safe hygiene facilities for returnees and vulnerable communities. The intervention aimed to strengthen infection prevention and control measures, promote safe hygiene practices, and reduce the risk of communicable diseases in crowded environments, particularly at border crossing points and temporary settlement areas.

Water Distribution through Water Tank: ARCS installed a 3,000-litre water storage tank with 10 portable handwashing facilities at the Islam Qala crossing point and Milak border, installed near the main gates as well as next to the toilets and ARCS blocks. In addition, daily trucking of 15,000 litres of water, reaching approximately 33,676 people (about 813 returnees per day). Furthermore, a bottle of drinking water was distributed daily alongside hot meals to support returnees facing dehydration, especially during extreme heat conditions.

Installation of Latrines: In Torkham (Omari Camp), 60 portable latrines were installed, each serving up to 50 people, providing sanitation coverage for approximately 3,000 people daily. However, the reduction in returnee arrivals at Islam Qala has eased pressure on sanitation facilities.

Family Hygiene Kits Distribution: To promote personal hygiene and support sanitation practices, ARCS distributed 200 family hygiene kits; 150 in Torkham and 50 in Islam Qala, benefiting an estimated 1,400 returnees. Additionally, 96 dignity kits were distributed -80 in Islam Qala and 16 in Milak, benefiting 96 women by the end of July 2025.

Hygiene Kits Distribution: To promote personal hygiene and support sanitation practices, ARCS distributed 350 hygiene kits in Islam Qala, and 300 hygiene kits were distributed in Umari Camp-Torkham.

 Community Engagement and Accountability		People Reached: 14,981	
		Female > 18: 1,125	Female < 18: 5,487
		Male > 18: 1,135	Male < 18: 7,081
Objective:	<i>Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of staff, volunteers, and leadership trained on community engagement and accountability</i>	100	100
	<i>Number of methods established to communicate with communities about what is happening in the organization/programme/operation, including selection criteria, if these are being used</i>	3	3
	<i>Number of methods used to enable communities to participate in planning and managing services, programmes, and operations</i>	3	3
	<i>Number of community perception and feedback reports produced</i>	3	12
	<i>Number of feedback comments collected, disaggregated by sex, age and disability, including sensitive feedback linked to SEA, fraud, corruption, or protection concerns</i>	3,591	500

ARCS, with the IFRC support, strengthened CEA by conducting a needs assessment in August in Islam Qala border point and developing a standardized [CEA plan](#) and [guidelines](#) for information desks. Findings from the assessment informed the design of the help desks, key messaging, and priority feedback categories. As part of these efforts, a total of 100 staff, volunteers, and leadership members in Herat and Nimroz have been trained on CEA, PGI and Safeguarding.

ARCS volunteers continued responding to over 500 daily inquiries related to food, shelter, sanitation, transport, and other available services offered by ARCS and humanitarian partners. Two couples of volunteers have been deployed in Islam Qala and Torkham borders to support the rollout of the digital feedback systems, specifically to collect feedback from returnees, document it and report findings to the relevant departments for further analysis and response. By the end of March 2026, a total of 3,591 community feedback have been collected and addressed in a timely manner.

To date, three communication methods, including information/help desks, outreach volunteers, and printed IEC materials, have been established and are actively used to share information with communities on services, processes, and selection criteria, meeting the planned target. In addition, 6,000 IEC materials have been distributed to households and individual returnees upon arrival at the border to ensure communities are informed about available services and assistance.

ARCS information on providing services at border points was shared with the existing help desks of other international organizations to ensure that ARCS services are included in the information available to returnees. This coordinated approach avoids duplication of effort and ensures that returnees receive consistent and accurate information through a single, consolidated source rather than multiple, separate help desks. It also strengthens collaboration between ARCS and humanitarian partners operating at the border. Through these mechanisms, ARCS has produced three community perception and feedback reports to date and collected over 3,500 feedback comments, disaggregated by sex, age, and disability, exceeding the initial target of 500 feedback entries.

During the reporting period, a total of 14,981 people were reached through CEA activities, encompassing 3,591 individuals who provided feedback, 6,000 IEC materials distributed, 1,550 person reached through information sharing session in HSPs, 3,649 people reached through information desks at crossing points, 91 people who participated in consultation meetings, and 100 ARCS staff and volunteers received the cross-cutting training.

 Protection, Gender, and Inclusion		People Reached: 364,100	
		Female > 18: N/A	Female < 18: N/A
		Male > 18: N/A	Male < 18: N/A
Objective:	<i>Communities identify the needs of the most at risk and particularly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, due to inequality, discrimination and other non-respect of their human rights and address their distinct needs</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of volunteers mobilised disaggregated by gender</i>	90	200
	<i>Number of people reached by information dissemination sessions on menstrual hygiene management (MHM)</i>	500	500

<i>Number of people reached by protection, gender, and inclusion programming</i>	2680	3,000
<i>Number of National Society staff and volunteers trained in prevention and protection of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and all forms of child safeguarding</i>	134	300
<i>The ARCS applies the IFRC minimum standards for PGI in emergencies</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>The ARCS engages a PGI focal person</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>The ARCS engages a safeguarding focal person</i>	Yes	Yes

By maintaining standards and principles of safeguarding and community engagement, the operation ensures that the dignity of the most vulnerable—particularly women, children, and those requiring specialized protection—remains at the forefront of the humanitarian response.

Below are some key highlights:

- Capacity Building and Institutional Standards:** A cornerstone of the PMO effectiveness is the professional development of its workforce. To date, 134 National Society staff and volunteers have been trained in the prevention and protection of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and child safeguarding, working toward a target of 300. This is supported by the formal appointment of dedicated PGI and safeguarding focal persons within the ARCS, ensuring that IFRC minimum standards for PGI in emergencies are consistently applied across all field activities.
- Community Engagement and Reach:** The operation has achieved a significant scale in its protective outreach, reaching 364,100 individuals through its PGI-focused programming. These efforts are complemented by specialized outreach, such as information dissemination sessions on MHM, which have successfully reached 500 individuals to date.
- Volunteer Mobilization:** The operation continues to rely on a robust network of volunteers to bridge the gap between aid and the community. Currently, 90 volunteers (68-male, 22-emale) have been actively mobilized, with ongoing efforts to expand this network to 200, ensuring that the operation maintains a strong, gender-balanced presence on the ground to support the diverse needs of returnees and displaced families.

 Migration and Displacement	People Reached: -		
	Female > 18: -	Female < 18: -	
	Male > 18: -	Male < 18: -	
Objective:	<i>Communities support the needs of migrants and their families and those assisting migrants at all stages of migration (origin, transit and destination)</i>		
Indicator	Actual	Target	

Key indicators:	<i>Number of Preparedness and Contingency Planning on Large-Scale Return</i>	-	1
	<i>National Society has undertaken any data collection, research, analysis or other information management initiatives to better assist and protect people on the move/returnees</i>	Yes	Yes
	<i>Number of staff and volunteers trained in Migration and Displacement</i>	-	100

From January 2025 to April 2026, Afghanistan continued to experience large-scale return movements from both Iran and Pakistan, placing sustained pressure on border provinces and communities of return. According to UN agencies and humanitarian partners, approximately 3.5 million Afghans returned during 2025, while an additional estimated 600,000 people returned during the first four months of 2026. Most returns were from Iran, driven by stricter immigration enforcement measures, deportations, reduced access to services, and increasing socio-economic pressures faced by undocumented Afghans. Returns from Pakistan also continued at significant levels, including deportations linked to the Government of Pakistan’s repatriation and documentation enforcement measures. [UNAMA](#)

Return movements peaked during mid-2025, particularly between June and July, before gradually stabilizing toward the end of the year. However, return rates remained substantially higher than in previous years. In Pakistan, the expiration of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards and continued policy enforcement in neighbouring countries contributed to fluctuating return trends throughout the reporting period. In early 2026, humanitarian actors continued to report high levels of deportations and forced returns, particularly from Iran, further increasing humanitarian needs at border crossing points and in areas of destination within Afghanistan. [UNHCR](#)

The large-scale returns continued to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, including limited access to shelter, livelihoods, healthcare, and protection services, especially during the winter period and early 2026. Women, children, older persons, and people with disabilities remained among the most vulnerable groups affected by the return movements.

To support evidence-based response planning, data collection and monitoring activities were conducted by the ARCS Disaster Management Department, which closely tracked returnee movements and priority humanitarian needs at border locations and areas of return. In parallel, ARCS continued to maintain and utilize its Health Management Information System (HMIS) to monitor the delivery of health services, including outpatient consultations, immunization coverage, and maternal and child health interventions among affected populations.

Enabling approaches



National Society Strengthening

Objective:	<i>Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of staff and volunteers reporting enhanced capacity for preparing and responding to emergencies</i>	1,025	310

<i>Number of branches with strengthened mechanisms for responding to prioritized threats</i>	0	5
<i>Number of branch warehouses optimized with required systems and supporting infrastructure for enhanced operations</i>	0	5
<i>The National Society has a fully updated database, management structure, and the required institutional arrangements for recruitment, engagement, and retention of volunteers</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>The National Society has an enhanced information management capacity to support its operations and strengthen accountability</i>	0	1

The orientation workshop for a Logistics and Supply Chain Management (LSCM) Assessment has been conducted, that have produced recommendations. The training report has been developed. The ARCS is equipped with assessment tools to conduct self-assessment and provide recommendations, develop Plan of Action to address logistics gaps.

In parallel, ARCS continues investment in its Digital Transformation, with a Digital Maturity Assessment set for rollout following leadership approval, report developed and shared with ARCS. Volunteer integration remains a central focus, with structured discussions leading to a draft Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy, updates to the Volunteer Database, and the expansion of the Volunteer Management System to strengthen volunteer rights, duty of care, and retention.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:	<i>Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster</i>		
Key indicators	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of strategic partnerships the National Society is engaged in</i>	-	5
	<i>Number of ARCS Leadership and SMT HD engagements set to influence the diplomatic corps to continue to support Afghans on the move and influence positive humanitarian outcomes</i>	1	8
	<i>Partner engagement strategies are developed to maximize the ARCS' resources to be able to roll out key programmatic interventions</i>	-	Yes
	<i>Key HD messages and reactive lines are updated quarterly to reflect the ARCS' response operations in the crisis showcasing their value added as a leading local organization</i>	-	Yes
	<i>Number of formal interagency/international coordination platforms the IFRC network is a part of</i>	7	7

ARCS, with the support of the IFRC, maintained close coordination with government authorities, humanitarian organizations, and Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners to support the response to the increasing number of returnees. Regular engagement in national and inter-agency coordination mechanisms helped ensure information sharing, avoid duplication, and strengthen collaboration among humanitarian actors.

Movement partners remained actively engaged in supporting both emergency response and longer-term development initiatives across the country. Participating National Societies contributed to a range of programmes, including health services, mental health and psychosocial support, relief assistance, and support at key border entry points. Regular consultations with partner National Societies strengthened collaboration in priority areas such as health, livelihoods, women’s empowerment, disaster preparedness, and climate resilience, while reaffirming their commitment to supporting ARCS's strategic priorities.

A significant milestone during the reporting period was the finalization, publication, and dissemination of the ARCS Strategic Plan. Developed through a collaborative process involving ARCS, IFRC, and Movement partners, the strategy provides a clear vision and direction for the National Society's humanitarian and organizational development priorities and serves as a key framework for guiding future partnerships, resource mobilization, and programme implementation.

To promote effective coordination and transparency, ARCS continued to share operational updates, situation reports, and planning information with Movement and humanitarian partners. Regular coordination and joint planning discussions supported resource mobilization efforts, strengthened complementarity among partners, and contributed to a more coherent and effective response to both immediate humanitarian needs and longer-term recovery and resilience challenges.



Secretariat Services

Objective:	<i>Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of technical and monitoring visits conducted</i>	3	20
	<i>Number of evaluations conducted (MTR and final evaluation)</i>	-	2
	<i>Number of surges profiles deployed</i>	10	2

The IFRC Country Delegation continued to support ARCS in delivering an effective and well-coordinated response to the returnee crisis. Through operational guidance, technical expertise, and coordination support, IFRC contributed to strengthening planning, implementation, resource management, monitoring, communications, logistics, and security functions. These efforts enabled ARCS to respond more efficiently to growing humanitarian needs while reinforcing organizational capacity and operational readiness.

Communications and Humanitarian Diplomacy

Throughout the reporting period, IFRC supported communications and humanitarian diplomacy efforts to increase awareness of the needs of returnees and the response being provided by ARCS. Photos, videos, human-interest stories, media interviews, and other communication materials were produced and shared to enhance visibility,

support advocacy efforts, and promote engagement with partners and donors. These materials are available through the following links:

- IFRC shaRED (<https://shared.ifrc.org/collections/~9be0e1552a>)
- <https://shared.ifrc.org/collections/~5c214f57dd>, <https://shared.ifrc.org/collections/~f3a91855e3>)
- IFRC X (Twitter), and LinkedIn. Stories of Afghan returnees from Pakistan were also shared to highlight the humanitarian efforts; [FB](#), [IG](#) (Nov 2025)
- [Media interview](#) (May 2026), [LinkedIn](#) (March 2026), [LinkedIn](#) (Feb 2026)

Links for stories shared: [Afghan returnees: A story of endurance amidst uncertainty](#)

Throughout the reporting period, ARCS, with support from the IFRC, invested in outreach, public information, and stakeholder engagement to increase awareness of the humanitarian situation facing returnees and to highlight the ongoing response efforts. Communication activities focused on documenting the experiences of affected populations, showcasing humanitarian action at border crossing points, and promoting understanding of emerging needs among partners, donors, media, and the wider public.

A range of multimedia and media engagement initiatives were undertaken, including field-based storytelling, photography, video production, digital content, media briefings, and interviews. Coverage of the returnee response was featured through national media outlets, while field missions to key border locations enabled the collection of first-hand accounts and visual content illustrating the challenges faced by returnees and the assistance provided by ARCS. These efforts helped amplify the voices of affected communities and strengthened advocacy for continued humanitarian support.

Communication products and operational updates were regularly disseminated through ARCS and IFRC communication channels, contributing to greater visibility of the response and fostering engagement with humanitarian partners and supporters. Ongoing communication and documentation efforts continue to capture developments on the ground and support advocacy for the needs of returnees and host communities.

Logistics

Throughout the reporting period, logistics operations focused on ensuring the uninterrupted availability of essential relief items and operational equipment required to support ARCS response activities at major border crossing points. Significant efforts were made to procure, transport, and position relief supplies to enable timely assistance to returning populations and strengthen operational readiness.

By the end of April 2026, a wide range of relief and operational items had been delivered and handed over to ARCS. These included family and refugee tents, portable latrines, sanitary and dignity kits, winterization items, blankets, family hygiene kits, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) kits, communication equipment, lighting equipment, and medical supplies. The delivery of these items enhanced ARCS's capacity to provide temporary shelter, improve living conditions at reception sites, support health and hygiene needs, and maintain response operations in challenging environments.

To further strengthen preparedness and response capacity, additional family tents, two Rubb Halls for key border locations, and supplementary operational equipment were dispatched during the reporting period. Furthermore, medical kits were provided to replenish ARCS emergency stocks and support the continuity of health services for returnees and vulnerable communities. These logistics interventions played a critical role in maintaining the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and ensuring that essential assistance remained available at high-priority operational locations.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER)

Throughout the reporting period, PMER support focused on strengthening monitoring, reporting, and operational learning to support an effective response to the evolving returnee situation. Regular operational updates and information products were produced to provide timely analysis, track progress, and inform decision-making across the operation. In response to the significant increase in return movements, particularly from Iran, operational plans, budgets, and monitoring frameworks were reviewed and updated to reflect changing needs and priorities.

Efforts were also made to strengthen data quality and reporting systems through close collaboration between IFRC and ARCS teams, improving the consistency, accuracy, and timeliness of information collected across operational locations. Technical support and capacity strengthening were provided to ARCS staff on monitoring, data management, verification, and reporting processes, contributing to more evidence-based planning and implementation. Additional surge support further enhanced PMER capacity, helping to ensure effective monitoring and reporting across multiple emergency operations, including the population movement response.

Information Management (IM)

Information Management (IM) support contributed to enhanced operational coordination, planning, and decision-making through the production of timely information products and analytical outputs. Regular mapping, data visualization, and situation analysis were developed to support operational monitoring, track population movements, and provide a clearer understanding of emerging humanitarian needs. These information products informed operational reporting and strategic discussions across the response, contributing to the development of situation updates and other key reporting outputs. Through continuous analysis and information sharing, the IM function helped strengthen situational awareness and supported evidence-based planning and coordination among ARCS, IFRC, and partner organizations. The [IFRC GO emergency page](#) continues to be actively maintained with timely and relevant updates, ensuring consistent information flow and situational awareness across the IFRC network and partners.

Safety & Security

Situation was continuously monitored throughout the operation, with particular attention to changes in the regional context, cross-border dynamics, and relations with Pakistan and Iran. Security risk analysis and contextual updates were regularly shared with operational teams and management. Field security assessments were conducted in border areas, transit locations, zero points, reception centers, and camps. In coordination with the National Society, mitigation measures and site-specific security arrangements were identified, proposed, and implemented to support safe humanitarian operations and population movement management. Security briefings and operational safety guidance were provided to staff, volunteers, visitors, and surge personnel operating in or visiting the areas of operation.

Real-time security awareness updates, alerts, and incident notifications were disseminated to ensure timely decision-making and risk mitigation. Liaison and coordination were maintained with local authorities, community representatives, humanitarian actors, and relevant stakeholders to facilitate access, information sharing, and operational acceptance. Movement tracking, route assessments, and travel security support were conducted for field missions and deployments. Incident reporting and monitoring mechanisms were maintained throughout the response, including follow-up on security incidents, analysis of trends, and recommendations for corrective and preventive measures. Contingency planning and emergency preparedness measures were also strengthened to address potential deterioration of the security situation, large-scale influxes, civil unrest, border closures, and other operational disruptions.

D. FUNDING

IFRC Secretariat Coverage	Amount Raised (CHF)	Funding Gap (CHF)	Coverage %
Hard Pledges + In kind + Soft Pledges	5,321,113	14,641,564	26%
Federation-wide Coverage	Amount Raised (CHF)	Funding Gap (CHF)	Coverage %
ARCS domestic income + IFRC Secretariat + Bilateral support	6,139,059	18,860,941	25%

As of 30 April 2026, 26 per cent of the total funding requirement has been successfully pledged to the IFRC Secretariat Emergency Appeal. Despite the clear humanitarian imperative, the operation is still burdened by an abyssal funding gap, a shortfall so deep it threatens the continuity of even the most essential services.

The IFRC urgently calls on partners and donors to step forward and help bridge this gap. Your support is critical to reaching vulnerable communities in a timely and impactful way.

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

At the Afghan Red Crescent Society:

- **Secretary General:** Mawlawi Rohullah Abdul Salam; email: SG@arcs.af, phone: +93(0) 70 29 777 32
- **Head of International Relations:** Zar Khan Ahmadzai; email: ir@arcs.af, phone: +93(0) 71 151 1311

At the IFRC Afghanistan Delegation, Afghanistan:

- **Head of Delegation:** Dr. Hosam Faysal; email: hosam.faysal@ifrc.org
- **Deputy Head of Delegation:** Homa Nader, email: homa.nader@ifrc.org
- **Operation Manager :** Shaima Jarrar; email: shaimaa.jarrar@ifrc.org

At the IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office, Kuala Lumpur:

- **Thematic Lead, Evolving Crises and Disasters:** Felipe Delcid; email: felipe.delcid@ifrc.org
- **Large Scale Disasters and Crises Coordinator:** Matthew Baden email: matthew.baden@ifrc.org
- **Operations Coordinator:** Saara Ilmonen; email: opscoord.southasia@ifrc.org
- **Regional Head, Strategic Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation:** Herve Gazeau; email: herve.gazeau@ifrc.org
- **Communications Manager:** Afrhill Rances; email: afrhill.rances@ifrc.org
- **Regional Head, PMER and Quality Assurance:** Alice Ho; email: alice.ho@ifrc.org

At IFRC Geneva:

- **Operations Coordination, Senior Officer:** Santiago Luengo, email: santiago.luengol@ifrc.org

For IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledges support:

- **Strategic Engagement and Partnerships;** Farkhonda Hassan, email: Farkhonda.hassan@ifrc.org

For In-Kind donations and Mobilization table support:

- **Regional Logistics Manager;** Nuraiza Khairuddin, email: nuraiza.khairuddin@ifrc.org

Reference documents

Click here for:

- [Previous Appeals and updates](#)
- [Emergency landing page](#)

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

Operational Strategy

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2025/4-2026/4	Operation	MDRAF018
Budget Timeframe	2025/4-2027/4	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 25 May 2026

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAF018 - Afghanistan - Population mvt from Pakistan

Operating Timeframe: 12 Apr 2025 to 30 Apr 2027; appeal launch date: 01 May 2025

I. Emergency Appeal Funding Requirements

Total Funding Requirements	20,000,000
Donor Response* as per 25 May 2026	5,321,114
Appeal Coverage	26.61%

II. IFRC Operating Budget Implementation

Planned Operations / Enabling Approaches	Op Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items	2	191,667	-191,665
PO02 - Livelihoods	221,000	314,770	-93,770
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash	327,602	244,968	82,634
PO04 - Health	502,426	147,564	354,862
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	275,802	225,624	50,178
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	1	588	-587
PO07 - Education	0	0	0
PO08 - Migration	520,977	592,915	-71,937
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	2,554,217	73,238	2,480,979
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	40,000	85,377	-45,377
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability	0	0	0
Planned Operations Total	4,442,028	1,876,711	2,565,317
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships	5,000	21,277	-16,277
EA02 - Secretariat Services	603,140	412,260	190,880
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	252,001	70,080	181,921
Enabling Approaches Total	860,141	503,616	356,525
Grand Total	5,302,169	2,380,327	2,921,842

III. Operating Movement & Closing Balance per 2026/04

Opening Balance	0
Income (includes outstanding DREF Loan per IV.)	5,321,114
Expenditure	-2,380,327
Closing Balance	2,940,787
Deferred Income	0
Funds Available	2,940,787

IV. DREF Loan

* not included in Donor Response	Loan :	1,750,000	Reimbursed :	750,000	Outstanding :	1,000,000
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Operational Strategy

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2025/4-2026/4	Operation	MDRAF018
Budget Timeframe	2025/4-2027/4	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 25 May 2026

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAF018 - Afghanistan - Population mvt from Pakistan

Operating Timeframe: 12 Apr 2025 to 30 Apr 2027; appeal launch date: 01 May 2025

V. Contributions by Donor and Other Income

Opening Balance							0
Income Type	Cash	InKind Goods	InKind Personnel	Other Income	TOTAL	Deferred Income	
British Red Cross (from British Government*)	633,790				633,790		
DREF Response Pillar				1,000,000	1,000,000		
European Commission - DG ECHO	2,310,336				2,310,336		
Hong Kong Red Cross, Branch of the Red Cross Socie	40,709				40,709		
Japanese Red Cross Society	45,929				45,929		
New Zealand Red Cross	9,071				9,071		
On Line donations	817				817		
Red Cross of Monaco	14,028				14,028		
Saudi Red Crescent Authority	118,309				118,309		
Swedish Red Cross	229,219				229,219		
Swiss Red Cross	100,000				100,000		
The Canadian Red Cross Society	218,270				218,270		
The Netherlands Red Cross (from Netherlands Govern	600,636				600,636		
Total Contributions and Other Income	4,321,114	0	0	1,000,000	5,321,114	0	
Total Income and Deferred Income					5,321,114	0	