



Appeal: MDRTM001	DREF Allocated: CHF 90,800	Hazard: Population Movement	Country: Turkmenistan
Population at risk (if available): 2,000	Operation Start Date: 16-03-2026	Operation End Date: 30-04-2026	
Event Onset: Sudden	Forecasted day of event (or peak): 2026-04-10	Operation Timeframe: 45 days	
Targeted Regions: Ahal, Balkan			

Scenario analysis

When and where is the hazard expected to happen?

Escalating tensions and worsening security, mobility, and socioeconomic conditions in Iran from late February to March 2026 increase the likelihood of sudden crossborder movements into Turkmenistan. Reports indicate intensifying hostilities, airspace and movement restrictions, service disruptions, and growing economic pressures, all heightening vulnerabilities. More than 290 third-country nationals (TCNs) have already entered Turkmenistan, and further arrivals remain possible. The National Society maintains close engagement with public authorities and humanitarian partners in the country. Current contingency planning and scenario analyses indicate a credible risk of increased population movements and highlight the need for strengthened preparedness. Furthermore, there are currently an estimate of 1-2M ethnic Turkmen present in Iran, some of whom maintain strong cultural, linguistic and family ties with Turkmenistan, which could lead some to seek return or temporary relocation should the situation deteriorate. Estimated figures for the next 4–5 weeks indicate two possible scenarios: a low scenario of 1,000–3,000 people and a high scenario of 7,000–10,000 people. Movements are expected along established corridors shaped by the Kopet Dag mountains and existing transport infrastructure. The Ahal region is likely to receive flows through Serakhs–Serakhs, Artyk–Lotfabad, and Gaudan–Bajgiran, while the Balkan region may see arrivals through Etrek / Gudri Olum–Inchek Borun. These crossing points have been activated during previous periods of tension and several are currently undergoing upgrades that could increase their capacity. A rapid influx could overwhelm border facilities, creating congestion, long waiting times, and shortages in WASH, shelter, health, protection, and information services. Significant Turkmen populations in northern Iran increase the likelihood of kinship-driven movement. Deteriorating conditions inside Iran—including airspace closures, restricted mobility, service disruptions, inflation, and reduced household resilience—further reinforce displacement risks. Early to mid April 2026 is foreseen as the critical preparedness window.

Under the most likely scenario, cross border movements increase gradually and remain predictable, manageable with current NRCST readiness. Under the less likely scenario, rapid escalation in Iran, mobility restrictions, and service disruptions may lead to larger movements requiring expanded NRCST capacity and reinforced coordination with national authorities and humanitarian partners in country. Humanitarian impacts may include a lack of immediate shelter, inadequate WASH services, urgent health and first aid needs, psychological distress and family separation, increased protection risks, and significant information gaps. NRCST will intervene by establishing a temporary rest and support point near designated border crossings, providing water, ready to eat food, hygiene items, Psychological First Aid, Restoring Family Links services, and reliable information. Volunteers in Balkan and Ahal regions will provide firstline support, thanks to predeployed tents, WASH supplies, first aid kits, and standby logistics capacity. If needs grow, NRCST will extend assistance to secondary transit locations with nonfood items, limited accommodation. The Government will retain responsibility for border management, with NRCST complementing state efforts through humanitarian support. The impact would exceed existing capacities if arrivals exceed 500 people per day for three consecutive days, surpass 2,000 per week, or when transit delays exceed 24 hours.

Preparedness and early-response measures are informed by existing contingency planning and scenario analyses and address priority sectors including WASH, child protection, health, nutrition, education, and early childhood development.

¹ UNHCR — Middle East Situation: Emergency Flash Update #1 (5 Mar 2026) and #2 (6 Mar 2026): operational adjustments, preparedness, and country updates for Iran; reception areas open with limited in person attendance and increased assistance needs. ReliefWeb item; UNHCR PDFs

² IOM — Iran Regional Escalation Situation Report (3 Mar 2026): airspace closures, mobility restrictions, disrupted humanitarian rotations/supply movement, and observed internal movements from major cities. [iom.int]

³ ACAPS — Iran country update (4 Mar 2026): widespread service disruptions including internet shutdowns, damage to health infrastructure, and constrained access affecting vulnerable groups. [acaps.org].

Ahal, Balkan

Explain the underlying vulnerabilities and risks the hazard poses for at-risk communities?

The deteriorating security, mobility, and socioeconomic conditions in Iran have significantly increased the vulnerabilities of people moving toward the Turkmenistan border. As hostilities escalate and essential services become disrupted, communities face reduced access to water, healthcare, communications, and transportation, weakening their ability to cope and increasing their risk of displacement. Those who move toward border crossing points or neutral zones are exposed to overcrowded conditions, long waiting periods, and limited availability of shelter, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, and basic health support. These gaps heighten the risk of dehydration, illness, and exposure to harsh environmental conditions.

The situation also places individuals under considerable psychological stress, especially those who experience uncertainty, traumatic events, or family separation during transit. Protection risks intensify for vulnerable groups—such as women, children, older persons, and third country nationals—who may face exploitation, unsafe transit routes, and difficulties accessing timely assistance or referrals. In addition, many people lack reliable information on border procedures, available services, and safety or CBRN related risks, which can lead to confusion and unsafe decision making. Collectively, these vulnerabilities increase the likelihood that sudden inflows could overwhelm border facilities and existing capacities and create humanitarian needs requiring immediate, coordinated support

Source Name

Source Link



Plan

Will surge personnel be deployed? If yes, please provide the role profile needed.

Yes

The IFRC Country Cluster Delegation is requesting the deployment of internal Secretariat assets (two personnel) within the CCD via a support mission, rather than formal surge activation, to make sure that the support provided in the technical implementation of the DREF is based on pre-existing specific knowledge of the context, appropriate language skills and already established working relations with the National Society. Profiles include preparedness expertise/DM/ operations management.

Which of the expected severe humanitarian impacts of the hazard are your actions addressing? Why were these impacts chosen?

Turkmenistan's southern border with Iran, particularly in the Ahal and Balkan regions, could experience localized humanitarian pressure if cross-border movements increase suddenly. The Ahal region is likely to receive flows through Serakhs-Sarakhs, Artyk-Lotfabad, and Gaudan-Bajgiran, while the Balkan region may see arrivals through Etrek (Akayila/Altyn Asyr-Incheborun). A sudden influx of people may lead to congestion, prolonged waiting times in Neutral Border Zones, and temporary pressure on available services, including water, sanitation, shelter and basic health support.

During waiting and transit periods, people may face limited access to safe drinking water, hygiene facilities, shelter and first aid services. This could increase risks of dehydration, exposure to weather conditions and deterioration of existing health conditions, particularly among older persons, children and individuals with specific vulnerabilities. In addition the long proximity to the nearest communities creates further challenges in access to the essential services and basic supplies.

Protection concerns may also arise for individuals lacking documentation clarity, language skills or confirmed onward travel arrangements. Sudden changes in border procedures or delays could result in temporary stranding, family separation, psychosocial distress and increased demand for Restoring Family Links (RFL) and Psychological First Aid (PFA) services.

Even under moderate scenarios, rapid increases in arrivals could temporarily exceed the absorption capacity of border infrastructure and local services, creating short-term but concentrated humanitarian needs at specific entry points and requiring immediate support

Plan



The proposed actions prioritize addressing the following potential humanitarian impacts of increased population movement across the border:

- Lack of immediate shelter and basic relief items for people waiting at border crossing points or neutral border zones – addressed through the provision of family tents and essential relief supplies.
- Limited access to safe drinking water and hygiene facilities during waiting and transit periods – addressed through the distribution of WASH items and hygiene materials.
- Urgent health and first aid needs among people in transit – addressed through the provision of first aid and basic health support at border crossing points.
- Psychological distress and vulnerability during displacement and transit – addressed through Psychological First Aid (PFA) and referral pathways for mental health and psychosocial support services.
- Family separation, protection risks, and lack of reliable information – addressed through Restoring Family Links (RFL) services, PGI and PSEA measures, and Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities.

These impacts were selected as they represent the most immediate and likely humanitarian needs during a sudden increase in arrivals, and the proposed actions aim to reduce immediate risks and prevent further deterioration of the situation at border areas within the 45-day timeframe of the operation



Proposed Actions

	Sector	Activities	Budget (CHF)
 Early Actions	Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of Balkan and Akhal disaster response teams: Distribute family tents and essential WASH and health supplies, including first aid kits, PPE, hygiene materials, and light food to meet immediate life saving needs during population movement. Provide first aid and basic health support at BCPs and NBZs. • Logistics and Preparedness for Deployment (Mobilize and deploy trained volunteers to priority BCPs and NBZs to deliver life saving assistance. Replenish stocks used for shelter, WASH, health, and food distributions to maintain readiness for continued influx). • Conduct daily monitoring of arrivals, vulnerabilities, and response coverage and report findings each day. Coordinate daily with authorities, border officials, partners, and diplomatic actors to ensure a harmonized and effective response. 	
	Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) (Provide Psychological First Aid (PFA) to individuals in distress. Establish and update referral pathways for MHPSS, protection, and health services. Maintain volunteer wellbeing through briefings, supervision, and psychosocial support mechanisms. Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) & Safe Programming : Apply PGI and PSEA minimum standards throughout NS operations. Collect Sex , Age and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) to support safe, equitable programming. Ensure accessible complaint and feedback mechanisms at BCPs and NBZs. Restoring Family Links (RFL) & Data Protection: Deliver RFL services in coordination with the ICRC. Manage personal data and sensitive information in line with Movement data protection standards. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) (Deliver timely and accessible RCCE messages on: Border procedures, Health and safety measures, CBRN risks, Available services, Messages should be aligned with government advisories to support informed and safe decision making . 	CHF 64,249
 Early Response	Migration	Conduct rapid needs assessments and continuous monitoring at BCPs and NBZs to ensure timely, targeted, and evidence based interventions.	CHF 10,751
Sub-total			CHF 75,000
Surge Deployment (if applicable)			CHF 10,000
Indirect Cost			CHF 5,800

Total

CHF 90,800



Contact Information

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