

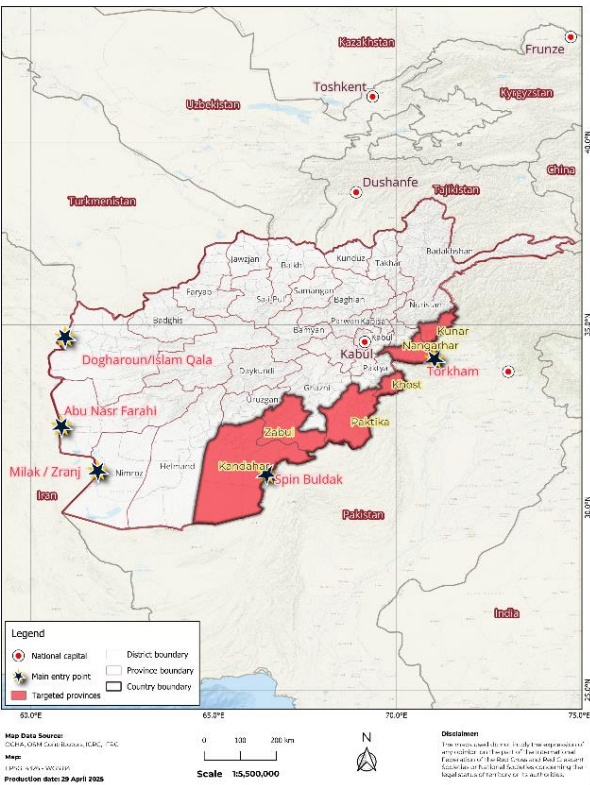


An Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) volunteer provides clean drinking water to a child at Torkham's Omari camp (Photo: ARCS)

Appeal No: MDRAF018	IFRC Secretariat Funding requirements: CHF 20 million Federation-wide Funding requirements: CHF 25 million¹	
Glide No: CE-2025-000042-AFG	People [affected]: 1.5 million (based on initial projections in 2025)	People to be assisted: Federation-wide: 525,000 people IFRC Secretariat: 350,000 people
DREF allocation: CHF 1,000,000	Appeal launched: 1 May 2025	Appeal ends: 30 April 2027

¹ The Federation-wide funding requirement encompasses all financial support to be directed to the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) in response to the emergency. It includes the ARCS's domestic fundraising requests and the fundraising appeals of supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies (CHF 5 million), as well as the funding ask of the IFRC secretariat (CHF 20 million). This comprehensive approach ensures that all available resources are mobilised to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the affected communities.

Emergency Appeal - Afghanistan
IFRC Population Movement - Returnees Reintegration



SITUATION OVERVIEW

In September 2023, the Government of Pakistan announced the introduction of the ‘Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan’ (IFRP), a multi-phase policy that requires all foreign nationals without a valid visa or legal status in Pakistan to leave the country or face deportation. The IFRP is primarily affecting Afghans and has prompted a large-scale population movement from Pakistan into Afghanistan. Since 15 September 2023, almost a million (972,400 people as of 23 April 2025) have already crossed back via the four official crossing points along the border with Pakistan, namely Torkham (Nangarhar), Spin Boldak (Kandahar), Ghulam Khan (Khost) and Badini (Helmand).

More than 118,400 Afghans have returned from Pakistan in the month of April 2025 alone, of whom 25,600 were deported. On average, 4,000 to 6,000 people are crossing daily, with women and children constituting a sizable

proportion. The influx of Afghans crossing the borders encompasses a diverse array of individuals facing heightened vulnerabilities and risks. Among this population are young children, the elderly, those with disabilities and chronic illnesses, and those grappling with extreme poverty. These factors compound the challenges they encounter during their journey, necessitating a comprehensive approach to address their unique needs. The number of people deported from Pakistan in April 2025 has surpassed the previous highest monthly number of deportations in November 2023 (UNHCR Pakistan-Afghanistan Returns Emergency Response, 23 April 2025).²

While Pakistan’s IFRP was the primary trigger for this large-scale cross-border movement, increasing returns from Iran have also been observed following policy changes towards Afghans in the country, particularly at border points in western Afghanistan, such as Herat and Nimroz. Both the scale and speed of these mass movements of Afghans from Iran and Pakistan are placing immense strain on border provinces and urban centres such as Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar, and Kandahar.

The mass return is unfolding against the backdrop of a fragile humanitarian context – marked by a multitude of challenges that have significantly exacerbated the vulnerability of the Afghan population. The ongoing crises, including the residual impacts of decades of conflict, and widespread food insecurity (which is expected to disproportionately affect returnees, IDPs, and disaster-affected communities), persistent drought, over 6.6 million conflict-induced IDPs, strained health systems, and weak infrastructure, continue to increase the populations reliance on humanitarian aid. Many returnees are settling in overcrowded shelters, transit centres, or informal settlements, where they face exposure to harsh weather and lack access to essential services. Since September 2023, among the Afghans assisted by UNHCR, half of the returnees are women, and 30 per cent are

² <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/115910>

female-headed households. Most returnees had to abandon their belongings and savings and today face the heavy burden of debt due to limited economic opportunities.

Widespread poverty, affecting nearly 48 per cent of the population, severely restricts the ability of Afghans to afford basic goods and services. Currently, 80 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Many households have resorted to selling their last income-generating assets in order to meet their basic needs, putting women and children at greater risk. The lack of employment opportunities has diminished the economic independence of millions of Afghans, leaving many grappling with feelings of hopelessness and despair.

The health, safety, and well-being of returnees, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities, are of paramount concern. The existing pressures on limited humanitarian services and resources are exacerbated by the

fact that many humanitarian organisations have scaled down or ceased operations due to funding constraints, particularly following reductions in support from major donors.

Given these pressing humanitarian needs, there is an urgent need for holistic and integrated assistance bridging the humanitarian needs at points of arrival and for longer-term recovery and reintegration across the country. Coordinated efforts are essential to ensure strategic complementarity between the actions of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners, and those of other humanitarian actors. The permanent presence of the ARCS at the community-level, providing trusted and tailored local level responses, will help ensure continuity of care for the most vulnerable – particularly given the evolving dynamics of this humanitarian crisis.

TARGETING

Approximately 1.5 million people are estimated to be affected by, or at risk due to, ongoing large-scale population movements from Pakistan to Afghanistan, combined with returns from Iran and other countries. The scale and speed of cross-border movements, particularly through the formal border crossing points at Torkham and Spin Boldak, and the unprecedented levels of vulnerability among returnees are placing significant strain on already fragile communities and overstretched services in provinces where returnees are settling.

The operation aims to address the immediate, medium, and longer-term needs of Afghan returnees. The Federation-wide target is to assist **525,000 people**, with the IFRC Secretariat seeking funding to support 350,000 people over the two-year duration of the operation. This target is based on primary data collected by the ARCS, initial trends of returnee demographics and routes, and the current capacity for an effective and timely response across priority provinces.

The target includes both returnees and host communities in the provinces where most returnees are settling. It also aligns with the ARCS's operational reach and presence in key reception and final destination areas.

Target Groups and Rationale

The response prioritises actions to reach the most vulnerable among the returnee population and communities where they are settling – those facing multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities and risks. Multi-sector support will focus on:

- Afghans severely impacted by destitution.
- Women at risk (mostly widows and female-headed households) and their families.
- Unaccompanied children and children screened with malnutrition.
- Pregnant and lactating women.
- Households returning from Pakistan with no shelter.
- Elderly persons, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups.

These groups are particularly exposed to compounded risks, including extreme poverty, gender-based violence, malnutrition, poor health, limited livelihood opportunities and exclusion from essential services. Targeting will be informed by direct community engagement and field observations, protection considerations, and close alignment with the findings of ARCS branch-level assessments.

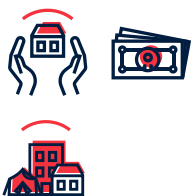
The current situation in Afghanistan demands urgent attention to those arriving with limited assets and access to essential services. By prioritising these vulnerable groups, the operation aims to provide life-saving assistance and opportunities for Afghan individuals to rebuild their lives. It is crucial to reach people who are facing compounding risks with limited access to essential services such as shelter, food, healthcare, and legal documentation.

PLANNED OPERATIONS

Through this Federation-wide Emergency Appeal, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) aims to support the ARCS in the response to Afghanistan Population Movement (Returnees) Crisis. The strategy of the IFRC's response will be to contribute to population movement and recovery efforts, focusing on the following areas:

Integrated Assistance

(Shelter, Livelihoods, and Multi-purpose Cash)



This operation will adopt an integrated approach to address the immediate, medium, and longer-term needs of vulnerable Afghans. The integrated assistance will prioritise the distribution of multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) to address basic needs and contribute to recovery efforts. Through the ARCS's "Marastoons" (Pashto for "Place for Hope"), safe shelter support will be extended to widows, severely destitute women, and marginalised individuals with unconditional cash assistance and cash for work schemes. There will be a focus on scaling-up income-generation support to aid the social and economic reintegration of returnees. Vocational training will be tailored to meet the demands of provincial and local markets, with the aim of accelerating social reintegration. These trainings are designed to build on the existing skills and capabilities of returnees, enabling them to contribute to local economic revitalisation.

The construction of permanent shelters through a community-based approach will also be prioritised to promote a dignified recovery and

sustainable reintegration in provinces of final destination. Shelter recovery efforts will include the construction of safe, transitional shelters at these locations, enabling returnees to re-establish stable living conditions.

This comprehensive response reflects the evolving scale of returns. As a leading local humanitarian actor with decades of experience, the ARCS holds the trust, presence, and acceptance needed to operate across all communities and sectors in Afghanistan. The National Society's extensive network allows it to reach even the hardest to access communities and provide impartial support, in full adherence to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



Health and Care including Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

(Mental Health and Psychosocial Support/Community Health)

Primary healthcare interventions will play a crucial role in addressing the health needs of returnees and host communities. The IFRC plans to provide primary healthcare services across 13 provinces, covering Paktika, Nuristan, Laghman, Urozgan, Kabul, Herat, Badghis, Jawzjan, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Kunar, Helmand, and Zabul. These services will target vulnerable groups, including 20 per cent who are children under five. The strategy for primary health interventions includes deploying mobile health teams and establishing health camps to provide a wide range of services. These services will encompass general medical consultations, maternal and child health care, vaccinations, nutrition support, mental health and psychosocial support, and health education. The mobile health teams will be able to reach scattered communities of returnees and host populations. The fixed Health Camp facilities in Nangarhar, Kandahar, and Herat provinces will serve as temporary healthcare centres offering comprehensive medical services, including emergency care, to address immediate the health needs of the returnees. This integrated approach aims to improve overall health outcomes, reduce morbidity and mortality rates, and enhance the well-being of returnees and the communities where they are settling.



To ensure the effective delivery of healthcare, 105 health staff, including medical doctors, pharmacists, nurses, midwives, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) counsellors, will undergo capacity-building training sessions. Additionally, 40 mobile health teams (MHTs) and three health camps will be deployed to provide essential medical services.

The IFRC will also focus on enhancing the capacity of local health facilities by providing medicine and consumable kits to the health camps and MHTs, ensuring that healthcare providers have the necessary resources to effectively treat patients. Furthermore, the IFRC will integrate community-based health and first aid sessions for returnees and host communities, aiming to improve health outcomes, promote hygiene practices, and build resilience among the returnee populations.

Community-based Health and First Aid (CBHFA)

The focus will be on training and mobilising ARCS volunteers at border crossing points, in transit camps, and in areas of return and settlement. ARCS volunteers will raise health literacy and awareness about non-communicable diseases (NCDs), reproductive health (RH), hygiene, communicable diseases, and routine immunisations. They will conduct screenings for malnutrition, provide psychological first aid (PFA), and offer first aid services. This approach aims to address both the immediate and long-term community health needs of returnees, ensuring that individuals with health concerns are referred to health facilities for further care.

WASH

Interventions will prioritise providing latrines that are gender-disaggregated and friendly for people with disabilities (PWD), along with clean drinking water and handwashing facilities. Emergency assistance will also include the distribution of hygiene promotion leaflets, family hygiene kits, and menstrual hygiene management kits, alongside hygiene promotion awareness sessions at border points and settlement areas.

Protection and Prevention

Protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) will be streamlined across all sectors of the intervention. The operation will promote social inclusion, ensuring that different layers and members of the targeted communities receive the support they need in line with the IFRC Minimum Standards for PGI in emergencies. PGI focal points will support the operation to guarantee equitable access to essential services while safeguarding the dignity, access, participation, and safety (DAPS) of all affected people, thereby making certain that the operation will “do no harm.”



The Movement’s community engagement and accountability (CEA) approach will be integrated into the operation to ensure the meaningful participation of affected people, with existing selection and exclusion criteria considered when choosing households and individuals to receive assistance. To support the inclusivity of the targeted communities, the IFRC and ARCS are committed to consulting and engaging with a range of stakeholders, including men, women, girls, boys, persons with disabilities, as well as community elders and authorities at the national and subnational levels, clusters, representatives of key humanitarian organisations, and donors.

Furthermore, to maintain the trust of communities, a feedback mechanism will be developed and implemented to continue listening to communities through their preferred channels and make certain that the ARCS and IFRC act on the feedback received. Migration and displacement considerations will be included across all sectors of the intervention to

provide safe and secure access to integrated services for Afghan returnees and host communities. The aim of the approach is to facilitate reintegration and promote social cohesion in areas where people will settle, contributing to longer-term stability and resilience.

Enabling approaches

The sectors outlined above will be supported and enhanced by the following enabling approaches:



Coordination and Partnerships

In line with the Seville Agreement 2.0, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in Afghanistan is operating under a unified coordination framework to respond effectively to the escalating population movement crisis. The endorsed Movement Cooperation Agreement (valid until the end of 2027) facilitates strategic collaboration through regular Strategic Platform (SMP) meetings between the ARCS, IFRC, and ICRC leadership. Operational and technical coordination is maintained through Movement Operational Coordination (MOC) and Movement Technical Coordination (MTC) meetings, ensuring cohesive planning while maximising the Movement's collective capacity. A dedicated task force, composed of all Movement partners in-country, is guiding the response to the mass return of Afghan nationals. Concurrently, the IFRC's Afghanistan Delegation is engaging with external partners to mobilise resources for the Emergency Appeal and provide frequent updates on the progress of the response. The recent Movement Partners call on 26 March 2025 highlighted growing concerns about the scale of returns from Pakistan and the urgent humanitarian needs expected in both the immediate and longer-term.



Shelter Cluster Coordination

The IFRC will actively engage in the Afghanistan Shelter Cluster, which is co-led by UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration, to ensure that collective efforts are focused on areas where the needs are greatest and under the key principle of effective coordination. The ARCS and IFRC will contribute to the cluster snapshots, which provide critical data on key indicators such as resources mobilised and people reached. The IFRC will also actively engage in Shelter Technical Working Groups, established to define technical specifications for safer construction practices. Additionally, the ARCS and IFRC have secured 10 tractors, which may be used to support the transportation of shelter materials in remote areas for the benefit of all shelter actors.



IFRC Secretariat Services

The IFRC Secretariat will provide services to integrated Participating National Societies supporting the operation, including procurement, transportation, accommodation, and security management. All procurement required for the operation will be conducted by the IFRC Secretariat. Additionally, the IFRC

Secretariat has engaged four financial service providers (FSPs) to channel cash transfers to community members. A Quality and Accountability team is in place to ensure that community participation, life-saving information, open communication, rumour management, and established feedback mechanisms are integrated as part of the holistic CEA approach used in this operation. The team will also contribute to closely monitoring implementation and enhancing measures to improve organisation-wide performance. Furthermore, a Compliance, Risk Management, and Safeguarding unit is in place and will strengthen adherence to internal/external compliance requirements, respond to sexual exploitation and abuse, including misconduct related to child safeguarding, and ensure that all possible risks are identified and mitigated. Risks analysed and considered outside of the risk appetite are escalated to the regional and global levels.

National Society Strengthening

The operation will invest in strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of the ARCS, enabling it to build on decades of expertise working with all communities in Afghanistan and to deliver principled, relevant, and sustainable humanitarian interventions. The affected provincial branches (which are deeply embedded within the country's many communities and serving all people irrespective of their regional, linguistic, religious, or political affiliations) will be further strengthened to deliver cost-effective, transparent, and accountable services. The ARCS will also continue receiving support to strengthen its auxiliary role, including close coordination with state agencies involved in disaster and crisis response. Additionally, investments will be made to digitalise processes and enhance operational efficiency.



The planned response reflects the current situation and is based on the information available at the time of the launch of this Emergency Appeal. Details of the operation will be updated through the Operational Strategy to be released in the coming days. The Operational Strategy will also provide further details on the Federation-wide approach, which includes the response activities of all contributing Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and the Federation-wide funding requirement.

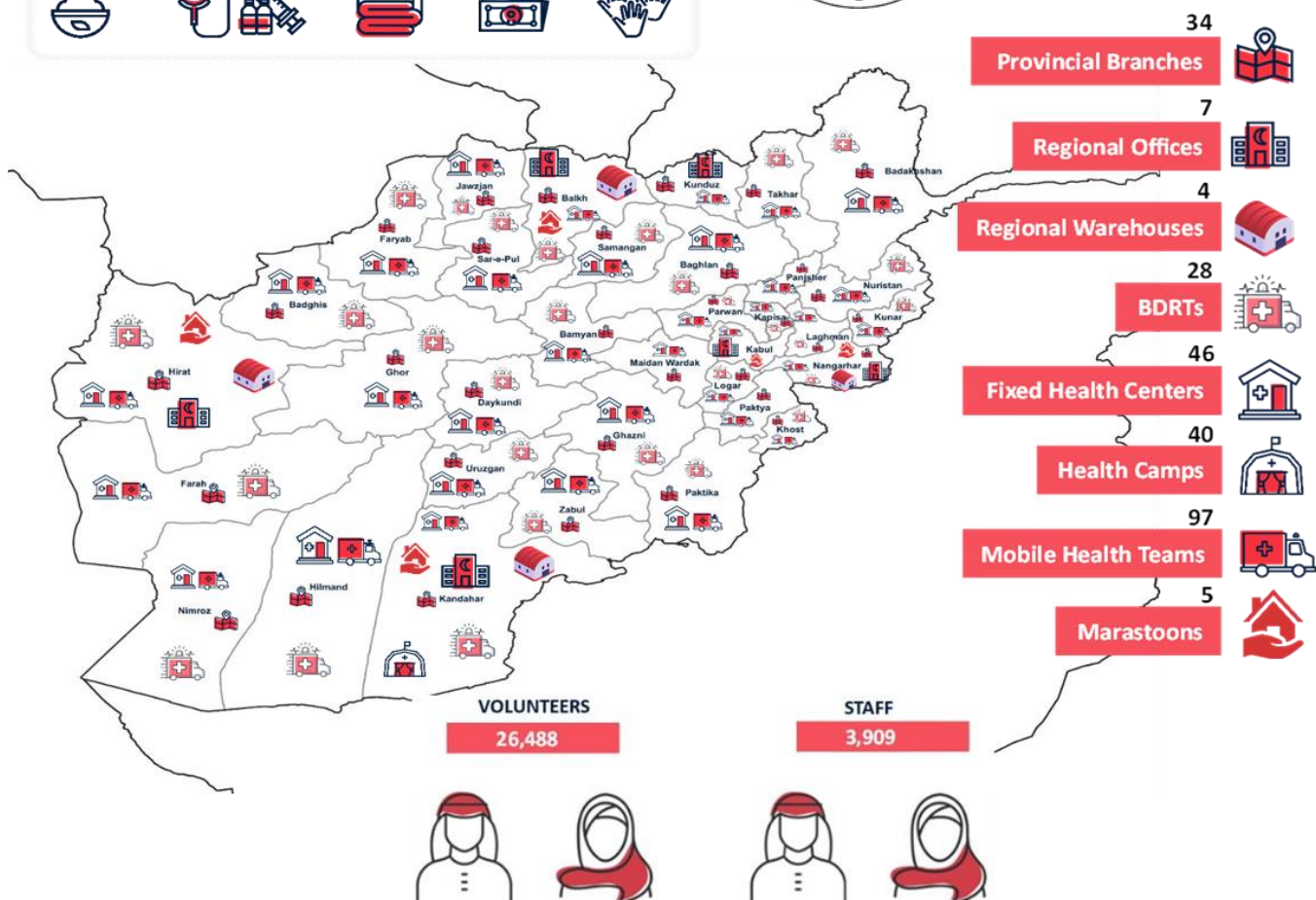
Effective 1 May 2027, pending interventions under this Emergency Appeal will continue under the [IFRC Network Afghanistan Country Plan](#) for 2027. The IFRC Network Country Plan integrates ongoing emergency responses and longer-term programming tailored to the needs of the ARCS, streamlining activities under one plan, while continuing to uphold the commitment to meeting the needs of those affected by the disaster in an accountable and transparent manner. Information will be shared should there be a need for an extension of the crisis-specific response beyond the above-mentioned period.

RED CROSS RED CRESCENT FOOTPRINT IN-COUNTRY

AFGHAN RED CRESCENT SOCIETY



Core Areas of Operations



IFRC Membership coordination

The IFRC Secretariat, via its Country Delegation, provides strategic coordination and ensures continuous engagement with the Membership present in the country, in line with the “Ways of Working” mechanism. Portions of this Emergency Appeal will be implemented by various Participating National Societies supporting the ARCS directly, based on their areas of expertise, with financial resources channelled by the IFRC Secretariat. The operation’s updates will take a Federation-wide reporting approach.

The in-country Participating National Societies are already providing support to the ARCS’s primary healthcare activities for this operation. The Norwegian Red Cross is in the process of mobilising the ARCS’s Emergency Mobile Health Teams (EMHTs) in Torkham and Spin Boldak borders and transit camps, the Austrian Red Cross has supported the deployment of one ARCS MHT, while the Danish Red Cross is exploring options to support the deployment of two MHTs and the distribution of MPCA for six hundred families. The Turkish Red Crescent is mobilising the goodness train with eleven thousand tons of food and essential household items.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement coordination

Collectively, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners work with established coordination and cooperation mechanisms, aligned with the Seville Agreement 2.0. A new Movement Cooperation Agreement has been endorsed and covers the period until 31 December 2027. Movement partners hold tripartite Movement Strategic Platform (SMP) meetings, bringing together the ARCS's leadership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and IFRC heads of delegation, to address strategic issues.

Furthermore, MOC meetings bring together the ARCS, ICRC, IFRC, and in-country Participating National Societies to address operational issues and create a shared understanding of operational strategies. MTC meetings will also be convened to ensure alignment between interventions supported by the various Movement Components in each field of activity by combining relevant expertise and making the best complementary use of the Movement's collective capacities. In addition, the ARCS has established a task force to discuss the needs of the returnees and coordinate movement efforts. The task force comprises all International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement members present in Afghanistan.

External coordination

As an auxiliary to the current authorities of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) in the humanitarian field, the ARCS is coordinating with and complementing the assistance provided to returnees by the IEA Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), supported by the IFRC Afghanistan Country Delegation. The MoRR has established 12 National Committees, each with a specific sectoral focus, with whom the ARCS is coordinating at both the national and provincial levels.

The IFRC engages in external coordination through the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and participates in the inter-agency Border Consortium led by IOM in Afghanistan. In addition, the ARCS, IFRC, and in-country Participating National Societies also cooperate and coordinate with other humanitarian organisations and key agencies as members of the various inter-agency sectoral clusters and technical working groups at the national and provincial levels.

At the regional level, the IFRC participates in inter-agency coordination meetings on the Afghanistan situation convened by the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, ensuring coherence and coordination related to dynamics in Pakistan, Iran, and the wider region.

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

IFRC Afghanistan Delegation:

- **Interim Head of Delegation:** Ahmed Suliman; email: ahmed.suliman@ifrc.org, phone: +93(0) 70 383 78 52
- **Manager of Humanitarian Diplomacy and Strategic Partnerships:** Homa Nader, email: homa.nader@ifrc.org, phone: +603597358

IFRC Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur:

- **Regional Director:** Alexander Matheou; email: alexander.matheou@ifrc.org
- **Deputy Regional Director:** Juja Kim; email: juja.kim@ifrc.org
- **Head of Health, Disaster, Climate and Crisis Unit:** Joy Singhal; email: joy.singhal@ifrc.org
- **Lead of Evolving Crises and Disaster:** Felipe Delcid; email: felipe.delcid@ifrc.org
- **Operations Coordinator:** Nusrat Hassan; email: nusrat.hassan@ifrc.org
- **Communications Manager:** Afrhill Rances; email: afrhill.rances@ifrc.org

IFRC Geneva:

- **Senior Officer, Operations Coordination:** Christina Duschl; email: christina.duschl@ifrc.org

IFRC Resource Mobilisation and Pledges support:

- **IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office:** email: PartnershipsEA.AP@ifrc.org

In-Kind Donations and Mobilisation table support:

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