

Emergency appeal №: MDRAF018 Emergency appeal launched: 01/05/2025 Operational Strategy published: 24/05/2025	Glide №: CE-2025-00042-AFG
Operation update #1 Date of issue: 28/06/2025	Timeframe covered by this update: From 01/05/2025 to 31/05/2025
Operation timeframe: 24 months (01/05/2025 – 30/04/2027)	Number of people being assisted: Federation-wide: 525,000 people IFRC Secretariat: 350,000 people
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 20 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 25 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 1 million



ARCS staff distribute hot meals to returnees at the Torkham crossing point. (Photo: ARCS)

The humanitarian needs of Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran are escalating rapidly. With little notice, thousands of families were forced to abandon their livelihoods and return to Afghanistan. For those born in Pakistan, Afghanistan is an unfamiliar place. Upon arrival at crossing points and in their provinces of origin, returnees are confronting major barriers to basic survival—lacking access to sufficient food, clean drinking water, medical care, shelter, education, and financial support.

In response, the Federation-wide Emergency Appeal seeks CHF 25 million to support 525,000 people, in coordination with the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS). The Emergency Appeal Operational Strategy outlines a comprehensive, principled response focused on protecting dignity and meeting urgent needs. However, 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 people facing urgent, complex and acute human needs in a timely and impactful way.

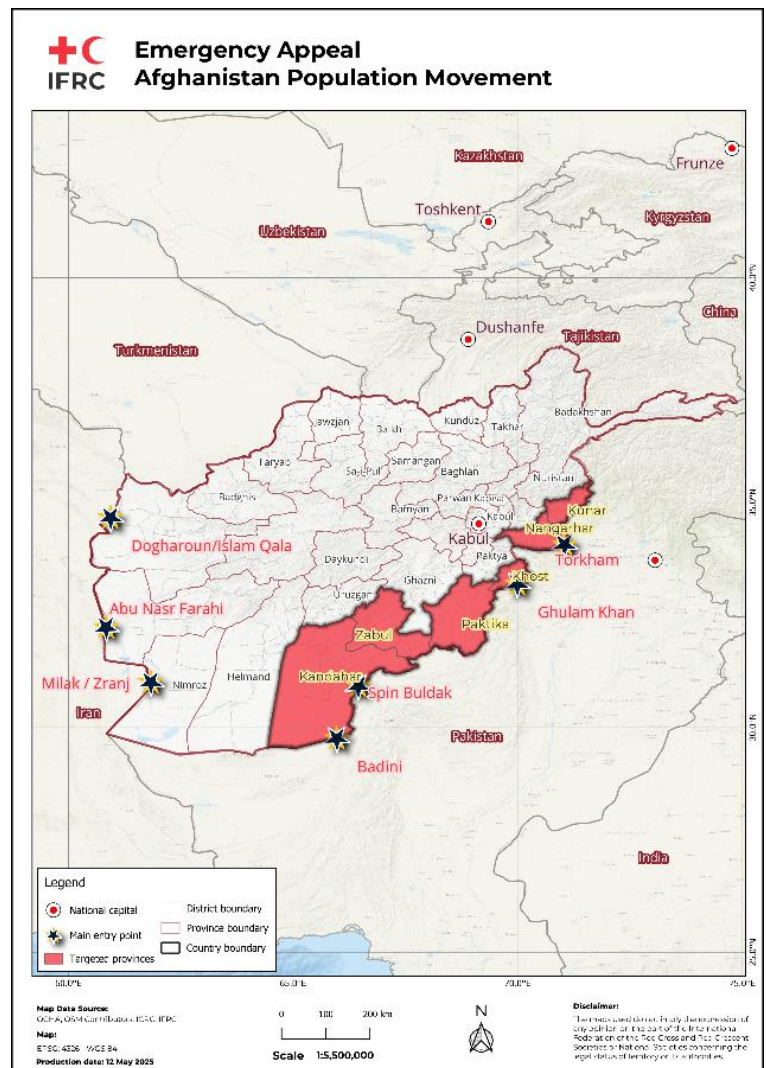
A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

Afghanistan is facing a deepening humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by the large-scale return and arrival of Afghans from Pakistan and Iran beginning in late 2023. In September 2023, the Government of Pakistan launched the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP), mandating that all undocumented foreign nationals leave Pakistan by 1 November 2024. This policy primarily impacted Afghans, many of whom had lived in Pakistan for decades. Simultaneously, policy changes accompanied by restricted access to basic services including health and education in Iran have further pressured Afghans to leave Iran.

According to recent statements by Iran's Interior Ministry spokesperson, up to four million Afghan nationals are expected to leave Iran by 6 July 2025, including approximately two million people whose registration documents have expired. Afghanistan is home to more than 6.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 80 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line with nominal earning of <USD 1.13 per day¹. In January 2025, Pakistan announced the second phase of the IFRP, setting a 31 March 2025 deadline for all undocumented Afghans and Afghan Citizen Card holders (ACC) to leave Pakistan or face deportation to Afghanistan.

Simultaneously, further policy changes in Iran restricting Afghan refugees' residency and access to

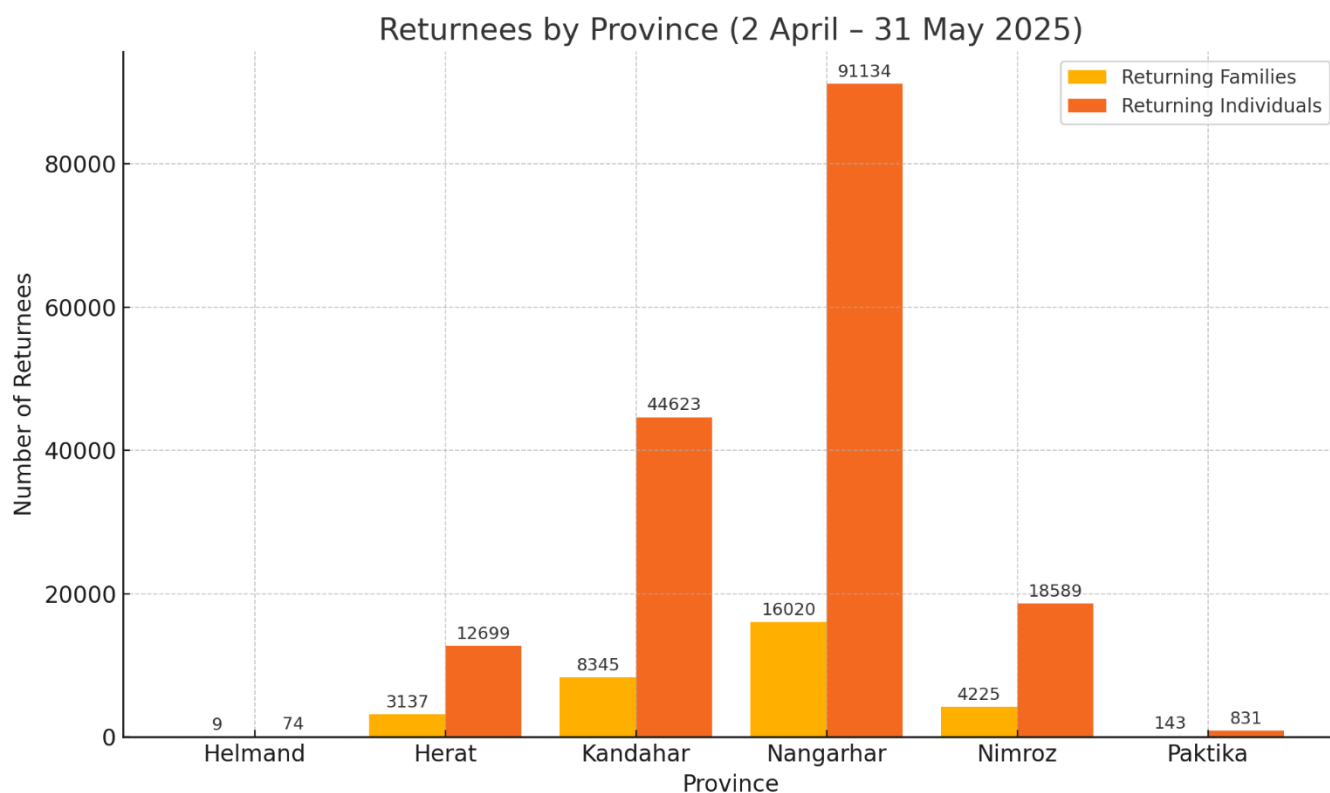


¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/afghanistan>

services led to an increase in departures to Afghanistan. Together, these developments triggered a second major wave of cross-border movements into Afghanistan.

As of June 2025, over one million people have returned or been deported from Pakistan since the enforcement of the IFRP in September 2023. Between 15 September 2023 and 30 April 2025, over 998,500 Afghans have returned from Pakistan². In April 2025 alone, over 144,500 Afghans returned, including approximately 29,900 who were deported. The number of returnees from Iran is also rising, with 170,200 people arriving between 20 March and 30 April 2025, resulting in more than 300,000 returnees from Pakistan and Iran arriving in Afghanistan during April alone³.

As per ARCS data, between 2 April and 31 May 2025, a total of 31,879 returning families, comprising 167,950 people, have been recorded across six provinces. These returnees arrived through multiple crossing points, highlighting the scale of population movements and the urgent need for multisectoral assistance, particularly in shelter, WASH, health, and protection.



The primary points of return include the official crossing points at Torkham (Nangarhar), Spin Boldak (Kandahar), for returnees from Pakistan and Puhantoom (Nimroz), for those returning from Iran. These provinces, along with urban centers such as Kabul and Herat, are under increasing pressure due to the rapid arrival of people and inadequate infrastructure to support the new arrivals. Returnees also include people with particular risks and vulnerabilities including women, children, the elderly, minorities and persons with disabilities. According to data collected by UNHCR amongst new arrivals, the main needs among arrivals are related to lack of civil documentation, food insecurity, and debt⁴.

In response to the needs of returnees, Afghan authorities, through the One-Stop Migration and Employment (OSME) programme, provide one-time cash assistance to returnees at crossing points with Pakistan. Under this initiative, families with up to four members receive AFN 2,000 (CHF 22) per person, while larger families are provided with a

² [UNHCR Afghanistan Situation Regional Update - 30 April 2025](https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/116040)

³ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/116040>

⁴ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116757>

lump sum of AFN 10,000 (CHF 112). This immediate financial support plays a vital role in helping returnees address their basic needs during the initial phase of reintegration.

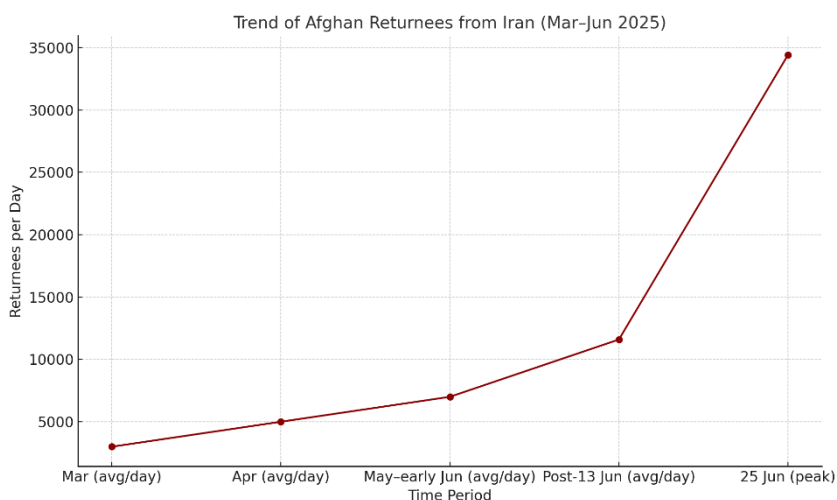
In response to the ongoing crossing point return and internal displacement of Afghans, the ARCS mobilised its volunteers and staff across key crossing point provinces and transit locations. Supported by the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement and other partners, ARCS provided urgent humanitarian assistance, including tents for shelter, hot meals, first aid, psychosocial support, dignity kits, and essential health services.

The IFRC initially allocated CHF 750,000 from its Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) which was later increased to CHF 1 million and launched an Emergency Appeal to deliver multisectoral assistance to 350,000 returnees across the Afghanistan crossing points.

Evolving situation

Afghanistan is experiencing a significant arrival of returnees from Pakistan and Iran which officially began on 1 April 2025 through both major crossing points. Between 1 April and 23 June 2025, approximately 48,000 households—equivalent to 222,000 people—returned from Pakistan, with daily arrivals averaging between 150 to 300 households (1,000 to 2,000 people).

Similarly, return movements from Iran commenced earlier, on 1 January 2025, from both the Islam Qala and Milak crossing points. Over 604,100 people have returned from Iran between 20 March and 25 June, with a cumulative total of 868,700 returns across all crossing points since January 2025. In March, the average number of returnees was around 3,000 per day, increasing to 5,000 daily in April, and rising further to approximately 7,000 per day during May and early June. However, a sharp escalation occurred after 13 June, with the daily average surging to over 11,500 returnees. This trend shows a dramatic peak on 25 June, when 34,400 people returned from the crossing points into Afghanistan—marking the highest single-day return figure recorded in 2025⁵.



The sharp increase is linked to Iranian government policy changes, including the expiration of registration documents and the removal of exit formalities, which have intensified pressure on Afghans to leave. Compounding this, the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel has significantly heightened insecurity and instability within Iran, resulting in a rise in mass returns and deportations of Afghans. Many returnees are being expelled with little to no notice, and under conditions that limit their ability to prepare or carry personal belongings.

The evolving situation reflects an urgent humanitarian concern, with increasing numbers of involuntary and undocumented returnees arriving at Afghanistan's crossing points under highly challenging circumstances. The immediate needs of Afghan returnees include multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to address essential expenses, primary healthcare services, temporary shelter, clean drinking water, adequate sanitation, and hot meals. These are critical for ensuring safety, dignity, and basic well-being upon arrival. In the longer term, returnees require support for sustainable livelihoods through income-generating activities such as vocational training and small-scale

⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/iran-afghanistan-returns-emergency-response-no10-10-25-june-2025>

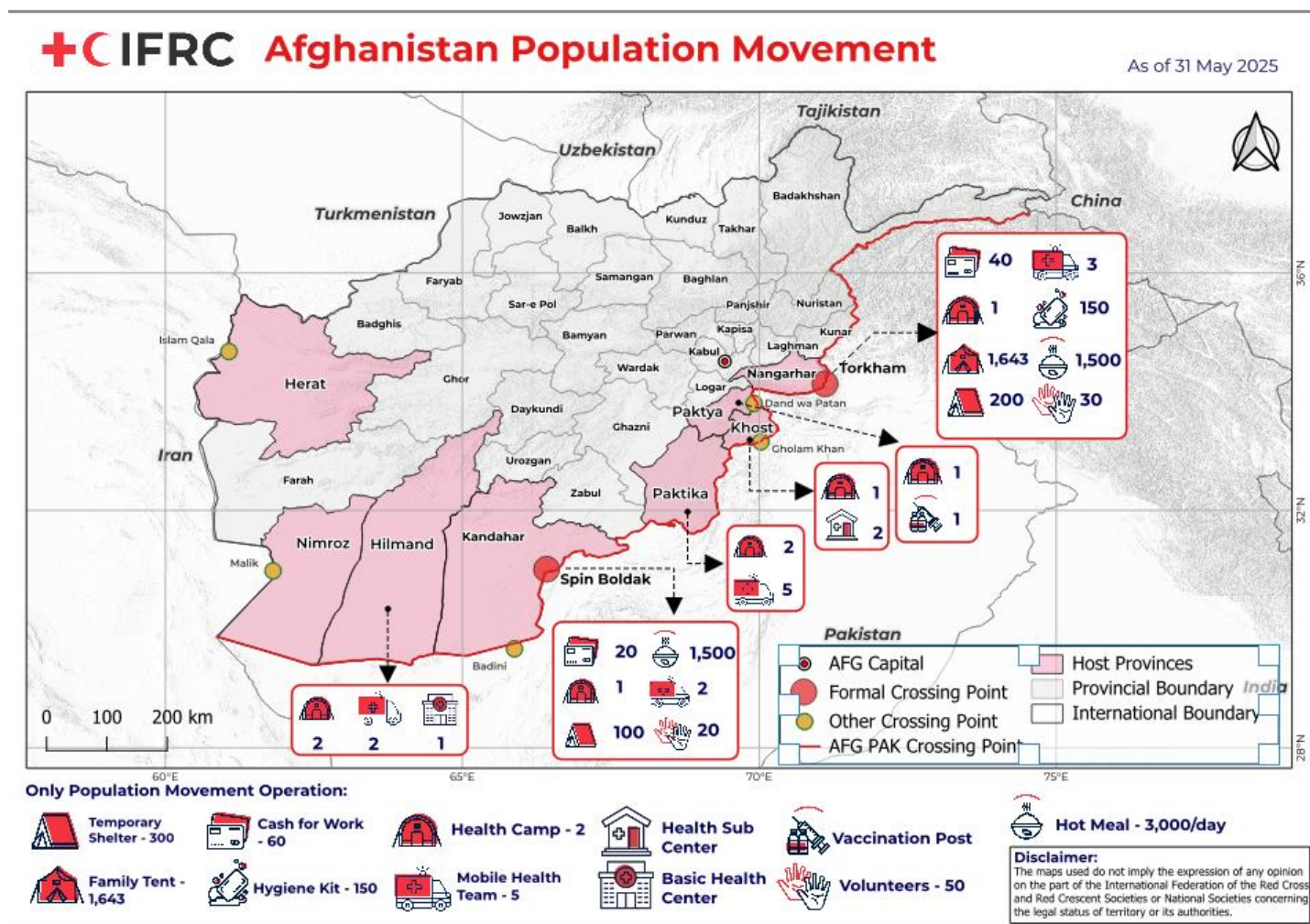
agriculture. Permanent housing is also a priority to facilitate safe shelter and reduce the risk of secondary displacement.

Note: This initial overview provides a preliminary understanding of the evolving situation and will be further refined and reflected in upcoming updates or through a potential revision of the Operational Strategy, subject to future developments and results of ongoing assessments. The remaining content, including Section C, continues to reflect updates as per the planned reporting period up to 31 May 2025.

Summary of response

Overview of the host National Society and ongoing response

The ARCS maintains an active presence in all provinces of Afghanistan and plays a vital auxiliary role to Afghan authorities. In response to the large-scale return of Afghans, particularly from Pakistan, ARCS has been a key participant in coordination committees led by local authorities to manage the complex humanitarian response. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), through the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR), formally appealed to donors, the United Nations, and humanitarian actors for urgent support in responding to the ongoing returnee crisis. In this context, ARCS continues to coordinate closely with Afghan authorities to facilitate the reintegration of returnees and address critical gaps in services.



As of 31 May 2025, the ARCS, with support from the IFRC and Movement partners, has been addressing the humanitarian needs arising from the ongoing population movement. A total of **9,297 returning families** have benefitted from temporary shelter assistance from April to May 2025, including the installation of 1,643 family tents in Omari Camp (Nangarhar) and Inzergai Camp (Kandahar), ensuring access to safe and dignified temporary accommodation. Concerns were raised about the suitability of the family tents during a visit of the IFRC Operations Manager, which were deemed inappropriate for the local context. The IFRC Country Delegation (CD) discussed the issue with ARCS and noted the tents used so far are indeed unsuitable for the returnees in the camp. IFRC has now procured 184 family tents that are ready to be dispatched to the zero point in alignment with ARCS' identified needs and plans.

In addressing the dire health needs, 14,104 people (including 6,499 female) received outpatient consultations, while 3,341 people accessed mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services through Mobile Health Teams and health camps. To improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions, 60 emergency latrines were installed, and 150 hygiene kits were distributed; additionally, 60 labourers were engaged under a cash-for-work scheme to carry out daily waste management activities within the camps. To meet immediate food needs, ARCS facilitated the daily distribution of 3,000 hot meals across the two main transit camps for returnees. These interventions collectively contributed to supporting approximately 168,000 people, with ARCS continuing to monitor crossing points movements and provide multi-sectoral response to the evolving context.

The ARCS, with support from the IFRC, conducted a joint rapid needs assessment at the two primary formal crossing points—Torkham in Nangarhar Province and Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province. The assessment, led by ARCS branch staff and volunteers, aimed to identify the most urgent humanitarian needs of returnees and inform the development of targeted interventions.

Needs analysis

Needs analysis

The multi sectoral assessment was conducted on 11 May covering Takhta Pul and Torkham returnee camps at Kandahar and Nangahar, which identified several immediate and critical needs among the returnee populations at the crossing points. A total of 90 trained ARCS volunteers (40 women and 50 men) were engaged during assessment at Spin Boldak and Torkham. Priority needs include emergency shelter, access to safe water, adequate sanitation facilities, and essential health services. Many families are residing in shelters without adequate protection, while health services, particularly in Torkham, are overstretched due to high demand and poor hygiene conditions. Livelihood support and cash-based assistance are urgently required to address economic vulnerability, alongside targeted protection services for women, children, and persons with disabilities. The assessment also highlights the need to strengthen community feedback mechanisms and access to timely, accurate information.

Shelter:

There is a significant shortage of emergency and transitional shelter. Many families are residing in overcrowded tents, or in temporary arrangements such as mosques, schools, or with host families for about 1 to 5 days. In Kunduz province, while thousands of acres of land have been allocated for the reintegration of returnees, no humanitarian organisation is currently engaged in shelter construction, and no formal plan for permanent shelter has been established. However, some progress has been made with the recent commencement of residential plot distribution in Khwaja Kaftrul, Kunduz Province.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):

Access to WASH services remains inadequate in both assessed locations. At Spin Boldak, the camp is equipped with approximately 50 bathing and sanitation facilities, all of which are designated for men, leaving women and girls without access to gender-appropriate hygiene services. Toilets are poorly maintained, and waste management is

irregular and insufficient. Insect infestations are widespread due to the absence of organised vector control measures. In Torkham, while water is supplied through a solar-powered network supported by UNICEF, the quality of both water and cooling ice remains untested, posing contamination risks. These conditions significantly elevate the risk of communicable disease outbreaks.

Health Services:

Health facilities, particularly at Torkham, are under severe strain. Clinics report providing service to 300 to 350 patients daily, with an estimated 50 to 60 cases directly linked to poor sanitation and unsafe water sources. This reflects the urgent need to reinforce health service delivery, particularly in primary care, communicable disease control, maternal and child health, and referral services.

Livelihoods and Income Support:

Returnees face acute income insecurity, having returned from their lives in Pakistan and Iran with limited resources and few livelihood opportunities. The assessment highlighted the need for immediate cash-based assistance, particularly in the form of cash-for-work interventions. Women in particular have expressed the need for targeted livelihood support to restore basic income sources and reduce economic vulnerability.

Protection and Psychosocial Support:

While no direct protection risks were identified at the time of the assessment, vulnerable groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities, face multiple barriers in accessing services. The need for psychosocial support was particularly noted, alongside the establishment of safe spaces for women and child friendly spaces incorporated with Marastoons, including mechanisms to address gender-based violence, child protection, and trauma-related needs.

Community Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms:

The assessment identified critical gaps in community engagement and accountability. Most returnees were unaware of existing feedback mechanisms, and no formal help desks or complaint systems were in place at the camps. Although some people shared verbal feedback with ARCS volunteers, these interactions were largely informal and lacked follow-up. Returnees expressed a strong preference for face-to-face communication and called for accessible, safe, and anonymous channels to voice concerns and receive timely information on available services. Based on the findings, the regional team developed two essential guidance documents: (1) a standardised CEA plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and (2) a guideline for establishing information desks, complete with a checklist to ensure consistent and effective information dissemination.

Additionally, ARCS volunteers have been gathering verbal feedback from returnees, emphasising the need to formalise and expand feedback mechanisms. Returnees specifically expressed the importance of clear and timely information regarding eligibility criteria, registration processes, and the nature and timing of assistance. They also highlighted the necessity of two-way communication channels to raise concerns, ask questions, and stay informed throughout the response cycle.

Operational risk assessment

The Afghanistan Population Movement response encountered contextual and programmatic risks during the reporting period. The following analysis outlines the key operational risks currently affecting the response, based on findings from the field and ongoing monitoring by ARCS and its partners.

- Funding shortfalls have limited ARCS' ability to sustain essential services, including shelter, WASH, and health interventions at key returnee sites, increasing the risk of service gaps.
- Although ARCS does not face access restrictions at present, access restrictions, particularly limitations on the participation of female humanitarian staff of NGO/INGOs, continue to hinder the delivery of inclusive and gender-sensitive assistance. Staff and volunteer safety is a concern due to overcrowded conditions, extreme

weather, and operational stress, though measures such as shift rotations, protective equipment, and security briefings have been implemented to mitigate these risks.

- Delays in logistics and procurement, caused by customs bottlenecks and supply chain disruptions, are impeding the timely delivery of critical relief items.
- The large number of returnees, averaging over 3,600 people per day in the period mid-April to late-May—has placed significant pressure on ARCS' existing resources, with transit camps nearing capacity and supplies requiring constant replenishment. Concurrent returns from other countries, such as Iran, may further strain ARCS' operational and financial capacity and complicate coordination across multiple entry points.
- Seasonal hazards, including extreme heat and the potential for flash floods, threaten the health and safety of returnees and may damage shelter and WASH infrastructure.
- Public health risks are elevated due to overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to safe water, increasing the likelihood of disease outbreaks, particularly among unvaccinated children.
- Protection concerns remain high for women, children, and persons with disabilities, who face increased risks of abuse and exploitation in overcrowded and under-resourced environments. The provision of safe spaces, gender-segregated facilities, and psychosocial support remains essential.

IFRC/ARCS outlined potential risks in the [Afghanistan Population Movement \(Returnees\) Operational Strategy](#) page# 29-10 and have been closely monitoring and mitigating those risks across the operation. The outlined risks and proposed mitigation measures remain valid for the operation.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update on the strategy

The Afghanistan Population Movement operation aims to support the ARCS in addressing the urgent humanitarian needs of returnees, while concurrently establishing the foundation for early recovery and long-term reintegration. The IFRC Emergency Appeal launched on 1 May 2025 targets **525,000 people** through a phased, Federation-wide response that spans immediate life-saving assistance, early recovery to sustainable livelihood restoration.

- **Immediate life-saving assistance** focuses on providing essential services such as temporary shelter, essential primary healthcare, hot meals, cash assistance for the most vulnerable, and basic WASH interventions, including camp waste management and coordination on crowd control with UN partners.
- **Early recovery and reintegration efforts** aim to restore self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods, reduce pressure on host communities and public services, and support vulnerable households in rebuilding their lives with dignity.

This approach ensures a comprehensive response that meets both the immediate and evolving needs of returnees and communities in areas of return. The [operational strategy](#), published on 24 May 2025, outlines a 24-month response plan that remains adaptive to the evolving context. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance and responsiveness to the emerging needs of returnees. The activities and budget from the DREF operation have been fully integrated into the Emergency Appeal budget.

Given the substantial funding gap and the pressing needs of returnees at crossing points and the resettlement areas, IFRC is exploring options to (re)allocate resources within the Unified Plan 2025 to bolster the Emergency Appeal response. During the initial discussion, the country delegation team and partners who have contributed to Unified Plan 2025 have agreed to utilize funds to support this operation. Any such transfer will adhere to Federation-wide procedures, ensuring full transparency with the donor.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

 Shelter, Housing and Settlements		People Reached: 65,079	
		Female > 18: 13,394	Female < 18: 18,496
		Male > 18: 13,939	Male < 18: 19,250
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>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached with shelter support</i>	9,297 HHs	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			
As of 31 May 2025, a total of 1,643 family tents have been installed at the Torkham and Spin Boldak crossing points to provide immediate shelter for returnee households. In total, 9,297 families (average 7 members in a family) have received temporary shelter assistance as part of the emergency response. Furthermore, five refugee tents have been erected to support larger groups and serve communal purposes within the camps. A total of 65,079 people have been reached with emergency shelter support.			
			
		Camp established by ARCS in Spin Boldak and Takhta Pol districts, Kandahar. (Photo: IFRC)	



Livelihoods

People Reached:

Female > 18:

Female < 18:

Male > 18:

Male < 18:

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

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached with livelihoods support</i>	-	4,000
	<i>Number of people supported in starting or improving their income-generation activities</i>	-	2,000
	<i>Number of people who have completed training or awareness-raising sessions on improved income-generation risk management practices</i>	-	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>	-	2,000
	<i>Number of households that received cash for tools and equipment under the CFW programme</i>	-	2,000

Hot Meal Distribution

The ARCS, with support from the IFRC and ICRC, is providing 3,000 hot meals daily to returnees, 1,500 in Omari Camp (Torkham) with ICRC support, and 1,500 in Enzargi Camp (Spin Boldak) with IFRC support. This assistance addresses immediate food needs for vulnerable families arriving with limited resources. The hot meals, prepared and distributed by ARCS teams, have been widely appreciated by returnees, UN agencies, and other stakeholders for being both nutritious and responsive to the immediate needs of those affected.

Cash for Work for Waste Management

ARCS has engaged 60 laborers through a cash-for-work initiative, supported by the IFRC, to manage solid waste in both camps. These workers received their monthly payments for May 2025, helping maintain a clean and safe camp environment.



Multi-purpose Cash

People Reached:

Female > 18:

Female < 18:

Male > 18:

Male < 18:

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>	-	5,000

As of 31 May 2025, no significant developments warrant reporting. It is expected that unconditional cash assistance will start in the recovery phase and depend on the funding coverage.



Health & Care

(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)

People Reached: 14,592

Female > 18: **6,741**

Female < 18: **560**

Male > 18: **6,760**

Male < 18: **531**

Objective: *Strengthening holistic individual and community health of the population impacted through community level interventions and health system strengthening*

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached through primary health care, outreach services, mobile units, and clinics operated by the National Society</i>	14,104	350,000
	<i>Number of childbirths attended by a skilled health worker in a health facility operated by the National Society</i>	3	350
	<i>Number of functional mobile health service units providing quality primary health care</i>	5	40
	<i>Number of pregnancies where postnatal or antenatal care is delivered by a skilled health worker in a health facility operated by the National Society</i>	543	9,625
	<i>Number of people reached with immunization services</i>	1,091	21,000
	<i>Number of children under five years of age enrolled in supplementary feeding delivered by the National Society following assessments</i>	-	4,375
	<i>Number of people reached with psychosocial and mental health services</i>	3,341	1,093

Primary Health Care

Between April and May 2025, the ARCS, supported by Movement partners including the Norwegian and Danish Red Cross, delivered comprehensive health services across key returnee entry points in Nangarhar, Kandahar, Kunar, Zabul, and Helmand provinces.

As of the end of May 2025, a total of eight Mobile Health Teams (MHTs); 4 in Nangarhar (Torkham), 4 in Kandahar (Spin Boldak) and two temporary health camps; in Torkham (Nangarhar), and in Takhta Pul (Kandahar) have been deployed to support the health needs of returnees. Of these, five MHTs remain operational in Nangarhar, Kunar, Kandahar, Zabul, and Helmand, along with two functioning health camps located at the Torkham crossing point and Inzergai Returnees Camp in Spin Boldak. These facilities continue to deliver essential health services across key points of entry.



ARCS provides medical services to returnees through its Mobile Health Teams. (Photo: IFRC)

- **Outpatient Consultations:** A combined 14,592 outpatient department (OPD) consultations (female-7,301 and male-7,291) were provided—8,778 in Nangarhar and 5,811 in Kandahar—addressing a wide range of health issues, including respiratory infections, acute watery diarrhea, and non-communicable diseases.
- **Reproductive Health Services:** ARCS conducted 150 family planning education sessions during which the educated women on various methods of family planning. The sessions were attended by 404 antenatal care (ANC) women and 139 postnatal care (PNC) women in Nangarhar, reaching a total of 543 women.
- **Nutrition Screening:** A total of 1,091 children (girl-560, boy-531) were screened for malnutrition—754 in Nangarhar and 337 in Kandahar. Among them, 731 children (479 in Nangarhar and 252 in Kandahar) had no acute malnutrition, while 247 children were found to have moderate and 113 children with severe acute malnutrition.
- **Child Deliveries:** Three normal deliveries were conducted by skilled health workers in ARCS' clinic in Nangarhar province. In total, 231 people received maternal and child health (MCH) services as part of the broader health response.
- **Health Education:** ARCS conducted health awareness sessions that reached around 900 people, focusing on hygiene promotion, disease prevention, and health-seeking behaviors.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):

ARCS, with Danish Red Cross support, provided MHPSS services to **3,341 people** (female-1,988 females and male-1,353) through three dedicated MHTs—one at Torkham Zero Point and two in Omari Camp. These services included psychological first aid, emotional support, individual counselling, and group sessions on stress management and coping mechanisms.

The integrated, mobile, and facility-based approach ensured timely and equitable access to essential health services for returnees, many of whom arrived in urgent need of medical care after prolonged and difficult journeys. These interventions played a critical role in protecting the health and dignity of vulnerable people and strengthening the resilience of host communities.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

People Reached: 4,050

Female > 18:
853

Female < 18:
1,132

Male > 18: 854

Male < 18: 211

Objective:

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

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

Number of people reached - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

4,050

10,500

Number of handwashing facilities constructed or rehabilitated

-

36

Number of sanitation facilities constructed or rehabilitated

36

Number of dignity kits distributed (MHM kits)

-

1,650

Number of volunteers trained in eCBHFA, NCD, HP, ECV, nutrition screening, and RH

-

1,080

Number of family hygiene kits distributed

150

1,260

The ARCS, with support from the IFRC, has provided WASH assistance in returnee camps across Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces to address urgent sanitation and public health needs. A joint WASH needs assessment was conducted by ARCS and IFRC at Torkham and Spin Boldak (Takhta Pul Camp), the findings of which are being used to inform and adapt to ongoing response activities.

Installation of Latrines

ARCS installed 60 portable latrines which accommodate 3,000 people daily (50 each for a latrine) in Omari Camp at the Torkham crossing point, with further installations planned to enhance access to safe and gender-sensitive sanitation facilities. Additionally, a total of 60 laborers have been hired for daily waste management within the camps, ensuring clean and hygienic conditions for all returnees residing at the crossing points. They were engaged through a cash-for-work intervention and received their monthly payment for May 2025 in recognition of their efforts to maintain clean and hygienic camp environments.



ARCS staff along with hired laborers cleaning the surrounding as part of waste management activities. (Photo: IFRC)

Hygiene Kits Distribution

To further promote hygiene, ARCS distributed 150 family hygiene kits in Torkham, benefiting 1050 returnees with essential sanitation supplies. Additionally, 650 sanitary kits were procured by the IFRC and formally handed over to ARCS in early June 2025. These kits are scheduled for distribution in the fourth week of June across returnee locations in both Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces.

These interventions collectively contribute to reducing the risk of disease transmission, safeguarding public health, and ensuring a more dignified living environment for vulnerable returnee populations.

 Community Engagement and Accountability	People Reached:	
	Female > 18:	Female < 18:
	Male > 18:	Male < 18:
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
	<i>Number of methods established to communicate with communities about what is happening in the organisation/programme/operation, including selection criteria, if these are being used</i>	In progress	3
	<i>Number of methods used to enable communities to participate in planning and managing services, programmes, and operations</i>	-	3
	<i>Number of community perception and feedback reports produced</i>	-	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>	-	500

To enhance community engagement and feedback mechanisms, ARCS and the IFRC regional CEA team undertook several key actions. A CEA needs assessment was conducted in the returnee camps, identifying communication gaps and informing future interventions. Based on the findings, the regional team developed two guidance documents: (1) a standardized [CEA plan](#) for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and (2) a [guideline](#) for establishing information desks, including a checklist to ensure consistent and clear information provision.

In addition, ARCS volunteers have been receiving verbal feedback from returnees, and in the process of setting up help desks for returnees at crossing point and returnees camp and documenting the feedback to formalize and expand feedback channels. Returnees specifically requested clear and timely information regarding eligibility criteria, registration processes, and the nature and timing of assistance. They also emphasized the importance of two-way communication mechanisms to raise concerns, ask questions, and stay informed throughout the response cycle. Efforts are underway to increase visibility, accessibility, and inclusiveness of feedback channels, including planning for safe, gender-sensitive, and anonymous mechanisms to complement existing approaches. These initiatives aim to promote two-way communication and strengthen accountability to affected populations.



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

People Reached:

Female > 18:

Female < 18:

Male > 18:

Male < 18:

Objective:

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

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

Number of volunteers mobilised disaggregated by gender

90

200

Number of people reached by information dissemination sessions on menstrual hygiene management (MHM)

-

500

Number of people reached by protection, gender, and inclusion programming

-

3,000

Number of National Society staff and volunteers trained in prevention and protection of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and all forms of child safeguarding

-

300

The ARCS applies the IFRC minimum standards for PGI in emergencies

Yes

Yes

The ARCS engages a PGI focal person

Yes

Yes

The ARCS engages a safeguarding focal person

Yes

Yes

The ARCS has integrated Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) considerations into health and psychosocial support interventions, with a focus on prioritizing women and children. Gender-responsive care was ensured through the provision of maternal and child health services, while mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities included psychological first aid, counselling, and emotional support tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups, including female-headed households and children. In accordance with cultural norms, all medical and psychosocial services were delivered separately for men and women by gender-matched staff, ensuring safe, dignified, and culturally appropriate access for all returnees. For disability inclusion, priority was given to persons with disabilities during hot meal distributions. The installed latrines are designed to be disability-friendly, and persons with disabilities will also be prioritized for the planned unconditional cash grants.

With support from IFRC, the ARCS conducted a PGI assessment at the Spin Boldak and Torkham crossing points, engaging 90 people (40 women and 50 men). The assessment was carried out by trained male and female ARCS volunteers to ensure representation of diverse community perspectives. As part of ongoing capacity-building efforts, ARCS staff and volunteers in Spin Boldak received targeted training on PGI.

The Head of the ARCS Gender Department undertook an official visit to Spin Boldak, engaging directly with returnees to gather insights that will inform gender-sensitive programming. In addition, ARCS, in collaboration with IFRC, planned training sessions on CEA/PGI and safeguarding and child protection for staff and volunteers (male and female separately). The recruitment process for a dedicated PGI Officer (male) in ARCS is currently

underway, and IFRC provided technical support to ARCS in the development of a safeguarding policy during the reporting period.

The IFRC PGI focal point held three coordination meetings with the Danish Red Cross (DRC), Norwegian Red Cross, and ICRC to strengthen joint support to the ARCS Gender Department. As part of this collaboration, the Norwegian Red Cross committed to delivering PGI training for ARCS’ Health Department at the national level, with plans to extend the training to branch level. The Danish Red Cross pledged support for the recruitment of a female PGI Officer who will also contribute to the ongoing population movement operation. Additionally, discussions were held on conducting a protection assessment in Spin Boldak and Torkham, with ICRC taking the lead. These efforts will be closely coordinated with the ARCS Gender Department and the Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme.

 Migration and Displacement		People Reached:	
		Female > 18:	Female < 18:
		Male > 18:	Male < 18:
Objective:	Communities support the needs of migrants and their families and those assisting migrants at all stages of migration (origin, transit and destination)		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	Number of Preparedness and Contingency Planning on Large-Scale Return	-	1
	Number of staff and volunteers trained in Migration and Displacement	-	100

From April to the end of May 2025, a total of 31,879 returning families, comprising 167,950 people, were recorded by ARCS across six provinces of Afghanistan, primarily returning from Pakistan through major crossing points such as Torkham and Spin Boldak. In parallel, approximately 328,300 people returned from Iran between 20 March and 27 May 2025, including both voluntary and forced returns. ARCS continues to monitor these crossing point movements to assess and respond to the evolving needs of returnees.

An IFRC Technical Migration Cell—comprising colleagues from Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Asia Pacific Regional Office, and the Geneva Secretariat—was established to enhance coordination, address technical challenges, and ensure timely information exchange. The Cell met weekly during the reporting period and transitioned to a fortnightly schedule from June onward.

A noticeable decline in returnee numbers was recorded -in late May, linked to the Eid al-Adha holiday in early June.. Correspondingly, ARCS reduced daily hot meal distributions from 3,000 to 600. However, returnee numbers are expected to



Returnees from Pakistan at Afghan crossing point. (Photo: ARCS)

rise again toward the end of June as repatriation activities resume in advance of the expiration of the validating of the Proof of Registration (PoR) cards in Pakistan on 30 June 2025.

ARCS plans to train its staff and volunteers in July 2025 on the Movement's principled approach to migration and displacement, with a particular focus on the principles guiding assistance to returning migrants. The training will also support ARCS in operationalizing the Movement's Migration Strategy by enhancing access to essential services for returnees, including protection and humanitarian assistance.

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>	-	310
	<i>Number of branches with strengthened mechanisms for responding to prioritised threats</i>	-	5
	<i>Number of branch warehouses optimised with required systems and supporting infrastructure for enhanced operations</i>	-	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
	<i>The National Society has an enhanced information management capacity to support its operations and strengthen accountability</i>	-	1

ARCS, in coordination with IFRC, conducted focused discussions to assess operational gaps and enhance readiness in light of the anticipated increase in returnees. These engagements led to the identification of priority activities to strengthen the National Society's capacity, particularly at the branch level and key response locations.

Advanced discussions were also held regarding volunteer integration, emphasizing the importance of their structured inclusion in operations while ensuring rights, duty of care, and retention. A volunteer recruitment and retention strategy has been drafted and shared with ARCS for review and approval.

To support preparedness efforts, the ARCS contingency plan has been finalized and translated into local languages (Pashto and Dari), with formal approval currently in progress. These efforts collectively aim to reinforce ARCS' institutional capacity to respond effectively to the ongoing population movement.



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>	-	8
	<i>Partner engagement strategies are developed to maximise the ARCS' resources to be able to rollout 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 organisation</i>	-	Yes
	<i>Number of formal interagency/international coordination platforms the IFRC network is a part of</i>	-	7

The ARCS is actively coordinating with Afghan authorities and humanitarian partners to support returnee reintegration. In response to the returnee crisis, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) formally appealed for support from donors, the UN, and humanitarian actors. Coordination meetings are co-chaired by MoRR, UNHCR, and IOM, with ARCS participating alongside other stakeholders to align efforts.

The ARCS, in collaboration with IFRC and Movement partners, has conducted regular movement coordination meetings focused on the returnee response. Participating Partner National Societies (PNS), including the Norwegian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, and Turkish Red Crescent, expressed interest and have actively contributed, particularly in supporting Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) and psychosocial support.

Norwegian Red Cross supported ARCS to establish three MHTs at the Torkham crossing point, including one stationed at the crossing point and two within Omari Camp, providing essential health and referral services. Similarly, they also provided a humanitarian caravan delivering non-food items and winter kits in areas anticipating high numbers of returns (approx. USD 800k; CHF 654,208) with additional USD 300k (CHF 245,328) for continued three fixed health facilities, five MHTs and humanitarian caravan operations. Additionally, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (approximately USD 1 million), supports polio eradication efforts and primary healthcare service delivery, particularly close to the informal crossing areas experiencing a high volume of returnees. The project is implemented in partnership with the IFRC, and discussions are underway regarding a potential extension into 2026.

Danish Red Cross provided support for MHPSS interventions, offering psychological first aid, counselling, and stress management, particularly for women and children.

Additionally, ARCS and IFRC have participated in inter-agency cluster meetings and conducted joint field visits with Movement partners, including joint needs assessments in Torkham and Spin Boldak. IFRC is strengthening

coordination and supporting ARCS' participation on several coordination forums, including the Cash Working Group, Shelter Cluster, Food Security and Agriculture Cluster, and the Government Returnees Committee. These coordination efforts have been key in aligning strategies and shaping the ongoing Population Movement response.



Secretariat Services

Objective:

Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of technical and monitoring visits conducted</i>	1	20
	<i>Number of evaluations conducted (MTR and final evaluation)</i>	-	2
	<i>Number of surges profiles deployed</i>	2	2

The IFRC Country Delegation provides strategic and operational advice to the ARCS leadership in terms of overall coordination, representation, planning as well as compliance (see above under NSD and coordination sections). Additionally, during the reporting period, the IFRC continued to extend the following support to ARCS:

Communications and Humanitarian Diplomacy

IFRC supported promoting visibility for the operation through various media platforms and humanitarian diplomacy channels. Key outputs include the collection and sharing of photos and videos from crossing points, which were uploaded to [shaRED](#) and featured in multiple social media posts across IFRC's X and LinkedIn accounts. Interviews were conducted with local television stations (Tolo and Shamshad TVs), and a human-interest story about a young mother who gave birth in the Takta Pul transit camp shortly after arriving from Pakistan was published by BBC News. These efforts have contributed to public awareness and advocacy, helping to highlight the urgent needs and resilience of people who have arrived from in Afghanistan from Pakistan.

Logistics

Significant progress was made in the procurement and delivery of essential relief items. This includes 184 family tents (international procurement), 5 refugee tents, 300 hygiene kits, 1 light tower (dispatched), as well as 650 sanitary kits and 60 portable latrines (locally procured and handed over to ARCS). These items replenish ARCS stock and support ongoing response efforts. The logistics team is also actively processing a repeat order for 27 medical kits to sustain service continuity.

Finance

The finance unit supported budget revisions through ERP and PEAR and facilitated the transfer of CHF 250,000 to ARCS to strengthen local operational capacity.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER)

The PMER team facilitated publishing the Operational Strategy and Situation Reports (#1 and #2), while supporting continuous data quality improvement at the field level. Regular engagement with the ARCS PMER unit has ensured consistency in data reporting and accountability.

Information Technology & Telecommunications (IT/Telecom)

A functional working station was established in Kabul for the Surge Operations Manager and provided critical technical support to facilitate smooth operations and field coordination.

Information Management (IM)

The IM team produced timely, evidence-based outputs, including the development of Disaster Snapshot #2 and updates to the IFRC [GO emergency page](#). These products support internal coordination and enhance situational awareness across the IFRC network.

Safety & Security

All IFRC staff completed mandatory Stay Safe 2.0 training, and ARCS personnel were encouraged to do the same. The IFRC security team has updated contingency and emergency management plans and maintains close coordination with other humanitarian actors at key crossing points. Security briefings were provided to all surge personnel.

Rapid Response Personnel

As of 19 May 2025, two rapid response deployments have supported the operation: an Operations Manager (Global level), a PMER Officer (Regional level) whereas an alert was shared for a Communications Coordinator (Global level). The Operations Manager conducted a field visit to Jalalabad and the Torkham crossing point to strengthen coordination efforts and oversee the implementation of ongoing activities. These deployments have provided essential surge support in operations management and PMER.

D. FUNDING

IFRC Secretariat Coverage	Amount Raised (CHF)	Funding Gap (CHF)	Coverage %
Hard Pledges + In kind + Soft Pledges	957,020	19,042,980	5%
Federation-wide Coverage	Amount Raised (CHF)	Funding Gap (CHF)	Coverage %
ARCS domestic income + IFRC Secretariat + Bilateral support to NRCS	1,705,256*	23,294,744	7%

As of 31 May 2025, 5 per cent of the total funding requirement has been successfully pledged to the IFRC Secretariat Emergency Appeal. *The Federation wide coverage includes CHF 748,236 interest from Finnish Red Cross which is still on going and not registered yet.

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:

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For IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledges support:

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For IFRC PMER and Quality Assurance and Performance and Accountability support

- **PMER in Emergencies Coordinator,** Mursidi Unir, email: mursidi.unir@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.