

NRC's operations in Afghanistan

Humanitarian overview

Decades of war, political turmoil, chronic poverty, recurrent disasters such as drought, earthquakes and flooding, as well as an economic crisis have devastated Afghanistan and left it on a trajectory of overall decline. The UN estimates that 23.7 million people – more than half of Afghanistan's population – are currently in need of humanitarian assistance.

Most Afghans now live well below the poverty line, with over 12 million people experiencing food insecurity, and 2.9 million facing acute hunger, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Widespread unemployment, currency fluctuation and increasing food costs continue to drive humanitarian needs.

As of November 2024, the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2024 is funded at less than 40 per cent, which prevents the maintenance and expansion of an effective humanitarian response.

There are around 6.3 million internally displaced people living in precarious situations across the country. Thousands more have been forced to leave their homes over the last year due to economic deprivation, persecution, violence and disasters.

In addition to the over 700,000 Afghans returning from Pakistan, the climate-induced disasters seen in the second quarter of 2024, such as flash floods across different provinces of Afghanistan, are exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.



Photo: Malsam Shafiey/NRC

Our core activities



Education



Information, counselling
and legal assistance (ICLA)



Livelihoods
and food security



Protection
from violence



Shelter
and settlements



Water, sanitation
and hygiene (WASH)

NRC in Afghanistan

Established	2003
International staff	16
National staff	760

Our areas of operation

- Badghis
- Balkh
- Faryab
- Herat
- Kabul
- Kandahar
- Khost
- Kunduz
- Nangarhar
- Sar-e-pul
- Uruzgan
- Zabul



Our activities in detail

NRC in Afghanistan seeks to protect and assist vulnerable communities affected by displacement. NRC provides assistance to meet immediate humanitarian needs, prevent further displacement, and contribute to durable solutions.

We implement programming across all of NRC's core competencies, integrating protection and advocacy, and maintaining an emergency team to support preparedness and response.



104,506 people reached in 2023 ▼

Education

We specialise in education in emergencies for displaced children, adolescents and youth. Our teams aim to improve access to quality, inclusive and protective educational opportunities relevant to the cognitive, emotional and psychosocial development with strengthened coping mechanism. To work towards this objective NRC improves the capacity of education staff to deliver quality programming. NRC works in both non-formal education and formal education.

Under non-formal education we provide accelerated and community-based education to children who are out-of-school, affected by displacement, and are in rural and hard-to-reach areas where schools do not exist or are far from communities. We support students transition into formal basic education.

Under formal education, NRC increases the capacity of schools and ensures successful enrolment and transition, particularly for out-of-school children, by providing learning environments that ensure physical, psychological, and cognitive wellbeing.

Through our support, schools can construct and renovate classrooms and educational infrastructure including the water, sanitation and hygiene facilities to make schools a safe environment for children.



62,207 people reached in 2023 ▼

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

We provide information, counselling and legal assistance to displaced Afghans on a wide range of legal matters within four thematic areas: housing, land and property (HLP); legal identity documentation (LID); employment law and procedure (ELP); and access to essential services and referrals.

We conduct information sessions on legal rights in communities, NRC community centres and transit centres run by other agencies as well as sessions on basic rights to returnees at border points with Pakistan and Iran. We help people through one-on-one legal counselling and provide direct legal assistance and full representation to enable people to claim and exercise their rights, including accessing legal identity documentation; resolving housing, land and property disputes; and claiming employment rights.

By supporting formal and informal justice actors with capacity-building training and mentorship, we provide knowledge and skills to resolve disputes and facilitate access to rights. Our teams also conduct research and assessments to better understand the challenges displaced Afghans face in claiming and exercising their rights.



14,441 people reached in 2023 ▼

Livelihoods and food security

To ensure households sustain their basic livelihoods during conflicts and disasters, NRC helps to address the food needs of displaced populations, ensuring their essential productive assets are protected, and that the coping capacity of vulnerable households is improved.

Through engaging in market-based activities, we support the displaced population by helping to meet their immediate food needs during emergency situations, assisting in improving food production systems, and strengthening local markets to work for affected populations.

Through our programmes, we enable women and people with disabilities to access basic food needs and improved livelihoods.



133,472 people reached in 2023 ▼

Protection from violence

NRC's protection from violence work focuses on community engagement to ensure that displaced communities are not exposed to further risks.

Our team supports displaced communities by providing access to information about basic services such as food or referrals to further medical assistance

NRC works with communities to identify their concerns and strengthen community coping mechanisms, supporting vulnerable community members such as persons with disabilities, female-headed households, and older persons, returnees and internally displaced.



57,740 people reached in 2023 ▼

Shelter and settlements

NRC provides shelter support to meet the immediate safety needs of vulnerable households and communities in Afghanistan, while also paving the way for long-term solutions and improved living conditions for internally displaced and returnee populations.

Through our work, we provide immediate and life-saving interventions after sudden events, whilst also providing and enhancing longer-term infrastructure conditions for vulnerable populations, including women and children. This includes assisting households facing imminent threat of eviction.

NRC supports households by providing non-food items, especially during Afghanistan's harsh winter conditions.



141,341 people reached in 2023 ▼

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

NRC supports internally displaced people (IDPs) who have limited or no access to WASH services as well as those who are exposed to public health risks.

This includes supporting communities affected by man-made, climate-induced and natural disasters such as conflict, drought, earthquakes, floods and disease outbreaks.

NRC provides new and restores existing WASH facilities in informal settlements. Our projects include provision of WASH facilities in schools, gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, distribution of hygiene kits, and training of communities on basic hygiene practices.

Gender and protection

NRC is committed to ensure safe and inclusive programming. Mainstreaming protection and gender in our work is essential to ensuring that service and aid provision is safe, accessible and accountable, while also being sensitive to the different needs of the affected population.

Although women, men, boys and girls share many common needs in a humanitarian setting, they do not necessarily have the same coping mechanisms, nor will they have the same experience in accessing and obtaining humanitarian support to meet their needs.

In Afghanistan, women and girls have always faced many barriers, increasing the need for humanitarian support. Yet this situation has only worsened in recent times. NRC continues to deliver its programmes through a gender lens by providing women with safe access to adequate assistance and services. Moreover, NRC believes that we can only undertake principled humanitarian action for women with women.

Emergency response

We provide access to humanitarian assistance for IDPs, displaced Afghans in host communities and returnees. We are scaling up our operations to provide emergency humanitarian assistance across our operational areas through a broad set of measures including winterisation, emergency shelter response, non-food items, vulnerability assessments, capacity building and multi-purpose cash to support displaced Afghans, both when settling and integrating in a new place, or upon return.

Our donors

We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:

- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)
- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (OCHA AHF)
- Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)
- USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)
- Liechtenstein
- Education Cannot Wait (ECW)
- The United States Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)
- UN International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)
- Government of Belgium – Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGD)
- Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

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