



# IOM AFGHANISTAN NEWSLETTER

June 2021

Through the first quarter of 2021 and into the second, we have continued to deliver support to people on the move in Afghanistan. With the confirmation of international troop withdrawal, and the turn of the seasons into the concerning dry spring, we have been tracking people's mobility and intentions, and preparing for what is to come. La Niña weather patterns are creating drought-like conditions, compounded by food insecurity, which is expected to result in displacement in high-risk provinces in the west, south and north. While the humanitarian community remains hopeful that the Intra-Afghan negotiations will result in a just and sustainable peace, the security situation continues to deteriorate, demanding scaled up emergency response and additional funding to meet growing humanitarian need. We remain committed to stay and deliver.


Historically high numbers of undocumented returnees are straining resources at Afghanistan's borders and accentuating downstream impacts for families who are reliant on remittances and international labour migration to survive. To date, as of mid-June 2021, more than 537,000 undocumented returnees have been registered at key border crossing points. At the same time, conflict and rapidly deteriorating economic conditions continue to drive out-migration. Irregular out-migration has long been a key migration dynamic over Afghanistan's long land borders, and vulnerable migrants, including children, face an intensifying risk of being trafficked. Anecdotal evidence gathered by IOM in hubs of irregular migration shows a 33% increase in migration abroad since December 2020. Shifts in cross-border movement patterns are considered likely, following outbound border closures by Iran and Pakistan as a result of the third wave of COVID-19 in April and May, and complete closure along the Durand Line in June. Ongoing border fencing at the Iran-Pakistan and Afghanistan-Pakistan frontiers may also impact movement and migration decision-making.

The COVID-19 vaccination roll-out began during the first quarter in Afghanistan. Vaccination coverage remains extremely limited amongst all migrant populations (particularly women and girls) due to supply constraints, vaccine hesitancy, and barriers to accessing care, including a rise in conflict. Human mobility should be regarded as the primary vector for infectious disease, including COVID-19 transmission: we urgently need to scale up our vaccination teams, linked to public information and awareness campaigning. One of the only areas to access many returnees, due to prevalent conflict dynamics, is on borders and in our Transit Centres, where services can be rendered (inclusive of vaccinations).

In March 2021, Afghanistan formally accepted the Chair of the Colombo Process, a regional forum on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour for countries of origins in Asia, with 12 member states. We will be providing technical support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for the duration of their leadership of this process. Managing migration and mobility of people in Afghanistan in a safe, regular and responsible manner, will be critical in the coming period for Afghanistan and the region.

Additional key achievements in the first quarter of 2021 were:

- All 401 Districts were assessed for mobility trends and multi-sector needs through our Displacement Tracking Matrix
- 16,000 undocumented returnees were reached with humanitarian assistance at major international border crossings, through our reception and transit centres
- Our health teams provided 47,570 out-patient consultations
- 68,881 persons were screened for COVID-19 by our health teams, with 5,621 suspected cases identified, and 3,210 self-quarantined. Samples were tested from 5,109 cases and 392 cases were confirmed as positive
- 6,451 undocumented returnees received protection case management services, and the protection team launched protection monitoring in areas of high return

  
Stuart Simpson  
Chief of Mission, IOM Afghanistan



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# Addressing Humanitarian Needs

## Displacement Tracking Matrix

On Wednesday 17 March, IOM DTM sent out a message titled “Learning from the 2018 Drought :: Implications for Potential Drought in 2021”, where, using its various surveys conducted in 2021 (BMA & CBNA) and during the 2018 drought, DTM outlined 5 key messages for 2021 drought preparedness activities:

### i. Mitigate drought-related displacement

DTM estimates that 12,816,875\* individuals in households dependent upon agriculture (9,170,593) and livestock (3,646,282) for their subsistence and livelihoods could suffer food insecurity or displacement in the 25 priority provinces likely to be affected by drought in 2021.

### ii. Early warning

Establish an early warning system through networks of communities and key

informants to monitor key factors that may lead to displacement, so that humanitarian partners can respond more rapidly to needs in places of origin and prevent displacement. Together with partners like REACH and OCHA, DTM is urgently looking for funding to establish an early warning system through its Emergency Event Tracking (EET) system, part of the global DTM Toolbox.

### iii. Early action

The 2018 Drought highlighted the need for response actors to act early and decisively in acutely affected areas to increase resilience, reduce vulnerabilities and mitigate mass displacement. Failure to act early could result in a full-scale crisis, more costly response, protracted displacement, and social tensions in areas of displacement.

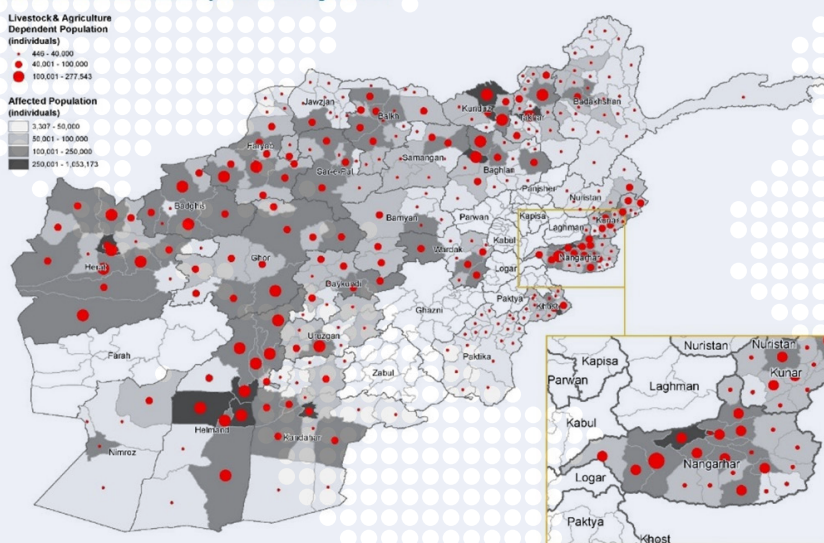
### iv. Respond in areas of origin

To prevent onset of mass displacement, partners should respond directly in areas of origin, focusing on interventions aimed at increasing communities’ resilience to drought-related shocks.

### v. Respond together

DTM’s Return Intention Survey, conducted during the 2018 drought in Herat and Badghis, highlighted the multi-sectoral investments from humanitarian and development partners needed to prevent displacement and facilitate return or local integration of IDPs. Integrated, area-based assistance in affected areas is recommended, preferably in areas of origin.

**Populations Dependent on Agriculture & Livestock in 25 Provinces Affected by Potential Drought in 2021**



### 2021 First Quarter Achievements

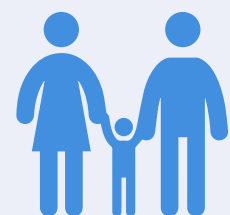
- 34** Provinces assessed with BMA+CBNA
- 401** Districts assessed with BMA+CBNA
- 12,290** Settlements assessed with BMA+CBNA
- 73,580** Key informants/change-makers reached with COVID-19 RCCE
- 4** Border crossing points assessed using FMP
- 632,659** Individuals counted at crossing a border at assessed border crossing points using FMP

## Cross-Border Return

Q1 of 2021 witnessed a continuation of the elevated cross border return trend from Iran that was seen throughout 2020 and continues into the second quarter. More than 240,000 undocumented migrants returned from Iran in the first three months of 2021, by mid-May more than 423,000, overshadowing return totals over the same period in 2019 and even superseding record returns in 2020. Returns are taking place against a backdrop of increasing levels of violence and crime in Afghanistan, meaning that access to services and livelihoods particularly in rural areas of return continue to drive movement trends toward cities where there is a perception of greater security, jobs and services- something which is less and less true.

IOM has assisted over 16,000 returning Afghans in Q1, however funding levels remain extremely compromised given uncertainty over international troop withdrawals around the 01 May deadline. The Cross-Border Return Response has only received 1.4m USD in funding against a total request of 29.7m USD in 2021.

### 2021 First Quarter Achievements



**16,000**

Undocumented migrants reached with humanitarian assistance at borders



## Migration Health

Migration Health Unit (MHU) provided health care through seven Mobile Health Teams (MHT) to 160,981 beneficiaries across four provinces. The MHTs offered OPD consultations, reproductive health, psychosocial services, health education, primary nursing healthcare and referral of complicated cases to a hospital with which IOM has a long-term agreement.

MHU continued supporting Provincial Public Health Directorate with deployment of rapid response teams across the four provinces on screening for COVID-19, case detection, referral, health education for the returnees and the host communities.

Under the Global Fund's multi-country Tuberculosis grant in partnership with UNDP, a total of 113,498 returnees and IDPs were screened for tuberculosis at the Zero Point Reception Centers in Herat, Nimroz, Kandahar and Nangarhar. Among them, 3,764 were identified as TB presumptive and underwent laboratory tests. 57 of them were confirmed as TB patients and 52 of these patients were enrolled in TB treatment.



Rapid Response Team in Kandahar screening families in a Madrasha, © IOM Kandahar 2021/Muse

### 2021 First Quarter Achievements



**47,570**

People reached with OPD consultations



**7,449**

People received reproductive health services



**4,344**

People received psychosocial services



**68,881**

Persons screened for COVID-19



**113,498**

Persons screened for TB

## Protection

In the first quarter IOM's Protection programme opened a new office in Badakhshan to offer protection services in the province. The team also appointed 15 new staff across 12 provinces including female protection screeners at both Nimroz and Herat border points, where the majority of undocumented Afghans return. The team's expansion will enhance the ability of IOM and national authorities to identify and support a diversity of complex protection cases requiring support at border points and in provinces of high return.

Interactive Protection Mainstreaming trainings were successfully carried out with national authorities (DoRR) and partner agencies in Nimroz and Herat, focused on strengthening screening at reception centres to identify the most vulnerable, facilitate immediate referrals and provide safe and dignified protection response.

Protection monitoring focused on the impacts of COVID-19 concluded this quarter with considerable increases in child labour and economic precarity for undocumented returnees since the pandemic hit. New protection monitoring tools were finalized with the Afghanistan Protection Cluster and data gathering kicked off.



Caption: Returnees like Zaman (70), a disabled father of 10, receive tailored case support to mitigate immediate protection risks and support safe and dignified reintegration. Zaman was referred to WFP for food and received one-off assistance to cover his rent arrears, settle debts and buy essentials for his family, Kandahar, 14 January 2021. Photo credit: Ismail Haydari

### 2021 First Quarter Achievements



**6,451**

Undocumented returnees reached



**374**

Undocumented returnees received post-arrival assistance



**1,025**

Households received case management support



**35**

Persons received protection capacity building training



**1,607**

Persons surveyed on the protection environment and impacts of COVID-19



## Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items

IOM responded to the emergency and recovery needs of natural disaster-affected and displaced communities countrywide. During the first quarter of 2021, IOM reached more than 1,100 people in nine affected provinces.

IOM prepositions over 50,000 packages of NFIs and Emergency Shelters, rapidly assesses needs and responds with ES-NFI wherever there is a need across all 34 provinces, primarily for natural disaster but also for conflict-induced internal displacement. The immediate needs of the affected people covered through distribution of cash for NFI/transportation, in-kind (non-food items (NFI) and emergency shelter kits). The emergency relief items, prepositioned in 16 warehouses across the country cover the immediate needs of approx. 15-20,000 families.

IOM is also the co-chair for Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster, has dedicated cluster staff at national and regional level and actively contributed in coordinating assessment and response to emergencies across the country. In the first quarter, there was a focus on contingency planning for spring and the possibility of drought.

2021 First Quarter Achievements



1,100

People received cash support



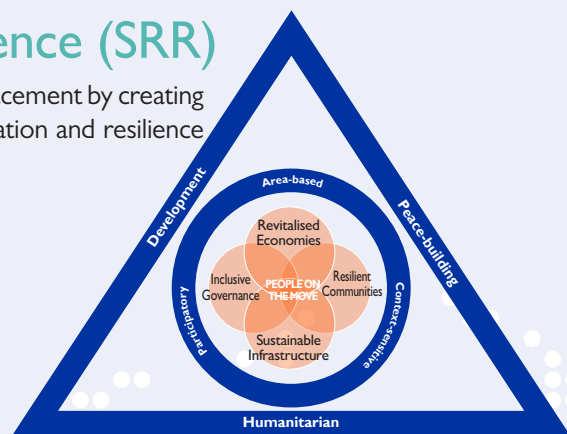
Provision of Cash for NFI and emergency shelter (ES) items to flood affected people in Nangahar; 07 April 2021

# Supporting Reintegration, Stabilization and Resilience

## Stabilization, Reintegration and Resilience (SRR)

IOM's SRR Division addresses the drivers and long-term impacts of crises and displacement by creating resilient communities that facilitate inclusive (re-)integration. Stabilization, reintegration and resilience are achieved through an integrated approach that is designed to:

- Facilitate sustainable reintegration of people on the move
- Revitalize local economic conditions
- Strengthen local governance
- Build resilient and inclusive communities
- Support sustainable infrastructure
- Leverage area-based, participatory, and context sensitive approaches
- Address the humanitarian-development-peace building nexus



## 300 PLACES

300 PLACES delivers integrated stabilisation, reintegration and resilience projects across 300 displacement- and conflict-affected communities in Afghanistan. It is designed based on the premise that evidence-based and participatory planning can give affected populations a meaningful voice in local socio-economic development, build community cohesion and create trust in authorities through increased legitimacy and accountability.

Facts and Figures:	Target	Assisted as of Mar 2021
Communities	300	136
Beneficiaries	1,000,000	286,488
Community Development Projects	600	75
Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Apprenticeship Participants	3,000	1,374
Jobs Safeguarded	10,000	5,262
Jobs Created	10,000	4,914
Funding	M \$200	M \$67.55

## Reintegration Assistance and Development in Afghanistan (RADA)

During the first quarter of 2021, the reintegration and development programme provided direct assistance to over 11,122 households with the construction of 22 basic and economic infrastructure projects. A total of 40 returnees secured gainful employment through the support of seven small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The provision of technical and vocational education and training enhanced the knowledge and skills of 356 returnees, improving their chances of employment or starting their own business. During the reporting period, IOM assisted 3,876 returnees (3,732 from Turkey and 144 from the EU States) with immediate reception assistance.



### 2021 First Quarter Achievements

**11,122**

Households benefited from community development projects



**22**

Community development projects completed



**7**

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises supported



**89**

Jobs created or safeguarded through SME support



**356**

Participants of TVET



**3,876**

Returns from Turkey and the EU states received assistance

## Connecting Return to Development (CRD)

During the first quarter of 2021, the CRD project provided direct assistance to over 387 households through CDPs and business support. A total of 60 community volunteers were trained on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces. Community volunteers identified and referred 102 persons to comprehensive health care centres at the district level for counselling and treatment.



# Disaster Risk Reduction

To mitigate the consequences of natural disasters and build community resilience, IOM constructs flood protection walls, culverts, check dams and canals to protect flood prone communities and their livelihood against seasonal flooding. During the first quarter of 2021, IOM carried out technical assessment of approx. 100 disaster prone communities in Kabul, Samangan and Parwan provinces. Of these communities, 49 disaster prone communities were identified for implementation of small-scale disaster risk management infrastructure projects. In addition, IOM also implements District Disaster Risk Management (DDRM) in disaster prone communities in 9 provinces by delivering training and equipping the communities on early warning, first aid, and light search and rescue.

IOM also supports the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) in capacity building initiatives, supporting emergency operation centers at provincial and national level by hiring dedicated staff to National Disaster Management Information System (NDMIS) including training and equipping the emergency operation centers. 39 NDMIS data entry clerk staff is recruited for ANDMA HQ and provincial offices. In addition, IOM provides technical support to national and provincial Emergency Operation Center (EOC) of ANDMA and has initiated renovating and equipping NEOC and PEOCs to allow timely coordination and response to emergencies.



## 2021 First Quarter Achievements



**96**

Technical assessments of flood prone sites were conducted in 66 communities



**39**

Dedicated data entry clerks to ANDMA HQ and 34 provincial offices were recruited by IOM



**899**

Persons were trained and equipped in 10 disaster prone communities under the District Disaster Risk Management (DDRM)

# Strengthening Migration Management

## Assisted Return and Reintegration

IOM's Return, Reintegration and Resettlement Programme (RRR) provided reception assistance to 479 voluntary and 152 non-voluntary Afghan returnees from the European Members States and Turkey to Afghanistan during 1st Quarter of 2021. Additionally, 364 returnees were provided with transportation assistance to reach to their final destination within Afghanistan and 10 returnees were provided with temporary accommodation in Kabul. RRR program also assisted 51 returnees with in-kind reintegration assistance which included household items, house rent, and self-employment projects.

### Labour Migration - Republic of Afghanistan assumes as Chair of the Regional Consultative Process on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (Colombo Process)

The Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), António Vitorino, congratulated Nepal on its successful leadership of the Colombo Process over the last two years and committed continued IOM support as the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) takes over as Chair.

The Colombo Process – also known as the Regional Consultative Process on the Management of Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia – was established in 2003. It brings together 12 South, South East, and East Asian countries of origin a member state driven, non-binding regional consultative process on migration to facilitate dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest and concerns relating to labour mobility. Afghanistan succeeds Nepal as Chair of the Colombo Process for a period of two years.

At the virtual handover ceremony, the Governments of Nepal and Afghanistan were represented by the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Nepal, Mr Gaurishankar Chaudhari, and the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of Afghanistan, Mr Bashir Ahmad Tahyanj, respectively.

As the Chair, the GoIRA will pursue an ambitious program of priorities to guide its mandate and advance its achievements. Mr Bashir Ahmad Tahyanj, Afghanistan's Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, extended his gratitude to Nepal and stressed that it is a great honor to continue Nepal's legacy.

The Afghan Chair-in-Office will focus on how to ensure that labour mobility governance responds to the socioeconomic recovery from COVID-19, protecting workers throughout the labour migration process and ensuring safe and regular pathways for migration.

## 2021 First Quarter Achievements



**631**

Returnee received reception assistance



**364**

Returnees from EUMS and Turkey were provided with transportation assistance



**10**

Returnees were provided with temporary accommodation



**61**

Returnees were assisted with in-kind reintegration assistance

## Diaspora Engagement - Return of Qualified Afghans

Under the Return of Qualified Afghans project, Phase 2020-2021, the administrative and technical equipment for the RQA beneficiaries was delivered to the Afghan Host Institutions as part of Employer Support and Capacity Building during Q1. Planning for the organization of a Capacity Building internship program for RQA beneficiaries held by the Afghanistan Civil Service Commission (ACSI) was also underway.



## Integrated Border Management

In close coordination with Afghan border management authorities, the IBM team in Afghanistan contributed to the efforts of the government of Afghanistan (GoA) to enhance related infrastructure and increase their border management abilities. This included the provision of technical training, the donation of equipment and commencement of the Border Management Information System (BMIS) installation process at Islam Qala and Torkham Border Crossing Points (BCPs).

During Q1, IOM staff visited the National Police Academy (NPA) to identify the areas that IOM can support to enhance their capacity. IOM is likewise contributing to the on-going efforts of the government of Afghanistan (GoA) to provide document verification services.



## Counter-Trafficking

IOM conducted a capacity building workshop on 10 and 11 March 2021 for Afghan government officials and partners on screening, referring, and assisting victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants. The workshop is a part of the Global Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT-Asia and the Middle East), which the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and IOM implement jointly. The workshop focused specifically on the first point of contact with vulnerable migrants to ensure an appropriate response. "Vulnerable migrants" includes victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants, and other vulnerable migrants, inclusive of children in all profiles. IOM staff conducted the training in Kabul with officials from the Ministry of Justice, the Trafficking-in-Persons Technical Committee, and an IOM expert trainer who joined virtually from Geneva. Participants included the Afghanistan Human Rights Commission, Attorney General, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Supreme Court, and others. The 23 participants included 20 men and 3 women.





# Family Assistance Programme - Resettlement to Germany

During this first quarter and due to COVID-19, the German embassies in Islamabad and New Delhi had closures at intervals. Based on the urgency of the cases, the resettlement programme increased the number of walk-ins during the first quarter of 2021 to provide timely support to people and help them prepare for their family reunification appointments.

During this quarter, capacity building training was provided to the resettlement staff on monitoring, conflict resolution, technical writing, and service orientation.



Migrant Services Assistants are covid-safe while helping applicants for family reunification with their documents control checks.

## 2021 First Quarter Achievements



**500+**

Families assisted in document completeness checks and interview questionnaires



**2300+**

Phone call inquiries answered



**2100+**

Email enquiries replied



**200+**

Beneficiaries referred

2021 Funding requirements		Funding Met as of 31 March 2021
Displacement Tracking Matrix	2,770,000	554,000
Cross-border Return	29,760,000	1,400,000
Health (including International Health Regulations)	10,000,000	1,900,000
Protection	3,000,000	3,000,000
Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items	9,500,000	3,000,000
Disaster Risk Reduction	8,000,000	4,000,000
Reintegration and Development	25,000,000	25,000,000
Border Management	5,000,000	300,000
Counter-Trafficking	1,500,000	150,000
Diaspora Engagement	2,000,000	420,000
<b>TOTAL 2021 REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>96,530,000</b>	<b>39,724,000</b>

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