

HIGHLIGHTS

- Afghanistan / Pakistan tensions result in border closure that interrupts lifesaving treatment for thousands of children suffering from malnutrition.
- Returnees living in Gambiri desert still struggling to get water
- New PACTEC flights enable immediate assistance to families fleeing conflict in Uruzgan to the seemingly safe but remote district of Jaghori, Ghazni province.
- 1.3 million people reached with life-saving emergency humanitarian assistance, according to the 2017 HRP First Quarter Report.
- Humanitarian Coordinator allocates \$15 million USD from the Common Humanitarian Fund to 14 NGO and 2 UN agency projects.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING 23% FUNDED

550 million
requested (US\$)

123 million
Received (US\$)

<http://fts.unocha.org>



Returnees in Gambiri desert in Nangarhar province. Photo: IOM

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Severely food insecure displaced affected by funding shortages

The Food Security Cluster contributed to the following article

Levels of food insecurity are high across Afghanistan affecting between 30 to 40 per cent of the population. 1.6 million people suffer from a severe lack of food. Another 9.5 million people are moderately food insecure, in a situation where they cannot sustainably cope with shocks and are resorting to asset depleting strategies to meet their basic needs. The ever increasing spread of conflict in the country is further compounding these challenges for people to find the means to buy or access food for their families. Despite clear needs for both food and livelihood assistance to Afghan families, the Financial Tracking Service <https://fts.unocha.org/> shows the funds received by the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster to be just \$22 million of their \$136 million requirement for 2017.

2016, saw more than 665,000 people internally displaced by conflict; a 40 per cent increase on the number displaced in 2015. Already in 2017, more than 100,000 more people have again been forced to flee their homes due to conflict. Humanitarian partners have responded to these displaced families across the country, providing at least 84,000 displaced people with emergency food rations in the first three months of the year alone. Food assistance has also been provided to 132,000 returnee families crossing back into Afghanistan from Pakistan.



An elder within an informal settlement. Photo: REACH

Due to severe funding shortages and delays in receiving funds, these emergency distributions have had to be prioritized at the cost of providing any assistance to other vulnerable groups, including provision of any follow up assistance to families that remain displaced and exhaust the initial rations they were provided.

A study commissioned by OCHA in 2016 conducted by REACH found that approximately 325,000 people displaced between January 1st 2014 and March 1st 2016, remained displaced in December 2016. While these prolonged displaced were identified spread across every region of Afghanistan, significantly higher populations were found in and around urban centres and particularly informal settlements.

In a follow up assessment of 56 settlements in Kabul and 23 settlements in Nangarhar undertaken by the food security cluster and REACH 68 per cent of households were found to be severely food insecure. 91 per cent were identified as consuming inadequate food with high dependencies on food based coping strategies such as missing meals or reducing portion sizes. Displaced people were found to be more severely food insecure than returnees, with more than 70 per cent falling into this category in both provinces compared to 30-40 per cent of returnees. Despite these findings, response to families living in a situation of prolonged displacement has been zero so far in 2017.

Response to other vulnerable groups was also limited in the first quarter of 2017. During the peak hunger season food security response remained very limited. Only 10 per cent of severely food insecure people received food assistance during peak hunger season. The situation in terms of supporting livelihoods is even more dire. Only 6 per cent of the total targeted caseload comprising all vulnerable groups received assistance.

Despite efforts by the cluster to alert Government and key donors to the scale of unmet need funding remains limited. Recently two projects targeting the food assistance needs of prolonged IDPs have been allocated funding. The combined financing however amounts to just one million USD, far short of the amount required for timely food assistance and seasonal livelihoods response to these vulnerable groups.

FSAC strongly urges donors to provide timely and appropriate funding for the response to meet the emergency needs of targeted communities based on the HRP 2017. Funding delays will significantly impact production and income feasibly resulting in increased malnutrition, asset depletion, communal conflict, migration and mortality.

Returnee WASH needs in Gambiri

The WASH cluster contributed the following article

The Gambiri desert lies approximately 30 kilometers outside of Jalalabad city, between Khewa (Kuzkunar) district of Nangarhar and Qaraghae district of Laghman provinces. It is hot and susceptible to blinding sandy wind storms blown up from the earth.

Since the summer of 2016, an increased wave of returning Afghan families who previously fled to Pakistan as refugees has persisted. Returning with limited resources, and no ownership over land elsewhere in the country, hundreds of these return families, with limited other options, have been settling in the western part of the inhospitable Gambiri desert.

In October last year, the NGO DACAAR along with UNICEF started provision of immediate water and sanitation support to 254 families. Safe drinking water was made available through tinkering with the aim of providing temporary assistance for an initial period of one month. In addition, family hygiene kits were distributed to all the families and 85 emergency latrines were constructed.

After one month, an additional 234 families arrived in the location and UNICEF extended the project to cover the needs of all 488 families for one more month. In the meantime, DACAAR began negotiating with the Laghman Provincial authorities to allow them to install deep boreholes to provide a more durable and cost efficient solution to ensure the water needs of the returnees could continue to be met.

The negotiations however were unsuccessful. DACAAR were informed by the provincial authority that they could not proceed due to the land being privately owned and that the returnees would be moved to other locations. This information was communicated to the



families in Gambiri and UNICEF took the decision to stop the water tinkering project due to the prohibitive cost. The water trucking was stopped in December 2016.

Since the government would not agree for humanitarian agencies to implement a durable solution to address the water needs, the returnees themselves took action and drilled four boreholes between December and February. Without sufficient resources however, the community were only able to equip two of the four boreholes with pumps and diesel generators to become functional. With an additional 99 new families joining the group in March and April this meant a total of 587 families depending on only two boreholes with some families having to walk up to 1,800m to reach the water point, often having to wait for long periods due to others queuing at the source.

Owing to the severe shortage of supply and long waiting times UNICEF and DACAAR are now planning to provide the necessary pumps and engines to equip the remaining two boreholes so that returnees' urgent water needs are met. This is becoming increasingly important as the summer arrives and the temperature in the desert soars – this water will be ever more critical to survival.

The local government, especially Laghman PRRD has been informed by DACAAR about the planned assistance

and no objections have been raised to the provision of the pumping equipment for the two additional boreholes that are sitting idle at the moment. UNICEF and DACAAR are also considering further assistance to the community in the form of emergency latrines for a community based school in the area where nearly 600 children attend every day, 300 in each shift.

The experience of Gambiri demonstrates the critical importance of prompt decision making on land allocation for returns and displaced families so that people can be provided with proper WASH services in a cost effective manner, especially through durable solutions where the families intend to stay there for longer term.



Water is scarce for Pakistan returns in Gambiri. Photo Wash Cluster

Pakistan border closure impacts lifesaving nutrition programming

The Nutrition cluster contributed the following article

Acute malnutrition in Afghanistan is one of the leading contributors to deaths in children under five. During 2017 alone, at least 1.3 million children will reach a level of starvation that can only be treated through regular administration of specialized nutritious foods (SNF).

Chronic poverty, severe food insecurity, and poor access to basic water, sanitation and health care in Afghanistan contribute to high prevalence of malnutrition both in children and women who are pregnant and breastfeeding. The conflict further exacerbates the situation by further hindering peoples access to health services, reducing their ability to find enough good food and also by forcing people in to displacement during which time their living situation is extremely compromised significantly increasing risk to infection and disease.

The conflict also creates significant barriers to the NGOs and UN agencies attempting to reach those women and children who urgently need treatment to prevent their malnutrition becoming life threatening. The coverage of nutrition services in the country is extremely low, both due to resource and capacity constraints but also due to insecurity

and difficulty to access people in more remote and insecure areas. Health services currently reach only 60 percent of the population, and only 58 percent of these provide any nutrition services. Only 20 percent provide treatment for both severe and moderate acute malnutrition.

More recently, conflict at the regional level has further hampered the delivery of lifesaving nutrition assistance as tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan and conflict in the border areas led to the closure of the border between the two countries for almost a month delaying the delivery of essential humanitarian supplies including the delivery of SNF.

Malnutrition develops when the body does not get the vital nutrients it needs to function. Children can become malnourished in different ways either due to a lack of nutrients in the food they have to eat or when illness, particularly diarrhoea, creates problems for them absorbing nutrients from food. Ensuring the right balance of nutrients and calories is therefore critical to helping the child recover. In Afghanistan, meeting these nutritional requirements through local food availability is extremely challenging and the specially developed SNF products are essential to enable children to be effectively treated and recover.

In Afghanistan the World Food Programme (WFP) supports treatment for children with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) between the ages of 6 – 59 months across 27 provinces of the country. WFP use two different types of SNFs for treatment. Due to the specialist nature of these products which have a high protein nut, or chickpea base but also contain highly concentrated doses of vitamins and minerals, neither products are available within Afghanistan and they have to be imported either from neighbouring Pakistan or from France.

As a result of the border closure and the interruption to the delivery of SNF supplies, the NGOs implementing the treatment programmes in partnership with WFP exhausted their available stocks and many children enrolled in the three-month malnutrition treatment programme could not receive their treatment rations and stopped attending the clinics. This 'defaulting' from the programme means that the children will not be able to recover and the parents/communities will lose confidence/trust in the programme. When the supplies arrive and activities resume, unless specific efforts are made to find them and convince their families to bring them back to the programme they might not attend the services.

The provinces worst affected by the interruptions in programming included Badakhshan, Ghazni, Kunduz, Laghman, Nuristan, Paktya and Takhar.

The impact of the unprecedented recent border closures has prompted WFP to look into enhanced contingency planning and exploring alternate routes/modalities for bringing-in supplies to ensure similar interruptions do not occur again. Although purchasing from neighbouring Pakistan was much more convenient, Pakistan is now also scaling up its own malnutrition programming meaning their production is insufficient to cover the needs of both countries. As a result, WFP is having to increase the level of supplies ordered from Europe and have also opened up a new supply corridor through Iran.

Acute malnutrition is a condition of starvation that develops when people do not have access to the vital nutrients that their body needs to function. This condition leaves them much more vulnerable to contract infectious diseases and increases the severity and duration in ways which can prove fatal. While the child may die as a result of the disease, malnutrition is therefore the underlying cause, and is attributable for around 45% of all deaths among children under the age of five.



A child gets screened for malnutrition in Dewanbegi informal settlement in Kabul through an ACF project funded by CHF. Photo: OCHA

PACTEC flight improves NGO access to conflict IDPs in Jaghori district, Ghazni

Jaghori district of Ghazni province, in the south east of Afghanistan has remained relatively free of conflict over the past years. While Jaghori enjoys relative peace, other surrounding districts of Ghazni and also Uruzgan province have been heavily affected by conflict and as a result many families fleeing the violence migrate towards the seeming security of Jaghori.

In late April approximately 2,100 people displaced following fighting between NSAG and government forces in Uruzgan's Khas district reportedly arrived in Jaghori without any personal belongings or assets.

Due to considerable insecurity along the routes connecting the district to the provincial capital, approximately 135km away, however access to the district to undertake assessments and provide assistance to these displaced families has been extremely challenging.

On 6th May the first humanitarian flight to the area in more than a year was arranged with three inter-agency assessment teams enabled to reach the area via organization of a PACTEC flight.

Led by the Danish Refugee Council the assessments are continuing and have so far identified 1,834 individuals in need of humanitarian assistance.



Three-year-old daughter of Basnaz in Jaghori District.
Photo: DRC

Since the initial PACTEC flight, further displacement of an additional 2,000 individuals has been reported in Jaghori and Malistan districts, the majority of people also fleeing Uruzgan due to continued armed clashes between ANSF and NSAGs. A second PACTEC flight is now scheduled to transport additional assessment teams on Sunday May 27.



A PACTEC flight lands at Jaghori airport in Ghazni.

Among them Basnaz, who was displaced to Jaghori district along with her 4 children. She explained how insurgents had used her house as a hiding place and that residents were unable to leave their homes leaving them with no access to markets, health facilities or schools. "That is why I along with my children were compelled to leave to save our lives" she said. "My three year' old daughter (see inset) has had continuous diarrhea and dysentery for the past two weeks but I have no money to get medication for her."

Once the assessment has been completed, IDPs will receive multi-purpose cash – an unrestricted cash grant which can be used to support a variety of sectoral needs – enabling Basnaz to buy medication for her daughter.

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Given the current trend and ongoing armed conflict in Uruzgan province, it is anticipated that substantial displacements will continue over the coming weeks to Jaghuri and Malistan districts of Ghazni province where there remain limited numbers of humanitarian actors operating.

2017 HRP 1st Quarter Results

PEOPLE IN NEED



PEOPLE TARGETED



BENEFICIARIES ASSISTED



REQUIREMENTS FOR 2017 (US\$)



FUNDING AVAILABLE (US\$)



OCHA has just published the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan First Quarter Report, outlining the financing, achievements and response challenges of the first three months.

Of the 5.7 million beneficiaries targeted through the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), approximately 1.3 million were reached with life-saving emergency humanitarian assistance, according to information compiled by OCHA and published in the 2017 HRP First Quarter Report. These individuals were assisted by the collective efforts of the humanitarian community and thanks to the generosity of donors, who provided over USD 102 million towards humanitarian programming between January and March 2017, including USD 92 million towards the HRP.

In 2017, the international community continues to be confronted with an array of humanitarian issues despite a decrease in conflict-related displacement: 67,850 Afghans fled their homes due to fighting between January and March, a 40 percent reduction on those experienced during the same period in 2016; 17,970 undocumented individuals returned to Afghanistan amid ongoing protection concerns in Pakistan, a considerable decrease on those arriving between July and December 2016, but still 20 percent more than those during the same period in 2016, while 2,181 civilians were either killed (715) or injured (1,466) as a result of the fighting. Of particular concern, is the substantial increase in the number of civilians killed by aerial operations, which reached 149 in the first three months of 2017, a five-fold increase on those killed during the same period in 2016. While natural disasters have so far been relatively small-scale in 2017, 30,720 were still affected, almost half that in the entire previous year.

The majority of humanitarian assistance was provided in the form of emergency food, water and shelter, as well as life-saving medical care and emergency medical supplies; a proportion has also been distributed in the form of multi-purpose cash assistance. Some 95,500 people across all 34 provinces received USD 4 million in unrestricted cash grants in the first three months of 2017 alone. While a series of avalanches in February in Nuristan province claimed 57 lives and affected 700 people, preparedness efforts spearheaded by OCHA, UN agencies and international partners to ensure that sufficient humanitarian supplies and stocks were prepositioned in high-risk locations prior to the onset of the winter, mitigated the impact of extreme weather events. Stocks prepositioned, included: 5,500MT of food assistance in 60 districts across eight provinces covering 188,000 people, pneumonia kits to 98 priority district hospitals in 24 provinces covering 144,000 cases, and a prepositioned stock of 20,000 NFI kits and over 3,100 emergency shelter kits.

Following on from successes in 2016, including the roll out of a single rapid single rapid assessment tool (the HEAT) for primary humanitarian responders, during the second quarter of 2017 the ICCT will focus on the establishment of eligibility thresholds for humanitarian assistance to ensure a harmonised approach to how rapid assessment data is analysed and interpreted and to support the transition from a status to needs based response. Efforts will also focus on identifying key gaps in order to inform cluster readiness and prioritise minimum preparedness actions to offset sudden onset crises.

At the end of May, the Afghanistan HRP was 20 per cent funded placing it among the best funded HRP's globally. The Afghanistan HRP's tightly-defined focus on the provision of life-saving assistance continues to attract donors who recognise the need for immediate emergency humanitarian assistance to those who have lost everything. Large numbers of IDPs and returning Afghans, both of whom tend to congregate in urban centres such as Jalalabad and Kabul city in search of livelihoods and job opportunities, does however call into question the continued use of humanitarian finances to support long term growing demand on public services. One fifth of the population across Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces is now a returnee, (approximately 500,000

people). Long-term initiatives, to support the full rights of returnees and IDPs, including proper documentation, access to basic services, land allocation and adequate housing are now required to ensure that no one is left behind.

To read the full report, go to: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info>

2017 CHF First Standard Allocation

On 25 April, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) approved \$15.2 million of the 2017 CHF First Standard Allocation for 18 projects of 16 CHF partners (11 International NGOs, 3 National NGOs, 2 UN Agencies) to address the key priorities of the four envelopes:

Composed of Cluster Leads, UN Agencies and experienced NGOs nominated by the Cluster Leads and facilitated by OCHA, the Strategic & Technical Review Committees (STRC) conducted in-depth evaluations of the 75 submissions to ensure the more strategically significant, technically sound and cost efficient projects were recommended to the HC. Specialized working groups evaluated the projects' justifications for Security - Access Strategies, Protection Mainstreaming and the Gender Marker Score.

The Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) contributed to the STRC meetings with in-depth review of project proposals and budgets to highlight any overlaps with current projects, the current/previous performance of CHF partners, and the feedback received from the OCHA Regional Sub-Offices on the presence, performance and coordination of the applying CHF partners.

The process for the allocation of US\$6.2 million to Health project proposals was delayed. On 12 April, the new Cluster Coordinator, colleagues from WHO, CHF partners and OCHA meet to clarify the priorities with in the allocation strategy, the eligible actions and the prioritized locations for implementation. Revised Health project proposals were submitted on 25 April, and are being reviewed by the STRC, HFU and specialized working groups.

Tribute to Mr. Leo Matunga

We pay tribute to one of the finest Nutrition Cluster coordinators, Mr Leo Matunga, who passed away on Sunday 21st May 2017 at a young age.

His efforts, during his career, as a cluster coordinator have contributed to saving many lives of women and children, through his dedication to improving nutrition.

Until a year ago, Mr Leo Matunga was the Nutrition Cluster Coordinator in Afghanistan, working with UNICEF. After leaving Afghanistan, he joined IRC as their Senior Nutrition Advisor based in his home country Zimbabwe, with travels to emergency countries to provide support. Leo was deployed by IRC to Juba, South Sudan when he suddenly fell ill and died shortly after.

Mr Leo Matunga joined UNICEF in North Darfur in 2005 and he worked there with the nutrition team for almost five years. Subsequently he was deployed during the 2010 floods to Pakistan to support the coordination of the nutrition response there. He was also the Nutrition Cluster Coordinator for Somalia, based in Nairobi for 3 years prior to leaving for Afghanistan in 2014.



Mr. Leo Matunga

Numerous messages have been sent by his colleagues and friends in the global nutrition community over the past few days, each echoing the reflection that Leo was undoubtedly among one of the pre-eminent cluster coordinators and a role model to fellow nutrition cluster coordinators.

His contributions to the nutrition cluster both at national and global levels will be valued and remembered and go a long way in shaping the work within the nutrition cluster. He will always be remembered for his exemplary role.

He was always considered to be more than a colleague, as he was invariably a very nice, kind hearted and a cheerful person. He was always there to support his colleagues and friends.

The sad news of his sudden death has taken everyone by surprise, coming as an enormous shock: everyone agrees that his death is a great loss and leaves a great gap. He will always be remembered as a friend, a colleague and a true professional in the field of emergency nutrition. His devotion and passion for the humanitarian endeavour is an inspiration to all of us.

He is survived by his wife Victoria, and four children, who are still very young. Leo was also the guardian to four other children of his late brother who died in a tragic car accident.

May his Soul Rest in Eternal Peace.

Our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and to all those close to him.

Humanitarian access: aid worker incidents

The overall number of incidents against aid workers and facilities is down by 45 percent for April 2017. Fourteen incidents relating to aid workers occurred in April 2017. Half of these directly related to attacks on healthcare facilities and personnel, and took place in Nangahar, Kunar, Badghis, Ghazni and Ghor

Incidents against aid workers, assets and activities (Jan-Apr 2017)

INCIDENTS IN JAN-APR 2017



110
Incidents



7
Aid workers killed



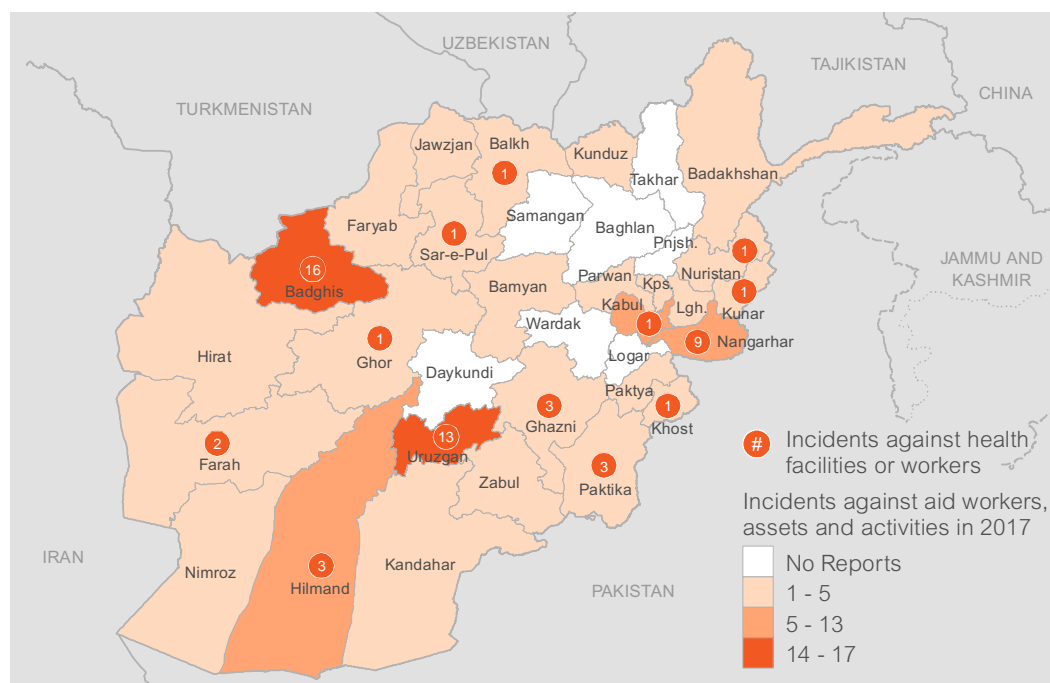
9
Aid workers wounded



8
Aid workers abducted



56
Incidents against health facilities and workers



Source: various

Humanitarian Access Group

The Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework (AMRF) for Afghanistan was started this month of April. The AMRF will measure nine access constraints ranging from

violence against humanitarian actors, restrictions of movement, interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities and self-imposed constraints to name a few.

NGOs, clusters, UN agencies, OCHA staff are all requested to report access constraints as they occur in order to provide regular analysis and provide trends over time feedback to field colleagues and the Humanitarian country team. This is expected to better inform early warning, preparedness, situational awareness and decision making. Using this resource of the Humanitarian Access Group (HAG) we would like to encourage all humanitarian actors to explore the possibilities of expanding their programmes into hard to reach districts and white areas.

For further information, please contact OCHA and the Humanitarian Access Group (HAG) focal point at ridges@un.org or 0793001138. All reports will be dealt with as strictly confidential. Additionally, if NGOs or UNAFPs are facing particular access difficulties, please contact the OCHA and HAG focal point as per details above.

Humanitarian funding

The humanitarian community in Afghanistan benefits from the steadfast support of donor governments dedicated to a strategic and coordinated humanitarian response. As of 5 May, the Financial Tracking Service (<https://fts.unocha.org>) shows a 19 percent increase over last month in support to the Afghanistan humanitarian community with US\$181m in total reported funding, of which US\$111.7 million (or 20 percent) are contributions towards the 2017 HRP. In appreciation for all donor commitments to coordinated and principled humanitarian assistance, the highest contributions are reported from the United States, United Kingdom, ECHO, Japan, Sweden and Denmark.

GMS Business Intelligence

OCHA's Grant Management System (GMS) is a standard online platform for the management of all Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPF). Implementing partners use this interface to submit project proposals and reports, and the Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) coordinates project review, monitoring and partner performance. The GMS Business Intelligence displays data in meaningful useful structure for donors and all stakeholders to analyze the ongoing processes with a consolidated view (<http://gms.unocha.org>).

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