



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
The UN Migration Agency

## INFORMATION

on the socio-economic situation in the light of COVID -19 in Afghanistan

requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum

23 September 2020

### Background information:

*The following questions relate primarily to the situation with regard to the COVID-19 crisis and are intended to provide an overview of the current state of affairs and - as far as possible - future developments. If the future development is not foreseeable or difficult to assess, please note this accordingly. When answering the questions, please focus primarily on the cities of Mazar-e Sharif and Herat.*

### COVID-19 general

#### 1. What is the current number of people who have fallen ill and what assumptions can be made about the number of "undetected cases"?

According to a survey, conducted by the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (Afghan MoPH), as of July 2020, 35 per cent of people had experienced signs and symptoms of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19 virus) since March 2020.

According to official government statistics, as of 2 September 2020, 103,722 people have been tested for the COVID-19 virus in Afghanistan. Out of this group 38,288 were tested positive. As of 2 September 2020, there are 7,488 active cases, 29,390 persons recovered, and 1,410 cases were fatal.

As of 2 September 2020, in Herat province 12,371 people have been tested for the COVID-19 virus, out of which 6,099 were tested positive; there are 9 active cases, 5,858 persons recovered, and 232 cases were fatal.

In Balkh province (with Mazar-e Sharif as capital city) 3,419 tested samples and 1,990 confirmed cases were reported as of 2 September 2020 with 780 active cases, 1126 recovered persons and 84 COVID-19 related deaths.

According to John Hopkins University & Medicine Coronavirus Resource Centre, there are 39,074 confirmed cases and 1,444 deaths related to COVID-19 in Afghanistan as of 22 September 2020, counting 302 new cases and 19 deaths in the week from 15 September until 22 September 2020.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. Which government measures are currently in force?

##### 2.1. Are there currently curfews in the cities of Herat and Mazar-e Sharif?

Currently, there are no curfews in the cities of Herat and Mazar-e Sharif. However, the Afghan MoPH has encouraged people to keep physical distancing of at least one meter, wear a medical mask, wash hands with water and soap for 20 seconds and to avoid gatherings.

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<sup>1</sup> John Hopkins University and Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center, *World Countries: Afghanistan*. Available at <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/afghanistan> (accessed 22 September 2020).



## 2.2. How are violations of the implemented measures punished by the government / police?

Violations of the implemented measures are currently not punished by the government or law enforcement.

## 2.3. What measures to support the population have been or are being implemented by the government?

The Afghan MoPH has taken action to prepare for and respond to COVID-19, implementing the following public health measures:

### a. Case Finding and Detection:

Case finding and detection is covered through two types of health worker teams:

*Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)* visit suspected COVID-19 patients in their homes. The number of active RRTs differs from province to province as their size and scope depends on the COVID-19 situation in the respective province. For instance, in Kabul, there are currently 12 RRTs.

*Fix Teams* are stationed in hospitals and check suspected COVID-19 patients in hospitals. Fix teams are available in every public hospital as well as in two state hospitals in Kabul admitting COVID-19 patients (Afghan-Japan Hospital and Mohammad Ali Jenah Hospital). In Kabul, there are 15 fix teams.

### b. Treatment:

COVID-19 patients can be diagnosed and treated in-patient in public hospitals (until capacities for COVID patients are exhausted). State run hospitals offer basic services related to COVID-19 free of charge, including a molecular-biological COVID-19 testing (PCR-test).

In those private hospitals which were authorized by the government to treat COVID-19 infected patients, services are charged for. A PCR-test for COVID-19 costs 4500 Afghanistan Afghani (AFN) (49,39 EUR)<sup>2</sup>.

Another part of COVID-19 patients is in home care (isolation). However, home care and isolation is very challenging to impossible for most patients, as spatial living conditions are very limited in Afghanistan. Between May and August 2020, IOM Afghanistan in coordination with the Afghanistan Protection Cluster, conducted a monitoring survey among undocumented returnees from Iran and Pakistan (in the following cited as IOM Afghanistan COVID-19 Protection Monitoring Report). According to this report, 96 per cent of surveyed returnees from Pakistan and Iran indicated having nowhere to self-isolate.<sup>3</sup>

### c. Awareness Raising:

Awareness-raising efforts include the dissemination of information through social media, billboards, flyers as well as elders in the communities. According to the IOM Afghanistan COVID-19 Protection Monitoring Report, surveyed returnees however reported low overall awareness of COVID-19 related restrictions. As of July 2020, in Ghor province 94 per cent were not aware of the measures outlined above; in Faryab province the highest number of respondents (84 per cent) was unaware of restrictions being imposed at all.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> All exchange rates in this document have been calculated using OANDA Currency Converter (rate as of 18 September 2020): [www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter](http://www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter)

<sup>3</sup> IOM, *COVID-19 Protection Monitoring May – July 2020* (Kabul, 2020). Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/iom-covid-19-protection-monitoring-may-july-2020> (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



### 3. What is the capacity utilisation of (public and private) hospitals?

As of 21 September 2020, the number of COVID-19 cases in Afghanistan appears to have continuously decreased since the highest number of reported cases on 17 June 2020<sup>5</sup>, which has led to a relaxation of the situation in the hospitals. In September 2020 no shortage of free beds in public hospitals and in intensive care units (ICUs) was reported. There is a total of 180 beds in ICUs in the 18 public hospitals in Kabul. Provincial hospitals have at least 10 ICU beds each. Private hospitals totally have 8000 beds, 800 of which have been equipped for intensive care.

However, according to the IOM Afghanistan COVID-19 Protection Monitoring Report, 53 per cent of the population remain without realistic access to health services. Further, an inability to afford desired preventive measures, such as purchasing face masks, was reported by 23 per cent of survey participants. Around one third of surveyed returnees reported a lack of access to handwashing facilities (30 per cent) or to soap/ sanitizer (35 per cent).<sup>6</sup>

### 4. Is there sufficient medical equipment (PPEs, drugs, respirators) available? If not: In which area is there a special need?

There are ventilators available for 10 per cent of ICU beds in Kabul as well as in the provinces. The personnel hired in response to COVID-19 has been trained by the government and organizations at the beginning of the pandemic.

### 5. Are hotels / tea houses / other accommodation facilities currently open?

Yes, they are open.

## Labour market

### 1. How has the labour market developed since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis?

There is no official government statistics available to show how the labour market has been impacted. The Directorate of Labour Market at the Afghanistan Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Afghan MoLSA) has recently launched an assessment of the labour market, which is yet to be published. However, existing evidence indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the economic situation in Afghanistan, including the labour market. The Afghan government has warned unemployment in Afghanistan will increase by 40 per cent, with poverty rates (= less than 2 USD [1,69 EUR] per day) projected to hit 72 per cent (up from 55 per cent prior to the crisis). Lockdown measures have compounded existing fragile livelihoods to the extent that by July 2020, 84 per cent of respondents said that without access to work outside the home (in event of quarantine), they could not meet their basic household needs beyond two weeks; that number increases to 98 per cent in case of four weeks of quarantine.<sup>7</sup>

According to the IOM Afghanistan COVID-19 Protection Monitoring Report, undocumented returnees are in a particularly vulnerable situation: For families and communities, loss of livelihoods was cited as the biggest impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerns over income paramount as returnees are being forced to search for new jobs or sources of income to make ends meet (87 per cent of respondents overall, though 100 per cent of respondents in Balkh and Ghor).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> WHO, *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard* (last updated on 21 September 2020). Available at <https://covid19.who.int/> (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>6</sup> IOM, *COVID-19 Protection Monitoring May – July 2020* (Kabul, 2020). Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/iom-covid-19-protection-monitoring-may-july-2020> (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



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**2. Which job opportunities are available to an unskilled worker without special work experience in Afghanistan? What is the average wage of an unskilled worker?**

Generally, unskilled workers generate their income as day labourers, street vendors or by running small shops. The average wage for an unskilled worker depends, for a day labourer, it is approximately 5 USD (4,24 EUR) per day.

**3. What is the current situation for day labourers?**

Overall, the situation is very difficult for day labourers as many economic sectors have been negatively impacted by the lock down measures related to COVID-19. Small and big enterprises usually provided direct working opportunities for day labourers. The loss of jobs in these businesses has hit the day labourers hard.

**4. What measures is the Afghan government taking to support unemployed people?**

There is no state support for unemployed persons.

There are a few websites with job announcements. For employment in the public sector, the Civil Service Commission Management Directorate (CSMD) of the Civil Service Commission and Administrative Reform announces vacant positions online on [www.iarcsc.com](http://www.iarcsc.com).

Vacant positions with NGOs, as well as with international and local companies are gathered on these websites:

- [www.acbar.org](http://www.acbar.org)
- [www.jobs.af](http://www.jobs.af)
- [www.duty.af](http://www.duty.af)
- <http://wazifa.af>
- <http://indeed.af><sup>9</sup>

**5. Are measures taken by the government to create new jobs?**

According to the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF, 2017-2021)<sup>10</sup>, the government has planned on focusing on several sectors to create jobs. In particular, it is focusing on comprehensive agriculture and private sector development programs. According to ANPDF, Afghanistan's GDP rises and falls with the performance of its agriculture, which is a source of jobs for at least 40 per cent of the population and makes up a significant share of the current exports. Job-generating initiatives include:

- Expanding the land under irrigation from 2.2 to 2.7 million hectares
- Increasing wheat production from 4.5 to 5.9 million metric tons
- Building efficient and competitive markets
- Enabling SMEs, particularly export-focused Afghan-owned firms
- Encouraging domestic and international investment

Further initiatives by the ANPDF include:

<sup>9</sup> IOM, *Country Fact Sheet Afghanistan* (Berlin, 2019). Available at [https://files.returningfromgermany.de/files/CFS\\_2019\\_Afghanistan\\_EN\\_.pdf](https://files.returningfromgermany.de/files/CFS_2019_Afghanistan_EN_.pdf) (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF, 2017 – 2021)*. Available at <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/afg148215.pdf> (accessed 22 September 2020).



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- A Mineral and Resource Development Program
- Energy and infrastructure development
- The advancement of regional integration
- Increasing labour productivity and investing in human capital
- An Urban Development Program

However, in a recent report published by the Asian Development Bank, a sharp decline of economic growth is reported in Afghanistan as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and continued security and political challenges. Based on the report, border closures and lock downs in the major cities have disrupted trade and transportation and undermined industry and services in the country. These factors will further reduce employment opportunities.

**6. Are there social and governmental support mechanisms for the unemployed in Afghanistan (e.g. AMS) and how do they currently operate?**

No, there is no assistance during the duration of unemployment.

**7. Is it possible to register as a jobseeker in Afghanistan with an office / organisation?**

There are some consultancies that charge a small fee for assisting people in finding jobs. However, successes have been small due to the high level of unemployment and there have been cases of fraud, which has led to a decreased trust by the population in such consultancies.

Jobseekers can get information on relevant vacancies through the Afghan MoLSA and through ACBAR ([www.acbar.org](http://www.acbar.org)), a non-governmental organization based in Afghanistan. Returnees can send their CV to both organizations and ask for consultation.<sup>11</sup>

## Economy and supply situation

**1. How has the economy developed since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis?**

According to a report by the World Bank<sup>12</sup>, available indicators show signs of a sharply contracting economy in the first half of 2020, reflecting the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in the context of continued insecurity and political uncertainty. Consumption and investment have been compressed by social distancing measures and weak confidence. Revenue decline have constrained scope for effective counter-cyclical fiscal policy to maintain economic activity over the first half of the year, with government spending declining over recent months as a result of both declining revenues and administrative disruptions to development project spending associated with social distancing measures.

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<sup>11</sup> IOM, *Country Fact Sheet Afghanistan* (Berlin, 2019). Available at [https://files.returningfromgermany.de/files/CFS\\_2019\\_Afghanistan\\_EN\\_.pdf](https://files.returningfromgermany.de/files/CFS_2019_Afghanistan_EN_.pdf) (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>12</sup> World Bank Group, *Afghanistan Development Update July 2020* (accessed 17 September 2020). Available at [www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/07/15/hit-hard-by-covid-19-afghanistan-needs-continued-international-support](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/07/15/hit-hard-by-covid-19-afghanistan-needs-continued-international-support) (accessed 22 September 2020).



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## 2. Which areas were / are particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis?

According to an assessment conducted by Afghanistan Center for Excellence, the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 crisis are:

- Non-food manufacturing
- Handicrafts and clothing
- Agri-food processing
- Fitness and health
- Non-profit (NGO) and humanitarian

The sectors least affected are:

- Information technology (IT), media and communications
- Management consulting and legal
- Finance and accounting

## 3. What has been the development of food prices since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis? Which further developments can be expected?

The COVID-19 crisis drove a significant spike in food prices over the first half of 2020. Food prices increased by around 17 per cent in April 2020 year-on-year following imposition of border control and lock down measures in main urban centres. The impact of trade disruptions on prices for basic household goods has so far significantly outweighed impacts of lower prices for key imports such as oil. Prices seem to have moderated since April 2020, following distribution of wheat from strategic grain reserves, enforcement of anti-price-gouging regulations, and the reopening of borders for food imports.<sup>13</sup>

## 4. What is the current situation in agriculture?

Impacts of COVID-19 on the agriculture sector have been limited to date. Favourable weather condition during the planting season are expected to see continued recovery in wheat production from the 2018 drought. Lock down measures have so far had limited impact on agricultural production, remaining unenforced in rural areas. Production of fruit and nuts for processing and export, however, is being negatively impacted by disruption to supply chains and closure of export routes.<sup>14</sup>

## 5. What is the current situation with regard to food supply and access to drinking water?

As stated under question three, at the beginning of the lock down, there was a spike in the food prices but later on due to different interventions, the prices went down. However, access to drinking water was not affected as many of the households either have a well inside the house or receive drinking water through a centralized water distribution channel.

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<sup>13</sup> World Bank Group, *Afghanistan Development Update July 2020* (accessed 17 September 2020). Available at [www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/07/15/hit-hard-by-covid-19-afghanistan-needs-continued-international-support](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/07/15/hit-hard-by-covid-19-afghanistan-needs-continued-international-support) (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



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**6. Do buses / shared taxis / airplanes currently run between the provinces and the cities? What is the current situation with regard to freedom of movement?**

Buses, shared taxis and airplanes currently run between the provinces and cities. The current situation has caused no restriction with regard to the freedom of movement.

## Returnees

**1. Is it currently possible for Afghan citizens to enter Afghanistan (voluntarily)?**

Yes.

**2. Are border crossings currently closed?**

No.

**3. Is Afghanistan currently accessible by air?**

**3.1 If so, which cities are currently served (internationally)?**

There are international flight connections to Kabul, Mazar and Kandahar. Please note that these flight connections are unreliable, in times of a pandemic flights are frequently cancelled or postponed.

**3.2 Are COVID-19 tests currently taking place at the airports? If so, what does this procedure look like?**

No. Currently there are no COVID-19 tests taking place at the airports in Afghanistan. Entry health screening (assessing symptoms and body temperature measurement) is conducted for arriving passengers.

**4. What is the current situation regarding IOM reintegration projects?**

**4.1 How many people have already been accepted to the current Restart III project?**

As of 22 September 2020, there is a total of 70 RESTART III project applications accepted by the BFA and IOM.

**4.2 Is it currently possible to return from Austria to Afghanistan voluntarily and / or with IOM support?**

As far as flight connections towards Afghanistan are available and entry regulations in Afghanistan allow it, a voluntary return from Austria to Afghanistan is possible. Turkish Airlines as well as Emirates provide flight options via Istanbul (in case of TK)/ Dubai (in case of Emirates) to Kabul. Participation in the reintegration project RESTART III is possible, but subject to approval from BFA and IOM. Please note that flight restrictions and/or entry regulations may be subject to change anytime according to COVID-19 developments.

**4.3 Have project participants returned to Afghanistan voluntarily from Austria since the beginning of the crisis?**

As of 22 September 2020, 47 RESTART III project participants voluntarily returned to Afghanistan from Austria. 19 participants returned in February and March 2020 before the lock down and travel restrictions took place, two beneficiaries returned in July 2020, 13 in August and 13 in September so far.



#### **4.4 How is the current IOM support on site? Especially in the cities of Herat and Mazar-e Sharif?**

Currently support can be provided by IOM at the airport in Kabul, in the main IOM office in Kabul as well as and in the seven sub-offices (including Herat and Mazar-e Sharif). IOM staff is partially in home-office, but returnees can access IOM offices. Please note that this may be subject to change anytime according to COVID-19 developments. Returnees are encouraged to minimize their visits to the IOM offices and instead address issues and seek consultation through phone or any other available online tools. Reintegration support has been adapted to the restrictions in place, e.g. virtual counselling is offered in Austria as well as in Afghanistan, reimbursement of in-kind assistance is possible, participants are encouraged to open a bank account to facilitate cash assistance.

#### **4.5 How are the projects of the persons who recently returned to Afghanistan in the course of the IOM reintegration projects developing?**

Businesses of RESTART III project participants are developing slowly, due to COVID-19 lock down regulations imposed by the government since the end of March 2020.

#### **5. Which kind of support does IOM provide to forced returnees (from Austria) on site (especially in the cities of Herat and Mazar-e Sharif)?**

Currently, there are no forced returns to Afghanistan from EU-countries. Generally, IOM offers a small cash grant of 147 EUR equivalent in local currency at Kabul International Airport as part of the RADA-project<sup>15</sup>. This amount aims to assist returnees with covering their immediate needs such as finding temporary accommodation for up to five nights in Kabul, paying for in-country onward transportation and covering food refreshments. This support is only available only for returnees arriving through Kabul International Airport.

#### **6. What other organisations are active for forced returnees in Afghanistan?**

The Ipsos (International Psychosocial Organization)<sup>16</sup> is an international non-profit organization that offers psychosocial services for returnees (please note that limited resources). There might be some other private initiatives or NGO's that provide some basic support to returnees. However, they are subject to permanent changes and have very few resources, therefore they are not listed.

##### **6.1 What services are provided by these organisations for forcibly returnees?**

IPSO provides psychosocial services for returnees. However, services are limited due to scarce resources.

##### **6.2 Which ones operate specifically in Mazar-e Sharif and Herat?**

IPSO also operates in Mazar-e Sharif and Herat. IOM Kabul is not aware of any other organization that provides support to returnees.

## **Women and children**

<sup>15</sup> IOM, *Reintegration and Development Assistance in Afghanistan (RADA)* (Kabul, 2019). Available at <https://afghanistan.iom.int/rada-factsheet> (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>16</sup> International Psychosocial Support Organization (Ipsos), *About us*. Available at [www.ipsoscontext.org](http://www.ipsoscontext.org) (accessed 22 September 2020).





## 1. Did the COVID-19 crisis had an impact on domestic violence?

Levels of domestic violence are generally high in Afghanistan: 87 per cent of Afghan women reportedly experience at least one form of physical, sexual or psychological violence.<sup>17</sup>

Times of crisis are commonly related to a rise in domestic and intimate partner-related violence<sup>18</sup>. In April 2020 Oxfam carried out an assessment on COVID-19 related threats for women in Afghanistan, conducted through 34 qualitative interviews with female Oxfam-beneficiaries, women's rights activists, civil society actors and government representatives. Respondents overall expressed their fear that the number of women experiencing violence will increase due to the COVID-19 situation especially due to economic constraints and stress related to the lock down as well as cramped living conditions. Ninety-seven per cent of female respondents reported that gender-based violence has increased since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease. Women's rights' activists also pointed out that traditional and informal conflict resolution mechanisms such as Shuras and Jurgas are not available now due to the ban of public and social gatherings. This leads to decreased mitigation and resolution options for conflicts and disputes within a family unit and could further heighten tensions.<sup>19</sup>

Woman shelters were over-crowded, with IOM receiving a request from local organizations for support in locations like Herat, which was for several months the hotspot for COVID-19 (due to vicinity to Iranian border).

## 2. Did the COVID-19 crisis had an impact on child labour?

According to a brief released by the ILO and UNICEF in June 2020, the COVID-19 crisis is related to a rise in poverty which can lead to an increase in child labour. It is further pointed out in the ILO brief that a one percentage point rise in poverty leads to at least a 0.7 per cent increase in child labour in certain countries<sup>20</sup>.

Observations made by various organizations including IOM, the World Bank, UNICEF and ILO indicate that child labour has become a coping mechanism for many families throughout the COVID-19 crisis. During the lock down schools have remained closed, worsening the situation for children and forcing them to work full time. In coordination with the Afghanistan Protection Cluster (APC), IOM conducted 1,659 household surveys with undocumented returnees to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the Protection environment across 11 provinces. Preliminary findings highlight an increase of child labour in some locations: Ghor and Sar-i-Pul were the provinces reporting the highest rates, peaking in June 2020 (at 81 per cent and 63 per cent respectively). Child labour is one of the top child protection concerns of protection actors across the country, and a clear indicator of the heightened risk of exploitation and abuse which economically vulnerable families are facing – particularly those for whom daily labour is the only source of income.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> UNFPA Afghanistan, *Gender-based Violence*. Available at <https://afghanistan.unfpa.org/en/node/15232> (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>18</sup> Harvard Medical School, Center for Primary Care, *A Second, Silent Pandemic: Sexual Violence in the time of COVID-19* (1 May 2020). Available at <http://info.primarycare.hms.harvard.edu/blog/sexual-violence-and-covid> (accessed 23 September 2020)

<sup>19</sup> OXFAM, *A new surge to Afghan women: COVID-19*. Oxfam Briefing Note (Oxfam in Afghanistan, 2020). Available at <https://asia.oxfam.org/latest/policy-paper/new-scourge-afghan-women-covid-19> (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>20</sup> ILO, UNICEF: *COVID-19 may push millions more children into child labour*. Available at [www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_747583/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_747583/lang--en/index.htm) (accessed 22 September 2020).

<sup>21</sup> NRC, *Protection Monitoring report, March 2020* (Kabul, 2020). Available at [www.globalprotectioncluster.org/2020/05/05/afghanistan-covid-19-situation-report-05-may-2020/](http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/2020/05/05/afghanistan-covid-19-situation-report-05-may-2020/) (accessed 22 September 2020).



### 3. Do families (in need) receive special assistance from the government?

In the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the government launched a pilot project to distribute foodstuff to the families in need in Kabul. However, it was criticized not only for the quality of the foodstuff distributed but also for its quantity. Afterwards, the government started to distribute bread to families in need first in Kabul and other major cities but later on was extended to the whole country. The program continued for a month and half, and then it was stopped. Currently, there is no support for families with social needs.

Generally, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on humanitarian operations, with many organisations having to temporarily suspend or delay program activities due to an increasingly restricted humanitarian space.<sup>22</sup>

### 4. Are schools in Afghanistan currently open, or if not, how does Afghanistan intend to proceed in the future?

Partly:

- Pupils of all grades of private schools can visit the schools, they opened in the beginning of September 2020.
- In public schools only upper secondary school grades 10, 11 and 12 (for children aged 15 to 18) are open. All classes of primary and lower secondary schools are closed until further notice.

#### Disclaimer

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<sup>22</sup> IOM, *COVID-19 Protection Monitoring May – July 2020* (Kabul, 2020). Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/iom-covid-19-protection-monitoring-may-july-2020> (accessed 22 September 2020).