



Photo by National Geographic

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE CLUSTER (FSAC) IN AFGHANISTAN CALLS FOR FUNDING TO SCALE UP ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR 14.1 MILLION PEOPLE IN IPC 3 AND 4 AFFECTED AREAS

OVERVIEW

The food security situation in Afghanistan continues to be alarming with more than 14 million people – one third of all Afghans - experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between March and May 2021.

The food insecurity situation in rural and urban areas will become even more critical over the next few months due to the combined impact of **COVID-19, high food prices** and widespread **unemployment**, and the **La Niña** weather phenomenon which has resulted in below-average precipitation in the 2020/21 season and is expected to impact both irrigated and rainfed wheat production in 2021, resulting in a **below average wheat harvest as well as reduced pastures and adverse impacts on livestock health and production**. Furthermore, the **conflict situation is expected to deteriorate** over spring-summer months and will likely result in high levels of internal displacement and worsening food insecurity.

Despite the increasing needs, the required scale-up in the response has not yet been possible due to severe underfunding. **Only 12% of the funding required for the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan** has been received.

KEY FACTS



1 in 3 Afghans are acutely food insecure, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report - **35% of the population or more than 14 million** people are in IPC Phase 3 or above



The **2021 harvest is expected to be below average** with **wheat production expected to decrease by 31 per cent compared to 2020**, while livestock production is expected to be down by **30 per cent across 18 provinces**



The 2020 wheat harvest **left a deficit of 1.3 million MT of wheat** which is expected to increase to **2.9 million MT because of reduced rainfall**



The **lean season is expected to be more intense and arrive earlier** leading the food and livelihoods security situation to deteriorate further



Early action and timely provision of humanitarian food and livelihoods assistance to severely food insecure people can reduce the impacts of the upcoming dry spell and avoid people **slipping into more severe food insecurity**



The cluster is facing **significant funding gaps**. **US\$554 million is required** for food assistance and livelihood support

IPC PRE-HARVEST ANALYSIS FINDINGS-MARCH TO MAY 2021

CURRENT MARCH - MAY 2021



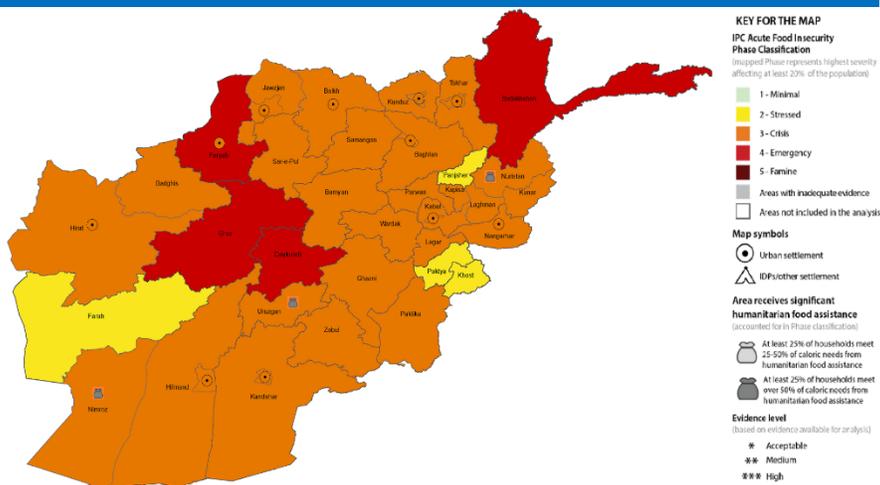
14.1 M

35% of the population

People facing acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase	000 000
Phase 5	People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	4,169,256 People in Emergency
Phase 3	9,910,392 People in Crisis
Phase 2	15,249,651 People in Stress
Phase 1	11,082,560 People minimally food insecure



FUNDING NEEDS



The food insecurity situation will continue to worsen during the lean season due to the impact of the protracted conflict, reduced income fueled by COVID-19, the prolonged dry spell, reduced snow cover, localized floods, and high temperatures. Hence, FSAC is calling for support to implement **priority anticipatory actions and rapid emergency response activities** in Afghanistan. FSAC requires **US\$554 million for 2021**. As of 16 May, the FSAC activities under 2021 HRP are less than 5 per cent funded according to the Financial Tracking Services leaving millions of people, especially without livelihoods assistance or access to food and thus potentially at risk of adopting extreme negative coping actions including forced displacement pressures.

RESPONSE PRIORITIES

Urgent action is required to contain a high rate of asset depletion in order to cover food consumption gaps through food assistance and livelihood interventions for people in IPC Phase 3 and above.



Provide emergency life-saving food assistance to people in IPC Phase 4 areas and highly food insecure pockets of IPC Phase 3 classified provinces, as well as IDPs, natural disaster-affected people, refugees and returnees.



Mitigate anticipated dry spell impacts during the 2021/2022 lean season and avoid increase in the humanitarian caseload of food insecure people. Season-critical and **timely distribution of quality seeds for winter wheat cultivation** is needed for farmers **while urgent livestock protection support is needed** for herders and livestock owners in provinces where the impact of **La Niña** has adversely affected crops and pasture.



Provide Cash / food for work assistance to improve local irrigation and flood protection infrastructures, especially in areas severely affected by the prolonged dry spell and/or at risk of flash flooding. Rehabilitating / constructing anew such structures will also result in multiple benefits of addressing water scarcity and localized drivers of conflict.



Promote Small-scale alternative livelihood programmes (e.g., backyard poultry, kitchen gardening) to reduce serious income gaps and lack of economic opportunities.



Construct, protect, and rehabilitate livelihoods infrastructure for agriculture and livestock, such as karizes, check dams, water channels and reservoirs.



Link all responses to longer-term **resilience building initiatives** such as communal asset creation and vocational skills training.



Coordinate **food security assessments** to better inform and adjust the response.