



Key socio-economic indicators in Afghanistan and in Kabul city

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Country of Origin Information Report

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It must be noted that the review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of the EUAA.





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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2019)¹. The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither the EUAA, nor any person acting on its behalf, may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022 the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 29 July 2022. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the [methodology section](#) of the [Introduction](#).

¹ EASO, EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, June 2019, [url](#)





Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AWMS	Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
<i>hawala</i>	Informal money transfer system
HFA	Humanitarian Food Assistance
<i>hijab</i>	A Muslim head covering
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEA	Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan
IED	Improvised explosive device
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ISKP	Islamic State Khorasan Province
MPVPV	Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice
NSIA	Afghanistan's National Statistics and Information Authority





Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of international protection status determination, including refugee status and subsidiary protection. In particular, it is intended to inform the update of the Country Guidance on Afghanistan April 2022. The terms of reference can be found in [Annex 2](#).

Methodology

This report was drafted by Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) as mentioned in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. This report is produced in line with the EASO COI Report Methodology (2019)² and the EASO COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2019).³

Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference were defined by EUAA and were based on inputs on information needs from country of origin information (COI) and policy experts in EU+ countries within the framework of a Country Guidance development on Afghanistan. The terms of reference are available in [Annex 2: Terms of Reference](#).

Collecting information

In accordance with the EASO COI Report Methodology, the information gathered is a result of research using public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources. The reference period is from 1 December 2021 until 30 June 2022. Some additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 4 August 2022.

Quality control

To ensure that the drafters respected the EASO COI Report Methodology, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report.

Sources

In accordance with the EASO COI Report Methodology the content of this report relies on a range of different open-source material. Amongst others, the report draws from the

² EASO, EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, June 2019, [url](#)

³ EASO, Writing and Referencing Guide for EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, June 2019, [url](#)





Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan published by UNOCHA⁴, a study published by Silvia Mila Arlini and Melissa Burgess written for Save the Children⁵, an UNHCR multi sectoral rapid assessment covering household in all 34 provinces⁶, and several publications from the World Food Programme⁷.

The local Afghan media outlet Hasht-e Subh is used as a source in the report, although a shift in the reporting tone was noted during the drafting exercise which became more critical of the Taliban, especially on events taking place in Panjsher Province. Due to difficulties assessing the reliability of this source, case-by-case assessments have been made on the inclusion of reports from Hasht-e Subh. Particular care has been taken on topics related to resistance groups involving Panjsher Province, and the Taliban's interactions with the local population of this area as well as with Tajiks in general. Reporting from Hasht-e Subh was often uncorroborated. Efforts to corroborate the information have been made but were not always possible.

All sources are outlined in [Annex 1: Bibliography](#).

Structure and use of the report

The report is structured in line with the Terms of Reference. The first chapter provides background information on Afghanistan; chapters two to seven provide an overview of key socio-economic indicators for Afghanistan and Kabul City, chapter eight covers child specific issues, chapter nine provides information on networks of support and chapter ten deals with mobility and travel in the country. In addition, most chapters also include subsections on the situation of women-headed households, as well as on the situation of IDPs and returnees.

Terminology

In this report the Afghan authorities operating under the Taliban (since August 2021) are described as the *de facto* authorities, as the announced state or interim government have not been internationally recognised. For readability, specific ministries or ministers operating under the Taliban are referred to as, for example, the 'Taliban Ministry of Interior' or the 'Taliban Minister of Foreign Affairs'. Persons working within lower-level authorities, who have been appointed by the Taliban or have returned to work since the takeover are not routinely referred to *de facto* state employees or Taliban officials, but efforts had been made to give clear context in which capacity these persons are working.

The administration of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, that collapsed amid the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021, is either referred to by its official name or as 'the previous

⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#)

⁵ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#)

⁶ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#)

⁷ WFP publications are available via the following website: [url](#)





government'. In cases where the reports refer to the previous government of the Taliban of the 1990s, this is indicated in the text.

Footnoted citations for documents published by Afghan authorities (typically previously cited as 'Afghanistan') are aligned with this terminology. This is to ensure a clear distinction between publications made by the previous elected Afghan government and publications published under the current *de facto* authorities.

Research limitations

Due to the Taliban takeover in August 2021, research limitations during the drafting of this report were observed. These challenges included: reduced and restricted media coverage, closing of local media outlets and fleeing of journalists, censorship, political interference from the Taliban in the work of journalists, threats and violence toward media workers and outlets, and difficulties verifying source/information reliability and corroborating information, especially from social media sources.⁸ Efforts have been made to locate reliable and corroborated information where possible given the limits.

Regarding population figures, there is a 'lack of reliable current disaggregated population data at provincial and district level'.⁹ The last national census was conducted in 1979. The numbers published by the *de facto* Taliban authorities in 2022 are based on the household listing of the years 2003-2005.¹⁰

⁸ RSF, RSF seeks UN Security Council meeting on plight of journalists in Afghanistan, 18 August 2021, [url](#); CNN, The media spotlight in Afghanistan is about to dim as journalists evacuate, 20 August 2021, [url](#); Denmark, DIS, Afghanistan, Taliban's impact on the population, June 2022, [url](#), p. 8; HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Threatening Provincial Media, 7 March 2022, [url](#)

⁹ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (September 2021 – March 2022), October 2021, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁰ Taliban de facto authorities of Afghanistan, NSIA, Estimated Population of Afghanistan 2022-2023, April 2022, [url](#), p. III



Map



Map 1. Afghanistan¹¹

¹¹ UN, Afghanistan, Map No. 3958 Rev. 7, June 2011, [url](#)



1. Background

1.1 Developments and major events impacting socio-economic situation since the Taliban takeover

When US and international forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, and following a large-scale Taliban offensive in the midst of the withdrawal with a consequent rise in insecurity, the Taliban swiftly took control of large parts of Afghanistan, including major Afghan cities,¹² and eventually Kabul on 15 August 2021.¹³ The previous elected government of Ashraf Ghani collapsed and the Taliban became the *de facto* authorities throughout Afghanistan.¹⁴ On 7 September 2021 the Taliban announced the formation of an interim or ‘caretaker’ government and declared the re-establishment of the country as Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA)¹⁵.

In late September 2021, the caretaker government was expanded, and included some individuals of non-Pashtun ethnic backgrounds.¹⁶ Although the new composition was reported to be a ‘small gesture toward including ethnic minorities’¹⁷, the cabinet still consisted of male members only, of predominantly ethnic Pashtuns, primarily from southern Afghanistan, and almost exclusively of former Taliban officials or long-time loyalists¹⁸.

As to how these caretaker positions differ from permanent ones, or by whom and when the members of this cabinet might be replaced in the future remained unclear.¹⁹ Moreover, the Taliban leadership remained vague concerning their plans on how to govern and structure the state and the ‘movement’ itself seemed to internally hold ‘diverse views about the forms that an Islamic order might take’.²⁰ After 100 days of the new *de facto* Taliban authorities taking control, the economic policy of the Taliban was still unclear, as well as how they intended to address issues such as poverty and unemployment.²¹ Taliban officials reportedly lacked experience in banking or financial issues.²² An Afghan human rights expert, interviewed by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) on 11 November 2021, also stated that the Taliban did

¹² UNSG, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, A/76/328–S/2021/759, 2 September 2021, [url](#), para. 16, 23

¹³ US, CSR, U.S. Military Withdrawal and Taliban Takeover in Afghanistan: Frequently Asked Questions, 17 September 2021, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁴ International Crisis Group, With the Taliban Back in Kabul, Regional Powers Watch and Wait, 26 August 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵ US, CSR, U.S. Military Withdrawal and Taliban Takeover in Afghanistan: Frequently Asked Questions, 17 September 2021, [url](#), p. 14; BBC News, Hardliners get key posts in new Taliban government, 7 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, Afghanistan’s Taliban Expand Their Interim Government, 28 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷ International Crisis Group, Afghanistan’s Taliban Expand Their Interim Government, 28 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸ US, CSR, Taliban Government in Afghanistan: Background and Issues for Congress, 2 November 2021, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, Who Will Run the Taliban Government, 9 September 2021, [url](#)

²⁰ Lombardi, C.B and March, A.F., Afghan Taliban Views on Legitimate Islamic Governance, USIP, February 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²¹ Al Jazeera, 100 days of the Taliban, 23 November 2021, [url](#)

²² AP, The economy on the brink, Taliban rely on former technocrats, 19 October 2021, [url](#)





not realise the urgency of the situation and the need to conform with some demands to reach international assistance.²³

Since the Taliban's seizure of power, they have issued instructions impacting, *inter alia*, media²⁴, girl's and women's rights²⁵ and the general population as regards observing Islamic law (*sharia*) in their daily lives²⁶. For more information on such restrictions, see EUAA COI report on [Afghanistan: Targeting of individuals](#) published in August 2022.

After the Taliban's seizure of power in August 2021 the international community froze Afghanistan's foreign assets and halted most economic aid;²⁷ only some aid continued to flow mainly through 'NGOs and multilateral bodies like the UN'²⁸. Since September 2021, as reported by various sources, Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy has been in free fall,²⁹ with public services³⁰ and the banking system collapsing³¹.

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 2615 in December 2021, exempting humanitarian assistance, as well as financial transactions and the delivery of goods and services necessary to deliver such assistance, from Taliban-related sanctions.³² In January 2022, the UN launched the largest single country aid appeal in history, exceeding five billion USD,³³ and 308 million USD of humanitarian assistance were announced by the US, raising the total US humanitarian aid to Afghanistan since October 2021 to 782 million USD³⁴. In February 2022, the US administration announced that half of the seven billion USD Afghan foreign reserves held in the US would be restored to Afghanistan, while the future of the other half remained to be resolved in litigation over the claims by relatives of 9/11 victims.³⁵ This approach was criticised by some advocacy groups and analysts.³⁶ Moreover, also in February 2022, the US administration had eased sanctions that had 'contributed to the collapse of

²³ Afghan human rights expert, online interview, 11 November 2021. This source left Afghanistan as the Taliban took power but remains in communication with sources on the ground. The source monitors developments within the human rights field through local sources in the country. The source wishes to be anonymous.

²⁴ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Restrict Media, 1 October 2021, [url](#)

²⁵ Chatham House, Women's rights under threat in Taliban-run Afghanistan, 10 June 2022, [url](#)

²⁶ Samim, S., Policing Public Morality, AAN, 15 June 2022, [url](#)

²⁷ AAN, Afghanistan's looming economic catastrophe: What next for the Taleban and the donors?, 6 September 2021, [url](#); US, SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30 October 2021, [url](#), pp. 119-120; Al Jazeera, UN chief warns millions of Afghans are on 'verge of death', 13 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁸ BBC News, Afghanistan: What humanitarian aid is getting in?, 14 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁹ USIP, The State of Afghanistan's Economy and Private Sector, 13 April 2022, [url](#); HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Blocking Female Aid Workers, 4 November 2021, [url](#); Barr, H., From Taliban to Taliban: Cycle of Hope, Despair on Women's Rights [Opinion], IPS, 29 October 2021, [url](#); AAN, Afghanistan's looming economic catastrophe: What next for the Taleban and the donors?, 6 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁰ WHO, Afghanistan's health system is on the brink of collapse: urgent action is needed, 24 January 2022, [url](#); IRC, 2022 Emergency Watchlist – System Failure, 14 December 2021, [url](#), p. 24

³¹ Reuters, Paralysed banking system pushing Afghanistan towards collapse -Red Cross, 25 February 2022, [url](#)

³² UN Security Council, Resolution S/RES/2615 (2021), 22 December 2021, [url](#)

³³ UN News, Afghanistan: UN launches largest single country aid appeal ever, 11 January 2022, [url](#)

³⁴ CNN, US providing \$308 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, 11 January 2022, [url](#)

³⁵ USIP, Afghanistan's Frozen Foreign Exchange Reserves: What Happened, What's Next, 1 March 2022, [url](#); FP, Biden Hands the Taliban a Propaganda Victory, 17 February 2022, [url](#); Reuters, Afghan central bank says U.S. plan for frozen funds an 'injustice', 14 February 2022, [url](#)

³⁶ Drezner, D.W., The United States is stealing Afghanistan's money, The Washington Post [Perspective], 14 February 2022, [url](#); VOA, Biden Keeping Half of Afghanistan's \$7B in Assets for 9/11 Victims, 11 February 2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera, 'Theft': Advocates decry US decision to withhold Afghan funds, 11 February 2022, [url](#)





Afghanistan's economy since the Taliban takeover in August'.³⁷ In March 2022, the Afghan central bank reportedly received 32 million USD in cash assistance.³⁸ On 22 June 2022, Paktika and Khost provinces were hit by a 'devastating'³⁹ earthquake, causing the deaths of more than 1 000 individuals and injuring over 6 000 with the Taliban launching appeals for international assistance.⁴⁰

As of June 2022, the Taliban *de facto* authorities had not yet been formally recognised by any foreign government.⁴¹

After August 2021, many countries halted or significantly reduced their financial assistance to the Afghan budget.⁴² Some sources claim this has impeded efforts to address humanitarian issues in Afghanistan.⁴³ In October 2021, the International Crisis Group reported that humanitarian aid was still reaching Afghanistan, whereas non-humanitarian assistance, which had previously supported development programs, the payment of civil servants, and the provision of public services, was suspended.⁴⁴ According to an article by The Diplomat, 'the limited aid being distributed in Afghanistan' reached the country mainly 'through established channels', including cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Food Program (WFP), and centred on medical and basic food assistance. Various other aid organisations like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the International Red Cross continued to work after the Taliban took power, with whom they 'had already established working relationships'.⁴⁵ In a January 2022 report, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) stated that humanitarian organisations faced difficulties in transferring funds to and within Afghanistan due to a 'complex set of international and domestic factors' - including the enormous shortage of cash inside Afghanistan, blockades by Western governments and financial institutions and 'banking rejections, linked to the increased compliance burden and financial sector over-compliance'.⁴⁶

In November 2021, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) stated that Afghanistan was heading for one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, due to, among other things, a sharp decrease in international aid and the Taliban's inability to deliver basic services.⁴⁷ According to the UNOCHA's January 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview, it was estimated that in 2022, 24.4 million people will be in need in Afghanistan.⁴⁸ For the second half of March

³⁷ New York Times (The), U.S. Eases Sanctions to Allow Routine Transactions With Afghan Government, 25 February 2022, [url](#)

³⁸ Hasht-e Subh, The Central Bank of Afghanistan Receives Another \$32 Million Cash in Assistance, 6 March 2022, [url](#)

³⁹ UN News, From the Field: Afghan earthquake survivors look to rebuild their lives, 18 July 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁰ IOM, Rising from the Rubble: Earthquake Victims in Afghanistan Rebuild After Disaster, 12 July 2022, [url](#); France24, Taliban appeal for help as rescuers scramble to reach Afghan quake survivors, 23 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹ VOA, Taliban Say US Is 'Biggest Hurdle' to Diplomatic Recognition, 18 June 2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Taliban supreme leader urges world to recognise 'Islamic Emirate', 29 April 2022, [url](#)

⁴² BBC News, Afghanistan earthquake: What foreign aid is getting in?, 8 July 2022, [url](#)

⁴³ VOA, Afghan Taliban's Quest for International Recognition Stuck in Neutral, 15 February 2022, [url](#); ACCORD, Afghanistan: Aktuelle Lage & Überblick über relevante Akteure; Situation gefährdeter Gruppen [Current situation & overview of relevant actors; situation of vulnerable groups] [source: Mielke, K.], March 2022, [url](#), pp. 9-10

⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, Thinking Through the Dilemmas of Aid to Afghanistan, 7 October 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁵ Diplomat (The), Can the World Get Aid to Afghanistan?, 24 September 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁶ NRC, Life and Death: NGO access to financial services in Afghanistan, January 2022, 27 January 2022, [url](#), p. 7, 12

⁴⁷ USIP, Winter is coming in Afghanistan. Are the Taliban ready?, 11 November 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 4





2022, the WHO reported a still increasing number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.⁴⁹ As noted by UNOCHA, '[t]he humanitarian conditions created by Afghanistan's multi-dimensional crisis continue to impact all parts of the country and affect every aspect of Afghan life.' It was estimated that 24.5 million people, or 55% of the Afghan population, would require humanitarian assistance in 2022, with 9.3 million of them estimated to be in extreme need.⁵⁰

In September 2021, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) warned of a drastic increase in poverty among the Afghan population.⁵¹ In addition, WFP reported the Afghan health care system to be on the brink of failure.⁵² As of 20 May 2022, by referring to the multi-partner initiative Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the WFP estimated that about 19.7 million people, nearly half of Afghanistan's population, were facing acute food insecurity,⁵³ not only because of the collapsing Afghan economy but also due to a severe drought plaguing the country.⁵⁴

For detailed information on these critical aspects of Afghanistan's humanitarian and socio-economic situation, please see section [2. Economy](#), section [3. Basic subsistence and employment](#), section [4. Food security](#), section [6. Healthcare](#) and section [8. Child-specific living conditions](#).

1.2 Demographic figures

This section will provide general demographic figures about the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and female-headed households, and regarding the population of Kabul city.

As of 1 December 2021, UNHCR estimated that 3.5 million people in Afghanistan were internally displaced by conflict.⁵⁵ Conflict-induced displacement has decreased significantly since the Taliban takeover. According to UNOCHA, 7 420 persons were displaced due to conflict between 2 December 2021 and 30 June 2022, the majority of displacement took place from Sar-e Pul to Bamyan and within Baghlan province.⁵⁶ According to IOM, 1 327 474 persons were displaced in 2021 due to conflict and natural disasters. This number included 988 817 persons who were displaced after the political changes in August 2021 and remained in displacement by the end of 2021. Of the total number of 5 832 454 IDPs residing in host communities by the end of 2021, Herat province – was hosting 17 % of all IDPs and thus the

⁴⁹ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 15, Reporting Period: 15–31 March 2022, 13 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁰ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 48

⁵¹ UNDP, Economic Instability and Uncertainty in Afghanistan after August 15, 9 September 2021, [url](#), p.1

⁵² WHO, Afghanistan's health system is on the brink of collapse: urgent action is needed, 24 January 2022, [url](#)

⁵³ WFP, Afghanistan: Situation Report 20 May 2022, 23 May 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁴ UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Bulletin (January – March 2022), 18 April 2022, [url](#), p. 6; Al Jazeera, Nearly 10 million children going hungry in Afghanistan, says NGO, 10 May 2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Climate now a worse crisis than war for Afghanistan's farmers, 26 October 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁵ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific, Flash External Update: Afghanistan Situation #16 as of 15 April 2022, 26 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁶ UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Conflict Induced Displacements, last updated 24 July 2022, [url](#)





largest IDP population countrywide.⁵⁷ Hundreds of Hazara Shia families had reportedly been forcibly evicted from their homes and land by the Taliban.⁵⁸ Local media reported on similar evictions in Jowzjan province, with more than 1 000 members of ethnic Uzbeks and Turkmen communities being expelled by Taliban fighters.⁵⁹

According to IOM data, 575 818 people, including documented and undocumented persons, returned to Afghanistan in 2021 after having lived abroad – mostly in Iran and Pakistan - for at least six months.⁶⁰ For 2022, IOM estimated over 785 000 returns to Afghanistan.⁶¹

As of 2020, an estimated 1.6 % or 69 000 households were headed by women, and 306 000 people were living in female-headed households, according to the Income and Expenditure & Labor Force survey by the Afghan National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA).⁶² The majority of female household leaders were widowed women (77.08 %), while 19.22 % were married, and less than 2 % were either divorced (1.27%) or had never married nor were they engaged (1.88 %).⁶³ According to UNHCR's 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis – an analysis based on assessments of 142 182 households in the period October to December 2021, mainly among IDPs and IDP returnees⁶⁴ -, 43 % of female-headed IDP households were headed by widows. Among IDP returnees alone, the share of widows among female-headed households was even higher with 56 %.⁶⁵

As of 2022, the population of Kabul province was estimated⁶⁶ to be 5 572 630, including 4 801 200 persons living in urban areas and 771 430 persons living in rural areas, according to the Afghan National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA).⁶⁷ This estimation is the result of calculations based on the 2003-2005 census.⁶⁸ According to IOM, 93 631 IDPs were displaced to or arrived in Kabul province since August 2021, making Kabul district⁶⁹ the district where the largest numbers of IDPs had arrived.⁷⁰ In the same period, Kabul was also the district to which most migrants from abroad – 4 166 individuals - returned.⁷¹

⁵⁷ IOM, DTM Afghanistan, Baseline Mobility Assessment Summary Results Round 14 November-December 2021, 2 March 2022, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁸ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Forcibly Evict Minority Shia, 22 October 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹ Gandhara, Taliban Accused Of Forcibly Evicting Ethnic Uzbeks, Turkmen In Northern Afghanistan, 9 December 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰ IOM, DTM Afghanistan, Baseline Mobility Assessment Summary Results Round 14, November-December 2021, 2 March 2022, [url](#), p. 9

⁶¹ IOM, Afghanistan Crisis Response Plan 2022, 22 March 2022, [url](#), p. 3

⁶² Afghanistan, NSIA, Income and Expenditure & Labour Force survey 2020, April 2021, [url](#), p. 23

⁶³ IPC-IG, Afghanistan: Needs Assessment, 2022, 10 March 2022, [url](#), p. 24

⁶⁴ According to UNHCR, the term 'IDP returnee' refers to internally displaced persons who have returned to their place of origin. UNHCR, Assessment of livelihood opportunities for returnees/internally displaced persons and host communities in Afghanistan, 2013, [url](#), p.13

⁶⁵ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁶ Regarding population figures, only estimates are available, and the official figures appear to be understated. IPC, Afghanistan IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis September 2021 - March 2022, October 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁶⁷ De facto authority of Afghanistan, NSIA, Estimated Population of Afghanistan 2022-2023, April 2022, [url](#), p. 13

⁶⁸ De facto authority of Afghanistan, NSIA, Estimated Population of Afghanistan 2022-2023, April 2022, [url](#), p. 42

⁶⁹ IOM, DTM Afghanistan Emergency Event Tracking Kabul Province, EET Round 3 (1-19 December 2021), 2 February 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁷⁰ IOM, DTM Afghanistan Emergency Event Tracking, EET Round 3 (1-19 December 2021), 21 December 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁷¹ IOM, DTM Afghanistan Emergency Event Tracking Kabul Province, EET Round 3 (1-19 December 2021), 2 February 2022, [url](#), p. 3





1.3 COVID-19 situation

According to UNOCHA, writing in January 2022, COVID-19 was a ‘serious threat’ in Afghanistan after the country was rocked by several waves of the pandemic with newly emerging variants and inadequate prevention measures.⁷² As of 7 July 2022, 182 873 COVID-19 infections and 7 725 COVID-19-related deaths were confirmed across Afghanistan. At the same time, the vaccination coverage rate of the population reportedly lied at approximately 8.5 %.⁷³

Measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic reportedly ‘deteriorated dramatically’ after 15 August 2021, as the suspension of funding⁷⁴ and lack of doctors and medicines led to the closure of the majority of COVID-19 treatment centres⁷⁵ and the *de facto* authorities did not clearly position themselves regarding the resumption of COVID-19 vaccination⁷⁶. Non-payment of salaries and other disrupted support including fuel for the generators and food reportedly left the remaining COVID-19 treatment centres in a state of limited functioning.⁷⁷ In addition, the ‘closure of most commercial land and air routes’ prompted by the events of August 2021 caused disruptions to scheduled imports of essential medical supplies.⁷⁸ For detailed information on this subject, please see section [6. Healthcare](#).

In its 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview, UNOCHA reported that ‘[t]he COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt across the country as it affects livelihoods and undermines coping capacity of an already vulnerable nation.’⁷⁹ Afghan households felt the impact of the pandemic in terms of reduced or lost sources of income,⁸⁰ lost or limited access to clean water and sanitation, limited access to food, or in the form of illness or death of household members, among others.⁸¹ For detailed information on these aspects, please see section [3. Basic subsistence and employment](#), section [4. Food security](#) and section [6. Healthcare](#).

⁷² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 22

⁷³ Reuters, COVID-19 Tracker: Afghanistan, updated 7 July 2022, 6:08 AM, [url](#)

⁷⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 41, 23

⁷⁵ Diplomat (The), New COVID-19 Wave Batters Afghanistan’s Crumbling Health Care, 9 February 2022, [url](#)

⁷⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 41

⁷⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 23; Diplomat (The), New COVID-19 Wave Batters Afghanistan’s Crumbling Health Care, 9 February 2022, [url](#); HealthNet TPO, Urgent Funding Needed for Covid-19 Hospital in Kabul, 13 October 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 23

⁷⁹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 41

⁸⁰ AREU, Afghanistan Covid-19 Poverty Monitor, March 2022, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 41

⁸¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 41





2. Economy

2.1 National economic and financial situation

Afghanistan's public spending depended on foreign assistance for 75 % of its support (in the form of grants)⁸² until August 2021. After the Taliban's takeover on 15 August 2021, however, donors and international financial institutions suspended all payments, leading to a liquidity crisis in the country, a near-collapse of the banking system, depreciation of the national currency, increasing prices and the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs.⁸³

In the absence of official Gross Domestic Product (GDP) statistics by the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan, the World Bank estimated the country's economic output to decline by between 20-30 % in the period August 2021 to August 2022.⁸⁴ According to a World Bank survey in October-November 2021 among 100 private businesses,⁸⁵ 82 % reported a decline in demand for their products and one third of the interviewed businesses had temporarily stopped operating since the Taliban takeover in August 2021. Small and women-owned businesses disproportionately indicated that they had faced a drop in demand, and two-fifths of them reported to have temporarily closed since August 2021.⁸⁶ The World Bank expected per capita incomes to be one-third lower at the end of 2022 than they were at the end of 2020,⁸⁷ and UNDP analysis similarly indicated a possible per capita income decline from USD 500 [EUR 475.4]⁸⁸ in 2020 to about USD 350 [EUR 332.8] by 2022, in case the resident population continued to increase by 2.5 % per year.⁸⁹

Afghanistan's Central Bank, facing a shortage of banknotes in both US dollars and Afghanis (Afghan currency), limited the transfer of banknotes to private banks as well as the amount of money that could be withdrawn from one's account. Due to these restrictions and the lack of physical money, private banks were no longer able to cover withdrawals, including for humanitarian aid, nor to pay out funds that were transferred electronically to the bank. For the same reason, banks were no longer able to grant credit to customers. Moreover, after the Taliban took control of the country in August 2021, the US and other governments and the World Bank decided to revoke the credentials of the Afghan Central Bank to interact with the international banking system, with international financial institutions and with many other national banking systems. This decision prevented the Afghan Central Bank from receiving

⁸² USIP, Afghanistan Study Group Final Report, February 2021, [url](#), p. 26; World Bank (The), Afghanistan: Public Expenditure Update, 28 July 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁸³ WFP, Afghanistan Annual Country Report 2021, 2022, [url](#), p. 7

⁸⁴ World Bank (The), Macro Poverty Outlook for Afghanistan: April 2022, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁵ The cited survey was sent to about 350 firms of which 100 eventually participated. The World Bank noted in its key findings that the low return rate might indicate that a considerable number of firms already had stopped operating. See [url](#), pp. v, 27

⁸⁶ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Private Sector Rapid Survey, A Snapshot of the Business Environment — Round 1, March 2022, 7 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 5-6

⁸⁷ World Bank (The), Towards Economic Stabilization and Recovery, Afghanistan Development Update April 2022, 13 April 2022, [url](#), p. iii

⁸⁸ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

⁸⁹ UNDP, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Outlook 2021-2022, 1 December 2021, [url](#), p. 9



any World Bank funds. It also blocked the bank from accessing its foreign currency reserves (approximately USD 9 billion [EUR 8.5 billion]⁹⁰), which could have been used otherwise to bridge liquidity problems and stabilise the national banking system.⁹¹ The liquidity crisis and severed access to the international banking system prevented firms from making or receiving payments for their import/export businesses or accessing their working capital, international humanitarian organisations and NGOs from paying salaries and contractors in the country as well as private households from gaining access to remittances or their savings.⁹² In November 2021, the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan prohibited the use of foreign currency in the country, requiring the population to use only Afghani for their financial transactions.⁹³

In this report, NRC analysed available payment channels for NGOs to transfer humanitarian funds into Afghanistan and observed that some humanitarian organisations began to use informal money transfer systems (*hawala*) for the transfer of humanitarian funds into Afghanistan. Previously, humanitarian organisations had reportedly used *hawala* predominantly to transfer money within the country.⁹⁴ According to a non-exhaustive poll by an NGO working group quoted in the report, USD 3.7 million [EUR 3.5 million]⁹⁵ have been sent into the country by NGOs using *hawala* between mid-August and mid-December 2021.⁹⁶ In view of the situation, UN agencies reportedly resorted to bringing physical cash to Kabul to pay for salaries and other costs. In this way, up to USD 150 million [EUR 142 million] were flown into Afghanistan every month as of April 2022.⁹⁷

According to an April 2022 report by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), individual account holders were able to withdraw funds up to USD 400 or AFN 30 000 [EUR 367.31]⁹⁸ per week. However, only the Afghanistan International Bank (AIB) in Kabul was able to actually pay out this amount. In the provinces, some banks were only able to pay an equivalent of USD 100-200 [EUR 91.83–183.66] per week, depending on the funds available to them. Business clients' withdrawals were limited to either five percent of their balance or up to USD 25 000 [EUR 22 957], whichever sum was lower. In-country transfers were possible, while international transfers depended on the Afghan Central Bank's prior approval and was restricted to the purchase of certain goods, including food, medicine and hygiene items, fuel, gas and electricity, and others. However, in case transfers reached a limit of 25 % of the total account balance of each vendor, no further withdrawals were allowed.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, both individuals and businesses reported that in practice the amounts of funds they were able to

⁹⁰ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

⁹¹ HRW, Afghanistan: Economic Roots of the Humanitarian Crisis, 1 March 2022, [url](#)

⁹² World Bank (The), Towards Economic Stabilization and Recovery, Afghanistan Development Update April 2022, 13 April 2022, [url](#), p. 5

⁹³ Al Jazeera, Taliban bans the use of foreign currency across Afghanistan, 2 November 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁴ NRC, Life and Death: NGO access to financial services in Afghanistan, January 2022, 27 January 2022, [url](#), p. 8

⁹⁵ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

⁹⁶ NRC, Life and Death: NGO access to financial services in Afghanistan, January 2022, 27 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 27-28

⁹⁷ World Bank (The), Towards Economic Stabilization and Recovery, Afghanistan Development Update April 2022, 13 April 2022, [url](#), p. 8

⁹⁸ Exchange rates in this paragraph are as indicated in the source: [url](#)

⁹⁹ IOM, Information on the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 4



withdraw in the first three months of 2022, were – considerably for firms- below the regulated limits.¹⁰⁰

As of March 2022, the World Bank noted that ongoing humanitarian support contributed to some economic stabilisation, with a slightly improved exchange rate, more stable inflation, and a slight increase in labour demand, and in nominal and real wages.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, the World Bank (WB) estimated that even under a best-case scenario it would take until 2031 for Afghanistan's GDP per capita to return close to the level of 2020. According to the WB, this, however, would require international support, the easing of restrictions on the financial sector, increased political confidence, which in turn would increase private investment in the country, more possibilities for women to participate in the economy, and a stable security situation.¹⁰²

Headline year-on-year inflation was 12.7 % in December 2021, due to an increase in international prices, import restrictions caused by disruptions to international transactions, and currency devaluation. In the period between the end of July 2021 to mid-February 2022, the national currency Afghani lost 14 % of its value against the US-Dollar, 10 % against the Euro and 4 % against the Pakistani Rupee.¹⁰³

2.2 Poverty rates

Due to the economic crisis, the humanitarian situation – already affected by decades of conflict, severe droughts, and the COVID-19 pandemic – further deteriorated.¹⁰⁴

According to a statement by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, as of June 2022, 25 million Afghans were living in poverty, noting that this was more than double compared with 2011.¹⁰⁵

More current data on poverty rates in Afghanistan could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

2.3 Female-headed households

The labour force participation rate for women in Afghanistan is low and those who do work outside the home tend to have more education. UNDP expressed concern that Taliban restrictions on female employment 'affect both the economic and society' noting that while it remains unclear to what extent the Taliban will enforce restrictions, incomes of households with working females will be reduced depending on the scope and severity that apply. UNDP

¹⁰⁰ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Economic Monitor, 18 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰¹ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Economic Monitor, 18 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 5-6

¹⁰² World Bank (The), Towards Economic Stabilization and Recovery, Afghanistan Development Update April 2022, 13 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 23-24

¹⁰³ World Bank (The), Macro Poverty Outlook for Afghanistan: April 2022, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰⁴ WFP, Afghanistan Annual Country Report 2021, 2022, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁵ UN, Amid Plummeting Humanitarian Conditions in Afghanistan, Women, Girls 'Are Being Written Out of Society' by De Facto Authorities, Briefers Warn Security Council, 23 June 2022, [url](#)





remarked that Taliban's approach to female employment has not been consistent or uniform.¹⁰⁶

2.4 IDPs

UNOCHA noted in its 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview and with reference to unpublished data of a nationwide survey among roughly 9 880 households in the period August to October 2021 (the Whole of Afghanistan (WoA) Assessment), that active conflict (73 %) and poverty (47 %) were the main drivers for forced internal displacement.¹⁰⁷ A recent Mid-Year WoA Assessment, however, indicates that unemployment and poverty had become the greatest drivers of internal displacement by May 2022.¹⁰⁸

2.5 Returnees

The main push factors causing recent returnees to come back to Afghanistan were being forced to leave their host country (40 %) followed by unemployment and poverty (26 %), according to findings of the nationwide WoA Assessment survey of August–September 2021. Moreover, their socio-economic situation was difficult due to a general lack of income opportunities as well as their specific shelter, food and health expenses. For these reasons, returnees faced significant obstacles related to sustainable integration including 'limited absorption capacity of basic services and infrastructure, slow progress on land allocation and lack of economic opportunities coupled with uncertain political prospect in Afghanistan.'¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ UNDP, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Outlook 2021-2022, 1 December 2021, [url](#), pp. 1, 17

¹⁰⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 17

¹⁰⁸ IRC, From Humanitarian Response to Economic Recovery: recommendations for addressing acute needs and the root causes of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, May 2022, 11 May 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰⁹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 33, 35





3. Basic subsistence and employment

3.1 Countrywide trends

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that in the context of the Taliban takeover of control in mid-August 2021, more than half a million workers lost their job in the third quarter of 2021, compared to a hypothetical scenario with no change in administration. Estimated losses were attributed to the Taliban takeover and related economic crisis as well as to restrictions on the employment of women. ILO estimated a further increase in employment losses up to 700 000 or – in case of a significant deterioration of the labour market situation of women and intensified emigration – up to 900 000 workers by the second quarter of 2022.¹¹⁰

According to the World Bank's Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey (AWMS) among 4 937 households across the country in the period October to December 2021, employment decreased in both, public and private sectors compared to data from the same period 2019. The decrease was, however, considerably higher in the public sector – from 12 % of household heads employed in that sector in the last quarter of 2019 to 8 % in the same period in 2021. This decline was mostly due to a decline in employment in the security sector - including police, armed forces, and security services, the share household heads employed in these sectors fell from over 3 % in 2019 to 1 % in December 2021. Similarly, employment rates in public administration fell from 2.8 % to 0.9 %. The decline in paid employment was comparatively moderate in the private sector, from 9 % in 2019 to 8 % in 2021. Self-employment, including casual work, increased in both urban and rural areas.¹¹¹

According to a World Bank survey of November 2021 among 100 private businesses, some 80 % of the country's 700 000 private businesses (90 % of which were micro, small and medium enterprises) were in the informal sector. The survey found that one third of all interviewed businesses temporarily ceased operations since August 2021, and businesses of all sizes and sectors reported to have dismissed over half of their staff, on average, with business in the agricultural sector dismissing fewer employees than other sectors.¹¹²

According to the same World Bank survey, 75 % of all female workers have been dismissed since August 2021. Some companies reportedly arranged for female workers to continue working from home. About one third of female-owned businesses – predominantly small businesses in the manufacturing sector, producing handicraft, jewellery and traditional clothing – resorted to this strategy, in comparison with 4 % of companies owned by men.¹¹³ Security concerns were considerably higher among women-owned firms – 66 % of women felt

¹¹⁰ ILO, Employment prospects in Afghanistan: A rapid impact assessment, ILO Brief, January 2022, 19 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 2-3

¹¹¹ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey Round 1, March 2022, 15 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 7-8

¹¹² World Bank (The), Afghanistan Private Sector Rapid Survey, A Snapshot of the Business Environment – Round 1, March 2022, 7 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 2, 6, 8

¹¹³ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Private Sector Rapid Survey, A Snapshot of the Business Environment – Round 1, March 2022, 7 April 2022, [url](#), p. 9





that the security situation had deteriorated following the Taliban takeover, while 61 % of men-owned firms said it had improved – and might be a key factor in the higher rate of closure of female-owned businesses.¹¹⁴ More than a quarter of female-owned firms (26 %) listed insecurity and restrictions on women among their top three business constraints, in contrast to only one percent of male-owned businesses.¹¹⁵

According to the World Bank's AWM survey, 79 % of household heads were employed in the period October to December 2021, showing an increase of 6 % compared with data from the same period 2019. The World Bank pointed at differing developments regarding urban and rural employment between 2019 and 2021: while in urban areas, the employment rate of household heads dropped from 75 % to 73 %, it increased from 73 % to 81 % in rural areas. The World Bank suggested that this increase of employment in rural areas might be linked to an improved security situation and to the return of some households to farm or non-farm activities. At the same time, the World Bank noted an increase in unemployment compared to 2019, mainly because the number of economically inactive persons (that is, persons not having a paid job and not looking for one) decreased and a larger part of the population actively began to look for work. The increase in household heads searching for work rose from 8 % to 21 % in urban areas and from 12 % to 15 % in rural areas in the period October to December 2021 compared with the same period 2019, presumably – as the World Bank noted – due to decreased earnings, a decline in remittances and the ongoing drought, which made it necessary to find additional sources of income.¹¹⁶

In April 2022, WFP noted that casual labour wage and the number of days of work available in the country's main markets was below average and 'gradually decreasing' due to the deteriorating economy. By the end of that month, the daily wage rate for unskilled labour was AFN 287 [EUR 3.05]¹¹⁷ and for skilled labour AFN 577 [EUR 6.15], which constituted a 5 % and 11 % decrease, respectively, compared to the rates of June 2021, before the establishment of the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan in mid-August 2021.¹¹⁸ By July 2022, wages had slightly increased to AFN 297 [EUR 3.16] and AFN 610 [EUR 6.5], respectively.¹¹⁹

WFP indicated that 81 % of interviewed households faced a decrease in their income in January 2022. In Kabul that number was even higher with 88 % of households. 18 % of households reportedly had no earnings at all in that month.¹²⁰ Among the 1 409 households¹²¹ interviewed at the end of 2021 by Save the Children, 82 % of households reported loss of

¹¹⁴ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Private Sector Rapid Survey, A Snapshot of the Business Environment – Round 1, March 2022, 7 April 2022, [url](#), p. 15

¹¹⁵ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Private Sector Rapid Survey, A Snapshot of the Business Environment – Round 1, March 2022, 7 April 2022, [url](#), p. 20

¹¹⁶ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey Round 1, March 2022, 15 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 6-7

¹¹⁷ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

¹¹⁸ WFP, Afghanistan Countrywide Weekly Market Price Bulletin, Issue 101 (covering 4th week of April 2022), 1 May 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹¹⁹ WFP, Afghanistan Countrywide Weekly Market Price Bulletin, Issue 110 (covering the first week of July 2022), 8 July 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹²⁰ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Five January 2022, 16 February 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹²¹ The surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16





income since mid-August 2021, with a third of families (34.8 %) having lost their entire household income and a quarter (26.6 %) of families having lost more than half of their household income since then.¹²² Similarly, almost 90 % of household heads interviewed by the World Bank for its AWM survey had experienced a decline in their labour earnings in the 30 days prior to the interview.¹²³ In autumn 2021, the average household debt was reportedly more than six times the average monthly income, and loss of livelihood and employment, rising food prices and currency devaluation led to an increase in negative coping mechanisms such as increase in debts, the sale of assets, marrying off girls or the sale or exchange of children.¹²⁴

The World Bank noted that according to official statistics, the net inflow of remittances fell by 47.8 % in the third quarter of 2021 (compared to the same period in 2020)¹²⁵, mainly because of restrictions on international financial transactions.¹²⁶ In December 2021, five percent of respondents of the World Bank's AWM survey said they were receiving private remittances, only half as many as in December 2019, when ten percent of households reportedly received remittances.¹²⁷ As of January 2022, most households (95 %) interviewed by WFP did not receive any remittances. In case remittances were received, they were mostly spent on food.¹²⁸

In a survey conducted by the World Bank in the period November to December 2021 among 4 937 households from all Afghanistan's provinces and 321 out of 401 districts (called the Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey (AWMS)), 70 % of households reported that they were not able to cover basic food and non-food needs, that is, the double percentage compared to May 2021 (35 %). Of these, 37 % of households could not cover food expenses, while 33 % said that 'they were unable to cover both food and non-food needs', compared to 16 % and 18% respectively in May 2021. Moreover, 85 % of households reportedly resorted to buying lower-quality or less expensive food, and 46 % reduced the number of daily meals.¹²⁹

An increasing number of Afghans reportedly resorted to selling one of their kidneys to be able to feed their families, while the practice has been common for several years already.¹³⁰ Moreover, the poverty crisis has led to an increase in 'suicide cases', according to Hasht-e Subh.¹³¹

¹²² Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 58

¹²³ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey Round 1, March 2022, 15 March 2022, [url](#), p. 8

¹²⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 42; VOA, Afghanistan Poverty Bears More Child Brides, 4 May 2022, [url](#)

¹²⁵ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

¹²⁶ World Bank (The), Towards Economic Stabilization and Recovery, Afghanistan Development Update April 2022, 13 April 2022, [url](#), p. 16

¹²⁷ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey Round 1, March 2022, 15 March 2022, [url](#), p. 11

¹²⁸ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Five January 2022, 16 February 2022, [url](#), p. 2

¹²⁹ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey Round 1, March 2022, 15 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 4-5, 9-10

¹³⁰ Al Jazeera, Desperate Afghans sell kidneys amid poverty, starvation, 28 February 2021, [url](#); New York Times (The), In Afghanistan, a Booming Kidney Trade Preys on the Poor, 15 February 2021, [url](#); Pajhwok Afghan News, Trafficking in Persons for the purpose of organ removal, 19 April 2017, [url](#)

¹³¹ Hasht-e Subh, Poverty, Father Burns Himself in Front of His Child, 18 April 2022, [url](#)





Save the Children noted in a survey among 1 409 households of Save the Children programme participants across seven provinces of Afghanistan that 82% of respondents had lost income since the Taliban took control in mid-August 2021. 18 % said they had no choice but to send their children to work. Based on this data, Save the Children estimated that countrywide over one million children were engaged in child labour.¹³² For more information on the situation of children, please see section [8. Child-specific living conditions](#).

3.2 Female-headed households

According to ILO estimates, women constituted 17 % of the total labour force and 10 % in urban settings in 2020, with most of them employed in agriculture, manufacturing of textiles and clothes, and in public administration and social services. As these sectors had been badly hit by the economic crisis and furthermore women's economic participation had been 'limited by newly imposed restrictions', women's employment was estimated to have decreased by 16 % in the third quarter of 2021. Moreover, ILO expected that women's employment might decrease by 21 % in the second quarter of 2022.¹³³ In addition, the lack of any civil identity documentation – the *Tazkira* – made it more difficult for women to seek employment or access services. According to findings of the 2021 WoA Assessment, 28 % of women did not have a *Tazkira*.¹³⁴

Women and female-headed households were particularly affected by the Taliban's policies of banning women from returning to their jobs or using public transport alone, requiring them to be accompanied by a close male relative when leaving the house, and observing a strict dress code. These policies did not only limit women's freedoms, but also affected their ability to work and make a living and thus were driving them further into poverty, as a group of UN experts noted in January 2022.¹³⁵ Human Rights Watch reported in January 2022 on the conditions for women in Ghazni province since the Taliban took control of the province. Several of the women interviewed for the report stated that they had not been able to return to work and had not received salaries for several months or were living of their savings, despite being the breadwinners of their families. A former government worker noted that widows and women who had been the sole providers of their families were facing great difficulties due to the constantly rising prices and turned to begging with their children.¹³⁶

For more information on the situation of female-headed households, please see section [4. Female-headed households](#) on Food security. In addition, for further information on women's access to employment after the Taliban take-over, see EUAA COI report on [Afghanistan: Targeting of individuals](#), 5.2 Situation of women and girls under Taliban rule, 5.2.2 Access to employment.

¹³² Save the Children, Afghanistan: A Fifth of Starving Families Sending Children to Work as Incomes Plummet in Past Six Months, 14 February 2022, [url](#)

¹³³ ILO, Employment prospects in Afghanistan: A rapid impact assessment, ILO Brief, January 2022, 19 January 2022, [url](#), p. 4

¹³⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 24-25

¹³⁵ UN, Afghanistan: Taliban attempting to steadily erase women and girls from public life – UN experts, 17 January 2022, [url](#)

¹³⁶ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Deprive Women of Livelihoods, Identity, 18 January 2022, [url](#)





3.3 IDPs

According to UNHCR's 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessment Analysis, 63 % of IDP and IDP returnee households said that they were not able to work and cover their daily expenses in the period following the establishment of the Taliban *de facto* government. UNHCR suggested a strong correlation between this fact and an increase in negative coping mechanisms among respondents such as reducing meals or the size of meals, buying less food or borrowing food, accruing debt, delaying medical treatment, or sending children to work. Nevertheless, UNHCR noted gender-based differences: among female-headed households, 81 % of IDP and 76 % of IDP returnee households indicated their inability to work and cover daily expenses, while the shares were lower among male-headed IDP and IDP returnee households, with 72 % and 68 %, respectively. All groups named food as their top priority need, while other needs – prioritised differently among female and male-headed IDP and IDP returnee households – included fuel, rent, non-food items and health care.¹³⁷

More than half of displaced households (51 %) fell in the emergency category of the Livelihood Coping Strategy (LCS) Index,¹³⁸ meaning they had to apply non-sustainable livelihood coping strategies that affected their future productivity and were more difficult to reverse, such as selling house or land, selling their last female animals, and begging as a response to a lack of food or of money to buy food.¹³⁹

UNOCHA noted that most people fleeing conflict in 2021 were displaced to provincial or urban areas. As most of the IDPs lacked urban labour skills, while their livelihood assets had been looted, sold at very low prices or, in the case of livestock, lost, IDPs were left with very few livelihood options in their new environment. In cases of return to their places of origin, IDP returnees had to cope with reduced remittances, the loss of livelihood opportunities at their place of origin and the loss of family support networks according to UNHCR.¹⁴⁰ For more detailed information on networks of support of IDPs, please see section [9 Networks of support](#) of this report.

The US Department of State (USDOS) noted in its 2021 Country Report on Human Rights, that many IDPs lacked identity documents (61.4 % of IDPs, according to a report by the Protection Cluster of March 2022)¹⁴¹, and that especially female-led IDP households had difficulties obtaining basic services as they lacked identity documents. In urban areas, many IDPs reportedly faced discrimination, lacked access to basic services and faced a permanent risk of being evicted from illegally occupied displacement sites. Lack of livelihood opportunities often led to secondary displacement,¹⁴² while media also reported on IDPs begging to pay for

¹³⁷ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 6, 9-10

¹³⁸ REACH Initiative, Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) Key Sectoral Findings, October 2021, 23 December 2021, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁹ For the definition of 'emergency' and other LCS categories and what coping strategies they include, see WFP, A Guide to Standardized Collection, Processing and Visualization of Cadre Harmonisé Food Security Indicators, Chapter 7 Livelihood Coping Strategies, 22 September 2021, [url](#); FAO, Livelihood-based Coping Strategy Index, 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 30, 31

¹⁴¹ Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update – Q 4, 28 February 2022, [url](#), p. 12

¹⁴² USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 – Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 35





shelter and food¹⁴³ or turning to extreme negative coping mechanisms such as child-selling or organ-selling.¹⁴⁴

3.4 Returnees

In April 2022, IOM published the results of the third round of its returnee longitudinal survey – a long-term study that was designed to gain better understanding of the living conditions and reintegration processes of return migrants in Afghanistan. To this aim, several hundred returnees from Turkey or the EU were interviewed on a regular basis over the course of several years. According to the latest survey, half of the respondents (51 %), who had returned to Afghanistan between January 2018 and July 2021, were unemployed by the end of 2021 and 29 % were working for daily wages. 12 % of respondents said they were self-employed. 41 % of respondents said they had been without work in the six months prior to the interview (in December 2021) and 10 % said they had lost their job in the previous six months and not got a new one since then. Around two thirds (64 %) of those who lost their job in the last six months said this was because their employer stopped activities and about a quarter (24 %) said it was because they closed their own business.¹⁴⁵

In the same study, 95 % of respondents stated that their personal economic situation had worsened in the last six months. While the rate of respondents earning a monthly income from USD 1 [EUR 0.9]¹⁴⁶ to USD 44 [EUR 41.8] increased from 16 % to 42 % between the second and the third round of the survey¹⁴⁷, the share of those earning between USD 45 [EUR 42.8] and USD 89 [EUR 84.6] dropped from 23 % to 8 %. Almost half of respondents in both rounds reported no income at all, with the share of those decreased in the third round. Nine in ten respondents said they had to borrow money to cover monthly expenses and 77 % stated that their monthly income was not enough to cover their family's basic needs. Almost all respondents (98 %) were facing periods of food insecurity and had to resort to measures such as reducing the quantity (7 % very often, 53 % often) or quality (9 % very often, 53 % often) of food, skipping meals (1 % very often, 19 % often, 56 % sometimes) and borrowing food (14 % very often, 38 % often) to cope with food insecurity and scarcity. 27% of respondents indicated their intention to migrate from Afghanistan in the next six months, 80 % of them named the lack of jobs in Afghanistan as their primary reason.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ openDemocracy, While displaced Afghans starve, international help is nowhere to be found, 31 January 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ Guardian (The), 'I've already sold my daughters; now, my kidney': winter in Afghanistan's slums, 23 January 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ IOM, DTM Afghanistan, Returnee Longitudinal Survey (RLS), Round 3 – December 2021, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁴⁶ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

¹⁴⁷ Interviews for the second round were conducted in the period September-October 2021, and for the third round in the period 4 December 2021 to 1 January 2022. IOM, DTM Afghanistan, Returnee Longitudinal Survey (RLS), Round 3 – December 2021, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁴⁸ IOM, DTM Afghanistan, Returnee Longitudinal Survey (RLS), Round 3 – December 2021, 21 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 2-4





3.5 Situation in Kabul

In a survey by Save the Children conducted in the period November to December 2021, more than 82 % of households¹⁴⁹ reported that they had lost household income since the Taliban takeover in mid-August 2021. Among those losing their entire income, 42.3 % lived in an urban setting and 31.2 % in a rural setting. In Kabul, about 50 % of respondents said they had lost all their income.¹⁵⁰

According to a survey among 100 household respondents aged 16 to 35 years in Kabul city published by the Austrian BFA Staatendokumentation (Country of Origin Information Unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum) in January 2022, more men than women reported having full-time jobs. 85.7 % of people surveyed in Kabul had a 'low' level of income (defined as less than 10 000 AFN, or about 100 USD month) and 14.3 % had a mid-level income (defined as 100-200 USD per month). In comparison, Balkh had 96% at low level and 4 % at mid-level. Herat had 87.2 % at low level and 7.7% at mid-level. 85.7 % of people surveyed in Kabul had a 'low' level of income (defined as less than 10 000 AFN, or about 100 USD month) and 14.3 % had a mid-level income (defined as 100-200 USD per month). In comparison, Balkh had 96% at low level and 4 % at mid-level. Herat had 87.2 % at low level and 7.7% at mid-level.¹⁵¹ and noted that they had difficulties in providing sufficient food and basic goods for their families.¹⁵²

More specific information on the situation in Kabul could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

¹⁴⁹ TTThe surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

¹⁵⁰ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 58

¹⁵¹ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

¹⁵² Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Dossier Afghanistan Socio-Economic Survey 2021, 12 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 26-28



4. Food security

4.1 Countrywide trends

As of March 2022, Afghanistan was reported to be facing ‘one of the world’s largest food security crises’¹⁵³ and a ‘malnutrition crisis of unparalleled proportions’¹⁵⁴ with a sharp surge in the acute hunger-affected population from 14 million in July 2021 to around 23 million in March 2022.¹⁵⁵ By comparison, the UN reported nearly 17 million food insecure people in March 2021.¹⁵⁶ In the first quarter of 2022, the acute hunger-affected population reportedly experienced great difficulty satisfying their day-to-day food needs and ensuring their household’s food security.¹⁵⁷ The high prevalence of food insecurity stemmed from multiple factors, most notably a series of severe droughts and the economic meltdown that followed the Taliban’s seizure of power.¹⁵⁸ Rising food prices were cited in connection with these factors, and the Ukraine conflict was identified as also adding to food insecurity in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁹

In May 2022, the multi-partner initiative, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), reported that an estimated 19.7 million people were deprived of sufficient food in the period between March and May 2022, which is classified as ‘lean’ season, i.e., the period between harvests, with an estimated 13 million people in a ‘crisis situation’ (IPC Phase 3), 6.6 million in an ‘emergency situation’ (IPC Phase 4), and 20 000 people in ‘catastrophic conditions’ (IPC Phase 5).¹⁶⁰ Compared to IPC’s previous reporting period, from November 2021 to March 2022, food insecurity has been alleviated for the most affected households through intensively scaled-up humanitarian food assistance (HFA). This is mainly due to humanitarian actors being better able to reach beneficiaries in vulnerable rural areas than during the peak of the winter season.¹⁶¹ Yet according to IPC, the number of people experiencing acute food insecurity at high and critical levels decreased only marginally.¹⁶² The World Food Programme (WFP) reported in its monthly Food Security Updates that the

¹⁵³ FAO, FAO Afghanistan Newsletter: 1st Quarter 2022 – Issue #27, 2022, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁴ UN Afghanistan, Statement by Dr Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative for the Secretary General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, on the Continued Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Crisis Facing People in Afghanistan, 15 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ UN Afghanistan, Statement by Dr Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative for the Secretary General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, on the Continued Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Crisis Facing People in Afghanistan, 15 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ UN News, ‘If you don’t feed people, you feed conflict’, UN chief tells Security Council, 11 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ FAO, FAO Afghanistan Newsletter: 1st Quarter 2022 – Issue #27, 2022, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁸ FAO, FAO Afghanistan Newsletter: 1st Quarter 2022 – Issue #27, 2022, [url](#), p. 2; IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), p. 1; FEWS NET, Afghanistan Remote Monitoring Update: Despite seasonal progress, poor macroeconomy and drought will drive high assistance needs, April 2022, [url](#), p. 1; AAN, A Pledging Conference for Afghanistan... But what about beyond the humanitarian?, 31 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶⁰ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), pp. 1-2

¹⁶¹ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), pp. 1-2; see also WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022, 19 April 2022 [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶² IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), pp. 1-2

percentage of people in Afghanistan facing insufficient food consumption¹⁶³ declined from 98 % in December 2021,¹⁶⁴ to 95 % in January and February,¹⁶⁵ 93 % in March 2022¹⁶⁶ and 92 % in April and May 2022¹⁶⁷.

Since August 2021, food security has reportedly declined in all regions of Afghanistan¹⁶⁸ and acute hunger was ‘not limited to remote parts of the country’ according to WFP Regional Deputy Director Anthea Webb.¹⁶⁹ Regional variations in the prevalence of food insecurity, which also evolved differently during the referencing period of this report, are depicted in Figure 1. For detailed information on the development in Kabul, please see section [4.5 Situation in Kabul](#).

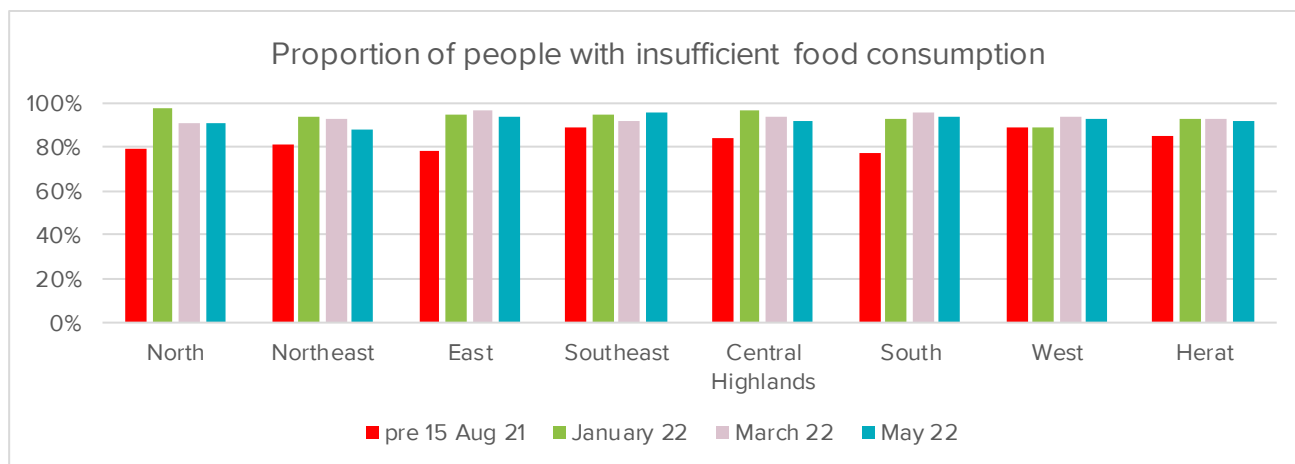


Figure 1: Proportion of people with inadequate nutrition per region, comparison between pre-August 2021 (i.e., Round 1 of the WFP Afghanistan Food Security Update covering 19 July – 15 August 2021)¹⁷⁰, January 2022, March 2022, and May 2022 based on WFP data¹⁷¹

For May 2022, WFP reported, that ‘hunger continues cutting across urban-rural divides’ as 92 % of urban families were found to be facing insufficient food consumption as well as 92 % of rural ones.¹⁷² According to WFP, Afghans have had to adopt ‘crisis-coping’ strategies to deal with insufficient food consumption. These numbers rose from 11 % in pre-August 15 time period, to 43 % in October 2021, 55 % in November, to 66% in January 2022, to 71 % in

¹⁶³ According to WFP “insufficient food consumption” is composed of the Food Consumption Score (FCS) of “poor food consumption” and the FCS of “borderline food consumption”. For further information on the Food Consumption Scores, please see WFP, Meta Data for the Food Consumption Score (FCS) Indicator, 3 February 2015, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: 8 December 2021, 10 December 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶⁵ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Five January 2022, 16 February 2022, [url](#), p. 1; WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Six February 2022, 23 March 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶⁶ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022, 19 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶⁷ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Eight April 2022, 13 June 2022, [url](#), p. 1; WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Nine May 2022, 27 June 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶⁸ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: 7 January 2022, 13 January 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶⁹ VOA, Humanitarians Fear Afghan Hunger Crisis Could Kill More Than War, 14 February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ Pre-August data slightly differs between WFP Round 5, Round 7 and Round 9. The drafters relied on the more recent figures for the period before August (Round 9, published in June 2022).

¹⁷¹ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Five January 2022 [Map], 16 February 2022, [url](#), p. 3; WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022 [Map], 19 April 2022 [url](#), p. 3; WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Nine May 2022 [Map], 27 June 2022, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁷² WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Nine May 2022, 27 June 2022, [url](#), p. 2



February 2022, and back down to 63% in March,¹⁷³ 59 % in April and 57 % in May.¹⁷⁴ These measures, which may include skipping meals or incurring debt to ensure that food is made available ‘reduced the quality, quantity, and diversity of food available, led to high levels of wasting¹⁷⁵ in children, and other harmful impacts on the physical and mental wellbeing of women, men, and children.’¹⁷⁶ UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan, Ramiz Alakbarov, was moreover quoted in an February 2022 news article as saying, ‘People are selling their organs. People are selling their children. They are desperate. They are hungry. And the situation is very, very dire.’¹⁷⁷

With below-average harvest prospects in most parts of the country for the period between June and November 2022, various factors at the socioeconomic and developmental levels but also the sanctions against the *de facto* authorities were ‘further expected to hamper the foreseeable seasonal improvement’. At the household level, the situation was reportedly expected to be exacerbated by the anticipated reduction in humanitarian food assistance due to a lack of funds.¹⁷⁸

As of 29 March 2022, the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI)¹⁷⁹ reported that both food and non-food items were generally available at Afghan markets, but that consumers struggled to purchase them as they were too expensive.¹⁸⁰ For January 2022, WFP reported of 72 % of interviewed families not having enough to eat at least once during the previous 14 days and most of them (92 %) indicated that this was due to a lack of money to buy food.¹⁸¹ Similarly, Save the Children’s Afghanistan Country Director noted that there was no shortage of food, but that ‘children are starving to death’ as their parents did not have the money to pay for it.¹⁸² Numbers remained similarly high in March 2022, with WFP estimating that 93 % of people in Afghanistan reportedly did not have enough to eat, and that 63 % resorted to crisis coping strategies.¹⁸³

USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) indicated that many rural households in lower-lying areas saw improved access to food and income, and poor urban households also witnessed seasonal improvements regarding income opportunities in April

¹⁷³ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022, 19 April 2022, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁷⁴ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Nine May 2022, 27 June 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁷⁵ ‘Child wasting refers to a child who is too thin for his or her height and is the result of recent rapid weight loss or the failure to gain weight. A child who is moderately or severely wasted has an increased risk of death, but treatment is possible.’ WHO, Wasting among children under 5 years of age (JME), n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ UN Afghanistan, Statement by Dr Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative for the Secretary General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, on the Continued Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Crisis Facing People in Afghanistan, 15 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ VOA, Humanitarians Fear Afghan Hunger Crisis Could Kill More Than War, 14 February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁷⁹ The Afghanistan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI) was launched by the Afghanistan Cash and Voucher Working Group (CVWG) and partners in March 2020, in collaboration with REACH Initiative (REACH).

¹⁸⁰ JMIMI, Market Trends – March 2022, 29 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 5, 8, 11

¹⁸¹ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: 7 January 2022, 13 January 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁸² Save the Children, Afghanistan: A Fifth of Starving Families Sending Children to Work as Incomes Plummet in Past Six Months, 14 February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸³ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022, 19 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1





2022.¹⁸⁴ According to a May 2022 IPC report, particularly non-farming households were expected to face major difficulties affording food.¹⁸⁵

Food prices were at historically high levels and expected to rise further or stabilize at a high level.¹⁸⁶ As of February 2022, the cost of a regular food basket was reported to exceed 82 % of an average family's income.¹⁸⁷ JMMI reported a 23 % increase in average median cost of the food basket between March 2021 and March 2022 and a 37 % increase between July 2021 and December 2021, the month where the food basket price peaked.¹⁸⁸ In March 2022, the median cost of a minimum expenditure basket (MEB)¹⁸⁹ was AFN 20 211 [EUR 215.48¹⁹⁰].¹⁹¹ In the same month, the daily wage of an unskilled worker amounted to AFN 283.2 [EUR 3.02] and of a skilled worker to AFN 573.2 [EUR 6.11].¹⁹² In the early months of 2022, 'prices of key staple food commodities continued to increase';¹⁹³ between April and May 2022, staple wheat and wheat flour prices reportedly rose by 3% despite the harvest season, 'reaching levels similar to the record-high prices recorded in January 2022'.¹⁹⁴ The general increase in prices was primarily caused by the depreciation of the Afghan currency, but the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and Russia was expected to significantly affect the supply and prices of food and fertilizers as well. Citing monthly WFP data, IPC reported that wheat prices had increased 45 %, wheat flour 49 %, rice 20 %, cooking oil 32 %, pulses 23 %, and sugar 25 % between June 2021 and April 2022.¹⁹⁵ Figure 2 shows the price development of the above-mentioned basic commodities across Afghan markets between December 2021 and June 2022. Figure 3 depicts the ratio of basic commodities per daily non-qualified labour wage.

¹⁸⁴ FEWS NET, Afghanistan Remote Monitoring Update: Despite seasonal progress, poor macroeconomy and drought will drive high assistance needs, April 2022, [url](#), pp. 1, 4

¹⁸⁵ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁸⁶ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁸⁷ UNHCR, Afghanistan: Operational update (February 2022), 16 March 2022, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁸⁸ JMMI, Market Trends – March 2022, 29 March 2022, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁸⁹ Defined as representing the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a seven-person Afghan household for one month. See REACH Initiative, Afghanistan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI), 7-17 March 2022, 19 April 2022, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁹⁰ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

¹⁹¹ REACH Initiative, Afghanistan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI), 7-17 March 2022, 19 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁹² WFP, Afghanistan Countrywide Monthly Market Price Bulletin Issue 22 (covering March 2022), 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁹³ FEWS NET, Afghanistan Remote Monitoring Update: Despite seasonal progress, poor macroeconomy and drought will drive high assistance needs, April 2022, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹⁴ FEWS NET, Afghanistan Remote Monitoring Update: In rural areas, food security outcomes improve only temporarily given poor crop production, June 2022, [url](#), pp. 2-3

¹⁹⁵ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), pp. 2, 6



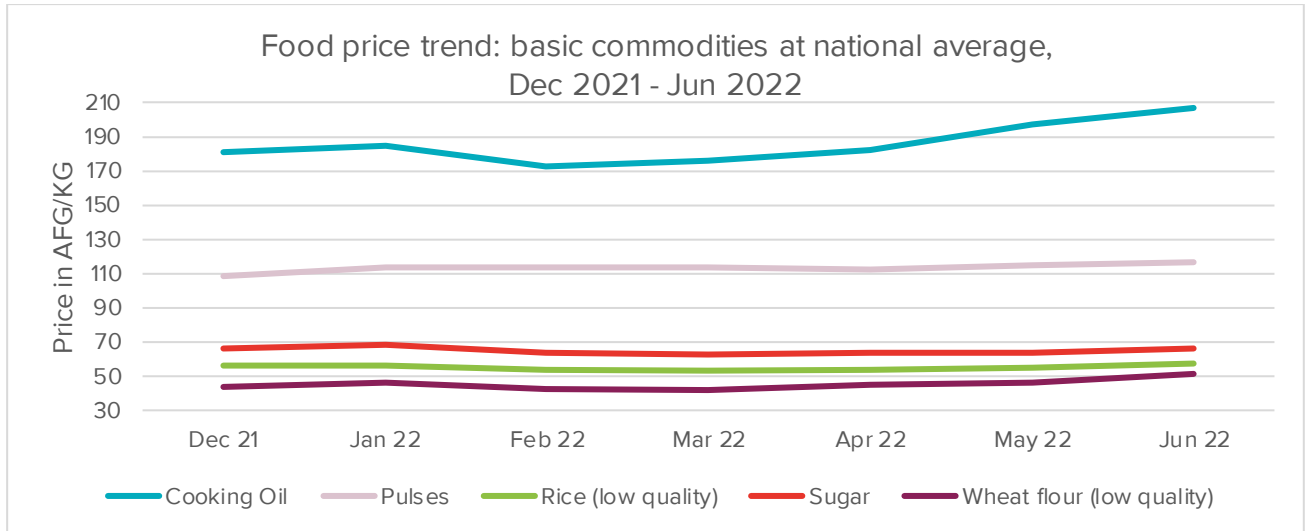


Figure 2: Development of prices of basic commodities at various markets across Afghanistan between December 2021 and June 2022, based on WFP data¹⁹⁶

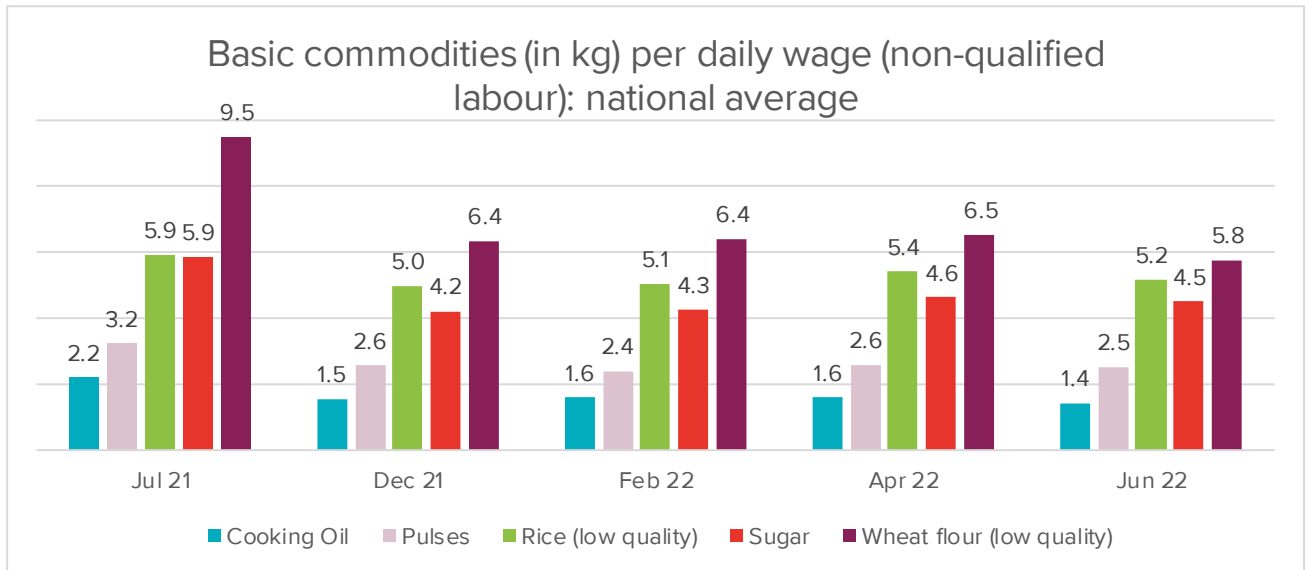


Figure 3: Ratio of basic commodities (in kg) per daily wage (non-qualified, non-agricultural labour) at various markets across Afghanistan between December 2021 and June 2022 and in comparison to July 2021 prior to the Taliban takeover (highlighted in different colours), based on WFP data¹⁹⁷

4.2 Female-headed households

According to a WFP update published in April 2022, female-headed households were reported¹⁹⁸ to be ‘struggling the most’ with 97 % experiencing insufficient food consumption.¹⁹⁹ This share was previously estimated by UN sources to be ‘almost 100 %’ as of February and

¹⁹⁶ ACCORD, chart based on WFP, Afghanistan – Food Prices, last updated 10 July 2022, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ ACCORD, chart based on WFP, Afghanistan – Food Prices, last updated 10 July 2022, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ WFP’s findings on female-headed households were described as ‘indicative’ due to a small sample size. WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022, 19 April 2022 [url](#), p. 2

¹⁹⁹ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022, 19 April 2022 [url](#), p. 2



mid-March 2022.²⁰⁰ These households reportedly resorted to ‘crisis-coping’ strategies more often (87%) than male-headed households (56%).²⁰¹ Based on a multi-sectorial rapid assessment²⁰² between October and December 2021, UNHCR found that post-August 2021 around 4 % of households turned to the negative coping strategy of child selling and 2 % to early marriage. When comparing male-headed and female-headed households, the findings are ‘mostly similar although the situation is marginally worse for female headed households’.²⁰³

In Afghan culture, women reportedly ‘bear the brunt of the effects of food insecurity’ and often tend to feed their families first and themselves second.²⁰⁴ In a March 2022 news article Orzala Ashraf Nemat, the exiled head of the independent think tank Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), indicated that for female-households it is more challenging to access aid ‘in the deeply conservative and patriarchal country’, as it is, for example, quite difficult for women to access food distribution centers when they are already overcrowded with men. The same article moreover reported on the struggle female-headed households had to faced amidst the humanitarian crisis, including skipping and drastically reducing meals.²⁰⁵

4.3 IDPs

Recently displaced households experienced worse food security scores than any other population group in Afghanistan.²⁰⁶ 46 % of displaced households had a poor Food Consumption Score (FCS) (measuring the frequency of consumption of different food groups consumed by a household in the 7 days prior to data collection),²⁰⁷ compared to 36 % of the resident population.²⁰⁸ According to the above-mentioned UNHCR multi-sectorial rapid assessment between October and December 2021, food was the main priority in terms of assistance needs of male- as well as female-headed IDP and IDP returnee households. However, only 5 % of households had reportedly received assistance.²⁰⁹ An article published by the independent media platform openDemocracy in January 2022 also stated that

²⁰⁰ WFP, WFP Data Shows Almost 100% of Households Headed by Women in Afghanistan Not Getting Enough Food, 28 February 2022, [url](#); UN Afghanistan, Statement by Dr Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative for the Secretary General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, on the Continued Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Crisis Facing People in Afghanistan, 15 March 2022, [url](#)

²⁰¹ WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022, 19 April 2022 [url](#), p. 2

²⁰² TTThis survey is not representative for the whole Afghan population and mainly provides findings ‘on the challenges IDPs and IDP returnees, in particular, face in Afghanistan’. UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰³ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 9

²⁰⁴ FAO, FAO Afghanistan Newsletter: 1st Quarter 2022 – Issue #27, 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰⁵ Gandhara, Afghan Widows Struggle To Survive Amid Humanitarian Disaster, 25 March 2022, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 30

²⁰⁷ For the definition of ‘emergency’ and other CLS categories, see WFP, A Guide to Standardized Collection, Processing and Visualization of Cadre Harmonisé Food Security Indicators, Chapter 7 Livelihood Coping Strategies, 22 September 2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ REACH Initiative, Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) Key Sectoral Findings, October 2021, 23 December 2021, [url](#), pp. 2-3

²⁰⁹ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis [Chart], 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 6



residents of an IDP camp in the north-western outskirts of Kabul received little to no support from NGOs or the new Taliban *de facto* authorities.²¹⁰

IDPs largely had to rely on begging and garbage selling, and meals were reportedly covered almost exclusively by (stale) bread or potatoes.²¹¹ According to UNOCHA's Humanitarian Needs Overview, 54 % of recently displaced IDP households reported facing a reduced access to food, and 13 % reported taking 'high-risk activities to obtain food' in the past 30 days.²¹² Regarding negative coping strategies, UNHCR found that these strategies were more prevalent among IDP returnee households headed by women than by other household types.²¹³ Tens of thousands of IDPs who have returned to Afghanistan's 'former battleground districts' faced significant struggles to feed their families. After borrowing money to buy food or repair their homes, many IDP returnees were reported to be severely indebted.²¹⁴

4.4 Returnees

In its Humanitarian Needs Overview published in January 2022, UNOCHA stated that 88 % of cross-border returnee households mentioned food as a 'priority need', while 57 % reported having difficulties obtaining or affording it.²¹⁵ At the end of 2021, a survey by Save the Children among 1 409 households of Save the Children programme participants in the provinces of Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul similarly noted that 93.1 % of surveyed returnee households were in need of food assistance.²¹⁶ Concerning negative coping strategies employed to obtain food or money to buy food, 67 % of cross-border returnee households reportedly used savings, 42 % sold household assets, 34 % reduced health and education expenditures, 24 % reported that they sent their children to work, 19 percent reported taking 'high-risk activities'.²¹⁷

According to the WFP's Annual Country Report on Afghanistan, four out of five households of returnees from Pakistan and Iran who were living in Kabul and received cash-based humanitarian assistance, indicated poor food consumption, the remaining ones indicated borderline food consumption. Most households had experienced sickness or loss of employment and wages and had used negative coping mechanisms such as borrowing money to pay for food, shelter or healthcare, according to WFP's Annual Country Report 2021.²¹⁸

²¹⁰ openDemocracy, While displaced Afghans starve, international help is nowhere to be found, 31 January 2022, [url](#)

²¹¹ DRC, Hunger eats away at Afghans' ability to dignified self-preservation, 24 March 2022, [url](#); openDemocracy, While displaced Afghans starve, international help is nowhere to be found, 31 January 2022, [url](#)

²¹² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 32

²¹³ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 9

²¹⁴ UNHCR, Displaced Afghan families return to destruction and hunger in Helmand, 10 January 2022, [url](#)

²¹⁵ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 33

²¹⁶ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 30

²¹⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 35

²¹⁸ WFP, Afghanistan Annual Country Report 2021, 2022, [url](#), p. 16



4.5 Situation in Kabul

Since August 2021, humanitarian food assistance operations in Kabul City suffered repeated disruptions.²¹⁹ Most recently, WFP operations were suspended between 20 March and 4 April 2022 due to security concerns but resumed in early April.²²⁰ According to IPC, in the period between March and May 2022, 30 % of the analysed urban population in Kabul experienced stress in regard to their food security (IPC Phase 2), 35 % were found to be in state of crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 15 % in an emergency situation (IPC Phase 4), while only 20 % were classified as food secure.²²¹

As depicted in Figure 4 below, the proportion of people in Kabul with malnutrition increased after the events of 15 August 2021 and declined again slightly between January 2022 and March 2022.

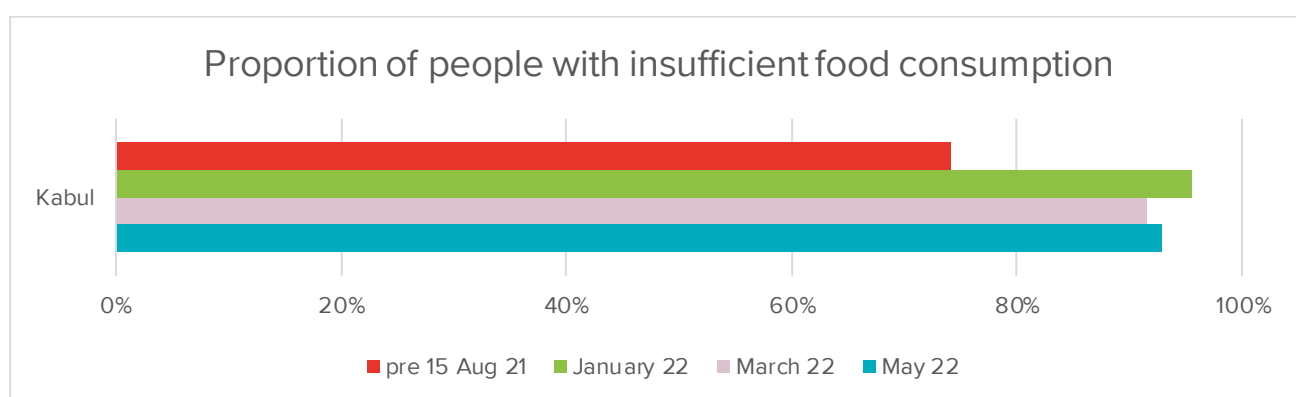


Figure 4: Proportion of people with inadequate nutrition per region, comparison between pre-August 2021 (i.e., Round 1 of the WFP Afghanistan Food Security Update covering 19 July – 15 August 2021)²²², January 2022, and March 2022, based on WFP data²²³

According to UNICEF, in Kabul wheat flour prices in early February 2022 were 81 % above the five-year average.²²⁴ According to a local media report of April 2022 quoting a resident of the city, a bag of flour was sold for AFN 2 450 [EUR 26.12]²²⁵, while people earned AFN 100 [EUR 1.06] per day.²²⁶ Figure 5 shows the price development of basic commodities at markets in Kabul City. Figure 6 displays the relation between these commodities and non-qualified, non-agricultural daily wage.

²¹⁹ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), p. 10

²²⁰ WFP, Afghanistan Situation Report: 8 April 2022, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

²²¹ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (March – November 2022), May 2022, [url](#), p. 10

²²² Pre-August data differs between WFP Round 5 and Round 7. The drafters relied on the more recent figures for the period before August (Round 7, published in April 2022).

²²³ ACCORD graphic based on WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Five January 2022 [Map], 16 February 2022, [url](#), p. 3; WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Seven March 2022 [Map], 19 April 2022 [url](#), p. 3; WFP, Afghanistan Food Security Update: Round Nine May 2022 [Map], 27 June 2022, [url](#), p. 3

²²⁴ UNICEF, Afghanistan, Humanitarian Situation Report #3, 1-28 February 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²²⁵ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

²²⁶ Kabul Times (The), Prices still high; even on the rise despite officials' efforts, Kabul citizens, 7 April 2022, [url](#)



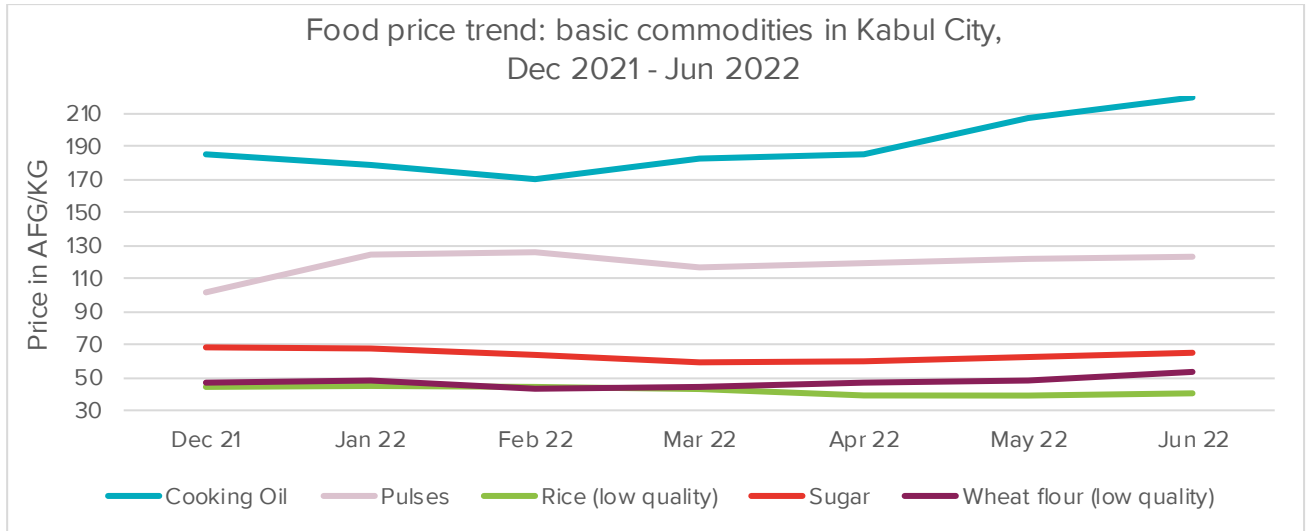


Figure 5: Development of prices of basic commodities in Kabul between December 2021 and June 2022, based on WFP data²²⁷

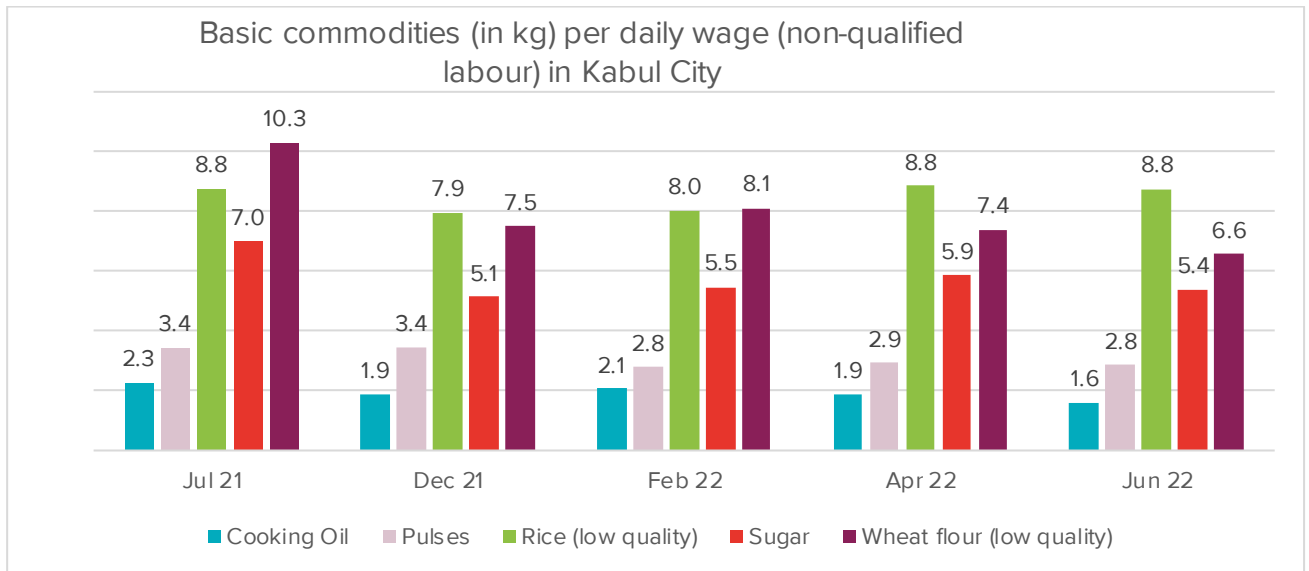


Figure 6: Ratio of basic commodities (in kg) per daily wage (non-qualified, non-agricultural labour) in Kabul between December 2021 and June 2022 and in comparison to July 2021 prior to the Taliban takeover (highlighted in different colours), based on WFP data²²⁸

²²⁷ ACCORD, chart based on WFP, Afghanistan – Food Prices, last updated 10 July 2022, [url](#)

²²⁸ ACCORD, chart based on WFP, Afghanistan – Food Prices, last updated 10 July 2022, [url](#)



5. Housing and living conditions

5.1 Countrywide trends

According to a report on NRC's operations in Afghanistan of November 2021, more than 6.8 million individuals (of an estimated population of 34 262 840)²²⁹ lived in inadequate housing conditions, such as overcrowding, rooms with low ceilings that did not allow standing up, windows without glass and limited privacy. Women, elderly people and persons with disabilities were the most affected by these adverse living conditions as they often spent more time inside the house than other population groups, as NRC noted.²³⁰ According to the Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoA), a nationwide survey among roughly 9 880 households (including IDPs, cross-border returnees and host communities) in the period August to October 2021,²³¹ slightly more than 70 % of responding households reportedly lived in partially or significantly damaged or fully destroyed shelters. In provinces that were most affected by the conflict such as Farah, Helmand and Kandahar, more than 20 % of households reportedly lived in significantly damaged shelters.²³² Overall, the 2021 WoA indicated that 31 % of households affected by conflict have lost their shelters or had them seriously damaged. UNOCHA estimated that in 2022, nearly 11 million persons would be in need of adequate shelters, heating items, blankets and adequate clothing for the winter.²³³

In a survey by Save the Children among 1 409 households of Save the Children programme participants in the provinces of Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul, the majority of respondents lived in a permanent house that they either owned (71.5 %) or rented (18.2 %). 9.8 % lived in a shelter, temporary settlement or unfinished or abandoned building. Most of the shelters were reportedly made of relatively low-quality material such as mud (76.3 %) while 14.8 % were made of better or stronger material such as bricks. Respondents to Save the Children's survey indicated that more than half of the shelters (59 %) had no separate provisions for women and men and 20.9 % of shelters had only partial separate provisions. The largest share of respondents living in shelters or temporary settlements were households of IDPs (18.1 %), undocumented returnees (11.9 %) or households headed by someone with a disability (9.9 %).²³⁴ More than half of the interviewed households reportedly used grass, animal waste and branches as an energy source for heating (50.5 %) and about two in five households (42.3 %) for cooking. The majority of respondents using this source of energy were IDP households, poor and urban households.²³⁵ Other reports

²²⁹ Taliban de facto authorities of Afghanistan, NSIA, Estimated Population of Afghanistan 2022-2023, April 2022, [url](#), p. 3

²³⁰ NRC, NRC's operations in Afghanistan, Fact Sheet November 2021, November 2021, [url](#), p. 4

²³¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 74;

²³² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 40, REACH Initiative, Whole of Afghanistan 2021, August-September 2021, Final Dataset Household-Level Analysis, n.d., [url](#)

²³³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 39

²³⁴ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 28

²³⁵ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), pp. 29-30





mentioned families heating their homes with used coal chips, wood scraps, cardboard and burnable garbage collected from the streets as they could not afford wood or heating fuel.²³⁶

NRC noted that the number of people in need of support with regard to water, sanitation and hygiene has nearly doubled in 2021, due to drought, conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has limited the population's access to these materials. Moreover, the population suffered from water scarcity, poorly managed and underfunded water facilities, and lack of financial means to pay for basic hygiene materials.²³⁷ According to a report by UNICEF of March 2022, 80 % of Afghanistan's population consumed unsafe water, and while prior to the economic crisis, about 30 % of Afghans used to buy drinking water from private vendors, this rate was steadily decreasing as people could no longer afford to do so. Moreover, half of the population lacked access to at least basic sanitation facilities and 60 % had no access to basic hygiene facilities. Nearly 30 % of households had no toilet that hygienically separated waste from human contact and nearly 11 % of the population continued to practice open defecation, as UNICEF noted.²³⁸ Most people with disabilities faced barriers in accessing WASH facilities, according to UNOCHA, as water points and latrines were either too far away or access was difficult due to slippery ramps or a lack of handrails, easy-to-use water taps or because access was not suitable to wheelchair users.²³⁹

A media report noted that the decision by the Taliban to prohibit women in Balkh and Herat provinces access to public bathhouses (hammams) sparked outrage, as many households lacked the facilities and capacity to heat large quantities of water for washing and bathing at home. In Herat city, according to the media report, only 39 % of neighbourhoods had adequate access to water and sanitation.²⁴⁰

For information on water, sanitation, and hygiene standards at Afghan schools, please see section [7.1](#).

When asked about land-related issues, respondents of a household survey²⁴¹ conducted by six humanitarian organisations in the 4th quarter of 2021 and analysed by the Protection Cluster, named rental disputes as their most pressing concern. 16 % of respondents pointed at land-related issues in their communities. Other issues like inheritance disputes and access and use issues were also mentioned. Households in Helmand, Zabul, Nangarhar, Kabul and Ghor provinces were reportedly most affected. Key informants interviewed in the same period, noted that such disputes often arose when households were not able to pay their rent on time and subsequently were facing harassment and eviction, or abusive practices (such as a

²³⁶ Washington Post (The), As Afghanistan's harsh winter sets in, many are forced to choose between food and warmth, 7 January 2022, [url](#); UNHCR, Displaced Families in Kabul caught in downward spiral, 16 December 2021, [url](#)

²³⁷ NRC, NRC's operations in Afghanistan, Fact Sheet November 2021, November 2021, [url](#), p. 4

²³⁸ UNICEF, Afghanistan WASH on the Brink, 2022, 30 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 2-4

²³⁹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 39

²⁴⁰ Guardian (The), Taliban stop Afghan women from using bathhouses in northern provinces, 7 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁴¹ The report used data collected in 12 722 household-level interviews, 589 Focus Group Discussions and 2 177 Key Informant Interviews by DRC, INTERSOS, IOM, IRC, NRC and UNHCR. Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update – Q4, 28 February 2022, [url](#), p. 4





sudden increase of rent or asking for rent during the month) by their landlords. As most households had no rental agreements, tenants were vulnerable to such practices.²⁴²

5.2 Female-headed households

UNOCHA noted in its 2022 report that women required both a *Tazkira* (identity document) and a marriage certificate to secure housing, land and property (HLP) rights and that women had a greater risk of inheritance problems if they lacked proper documentation. At the same time, according to the 2021 WoA Assessment, 31 % of households reported that no female household member had a *Tazkira*, and according to estimates, less than 5 % of land and housing tenure and ownership documents included the name of a female family member. As a result – and since a woman’s ownership of land was mainly manifested through her relationship with a male owner – women often lacked independent access to land and housing rights.²⁴³

Inheritance issues were also often mentioned in key informant interviews analysed by the Protection Cluster, noting that women were particularly affected because communities and families discriminated against their inheritance rights, while informal justice systems would be discriminatory when applying related legal frameworks. Consequently, affected households were living in permanently instable situations, which made them ‘especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation’. Such households, the Protection Cluster noted, were in need of further HLP assistance and cash for rent in case they were at risk of eviction.²⁴⁴ The threat of eviction was the second most urgent concern for female-headed households, according to findings of UNHCR, while it was the primary concern for IDP households, both male and female-headed.²⁴⁵

5.4 Returnees

In January 2022, UNOCHA noted that cross-border returnees faced significant humanitarian needs and often struggled to access basic services due to their socio-economic situation, lack of civil documentation and a shelter situation. Findings of the 2021 WoA Assessment indicated that almost two-thirds of returnees (62 %) lived in non-permanent, non-robust shelters, with half of returnee households lacking insulation and 39 % reporting leaks during heavy rain. Moreover, 48 % relied on wood and bushes and 12 % on animal dung and waste as heating sources. 63 % of cross-border returnees reported a lack of adequate heating sources and none reportedly had access to electricity. The difficult socio-economic and shelter situation also increased the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), as UNOCHA noted, with 43 % of returnee households reporting at least one place in their settlement being unsafe for girls and women.²⁴⁶

²⁴² Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update – Q4, 28 February 2022, [url](#), p. 13

²⁴³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview January 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 13-14

²⁴⁴ Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update – Q4, 28 February 2022, [url](#), p. 14

²⁴⁵ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 7

²⁴⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 33-34





In a survey by Save the Children among 1 409 households²⁴⁷, 61 % of undocumented returnees and 38 % of documented returnees reported a need for shelter.²⁴⁸

5.3 IDPs

UNOCHA noted in January 2022 that according to findings of the WoA assessment, a large number of newly displaced IDPs were living in urban areas and residing in poorly constructed houses. For more than half of IDP households (53 %), shelter was reportedly one of the top three priority needs, compared with 39 % of cross-border returnees and 26 % of host communities. 85 % of IDPs reported at least one shelter issue, such as leaks during heavy rain, lack of insulation, and others.²⁴⁹

Save the Children noted in a survey among 1 409 households²⁵⁰ by the end of 2021 that 39.2 % of IDP households stated to be in need of shelter.²⁵¹

According to data collected by IOM across the country in the period November to December 2021 from 13 187 settlements, almost two-thirds of all IDPs who were displaced in the period 2012 to 2021, were living in a house they either owned (30 %) or rented (32 %). More than a third (37 %) of IDPs lived with a host family, 1 % lived in a tent and less than 1 % in open air. The largest number of IDPs living in informal settlements (166 857 individuals) was living in Khost province. Overall, about 9 % of IDPs across the country lived in informal settlements, and almost two-thirds of all IDPs remained within their province of origin, according to IOM.²⁵²

According to findings of UNHCR's 2021 Rapid Assessment Analysis, 84 % of IDPs indicated that they were renting shelters. UNHCR pointed to the fact that the presence of IDPs who were renting shelters led to an increase in rental prices and contributed to community tensions, noting that also 20 % of host community members said they were living in rented shelters. In this context, the primary concern named by IDP households was the threat of being evicted in case of inability to pay rent.²⁵³ Concerns with regard to eviction were also mentioned in several other reports, linked to the fact that many displaced households were living in insecure accommodation arrangements such as having only verbal or no rental

²⁴⁷ Please note that the surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

²⁴⁸ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 32

²⁴⁹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 31

²⁵⁰ The surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

²⁵¹ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 32

²⁵² IOM, DTM Afghanistan, Baseline Mobility Assessment Summary Results Round 14 November-December 2021, 2 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 1, 5-6

²⁵³ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 7





agreements,²⁵⁴ living in ‘illegally occupied displacement sites’,²⁵⁵ or informal sites and settlements²⁵⁶.

Another shelter-related issue mentioned by UNHCR’s 2021 Rapid Assessment Analysis was overcrowding (see also above, section [5.1](#)), which affected IDP and host communities likewise. 70 % of all households assessed had between 1 and 10 persons in their household, while 27 % had between 11 and 20 household members and 3 % of households included 21 or more persons. Moreover, 49 % of IDP households indicated that they lived in ‘shelters in remote locations with no access to basic services’ and 34 % reportedly had no water source in less than 500 metres distance.²⁵⁷ UNOCHA equally noted that IDP households were disproportionately in need of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. 79 % of newly displaced households reported limited access to water, which would cover only the needs for drinking, washing and handwashing.²⁵⁸ IDP households were slightly more in need of access to sufficient handwashing facilities (including soap and sufficient water) than non-displaced households (with 34 % of IDP and 32 % of non-displaced households being in ‘critical’ need). Similarly, 26 % of IDP households (compared with 19 % of non-displaced ones) were in critical need of access to functional and improved (e.g., including flush or covered pit latrines) sanitation facilities.²⁵⁹

5.5 Situation in Kabul

A survey conducted for the Austrian BFA Staatendokumentation of January 2022 indicated that brick-and-mortar houses or mudbrick houses were the most common dwellings in Kabul city with only a small number of the population living in an apartment, tent or shack. Renting or leasing accommodation was found to be more common than owning one’s home and for many households the monthly costs for accommodation were in the range of AFN 5 000 [EUR 53.30]²⁶⁰ to AFN 10 000 [EUR 106.62], or less than AFN 5 000 [EUR 53.30], while only a few paid between AFN 10 000 [EUR 106.62] and AFN 20 000 [EUR 213.23].²⁶¹

According to a brief report by IOM of April 2022, based on information from local real estate agents and house owners, the average monthly rent for a three-bedroom apartment in Kabul city was USD 120 to USD 150 (EUR 110.19 to EUR 137.74)²⁶², which represented a decrease in price (USD 250 to USD 300 and EUR 229.57–EUR 275.48, respectively) compared to the past. Monthly rent for a simple house with three bedrooms in the suburbs of Kabul was about

²⁵⁴ Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update – Q4, 28 February 2022, [url](#), pp. 13-14; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 14

²⁵⁵ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 – Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 35

²⁵⁶ CCCM and Protection Clusters Afghanistan, Joint-Advocacy Briefing Note From The Shelter/NFI, CCCM And Protection Clusters Afghanistan Pledging Conference, 31 March 2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 7

²⁵⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 31

²⁵⁹ REACH Initiative, Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) Key Sectoral Findings, October 2021, 23 December 2021, [url](#), p. 8

²⁶⁰ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 July 2022

²⁶¹ Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Dossier Afghanistan Socio-Economic Survey 2021, 12 January 2022, [url](#), p. 9

²⁶² Exchange rates in this paragraph are as indicated in the source.





USD 100 [EUR 91.83].²⁶³ Similarly, local media quoted property dealers in Kabul saying that house rents, prices and mortgages had fallen by more than 50 % since the Taliban takeover of control in mid-August 2021. Even with lower prices, however, people were reluctant to invest money in a house or could not afford it, and some real estate agents were expressing fears that they might have to close their business. Some residents, however, were reportedly happy about the decline in prices and rents.²⁶⁴

Rukhshana Media, an Afghan online news agency focusing on women's issues, reported that female students in Kabul faced problems with finding rooms and apartments, as landlords were reluctant to rent them out to women for fear of being punished by the Taliban.²⁶⁵

UNOCHA noted that since the Taliban takeover of Kabul in mid-August 2021, the quality and quantity of drinking water supply had considerably deteriorated in cities across the country. In several cities across the country, including Kabul, less than 20 % of the urban population had access to piped water, after the Afghan Urban Water Supply and Sewerage State Owned Corporation (UWASS SoC) slowed down or ceased water supply due to financial and bureaucratic troubles.²⁶⁶ A survey conducted for the Austrian BFA Staatendokumentation of January 2022 indicated that there were households which always had access to clean drinking water, from a variety of sources, including piped water, piped on premise, public tap, tube well or borewell, dug well, water tanker, and bottled water. A small number of households had never access to clean drinking water, while some households hardly ever or only sometimes had access to it.²⁶⁷

In Kabul province, 20.8 % of respondents in a survey conducted by Save the Children at the end of 2021 among 1 409 households²⁶⁸ indicated that they did not have access to sufficient drinking water (with no mention of possible sources), while 27.2 % reportedly had no access to a stable supply of water for domestic use. Almost three-quarters of respondents (72.3 %) in Kabul province noted that water availability in 2021 was worse than the previous year.²⁶⁹ With regard to sanitation facilities, 4.5 % reported that they did not have a functional latrine in the house.²⁷⁰

UWASS SoC estimated that due to the poor state of urban water networks and the basic equipment in the water pumping stations and storage systems, system water loss amounted to about 50-60 %. In addition, according to UNOCHA, aquifers in central Afghanistan were

²⁶³ IOM, Information on the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 7

²⁶⁴ Pajhwok Afghan News, Rents, prices of residential buildings drop by 50pc in Kabul, 20 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ Rukhshana Media, Landlords refuse to rent apartments to female university students in Kabul, 19 March 2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 38

²⁶⁷ Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Dossier Afghanistan Socio-Economic Survey 2021, 12 January 2022, [url](#), p. 34

²⁶⁸ Please note that the surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

²⁶⁹ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), pp. 34-35

²⁷⁰ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 37





severely affected by the drought and subsequent water scarcity crisis and 45 % of respondents in a June 2021 UNICEF monitoring analysis reported an increase in turbidity and salinity in drinking water in Kabul province. Groundwater levels had reportedly lowered continually from 8 to 45 metres since 2003, with the quality and quantity of water used for drinking and domestic use deteriorating to the extent that first cases of cholera were reported since 2016.²⁷¹

A survey by the Austrian BFA Staatendokumentation indicated that there were households in Kabul city with uninterrupted access to electricity and others with interrupted access. Few, if any, households never had access to electricity.²⁷² In Kabul province, according to a survey conducted by Save the Children at the end of 2021 among 1 409 households²⁷³, 19.3 % of households were reportedly using grass, animals waste and branches as heating energy, and almost one third (31.2 %) used these materials also for heating.²⁷⁴ In January 2022, local media reported on a blackout in Kabul due to a decrease in imports of energy from Uzbekistan, allegedly due to technical problems,²⁷⁵ while in April 2022, the bombing of two pylons in Parwan province reportedly caused blackouts in 11 provinces, including Kabul.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 38

²⁷² Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Dossier Afghanistan Socio-Economic Survey 2021, 12 January 2022, [url](#), p. 9

²⁷³ Please note that the surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

²⁷⁴ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 29

²⁷⁵ Khaama Press, Kabul in Blackout, Uzbekistan's electricity to Afghanistan decreased by 60 %, 13 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ New Arab (The), Millions in Afghanistan will face power cuts ahead of Eid al-Fitr, following tower explosions, 30 April 2022, [url](#)



6. Healthcare

6.1 State of the national health system after the Taliban takeover

Health care services in the country were severely disrupted after mid-August 2021 by the freezing of World Bank funding for the so-called Sehatmandi Project. The project provided support for quality health care, nutrition and family planning services across the country and, according to the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), involved more than 20 000 health workers in 2 309 health facilities.²⁷⁷ Eventually, WHO and UNICEF continued to support the project with funding from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund²⁷⁸ and – for the period from February to June 2022 – from the World Bank-led Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.²⁷⁹

The health system continued to face shortages of supplies, fuel, and money to pay health workers' salaries. WHO noted that over 1 200 health facilities and more than 11 000 health workers were not covered through current support.²⁸⁰ Similarly, field reports indicated that health facilities were lacking medical supplies and equipment, while needs were high, as the WHO-led Health Cluster Afghanistan noted in April 2022.²⁸¹ Media and international organisations such as Human Rights Watch and the ICRC reported on a lack of adequate medicines and funds to pay for salaries,²⁸² as well as a lack of food supplies for patients and money to buy fuel for generators.²⁸³

Moreover, the country is dealing with several disease outbreaks, including COVID-19, measles, acute watery diarrhoea (AWD), dengue fever, malaria,²⁸⁴ leishmaniasis,²⁸⁵ and cholera. AWD was the second biggest cause of death in the country overall, as IFRC noted in June 2022.²⁸⁶ As of March 2022, more than 5 000 cases of AWD had been registered in five provinces including Kabul and neighbouring areas, where the outbreak started in summer 2021.²⁸⁷ As of April 2022, there have been 178 154 confirmed cases of COVID-19 (overall positivity of 31.3 %) and 7 676 associated deaths (case fatality ratio of 4.30 %) since February 2020, according to

²⁷⁷ IFRC, Operation Update Report Afghanistan: Humanitarian Crises, 3 June 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁷⁸ For the period November 2021 to January 2022.

²⁷⁹ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 14, Reporting period: 1-15 March 2022, 21 March 2022, [url](#), p. 3

²⁸⁰ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 14, Reporting period: 1-15 March 2022, 21 March 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁸¹ WHO, Health Cluster Afghanistan, Health Cluster Bulletin April 2022, 22 May 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁸² HRW, Afghans Dying from Lack of Medicine, 9 May 2022, [url](#); ICRC, Afghanistan, ICRC scales up support to prevent the collapse of health care, 21 February 2022, [url](#); DW, Afghan health faces collapse amid economic crisis, 24 December 2021, [url](#)

²⁸³ ICRC, Afghanistan, ICRC scales up support to prevent the collapse of health care, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 14, Reporting period: 1-15 March 2022, 21 March 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁸⁵ US, CDC, FAQs for Health Care Providers Leishmaniasis in Afghan Evacuees, n.d., [url](#), p. 1

²⁸⁶ IFRC, Operation Update Report Afghanistan: Humanitarian Crises, 3 June 2022, [url](#), pp. 2-3

²⁸⁷ UNICEF, Afghanistan WASH on the Brink, 2022, 30 March 2022, [url](#), p. 4



WHO,²⁸⁸ although numbers were likely higher.²⁸⁹ At the same time, about 4.6 million people have been fully vaccinated and about 1.3 million people partially vaccinated. WHO's support of health facilities in the country included nine COVID-19 hospitals in eight provinces across the country.²⁹⁰ For more information on the COVID-19 situation in Afghanistan, please see section 1.3 of this report.

In February 2022, gunmen reportedly killed seven members of polio vaccination teams in three separate incidents in Kunduz and Takhar province, leading the UN to suspend the vaccination campaign in these provinces.²⁹¹

6.1.1 WASH and Energy

UNICEF noted in March 2022, that around 35 % of healthcare facilities lacked access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. Since the country's health system was at the same time dealing with outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea, malnutrition and COVID-19, the lack of sufficient basic WASH facilities posed the risk that health facilities were becoming points of infection and reinfection. Moreover, one third of health facilities lack access to at least basic drinking water supply.²⁹² According to a WHO report on the operational status of health facilities across Afghanistan published in March 2022, water was available at 79 % of health facilities, with the main sources being protected dug wells, tube wells or boreholes, piped supply networks or surface water. 74 % of health institutions had sanitation facilities with or without water, such as pit latrines. More than 8 in 10 health facilities (85%) had electricity available.²⁹³ According to a media report from February 2022, hospitals in northern Afghanistan were affected by power cuts reportedly due to technical problems in neighbouring Uzbekistan - one of the country's electricity suppliers -, leaving patients in the cold and forcing doctors to manage work with a fuel-run generator.²⁹⁴

6.2 Access to basic health care, treatment and medication

IOM Germany noted in a 2021 report that public health insurance in Afghanistan did not exist, while private insurance companies charged comparatively high fees, which a large majority of the population could not afford. Patients will usually be advised to buy medicines privately, except in case of emergencies.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁸ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 16, Reporting period: March-April 2022, 15 May 2022, [url](#), p. 8

²⁸⁹ CSIS, A Conversation with Paul Spiegel on the Afghan Healthcare System, 3 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁹⁰ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 16, Reporting period: March-April 2022, 15 May 2022, [url](#), p. 2, 8

²⁹¹ Insecurity Insight, Attacks on Health Care, Bi-Monthly News Brief, 23 February – 8 March 2022, 22 March 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁹² UNICEF, Afghanistan WASH on the Brink, 2022, 30 March 2022, [url](#), p. 2, 4

²⁹³ WHO, HeRAMS Afghanistan Baseline Report 2022. Operational Status of the health system: A comprehensive mapping of the operational status of health facilities, March 2022, 29 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 20, 22, 23, 25, 37, 39

²⁹⁴ National (The), Afghanistan's power dependency takes its toll on hospitals, 1 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ IOM Germany, Afghanistan Country Fact Sheet 2021, 2021, [url](#), pp. 4-5





About 81 % of households interviewed for the World Bank's Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey (AWMS) in the period October to December 2021 reported having at least one household member who needed medical help in the last 30 days. Of these, more than 90 % were able to obtain it either from a public or a private provider, regardless of whether they were men or women or living in a rural or urban setting, although public providers – e.g., public hospitals, basic or community health clinics - were slightly more often attended in rural areas.²⁹⁶ According to the 2021 WoA Assessment, more than eight in ten households (81 %) reported access to an active health care centre in or close to their village in the three months prior to data collection and only 19 % responded that they did not have access. However, 23 % noted that specific treatments or medication was not available and 18 % could not afford treatment.²⁹⁷ Similarly, the ICRC noted that sometimes, families of a patient could not afford the accommodation or medicine that was not provided for free by the hospital, and sometimes patients were discharged without treatment.²⁹⁸ In a survey conducted by Save the Children among 1 409 households²⁹⁹ at the end of 2021, the main reason given for not being able to receive medical help was the respondents' inability to pay the costs (58.1 %). Other reasons included the health facility being too far away (45 %), security issues (35.1 %) and transportation costs (21.5 %).³⁰⁰

19 % of respondents to the 2021 WoA Assessment reported that there was no functional health facility near their home. Slightly over a quarter (26 %) of households noted that emergency care was not available within 24 hours of serious injuries like, for example, a broken bone or loss of limb. On settlement level (and based on key informant interviews), 36 % of settlements assessed reported no access to a health care facility in the three months prior to data collection. The provinces with the highest number of settlements reporting no access to a health care facility were Nuristan (84 %)³⁰¹, Badghis (70 %) and Samangan (60 %) provinces. Slightly more than half of settlements assessed (51 %) reported that their closest health facility could be reached within an hour by the majority of the population and by regular mode of transport. 32 % of settlements reported that it would take between one and three hours to reach the closest health facility and 17 % would need more than 3 hours.³⁰²

More than half (53.9 %) of respondents to Save the Children's survey³⁰³ reported that they needed 30 minutes or more to reach the nearest health facility, while 32.7 % reportedly

²⁹⁶ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey Round 1, March 2022, 15 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 13-14

²⁹⁷ REACH Initiative, Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) Key Sectoral Findings, October 2021, 23 December 2021, [url](#), p. 5

²⁹⁸ ICRC, Afghanistan, ICRC scales up support to prevent the collapse of health care, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ The surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

³⁰⁰ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 45

³⁰¹ AAN described Nuristan in 2018 as 'one of the most remote, under-served and unknown provinces' where 'services and social infrastructure are 'patchy and low-level'. AAN, The 2018 Election Observed (5) in Nuristan: Disfranchisement and lack of data, 17 November 2018, [url](#)

³⁰² REACH Initiative, Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) Key Sectoral Findings, October 2021, 23 December 2021, [url](#), pp. 4-5

³⁰³ The surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar





needed 30 to 60 minutes and 21.2 % more than an hour. 23.6 % of respondents noted that basic health services were not available at health facilities. Of those services that were available, the ones most frequently mentioned were routine immunisation (EPI) services (mentioned by 60.7 % of respondents), child health services (55.9 %), treatment of malnutrition (40.2 %). More than half (56.9 %) of respondents noted the availability of a female doctor or midwife. About one third (36.5 %) reported that some medication was available free of charge, and only 10.9 % reported the availability of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services.³⁰⁴ The Health Cluster indicated that several areas in the country were underserved and in need of Primary Health Care (PHC) services and health cluster partners had reportedly been urged to sustain critical life-saving health services in these areas and remote locations. A UNICEF assessment in the context of a countrywide measles outbreak reportedly indicated that adequate stocks of medicines for treatment were available, however, provincial hospitals were lacking beds and space for the clinical management of cases.³⁰⁵

6.3 Access to healthcare for women, maternal healthcare, and child healthcare

As of April 2022, the infant mortality rate was 46.5 per 1 000 live births (by comparison, the infant mortality rate in the EU was 3.4 deaths per 1 000 live births in 2019)³⁰⁶, and projected maternal mortality rate was 638 deaths per 100 000 births, according to the Health Cluster Afghanistan. Pregnant women were in need of antenatal and postnatal care as well as services of access to trained birth attendants. The Health Cluster Afghanistan estimated in April 2022 that about 20% of deliveries and 20% of new-born children would require life-saving emergency interventions.³⁰⁷ The United Nation's Population Fund noted in March 2022, that 'every two hours an Afghan woman dies from childbirth or pregnancy complications'.³⁰⁸

Women with more complex health needs, such as pregnant women, have reportedly been facing major issues with regard to access to health care, including fear and insecurity, mobility restrictions due to the need to be accompanied in public by a *mahram*³⁰⁹ or the need to travel long distances to reach health services. Moreover, women lacked sufficient means of safe transportation and there was a shortage of trained female personnel, as UN Women noted in December 2021.³¹⁰ Similarly, USDOS stated in its 2021 Country Report on Human Rights that some social norms and traditions such as home births or the need for women to have male

and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

³⁰⁴ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), pp. 42-43

³⁰⁵ WHO, Health Cluster Afghanistan, Health Cluster Bulletin April 2022, 22 May 2022, [url](#), pp. 2, 8

³⁰⁶ EU, Eurostat, Infant mortality sharply declined over the past decades, 4 June 2021, [url](#)

³⁰⁷ WHO, Health Cluster Afghanistan, Health Cluster Bulletin April 2022, 22 May 2022, [url](#), p. 2

³⁰⁸ UNFPA, Midwives ensure life-saving reproductive health care for women returning to Afghanistan, 31 March 2022, [url](#)

³⁰⁹ Defined as a 'close male relative: either a husband, or a male relative' whom a woman 'cannot marry, such as a brother, father, son or uncle'. AAN, "We need to breathe too": Women across Afghanistan navigate the Taliban's hijab ruling, 1 June 2022, [url](#)

³¹⁰ UN Women, Gender Alert No. 1, Women's Rights in Afghanistan: Where are we now?, December 2021, 7 December 2021, [url](#), p. 6



company if they want to leave the house, had a negative impact on women's reproductive health, including insufficient care before and after giving birth as well as emergency obstetric care. Moreover, access to maternal health care services was restricted by a limited number of female health workers, including trained birth attendants. Their number further decreased after the Taliban takeover, since many women were afraid to return to work, although the Taliban had allowed female medical personnel to continue working.³¹¹ WHO noted in March 2022, that for a considerable part of the vulnerable population maternal and child health services were not easily accessible, including because of the country's weak referral system and the record level of malnutrition, which made the population more susceptible to illness and diseases such as measles.³¹²

MSF has been operating a specialised maternity hospital in Khost since 2012, with an almost entirely female medical staff, noting this was important to ensure separation of the sexes and to make patients and their families feel at ease.³¹³ Similarly, the Guardian reported in May 2022 on several hospitals in Kabul with an exclusively female staff.³¹⁴ An article for the Fuller Project quoted health workers from Ghazni district describing an incident where two unaccompanied women were reportedly forced out of a clinic by the Taliban. In another incident, a midwife was reportedly detained, and medical staff of the clinic was facing prosecution for having attended a single woman giving birth. Taliban reportedly denied such incidents did happen.³¹⁵ In May 2022, local media quoted a *de facto* deputy minister of the *de facto* Ministry of Public Health that more than 38 000 midwives were working in the country's health institutions. He reportedly acknowledged a shortage of midwives and the necessity of higher education in the field of midwifery.³¹⁶

6.4 Access to healthcare for IDPs

According to a report by the Protection Cluster of March 2022, based on an analysis of household surveys, 65 % of IDPs indicated that they were not able to access services upon arrival at their displacement location, specifically health and livelihood services. The main reasons for this inability were reportedly a lack of information on available services and the necessary documentation to get access to services. 9 % of IDPs planned to integrate into the existing community in order to have access to services and infrastructure.³¹⁷ UNOCHA noted in its 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview that IDPs and returnees were particularly affected by their lack of official identity documentation (*Tazkira*), as it prevented them from getting access to the few existing *de facto* government services,³¹⁸ and USDOS indicated that especially female-headed IDP households were facing difficulties obtaining basic services for this

³¹¹ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 – Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 49

³¹² WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 14, Reporting period: 1-15 March 2022, 21 March 2022, [url](#), p. 2

³¹³ MSF, A 'hospital of women, for women', 16 December 2021, [url](#); MSF, Expanding access to urgently needed maternal health care in Afghanistan, 16 December 2021, [url](#)

³¹⁴ Guardian (The), 'The Taliban know they need us': the Afghan hospitals run by women, 9 May 2022, [url](#)

³¹⁵ Nader, Z. and Amini, N., The Taliban are harming Afghan women's health, The Fuller Project, 2 March 2022, [url](#)

³¹⁶ TOLONews, Health Ministry pledges to hire more midwives, 16 May 2022, [url](#)

³¹⁷ Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update – Q4, 28 February 2022, [url](#), p. 15

³¹⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 13



reason.³¹⁹ According to 2021 WoA Assessment data, 63 % of displaced households reported that some of their members did not have a Tazkira, while 2 % of households reported that none of their members had such official identity documentation.³²⁰ UNHCR's 2021 Rapid Assessment Analysis noted that both, IDPs and IDP returnees, named costs of medicines, care, and treatment as well as costs of transport as the main obstacles for accessing health care. Lack of health care facilities or long travel times to reach such facilities were also – although significantly less frequently – mentioned.³²¹

6.5 Access to healthcare for returnees

UNOCHA noted that based on findings of the 2021 WoA Assessment a substantial number of cross-border returnees might have 'greater health-related needs' than other population groups. Almost two thirds (63 %) of interviewed cross-border households reportedly indicated health care was among their top three priority needs, in comparison to 48 % of IDP households and 54 % of host community households. At the same time, cross-border returnee households reportedly spent considerably more money on health care than either IDP or host households. Moreover, cross-border returnees faced difficulties in accessing health and nutrition services, with 78 % stating that they did not have access to nutrition services in the three months prior to the assessment mainly because such services were not available. UNOCHA noted that in addition to food needs – which were reported by 88 % of cross-border returnees -, undocumented returnees and deportees faced additional protection and assistance needs, as well as critical health needs, including for injuries sustained when trying to cross the border and deprivation of basic services, violence and coercion such as forced recruitment – factors which were increasing mental health needs.³²² However, while in the context of the 2021 WoA Assessment 72 % of cross-border returnee households reported a behavioural change in at least one household member in the year prior to data collection (the share was even higher among IDPs and host communities, with 75 % and 74 %, respectively),³²³ 82 % of cross-border returnee households were not aware of any 'mental health and psychological support services (MHPSS) in or near their community'.³²⁴

IOM Germany noted in a 2021 report that for access to medical facilities, returnees needed to present their national identity documentation (*Tazkira*) to a hospital, where they would 'get registered and referred to the respective doctor'. The fee for a doctor's visit was AFN 20 [EUR 0.2]³²⁵ in public and AFN 100 [EUR 1.06] to 1 500 [EUR 16] in private hospitals; fees for hospitalisation amounted to AFN 1 000 [EUR 10.66] to 1 500 [EUR 16] per night.³²⁶

³¹⁹ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 – Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 35

³²⁰ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 13

³²¹ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 7

³²² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 33-34

³²³ REACH Initiative, Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) Key Sectoral Findings, October 2021, 23 December 2021, [url](#), p. 5

³²⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 34

³²⁵ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 4 July 2022

³²⁶ IOM Germany, Afghanistan Country Fact Sheet 2021, 2021, [url](#), pp. 4-5





6.6 Situation in Kabul

AP reported in February 2022 that the Afghan Japan Communicable Disease Hospital in Kabul is the only hospital offering COVID-19 treatment. The hospital's director was quoted saying that the hospital lacked everything from oxygen to medicine supplies.³²⁷ Al Jazeera quoted the hospital's logistics manager that as of December 2021 the hospital's oxygen production plant had not been working for several months as the hospital lacked the fuel for the generators.³²⁸ AP quoted the head of the intensive care unit saying that they needed more ventilators as well as staff trained to use them. Most of the staff reportedly continued to work despite not having received salaries for several months. Since the establishment of the *de facto* authorities, hospital staff had reportedly received their salaries just once.³²⁹ WHO reported in April 2022 that funding had been granted to another COVID-19 hospital in Kabul, that hadn't been fully operational following the Taliban takeover.³³⁰ In some hospitals, including in hospitals in Kabul, Taliban *mullahs* (Islamic religious leader or teacher)³³¹ have reportedly taken the place of health officials to manage the facilities,³³² and in some cases, there were reportedly issues about their conduct, as medical staff was threatened and assaulted.³³³

WHO reported in April 2022 that Kabul was among the five provinces most affected by a recent measles outbreak. Similarly, in relation to an outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD), Kabul city and Sorobi district were the most affected areas compared to other affected provinces.³³⁴ WHO was also supporting the National Infectious Disease Hospital in Kabul by providing food for patients, heating system, maintenance of ambulances, waste management, as well as essential drugs and supplies.³³⁵

More specific information on the situation in Kabul could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

³²⁷ AP, New COVID surge batters Afghanistan's crumbling health care, 9 February 2022, [url](#)

³²⁸ Al Jazeera, Afghanistan healthcare 'on brink of collapse' amid Omicron scare, 16 December 2021, [url](#)

³²⁹ AP, New COVID surge batters Afghanistan's crumbling health care, 9 February 2022, [url](#)

³³⁰ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 15, Reporting period: 15-31 March 2022, 13 April 2022, [url](#), p. 7

³³¹ Cambridge Dictionary, Definition: Mullah, 2014, [url](#)

³³² CSIS, A Conversation with Paul Spiegel on the Afghan Healthcare System, 3 January 2022, [url](#); Economist (The), On life support; Afghanistan's health-care system is crumbling, 19 December 2021, [url](#)

³³³ CSIS, A Conversation with Paul Spiegel on the Afghan Healthcare System, 3 January 2022, [url](#)

³³⁴ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 16, Reporting period: March-April 2022, 15 May 2022, [url](#), pp. 6-7

³³⁵ WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 15, Reporting period: 15-31 March 2022, 13 April 2022, [url](#), p. 5





7. Education

7.1 State of the national education system after the Taliban takeover

Until mid-August 2021, 49 % of Afghanistan's education expenses were financed through external aid, which was largely suspended after the Taliban's take of control, as the Afghanistan Education Cluster noted in February 2022. Girls enrolled in secondary schools and female teachers had been requested by the Taliban to stay at home until a decision had been made on how the girls' education could be continued in accordance with the *de facto* leadership's norms and values. Moreover, the higher education system required reorganisation at universities due to the newly introduced gender segregation. Salaries of professors had been cut by 40 % on average without benefits due to the economic crisis,³³⁶ and a significant number of university staff including highly qualified professors had left or fled from the country following the Taliban's return to power.³³⁷ Local media reported on the shortage of teachers and textbooks in several provinces.³³⁸ The *de facto* Ministry of Education announced in April 2022 that it would hire 70 000 teachers in the next one or two years, but that in the meantime part-time teachers would be hired temporarily.³³⁹ UNICEF announced in February 2022 that it would pay an EU-funded monthly emergency stipend of USD 100 [EUR 95]³⁴⁰ for the months of January and February 2022 to about 194 000 primary and secondary school teachers, who had not received salaries for several months.³⁴¹ The Afghan *de facto* Ministry of Education declared that for teachers with a salary over USD 100 [EUR 95], the *de facto* ministry would cover the remaining costs.³⁴² In April 2022, UNICEF noted that it paid a second round of monthly cash support of USD 100 [EUR 95] to teachers who had problems to access their bank account or did not have an account. UNICEF expected that round to be completed in May 2022.³⁴³

In an interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, an independent Afghan news agency, in February 2022, the director of the Afghan Private Schools Union (APSU) noted that 200 of the overall 3 000 private schools across the country had closed since the Taliban takeover in mid-August 2021 for economic reasons. The number of students in the same period had declined by 30 %,

³³⁶ Afghanistan Education Cluster, Afghanistan Education Sector Transitional Framework, 28 February 2022, 12 May 2022, [url](#), pp. 12-13

³³⁷ Afghanistan Education Cluster, Afghanistan Education Sector Transitional Framework, 28 February 2022, 12 May 2022, [url](#), p. 13; Pajhwok Afghan News, Herat University students concerned as teachers flee abroad, 9 March 2022, [url](#)

³³⁸ TOLONews, Schools Faces Shortage of Teachers, Textbooks, Uniforms, 5 June 2022, [url](#); Pajhwok Afghan News, More than 800 teachers being recruited in Logar, 30 May 2022, [url](#); Pajhwok Afghan News, Maidan Wardak needs 1144 more teachers: Education director, 12 April 2022, [url](#); Pajhwok Afghan News, Kapisa school need 1,338 more teachers, 23 March 2022, [url](#)

³³⁹ Pajhwok Afghan News, About 70,000 more teachers need to be hired: MoE, 17 April 2022, [url](#)

³⁴⁰ Exchange rates in this paragraph from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 4 July 2022

³⁴¹ UNICEF, UNICEF provides support to all public school teachers in Afghanistan for 2 months, 20 February 2022, [url](#)

³⁴² TOLONews, MoE: UNICEF to Pay Salaries of Nearly 200,000 Teachers, 20 February 2022, [url](#)

³⁴³ UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report # 5, 1-30 April 2022, 26 May 2022, [url](#), p. 3





particularly after the Taliban's decision to keep girls' schools closed. According to the director, most of the private schools had separate branches for boys and for girls. Overall, 750 000 students were enrolled in private schools and about 70 000 to 80 000 teachers were employed, with 50 000 among them women. He reportedly also noted that the *de facto* government charged tax on private schools and that the private sector paid more than USD 100 million [EUR 95 million]³⁴⁴ in taxes to the *de facto* government.³⁴⁵

According to local media reports from Daikundi and Maidan Wardak provinces, a considerable part of the provinces' schools was without buildings, forcing students to have classes in open air,³⁴⁶ or in a tent³⁴⁷. UNICEF noted in a report of March 2022, that more than 9 out of 10 schools (94 %) did not have at least basic handwashing facilities,³⁴⁸ nearly 40 % had no access to drinking water and the other 60 % had only access to bacteriologically contaminated water. A quarter of schools had no access to basic sanitation facilities and over 90 % had not access to basic hygiene facilities, according to UNICEF. The organisation noted that lack of access to such facilities disrupted children's education, in particular that of girls. Almost one third of girls reportedly did not come to class during menstruation because their schools lacked menstrual hygiene facilities.³⁴⁹

7.2 Access to basic education, secondary education, and higher education

Secondary education for girls was *de facto* banned after the Taliban announced in September 2021 that all male pupils and schoolteachers had to be present at schools but did not mention girls and female teachers. This *de facto* ban was, however, not applied to the same extent everywhere in the country and many secondary schools for girls were allowed to keep operating due to the support of local Taliban leaders or pressure by parents or teachers, as researcher Ashley Jackson noted in a report for the Afghan Analysts Network in March 2022. Furthermore, the general opening of secondary schools for girls at the beginning of the new school year on 23 March 2022, that had been widely expected, was cancelled by the Taliban on the day itself, citing lack of teachers, inappropriate school uniforms and, eventually, the need for a plan for girls' higher education 'in accordance with sharia and Afghan culture'. According to Jackson, the decision and surrounding circumstances indicated internal disagreements among the Taliban on the matter.³⁵⁰ According to a joint report by UNICEF, Save the Children and the Education Cluster, the ban affected 1.1 million girls at the secondary school level.³⁵¹ However, in nine provinces across the country, some schools were open for girls at secondary level, reportedly due to pressure from local communities, as UNICEF noted in April 2022. According to estimates, as of April 2022, about 70 % of all children were back in

³⁴⁴ Exchange rate from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 4 July 2022.

³⁴⁵ Pajhwok Afghan News, Number of private schools' students declines by 30pc, 7 April 2022, [url](#)

³⁴⁶ Pajhwok Afghan News, Half of Daikundi schools without buildings, 14 April 2022, [url](#)

³⁴⁷ Pajhwok Afghan News, Maidan Wardak needs 1144 more teachers: Education director, 12 April 2022, [url](#)

³⁴⁸ UNICEF, Afghanistan WASH on the Brink, 2022, 30 March 2022, [url](#), p. 2

³⁴⁹ UNICEF, Afghanistan WASH on the Brink, 2022, 30 March 2022, [url](#), p. 5

³⁵⁰ Jackson, A., The Ban on Older Girls' Education: Taleban conservatives ascendant and a leadership in disarray, AAN, 29 March 2022, [url](#)

³⁵¹ UNICEF et al., Afghanistan: Back to School. Situation Update, April 2022, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 2





primary school and about 80 % of the boys in secondary education. In general, UNICEF noted, the key factor for children leaving school before they finished their education was poverty.³⁵²

More than one in five households (22.3 %) interviewed for Save the Children's survey among 1 409 households³⁵³ at the end of 2021 indicated that they had decreased expenditures on education and health to cope with the difficult economic situation. 12.8 % reported that they had taken their children out of school for this reason.³⁵⁴ With regard to girls, security concerns were named by more than half of interviewed households (50.5 %, compared to 44.6 % with boys), security concerns were the main reason for not sending girls to school, compared to 44.6 % with regard to boys. High school costs were an issue for 37.3 % of households with regard to girls, and for 40.3 % of households with regard to boys. Expensive transportation to school was also named by 15.3 % (girls) and 17.1 % (boys) of households respectively. Other reasons indicated by households why they would not send girls to school were a lack of (female) teachers (39.4 %) and family restrictions or cultural barriers (32.2%). These two issues were significantly less important in the case of boys (14.3 % and 14.1 % respectively). A larger share of households said they would not send boys to school as they needed to work or help at home (30.5 %), or because no importance was given to education (24.7 %); with regard to girls, these reasons were mentioned less frequently (20.8 % and 20.5 %, respectively).³⁵⁵

Human Rights Watch quoted a teacher from a school in Balkh province – one of the few provinces where girls' secondary schools have continued to operate even after the Taliban takeover – that dress codes for women were getting increasingly harsh and teachers or students not complying with the regulations were dismissed or expelled immediately.³⁵⁶ Moreover, the need to buy new uniforms reportedly put additional financial strain on families already struggling with the difficult economic situation. Nevertheless, hundreds of families have reportedly moved to Balkh and other provinces, or to neighbouring Iran, so that their daughters could continue their education.³⁵⁷ Local and international media reported on a 'mobile school and mobile library' project by an Afghan NGO in Kandahar province, where boys and girls would be instructed separately in locally set up classrooms.³⁵⁸

Al Jazeera reported that the country's main universities reopened in February 2022 with gender-segregated classes and a strict dress-code for women, pressing them to wear a black *abaya*³⁵⁹ to cover their bodies and a *hijab* (a Muslim head covering)³⁶⁰ on their heads. Only

³⁵² UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report #5, 1-30 April 2022, 26 May 2022, [url](#), p. 1

³⁵³ Please note that the surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

³⁵⁴ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 59

³⁵⁵ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), pp. 62-63

³⁵⁶ HRW, Dress Restrictions Tighten for Afghanistan Girls' Schools, 27 April 2022, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ MEE, Afghan girls move to Iran to defy Taliban's education ban, 14 May 2022, [url](#)

³⁵⁸ Hasht-e Sub, Mobile School: Pen Path Takes School to the Door Steps in Kandahar Province, 17 May 2022, [url](#), Kabul Times (The), Pen Path setting up schools, libraries to support education in Afghanistan, 19 May 2022, [url](#), openDemocracy, The volunteers risking their lives to secretly educate Afghanistan's girls, 3 June 2022, [url](#)

³⁵⁹ "A long piece of clothing that reaches to the ground, covering the whole of the body except the head, feet, and hands, worn by some Muslim women", Cambridge Dictionary, Definition: Abaya, 2014, [url](#)

³⁶⁰ Cambridge Dictionary, Definition: Hijab, 2014, [url](#)





few students, however, reportedly did return to university, while also a shortage of female lecturers was noted.³⁶¹ Similar conditions had already been imposed on private universities and colleges in September 2021.³⁶²

7.3 Access to education for IDPs

According to a survey by Save the Children among 1 409 households³⁶³ at the end of 2021, 56.3 % of girls were not attending school, compared to 27.7 % of boys. The situation was worse for girls living in IDP households with 62.7 % not attending classes, although they were often enrolled in school.³⁶⁴ 22 % of IDP households interviewed for the 2021 WoA Assessment noted that they had at least one child in their household that did not feel safe travelling to or being at school, compared to 16 % of host communities' households.³⁶⁵ Overall, 47 % of boys and 39 % of girls at school age from IDP households were reportedly enrolled in school, while almost half of IDP households said they had none of their school-aged children (6 to 17 years) enrolled in school.³⁶⁶

7.4 Access for returnees

In 2022, UNHCR expected 225 276 returnee children to face needs with regard to their education. Findings of the 2021 WoA Assessment indicated that boys and girls from families of returnees and deportees faced different kinds of barriers to access education depending on their gender. Families reported that 13 % of boys were taken out of school to earn money, compared to 2 % of girls, while conversely, 13 % of girls did not attend school for cultural reasons, compared to 2 % of boys, and another 2% of girls did not attend because they were given in marriage. School closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic and schools being too far were other reasons indicated by families for children not going to school.³⁶⁷

UNHCR noted in April 2022, that some 40 Afghan refugee returnee students – half of them women - started courses in February at universities across Kabul with UNHCR's support and under the DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) Scholarship³⁶⁸ scheme. UNHCR expected the programme to be established in other areas as well, including Jalalabad

³⁶¹ Al Jazeera, Afghan public universities reopen with gender segregated classes, 26 February 2022, [url](#). In May 2022, the Taliban noted publicly that 'the best hijab' was the burqa and that women (unless they were 'too old or young') had to cover their face except for the eyes. Guardian (The), Taliban order all Afghan women to cover their faces in public, 7 May 2022, [url](#)

³⁶² Gandhara, Taliban Imposes New Dress Code, Segregation Of Women At Afghan Universities, 6 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁶³ Please note that the surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 16

³⁶⁴ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 67

³⁶⁵ REACH Initiative, Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) Key Sectoral Findings, October 2021, 23 December 2021, [url](#), p. 15

³⁶⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 31

³⁶⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 35

³⁶⁸ UNHCR, DAFI Tertiary Scholarship Programme, n.d., [url](#)





(Nangarhar Province) and Mazar-e Sharif (Balkh Province) for an additional 20 students. Moreover, UNHCR reported that it would construct new schools in 55 Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs) in 2022 and would also provide support for the upgrading of existing educational facilities.³⁶⁹

USAID reported in May 2022 on funding programmes designed to reintegrate refugees and to increase opportunities for vulnerable host community populations, including literacy courses, courses to increase business knowledge, and skills development. Support was also provided to give returning refugee children access to learning spaces and accelerated learning programmes to help these children prepare for enrolment in formal schools.³⁷⁰

7.5 Situation in Kabul

According to Save the Children's survey³⁷¹ at the end of 2021, in Kabul, 38.3 % of children interviewed³⁷² for the report responded that they were not attending school. 22.9 % among them were not enrolled at school either, while the remaining 15.4 % were enrolled but did not attend classes.³⁷³ In 17.9 % of households, children were attending programmes such as community-based education, accelerated learning or early childcare and development programmes – the majority of them (60.5 %) in Kabul province.³⁷⁴

Local media reported that of the overall 3 000 private schools operating in Afghanistan, 1 200 were located in Kabul. The owner of a private school in Kabul confirmed that the number of students had decreased by 40 % since the Taliban's return to power in mid-August 2021 and noted that the difficult economic situation made it hard for parents to pay for school fees. Equally, the fact that girls beyond 6th grade were not allowed to continue their education contributed to the decrease in the number of students. Of 137 private schools in the 12th police district of Kabul, 45 had been closed, according to the interviewed private school owner.³⁷⁵

According to the Afghanistan Education Cluster, disability inclusion in Afghanistan's schools had been limited due to fluctuations in donor and government interest and support. Some agencies had developed sign language and Braille translated curricula and teacher training materials and in Kabul there was a small number of special education schools, however, not

³⁶⁹ UNHCR, Afghanistan Operational Update April 2022, 8 June 2022, [url](#), pp. 3, 4

³⁷⁰ USAID, Afghanistan – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #7, Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 27 May 2022, [url](#), p. 4

³⁷¹ Please note that the surveyed households were 'current Save the Children programme participants in seven provinces where Save the Children Afghanistan has an operational presence – Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Sar-e Pul'.

³⁷² Data for the survey was collected from 1 409 adults living in a household with children and from 1 408 children aged 11 to 17 years living in the household of an adult interviewed for the survey. Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 24

³⁷³ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), pp. 66-67

³⁷⁴ Arlini, S. M. and Burgess, M., Afghanistan Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment – 2021/2022, Save the Children, March 2022, [url](#), p. 61

³⁷⁵ Pajhwok Afghan News, Number of private schools' students declines by 30pc, 7 April 2022, [url](#)





yet in the country's rural areas.³⁷⁶ According to a 2019 study by the Asia Foundation, 17.3 % of children in Afghanistan had some form of disability.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ Afghanistan Education Cluster, Afghanistan Education Sector Transitional Framework, 28 February 2022, 12 May 2022, [url](#), p. 52

³⁷⁷ Asia Foundation (The), Model Disability Survey of Afghanistan 2019, 13 May 2020, [url](#), p. 19





8. Child-specific living conditions

The economic deterioration and resulting increase in poverty in the country following August 2021,³⁷⁸ as well as reoccurring ‘shocks and disruptions’ causing the population’s resilience to diminish,³⁷⁹ have led the Afghan population to increasingly resort to negative coping strategies, which can generally be understood as ‘a set of responses to difficulties that may provide a temporary means of survival.’³⁸⁰ Examples include the case of child marriage, the sale of children or child recruitment.³⁸¹

8.1 Child marriage

There has been a slow but steady decline in child marriages over the past years.³⁸² However, according to UN entities, aid organisations and local officials, since the Taliban takeover, the risk of child marriages is increasing in Afghanistan,³⁸³ with UNICEF remarking in November 2021 that they had received credible reports of families offering baby girls as young as 20 days old up for marriage.³⁸⁴ The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has already raised concerns that the situation has worsened in terms of the prevalence of forced marriages.³⁸⁵ In addition, the ongoing food crisis and the onset of winter further worsened the circumstances of Afghan families.³⁸⁶ Based on a multi-sectorial rapid assessment³⁸⁷ between October and December 2021, UNHCR found that post-August 2021 around 4 % of households turned to the negative coping strategy of child selling and 2 % to early marriage.³⁸⁸

³⁷⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights, A/HRC/49/90, 12 January 2022, [url](#), para. 29

³⁷⁹ CCCM and Protection Clusters Afghanistan, Joint-Advocacy Briefing Note from the Shelter/NFI, CCCM and Protection Clusters Afghanistan Pledging Conference, 31 March 2022, [url](#)

³⁸⁰ TNH, Pakistan’s IDPs find it can get worse, 5 August 2013, [url](#)

³⁸¹ CCCM and Protection Clusters Afghanistan, Joint-Advocacy Briefing Note from the Shelter/NFI, CCCM and Protection Clusters Afghanistan Pledging Conference, 31 March 2022, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights, A/HRC/49/90, 12 January 2022, [url](#), para. 29; Washington Post (The), Through child marriage or paid adoption, Afghan girls bear brunt of crisis, 14 April 2022, [url](#)

³⁸² UNICEF, Child marriage is declining in Afghanistan – yet, more is needed to end the practice, 29 July 2018, [url](#)

³⁸³ OHCHR, Afghanistan: Taliban attempting to steadily erase women and girls from public life – UN experts, 17 January 2022, [url](#); UNICEF, Girls increasingly at risk of child marriage in Afghanistan - Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, 12 November 2021, [url](#); Washington Post (The), Through child marriage or paid adoption, Afghan girls bear brunt of crisis, 14 April 2022, [url](#); CNN, The rescue of Parwana: 9-year-old child bride is taken to safety in Afghanistan, 3 December 2021, [url](#)

³⁸⁴ UNICEF, Girls increasingly at risk of child marriage in Afghanistan - Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, 12 November 2021, [url](#)

³⁸⁵ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Atlas der Versklavung [Atlas of slavery], November 2021, [url](#), p. 45; Penn Today, Spike in child marriages may be ‘the most disturbing fallout of the Taliban takeover’, 3 December 2021, [url](#)

³⁸⁶ UNICEF, Girls increasingly at risk of child marriage in Afghanistan - Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, 12 November 2021, [url](#)

³⁸⁷ This survey is not representative for the whole Afghan population and mainly provides findings ‘on the challenges IDPs and IDP returnees, in particular, face in Afghanistan’. UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 2

³⁸⁸ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 9



In its November 2021 publication, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation referred to estimates indicating a prevalence of child or forced marriages of 60-80 % in Afghanistan. Reasons for the high prevalence reportedly include practices such as marriage to pay off debts or to resolve conflicts (*bad*), and bride-swapping to avoid paying the bride's dowry (*badal*). Children and young women married off through forced or child marriage usually live in complete dependence on the husband's family.³⁸⁹

In December 2021, the Taliban issued a decree banning forced marriages, stating that women should not be considered property and needed to consent to marriage.³⁹⁰ Even before the Taliban came to power, the country's judicial system was lacking strength and options to respond to cases of forced marriages. As a result, many girls and women find little support and help, especially if their families insisted on their marriages.³⁹¹ Almost all shelters that had previously offered young women and girls protection from forced marriage have reportedly been closed by the Taliban throughout the country.³⁹²

Since the Taliban took power in August 2021, the dire economic conditions have forced more and more families to resort to the negative coping strategy of marrying off daughters.³⁹³ Afghan women's rights activist Mahbouba Seraj was cited by CNN in December 2021 as saying that '[A]fghan young girls (are) becoming the price of food; [b]ecause otherwise their family will starve.'³⁹⁴ Moreover, restrictions imposed by the Taliban on girls' access to education increase the risk of child marriage further.³⁹⁵ According to a November 2021 statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, girls who marry before the age of 18 are also at higher risk of domestic violence, discrimination, abuse, and poor mental health.³⁹⁶

8.2 Child recruitment

In an October 2021 report, UNHCR referred to information obtained from interlocutors in the field, according to which both the Taliban/the *de facto* authorities as well as the ISKP 'recruit widely and use children in their ranks.'³⁹⁷ USDOS indicated in its report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan in 2021, that armed groups, particularly the Taliban and ISKP, were responsible for most child recruitments and were also deploying children under the age of 12.³⁹⁸

³⁸⁹ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Atlas der Versklavung [Atlas of slavery], November 2021, [url](#), p. 44

³⁹⁰ Al Jazeera, Taliban bans forced marriage of women in Afghanistan, 3 December 2021, [url](#)

³⁹¹ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Atlas der Versklavung [Atlas of slavery], November 2021, [url](#), p. 45

³⁹² TNH, Protections for women facing violence have vanished under the Taliban, 20 April 2022, [url](#)

³⁹³ UNICEF, Girls increasingly at risk of child marriage in Afghanistan - Statement by UNICEF Executive Director

Henrietta Fore, 12 November 2021, [url](#); VOA, Afghanistan Poverty Bears More Child Brides, 4 May 2022, [url](#)

³⁹⁴ CNN, The rescue of Parwana: 9-year-old child bride is taken to safety in Afghanistan, 3 December 2021, [url](#)

³⁹⁵ UNSG, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, A/76/862 -

S/2022/485, 15 June 2022, [url](#), para. 38; UNICEF, Girls increasingly at risk of child marriage in Afghanistan -

Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, 12 November 2021, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ UNICEF, Girls increasingly at risk of child marriage in Afghanistan - Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, 12 November 2021, [url](#)

³⁹⁷ Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update – October 2021, October 2021, [url](#), p. 8

³⁹⁸ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 4



According to a January 2022 report by the UN Human Rights Council, there were at least 47 verified cases of child recruitment in 2021, including 24 by the Taliban, 16 by pro-government militias and 7 by the Afghan National Police. However, the same report emphasised that ‘recruitment and use of children remains under verified’ due to sensitivity and protection issues. The vast majority of these recruitments reportedly took place before 15 August 2021. ‘At the same time, children in the ranks of Taliban have become more visible since its takeover, leading to perceptions that the recruitment of children has increased, despite much of the recruitment likely having occurred previously.’³⁹⁹

In more than 20 years of armed conflict, the Taliban have reportedly used children as fighters, to plant and detonate IEDs, and as suicide bombers. HRW reported in July 2022 that there are thousands of children in their ranks, often trained in *madrassas* and recruited through force and threats, deception, promises of money or other incentives. ‘The Taliban have denied that they use children in “jihadic operations” and their code of conduct states that “boys without beards” are not allowed in military centers.’ Moreover, in more recent years, the Taliban reportedly ‘expressed some sensitivity’ to the problematic issue of child recruitment. Nevertheless, hundreds of individual cases of child recruitment by Taliban forces have been documented, with a significant increase in 2020.⁴⁰⁰

According to a January 2022 report by the UN Human Rights Council, the increasing poverty ‘served as a driving factor for the recruitment and use of children by armed groups.’⁴⁰¹ In its Humanitarian Needs Overview, UNOCHA emphasised the harmful impact of this practice on the safety, well-being, and development of children.⁴⁰²

8.3 Child labour

Although the previous Afghan government enacted regulations against child labour, the legal framework does not adequately safeguard children against the worst forms of child labour, which include debt bondage and commercial sexual exploitation.⁴⁰³ As reported by USDOS in April 2022, the Taliban have not expressed any intention to change existing labour laws and have not yet commented on child labour.⁴⁰⁴ In its April 2022 country report, USDOS mentioned children forced to work under threat of physical violence from their families, boys sent to work in neighbouring Iran, or children living in orphanages reportedly forced to.⁴⁰⁵ For more information in this regard, please see section [9.3 Orphans and children without a support network](#).

³⁹⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights, A/HRC/49/90, 12 January 2022, [url](#), para. 24

⁴⁰⁰ HRW, This is our opportunity to end the Taliban's use of child soldiers, 20 September 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰¹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights, A/HRC/49/90, 12 January 2022, [url](#), para. 29

⁴⁰² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), p. 37

⁴⁰³ USDOL, Country Report on Child Labor and Forced Labor – Afghanistan, 29 September 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁴ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 63

⁴⁰⁵ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 63





Poverty is reported to be a driving factor for child labour,⁴⁰⁶ causing the current economic crisis to further increase the risk of child labour.⁴⁰⁷ In March 2022, the UN Human Rights Council referred to UNICEF, which had reportedly identified an uptick in child labour in Afghanistan.⁴⁰⁸ In a January 2022 article, the Afghan online news portal Hasht-e Subh also reported that child labour has increased sharply since the Taliban came to power and poverty levels soared. According to the same article, in Charikar city, the capital city of Parwan province alone, more than 1 700 children were employed in hard labour and more than 100 of them were homeless.⁴⁰⁹ Based on a multi-sectorial rapid assessment between October and December 2021, UNHCR found that post-August 64 % of households confirmed that children were required to work.⁴¹⁰ According to a February 2022 article published by the Save the Children, up to 20 % of Afghan families ‘have been forced to send their children out to work as incomes have plummeted in the past six months with an estimated one million children now engaged in child labour’.⁴¹¹

According to a January 2022 International Labour Organization (ILO) Rapid Impact Assessment, boys and children living in rural areas are generally more likely to be affected by child labour than girls and children living in urban areas.⁴¹² In February 2022, the news website Equal Times, which focuses on ‘social justice’ issues, referred to data by the Afghan National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), according to which ‘twice as many boys as girls are engaged in work outside the home, while girls are mostly confined to work in their homes, rendering them invisible and thus more difficult to assess’. The article further stated, that alongside poverty, the issue of child labour is exacerbated by limited access to education in ‘remote and conservative’ areas of the country.⁴¹³

8.4 Trafficking of children

In January 2022, the UN Human Rights Council found that the deterioration of the economic situation after August 2021 was a contributing factor to the sale of children.⁴¹⁴ In addition, UN experts stated that restrictions imposed by the Taliban against women and girls increased the

⁴⁰⁶ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 63; Equal Times, Afghanistan’s dire political and economic situation is undermining its fight against child labour, 4 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ ILO, Employment prospects in Afghanistan: A rapid impact assessment, ILO Brief, January 2022, 19 January 2022, [url](#), p. 5; UNSG, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, A/76/667-S/2022/64, 28 January 2022, [url](#), para. 65; BBC News, Afghanistan: What’s life like for children in the country?, 17 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/49/24, 4 March 2022, [url](#), para. 12; UN News, Afghanistan: Humanitarian crisis threatens basic human rights, 14 December 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁹ Hasht-e Subh, Child Labor in Afghanistan’s Parwan Province Increases Since Taliban Takeover, 21 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹⁰ UNHCR, Afghanistan 2021 Multi Sectoral Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 April 2022, [url](#), p. 9

⁴¹¹ Save the Children, Afghanistan: A Fifth of Starving Families Sending Children to Work as Incomes Plummet in Past Six Months, 14 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹² ILO, Employment prospects in Afghanistan: A rapid impact assessment, ILO Brief, January 2022, 19 January 2022, [url](#), p. 5

⁴¹³ Equal Times, Afghanistan’s dire political and economic situation is undermining its fight against child labour, 4 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights, A/HRC/49/90, 12 January 2022, [url](#), para. 29





‘risk of exploitation of women and girls including of trafficking for the purposes of child and forced marriage as well as sexual exploitation and forced labor’.⁴¹⁵

According to a June 2022 news report, the illegal trafficking of Afghan children increased since the Taliban takeover.⁴¹⁶

In January 2022 the All Survivors Project, an independent research project and charitable foundation, pointed out that the Taliban takeover caused conflict-related sexual violence risk factors to ‘increase significantly,’ while ‘exponentially decreas[ing]’ the scope to respond. In this context, the source referred to ‘multiple recent reports of boys being smuggled across the Iranian and Pakistan borders (where prospects for employment and security are considered better than in Afghanistan), and of incidents of sexual violence against them committed by paid “guides”’.⁴¹⁷

In its country report on child labour in Afghanistan published in September 2021, the US Department of Labor (USDOL) mentioned, that children are subjected to human trafficking both domestically and internationally and that boys migrating unaccompanied are ‘particularly vulnerable to human trafficking,’ including for agricultural and construction work.⁴¹⁸ There were reportedly cases of children being trafficked as a means of paying off their families’ debts.⁴¹⁹

In September 2021, the USDOL noted that some victims of child trafficking (especially those engaged in *bacha bazi*⁴²⁰ or armed conflict) were treated as criminals by the former Afghan government and subjected to abuse.⁴²¹ In April 2022, the USDOS wrote that ‘the pre-August 15 government protected trafficking victims from prosecution for crimes committed because of being subjected to trafficking’.⁴²²

⁴¹⁵ OHCHR, Afghanistan: Taliban attempting to steadily erase women and girls from public life – UN experts, 17 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ WION, Taliban regime accountable for rise in illegal trafficking of children in Afghanistan, 8 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹⁷ All Survivors Project, Conflict-related sexual violence: New dangers facing men and boys in Afghanistan, January 2022, [url](#), pp. 1-3

⁴¹⁸ USDOL, Country Report on Child Labor and Forced Labor – Afghanistan, 29 September 2021, [url](#)

⁴¹⁹ Save the Children, Afghanistan: Desperate Mother Agreed to Sell her Unborn Baby as Debt-Ridden Families Are Pushed to Crisis Point, 17 March 2022, [url](#); USDOL, Country Report on Child Labor and Forced Labor – Afghanistan, 29 September 2021, [url](#)

⁴²⁰ *Bacha Bazi* can be roughly translated as ‘boy play’ and is ‘the sexual and commercial exploitation of boys, especially by men in positions of power’. There were numerous reports that members of the former Afghan security forces were ‘among the most prevalent perpetrators of *bacha bazi*’. USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 8; Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy, What About the Boys: A Gendered Analysis of the U.S. Withdrawal and *Bacha Bazi* in Afghanistan, 24 June 2021, [url](#)

⁴²¹ USDOL, Country Report on Child Labor and Forced Labor – Afghanistan, 29 September 2021, [url](#)

⁴²² USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 23



9. Network of support

9.1 Network through family and community

Sources report that in the absence of a functioning state, government, or market, in Afghan villages, autonomous local institutions such as social networks, exist and play a pivotal role in regard to resources.⁴²³ According to rural development researcher Adam Pain, '[i]n Afghanistan, rural households have not been able to obtain reliable economic security from either the state or the market and as a result, the community and family play a central role in meeting that deficit of provision.'⁴²⁴ In this context, so-called *qawm*⁴²⁵, families or joint households,⁴²⁶ and at a higher level, villages, are described as vital social institutions that provide Afghan communities with the resilience needed to be able to withstand both internal and external shocks while also hampering 40 years of efforts to modernise governance of the country.⁴²⁷

Joint households are usually composed of several generations and several nuclear families living under one roof and can include 20 or more members. Such households form a cooperative community within which collaboration ensures survival.⁴²⁸ Villages are described as networks 'that govern [...] social, political, and economic life'⁴²⁹, provide 'the key public good of security' and are 'central to household economic life and a wider "distributional economy" of sharing'⁴³⁰. According to Pain, in a distributional economy, individuals who do not have enough land, sufficient employment or decent work can claim access to the resources of others in order to survive. To make such claims, it is essential to invest in and maintain social relationships on which (material) assistance and support might depend in times of need.⁴³¹

Pain stated that 'the quality of the social relationships that a household can establish is central to its security.' He states that the 'robustness of household economies' affects their ability to reciprocate that support to other households and that when they are in decline, this limits

⁴²³ Noori, H., Social capital and structural disadvantages: A case of Community-Driven Development program in Afghanistan, 2022, [url](#), p. 72; Pain, A., Living With Radical Uncertainty in Rural Afghanistan: The work of survival, AAN, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴²⁴ Pain, A., Living With Radical Uncertainty in Rural Afghanistan: The work of survival, AAN, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴²⁵ *Qawm* can be described as 'a social structure which is based on kinship, residence, and occupation', that used to be translated 'as a tribe or ethnicity in Afghanistan', although it may refer to 'cross tribal and ethnicity boundaries' as well, according to Hadi Noori. According to Barnett R. Rubin, *qawm* refers to 'any form of solidarity' and 'may denote various forms of identity: any level of tribal organization; an area of residence such as a village, valley, or town; a linguistically based ethnic group or "nationality"; or an occupational group similar to a caste'.

Noori, H., Social capital and structural disadvantages: A case of Community-Driven Development program in Afghanistan, 2022, [url](#), p. 72; Rubin, B.R., The Fragmentation of Afghanistan, 2002, p. 25.

⁴²⁶ Pain, A., Living With Radical Uncertainty in Rural Afghanistan: The work of survival, AAN, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴²⁷ Noori, H., Social capital and structural disadvantages: A case of Community-Driven Development program in Afghanistan, 2022, [url](#), p. 72; Pain, A., Living With Radical Uncertainty in Rural Afghanistan: The work of survival, AAN, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴²⁸ Pain, A., Living With Radical Uncertainty in Rural Afghanistan: The work of survival, AAN, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴²⁹ Noori, H., Social capital and structural disadvantages: A case of Community-Driven Development program in Afghanistan, 2022, [url](#), p. 73

⁴³⁰ Pain, A., Living With Radical Uncertainty in Rural Afghanistan: The work of survival, AAN, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴³¹ Pain, A., Living With Radical Uncertainty in Rural Afghanistan: The work of survival, AAN, 21 February 2022, [url](#)



what they can provide to others, and may cause them to lose access to support networks.⁴³² In June 2021, Friederike Stahlmann, researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Ethnological Research, stressed that social networks have long been unable to cope with temporary crises, which in turn leads to long-term impoverishment.⁴³³

For detailed information on the economic situation, access to basic subsistence, employment and food security of Afghan households, please see sections [2. Economy](#), [3. Basic subsistence and employment](#) and [4. Food security](#).

9.2 Women without a support network

After their seizure of power in August 2021, the Taliban restricted women's freedom of movement, requiring them to travel with a close male relative, a *mahram*⁴³⁴, when traveling longer distances, accessing health facilities, or using taxis.⁴³⁵ The Taliban-imposed restrictions on movement also affected women's access to food and related services and their ability to work.⁴³⁶ Due to the potential need to have a *mahram*, unmarried women reportedly felt even more compelled to marry.⁴³⁷

Single mothers and single female breadwinners were hit particularly hard by the Taliban's ban on women working.⁴³⁸ In August and September 2021, the British newspaper The Guardian reported that single mothers, whose lives in Afghanistan had always been marked by stigma, poverty and exclusion, and divorced women, who were often disowned by their families and had to fight hard for their basic rights, found themselves in an even more difficult and desperate situation.⁴³⁹

For detailed information on the economic and labour market situation of female-headed households, please see section [2.3](#) and section [3.2](#) of this report.

⁴³² Pain, A., Living With Radical Uncertainty in Rural Afghanistan: The work of survival, AAN, 21 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴³³ Stahlmann, F., Erfahrungen und Perspektiven abgeschobener Afghanen [Experiences and Perspectives of Deported Afghans], June 2021, [url](#), p. 41

⁴³⁴ Mahram can be defined as 'a close male relative: either a husband, or a male relative whom she cannot marry'. AAN, "We need to breathe too": Women across Afghanistan navigate the Taleban's hijab ruling, 1 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴³⁵ Al Jazeera, Shrinking public space for Afghan women as Taliban expands curbs, 6 April 2022, [url](#)

⁴³⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2022, 7 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 24, 38

⁴³⁷ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Deprive Women of Livelihoods, Identity, 18 January 2022, [url](#); Die Zeit, "Sollen wir Frauen uns in Luft auflösen?" ["Should we women vanish into thin air?"], 9 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴³⁸ DW, A brief history of Afghan women's rights, 23 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴³⁹ Guardian (The), 'They came for my daughter': Afghan single mothers face losing children under Taliban, 8 September 2021, [url](#); Guardian (The), 'Nowhere to go': divorced Afghan women in peril as the Taliban close in, 13 August 2021, [url](#)



9.3 Orphans and children without a support network

Media articles published in January and February 2022 indicated that the number of orphans and unsupervised children was on the rise in Afghanistan.⁴⁴⁰ In war-torn Afghanistan, many children have lost their parents in the conflict, making orphanages in Afghanistan important institutions.⁴⁴¹ However, at the same time orphanages were seriously struggling to provide care and food for the children due to the country's economic crisis and lack of external and internal funding.⁴⁴²

In its 2021 report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, USDOS noted that living conditions in orphanages were poor with no 'regular access to running water, heating in winter, indoor plumbing, health-care services, recreational facilities, or education'. Children were reportedly subjected to psychological, physical, and sexual abuse or forced labour, and at times became the victims of human trafficking (for more information in this regard, please see section 8.4).⁴⁴³ As of February 2022, of the 68 public orphanages in Afghanistan, only 9 were reportedly still open, while 36 private orphanages were also still operating.⁴⁴⁴ Only a few weeks after the Taliban takeover in August 2021, the situation for children was described as particularly dire.⁴⁴⁵ In October 2021, RFE/RL's Gandhara reported the starvation deaths of eight unattended orphan boys in Kabul's District 13.⁴⁴⁶

9.4 IDPs and returnees

For returnees from European countries, research studies published in 2020 and 2021 found that they often did not have access to support from their previous social networks and local communities.⁴⁴⁷ The resources needed for reintegration were not available to these returnees⁴⁴⁸ as their networks had changed in the meantime⁴⁴⁹ or they had been deliberately excluded from their networks due to the disappointment associated with their return or

⁴⁴⁰ TOLONews, Most Public Orphanages in Afghanistan Now Closed: Ministry, 1 February 2022, [url](#); ITV News, Afghanistan orphanage forced to turn away children from desperate parents, 19 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁴¹ Conversation (The), With catastrophe looming, the world cannot turn its back on Afghanistan's children, 2 November 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁴² ITV News, Afghanistan orphanage forced to turn away children from desperate parents, 19 January 2022, [url](#); AA, Economic crisis hits Afghanistan orphanages hard, 4 December 2021, [url](#); Conversation (The), With catastrophe looming, the world cannot turn its back on Afghanistan's children, 2 November 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁴³ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 58, 63

⁴⁴⁴ TOLONews, Most Public Orphanages in Afghanistan Now Closed: Ministry, 1 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁵ Conversation (The), With catastrophe looming, the world cannot turn its back on Afghanistan's children, 2 November 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁶ Gandhara, Eight Orphan Children Found Dead From Starvation In Kabul, 24 October 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁷ Majidi, N., Assuming Reintegration, Experiencing Dislocation – Returns from Europe to Afghanistan, 6 November 2020, [url](#), p. 186; Stahlmann, F., Erfahrungen und Perspektiven abgeschobener Afghanen [Experiences and Perspectives of Deported Afghans], June 2021, [url](#), pp. 16, 41; Ahmad, A., From Austria to Afghanistan: Forced return and a new migration cycle, VIDC, January 2021, [url](#), p. 5

⁴⁴⁸ Majidi, N., Assuming Reintegration, Experiencing Dislocation – Returns from Europe to Afghanistan, 6 November 2020, [url](#), p. 186

⁴⁴⁹ Ahmad, A., From Austria to Afghanistan: Forced return and a new migration cycle, VIDC, January 2021, [url](#), p. 5



stigmatization as ‘westernized’ or ‘criminal’⁴⁵⁰. In her June 2021 study, Friederike Stahlmann further expressed that those returnees who do not have support networks in Afghanistan are particularly vulnerable.⁴⁵¹ More recent information covering the period between the end of 2021 and June 2022 could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

With regard to IDPs, a January 2022 research study conducted in Kandahar indicated that relations between locals and IDPs were found to be hard to improve, as IDPs were primarily perceived as ‘security threats, economic competitors in a tight labor market, and a strain on resources such as schools and housing’.⁴⁵²

More recent and further relevant information on the situation of IDPs and returnees in regard to their networks of support could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

⁴⁵⁰ Stahlmann, F., Erfahrungen und Perspektiven abgeschobener Afghanen [Experiences and Perspectives of Deported Afghans], June 2021, [url](#), pp. 16, 41; Ahmad, A., From Austria to Afghanistan: Forced return and a new migration cycle, VIDC, January 2021, [url](#), p. 5

⁴⁵¹ Stahlmann, F., Erfahrungen und Perspektiven abgeschobener Afghanen [Experiences and Perspectives of Deported Afghans], June 2021, [url](#), p. 16

⁴⁵² Zhou, Y.-Y. and Lyall, J., Prolonged Contact Does Not Reshape Locals’ Attitudes toward Migrants in Wartime Settings: Experimental Evidence from Afghanistan, 31 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 5-6



10. Mobility and travel

10.1 Travel requirements and restrictions

Freedom House reported that the *de facto* Taliban authorities had few ‘direct restrictions’ on movement but that it can be hazardous due to ‘intrusive checkpoints, designed to ensnare suspected opponents and enforce Taliban codes’.⁴⁵³ In a May 2022 publication by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan noted that the decline in armed conflict in the country has led to better accessibility within the country for Afghans and humanitarian actors alike and increased ‘predictability’, particularly in rural communities.⁴⁵⁴ According to the USDOS, ‘intercity travel’ was largely unimpeded after the Taliban takeover.⁴⁵⁵ According to June 2022 media reports, the Taliban limited access to areas where conflict was concentrated.⁴⁵⁶

As reported by USDOS, local and international media in March and April 2022, Taliban leaders claimed that while they do not want citizens to leave Afghanistan, those who have foreign travel authorisation and necessary papers will be permitted to go abroad.⁴⁵⁷ According to USDOS, ‘[c]itizens with passports and visas for third countries were generally permitted to depart the country, and Pakistan was allowing pedestrians from Kandahar province to cross into Pakistan and back for trade and day labor using only identity cards.’ (Further information on the situation at the Afghan-Pakistani border can be found in the [EUAA COI Report: Pakistan – Situation of Afghan refugees \(May 2022\)](#).) However, the Taliban reportedly barred specific political figures affiliated with the former government from leaving the country over concerns about ‘possible political activities abroad’.⁴⁵⁸

Women’s freedom of movement was, however, ‘restricted’.⁴⁵⁹ This was by orders imposed by the Taliban’s Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (MPVPV) limiting how far women were allowed to travel on their own. Moreover, women who do not dress in accordance with the ministry’s guidelines risked being denied access to vehicles.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵³ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 – Afghanistan, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁴ OHCHR, Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights, Richard Bennett, following his visit to Afghanistan from May 15-26, 2022, 26 May 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁵⁵ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 33

⁴⁵⁶ Washington Post (The), Inside the Taliban’s secret war in the Panjshir Valley, 8 June 2022, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Taliban Closes Access Routes to Balkhab District, Sar-e Pol, 17 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁷ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 33-34; Khaama Press, Mujahid claims to be misconstrued about travel restrictions on people, 1 March 2022, [url](#); Ariana News, Afghans with legal documents, invitations can travel: Mujahid, 1 March 2022, [url](#); AFP, Taliban Rows Back Comments Saying Afghans Barred From Leaving, 1 March 2022; Al Jazeera, Afghans with correct legal documents may travel abroad: Taliban, 2 March 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁸ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 34

⁴⁵⁹ OHCHR, Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights, Richard Bennett, following his visit to Afghanistan from May 15-26, 2022, 26 May 2022, [url](#), p. 1; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 – Afghanistan, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 – Afghanistan, 28 February 2022, [url](#)



Shortly after returning to power in August 2021, the Taliban stopped the issuance of passports.⁴⁶¹ In October, the Kabul passport office reopened, but stopped operating just a few days later as biometric equipment broke down due to the large number of applications.⁴⁶² In December 2021, passport offices in 25 provinces⁴⁶³ reportedly reopened.⁴⁶⁴ According to an April 2022 report by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the *de facto* Taliban authorities have halted issuing new passports in Bamyan, Daykundi and Kandahar as well.⁴⁶⁵ In February 2022, the renewed closure of passport offices was mentioned,⁴⁶⁶ which, reopened again in Kabul in early April⁴⁶⁷ and were announced to reopen in the provinces in May 2022.⁴⁶⁸ Further information on the operations of passport offices as of July 2022 could not be found.

In its April 2022 report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, the USDOS referred to ‘anecdotal reports’ that passport issuance was not always conducted impartially but tended to be reserved for individuals deemed ‘unproblematic’ by the Taliban or individuals who were able to pay much higher prices for it. Some individuals linked to the former government were allegedly detained and beaten after visiting passport offices.⁴⁶⁹ According to IOM, under the new *de facto* government, passport issuance takes much longer and can require up to a month and a half.⁴⁷⁰ In a February 2022 webinar on the situation in Afghanistan, Emran Feroz, a journalist and book author well versed in Afghanistan, reported of cases where individuals were waiting already for six months to receive their passports. In addition, the cost of obtaining a passport reached an extremely high level. Even before the Taliban took power, it was reportedly very difficult to obtain a passport from the Kabul passport office, which used to cost between USD 70 and USD 100 per person. According to Emran Feroz’s research, however, bribes had increased immensely, with a single passport sometimes reaching a price between USD 600 and USD 1 000.⁴⁷¹

According to the above-cited April 2022 report by IOM, the *de facto* authority responsible for the issuance of national ID-cards (*Tazkira*), the National Statistics and Information Authorities

⁴⁶¹ Guardian (The), Hundreds queue for passports in bid to leave Afghanistan, 19 December 2021, [url](#); Daily Sabah, Suicide attack at Afghan passport office injures several in Kabul, 23 December 2021, [url](#); IOM, Information on the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 2; USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 34

⁴⁶² Daily Sabah, Suicide attack at Afghan passport office injures several in Kabul, 23 December 2021, [url](#); Guardian (The), Hundreds queue for passports in bid to leave Afghanistan, 19 December 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁶³ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 34

⁴⁶⁴ Guardian (The), Hundreds queue for passports in bid to leave Afghanistan, 19 December 2021, [url](#); Daily Sabah, Suicide attack at Afghan passport office injures several in Kabul, 23 December 2021, [url](#); USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 34

⁴⁶⁵ IOM, Information on the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁶⁶ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Aktuelle Lage & Überblick über relevante Akteure; Situation gefährdeter Gruppen [Current situation & overview of relevant actors; situation of vulnerable groups] [source: Feroz, E.], March 2022, [url](#), p. 33

⁴⁶⁷ TOLONews, Passport Processing Resumes in Kabul, 9 April 2022, [url](#); UNHCR, Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran (30 April 2022), 9 May 2022, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁶⁸ TOLONews, Passport Processing Resumes in Kabul, 9 April 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁹ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 34

⁴⁷⁰ IOM, Information on the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁷¹ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Aktuelle Lage & Überblick über relevante Akteure; Situation gefährdeter Gruppen [Current situation & overview of relevant actors; situation of vulnerable groups] [source: Feroz, E.], March 2022, [url](#), p. 33





(NSIA) resumed their activities in 104 centres across the country, including 25 centres in Kabul Province two months after the collapse of the previous government.⁴⁷²

In March 2022, Amnesty International (AI) reported that the Taliban-imposed limitations on departures, including ‘insurmountable difficulties’ in acquiring passports and visas, compromised the ability of Afghans, including those at fear of retaliation, to seek asylum in third countries. Concerns were raised that border restrictions by neighbouring countries would force Afghans to travel irregularly and smuggler smugglers, making them even more vulnerable to human rights abuses.⁴⁷³ In June 2022, RFE/RL's Gandhara reported on the increase in smuggling of Afghans without documents into neighboring Iran and Pakistan. Although the Taliban have banned the cross-border movement of undocumented migrants, smugglers reportedly circumvent the ban by ‘bribing corrupt Taliban border guards’.⁴⁷⁴

In December 2021, VOA reported on Taliban checkpoints ‘in and around Afghan cities and towns’,⁴⁷⁵ while the Wall Street Journal mentioned in January 2022 that Taliban checkpoints far from the cities have become ‘increasingly rare’⁴⁷⁶. In July 2022, Hasht-e Subh reported on an increase in Taliban checkpoints in Panjshir province⁴⁷⁷ as well as on Taliban checkpoints set up at the Afghanistan-Iran border in order to identify former soldiers and NRF affiliates, after clashes reportedly intensifies in Afghanistan’s north⁴⁷⁸. According to a former Afghan military commander quoted in a March 2022 Human Rights Watch article, Taliban forces check the names and faces of individuals at checkpoints based on ‘lists of names and photographs of former army and police’ personnel.⁴⁷⁹

10.2 Access to airports in Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat

A June 2022 NPR report described the drive from Kabul airport to Kabul and noted that armed Taliban manned checkpoints and patrolled the roads.⁴⁸⁰ In March 2022, the Taliban reportedly notified airlines in Afghanistan that women, including dual nationals, were not allowed to board domestic or international flights without being accompanied by a male.⁴⁸¹ However, these regulations were not always implemented, according to a June 2022 interview with Afghan women rights activist Mahbouba Seraj.⁴⁸² More recent and further relevant information

⁴⁷² IOM, Information on the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁷³ AI, Amnesty International Report 2021/22 – The state of the world’s human rights, 29 March 2022, [url](#), p. 65

⁴⁷⁴ Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Taliban Rift, Afghan Musicians, People Smuggling, 3 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁵ VOA, Taliban Fighters Now Manning Checkpoints in Afghan Cities, 8 December 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁶ WSJ, A Journey Along Afghanistan’s Main Highway Leads Through a Country in Transition, 22 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁷ Hasht-e Subh, Taliban Increases Checkpoints in Panjshir Province, 12 July 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁸ Hasht-e Subh, Taliban Establishes Check Points Across Afghanistan-Iran Border to Identify Ex-Government NRF Affiliates, 24 July 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁹ HRW, New Evidence that Biometric Data Systems Imperil Afghans, 30 March 2022 [url](#)

⁴⁸⁰ NPR, NPR travels to Afghanistan for the 1st time since the Taliban took over, 9 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁸¹ Reuters, 27 March 2022, [url](#); AP, Officials: Taliban blocked unaccompanied women from flights, 26 March 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁸² Die Zeit, "Sollen wir Frauen uns in Luft auflösen?" ["Should we women vanish into thin air?"], 9 June 2022, [url](#)





on access to the airports in Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

10.3 Operability of international and domestic flights

After the Taliban took power, air traffic declined significantly due to the lack of capacity and functionality of the country's airports.⁴⁸³ Already in September 2021, the Afghan police, together with Taliban security forces, had reportedly resumed their work at Kabul Airport.⁴⁸⁴ As of December 2021, it was reported that no commercial flights were operating into or out of the country,⁴⁸⁵ which resumed to a limited extent in the course of the first half of 2022⁴⁸⁶.

According to a January 2022 SIGAR report, Qatari engineers were able to restore limited daytime airport operations in Kabul in September, and enabled domestic flights to Herat, Mazar-e Sharif, and Kandahar.⁴⁸⁷ In April 2022, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) reported that '[c]onditions on the ground at Kabul International Airport (KBL) remain[ed] essentially unchanged' with Kabul airport only operating when weather and light conditions 'allow pilots to navigate visually', as the airport lacked trained personnel and the necessary equipment for poor-weather conditions.⁴⁸⁸ In a January 2022 article by the Afghan news outlet TOLONews, the spokesman of the *de facto* Taliban Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation was quoted as saying that flights from Afghanistan's airports were proceeding as normal, international and domestic flights were taking place, and parts of Kabul Airport served for military, logistical, and other flights.⁴⁸⁹ An April 2022 TOLONews article referred to numbers of the respective Taliban ministry stating that more than 20 domestic and international flights were departing and arriving from/at Kabul Airport each day,⁴⁹⁰ while SIGAR reported also in April 2022 on eight domestic and international flights leaving Kabul airport per day on average, including to the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Qatar⁴⁹¹.

According to a June 2022 report by the UN Secretary General, in May 2022 the *de facto* authorities signed a contract with a company based in the United Arab Emirates, 'for ground handling and related services at Afghan international airports'. On 'more comprehensive services', negotiations with Qatar and Turkey were reportedly ongoing.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸³ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 - Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 34

⁴⁸⁴ AFP, Afghan police return to work alongside Taliban at airport, 12 September 2021

⁴⁸⁵ Washington Post (The), As evacuations from Afghanistan slow to a trickle, some 'at risk' allies may face long road to the United States, 12 December 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁶ US, SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 117-118; TOLONews, Weekly Kabul-Moscow Flights to Begin, 27 April 2022, [url](#); TOLONews, Afghan Civilian and Military Airports Resume Activities, 29 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁷ US, SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30 January 2022, [url](#), p. 108

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

The reference period should be **1 December 2021 – 30 June 2022**. The Background should also cover events from 15 August – 30 November 2022.

The report should cover the general humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, including information on the following topics. Information on the situation in the capital Kabul should be included, and in cases where provinces or areas experience a notably different situation this should be indicated.

- 1. Background**
 - a. Developments and major events since the Taliban takeover
 - b. Humanitarian situation/issues since Taliban takeover
 - c. COVID-19 situation
- 2. Economy**
 - a. National economic and financial situation
 - b. Poverty rates
 - c. Situation in Kabul
 - d. Female-headed households
 - e. IDPs
- 3. Basic subsistence and employment**
 - a. Countrywide trends
 - b. Situation in Kabul
 - c. Female-headed households
 - d. IDPs
- 4. Food security**
 - a. Countrywide trends
 - b. Situation in Kabul
 - c. Female-headed households
 - d. IDPs
- 5. Housing/shelter and living conditions, including water, hygiene, and sanitation**
 - a. Countrywide trends
 - b. Situation in Kabul
 - c. Female-headed households
 - d. IDPs
- 6. Healthcare situation**
 - a. Situation of the national health system since Taliban takeover
 - b. Access to basic health care treatment and medication
 - c. Access to healthcare for women/maternal and child healthcare
 - d. Access to healthcare for IDPs
 - e. Situation in Kabul
- 7. Education**
 - a. Situation of the national education system since Taliban takeover
 - b. Access to basic education, secondary, and higher education
 - c. Access for IDPs
 - d. Situation in Kabul





8. Child specific living conditions

- a. Child marriage
- b. Child recruitment
- c. Child labour
- d. Trafficking of children

9. Networks of support

- a. Network through family and community
- b. Women without a support network
- c. Orphans and children without a support network
- d. IDPs and returnees from abroad

10. Mobility and travel

- a. Requirements to travel from/to/within Afghanistan (including any legal requirements, travel restrictions, documents, etc).
- b. Situation of and access to airports in Kabul city, Mazar-e Sharif, Herat
- c. Operability of international and domestic flights



