



## UN and NGOs will stay and deliver aid to millions of Afghans in need

Kabul, 24 May 2021 - Humanitarian actors in Afghanistan (the UN and national and international NGOs) are committed to staying and delivering impartial and neutral assistance to millions of people in need. Ongoing conflict, spiralling food insecurity and the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in a near-doubling of people in need in the space of 12 months – up from 9.4 million in January 2020 to 18.4 million in January 2021.

While intra-Afghan negotiations present the opportunity for a lasting peace, humanitarian actors are deeply concerned by continued violence across the country characterised by high levels of civilian casualties and almost 100,000 people internally displaced just this year.

Increasing conflict and bureaucratic impediments have required humanitarian organisations to assess, mitigate and navigate the changing operational space. Despite these challenges, some 165 humanitarian organisations continued working across the country and reached nearly 12 million people with life-saving assistance in 2020. Even with significant funding and operational challenges, 3.7 million people received aid during the first three months of 2021, demonstrating a strong capacity to stay and deliver assistance and protection to people in need, including in challenging environments. In the context of growing need driven by the pandemic, food insecurity, conflict and a looming threat of drought, humanitarian organisations are mobilising to scale-up support and continue to respond wherever assistance is most needed.

In order to achieve the above, humanitarian actors in Afghanistan ask the following of parties to the conflict:

1. Protect civilians, aid workers and civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals in compliance with International Humanitarian Law.
2. Provide unimpeded access and ensure that aid workers and service providers can deliver assistance and services without interference, in accordance with the principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality.

To donors and the international community:

3. Urgently release and increase funding to the [Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan](#).

In 2021, the UN and humanitarian partners in Afghanistan require US \$1.3 billion to help 15.7 million people in need. Only \$166.8 million (13 per cent) of the funding has been received so far. Humanitarian Coordinator Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov says, “The COVID-19 crisis has already had significant consequences on the lives and livelihoods of Afghans and on humanitarian operations. At this critical time, it is more important than ever that we continue to work together to uphold the rights of all people in Afghanistan, including their right to life-saving aid.”

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