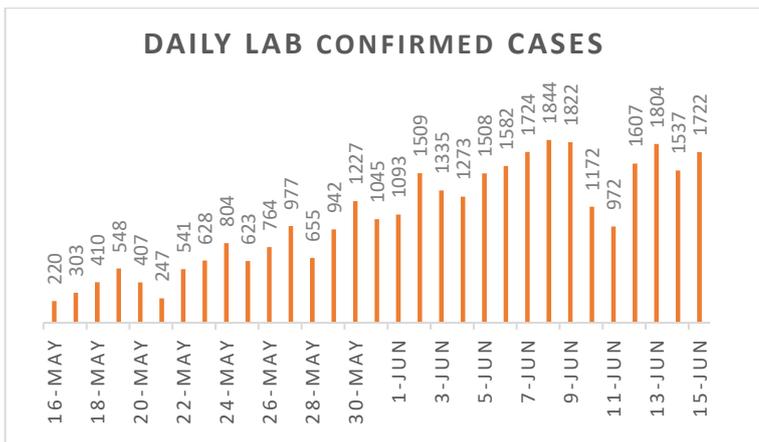


The next Strategic Situation Report will be released on 1 July

### Situation Overview: **UPDATED**

**MoPH Figures:** As of 17 June, **MoPH data** shows that **96,531** people across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan are confirmed to have had COVID-19. An extra **19,903** people have tested positive since the last update two weeks ago. Some **62,397** people have recovered, and **3,842** people have died – at least **92** of fatalities have been healthcare workers. Since the start of the pandemic, only **541,735** tests have been conducted for a population of **40.4** million.



**Cases have steadily risen to alarming levels over the post-Eid period. The daily average number of new cases now far surpasses figures seen during the peak of the first and second waves.** On 8 June alone, 1,844 new cases were reported – the highest number of new cases recorded in a single day since the onset of the pandemic. Overseas testing has confirmed the presence of the variants in Afghanistan. While Afghanistan lacks in-country facilities to test for the variant that originated in India, concern over the variant’s spread is high as many of the patients hospitalised over the last four weeks have a history of recently returning from India or having contact with people who have. Afghanistan now has a weekly test-positivity-rate – positive tests as a percentage of total tests – of 47 per cent during week 24, suggesting overall under-testing of potential cases. 29 laboratories are now operating in Afghanistan – with plans to scale-up to at least one laboratory per province. Due to limited public health resources, lack of people coming forward for testing, as well as the absence of a national death register, confirmed cases of and deaths from COVID-19 are likely to be under-reported overall in Afghanistan.

WHO warns that despite the new surge, widespread complacency and failure to follow public health advice in Afghanistan is creating grave risks in the community with people generally not observing physical distancing or mask-wearing protocols. Given the rapid rise in cases, the Government of Afghanistan has extended a two-week closure for all schools, universities and training courses that started on 29 May, for an additional two weeks. The school closure will be in effect across 16 provinces, including Kabul. Most government offices have moved to essential staff because of the outbreak. The Government has also announced other preventative measures across these 16 provinces, including the banning of mass gatherings and weddings. No other nation-wide lockdown measures are currently in place.

**Vaccination:** Since 8 March, Afghanistan has received 1,668,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines – 468,000 from the COVAX facility, 500,000 directly from the Government of India, and 700,000 from the government of the People's Republic of China. The contribution from China of Sinopharm vaccines arrived in Afghanistan on 10 June. COVID-19 vaccinations through MoPH are open to all those above 18 years of age. Vaccination is currently available in select health facilities and through mobile vaccination teams. People are reminded that mixing of vaccines between doses is not recommended. More than 673,000 people have been vaccinated in Afghanistan through the MoPH programme to date, including some 122,000 health workers, 82,000 teachers, 31,000 people with co-morbidities and 31,000 prisoners. Of those vaccinated, 64.5 per cent were men and 35.5 per cent women. Around 27 per cent of those vaccinated have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Overall, there remains strong concern regarding equitable access to vaccines for Afghans, especially vulnerable groups such as IDPs, returnees and nomadic populations and people living in hard-to-reach areas. IOM reports that vaccination coverage is extremely limited among all migrant populations due to negative perceptions and barriers to accessing care. Greater focus is needed to ensure migrants are vaccinated on pace with settled populations given the impact mobility has as a vector for transmission, especially with the more contagious viral variants present in neighbouring countries.

Additional efforts are also needed to reach women and people living in non-government-controlled areas with vaccines. Vaccine uptake remains slow and continued risk communication and community engagement efforts are needed to ensure high-risk populations and frontline staff understand the benefits of the vaccine and can effectively dispel misinformation. Countering negative rumours about the vaccine is a priority. As cases increase, humanitarian partners continue to urge the Government to ensure laboratories and frontline staff are appropriately equipped and that procured supplies – including vaccines – go to under-resourced health centres across the entire country in a transparent manner, so that life-saving support can be delivered to those most in need.

**COVID-19 response update:** WHO and UNICEF have provided Afghanistan with 3,750 oxygenators since the start of the pandemic. On 9 June, UNICEF received ten oxygen plants and is working closely with MoPH to install them in hospitals across the country. Additional details on the One UN COVID-19 Response can be found [here](#).

**Socio-economic impacts:** In addition to pre-existing problems, the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have translated into a dramatic deterioration in food insecurity. The recently released IPC analysis estimates that 12.2 million people – almost one third of the population - are in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. Food prices are already higher than normal due to COVID-19 may increase further in some places due to conflict and water scarcity. Water scarcity is already being seen in a number of areas.

### **Cross Border:** **UPDATED**

**Border Crossings:** Since 29 April, the Iranian Government has imposed an indefinite lockdown with border closures. The border remains open only to commercial traffic and movement of documented nationals returning home to Afghanistan. According to the Border Monitoring Team of the Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR), a total of 22,950 Afghanistan nationals returned from Iran through the Milak and Islam Qala border crossing sites between 4 and 10 June. Of these, 17,124 people returned voluntarily and 18,242 were deported. Since the start of the year, a historically significant influx of 531,797 people returned to Afghanistan from Iran – with 54 per cent being deportees – sparking new concerns about transmission of COVID-19 variants and overall absorption capacity of existing health resources. This historical influx of people from Iran constitutes 82 per cent of the projected annual return for 2021 and is well above 2019 (+310,000) and 2020 (+200,000) return levels compared to the same period of the last two years. This continues a record level of return with over 1.4 million people returning from Iran since January 2020. A sharp drop in remittances to Afghanistan has also been observed.

The border with Pakistan reopened on 20 May after a two-week lockdown by Pakistan. Between 4 and 10 June 2021, a total of 383 undocumented Afghans returned from Pakistan through the Torkham and Spin Boldak borders (362 returned voluntarily and 21 were deported). The total humanitarian returns from Pakistan in 2021 remain low with 5,959 undocumented returns and 348 refugee returns.

Additionally, there have been a total of 8,443 deportations from Turkey between 1 January and 12 June 2021 including 347 unaccompanied migrant children.

### **More Information – Links:** **UPDATED**

#### WHO

- [WHO's latest information on COVID-19](#)
- [Considerations for implementing and adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19](#)
- [Weekly Operational Update on COVID-19](#)
- [Young people and COVID-19](#)
- [The ACT Accelerator partnership welcomes commitment of 870 million vaccine doses and calls for more investment in all tools to end the pandemic](#)
- [WHO EMRO Weekly Epidemiological Monitor: Volume 14](#)
- [COVID-19: WHO EMRO Biweekly Situation Report #11](#)
- [WHO announces simple, easy-to-say labels for SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Interest and Concern](#)
- [Polio Eradication Strategy 2022-2026: Delivering on a Promise](#)
- [Global Leaders from Health and Energy pave the way for a Clean and Healthy Future for All](#)
- [Afghanistan: Attacks on Health Care \(January 01 - May 31 2021\)](#)

#### Government of Afghanistan:

- [Ministry of Public Health: COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

#### Inter-Agency Standing Committee

- [IASC-endorsed COVID-19 guidance – new materials available](#)
- [Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Aspects of COVID-19 Outbreak \(available in English, Dari, Pashto\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions: The COVAX Humanitarian Buffer](#)

#### UN and others

- [Relief Web: COVID-19 Response Page](#)
- [OCHA: Global Humanitarian Overview 2021, May Update](#)
- [OCHA: Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 Progress Report: Final Progress Report, 22 February 2021](#)
- [UN: Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 \(September\)](#)
- [OCHA: Asia Pacific COVID-19 - Humanitarian Data Portal](#)
- [OCHA: Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2018-2021 \(2020 Year End Monitoring Report\)](#)
- [OCHA: Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan - 2020 Quarter Three Dashboard \(Jan - Sep 2020\)](#)
- [OCHA: Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021 \(December 2020\)](#)
- [OCHA: Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 \(January 2021\)](#)
- [OCHA: Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Planned Response 2021](#)

- UN SG: Together, 'We Learn, Heal, Shine', Secretary-General Says, Reiterating Commitment to Displaced People in World Refugee Day Message
- UN: COVID-19 Threatens to Push Another 9 Million Minors into Child Labour by 2022, Deputy Secretary-General Warns, Calls for Protection, Multi-Sector Responses
- GAVI, UNICEF, WHO: G7 announces pledges of 870 million COVID-19 VACCINE doses, of which at least half to be delivered by the end of 2021
- FAO: Child labour in agriculture is on the rise again, with further deterioration foreseen due to COVID-19
- FAO: Food Outlook - Biannual Report on Global Food Markets
- UNICEF, WHO: School reopening can't wait
- UNICEF: Maternal, newborn and infant care during COVID-19
- UN Women: Set women at the heart of recovery decisions and processes
- UNAIDS: What responses to HIV and COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific led by civil society can teach us
- WFP: WFP's COVID-19 response one year on
- IOM: DTM (COVID-19) Global Mobility Restriction Overview
- IOM: COVID-19 Impact On Points Of Entry Bi-Weekly Analysis
- IOM: COVID-19: Impact On Key Locations of Internal Mobility
- IOM: Addressing Child Labour through a Protection Response for Undocumented Returnees
- IOM, UNDP: Empowering Migrants is Key to COVID-19 Recovery
- ILO, UNICEF: Child labour rises to 160 million – first increase in two decades
- UNFPA: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women and Girls with disabilities
- UNFPA: Achieving Transformative Results in the Covid-19 Pandemic
- UNFPA: Delivering in a pandemic: Annual Report 2020
- UNDRR: Assessment Study of the Role of NDMAs in COVID-19 Crisis Response and Impact of COVID-19 on NDMAs Operations
- UNHCR: Asia and the Pacific COVID-19 External Update
- UNHCR: Global legal community steps up for refugees amid pandemic, providing 165,000 hours of free legal aid
- EU, Govt. Canada, Govt. France, +5 more: Carbis Bay G7 Health Declaration
- Govt. UK: UK to donate 100 million coronavirus vaccine doses
- World Bank: Statement on COVID-19 Response and Vaccinations for Developing Countries
- War Child: Innovation in times of crisis
- SC: Kids in world's poorest countries lost 66% more of lifetime at school than richer peers
- ActionAid: Bringing a feminist lens to the Grand Bargain 2.0
- MSF: Governments off track on providing tools to prevent TB, the second biggest infectious disease killer after COVID-19
- Caritas: Localisation in Covid19 - Experience of Caritas national organisations with humanitarian funding, partnerships and coordination in the Covid19 pandemic
- CaLP: Cash and vouchers can improve health outcomes – but you must understand the challenges first
- ENN: Field Exchange No. 65
- BMJ: Falling aid for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health in the lead-up to the COVID-19 pandemic
- AHA Centre: Study on localisation of disaster management during pandemic
- INEE: Mind the gap: the state of girls' education in crisis and conflict
- AKAH: Five lessons for Participatory Planning during a Pandemic
- IIED: Better cities after COVID-19: Transformative urban recovery in the global South
- Sphere: Applying humanitarian standards to fight COVID-19
- Sphere: The Sphere standards and the Coronavirus response
- ACLED: Regional Overview – South Asia and Afghanistan
- IRC: When COVID-19 Vaccines Are Not Enough
- USAID: Afghanistan - Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 (June 11, 2021)
- IRC: Millions at risk of displacement as Afghanistan faces extreme drought, warns IRC
- NRC: Running out of time - A looming drought in Afghanistan
- MSF: The Continued Struggle to Access Medical Care in Afghanistan
- SC: Afghanistan's children are paying the price of global COVID-19 vaccine rollout failures, warns Save the Children

For further information, please contact:

Dr. David Lai, Health Cluster Coordinator, Health Emergencies Programme, WHO, [laidavid@who.int](mailto:laidavid@who.int), Tel. (+93) 078 176 4906 (for Technical Expertise)

Danielle Parry, Head of Strategy and Coordination, OCHA, [parryd@un.org](mailto:parryd@un.org), Tel. (+93) 079 300 1124