

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Iran 10213.1

Title: Food Assistance and Education Incentive for Afghan and Iraqi Refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Duration: 24 months (1 January 2009 – 31 December 2010)

Number of beneficiaries: 38,000

WFP food tonnage: 12,984 mt

WFP food cost: US\$5,482,104

Total cost to WFP: US\$8,995,481

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) is a follow up phase to PRRO 10213.0, which assisted Afghan and Iraqi refugees in Iran from 2003 to 2008. This operation will address the food needs of 38,000 Afghan and Iraqi refugees through a relief component of general feeding and a recovery component of food for education.

The governments of Iran and Afghanistan have been actively promoting the repatriation of refugees. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an estimated 1.5 million Afghans and 500,000 Iraqis have voluntarily returned home from Iran since 2002. Out of those, some 859,200 Afghans and 20,400 Iraqi refugees have benefited from UNHCR's repatriation assistance. In 2008, only 3,500 Afghans were assisted to return home from Iran – the lowest in years.

Notwithstanding these efforts, 950,000 Afghans and 50,000 Iraqi refugees still reside in Iran, representing a large burden for the local economy. The Government of Iran has designated specific areas where refugees can reside. 32,000 Iraqi and Afghan refugees currently live in 16 settlements located in these designated areas. An additional 6,000 registered refugees who were residing outside are expected to relocate to these settlements in the near future.

A comprehensive joint assessment mission (JAM) undertaken in June 2008 concluded that the refugees living in settlements had few means of subsistence and were therefore in continued need of humanitarian assistance. Restrictive labour laws limit their possibilities to find unskilled wage labour. In light of this, this PRRO will cover the needs of 38,000 Iraqi and Afghan refugees living in settlements for the next two years.

Through its relief component, this project will address WFP Strategic Objective SO 1 - Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies. By so doing, it will ensure that the basic food needs of the refugees are met. The recovery component ("Support to Girls' Education") will contribute to SO 3 - Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict and post-disaster situations. More specifically, the "Support to Girls' Education" programme will help stabilize or increase enrolment and completion rates of refugee girls in primary and secondary schools in line with WFP gender policy.

1. SITUATION ANALYSIS AND SCENARIO(S)

The overall context

- 1) Iran has been hosting Afghan refugees for 29 years with the first wave of asylum seekers coming to Iran as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan by the soviet troops in 1979 and the escalating war until 1993. A second major influx of Afghan refugees occurred during the Taliban regime from 1994 to 2001. The Government of Iran has maintained its position of promoting the repatriation of Afghans to their homeland since the relative peace and security was established in 2003 in Afghanistan, and has repeatedly stressed the financial burden of refugees on the country's economy and the need for greater international assistance to reduce this strain. Integration of Afghan refugees into the Iranian society has never been viewed as a solution. Many Iraqi refugees fled the conflict in the region during the 1980s and settle in Iran. The vast majority of Iraqi Kurds in the northwest of Iran sought refuge in Iran during the first and second gulf wars. UNHCR and WFP have been assisting Afghan refugees since the 1980s and Iraqis since 1991. The proposed operation is a follow up to the current PRRO 10213.0.
- 2) Since 2007, the Government of Iran has designated specific areas where refugees can reside. 32,000 Iraqi and Afghan refugees currently live in 16 settlements located in these designated areas. An additional 6,000 registered refugees who were residing outside are expected to relocate to these settlements in the near future. In light of this, the proposed PRRO will cover the needs of 38,000 Iraqi and Afghan refugees deemed in continued need of assistance.
- 3) Following the relative peace and political stability achieved in Afghanistan, a tripartite agreement was signed in 2002 by the governments of Iran and Afghanistan and UNHCR, outlining a four-year programme for the repatriation of 2,000,000 Afghan refugees by the end of 2006.
- 4) The target of 500,000 returnees per year was not reached during 2002 and the following years witnessed fluctuations in numbers. The peak year of repatriation was 2004, with a total of 377,542 Afghans returning home. In 2005, only 63,624 Afghans returned. The voluntary return movement exhausted itself in late 2006 due to a combination of factors, including the deteriorating security situation and increased food insecurity in Afghanistan and the socio-economic challenges faced by the country.
- 5) Between 2003 and 2005, the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi refugees repatriated voluntarily but the numbers of returns dropped dramatically as from 2006. Currently, 54,000 registered Iraqi refugees live in Iran. While the majority of them reside in urban areas, 5,000 Iraqi refugees are hosted in settlements.

The food security and nutrition situation

- 6) The 2008 JAM found that, in many cases, the food security situation of the refugees residing in settlements had deteriorated since the 2003 Household Food Economy Survey. Food consumption among refugees was barely adequate. An analysis of the household food consumption and food expenditure clearly showed the importance of food assistance for nearly 75 percent of the refugee households residing in settlements. The JAM found that the situation was made worse by the absence of social services and an increase in food prices.
- 7) Refugees living in settlements remain highly vulnerable. They have few means of subsistence and fairly irregular incomes. Unskilled wage labour, seasonal labour and petty trade are the most common sources of income for the majority of refugees living in Iran. However, labour opportunities are few and far between. The tightening of labour laws, with heavy fines levied on employers, has discouraged companies and individuals from hiring Afghans. Iraqi Kurd and Arab refugees seem to have better options for income-generating activities and, due to their assimilation of ethnicity, are generally better accepted by the local population.
- 8) The food insecurity has been further exacerbated by the high food and fuel price crisis which has resulted in an increase in the cost of living with an annual inflation rate of 28 percent¹. Food expenditure (which has increased at the national level by over 50 percent in 2008 as a result of the recent food prices increase) accounts on average for about 45 percent of the overall household expenditures for Afghan and Iraqi refugees followed by expenditures for electricity,

¹ The Economist Intelligence Unit, December 2008.

fuel/heating, medical services, clothing and transport. Therefore, all refugees living in settlements are in continued need of humanitarian assistance.

- 9) Although no cases of severe malnutrition were reported among the refugees living in settlements, the JAM determined that the current recording system was not adequately capturing the information. Therefore, the mission recommended that a system be set up to compile and analyse nutritional data collected at health posts.
- 10) In addition, the mission noted large differences in socio-economic status between Afghan and Iraqi refugees as well as between refugees in each settlement. In some of the visited refugee settlements, the mission recommended urgent actions to improve the shelter and sanitation situation. This was particularly the case in two of the largest Afghan settlements in Kerman province, where families are still living in tents and where the sewage facility is in urgent need of repair. UNHCR is planning to allocate additional funds in 2009 to Iran's Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA) to undertake these improvements.
- 11) The illiteracy rate especially among Afghan women was considerably high in 1999 and there was a disparity of 30 percent between the absolute primary school enrolment rates for girls and boys. Although primary schools were available in the settlements, families were reluctant to send their girls to school, and would instead teach them a craft such as kelim weaving and embroidery, which could result later into income generation for the family. In response, WFP initiated its "Support to Girls' Education" programme in 1999, providing a tin of oil to refugee girls attending primary school. This initiative proved to be very successful to increase girls' enrolment in primary schools but did not address the gender disparity at the secondary level. In July 2008, the gap between absolute enrolment rate of girls and boys at secondary level was an alarming level of 63 percent. Stakeholder interviews conducted during a monitoring mission in the settlements have indicated that refugee households were in favour of continuing girls' education at secondary level and requested for an extension of WFP assistance to girls attending secondary schools.

Scenarios

- 12) It is envisaged that the relief and recovery assistance to the Afghan and Iraqi settlement-based refugees will continue for the next two years. Under the relief component, Iraqi and Afghan refugees will receive a general food ration to ensure that their basic food needs are met and that their nutritional status is maintained at an acceptable level. The recovery component will contribute to stabilizing girls' enrolment and completion rates at primary level and increasing girls' enrolment and completion rates at secondary level.

2. POLICIES, CAPACITIES AND ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHERS

Policies, capacities and actions of the Government

- 13) Refugees residing in settlements benefit from the basic health care and education structures established in all settlements. BAFIA's main focus of attention remains the repatriation of the remaining one million Afghans and Iraqis living outside the designated areas. BAFIA has acknowledged that the settlement-based refugees, having resided the longest in Iran, will be the last ones to repatriate. Hence, the Government, through BAFIA, has repeatedly requested WFP to continue food assistance to these refugees until they repatriate. This request was reiterated during the JAM mission conducted in June 2008.

Policies, capacities and actions of other major actors

- 14) Under the general auspices of the Ministry of Interior and BAFIA, several line ministries are involved in matters related to refugees. The Ministry of Education employs the teachers of schools in the refugee settlements. The Ministry of Health is responsible for managing and staffing the clinics and health care centres located in the settlements. UNHCR is providing

financial support through BAFIA to maintain acceptable health and educational services in the refugee settlements and maintain the camp sanitation and sewage systems. UNHCR remains committed to addressing the most pressing humanitarian relief needs of the Afghan and Iraqi refugees, and providing them guidance and counselling. The High Commissioner reiterated this commitment during a recent visit to Iran in September 2008.

Coordination

- 15) Regular BAFIA, UNHCR and WFP coordination meetings at the policy and operational levels will continue to monitor the trend of repatriation and determine the level of assistance during the next two years:
- Bi-annual joint meetings will take place at the senior management level of BAFIA, WFP and UNHCR with the aim of verifying the relevance of assistance and addressing new situations as they arise.
 - Monthly coordination meetings at an operational level among BAFIA, UNHCR and WFP will review intervention mechanisms and address any pending issues.

3. OBJECTIVES OF WFP ASSISTANCE

- 16) In line with WFP's Mission Statement, and subject to the availability of resources, the PRRO aims to address the basic food needs of the refugees, strengthen their coping mechanisms, and support their efforts to achieve food security. The objectives of this operation are to:
- i. Ensure that basic food needs of the refugees in settlements are met (SO1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies);
 - ii. Stabilize enrolment and completion rates of refugee girls attending primary schools and increase the enrolment rates of girls attending secondary schools, whilst ensuring the female teachers' participation in classes (SO3- Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster situations).

4. WFP RESPONSE STRATEGY

Nature and effectiveness of food-security related assistance to date

- 17) Under the PRRO 10213.0, WFP has provided a general food ration to Afghan and Iraqi refugees living in designated settlements from 2003 to 2008. In addition, WFP started its "Support to Girls' Education" programme in 1999 to address the gender disparity amongst refugee children by providing a tin of oil to 2,221 refugee girls attending primary schools in the settlements. This scheme has proven to be extremely successful and has resulted in a dramatic reduction of the gap between absolute enrolment rate of girls and boys (from 30 percent in 1999 to 12.5 percent in 2007). Since male teachers were culturally not acceptable to the refugee community, 170 female teachers were provided with a take home ration of oil as an incentive to teach in the refugee settlements, often situated in remote areas.

Strategy outline

- 18) *Relief component:* Under the proposed PRRO 10213.1, the provision of a general food ration will ensure that the basic food needs of 38,000 Afghan and Iraqi refugees living in the settlements are met. In line with the JAM recommendations, WFP will provide a food basket consisting of wheat flour, rice, sugar, pulses and oil.
- 19) *Recovery component:* Continuation of the "Support to Girls' Education" programme, which proved successful during the previous PRRO, will stabilize enrolment and completion rate of primary school girls and enhance the commitment of female teachers in the settlements. In line with the findings of recent monitoring missions, WFP will extend its "Support to Girls' Education" programme to refugee girls attending secondary schools with the aim of increasing enrolment and completion rate in secondary schools.

Handover strategy

- 20) Since the Government of Iran does not regard integration into the Iranian society an option, refugees are likely to require continued assistance until they return home. In the long-term, the exit strategy will therefore depend on the security and economic situation in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the mid-term, discussions are taking place to conduct a vulnerability assessment in early 2010 and screen refugee households to determine on a case-by-case basis whether they will remain eligible for food assistance or not. Meanwhile, all refugees living in settlements will continue to receive general food rations.

5. BENEFICIARIES AND TARGETING

General Food Distributions

- 21) WFP is targeting 38,000 Iraqi and Afghan refugees living in 16 settlements (4,833 Iraqis in ten settlements and 33,167 Afghans in six settlements) located in 11 provinces (Bushehr, Fars, Kerman, Kermanshah, Khorasan, Kurdistan, Lorestan, Markazi, Semnan, W.Azerbaijan and Zanjan). Approximately 50 percent of the population is female.

Support to Girls' Education

- 22) 2,810 schoolgirls attending primary and secondary schools and 190 teachers will receive 4 kg of vegetable oil per month for their regular participation. While primary schools are all located within one of the 16 refugee settlements, the secondary schools will be either in the settlements or nearby. In settlements where secondary schools are available, the modality of oil distribution will be the same as for primary schools. Where there is no secondary school, refugee girls will attend a secondary school in the close vicinity of the settlement. To facilitate girls' participation, transportation will be arranged by BAFIA. Documentation will be obtained from the school authorities on a monthly basis specifying girls' regular attendance.

Table 1 gives information on the number of beneficiaries per settlement.

Table1: Beneficiary figures per settlement

No.	Settlement	Province	Population	Primary School Girls/ teachers	Secondary school girls
1	Soltanieh	Zanjan	35	0	0
2	Ziveh	W.Azerbaijan	1,350	100	50
3	Dilzeh	"	286	20	5
4	Bezileh	"	132	7	0
5	Varmahang	Kurdestan	17	5	0
6	Kangavar	"	84	8	0
7	Songhor	"	101	7	0
	Total Iraqi Kurds		2,005	147	55
8	Abazar	Lorestan	850	60	0
9	Jahrom	Fars	1,800	210	50
10	Bani Najar /Ansar	Khuzestan	178	21	0
	Total Iraqi Arabs		2,828	291	50
11	Mohajerin	Semnan	4,790	160	20
12	Dalaki	Bushehr	2,200	160	30
13	Rafsanjan	Kerman	6,400	470	190
14	Bardsir	Kerman	6,900	570	250
15	Saveh	Markazi	5,913	200	25
16	Torbat-e-jam	Khorasan	6,964	232	150
	Total Afghans		33,167	1,792	665
	Grand Total		38,000	*2,230	770

* Out of 2,230 beneficiaries in primary level, 170 are teachers.

** Out of 770 beneficiaries in secondary level, 20 are teachers.

6. NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RATIIONS

- 23) A basic food basket of wheat flour, rice, pulses, sugar and vegetable oil will be provided to Afghan and Iraqi refugees. In line with the 2008 JAM recommendations, the general food ration was rounded up in order to improve the effectiveness of the distribution process and reduce distribution losses. The energy and protein supplied by the revised food ration have increased by 3 and 6 percent, respectively. Since refugees have access to other sources of food, the food basket is limited to 1,738 kcal per person per day, which is considered a contribution towards their needs (83 percent of daily requirements) rather than a full coverage of minimum requirements.
- 24) Iraqi refugee households have been assisted by a non governmental organisation (NGO) with ovens for baking bread. In the absence of ovens and fuel in Afghan settlements, Afghan refugees will receive their wheat flour in the form of baked bread to reduce the negative environmental impact of gathering firewood. A nominal fee will be charged for baking the bread in the settlements' bakeries.

- 25) Primary and secondary school girls and female teachers will receive 4 kg of vegetable oil each month during the nine-month school year.

Table 2 gives the ration scale for all categories of beneficiaries.

TABLE 2: MONTHLY FOOD RATION (kg/person/month)					
Activities	Wheat Flour	Rice	Veg. Oil	Pulses	Sugar
RELIEF (General feeding)	9.0	3.0	0.5	1.0	0.5
RECOVERY ("Support to Girls' Education")	0	0	4.0	0	0

Table 3 gives a breakdown of beneficiaries and food requirements for 24 months.

TABLE 3: BENEFICIARIES AND FOOD REQUIREMENTS (24months)								
Activities	No. of beneficiaries	Duration of assistance (months)	Wheat flour (mt)	Rice (mt)	Pulses (mt)	Sugar (mt)	Veg. Oil (mt)	Total (mt)
A. General Food Distribution								
Afghan Refugees	33,167	24	7,164	2,388	796	398	398	11,144
Iraqi refugees	4,833	24	1,044	348	116	58	58	1,624
B. Support to Girls' Education								
Afghan refugees	2,457	18	0	0	0	0	177	177
Iraqi refugees	543	18	0	0	0	0	39	39
Total	38,000		8,208	2,736	912	456	672	12,984

7. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Participation

- 26) Refugee councils in each settlement have always participated in the distribution process. Since 2005, refugee councils have taken over responsibility for food storage and distribution. This mechanism, which has proven to empower refugees, will remain in place under the new PRRO. Each refugee council has at least one female member, representing the views and needs of the women refugees. However, women do not participate in the distribution process due to cultural unacceptability. WFP will endeavour to register the 6,000 refugees expected to relocate to one of the settlements under the name of the woman in order to gradually decrease the sensitivity of the participation of Afghan women in society. Opportunities for empowering and developing the capacity of women refugees will be jointly pursued by UNHCR and WFP in consultation with BAFIA.

Partners

- 27) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and BAFIA are responsible for coordinating all matters related to refugees and international aid agencies in the country. All assistance, including food, is channelled through BAFIA and coordinated with MFA. The general management of the settlement is the responsibility of BAFIA. Although food storage and handling fall under the refugee councils' responsibility, the councils closely coordinate with BAFIA authorities in the settlements and at provincial level. As in the past, WFP will continue to work in partnership with UNHCR and BAFIA.

Joint monitoring visits by WFP, UNHCR and BAFIA are conducted twice a year in all 16 settlements. The monitoring team will ensure that refugees have access to adequate quantities and quality of food, and that distributions are carried out in an appropriate and timely manner. Food handling, recording and reporting processes will also be reviewed to ensure that they are in line with WFP guiding principles. An assessment of warehouse conditions as well as physical stock count of WFP commodities will also be undertaken during the monitoring visits. A new tripartite agreement outlining the roles and responsibilities of BAFIA, UNHCR and WFP will be prepared early 2009.

Non-food inputs

- 28) Non-food inputs in the form of shelter, education and health care assistance will be supplied by UNHCR and the Government of Iran.

Capacity-building

- 29) Since food distributions are now managed by the refugee councils, efforts to build their capacity will ultimately increase their effectiveness and efficiency. Warehouse managers will receive refresher courses from monitoring staff during warehouse visits. WFP country office will meet with the women's refugee council in order to identify needs and opportunities for capacity building.

Environmental concerns

- 30) The Government has established bakeries in Afghan settlements in order to eliminate the need for collecting firewood and avoid possible damage to the environment.

Logistics arrangements

- 31) Should cash contributions be available, WFP would be able to purchase food locally or regionally at competitive prices and without disrupting the local market. Wheat flour will be purchased either internationally or locally from the Government Trading Company (GTC) where prices are competitive.
- 32) The main entry port for most imported commodities is Bandar Abbas. From there, commercial transporters will undertake inland transportation by road. Local transport capacity is adequate. In the past, short-listed transporters have delivered goods to settlements throughout the country. No warehouse is required at the port because containers are de-stuffed at the port and loaded onto trucks for direct delivery as soon as customs clearance is completed. Responsibility for customs clearance of WFP-imported commodities lies with BAFIA. WFP commodities are stored in government-owned warehouses in the settlements and distributed on a monthly basis.
- 33) The projected landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) rate averages US\$74 per ton, including the cost of emptying containers at Bandar Abbas, loading onto trucks, supervision over loading and issuance of WFP waybills, transport to extended delivery points (EDPs) and offloading as well as periodic fumigation.
- 34) All food commodities are tracked using WFP corporate tracking system (COMPAS) from the point of loading to final distribution in the settlements. Two COMPAS sites are installed in Tehran and Bandar Abbas.

8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 35) In line with WFP results-based management approach, reporting formats and checklists have been revised to enhance the existing reporting system. Information on beneficiaries is sorted by beneficiary groups and by gender. BAFIA will provide information for the preparation of monthly distribution reports and quarterly activity reports using WFP checklists.
- 36) WFP, together with UNHCR and BAFIA, will conduct joint field visits twice a year to validate the information. During the visits the team will undertake household interviews to cross-check the accuracy of the food ration and verify the beneficiaries' awareness of their food entitlements. The team will also visit health posts and schools to collect relevant information.
- 37) The monitoring and performance indicators include:
- number of refugees who received food ration, by gender and by activity;
 - Household food consumption score;
 - net enrolment rate of primary school students disaggregated by gender;
 - retention rate of primary school students disaggregated by gender;
 - net enrolment rate of secondary school students disaggregated by gender;
 - retention rate of secondary school students disaggregated by gender;
 - statistics on food distribution by commodity and activity; and
 - timeliness and regularity of food distribution in settlements.
- 38) The country office will conduct an internal mid-term evaluation of the operation to determine its efficiency and effectiveness and make any necessary adjustments or improvements.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Risk assessment

- 39) The major risk factor that could affect the project's implementation is a possible sudden deterioration in the security situation in Afghanistan and Iraq. This could result in a further influx of refugees in Iran.

Contingency Planning

- 40) WFP, as part of the United Nations Country Team, has regularly conducted contingency planning exercises. Contingency plans for any potential influx of additional Afghan and Iraqi refugees into Iran are available and can be updated based on changing circumstances.

10. SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 41) A United Nations security plan is in place and updated on a regular basis. The country office in Tehran (Security Phase One) is Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS) compliant. Most of the settlements are in the border areas, where Phase Two is in force. High frequency radios are installed in all WFP vehicles; WFP staff has been provided with very high frequency (VHF) handsets, in line with the United Nations MOSS.

11. RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Director is requested to approve the proposed protracted relief and recovery operation PRRO 10213.1.

APPROVAL

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Josette Sheeran
Executive Director

Date:

LIST OF ANNEXES

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ANNEX IA

WFP PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN

	Quantity (mt)	Average cost (US\$) per mt	Value (US \$)
COSTS			
A. Direct operational costs			
Wheat Flour	8,208	279	2,285,928
Rice	2,736	526	1,439,136
Veg. Oil	672	1,324	889,728
Pulses	912	691	629,736
Sugar	456	521	237,576
...			
...			
...			
...			
Total commodities	12,984		5,482,104
External transport			1,016,523
Landside transport			
ITSH			
Total LTSH			955,890
Other direct operational costs			
			Total direct operational costs
			7,454,517
B. Direct support costs (see table below for details)			952,474
C. Indirect support costs (7 percent of total direct costs)			588,489
TOTAL WFP COSTS			8,995,481

ANNEX IB

DIRECT SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS (*dollars*)

Staff	
International professional staff	0
National professional officers	189,014
National general service staff	373,080
Temporary assistance	139,208
Overtime	23,040
Staff duty travel	24,000
Staff training and development	40,540
Subtotal	788,882
Office expenses and other recurrent costs	
Rental of facility	66,000
Utilities (general)	2,000
Office supplies	2,000
Communication and IT services	2,000
Insurance	2,000
Equipment repair and maintenance	2,000
Vehicle maintenance and running cost	5,000
Other office expenses	3,000
United Nations Organizations Services	
Subtotal	84,000
Equipment and other fixed costs	
Furniture, tools and equipment	20,000
Vehicles	15,192
TC/IT equipment	44,400
Subtotal	79,592
TOTAL DIRECT SUPPORT COSTS	952,474