

PLACE

Kabul

DATE

28 March 2021

The Republic of Korea donates 300,000 KF94 face masks to protect vulnerable Afghans from the COVID19 pandemic

Afghanistan

On 18 March 2021, UNHCR in Afghanistan received a consignment of 300,000 KF94 face masks donated by the Government of the Republic of Korea (RoK) to fight the spread of the COVID19 pandemic in Afghanistan. This donation is part of a larger donation of 3.6 million KF94 masks, provided by RoK for the COVID19 pandemic response across UNHCR operations in the Middle East and North Africa, and in Asia and the Pacific. UNHCR appreciates the continuous support of RoK to its response to the needs of persons of concern in Afghanistan.

“Since 2014, UNHCR Afghanistan has received contributions amounting to USD 28.5 million from the Government of Korea,” said Indrika Ratwatte, UNHCR’s Director for Asia and the Pacific. “The generosity of the Government and people of Korea, and their solidarity with Afghanistan, allows us to stay and deliver vital assistance,” he added.

As of 28 March, there were 56,290 COVID19 positive cases and 2,469 related deaths reported by the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). In recent days, MoPH has confirmed cases of a COVID19 variant in the country, making preventative measures even more important. “A friend in need is a friend indeed. This shipment is a small token of friendship and empathy of the Korean people vis-à-vis the people of Afghanistan. I am confident that Afghanistan will overcome the daunting challenges of today, too, as Koreans have been doing. Korea will continue to stand by Afghanistan,” said Taeho CHOI, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Afghanistan.

UNHCR and the MoPH will distribute this generous donation of 300,000 KF94 masks to frontline staff in isolation wards, ICU units and laboratories in isolation centres (hospitals) across the country. Some 150,000 of these masks will be distributed to vulnerable refugees, displaced persons, returnees, and host communities across the country.

Afghanistan has to date received some 968,000 doses of the COVISHIELD vaccine. Alongside vaccination efforts by the Government of Afghanistan, for 2021, UNHCR has prioritized investments in livelihoods activities such as business start-up grants and business incubation activities and cash-based interventions to provide a lifeline to displaced persons who have lost their means of subsistence, and to the communities hosting them. Furthermore, UNHCR is also responding to the COVID19 pandemic through risk communication campaigns, construction of health centres, schools, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and distribution of personal protective equipment and educational

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supplies. These interventions align with the operational framework of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees which aims to facilitate voluntary repatriation, enable sustainable reintegration, and assist host communities.

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