

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS OVERVIEW

December 2020



INTRODUCTION

ACAPS Humanitarian Access Overview provides a snapshot of the most challenging contexts for humanitarian access

Crisis-affected populations in more than 60 countries are not getting the humanitarian assistance they need because of access constraints. Four new countries – **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Eswatini, and Vietnam** – have entered the ranking since the last [ACAPS Humanitarian Access report](#), released in July 2020.

Among the indicators, ‘physical constraints’ and ‘restrictions and obstruction to services and assistance’ are the most common challenges.

ACAPS analysts considered nine variables to rank and compare humanitarian access levels worldwide. This report presents the score boards (see [page five](#)) for all the countries assessed. Analytical narratives are provided only for countries scored between levels 3 to 5 – i.e. those classified as having high, very high, or extreme constraints.

Extreme Constraints ●

ERITREA
LIBYA
SYRIA
YEMEN

Very High Constraints ●

AFGHANISTAN
BANGLADESH
CAMEROON
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)
ETHIOPIA
IRAQ
MALI
MYANMAR
NIGERIA
PALESTINE
SOMALIA
SOUTH SUDAN
VENEZUELA

High Constraints ●

AZERBAIJAN
BURKINA FASO
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)
CHAD
COLOMBIA
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (DPRK)
HONDURAS
INDIA
IRAN
LEBANON
MOZAMBIQUE
NICARAGUA
NIGER
PAKISTAN
SUDAN
TURKEY
UKRAINE

TRENDS

This is a comparison of the overall level of humanitarian access between the last report produced in July 2020 and the current situation:



Humanitarian access has deteriorated

AZERBAIJAN
CAMEROON
ETHIOPIA
HONDURAS
LIBYA
MOZAMBIQUE
NICARAGUA



Humanitarian access has remained stable

AFGHANISTAN	NIGER
BANGLADESH	NIGERIA
BURKINA FASO	PAKISTAN
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)	PALESTINE
CHAD	SOMALIA
COLOMBIA	SOUTH SUDAN
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)	SUDAN
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (DPRK)	SYRIA
ERITREA	TURKEY
INDIA	UKRAINE
IRAQ	VENEZUELA
LEBANON	YEMEN
MALI	
MYANMAR	



Humanitarian access has improved

IRAN



INTRODUCTION

HOW ARE THE ACCESS LEVELS CALCULATED?

Our methodology groups nine indicators under three dimensions:

PILLAR 1 Access of people in need to humanitarian aid

1. Denial of existence of humanitarian needs or entitlements to assistance.
2. Restriction and obstruction of access to services and assistance.

PILLAR 2 Access of humanitarian actors to affected population

3. Impediments to enter the country (bureaucratic and administrative).
4. Restriction of movement within the country (impediments to freedom of movement and/or administrative restrictions).
5. Interference into implementation of humanitarian activities.
6. Violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities, and assets.

PILLAR 3 Security and physical constraints

7. Ongoing insecurity or hostilities affecting humanitarian assistance.
8. Presence of landmines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), explosive remnants of war (ERW), and unexploded ordnance (UXOs).
9. Physical constraints in the environment (obstacles related to terrain, climate, lack of infrastructure, etc.).

Each indicator is scored on a 0 to 3 scale.

Where there is no information for a specific indicator, it is logged as «Information Gap».

- Extreme constraints
- Very high access constraints
- High access constraints
- Moderate access constraints
- Low access constraints
- No significant access constraints

WHAT ARE OUR SOURCES?

The Humanitarian Access methodology uses a range of qualitative information sources together with relevant datasets. It collates these in a structured way in order to quantify the level of humanitarian access. ACAPS analysts collect information from a range of credible and publicly available sources, including UN agencies, governments, international and local NGOs, international and local media, and data collected from humanitarians working in the field.

Some of the most relied-upon sources are:

- Aid Worker Security Database by Humanitarian Outcomes
- Aid in Danger project by Insecurity Insight
- Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)
- OCHA's Humanitarian Needs Overviews and situation reports
- Landmine Monitor

[Read more about our Access methodology](#)

LIMITATIONS

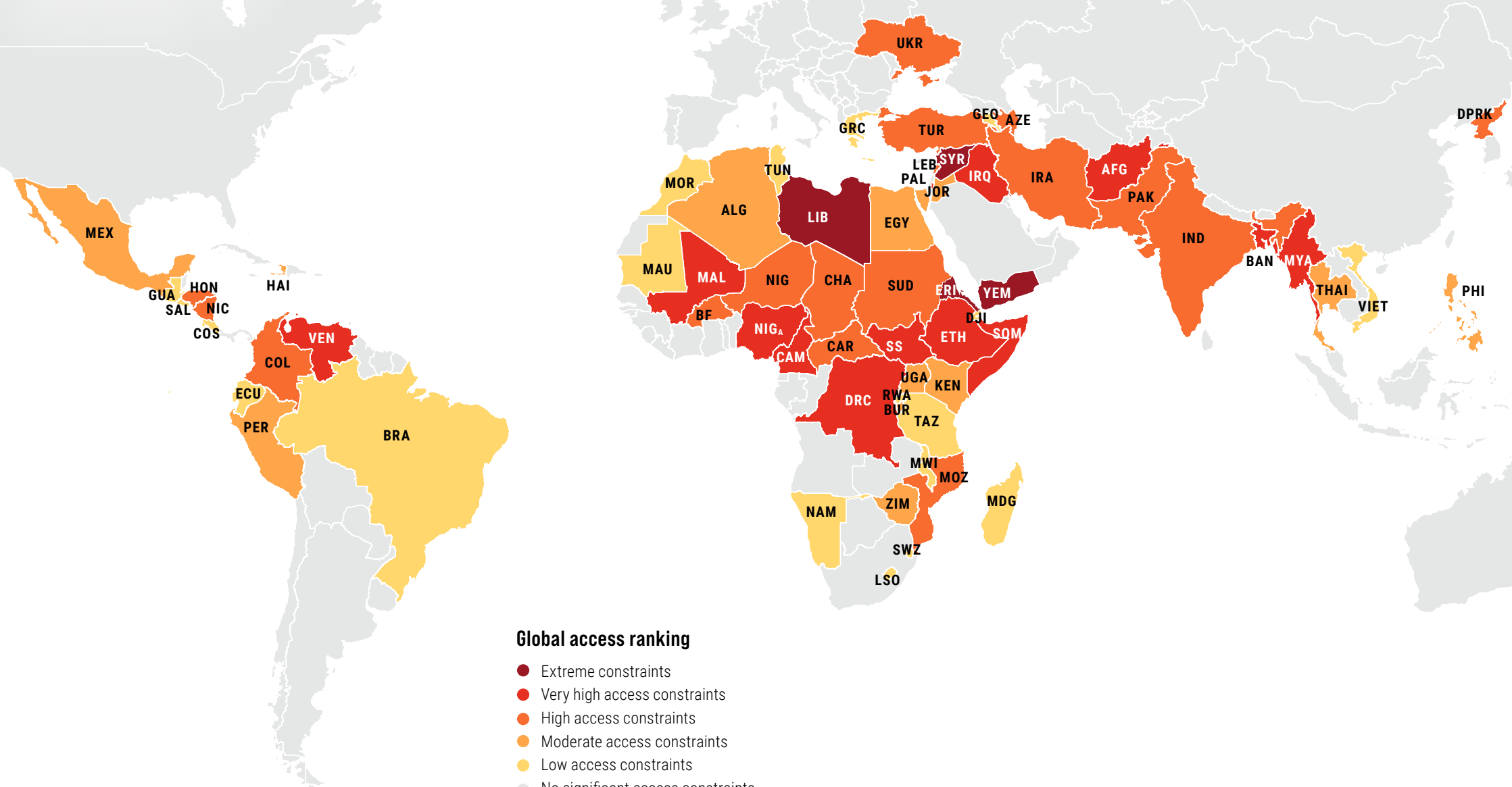
ACAPS Humanitarian Access Overview faces the same limitations that all secondary data reviews conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic are confronted with: information might not be available without a physical presence in the analysed countries, and humanitarian access is heavily impacted by COVID-19 containment measures, which continue to be extremely volatile. When possible, our analysts tried to cross-check available information with humanitarians working in the field.



CRISISINSIGHT

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS OVERVIEW

DECEMBER 2020



ACCESS INDICATORS

	Afghanistan	Algeria	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Brazil	Burkina Faso	Burundi	Cameroon	CAR	Chad	Colombia	Congo	Costa Rica	Djibouti	DPRK	DRC	Ecuador	Egypt	El Salvador	Eritrea	Eswatini	Ethiopia	Greece	Guatemala	Haiti	Honduras	India	Iran	Iraq	Jordan	Kenya	Lebanon	Lesotho	
Overall humanitarian access ranking	4	2	1	3	4	1	3	2	4	3	3	3	0	1	2	3	4	1	2	2	5	1	4	1	1	2	3	3	3	4	2	2	3	1	
Denial of existence of humanitarian needs	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	2	0	
Restriction of access to services and assistance	3	2	0	2	3	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	3	2	2	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	
Impediments to entry into country	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	0
Restriction of movement within the country	3	1	0	2	1	0	2	2	3	3	2	2	0	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	0	
Interference with humanitarian activities	2	2	0	0	2	0	2	2	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	3	2	2	0	0	2	0	
Violence against personnel, facilities, and assets	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ongoing insecurity / hostilities	3	0	0	3	3	0	3	1	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Presence of landmines, IEDs, ERW, and UXOs	3	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	3	0	
Physical constraints in the environment	3	1	0	0	3	0	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	3	3	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	3	3	2	3	2	2	0	2	1	1	
Information gap	12%	12%	0%	0%	8%	0%	18%	5%	12%	16%	12%	3%	6%	0%	0%	3%	0%	3%	19%	3%	51%	0%	9%	0%	3%	8%	7%	11%	12%	0%	8%	8%	4%	0%	

	Libya	Madagascar	Malawi	Mali	Mauritania	Mexico	Morocco	Mozambique	Myanmar	Namibia	Nicaragua	Niger	Nigeria	Pakistan	Palestine	Peru	Philippines	Rwanda	Somalia	South Sudan	Sudan	Syria	Tanzania	Thailand	Trinidad and Tobago	Tunisia	Turkey	Uganda	Ukraine	Venezuela	Vietnam	Yemen	Zambia	Zimbabwe
Overall humanitarian access ranking	5	1	1	4	1	2	1	3	4	1	3	3	4	3	4	2	2	1	4	4	3	5	1	2	1	1	3	2	3	4	1	5	0	2
Denial of existence of humanitarian needs	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	2	0	0
Restriction of access to services and assistance	3	2	2	2	0	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	3	0	2	2
Impediments to entry into country	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	1
Restriction of movement within the country	3	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	3	0	0	2	3	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	3	0	3	0	0
Interference with humanitarian activities	3	0	0	2	0	2	1	2	2	0	2	1	2	2	3	0	0	0	2	1	2	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	3	0	3	0	2
Violence against personnel, facilities and assets	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Ongoing insecurity / hostilities	3	0	0	3	0	2	0	3	2	0	0	3	2	1	2	0	1	0	3	3	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	3	0	0
Presence of landmines, IEDs, ERW and UXOs	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	2	3	1	2	0	3	0	1	3	0	3	0	3	1	0	2
Physical constraints in the environment	3	0	0	2	3	1	0	1	3	0	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	3	1	0
Information gap	13%	0%	0%	9%	18%	8%	12%	17%	12%	0%	19%	3%	22%	18%	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	4%	1%	11%	0%	12%	6%	9%	10%	7%	0%	24%	0%	14%	0%	0%



ERITREA

Eritrea remains one of the most difficult countries for humanitarian agencies to access. There is a very limited humanitarian presence; only a few agencies, including UNICEF, FAO, and UNHCR, are mandated to operate in the country. International funds allocated to humanitarian organisations are subject to administrative and bureaucratic barriers. There are significant information gaps regarding humanitarian needs or response, and it is difficult to obtain reliable information on the access situation. Like most countries worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the already limited access in Eritrea, with border closures and restrictions on food imports.

[READ MORE ABOUT ERITREA](#)

LIBYA

Libya's borders with Tunisia and Egypt remain partially closed as a result of COVID-19 containment measures, likely affecting aid passing through these borders. Humanitarians in Libya face new obstacles because of COVID-19 restrictions beyond pre-existing checkpoints, road closures, and the presence of competing authorities. Few organisations have secured curfew passes to move around during the pandemic, and the movement restrictions that existed even before COVID-19 remain an issue. Military operations and hostilities impede humanitarian operations. Libya also remains unsafe for humanitarian workers with targeted killings, injuries, and kidnapping incidents reported in the last six months of 2020. Different authorities continue to interfere in aid delivery and distribution, especially when aid is destined to areas controlled by opposing forces. Insecurity persists with frequent attacks on civilian infrastructure, limiting the affected population's access to services. Fuel shortages, absent or inadequate infrastructure for aid delivery, and the remote location of some communities in need also hamper humanitarian operations. Because of its remote location and some restrictions on movement, there is low humanitarian operational presence in the southern region. Remote areas in the east and west of the country also lack operational presence. Thousands of migrants and refugees continue to be held in overcrowded detention centres across Libya, limiting their access to basic services.

[READ MORE ABOUT LIBYA](#)



SYRIA

Extreme constraints on humanitarian access are still widespread across Syria. The availability of and access to basic services provided by humanitarian organisations remain limited. The delivery of humanitarian aid continues to be hindered by deliberate restrictions posed by all parties to the conflict. Checkpoints belonging to different armed groups restrict humanitarian aid and prevent residents from maintaining livelihood activities, such as selling goods, as well as from seeking services away from their place of residence. Violence targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure such as markets, hospitals, schools, and residential areas is reported countrywide. Humanitarian organisations face multiple bureaucratic and logistical constraints; UN agencies have to request permissions from different counterparts in the Government of Syria and from local armed groups in order to deliver aid, especially in northeast Syria. Securing humanitarian access within areas that have come under government control in the past two years is particularly challenging. Some government-held areas in northwest and northeast Syria remain completely inaccessible for humanitarian organisations. Economic hardship has resulted in limited fuel availability, impacting humanitarian operations.

[READ MORE ABOUT SYRIA](#)

YEMEN

Access continues to be extremely challenging in Yemen as a result of conflict and insecurity, bureaucratic impediments, and COVID-19 restrictions. Although some progress was made by the end of 2019, the number of people in need living in hard-to-reach areas increased from 5 million in April 2019 to 19 million in August 2020 – most of whom live in northern governorates. Since the beginning of 2020, new frontlines have been established around Marib and Al Jawf governorates, affecting access to these areas. Persistent fighting across the country and lack of safety assurances have led to the suspension or re-location of humanitarian programmes, the withdrawal of humanitarian personnel in areas closest to the clashes, and blocked movement of humanitarian cargo. Humanitarian organisations struggle to collect local data and many humanitarian needs assessments and monitoring activities are based mostly on remote data collection. COVID-19 also affected movement between April–June and increased the duration of humanitarian operations. Conflict across the country continues to disrupt people's access to markets and services and causes difficulties for humanitarians delivering assistance. Fuel and gas shortages – largely a result of competition between parties to the conflict to control markets – disrupt electricity, water, sanitation, and health services and raise the cost of basic goods, overwhelming humanitarian response in a country where access is very challenging. Access is likely to further decrease if the conflict escalates across the country.

[READ MORE ABOUT YEMEN](#)



AFGHANISTAN

Prolonged and escalating conflict across the country continues to hamper humanitarian access. Active conflict between the Afghan National Security Forces and the Taliban is still triggering short-term and protracted displacement, which limits the access of displaced people to livelihood opportunities and to humanitarian aid. This is even more difficult for those without any formal documentation who are unable to access education programmes, humanitarian aid distributions, formal employment, and medical treatment. A considerable number of humanitarian agencies operate across the country. Their access is subject to considerable bureaucratic processes, however, including registration processes, both in government-controlled areas and areas controlled by non-state armed groups. Humanitarian operations are also constrained by conflict, IEDs, and checkpoints, which often lead to the suspension of humanitarian activities and inhibit the free movement of people. A number of health facilities have been forced to close because of insecurity, affecting the provision of essential health services. In August, humanitarian access was hampered by flooding and landslides and the upcoming winter season is likely to hinder movement. Given the overlap between humanitarian and political issues, the outcome of intra-Afghan peace talks and the foreign policy adopted by the new US administration will be key in shaping future humanitarian access.

[READ MORE ABOUT AFGHANISTAN](#)

BANGLADESH

The Government of Bangladesh does not legally recognise Rohingyas as refugees, who are confined to camps in Cox's Bazar with limited movement. COVID-19 containment measures have further restricted refugees' freedom of movement and affected their access to services. Since March, humanitarian operations have been limited to critical services with a reduced number of staff being allowed access to the camps – this is enforced by the Bangladesh authorities. Bureaucratic processes for visas and procurement have taken longer because of extra measures for COVID-19. Mobile networks and internet in the camps were officially restored by the government in August, increasing communication access between humanitarian staff and refugees – though connection remains poor and unreliable. The security situation in the camps continues to deteriorate, with increasing activity from organised armed groups. In October, fighting between rival gangs in the settlements led to the displacement of hundreds of Rohingyas. Humanitarian agencies struggled to provide help to the newly displaced families and had to temporarily withdraw from the camps because of the violence. Over 300 Rohingyas remain confined on the unsafe silt island of Bhasan Char by Bangladeshi authorities, citing COVID-19 containment as justification. No humanitarian organisations have been allowed to conduct an independent assessment of living conditions on the island. Countrywide, heavy monsoon rain caused road and infrastructural damages that limited access, affecting 30 districts across Bangladesh, including camps in Cox's Bazar.

[READ MORE ABOUT BANGLADESH](#)



CAMEROON



Humanitarian access is worsening – especially in the Far North and in the Southwest and Northwest regions, which are affected by Boko Haram and the Anglophone crisis respectively. Access by humanitarians to people living in these areas is of particular concern, because of checkpoints established by security forces and separatist groups, attacks on humanitarian workers, and disruption of humanitarian operations related to the Anglophone crisis. There are bureaucratic impediments related to obtaining the necessary authorisations to implement humanitarian operations by different authorities. Physical, environmental, and security constraints are also heavily affecting humanitarian access across the country. Road conditions, which were already poor, worsened during the rainy season, especially in the Far North. Increasing insecurity in the Far North limits the movement of goods, people, and humanitarian staff while continued violence in the Southwest and the Northwest regions blocks access to populations in need. Schools are targeted in the Anglophone region, and IDP camps have been violently attacked in the past months in the Far North. COVID-19-related measures have aggravated the situation, limiting the movements of the population and constraining humanitarian operations, especially in the Anglophone region. The rise of violence targeting civilians by Boko Haram is likely to worsen humanitarian access in the Far North in the coming months.

[READ MORE ABOUT CAMEROON](#)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)



The security situation remains volatile because of armed clashes and inter-ethnic conflicts, particularly in Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, and Ituri. Insecurity hampers the population's access to services and aid, as attacks often displace people from towns and villages into the forest and other remote areas. Main roads in the eastern provinces are targets of violence, hindering the freedom of movement of people in need. People are also required to pay to pass through checkpoints, which are set up both by security forces and armed groups. NGOs have reported difficulties in their registration process and in obtaining visas. Humanitarian operations are sometimes temporarily suspended because of violence. In some areas, access is subject to extensive negotiations with several parties. Armed groups ambush and rob aid convoys and abduct aid workers for ransom. Four humanitarian workers were killed between April–September 2020. Certain areas can be completely cut off from road access when flooding occurs. Poor road conditions, including large stretches of unpaved road, limit travel, particularly for heavy vehicles used for transporting aid.

[READ MORE ABOUT DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO](#)

ETHIOPIA



This analysis covers humanitarian access over the last six months across Ethiopia. The current situation in Tigray region is extremely volatile. As of 2 December, the UN was granted humanitarian access in federal government-controlled areas in the regions affected by the conflict and by the resulting displacement. Assessments are ongoing and the situation is likely to evolve quickly.

A political crisis, COVID-19, and the onset of conflict between the federal government and the government of the Tigray region has resulted in significant deterioration of humanitarian access since our previous report in July 2020. Incidents of violence have increased in frequency across the country, leading to the killing of civilians and heightened displacement in a number of regions. This poses a threat to humanitarian workers and their access to areas prone to violence or where conflicting authorities vie for control. The conflict in Tigray has been accompanied by a communications blackout across the region and humanitarian access was only granted on 2 December in federal government-controlled areas. Assessments are ongoing at the time of writing; however, areas not under control of the Federal Government Forces remain inaccessible. Several airports and transportation routes have ceased operations or been disrupted, mainly in the Tigray region. The border with Sudan has been partially closed since the beginning of the conflict. Infrastructure in Ethiopia creates regular access barriers (unequal access in different regions, poor roads, and communications that are prone to disruption, especially during climate-related events). Recent flooding has reduced mobility, with inundated roads and some damage and destruction in the Afar region. COVID-19 prevention measures have interrupted supply chains for food and humanitarian aid across the country.

[READ MORE ABOUT ETHIOPIA](#)

IRAQ



In mid-2019, the Iraqi government initiated a plan to close IDP camps and facilitate returns – pushing some IDPs to secondary displacement, away from services provided by humanitarian organisations in camps. Thousands of people are still without documentation, which is stopping them from accessing aid. Administrative restrictions – including difficulties in obtaining authorisations by NGOs – continue to affect the operations and movement of humanitarians. The federal government and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) government function separately in regard to humanitarian operations. For instance, NGOs registered in KR-I cannot operate in federal Iraq. As a result, humanitarian actors operating in the disputed territories between



the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government face challenges in coordination between the two governments. Insecurity in some parts of Iraq, particularly in Diyala governorate, disrupts humanitarian operations. Iraq remains one of the world's most contaminated countries by landmines and ERW, particularly in southern Iraq and the Kurdistan region.

[READ MORE ABOUT IRAQ](#)

MALI

Humanitarian constraints in Mali remain very high but stable, although there are concerns over uncertain political and conflict developments following the 18 August coup. Poor road infrastructure, the presence of armed groups, intercommunal conflict, and military operations are challenging humanitarian access, especially in the central and northern regions. The Malian state has a weak presence in many parts of the country, contributing to the proliferation of ethnic self-defence militias and intercommunal violence. Armed groups sometimes surround villages and cut them off from the rest of the country. Safety for humanitarian workers is a challenge; one aid worker was killed and 18 kidnapped between April–September 2020. Humanitarian operations are sometimes temporarily suspended because of insecurity. Diversion of aid has also been reported this year. Both armed groups and armed forces man checkpoints, limiting movement. Infrastructure damaged because of flooding in the rainy season and low-quality clay roads have affected humanitarian interventions and the population's ability to access aid.

[READ MORE ABOUT MALI](#)

MYANMAR

Access constraints across Myanmar, especially in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, and Shan states, are still very high. Rohingyas, particularly in Rakhine, face systemic discriminatory policies in respect to accessing citizenship, education, and the ability to vote. Active conflict in northern Shan, Rakhine, Chin, and Kachin states limits the free movement of people, reducing livelihood opportunities and regular access to quality healthcare and humanitarian aid. There are also reports of armed forces using schools as headquarters, limiting viable options for emergency facilities – especially given the likelihood of displacement – as schools are often used for these purposes. The delivery of aid is subject to authorisation, limiting access to the country or to specific regions. For example, in northern Shan, tracking displacement and assessing the

needs of IDPs is particularly difficult because of access constraints. The presence of checkpoints throughout Rakhine and Chin states also limits the free movement of people and the delivery of aid. Active conflict disrupts transport along main roads, including the Yangon-Sittwe road – a major trade route. Further humanitarian constraints have emerged because of COVID-19 containment measures, including obligatory testing for humanitarian staff and a reduction of programmes. Electricity and diesel shortages persist in Paletwa township, Chin state. Internet access is severely limited across Rakhine and Chin states, substantially restricting the free flow of information. Humanitarian access is likely to continue to be very limited because of active conflict. There is little indication that the November 2020 national elections will pave the way to reducing insecurity.

[READ MORE ABOUT MYANMAR](#)

NIGERIA

Humanitarian access in Nigeria is heavily constrained in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states, which are affected by Boko Haram's armed activity. Insecurity and threats of attacks against civilians, humanitarians, and aid facilities affect both access of people to services and aid delivery. Aid organisations are restricted from operating in areas not under the control of the federal government – based on a law preventing 'terrorism' – including in areas controlled by Boko Haram. There are barriers to importing humanitarian material, which is subjected to specific administrative procedures. Registration processes at federal and state levels for humanitarian organisations are ambiguous; states are allowed to implement independent local laws that result in additional conditions being imposed on humanitarian activities in specific areas. In Borno state, a regional law has strengthened the requirements related to registration for organisations that operate in the state, establishing a stronger policy of control of aid operations. Insecurity and violence affect humanitarian activities and limit movements of humanitarian goods and staff in the northwestern part of Nigeria, which has been affected by criminal activity and banditry.

[READ MORE ABOUT NIGERIA](#)



STATE OF PALESTINE

Palestinians are subject to several bureaucratic and freedom of movement constraints – such as difficulties in obtaining Israeli-issued permits and denial of passage through military checkpoints – which limit their ability to access services and humanitarian aid. On 19 May, the Palestinian Authority announced the end of security coordination with Israel, including the issuance of Israeli permits for Palestinians. These permits enable Palestinians to access essential services in Israel, such as specialised healthcare. Humanitarian access also remains challenging, with different levels of constraints in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The blockade of the Gaza Strip continues, leading to restrictions on entry of humanitarian goods such as medical supplies. Further challenges faced by humanitarian organisations include visa restrictions, difficulties in accessing certain areas of the country, occasional and unannounced closures of programmes, destruction of aid-funded structures, and confiscation of aid. In the West Bank, the barrier and other physical constraints such as military checkpoints remain a major impediment to humanitarian access, limiting the free movement of people and the delivery of aid.

[READ MORE ABOUT STATE OF PALESTINE](#)

SOMALIA

Violent attacks in Somalia have continued to increase throughout 2020, particularly those targeting humanitarian workers – which makes humanitarian operations in Somalia challenging and unstable. The perpetual outbreaks of violence inflict damage upon infrastructure, including transportation routes and lines of communication, strongly impacting humanitarian access. The extent of the federal government's control and influence varies from region to region, which affects the reach of humanitarian organisations in the country. Administrative and bureaucratic barriers to effective humanitarian operations are prevalent in government-controlled areas. Poor infrastructure was worsened by the onset of region-wide flooding between July–August 2020, limiting humanitarian access and effective delivery of aid to those in need. COVID-19-related restrictions, such as the suspension of vaccination campaigns and the restriction of movement within the country, have created further impediments to the implementation of humanitarian programmes and aid delivery.

[READ MORE ABOUT SOMALIA](#)

SOUTH SUDAN

Humanitarian access in South Sudan is stable, but remains highly constrained. People's movements are severely restricted because of the impact of heavy flooding in two consecutive years, violence, and COVID-19 measures, affecting both the access of people in need to humanitarian aid and the effective delivery of relief by humanitarian workers. Security concerns significantly inhibit humanitarian activities. South Sudan has one of the world's highest rates of violent incidents against humanitarian workers. Since June 2020, 16 humanitarian workers have been killed, one kidnapped, and 27 injured, mostly during ambushes. Flooding is aggravating access to road infrastructure, which is among the least developed in the East Africa region.

[READ MORE ABOUT SOUTH SUDAN](#)

VENEZUELA

While the government recognises the existence of humanitarian needs in the country, it continues to play down the scale of needs – including in relation to COVID-19 – and restricts independent assessments of the humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian aid is highly politicised and interference in humanitarian operations is common. The access of people in need to aid is hampered by widespread fuel shortages, blackouts, and insecurity. Land borders remain closed because of COVID-19, which largely prevents people from seeking assistance in neighbouring countries or forces them to cross borders irregularly. While humanitarian operations are generally permitted, bureaucratic obstacles limit an effective humanitarian response. Registration processes for humanitarian organisations remain complex. Although a new legal framework for the registration of international NGOs was approved in October, it is unclear whether its implementation will improve their operability. COVID-19-related restrictions on international travel and transport have further hampered the entry of humanitarian staff and goods. Some organisations have not received special permits (*salvoconductos*) that would allow them to operate within the country despite movement restrictions. Fuel shortages also affect humanitarian organisations – hindering the implementation of activities – even when they have obtained the necessary permits. The presence of armed groups, a volatile security situation in some parts of the country, and infrastructure disruptions further impede humanitarian operations. Analysis of humanitarian access is limited by information gaps.

[READ MORE ABOUT VENEZUELA](#)



AZERBAIJAN (NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT)

This analysis covers humanitarian access over the last six months in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, assessing both conflict-related and peacetime humanitarian access constraints. It refers to all parties that held official and de facto control in Nagorno-Karabakh during that time. It does not assess the access situation resulting from the 9 November ceasefire agreement.

Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh broke out on 27 September between Azerbaijan and Armenia-backed ethnic Armenian forces. Fighting restricted the access of people in need to services, and roads were sometimes blocked, restricting people's access to safety. Humanitarian organisations are primarily concentrated in Armenia, with some service provision in Azerbaijan. Access to Nagorno-Karabakh itself is difficult to ensure, as aid agencies are subject to a complex registration and review process in Azerbaijan. The ICRC was the only active aid organisation in Nagorno-Karabakh prior to the most recent conflict, and at the height of hostilities was forced to reduce and suspend activities, although it is now operational. Humanitarian organisations had no access to adjacent territories, which were also affected by the recent and past conflicts. Nagorno-Karabakh was and is subject to the control of different actors, namely ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijan. Fighting restricted movement and destroyed or damaged civilian infrastructure in Nagorno-Karabakh as well as in Azerbaijan. It has also likely left additional UXOs in the region, which had already created access constraints prior to the recent conflict. As the situation is evolving, it is unclear how humanitarian access will shift in Nagorno-Karabakh under the provisions of the ceasefire agreement.

[READ MORE ABOUT AZERBAIJAN](#)

BURKINA FASO

Increasing insecurity and the resulting displacement are restricting humanitarian access. The number of IDPs rose from 280,000 in September 2019 to over 1 million in September 2020. The arrival of newly displaced populations has overwhelmed humanitarian operations and social services, especially in the education and health sectors as schools and health facilities frequently come under attack. The situation is particularly critical in the Sahel region, where only 8.3% of the region's health centres are fully operational. State presence is weak in parts of the Centre-Nord, Nord, and Sahel regions where the activities of armed groups limit humanitarian movement. People in need in the Sahel can sometimes not be accessed, as armed groups surround and cut off certain areas. Repeated displacements lead some populations to more remote areas, where access is more likely to be affected by seasonal flooding. Poor road quality poses an additional logistical constraint in the delivery of aid.

[READ MORE ABOUT BURKINA FASO](#)



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Despite a peace agreement being signed in February 2019, the security situation in the Central African Republic remains volatile, affecting humanitarian access. Many areas of the country are controlled by militias and armed groups. The heavy presence of armed groups constrains the population's ability to travel between villages. Civilians are often unable to reach aid because of the risk of violence on roads. Armed groups harass and sometimes forcibly displace IDPs. These groups also maintain checkpoints in conflict-affected areas, blocking access to basic services such as education and hampering humanitarian access to the affected population. Humanitarian operations in certain areas have been temporarily suspended because of insecurity. Flooding resulting from seasonal rains (typically April–October) completely cut off some areas, particularly in the eastern and northern prefectures. Flood-related constraints may last well beyond the season because of the country's inadequate road infrastructure. Humanitarian access to some areas is only possible by air. The combination of poor road infrastructure, flood damage, and armed group activity results in a constantly changing logistical landscape. Attacks on humanitarians have risen throughout 2020; there were 343 recorded incidents and two deaths of aid workers between January–October 2020.

[READ MORE ABOUT CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC \(CAR\)](#)

CHAD

The volatile security situation, combined with a lack of basic infrastructure, restricts humanitarian access. People in need often have limited access to services as a result of insecurity, particularly in the Lac region and several areas in the south and east. Armed group attacks along the border areas with Niger and Nigeria further hamper access. Interference in humanitarian activities is a concern, with lengthy registration and visa processes continuing to impede access and the entry of humanitarian staff into the country. Insecurity in the Lac region has led to an increase in displacement, and has limited access to basic services and humanitarian aid for the affected population. Most of Chad experiences seasonal floods – the rainy season usually lasts from April–October – making the delivery of aid more difficult. Physical constraints, such as poor road conditions and the many islands in the Lac region, also negatively affect the delivery of aid.

[READ MORE ABOUT CHAD](#)

COLOMBIA

There are access constraints in areas where armed groups are disputing territories. The armed conflict has escalated in 2020, with an increase in massacres and frequent clashes between armed groups, causing internal displacement and confinement, hindering humanitarian operations, and restricting the affected population from accessing services and assistance. In conflict-affected areas, medical missions have been intercepted and/or detained by armed groups that prevent them from accessing the population in need. Venezuelan migrants and refugees are also affected by these dynamics when they cross borders controlled by armed groups or as they travel through conflict-affected areas. Migrants and refugees with irregular migration status also face bureaucratic barriers in accessing assistance and services. Heavy rains causing flooding, landslides, road blocks, and damage to basic infrastructure have been reported in the departments of Chocó, Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar, and La Guajira, and in the archipelago of San Andres, Providencia, and Santa Catalina. Some remote areas of Colombia are very difficult to access because of the limited or nonexistent transport infrastructure.

[READ MORE ABOUT COLOMBIA](#)

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (DPRK)

Overall, humanitarian access continues to be limited despite slight improvements since 2018. Travel and humanitarian activities remain highly regulated by national authorities. These have been considerably more restricted by COVID-19 containment measures, with all borders closed since January and strict restrictions on movement within the country. Three typhoons made landfall between August–September, causing major flooding and destroying several road and rail bridges and major roads. Though state media recognised that the damage was extensive, the exact extent of the damage remains unclear. While reconstruction efforts are underway, the damage caused by the typhoons severely restricts movement to and from major cities and further restricts humanitarian access to the affected population. The northeast was not as affected as the south, but remains poorly connected and the topography limits the distribution of food and other humanitarian aid. Economic sanctions – particularly from the UN – and bilateral US secondary sanctions have restricted the import of humanitarian goods, complicated the funding of humanitarian projects, and affected access to aid.

[READ MORE ABOUT DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA](#)



HONDURAS

Access in Honduras has deteriorated following Hurricanes Eta and Iota, which hit the country in November 2020. The hurricanes caused flooding, landslides, roadblocks, and severe damage to infrastructure. There were existing access constraints because of the remoteness of some areas of the country, and this was furthered affected by the impact of the hurricanes in the region. Gang violence poses threats to the movements of the population, restricting their access to services and humanitarian assistance. General insecurity in areas controlled by gangs, or where gangs operate, limits humanitarian operations and makes it difficult for humanitarian workers to access the affected population.

[READ MORE ABOUT HONDURAS](#)

INDIA

Gaining humanitarian access in India can be a lengthy procedure, with registration taking up to one year to complete in some cases. Since September, an amendment to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) – initially adopted in 2010 – has placed greater administrative and practical hurdles on NGOs and international organisations. Several organisations have since suspended their activities, claiming that their activities had been suppressed. Throughout October, raids were carried out at NGO offices to determine whether the FCRA rules were being respected. In Kashmir, the population continues to face extreme movement restrictions and an internet blackout. Military checkpoints and curfews in Kashmir severely affect the free movement of people, medical equipment, and hospital personnel, and have resulted in significant shortages of healthcare personnel, ambulances, ventilators, and oxygen. Access to basic services and aid for the affected population remains a challenge. Since May, India has been hard-hit by monsoon rainfall that has caused flooding in more than half of the country's districts and made assisting flood-affected populations challenging. Because of damage to roads and bridges, access to rural areas is even more difficult.

[READ MORE ABOUT INDIA](#)

IRAN

The humanitarian landscape in Iran is unique, with a handful of international organisations operating and access constrained by the authorities. Accessing aid is dependent on people's legal status, with most aid delivered to Amayesh card holders – an identity card for refugees. Amayesh card holders, visa holders, and undocumented but registered Afghans can in theory access basic education, healthcare – including for COVID-19 treatment – and humanitarian aid. Significant government oversight limits the provision of aid to undocumented Afghans however, who also cannot legally engage in most livelihood activities and are at risk of deportation. Field mission requests to deliver aid need to be approved prior to every mission, allowing the government to enforce conditions on aid delivery and the movement of aid workers. Continued economic sanctions imposed on Iran risk negatively affecting the transfer of funds into the country, including for humanitarian organisations, which limits the provision of aid to those in need. COVID-19 containment measures suspended non-essential programmes, dramatically reducing the number of operations and limiting access to humanitarian aid – such as the distribution of school equipment. There was little impact on the procurement of relief items however, as the majority of this is done in-country. The UNHCR repatriation programme, which was suspended because of COVID-19 between 4 March–29 April, has resumed, increasing cross-country movement and access to assistance for those wishing to return to their countries of origin. Fewer logistical constraints directly linked to the physical environment were recorded.

[READ MORE ABOUT IRAN](#)

LEBANON

Humanitarian access in Lebanon remains constrained. Since May 2015, the government has instructed UNHCR Lebanon to suspend new registrations of Syrian refugees. Undocumented migrants and refugees are still restricted in accessing aid because of a lack of documentation. Checkpoints across Lebanon remain widespread, affecting freedom of movement of many undocumented refugees. Humanitarian organisations working in Lebanon are facing operational impediments, both because of logistical constraints related to the economic crisis, such as a shortage of US dollars – which has affected operations and cash distributions – and as a result of COVID-19 containment measures such as travel restrictions. The presence of landmines, mostly in the south of the country, and related protection concerns continue to pose risks to the population and to humanitarian workers.

[READ MORE ABOUT LEBANON](#)



MOZAMBIQUE



The violent insurgency in Cabo Delgado continues to obstruct the effective delivery of and access to humanitarian aid in Mozambique. The conflict is largely localised, but the continually changing geographic boundaries of the disputed area and resultant shifts in authority and governance make the organisation of humanitarian aid or corridors problematic. Violence-related displacement can be seen both in the Cabo Delgado region and across the Tanzanian border, threatening regional security and the stability of humanitarian access. Even when it is delivered, humanitarian aid is often unevenly distributed, depending on who is in charge. The combination of administrative barriers placed by the Government of Mozambique on humanitarian organisations, COVID-19-related restrictions, and a general lack of accurate information regarding where humanitarian aid is needed makes access to humanitarian aid and access by humanitarian aid workers a challenge. The damage inflicted by cyclones Idai (March 2019) and Kenneth (April 2019) still requires humanitarian interventions, and the conflict in Cabo Delgado has further deteriorated existing infrastructure. COVID-19-related restriction measures are creating barriers to reaching people in need.

[READ MORE ABOUT MOZAMBIQUE](#)

NICARAGUA



Humanitarian access in Nicaragua is deteriorating because of the political environment, and is compounded by the impact of natural hazards. Limitations imposed by the authorities on humanitarian activities and operations are of particular concern and affect both the access of humanitarian actors to people in need and the effective delivery of aid by humanitarian agencies. Registration processes for NGOs are complex. Even though some international NGOs and UN agencies are operational in Nicaragua, other humanitarian organisations have reported being denied entry into the country or being expelled. Staff members of humanitarian and faith-based organisations are closely controlled, as are their activities. In October 2020, parliament approved a law that will allow more control of NGOs funded by foreign governments or associations. Hurricanes Eta and Iota caused material damages, interruption of power supplies, and obstruction of roads – limiting access to affected areas and people in need.

[READ MORE ABOUT NICARAGUA](#)

NIGER



Humanitarian access continues to be restricted because of the unpredictable security situation, with recent developments imposing further constraints on the delivery of aid. The safety of humanitarian workers has been of particular concern following the killing of seven aid workers in Koure (Tillabéri region) on 9 August. Since 2 September, military escorts are required nationwide outside of Niger's major cities for all travel by diplomats and international organisations. These restrictions have heavily impacted humanitarian operations and prevented international organisations from accessing affected populations. Some humanitarian organisations have suspended activities that require military escorts. Humanitarian operations in some areas of the Tahoua and Tillabéri regions bordering Mali and Burkina Faso are extremely challenging, because of insecurity and government restrictions. The risk of violence makes free movement for the affected population very difficult. As the rainy season ends – it usually lasts from June–October – and as roads that were flooded become useable, armed group activity is expected to increase, generating further access constraints.

[READ MORE ABOUT NIGER](#)

PAKISTAN



Access constraints remain high across Pakistan. Humanitarian activities continue to be hindered by government delays in NGO registration and strict project approval processes. Violence in Balochistan province and increased violence along the Line of Control in Azad Jammu and Kashmir restricted the movement of people, caused displacements, and disrupted access to basic services. Throughout August, flooding across the country was a major obstacle for humanitarian agencies and damage to roads and bridges restricted access. An economic slowdown over the past few years has caused substantial inflation, increasing humanitarian needs and the cost of assisting these, such as the price of fuel for transporting humanitarian goods and supplies. Exact data indicating the impact of IEDs on humanitarian access in Pakistan is unavailable, but there continue to be reports of casualties.

[READ MORE ABOUT PAKISTAN](#)



SUDAN

Although it remains stable, humanitarian access in Sudan still faces limitations – especially in terms of the access of people in need to humanitarian aid and constraints related to the physical environment and security conditions. The country experienced flooding between July–September, affecting vast areas and damaging or destroying basic infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and electrical lines. Flooding has heavily constrained humanitarian operations, hampering access in the affected areas. A peace agreement, signed in September 2020 between the government and some armed groups, aimed to resolve conflict in the country, namely in Darfur region and in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Despite the agreement, humanitarian activities are still disrupted because of the recent escalation of violence across the country, particularly in Darfur. COVID-19 measures have also impacted the delivery of aid to people in need, especially in Khartoum state which has been most affected by the pandemic.

[READ MORE ABOUT SUDAN](#)

TURKEY

Humanitarian access in Turkey has remained stable, although COVID-19 restrictions have created new barriers. A lack of proper documentation and official refugee status bars many people from receiving humanitarian assistance. Contact tracing measures in administrative buildings and transport services require official documentation. As a result of the lengthy process required for refugees to obtain a work permit, some engage in informal labour, which puts them at a high risk of deportation if caught. Voluntary repatriation agreements signed by deception or coercion have also been reported. Humanitarian movement is limited in southern provinces affected by the Kurdish conflict, where access to the affected population is only possible for registered organisations.

[READ MORE ABOUT TURKEY](#)

UKRAINE

Although the conflict in Eastern Ukraine has reached a stalemate in recent years, insecurity and administrative restrictions continue to constrain humanitarian access. The presence of landmines and indiscriminate shelling has restricted the movement of people and humanitarian agencies within non-government-controlled areas (NGCA) in Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. Administrative requirements from both government and non-government authorities have delayed aid delivery and forced organisations to scale back their programming, especially in NGCA. As of 1 December, only two border crossing points were open. The five remaining crossing points, including two newly completed ones, are closed because of COVID-19. The only open crossing point between Luhansk government-controlled areas (GCA) and NGCA – Stanytsia Luhanska – does not permit the transport of heavy goods. At open crossing points, temporary closures, document requirements, and an obligation for people to install a contact tracing mobile application to access GCAs have led to increased delays in entering the country.

[READ MORE ABOUT UKRAINE](#)



SEE THE CRISIS CHANGE THE OUTCOME

ACAPS

Avenue de France 23
5th floor
CH 1202 Geneva
+41 22 338 15 90
info@acaps.org

