



Photo: UNICEF Islamic Republic of Iran

Tehran, 15 November 2021 – This evening, a first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines landed at Imam Khomeini International Airport in Tehran, the capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran, provided as part of the Humanitarian Buffer mechanism of the COVAX Facility to help the Government vaccinate more refugees. A second shipment of the vaccine will land in the country on 16 November, bringing the total number of vaccines provided through the international mechanism to 1 611 600 doses. Safety boxes and syringes for these vaccines will be shipped to the country separately.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has already been vaccinating refugees against COVID-19, at the same time as its citizens and as part of the national vaccination plan. This new shipment will ensure that more refugees will be protected under the Islamic Republic of Iran's inclusive health policies.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was one of the first countries affected by the pandemic and, in the past few months, has managed to step up its vaccination campaign. So far, around 50% of the eligible population have been fully vaccinated. According to government figures, to date over 500 000 refugees and other persons of concern have received two vaccine doses.

While the Humanitarian Buffer within the COVAX Facility ensures that countries have enough vaccines to immunize high-risk and vulnerable populations in humanitarian settings, given the high number of Afghans already living in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the recent arrivals of Afghans fleeing renewed violence and insecurities, more vaccines will likely be needed to protect this community against COVID-19.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's application for the Humanitarian Buffer was supported by the United Nations in the Islamic Republic of Iran (UN Iran), which extends its appreciation to the COVAX Facility. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the self-financing participant countries of the COVAX Facility, has since April 2021 received 6.7 million COVID-19 vaccine doses from its paid allocation, with new consignments to be delivered soon. Through COVAX, UN Iran has also facilitated the delivery and shipment of COVID-19 vaccines donated to the country, including 2.9 million doses donated by Japan, 1 139 600 doses donated by Italy and 302 400 doses donated by Germany.

The COVAX Facility is a partnership co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the World Health Organization (WHO), alongside key delivery partner the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

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