



AFGHANISTAN EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

EMERGENCY APPEAL

OCTOBER 2023 – MARCH 2024

Key figures

Over 1,300 people killed and more than **1,800 injured**

19,250 people directly impacted by the earthquakes

12 villages completely destroyed, and over 440 impacted

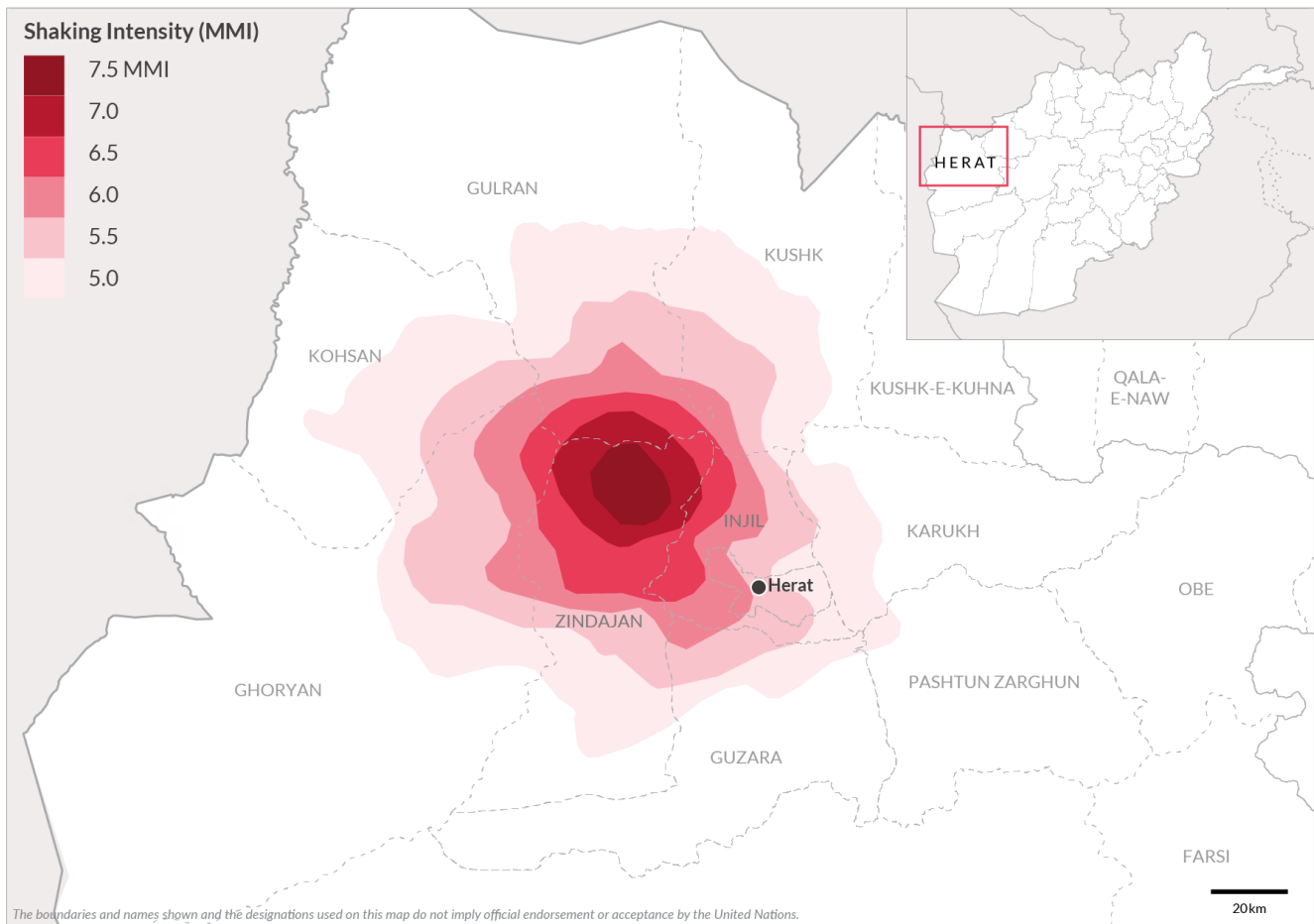
2,500 houses collapsed

8,100 families (56,700 individuals) targeted for assistance

US \$14.4 million needed to respond

US \$79.7 million existing shortfall for UNHCR's existing programme in Afghanistan

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency is urgently appealing for US \$14.4 million to address the immediate, emergency needs of people affected by the earthquake in Afghanistan's Herat Province.



Background

On 7 October 2023 at around 11:00 local time, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck 40 kilometres west of Herat City in Herat Province, western Afghanistan. The initial quake could be felt in neighbouring Badghis and Farah Provinces. Several powerful aftershocks followed.

On 11 October, another powerful earthquake of the same strength as the first one hit Herat province at 05:11 local time, followed by two aftershocks of magnitude 5 and 4.1.

At the time of writing (13 October), more than 1,300 people were reportedly killed, 1,800 injured and 19,250 (3,197 families) impacted in seven districts of Herat Province, including Zindajan, Injil, Kushk / Rabat-e-Sangai, Ghulan, Herat, and Khosan.

These figures are expected to rise as humanitarian partners continue to assess communities.

The earthquakes have further exacerbated the situation of already vulnerable communities, who are now grappling with the loss of many lives, homes and livelihoods. Among them are many returnee refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) who had been displaced as a result of previous natural disasters and conflict and had returned and are now forced to start over once again.

Until the earthquake struck the country, Afghanistan was home to over 3.2 million internally displaced people (IDPs), over 52,000 refugees and some 13,500 Afghan refugee returnees.

UNHCR's emergency response

Despite the funding shortfall faced by UNHCR in Afghanistan, the operation through its Field Office in Herat immediately responded, providing emergency shelter (tents), tarpaulin, blankets, kitchen sets, gas cookers, buckets, jerrycans and solar lamps. In the aftermath of the earthquake,

these items have proved critical to help affected people stay warm at night, prepare a hot meal, take care of their health and hygiene, and reach latrines safely and light their tents during the hours of darkness.

UNHCR's life-saving assistance to the affected population in Zindajan district of Herat

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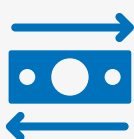
Scaling up the response

With over 35 years' presence in Afghanistan, UNHCR is working closely with national and international partners to ramp up the response as part of broader inter-agency efforts, coordinated by OCHA. UNHCR's priorities are:



Protection

- Drawing on UNHCR's emergency response expertise and the centrality of protection in humanitarian action, the operation is engaged in joint assessments and the identification of persons with specific needs, including population groups at heightened risk in Afghanistan such as women and girls, child or female-headed households, older people and persons with disabilities. Orphaned, separated or unaccompanied children require specific case management and psychosocial assistance. Psychosocial support (PSS) will be essential to help affected populations cope with the trauma of the loss of life, homes and livelihoods.
- Refugee and IDP returnees who have recently arrived in Herat Province will need additional support in the absence of long-established resilience support networks in the community.
- The implementation of community-based protection interventions is central to UNHCR's protection response, including the prevention, protection and response to gender-based violence (GBV).
- UNHCR in its role as co-chair of the Accountability to Affected People (AAP) working group ensures that the existing Complaint and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) can respond to the steep increase in the number of enquiries from people seeking support. Communication with Communities (CWC) mechanisms have been set up in the earthquake-affected districts and need to be further expanded.
- Legal assistance and counselling are of paramount importance to help affected populations access their rights, including through supporting the recovery and processing of civil documentation (tazkira). This is even more critical for recently arrived refugee and IDP returnees.



Emergency shelter

- As many houses have been flattened and in anticipation of upcoming, harsh winter months, family tents provide life-saving shelter for people made homeless and who have been sleeping in the open in the aftermath of the earthquakes.
- Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) will be provided to overcrowded hospitals to accommodate survivors of the earthquakes currently receiving casualty treatment and sleeping outdoors.



Well-being and basic needs

- Thousands of families lost everything and are in urgent need of emergency relief items such as blankets, winter clothing, plastic sheets, solar lamps, gas cookers, heaters, buckets, kitchen sets, jerry cans and laundry soap. While some stocks are available in country, there is a need to mobilize more, including from UNHCR's stockpiles in neighboring countries.
- Hygiene kits are critical to help people affected by the earthquake stay healthy and maintain their dignity, including toilet soap, sanitary napkins, a bucket and underwear.
- Based on the results of the needs assessments and the identified protection concerns, UNHCR will implement tailored multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) programmes, including cash for rent during winter to mitigate harmful coping mechanisms for persons facing heightened risks. This assistance is especially useful in emergency situations, where the affected populations can best determine their own needs and exercise agency in dignity through purchasing essentials, in particular as a harsh winter is fast approaching.

Budget

| OUTCOME AREAS | Targeted population | Budget (USD) |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| PROTECTION | | |
| Documentation, Legal Assistance, Child Protection, MHPSS, GBV prevention and response, Community-based protection monitoring, Case Management, AAP, CwC | 8,100 households | 706,847 |
| Support to Persons with Specific Needs (including Persons with Disabilities and older people) | 3,238 individuals | 1,864,924 |
| Sub total | | 2,571,771 |
| EMERGENCY SHELTER | | |
| Family tents | 8,100 households | 4,491,815 |
| Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) | 350 units | 596,390 |
| Sub total | | 5,088,205 |
| WELL-BEING AND BASIC NEEDS | | |
| Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (2 months) | 8,100 households | 2,883,936 |
| Winterization Cash Assistance | 8,100 households | 2,332,595 |
| Core relief items | 8,100 households | 1,373,602 |
| Hygiene Kits | 22,680 individuals | 176,700 |
| Sub total | | 6,766,833 |
| TOTAL | | 14,426,809 |

Partnerships

As part of the inter-agency response, UNHCR is working with UN sister agencies, under the leadership of OCHA. In line with its prioritisation of localisation, in Herat UNHCR is working with eight local organizations including: Ansari Rehabilitation, Association for Afghanistan (ARAA), Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), Women for Afghan Women (WAW), Agency for Humanitarian and

Development Assistance for Afghanistan (AHDA), The Welfare Association for the Development of Afghanistan (WADAN), Organization for Social and Economic Development (OSED), Afghan Women Skills Development Center (AWSDC) and Women's Activities and Social Services Association (WASSA).



Communities in western Herat receive tents and other core relief items following an earthquake on 7 October.
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UNHCR Afghanistan distributing tents, blankets and emergency kits to families in Zinda Jan district, western Herat province.
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COVER PHOTO: Destroyed houses in Zinda Jan district, western Afghanistan following the 7 October earthquake. UNHCR and partners were quick to support affected communities with emergency shelter.

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For more information

LINKS: [Global Focus: Afghanistan](#) | [Operational Data Portal: Afghanistan](#) |
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DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR's response in Afghanistan as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds which allow us to respond in an agile manner where the needs are greatest:

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