

AFGHANISTAN

Earthquake in Herat Province

Health Situation Report No. 3

9 October 2023

Reporting period: from 19:00 on October to 19:00 on 9 October 2023

(Information in the report is based on available data as of reporting period)



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SITUATION UPDATE

Highlights

6.3 magnitude earthquake hit the western region in Afghanistan on 7 October 2023

At least **11,585 people (1,655 families)** have been affected across Zindajan, Injil, Gulran, Kohsan, and Kushk districts.

WHO reported **556 severe and critical cases** referred to and admitted to seven hospitals in Herat City, in addition to 413 deaths.

OCHA Afghanistan reported a total of **1,023 deaths** and **1,663 injuries** across 11 villages in Zindajan district (as of 8 October)



Volunteers continue to find victims trapped in debris of collapsed buildings while most of homes were completely destroyed in Naieb Rafi village, Zindajan district. There are 516 people still missing.

Overview:

It has been just over 56 hours since a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck Herat Province on 7 October 2023, affecting five districts: Zindajan, Injil, Gulran, Kohsan and Kushk. As of 8 October, at least 11,585 people have been affected across the five districts. Twelve villages in Zindajan District were heavily damaged, with Kushk, Naieb Rafi and Sia Arab villages among the hardest hit. While rescue efforts are ongoing, a series of aftershocks continue, including one with a 5.1 magnitude at 18:00 on 9 October.

At the time of this reporting (9 October, 19:00), at the hospital level, WHO has reported 413 deaths and 556 severe and critical cases referred to and admitted to seven hospitals in Herat City. OCHA Afghanistan has reported a total of 1,023 deaths and 1,663 injuries as of 8 October.

WHO, together with 19 health partners, have been on the ground within few hours of the earthquake, providing healthcare services to the affected populations. There are currently 87 health facilities treating victims, including two district hospitals, 21 basic health centers (BHCs), 13 comprehensive health centers (CHCs), and nine sub health centers (SHCs). In addition, 53 Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams (MHNTs) were deployed to the affected villages. However, to avoid duplication, the number of MHNTs has been reduced to 13. Most severe and critical cases have been referred to the 650-bed Herat Regional Hospital. WHO and health partners are committed to ensuring that those impacted by this disaster receive the care and support they urgently need.

Health Cluster Coordination

- Two ad hoc Health Cluster partners' meetings were conducted in Herat on 9 October. The Regional Health Cluster coordination team also attended ICCG and OCT meetings.
- The Regional Health Cluster Coordinator for the southeast region has arrived in Herat to support the Regional Health Cluster Coordinator and the Co-Coordinator for the western region in health response coordination.
- To avoid duplication of services, the number of MHNTs deployed was reduced from 54 on 8 October 8 to 13 on 9 October, 2023.
- The Health Cluster aims to develop the health response plan within the next 2-3 days.

Health Facility Situation

- In the earthquake affected districts, two facilities have been reported damaged: Karnil BHC in Zindajan district was completely destroyed, and Jibarayel CHC in Injil district were partially damaged with cracks on the walls.
- For those who lost homes, the Heart Health Institute has hosted 217 individuals (178 families) in the premises. The institute is located inside the Herat Regional Hospital, and most of those discharges from the hospital were moved to this institute. Food, blankets, carpet, mattress, bottled water and some basic medicine have been provided by the community.

Trauma & Hospital Care

- On 9 October, four new injured cases from Zindajan were referred to the Regional Hospital, and a total number of admitted cases has increased to 556. Currently, 152 patients are hospitalized in the Regional hospital.
- WHO team of trauma care experts continue to work with Herat Regional Hospital to ensure there is sufficient supply of medicines and the blood bank has sufficient supply for blood transfusion.
- AADA/UNFPA, CARE, HealthNet TPO, IRC, MMRCA, and OHPM/UNFPA have provided primary healthcare, reproductive health and MHPSS services in the affected communities of Zindajan district through both static facilities and MHNTs. They have also supported emergency health services at Herat Regional Hospital.
- A total of three WHO-supported MHTs operated by OCCD have continued to be deployed in two villages in Zindajan district.



Karnil BHC, located in Zindajan district, which covers almost 15,000 population has been completely destroyed.

Mental Health Psychosocial Support

- WHO prioritizes mental health services for the affected population in Zindajan district, as well as displaced persons, mostly patients and their family members who temporally stay in shelters in Herat City. WHO will train the Community Health Workers and some volunteers in the affected communities on Psychological First Aid and Stress Management. This will also include a refresher training on MHPSS for the current Psychosocial Support Counselors who are deployed from the MHNTs in the affected communities.

Disease Surveillance/Potential Diseases Outbreak Prevention & Response

- Considering the fragile condition among the affected population, WHO is preparing for potential communicable disease outbreaks such as measles, acute respiratory infections (ARI), tetanus, and acute watery diarrhea. WHO has coordinated with the National Disease Surveillance Response (NDSR) team to enhance surveillance activities.
- A WHO-supported surveillance support team (SST) will be deployed in Zindajan district starting on 10 October for active surveillance.

Operational Support and Logistics

- WHO dispatched additional 25 metric tonnes of medicines and medical supplies to Herat from its warehouse in Kabul. These included medicines for trauma care, pneumonia and for treatment of severe malnutrition; orthopedic and surgery equipment; basic hygiene supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers. This include 11 interagency emergency health kits (IEHK) and 65 trauma and emergency surgery kits (TESK) which are sufficient to treat 650 injured patients.
- MSF, and the Herat Medicines Markets Association have provided medical supplies to support the response.
- UNFPA, and its implementing partners provided blankets, dignity kits, tarpaulin sheets, Mama and Baby Kits, and Individual Clean Delivery Kits to the affected communities.



IRC providing PHC services to the affected population at MHNT



WHO supported the visit of Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) and Deputy SRSG to the Herat Regional Hospital to meet patients and support families and their relatives.

GAPS

- Considering the thousands of people who have lost their family members, homes, livelihoods, and belongings, mental health support needs to be prioritized for the affected population. Plans are underway to provide communities with the assistance and information that they need, empathetic psychological first aid at primary care and community levels, and specialized psychological and psychiatric care for the small number of people who will have severe psychological reactions. The plans will include deployment of trained mental health professionals and resources to support communities. Beyond addressing immediate physical threats, these specialists will focus on assisting survivors in dealing with trauma, loss, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorders.
- A significant number of people were displaced from the affected areas to Herat City. The patients who were discharged from the hospitals and their families continued to stay in temporary shelters, such as tents, where poor hygiene was observed. Basic needs for food and clean water, shelter, in addition to sustainable solutions for those displaced population, are urgently needed.
- Health Cluster and partners are still assessing the damage to health infrastructure. Damage to the operating theatre in Sakina Yakobi Maternity Hospital in Herat was reported.
- While search and rescue operations remain ongoing, the exact numbers of casualties and houses/premises destroyed are still not fully confirmed.



Every day since the earthquake, Muska leaves Herat City at 6 am, traveling by rental car more than 1.5 hours to Khuskak Village, where her dedication serves as a lifeline to the devastated and desperate community affected by the earthquake. Muska is a 24-year old psychosocial counselor who has been working for Organization for Community Coordination and Development (OCCD) in Ghoryan Mobile Health Team (MHT).

Within three hours of the earthquake, OCCD decided to relocate MHT staff to the most affected areas in Zinda Jan District. Muska is one of the eight female staff members among the 13-member Ghoryan MHT team assigned to Khuskak Village. Her brother accompanies her throughout her duties as Mahram. She and her colleagues are providing counseling and comfort to victims from 8am to 7pm in quickly assembled temporary tents.

“As soon as I heard about the terrible situation, I instinctively knew I had to help. As a woman, I want to do everything I can help to help my fellow Afghan women and their children. It’s simply the right thing to do. I consider it an honor as much as a duty to work night and day to help as many people to recover from this tragedy.”

The response to this disaster was made successful and timely thanks to a significant number of volunteers who have come from all corners of the country filled with goodwill, putting their own lives on hold to serve others. Some just came with their shovels, determined to rescue victims trapped in debris of collapsed buildings while others are taking care of surviving livestock, feeding sheep, goats, and chickens in the absence of their owners. Amidst this tragedy, these selfless workers are not only demonstrating the power of compassion. They have also shown that, in times of crisis, the human spirit shines brightest when people come together to lend a helping

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