Reporting Period: 1 January to 30 June 2023

Highlights

- In the first half of 2023, a number of natural disasters, including floods, avalanches, and earthquakes, occurred in the region, affecting over 15.2 million people in Türkiye¹, and nearly 25,000 people in Tajikistan and Kosovo*.

- Between January and June, UNICEF and partners provided assistance for approximately 20,000 people affected by humanitarian situations in Tajikistan, Kosovo*, Albania and Kyrgyzstan, while regional surge support enabled immediate scale up of the earthquake response in Türkiye.

- A sub-regional multi-country emergency preparedness and response training and simulation was conducted covering the Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia), while country office preparedness and response capacities were enhanced for Armenia and Azerbaijan through dedicated trainings, simulation exercises and the development of preparedness plans.

- In the first half of 2023, UNICEF continued to work closely with governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and international organizations, including the World Health Organization at regional and country level, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Red Crescent Societies National, the Center on Emergency Situation and Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative.

- As of 30 June 2023, UNICEF received US$ 3.7 million against its US$ 7.7 million ask. This, in addition to US$1.1 million carry-over funds, results in a funding gap of 37 percent. UNICEF is grateful to all donors for their generous, important contributions.

Situation in Numbers
(ECAR HAC 2023)

- 7.5 million children exposed to riverine floods in the region
- 3.7 million people are prone to high earthquake risk
- 32 million children are highly exposed to water scarcity
- 115,460 people internally displaced in 2021

UNICEF Appeal 2023
US$ 7.7 million
Funding Status (in US$)**

¹UNICEF’s response to the earthquake is supported under the Türkiye Earthquake Response HAC and reported in dedicated Situation Reports which can be found here.
*In line with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1244)
**Funding available includes funds received in the current year as well as carry-over from the previous year.
Regional Funding Overview and Partnerships

As of the end of June 2023, UNICEF received US$ 3.7 million against the 2023 Europe and Central Asia Region HAC Appeal ask of US$ 7.7 million. This new funding, in addition to US$ 1.1 million carry-over funds from 2022, results in an overall funding gap of 37 percent against the total ask, including a 42 percent gap in funds to deliver critical response to ongoing humanitarian situations and a 51 percent gap in funding to bolster emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR) capacity at country level. Generous, important contributions were received from the Akelius Foundation, Global Thematic Humanitarian Funds, the United Kingdom Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration (PRM), and the United States Agency for International Development's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID’s BHA). These contributions enabled UNICEF to support children and families affected by onset emergencies, including those related to earthquakes, conflict, floods and avalanches. They also enabled important interventions to better protect communities at risk by helping to enhance preparedness and disaster management capacities at local, national and regional levels.

In the first half of 2023, UNICEF continued to work closely with governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) across programme countries. UNICEF also worked closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) at regional and country level to support countries in outbreak response and address backsliding in immunization coverage to prevent further outbreaks. In Central Asia, UNICEF, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Red Crescent National Societies (RCNS) jointly strengthened national and local capacities for emergency preparedness and DRR, contributing to the resilience of communities, families and children. UNICEF country offices and RCNS in Central Asia maintained and deepened the partnership with emergency, social development and education authorities at national and local levels for enhanced preparedness and disaster and climate risk reduction.

Regional Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The Europe and Central Asia Region has remained highly prone to natural hazards, the frequency and intensity of which continues to increase with the adverse effects of climate change. In the first half of 2023, several countries in the region faced emergency situations. Several avalanches and earthquakes were registered in Tajikistan, affecting over 3,000 people in rural communities in Kuhistonii Matcho, Rasht, Nurobod Districts, and Gorno-Badakhsh Autonomous Province (GBAO). The earthquake in Türkiye in February, devastatingly impacted 10 provinces affecting 15.2 million people. Kosovo* experienced severe flooding in January, directly impacting 3,580 households (around 21,500 people), the majority of which were already highly vulnerable with low income. The flooding had devastating impact across the country, particularly in Gjakova, Leposavic, Mitrovica South, Skenderaj, Zubin Potok, Mitrovica North, Zvecan, Istog, Klina, Rahovec and Podujeva. In most places, both urban and rural zones were affected by a rapid increase of water levels in a short period of time, resulting in significant damage.

With the low immunization rates in some countries, outbreak of vaccine preventable diseases has remained a situation of concern. Across the Europe and Central Asia region, measles cases have increased 7.4-fold compared to 2022: in 2022, 909 cases were recorded, while the first 6 months of 2023 already witnessed 6,727 cases. The highest numbers of measles cases were registered in Türkiye (2,051), Kyrgyzstan (1,507), Kazakhstan (869), Tajikistan (251) Armenia (197), and Uzbekistan (102).

The ongoing war in Ukraine as well as the global cost-of-living crisis continued to impact the socio-economic conditions of all countries in the region, ranging from inflation, increasing prices for oil, gas, and other commodities, decreasing net remittances, influx of refugees, and political polarization. This situation has continued to erode the resilience of households most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity and created greater need to improve existing social protection schemes and provision of cash assistance, particularly for the most vulnerable children and families.1

There has also been need for continued focus on ensuring support to reintegration of children and women returning from conflict areas. In Tajikistan, 102 children and their caregivers, who returned from Syria in July 2022, transitioned from transit centres into community-based care, while 83 children repatriated from Iraq are in residential care. In May, an additional 104 children and their caregivers (73 children, 31 women) were repatriated from Syria. The Government of Tajikistan, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Commission on Child Rights, has maintained a focus on reuniting children with their families and reintegrating them in society. Similarly, in Kyrgyzstan, 59 people (41 children, 18 mothers) out of a total of 410 children and 178 women identified as living in camps in northeast Syria, were repatriated in February 2022. With more children and their mothers expected to be repatriated and reintegrated throughout 2023, there is need for UNICEF’s continued assistance to government efforts to ensure age- and gender-appropriate legal assistance, mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), education and health services and basic material support.

In Albania, Afghan evacuees who have remained in the country since 2022, as well as those evacuated in 2023, the number of whom increased from 650 in early April to 970 at the end of June, have continued to require humanitarian

1 A recent study by WFP (2023) demonstrates the impacts in Kyrgyzstan: https://reliefweb.int/report/kyrgyzstan/kyrgyz-republic-food-security-monitoring-update-june-2023
assistance. Urgent needs remain with regards to access to education, child protection, and health services, for which UNICEF specialised technical support continues to be required.

Regional Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF continued to work with country offices, governments and partners to enhance emergency preparedness and response capacities, provide technical assistance and strengthen systems for inclusive, child-sensitive humanitarian action. The focus has remained on scaling up national preparedness for sudden and slow-onset emergencies, including disasters triggered by natural and climate-induced hazards, conflict, displacements and epidemics/pandemics; and on delivering life-saving support and protection in the areas of health, nutrition, education, water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection, social protection and social and behavioural change. UNICEF worked with authorities and communities to enhance local capacities on DRR and climate change adaptation, mitigate the impacts of disasters, strengthen risk-informed programming and reinforce linkages between humanitarian and development programmes. In Central Asia and other subregions, UNICEF sustained its partnership with IFRC, further building the capacities of governments and front-line actors through pre-positioning supplies; strengthening shock responsive social protection systems (including for cash programmes); improving capacities in accountability to affected populations (AAP) and in WASH and gender in emergencies programming; and promoting school safety and youth engagement. Inter-agency collaboration on preparedness and resilience continued through co-facilitation of the regional Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI).

Regional Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR): In-country and remote support was provided to enhance preparedness capacities of a selection of country offices through dedicated trainings and simulation exercises as well as development of operational emergency preparedness plans, including supply prepositioning, development of contingency partnership agreements and strengthening technical capacities for AAP, WASH and gender in emergencies and shock responsive social protection.

In coordination with regional programme sections, a sub-regional multi-country Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) training was conducted to include UNICEF’s seven offices in the Western Balkans - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The training included theoretical sessions covering coordination, response planning, gender, AAP, humanitarian cash transfers (HCT), communication, advocacy, resource mobilisation, human resources, supply and logistics and partnerships which were later applied during an emergency simulation to include practical learning. The training allowed countries to share experiences from their emergency responses, identify common challenges as well as country-specific emergencies, and develop country-specific and cross-country preparedness plans.

In Armenia, UNICEF established partnerships with the Armenian Red Cross Society to build capacities to conduct rapid need assessments, enhance AAP, improve warehousing capacities, coordinate distribution of cash assistance and non-food items, deliver psychosocial first aid and MHPSS, and establish temporary learning spaces in case of an emergency. UNICEF’s local level presence was strengthened to facilitate monitoring of the situation, activities and capacities of partners and strengthen capacities to respond to onset emergencies, including through enhancing warehousing capacities in Yerevan and Goris, prepositioning essential supplies and establishment of a field office in Syunik region.

In Azerbaijan, an office is being established in Barda district to enhance preparedness capacity for support to affected populations at the local level, in case of an emergency. UNICEF also continued to implement Explosive Ordinance Risk Education (EORE) activities to provide lifesaving EORE interventions for at-risk populations. Two videos (one animation for children, one for the general public) were produced and broadcast on national TV channel to reach a wide audience.

At regional and country level, UNICEF continued to partner closely with IFRC and the RCNS to strengthen emergency preparedness, disaster and climate resilience capacities and national DRR efforts in all five Countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan). At regional level, two new technical resources were developed to strengthen national capacities for gender-responsive emergency preparedness and response policies and plans. The first, a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Safety Audit Tool, provides practical guidance to assess GBV risks, implement community response and prevention mechanisms, and improve access to quality services for GBV survivors. The second, a Strategic Note on Gender in Emergency for Central Asia, highlights the importance of gender issues and offers a framework to integrate gender perspectives into DRR legislation, policies, and programs, fostering collaboration among partners. Moreover, UNICEF and IFRC expanded their work on AAP and WASH in emergencies, enhancing local and national capacities. UNICEF also focused on building national capacities for humanitarian cash transfers in Central Asian countries. In-country training and technical support was provided to Kyrgyzstan for 26 representatives from key ministries.

In Kazakhstan, UNICEF partnered with the sub-regional Center on Emergency Situation and Disaster Risk Reduction (CESDRR) to develop child- and gender-sensitive rapid needs assessment tools; identify emergency suppliers with capacity for timely and effective delivery; develop of Red Crescent staff capacity on MHPSS for families with children and strengthen national capacities on Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), AAP and Community Engagement, WASH and Gender in Emergencies.
In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF, in close collaboration with the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan (RCSK) and the Ministry of Education and Science, prepositioned emergency supplies for schools, such School-in-a-Box kits recreational kits, early childhood development (ECD) kits and mathematics kits. So far, School-in-a-Box kits are prepositioned in UNICEF’s warehouse in Osh targeting approximately 2,400 students. In Uzbekistan, UNICEF strengthened disaster preparedness capacities of the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan (RCSU) by procuring critical emergency supplies for prepositioning, including School-in-a-Box kits, WASH and dignity kits, recreation kits and ECD kits, to reach 8,875 people. In Turkmenistan, UNICEF supported the National Red Crescent Society (NRCST) to enhance their warehouse capacities and comply with safety and accessibility standards. UNICEF also procured and prepositioned ECD kits, School-in-a-Box, recreation kits and school bags for students and prepositioned in the NRCST warehouse to reach over 1,200 children.

UNICEF also partnered with governments and RCNS in Central Asia to enhance safety and resilience of children and education personnel in disaster-prone communities by improving their knowledge and skills in disaster management, emergency preparedness and emergency response. In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF and RCSK, jointly with local governments, selected eight target schools to enhance school safety, community preparedness and conduct non-structural mitigation measures. In Uzbekistan, UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Emergency Situation’s Institute for Civil Protection, conducted an assessment of climatic-geographical, socio-economic and engineering-technical features of target regions and schools, established school DRR and emergency response committees and organized DRR capacity development in ten target schools. In Tajikistan, 4,010 schoolchildren (1,966 girls, 2,044 boys), and 435 teachers (227 female, 208 male) in 12 schools developed their school disaster management plans, DRR and climate change education and learning objectives, and implemented evacuation drills and non-structural risk mitigation measures. In Kazakhstan, UNICEF supported the National Volunteer Network to implement the BeSafe school-based volunteering programme aimed at involving children and young volunteers in emergency preparedness, DRR and climate action. 364 trained volunteers conducted lessons on human-made and natural emergencies and environment protection issues, facilitated discussions and emergency simulation activities for 19,173 schoolchildren and 3,054 school administrators and teachers in schools located in risk-prone areas. In Turkmenistan, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education identified 10 pilot schools in the three most disadvantaged regions as well as Ashgabat city to implement school safety and adolescent empowerment programme.

In the first half of 2023, UNICEF also ensured immediate humanitarian response for affected families across the region. Following the earthquake and avalanches in Tajikistan, UNICEF, in partnership with the Tajikistan Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence and the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST), provided WASH supplies (including family hygiene and dignity kits), reaching 450 households affected by earthquake and 70 households affected by the avalanches.

In country surge support was also provided to support the initial scale up of the humanitarian response in Türkiye following the devastating earthquakes in February. Regional surge mechanisms immediately provided technical assistance related to supply and logistics, humanitarian performance monitoring, GBV and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), WASH, Health, AAP, communication and advocacy, emergency field coordination and reporting.

Following severe flooding in Kosovo*, which had a devastating impact on 21,500 thousand people, UNICEF delivered hygiene items and multi-purpose cash vouchers to 300 affected, vulnerable families with children, through the Red Cross and in close coordination with Emergency Management Agency and municipal authorities.

Reintegration and reintegration of children and women from conflict zones: In Tajikistan, UNICEF provided support to the Government, working in collaboration with civil society, and other international organizations to facilitate the return and reintegration of children and their families from Iraq and Syria by providing specialised protection, mental health support, and reintegration services. A total of 164 children received reintegration assistance - 62 living with their families and 104 initially hosted in a temporary/transit center, and later reunited with their families. To support the children and caregivers in the transit center, UNICEF established a child-friendly space, offering MHSPS, educational support, early childhood activities, and essential supplies. UNICEF also hired social workers and psychologists to provide psychosocial support, provided specialised training to enhance their capacities to work with children returning from the conflict zones and provided guidance to local experts on appropriate interventions and case management. Additionally, UNICEF’s NGO partner and the Government provided reintegration services for children living with their families, including healthcare, education, psychosocial support, and legal assistance. UNICEF continued to support the Government in developing evidence-based reintegration services, and participated in an Inter-Agency Working Group for effective coordination of efforts in reintegrating children and women returning from conflict zones.

In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF joined a multi-agency working group to support the repatriation and reintegration of children and women from Syria, led by the Government. In February, UNICEF supported the Government with the repatriation of 59 returnees (41 children, 18 mothers), including the provision of official documents for children and mothers, psychosocial support and case management services, provision of hygiene and clothing supplies, and the assessment of individual learning capacities and gaps of each child. In June, after three and a half months in the transit center, all returnees were reunited with their extended families across the country. In the process, UNICEF built capacities of professionals to provide child-friendly and gender-sensitive services and enhanced communication expertise and capacity of local and national level media and influencers to support community preparedness and support to
reintegration. It is expected that the Government will repatriate more children during the second half of the year, relying on UNICEF’s support.

**Support to Afghan Evacuees: In Albania**, UNICEF continued to provide humanitarian response to Afghan evacuees who have remained in the country since 2022. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Agency for the Assurance of Quality in Preuniversity Education, and Regional Education Directorates, UNICEF continued the implementation of the “Akeliu Digital Language Initiative” in 13 schools, with currently 3,171 children regularly using the platform. The main objectives are (1) to support non-formal language learning opportunities for vulnerable Albanian children and Afghan refugee children in educational settings; (2) enhance the capacity of teachers, facilitators, and educators teaching English as a second language in schools; (3) assist partners in adapting teacher guidance and utilizing digital language learning technology effectively. Participating children have shown significant improvements in their English and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Moreover, 644 teachers have been trained in Akeliu blended learning technology and supported during the implantation of the programme.

UNICEF has continued prioritizing the needs of Afghan evacuees, focusing on education, child protection, and healthcare services. In the first quarter of 2023, 67 adolescents, 31 children, and 140 adults received MHPSS through child-friendly spaces. Risk mitigation, prevention, and response interventions were provided to 78 individuals (16 children, 38 adults, 24 parents) to address GBV, with specialized support for 20 children (12 girls, 8 boys). Training was conducted for 67 child protection frontline workers, 22 health professionals, and 124 parents to handle children with protection needs. In the second quarter of 2023, 278 children and 236 adults received child protection services, daily activities and MHPSS in child and youth friendly spaces. Additionally, 198 children were educated about GBV risks and reporting mechanisms, while 67 frontline workers received training on protection from sexual abuse and exploitation. Health services were provided for the Afghan population, with a focus on maternal and child health, benefiting 221 children and 389 adults. The capacities of 36 health care personnel were strengthened and 256 people engaged in health promotion activities.

**Next SitRep: January 2024**

Who to contact for further information:

**Regina De Dominics**
Regional Director
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Email: rdedominicis@unicef.org

**Octavian Bivol**
Deputy Regional Director
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Email: obivol@unicef.org

**Anmari Swai**
Regional Advisor Emergency
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Email: aswai@unicef.org

---

**Annex B - Funding Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal Area</th>
<th>2023 Requirements</th>
<th>Funds available</th>
<th></th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Humanitarian resources received in 2023</td>
<td>Resources available from 2022 (Carry-over)</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Response</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>2,334,000</td>
<td>357,094</td>
<td>2,668,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>669,638</td>
<td>791,728</td>
<td>1,538,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Office Technical Capacity</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,700,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,703,638</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,148,822</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,847,540</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As defined in Humanitarian Appeal of 31/07/2023 for a period of 6 months

---

2 Due to the high turnover rate of Afghan refugees, results for quarter one and two cannot be combined to avoid duplication.