

UNICEF Afghanistan

EASTERN REGION EARTHQUAKE UPDATE – *The first 7 Days*

07 Sept. 2025

Key Highlights

- On 31 August at 23:47 AFT, a 6.0–6.2 magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan with the epicenter in Kuz Kunar District, followed by multiple aftershocks and three above magnitude 5.
- More than 500,000 people were exposed to Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) level 6 or higher.
- As of 6 September, over 2,205 deaths and 3,640 injuries have been reported, with more than 6,700 houses partially or fully damaged.
- Children are among the most affected: as of 6 September, the Multi-Sector Rapid Assessment Framework¹ in 30 communities recorded 19,781 affected children (10,299 girls), including 731 child fatalities (393 girls), 45 unaccompanied and separated children identified for case management, and 271 newly orphaned children.
- UNICEF rapidly launched a multi-sectoral response within the first 72 hours, delivering urgent health, nutrition, WASH, cash, and child protection support.
- Gender-focused partners are complementing the response with rapid assessments, psychosocial support, and essential relief distributions.
- UNICEF joined a UNDSS aerial surveillance mission on 5 Sept to explore air access for supplies and frontline workers.
- UNICEF requires US\$ 21.6 million to support a six-month response plan of which US\$ 5.2 million is currently available, leaving a funding gap of US\$ 16.3 million.

¹ Note that the Multi-Sectoral Rapid Assessment is still ongoing, expected to take another week to cover all the affected communities.

Situation overview

On 31 August 2025 at 23:47 local time, a magnitude 6.0 earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan (Kuz Kunar District, Nangarhar Province), followed by over 17 aftershocks of magnitude 4.0 and above through 7 September, including three significant shocks of M 5.5, M 5.6, and M 5.4. The shallow depth, mountainous terrain prone to landslides, and widespread use of mud-brick and unreinforced masonry housing amplified the destruction.



Sajed, 11, and his father sift through the rubble of what used to be their home in Morcha Khil village, Sawkai District in Kunar ©UNICEF

Entire villages were damaged or destroyed, and repeated shocks have collapsed weakened structures. Rockfalls and landslides continue to cut off access to several districts, while many families remain displaced outdoors due to fear of further collapses.

As of 6 September, the de facto authorities (DfA) confirmed 2,205 deaths, including 731 children (393 girls, 338 boys), and more than 3,640 were injured. At least 6,700 houses have been partially or fully destroyed. The DfA Ministry of Economy announced the waiver of NGO Memoranda of Understanding to expedite emergency operations.

Search and rescue/Assessments

The DfA deployed helicopters to evacuate the injured to Jalalabad and Asadabad Hospitals, the primary referral centers in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. Heavy machinery has been sent to Nurgal and Chawkay to clear blocked roads, although Dewagal Valley and Mazar Dara remain accessible only on foot.

An inter-agency rapid assessment, led by IOM and coordinated by OCHA with UNICEF participation, has mobilized 20 teams across Kunar, Nangarhar, and Laghman. The assessment reported 500,000 people were affected, of whom 263,000 are children. Inter-agency rapid assessments in 30 communities confirmed 19,781 children affected (10,299 girls, 9,482 boys), 45 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), and 271 orphaned children. These figures highlight the disproportionate impact on children and the urgent need for child-focused protection and services.

UNICEF Response

UNICEF continue to mobilized surge teams, supplies, and resources across multiple sectors, with an operational base in Jalalabad to address urgent needs in the earthquake-affected areas.

Two ECHO-supported Charters flights have delivered emergency supplies from the Dubai supply hub and the UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen to support the response, with the third flight expected on 8 September. Inspection waiver of medicines has been granted by the Afghanistan Food and Drug Administration (AFDA) to facilitate the response.

At present, supplies from ECHO, together with UNICEF pre-positioned supplies are currently deployed in the field to support the response.



Receipt of ECHO-donated supplies at the Kabul International Airport ©UNICEF

Health and Nutrition

Over 25 UNICEF-supported health facilities, including one regional and two provincial hospitals (funded by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank), are providing critical services to earthquake-affected populations. Since 1 September, these facilities have treated nearly 2,854 trauma cases and conducted 304 major surgeries.

A fleet of 47 ambulances is operating around the clock, transporting the injured from remote villages to Jalalabad and Asadabad hospitals. In addition, community health teams deployed in 10 villages have treated more than 1,000 patients in the past four days. Services include primary healthcare consultations as well as mental health and psychosocial counselling.



Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams screen children for malnutrition in addition to providing trauma care and other services ©UNICEF

Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams deployed by UNICEF implementation partners are assisting with trauma care and malnutrition screening, while 12 additional nurses and medical staff have been deployed to the regional hospital to manage increased caseloads.

Supplies provided so far include 48,500 IV fluids, 25,000 antibiotics, 21,000 LLINs, 150 IHEK kits, 40 AWD community drug kits, and consumables. Nutrition stocks include 3,000 cartons of essential commodities and 1,000 cartons of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF).

Procurement of infant-formula is underway for infants under six months deprived of breastfeeding.

Polio frontline workers are supporting response efforts and will help distribute 500,000 bars of soap and 20,000 baby blankets. Maternal and child health consultations, vaccinations, nutrition services, and safe deliveries continue to be provided across UNICEF-supported facilities in the region.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

UNICEF has launched an emergency WASH response to address urgent needs in temporary settlements and affected communities.

Water trucking is underway in three sites, i.e Khas Kunar, Pattan School, and Sawkai, ensuring access to safe drinking water for displaced families. A team of 20 hygiene promoters are engaged in distributing WASH non-food items (NFIs) and raising awareness, having reached 400 families to date.



Through emergency water trucking, displaced families are receiving safe water for drinking and to maintain good hygiene ©UNICEF

In Kunar, 5,150 family hygiene kits and 40,000 jerry cans have arrived and are being distributed across multiple locations. The installation of 150 sanitation facilities is ongoing to improve hygiene and prevent disease outbreaks in crowded sites.

WASH teams are also working with partners to establish facilities in the newly proposed camp at Mazar Dara and are conducting technical assessments for the rapid repair of damaged water supply systems. To further strengthen the response, UNICEF has deployed an additional WASH Specialist and Information Management Officer.

Child Protection

UNICEF and partners have prioritized the protection of children affected by the earthquake. At Jalalabad Hospital, 36 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), including 18 girls, were identified. To date, 34 children (18 girls and 16 boys) have been successfully reunified with their families and provided with psychosocial support.

To strengthen case management, 21 social workers (13 men and 8 women) have been deployed in hospitals and affected villages, supported by a dedicated child protection hotline. Two interim care centers are being established in Khas Kunar Camp and Nangarhar to provide safe care for UASC following medical treatment or while awaiting family tracing and reunification.

Child-friendly spaces are being scaled up, with nine CFS operational, providing structured activities and psychosocial services. So far, 975 children (479 girls and 496 boys) have accessed these safe spaces. In addition, 463 individuals (87 girls, 111 boys, 145 women, 120 men) have benefited from Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), while 250 people (70 girls, 35 boys, 100 women, 45 men) have received awareness and messaging on child protection and well-being.

Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) and Community Engagement

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Polio programme, has mobilized 70 social mobilizers and CEFC/community structure members in Noorgal and Sawky (Kunar) and Khewa and Darenoor (Nangarhar). To date, they have reached 2,775 people, including 1,504 women (54%), promoting behaviours on safe sheltering and aftershock preparedness as well as safe water consumption and

hygiene practices. A network of 20 CEFCs is now active in priority locations, serving as key hubs for engagement and feedback.

At the same time, large-scale risk communication efforts are underway. 397 banners were installed in public locations, and 181,000 brochures, 13,000 posters, and 1,650 flipcharts containing life-saving messages have been distributed. Messaging emphasizes preparedness, immediate safety, and recovery practices. A total of 225 public service announcements (PSAs) has been broadcast through local media outlets across the eastern region.

To strengthen accountability to affected people (AAP), communities have been engaged in identifying their priorities. Key needs expressed include family tents for temporary shelter, health services and ambulance support in camps, portable toilets to reduce open defecation, safe drinking water, food assistance, basic household items and kitchen utensils, long-term housing reconstruction, and psychosocial support. An inter-agency Rapid Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) coordination meeting is scheduled for Monday to align the next steps and ensure a harmonized approach to community engagement.

Education

The Education Cluster is preparing to deploy structural assessment teams upon confirmation from the Provincial Education Directorate. Assessment tools have already been finalized and are ready for immediate use. UNICEF has 917 tents available to establish temporary learning spaces, ensuring continuity of education while assessments and repairs are carried out.

Social Protection

Cash assistance for communities affected by the earthquake in Nurgal District, Kunar Province, began on 6 September. In Masoud village, 89 households – including 11 with persons with disabilities – received Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA). Distributions continued on 7 September at Patang School in Titak village, where 120–150 households are expected to be supported. Each household is receiving US\$150 in line with the recommendation of the Cash and Voucher Working Group.



A cash distribution site at Patang School in Nurgal District ©UNICEF

The initial response aims to reach up to 3,200 households, with the possibility of scaling up to 5,000. The number of supported households is expected to rise in the coming days as access improves, and inter-agency needs assessment data becomes available.

Winterization: UNICEF and partners are supporting winter preparedness in earthquake-affected mountainous districts. In coordination with relevant clusters, UNICEF has pre-positioned family kits containing essential household supplies (such as cooking equipment), tarpaulins for emergency shelter, and 5,000 sets of warm winter clothing and blankets, ready for distribution ahead of the cold season. In addition, UNICEF will reach 25,000 earthquake-affected households with MPCA under the

winterization programme. This one-off payment will enable families to meet critical winter needs, including heating, fuel, and other essential expenses.

Coordination and Cluster Response

UNICEF-led clusters are coordinating the earthquake response with OCHA and cluster members.

- **Nutrition:** While malnutrition situation was already critical before the earthquake, the rates in Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar have sharply increased and are expected to worsen. The Nutrition Cluster is prioritizing treatment and preventive services through health facilities and mobile teams, aiming to reach 312,000 children of the 389,000 in need.
- **WASH:** Interventions include hygiene promotion for 3,400 people, 250,000 water purification tablets, 10,000 hygiene kits, and 120 latrines under construction, aiming to reach 448,000 of the 500,00 people affected.
- **Education:** With 50 schools and 76 Community Based Education classes damaged, partners are mapping supplies, planning temporary learning spaces, aiming to reach 88,000 children of the 177,000 affected.
- **Child Protection:** The Area of Responsibility is scaling up psychosocial support, case management, and safe spaces for children, aiming to reach 153,000 of 227,000 in need.

Cross-cutting issues

PSEA and Psychosocial Support

UNICEF and partners are reinforcing the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by training emergency response staff on the Code of Conduct, SEA definitions, and reporting mechanisms. Information on reporting channels is being disseminated through SBC feedback centres, social mobilisers, and IEC materials. Rapid PSEAH risk assessments are underway, and all frontline staff are signing the PSEA Code of Conduct. Psychosocial support for women and girls is being provided by female counsellors based in health clinics, who are conducting regular visits to collective sites to ensure outreach.

Gender

Gender-focused interventions are addressing urgent needs through rapid assessments, psychosocial support, and essential relief distributions. SWSSO deployed female volunteers to provide psychological first aid and referrals to 1,425 people, primarily women and adolescent girls, while AWEC reached 1,000 people in Nurgal district, Kunar, with food and safe water, and plans to expand distributions to include food, water, and shelter over the coming days.

Staff from women and girls' safe spaces in Asadabad, assigned to Noorgal and Chawkai districts delivered Psychological First Aid and psychosocial support to 2,475 women and adolescent girls. They also distributed 180 dignity kits and sanitary pads and screened 350 women and adolescent girls for nutrition, ensuring they received appropriate follow-up support.

In parallel, UNICEF's Gender team is working with partners to establish integrated adolescent girls-friendly spaces, with a rapid assessment currently underway.

Funding Requirement

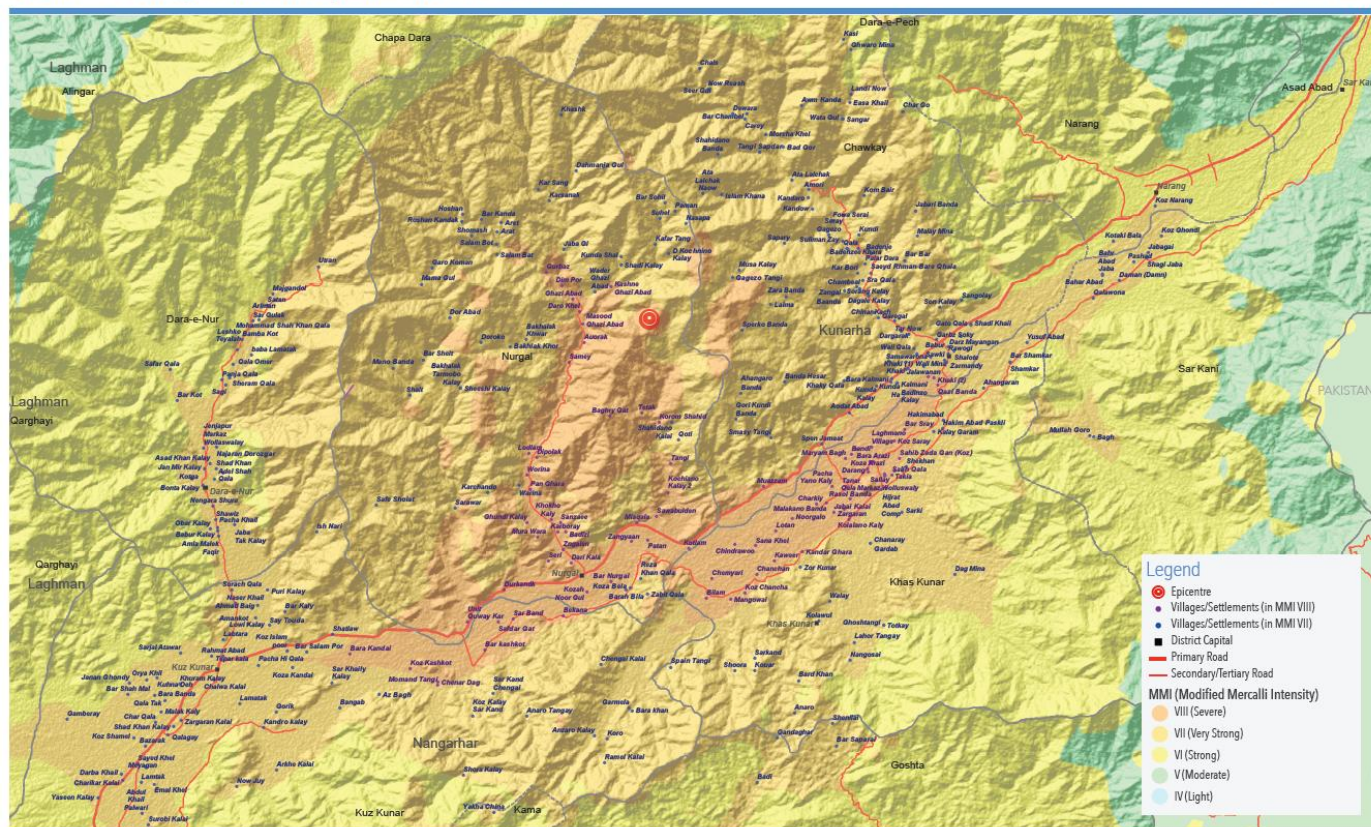
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AFGHANISTAN

Villages in earthquake affected areas

As of 06 September 2025



Data sources: USGS, MISTI, OSM.

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Disclaimers: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

Next Update: 14 Sept. 2025

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