



UNICEF Afghanistan

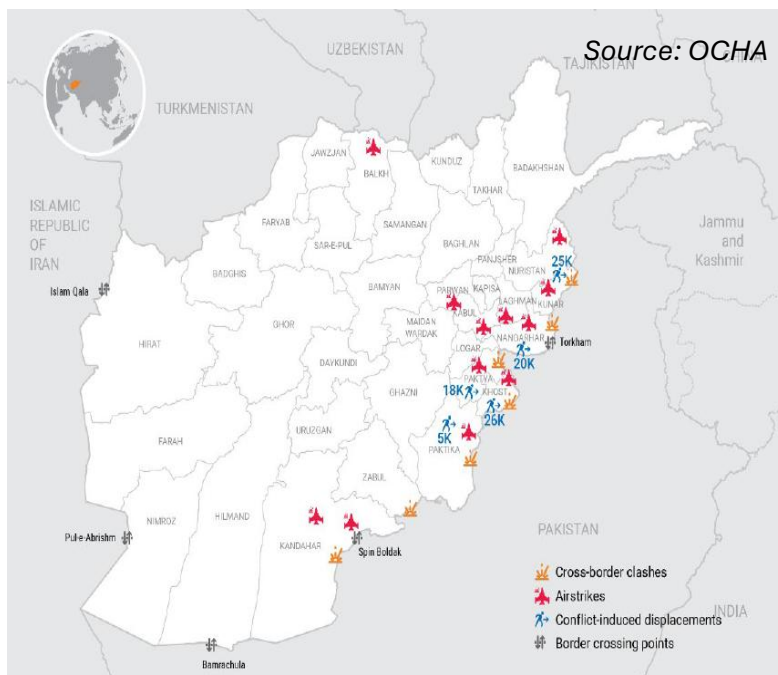
CROSS BORDER CONFLICT / TENSION

External Flash Update #4 10 April 2026

Children from flood affected families received hygiene kits.

Key Highlights

- Escalation of cross-border hostilities since late February**—including shelling, airstrikes, and armed clashes—has resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties, including children and a humanitarian worker. Although a **temporary Eid ceasefire was observed (19–24 March)**, violence and UXO incidents persisted, particularly in eastern and southeastern regions.
- Mass displacement continues, with over 94,000 people (13,400 families) affected across Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar, and Paktika.** In parallel, critical infrastructure damage has disrupted essential services, including damage or closure of 25 health facilities and 41 schools, alongside destruction of homes and key civilian sites such as hospitals, markets, and fuel depots.
- Severe humanitarian access constraints persist in parts of Nuristan (Bargematal and Kamdesh),** leaving nearly 100,000 people without access to aid, markets, or healthcare. Ongoing insecurity and cross-border fire have rendered key access routes unusable, with reported fatalities among civilians and aid workers, and worsening shortages of food and medical supplies.
- Border instability and explosive hazards remain critical concerns. UXO incidents continue to pose serious risks—particularly to children—**while clearance operations are delayed due to insecurity, limiting safe movement and humanitarian operations.



- **Multiple and cascading risks are impacting the most vulnerable families:** Between 26 March and 6 April, heavy rainfall and flash floods affected 31 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, impacting over 73,300 people and causing at least 93 deaths. The eastern region was hardest hit. In addition there was a 5.8-magnitude earthquake which impacted Badakhshan province on 3 April, resulting in casualties and damages.
- **UNICEF and partners continue to deliver a multi-sectoral response across conflict-affected areas and border points,** sustaining services in health, nutrition, WASH, education and child protection while adapting operations to access constraints and population movements. In addition, UNICEF is partnering with women focused organisations to deliver services which include psychosocial support, GBV information and counselling and referral to health and nutrition services for affected communities through community-based women and girls' safe spaces. UNICEF is also coordinating with the Gender in Humanitarian Action Coordination group to conduct rapid gender and PSEA needs assessment, to strengthen protection for both female beneficiaries and female service providers.
- **At key border locations, including in the western and southern regions,** integrated services continue at scale, reaching tens of thousands of returnees with life-saving assistance, while maintaining readiness to expand operations in response to evolving needs.

Background Information

Between 17 March and 1 April 2026, hostilities along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border continued to cause significant humanitarian consequences, particularly across the eastern (Kunar, Nangarhar, Nuristan) and southeastern (Khost, Paktika, Paktia) regions. Since late February, cross-border shelling, airstrikes and armed clashes have resulted in civilian casualties (killed and wounded) in the several hundred, including children and one humanitarian worker. On 29 March, cross-border shelling struck areas around Asadabad city, reportedly resulting in one fatality and 18 injuries, including women and children, and triggering displacement to safer locations, while ongoing hostilities along the border continue to disrupt daily life and instil fear among communities. While assessments are still ongoing, including in Nuristan province, just over 94,000 people (about 13,400 families) have been assessed as displaced to date through community and household-level inter-agency assessments, while 345 homes have been assessed as destroyed or severely damaged. The eastern region remains heavily affected with over 44,900 displaced people across the provinces of Nangarhar and Kunar alone. Priority needs continue to include shelter, access to food and health services. **Protracted heavy rains and flooding in multiple provinces** have added a new layer of humanitarian needs, with casualty figures increasing as well as reported damage to homes and infrastructure.



Recent rainfall in Nangarhar has caused damage to agriculture, irrigation systems, and livestock.

Preparedness and Response

UNICEF and partners continue to sustain and adapt the response to a **complex and evolving operational environment**, maintaining service delivery for conflict-affected populations while closely monitoring developments at key border points.

At reception facilities, including Torkham, essential services remain operational, with health, nutrition, WASH and child protection support provided to returning families. Efforts are focused on ensuring continuity of services and the ability to scale up rapidly should arrival numbers increase.

Across affected areas, UNICEF is maintaining operational capacity through pre-positioned supplies, mobile service delivery and strengthened coordination with partners and local authorities. This includes ongoing adjustments to reach populations in hard-to-access locations and areas affected by displacement.

At the same time, coordination through the Border Consortium continues to support a coherent and complementary response across entry points and areas of return, with partners aligning service delivery and preparedness measures in anticipation of potential shifts in population movements.



Children who have recently returned from Pakistan.

Response to communities affected by the conflict with Pakistan

Health and Polio

UNICEF-supported health services continue to operate across conflict-affected areas, providing essential care to displaced and host communities through existing health facilities and mobile teams. **In eastern provinces, emergency health and nutrition supplies – including trauma care kits – have been pre-positioned to sustain service delivery** in border districts, while one tonne of medical supplies, including vaccines, was airlifted to Nuristan to support hard-to-reach areas.

To date, **534 trauma cases have been treated, and 124 surgeries have been performed in UNICEF-supported health facilities**. Mobile health teams have also been deployed in areas with limited access, including parts of Kunar, to ensure continuity of care for displaced populations.

A UNICEF-supported Health Facility (HF) in Torkham is providing primary health care services following the reopening of the gate. Since the third week of March, , the facility has conducted a total of **788 consultations**. In addition, **83 children** have been vaccinated with the Pentavalent vaccine, and **36 children** have received the measles vaccine. All injured individuals received timely, quality care through UNICEF-supported health facilities across the South East Region, (SER), with no gaps in life-saving services; displaced families are also accessing medical care through Health Facilities (HFs) in areas of displacement; trauma care capacity has been fully activated with pre-positioned emergency surgical kits; referral systems strengthened through additional supplies in border districts and ambulance deployment. In addition, contingency scale-up plans are in place, these include potential relocation of border HFs, readiness of two trauma teams per province, and planning for five-month supply needs.

In the **southern region**, immunization services continue at reception centres, with 380 children vaccinated with Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG), 1,627 individuals received pentavalent vaccines, and 1,360 children vaccinated against measles during the reporting period. Emergency medicines have been distributed to support approximately 50,000 patients, with additional surge capacity available through Interagency Emergency Health Kits sufficient for 25,000 people and 100 surgical kits supporting up to 5,000 surgical procedures.

Preventive efforts remain critical at points of entry. From January to April 7, 2026, a total of 1,966 health education sessions were conducted at the RC, reaching 13,952 males and 6,858 females. 21,800 people received polio vaccines, and 1,553 Polio Plus were distributed to infants under one year who get the OPV.

Nutrition

Nutrition services continue to be delivered across conflict-affected and border areas, with a focus on maintaining access for vulnerable children and pregnant and breastfeeding women despite displacement and access constraints.

In the **southern region**, screening and treatment services remain operational at key border points, including Spin Boldak and Bahramcha. To date, **4,313 children under five have been screened for malnutrition**, with 182 admitted for severe acute malnutrition treatment and 140 for moderate acute malnutrition. In addition, 566 pregnant and lactating women were screened, with 164 PLW receiving nutrition support services.

In **Southeast region**, displaced populations are being effectively reached through UNICEF supported facilities in current settlements, with 29 HFs (11 in Khost, 7 in Paktika, 11 in Paktia) providing services to most of the Internally Displaced Persons. Additionally, **122 children under the age of five have received nutrition services** focusing on growth monitoring, the treatment of acute malnutrition in Paktika and Khost provinces.

In the **eastern region**, nutrition services continue to be delivered across conflict-affected border areas, with a strong focus on sustaining access for vulnerable children and pregnant and breastfeeding women amid ongoing displacement and access constraints. Between 26 February and 2 April 2026, nutrition partners scaled up emergency nutrition interventions to address the needs of conflict-affected internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces. Services were provided through a mix of static health facilities (CHCs and BHCs) and Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams (MHNTs), targeting high-burden districts including Asadabad, Manawara, Momandara, Batikot, Nazyan, Dare Noor, and IDP settlement areas such as Gardi Ghows camp. Despite operational challenges, partners have maintained service continuity through facility-based and outreach modalities.

Across both provinces, **3,096 children under five (1,483 boys and 1,613 girls) were screened** for acute malnutrition during the reporting period. Screening activities were complemented by maternal nutrition and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) interventions to ensure integrated service delivery for displaced and conflict-affected populations. Of the children screened, **96 children (31 boys and 65 girls) were identified with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and admitted for treatment or referred as appropriate**. In addition, **46 children** (18 boys and 28 girls) with High-Risk Moderate Malnutrition (HRM), while **190 children** (92 boys and 98 girls) **were enrolled in Early Moderate Acute Malnutrition (E-MAM) services**.

At the Torkham Border, nutrition supplies remain available, with no major pipeline disruptions reported, and contingency stocks in place to support continued response should needs increase. Nutrition services for women were also sustained in all available sites in Torkham. IYCF-E **counselling reached 2,222 women**, while supplementary food assistance for pregnant and lactating women reached **2,361 beneficiaries**. Furthermore, **1,497 pregnant women** received Multi-Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) to address micronutrient deficiencies and support maternal nutrition.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

UNICEF and WASH Cluster partners **continue to provide emergency water, sanitation and hygiene services to conflict-affected and displaced populations**, while maintaining support at key border points and reception facilities.

In **eastern and southeastern areas**, more than 16,00 **hygiene kits have been distributed to displaced families, alongside sustained water supply and sanitation services in displacement sites**. These interventions aim to reduce the risk of waterborne diseases and support basic living conditions for affected communities.

At the Torkham Gate: Following the reopening of the Torkham Gate, around 2,500 returnee families have returned to Afghanistan and received essential services, including hygiene promotion and water purification tablets for safe drinking water.

WASH supplies sufficient for approximately **71,500** people have been pre-positioned across **Central Region** provinces to support a rapid response.



A child who has recently returned from Pakistan with their family, fetching water from UNICEF support water supply network. @UNICEF

At border points and reception facilities in the southern region, services continue at scale, with capacity to reach over 200,000 people. From January to 7 April, 16,761 returnees were reached with safe drinking water, sanitation services, and essential WASH supplies. In addition, around 12,570 returnees benefited from hygiene awareness sessions, promoting improved health and sanitation practices. Targeted assistance has also been provided to vulnerable households, including persons with disabilities and female-headed households.

Child Protection

Children affected by conflict, displacement and cross-border movements continue to face **heightened protection risks, including family separation, psychosocial distress and exposure to violence**. UNICEF and partners are providing child protection services across affected areas, focusing on psychosocial support, case management and family tracing and reunification.

In the **eastern region, 1,752 individuals** – including 1,344 children – received mental health and psychosocial support, while over 1,596 individuals (1,461 children and 135 caregivers) were reached with child rights and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) messaging. Child-friendly spaces remain operational, with additional outreach modalities expanding coverage in displacement-affected areas.

At the Torkham Border, 18 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) were identified and 14 UASC have been successfully reunified to date, while family tracing and reunification is underway for 4 UASC. At the same border, 5 missing children (3 girls) were identified and reunified with their families. In addition, 869 returnee children (412 boys and 457 girls) as well as 105 caregivers received psychological first aid as well as mental health and psychosocial support and awareness-raising services.

In the **southern region**, services continue at scale along key return routes and in areas affected by displacement. A total of 371 unaccompanied and separated children received case management, including interim care and family tracing and reunification services (270 in Kandahar and 101 in Bahramcha. **In addition, over 6,253**

children (5,761 in Kandahar and 492 in Bahramcha) benefited from psychosocial support and recreational activities, while 2,426 women and girls (2,376 in Spin Boldak and 50 in Bahramcha) were reached with gender-based violence awareness. Furthermore, 1,477 male returnees from Pakistan received child protection and psychosocial support awareness.

Child protection monitoring is ongoing to identify risks, support timely referrals and ensure that vulnerable children are reached with appropriate services.

Education

Conflict and displacement continue to **disrupt children's access to learning in border areas**, while **population movements are placing additional pressure on already fragile education services** in areas of arrival and return. UNICEF and Education Cluster Partners, continue to support the resumption of education services.



Playtime in a child-friendly space. @UNICEF

In **the Eastern Region Education** UNICEF and Education Cluster partners are working to sustain and expand access to learning for children. In the affected areas, initially 260 Community Based Education (CBE)/ Accelerated learning programmes (ALPs) as well as 661 Temporary Learning Spaces (TLSs) were suspended due to security concerns. On 28 March 134 CBE/ALPs with 4,020 students and 440 TLSs with 13,200 students resumed their classes.

The Education Help desk at the Torkham Border remains functional. UNICEF and other cluster partners are providing support to families and students on awareness raising, registration and provision of referral letters with leaflets and stationery. Since the boarder opening at the end of March, 306 school age children (188 boys and 118 girls) were registered at the help desk and referral letters were provided to students for enrollment in TLSs and in public schools.

Community Engagement and Accountability to Affected Populations

At the **Torkham Border**, UNICEF and partners reached 4,400 returnees and host community members with life-saving messages on health, nutrition, WASH, child protection and education, including 2,200 individuals engaged through interpersonal communication and community dialogue during the past week. In addition, 12 social mobilizers were deployed to support outreach and service uptake, facilitating access for nearly 17,000 returnees to service delivery points. Community feedback mechanisms captured inputs from 102 individuals, mainly on service availability and assistance needs. **In Kunar**, 6,322 caregivers and community members participated in 418 community engagement sessions, with women and girls comprising 40% of participants. Six SBC teams supported community outreach and service linkages. In total, 12,644 individuals were reached with life-saving information through community-based networks. Feedback from 521 individuals highlighted key concerns, primarily related to food assistance, health services, shelter, water access and winterization support.

Through the Takhtapul education helpdesk, over 6,000 children have been registered and received awareness on education services along with basic teaching and learning materials (TLM kits). One thousand five hundred returnee children have accessed education through TLSs. An additional 60 TLS (targeting 1,800 children) and 100 TLS (targeting 3,000 children) are planned to be constructed to accommodate the expected additional influx of returnee children.

Afghan returnees from Iran

Preparedness and Response

UNICEF continues to maintain preparedness for a potential increase in return movements from Iran, with no significant changes observed in arrival trends during the reporting period. Readiness measures remain in place to enable a rapid scale-up of services should movements increase.

In the **western and south-western regions**, UNICEF and partners continue to deliver integrated services at border and transit locations – including health, nutrition, WASH, education and child protection – in coordination with partners through the Border Consortium.

Western Region

In the **Western Region**, UNICEF continues to support returnees at border and transit locations in close coordination with WHO, IOM and other partners, delivering integrated services across health, nutrition, WASH, education and child protection.

Immunization services remain a key priority. As of 07 April 2026, **1,029 children (539 boys, 490 girls)** aged 9 months to 10 years have received measles vaccination, while **1,384 children (719 boys, 665 girls)** received oral polio vaccine and 1,067 children (563 boys, 504 girls) received inactivated polio vaccine, supported through UNICEF provision of vaccines, cold chain equipment and essential supplies.

Nutrition services are being delivered in coordination with other interventions, including screening, referral and treatment. During the reporting period, **971 under five children (480 boys, 491 girls)** were screened for malnutrition, with 34 Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases (13 Boys, 21 Girls) and 130 Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) cases identified and supported. In addition, **277 women caregivers** received infant and young child feeding counselling (IYCF), while 305 adolescent girls and 290 lactating women received iron and folic acid supplementation (IFA), and 142 mothers received Multi Micronutrient Supplement, 68 pregnant women and 50 Lactating Women received Lipid Nutrient Supplement (LNS).

UNICEF has established critical WASH services at Islam Qala Reception Centre, including a solar-powered water supply network and latrine facilities. During the reporting period, an estimated **67,971 returnees** (64,537 male and 3,399 females) benefited from safe water, while **59,475 returnees** (56,501 males and 2,974 females) accessed sanitation services, ensuring safer and more dignified conditions at the reception centre.

Child protection services are fully operational, with **1,395 unaccompanied and separated children** identified, including **seven girls**, screened and supported through interim care and family tracing and reunification services, ensuring protection and safe return for vulnerable children.

In areas of return, UNICEF has scaled up education services, establishing 260 temporary learning spaces across Herat, Badghis and Farah provinces, providing access to learning for **7,800 returnee children**. A total of 265 teachers have been equipped with teaching and learning materials and completed specialized training to support quality education delivery. An additional 200 temporary learning spaces are planned to further expand capacity and support the integration of returnee children into the formal education system.



Children who have recently returned from Iran. @UNICEF

Southern Region

In the southern region, UNICEF and partners continue to **deliver integrated services for returnee families at reception and transit facilities**, covering health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection and community engagement.

Health services remain operational, focusing on primary healthcare, immunization and referral support.

At the Milak border reception center, Outpatient Department services were provided to 661 children under the age of five (359 boys and 302 girls). Maternal Child Health (MCH) services reached 893 women, including 333 who received Ante natal care services and 248 who received Post Natal Care services. A total of 2,880 returnees (1,727 male and 1,153 female) received health education support. Furthermore, 105 minor trauma cases were treated, and 20 patients were referred to the hospital for advanced care. As of April 7, 2026, 6,716 health education sessions were conducted at the Milak Border, reaching 14,803 males and 1,644 females. Four thousand, one hundred and sixty-four people received polio vaccines, and 1,205 Polio Plus diapers were distributed to infants receiving OPV.

Nutrition services are being delivered alongside health interventions. Since the beginning of the year, over **1,600 children under five have been screened for malnutrition**, with cases of severe and moderate acute malnutrition identified and enrolled in treatment. Preventive services, including micronutrient supplementation and infant and young child feeding counselling, are also being provided.

WASH services are being provided at scale, with over 74,813 returnees accessing safe water and sanitation services, more than 56,000 reached through hygiene promotion, and over 11,000 receiving essential WASH supplies.

Child protection services remain a priority, with nearly **2,029 unaccompanied and separated children** supported through family tracing and reunification. In addition, over 6,155 individuals (3001 female) received psychosocial support, while awareness on gender-based violence and child protection reached thousands of women, girls and men.

Education services are being scaled up to support returnee children, with 3,000 children accessing learning through temporary learning spaces and additional capacity under expansion. At the Milak border, more than **4,300 children have been registered and supported with education materials**.

Community engagement remains central to the response. Since the beginning of 2026, over 38,000 individuals have been reached with life-saving messages, while more than 10,000 returnees have accessed community engagement and feedback centres for information and support.

Next Update: 24, April 2026

For further information:

Dr. Tajudeen Oyewale
Representative
UNICEF Afghanistan
Tel: +93 79 998 7100
Email: toyewale@unicef.org

Mr. Charles Nzuki
Chief Field Coordination and
Emergency
UNICEF Afghanistan
Tel: +93 70 902 7560
Email: cnzuki@unicef.org

Ms. Shruti Sharma
OIC Chief of Communication
UNICEF Afghanistan
Tel: +93 79 998 7195
Email: shrsharma@unicef.org