

HIGHLIGHTS

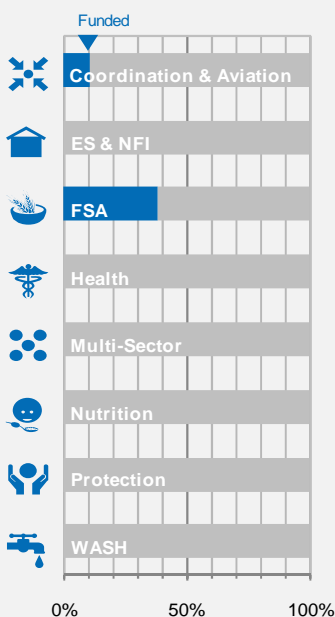
- 6,181 families affected by extreme weather
- Thousands of malnourished Afghan children reached at Medair clinics with CHF fund
- CHF first allocation will provide 22 million dollars for lifesaving action.

FUNDING

405 million
requested (US\$)

12% funded

FUNDING BY CLUSTER



Source: Omar Hashemi/IOM

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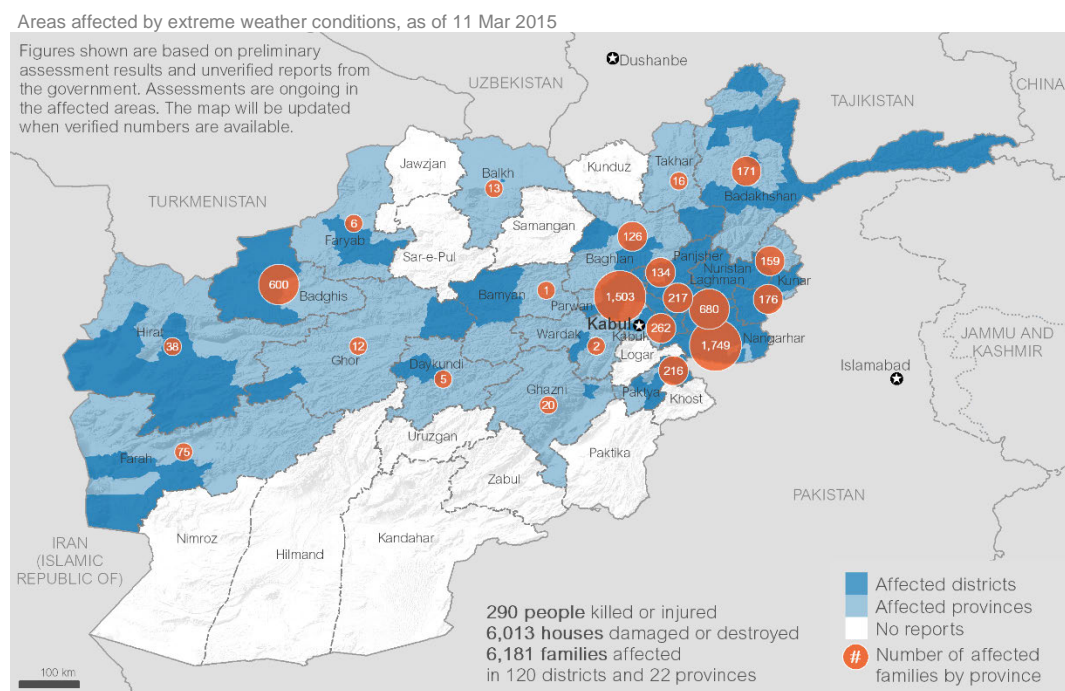
Avalanches leave thousands homeless

Humanitarians support government in response to avalanches and flooding

The humanitarian community is supporting the Government of Afghanistan in reaching thousands of people impacted by the recent deadly avalanches and floods that caused hundreds of fatalities, destroyed homes, and cut off villages. Across the country, 224 people were reportedly killed and 74 injured as a result of the adverse weather which began on 23 February.

Rapid assessment teams made up of members from government, UN agencies, and NGOs acted quickly to reach and assist affected communities. However, damaged roads, rugged terrain and insecurity challenged efforts to reach those impacted. Many teams set off on foot across snowbound terrain and military helicopters were deployed to carry assistance to affected communities in remote or inaccessible regions.

Based on their reports, as of 11 March, an estimated 6,181 families in 120 districts in 22 provinces are affected by avalanches and heavy snow, rains and floods, with 1,381 houses completely destroyed and 4,632 houses damaged. These figures are likely to change as teams continue to reach and assess affected communities.



Source: Various

6,181 families in 120 districts in 22 provinces are affected by adverse weather conditions with 1,381 houses completely destroyed and 4,632 houses damaged

In the hard hit Central Region, the important Salang thoroughfare connecting Kabul to provinces in the north was blocked by snow. Power lines were downed leaving thousands of households in central provinces and the capital Kabul without electricity. In Panjshir province, 113 people were reportedly killed and 113 houses destroyed in Bazarak, Dara, Hes-e-Awal, Paryan and Shatul districts. In Parwan province, more than 1,500 families -- 650 of them in Shinwari district -- were affected by heavy rainfall or snow as of 11 March.

In Afghanistan's Eastern Region, over 2,700 families were affected by flooding 63 per cent of which live in Nangarhar province.

UN agencies and other relief organisations are supporting the Afghan government to deliver food, blankets, medicine and tents to affected families. The Government of Afghanistan is not making an appeal for international support at this time, as in-country stocks both of Government and humanitarian partners are sufficient for the response. In the long term, it is likely that there will be a need for donor support to the reconstruction/rehabilitation of infrastructure and shelters destroyed.



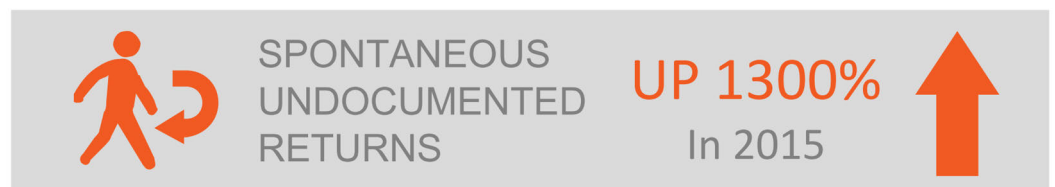
Rescue operations, Tol Village Paryan District, Panjshir March 2015
Credit: Omar Hashemi/IOM

Thousands of Afghans returning from Pakistan

Ahmed is 32 years old. He decided to leave Pakistan, where he was born, with his wife and three children, after his uncle was arrested during a night search of their home. They crossed the Torkham border from Pakistan into Afghanistan on 11 February with their few belongings stacked high on the back of a rented lorry, together with 11 other relatives.

Highest return provinces

1. **Nangarhar**
(19,161)
2. **Kunar**
(7,705)
3. **Laghman**
(3,315)
4. **Kabul**
(3,189)
5. **Kunduz**
(2,979)



2014 59 individuals per day | 2015 749 individuals per day

They are among the 41,209 undocumented Afghans who have returned from Pakistan since the start of 2015. This surge in the number of undocumented Afghans crossing into eastern Afghanistan has already exceeded total returns for 2014 with the average daily rate of spontaneous return 26 times higher than December 2014.

While the rate of return has declined from January's all time high of 22,274 (of which 11,082 women), to 18,935 (of which 9,394 women) in February, Afghan families continue to return from Pakistan in large numbers. Like Ahmed and his family, other returnees have reported coercion and harassment, as well as home and workplace raids in Pakistan, particularly in the wake of an attack on a school in Peshawar mid-December 2014, which resulted in anti-Afghan sentiments. Many say that their only option has been to return to Afghanistan.

As of 28 February, Afghanistan's Directorate of Refugees and Returnees in Nangarhar province had recorded a total of 44,256 combined spontaneous returnees and refugees.

The unprecedented rate of return is overwhelming the capacity of humanitarian actors to assist returning populations. IOM and government border screeners predict that between 30 to 40 per cent of the overall undocumented returnees from Pakistan are vulnerable and in need of assistance, IOM currently has the capacity to assist only 9 per cent of Persons with Specific Needs (PSNs) among the returnees. According to IOM estimates, \$2.4 million is needed to assist 129,580 PSNs who are expected to return to Afghanistan via the Torkham border in 2015.

CHF funding helps Medair reach thousands of malnourished children

Humanitarian Coordinator talks malnutrition with Medair team in Kandahar

Wahida weighed only 6 kg when her mother took the 15 month old girl to a Medair mobile clinic in Kandahar. A healthy child her age should weigh at least 9 Kg. She was diagnosed with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and admitted to the Medair feeding programme. Four months later, her cheeks are full and her eyes are bright. She now weighs 9 kg.

“My husband is a labourer in the city but he doesn’t always have daily wages to give us. Sometimes we don’t eat and the clinics are far,” said her mother, Zarghana.

Since September 2014, Medair has screened nearly 11,000 children for malnutrition



Humanitarian Coordinator Mark Bowden and Medair Country Director Kieren Barnes meet with staff from Medair mobile nutrition clinics in Kandahar
Credit: Medair

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, Mark Bowden, travelled to Kandahar province on 19 February and met with the Medair team to discuss the progress of Medair’s work with communities in Kandahar. With support from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) for Afghanistan, Medair’s eight mobile nutrition clinics assist the most vulnerable children in Kandahar, who due to insecurity and cultural barriers have limited access to services.

Since September 2014, they have screened nearly 11,000 children for malnutrition. As of January 2015, Medair has treated and discharged 486 children as cured, and currently have 706 children with severe acute malnutrition receiving treatment.

“She looks healthy now. It brings me so much happiness to see her change,” said Zarghana adding, “This clinic is closer and easily accessible for us to bring skinny and sick children. Sometimes if family members are sick, we have to take them far away to private clinics or the hospital. Medair comes to our community and they value our people.”

Malnutrition is a complex condition involving multiple, overlapping deficiencies of protein, energy and micronutrients. Malnutrition in children is often caused by a combination of inadequate food intake, insufficient access to food, poor health services, lack of safe water and sanitation, and inadequate child and maternal care.

"I am happy and thankful to have Medair's clinic in my area. Children are improving, gaining weight, and thriving so well. The parents and caregivers who receive health and nutrition information are trying their best to follow all instructions," said a local community leader who cannot be named for security reasons.



Nutrition programme at Medair clinic in Kandahar
Credit: Medair

In its first year of operation, the CHF provided \$15.8 million to support projects treating malnutrition. These projects provide lifesaving nutrition treatment to approximately 140,179 children under five and pregnant and lactating women who are severely or moderately malnourished. According to the 2013 National Nutrition Survey, an estimated 1.2 million Afghan children are malnourished, with 500,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, with the majority of children treated for severe malnutrition under a year old.

Humanitarian access

Incidents affecting humanitarian action

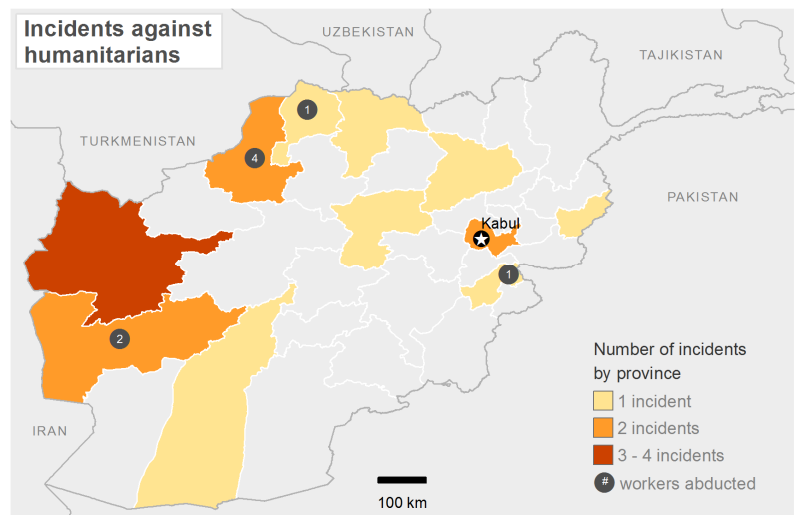
16 incidents

2 aid workers killed

2 aid workers wounded

8 aid workers abducted

There were 16 incidents reported against national and international NGOs and international organisations across Afghanistan in February. These incidents resulted in violence against aid workers, assets or facilities. There were eight reported abductions, two deaths, and two injuries. There were two incidents involving NGO run health facilities, one of which caused substantial damage due to the detonation of an IED inside the building. An NGO ambulance was also attacked in the southern region, which caused damage to the vehicle due to the small arms fire.



Incidents against Humanitarians in February 2015
Source: Various

Humanitarian financing Update

2015 Strategic Response Plan 12 percent funded

Overall funding

As of 28 February, total humanitarian funding for Afghanistan stands at \$52 million, of which, \$48.8 million is aligned with the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2015.

In brief

First CHF allocation of the year will give 22 million dollars for lifesaving action in Afghanistan

The Humanitarian Coordinator has launched the first standard allocation of the Common Humanitarian Fund in 2015 to address the expected increase in needs due to conflict, mass-displacement, cross-border movements and possible natural disasters. Launched on 1 March, the \$22 million allocation will support the strategic priorities of the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and amounts to 5.4 per cent of funds requested by the 2015 HRP.

The CHF funding will provide life-saving humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable populations by providing support to health care in contested and underserved areas; essential services to refugees and Afghan returnees in southeast Afghanistan; essential nutrition services to acutely malnourished children; water and sanitation support to reduce child morbidity; and improvements in information management and assessments in health and nutrition.

Eligible programme areas and geographic locations of the allocation were jointly prioritised by the Clusters, NGOs and UN Agencies, and the CHF Advisory Board.

Applications can be made until 15 March 2015. The Strategy Paper and further information can be accessed on <http://www.unocha.org/afghanistan/funding-allocations>

\$22 million of CHF funding will support strategic priorities of the 2015 HRP



Therapeutic Feeding Unit of Hazar Juft District Hospital in Helmand
Credit: OCHA Southern Region

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OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at www.unocha.org/Afghanistan | afg.humanitarianresponse.info | www.reliefweb.int